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THE RISE OF THE "REAGAN DEMOCRATS"
IN WARREN, MICHIGAN: 1964-1984

by

RICHARD DAVID RIDDLE

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1998

MAJOR: HISTORY

Approved by:

Elizabeth Faue 3-4-98
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[1] Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

resources, including oral history prospects. His help as a guide through the corridors of politics in Warren and Macomb County has been invaluable. Another individual who was of incalculable importance to this project – and whom I tried to convince to write it himself – is Jim Jacobs. Jim is the first person I ever met who appreciated Warren's importance. He has been thinking about the problem of the "Reagan Democrat" in terms of the relationship between city and suburb long before I ever considered it and, indeed, even before there were any "Reagan Democrats."

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Chapter 1

Introduction: the "Democratic Defection" in Warren, Michigan

In the 1980 presidential vote in Warren, Michigan, Republican challenger Ronald Reagan beat incumbent Democrat Jimmy Carter by 49 percent to 44 percent. Some observers took this as evidence of Reagan's superb vote-winning style. Warren, a white working-class Detroit suburb, had a reputation as a vote-rich bastion of Democratic Party power. It was the largest city in Macomb County and the third largest city in the state. In 1960, Warren's residents had given 69 percent of their votes to John Kennedy, 77 percent to Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and 58 percent to Hubert Humphrey in 1968. In rejecting Carter in 1980, it seemed that Warren's voters were registering their impatience with Carter's paralysis in the face of the Teheran hostage crisis and the soaring oil prices at home. Tired of the "malaise" that had haunted America since the Vietnam war, Warren voters were "sending them a message" in Washington.[1]

Observers more familiar with Warren were not surprised by Reagan's victory. From 1964 to 1980, Warren's Democratic presidential vote had oscillated wildly, exhibiting a wider amplitude from election to election than the national Democratic vote.[2] In 1972, the voters had deserted the Democratic standard bearer, George McGovern. He got only 35 percent of Warren's vote. And in 1984, Warren's voters continued their maverick ways: the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale, once again received only 35

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[1] For all Warren voting returns, I have used the *Canvassed Records* of the Macomb County Clerk, Office of Elections, in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. For a discussion of the post-Vietnam "malaise" of the American public, see Louis Harris, *The Anguish of Change* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973).

[2] See Chart 1.4 below.

percent, while Reagan raked in 64 percent. By Reagan's second term, Warren and Macomb County had acquired a new image as contested political territory. Pollsters decided that the declining Democratic Party vote was a trend instead of an aberration. Newsmagazines began calling these cross-over voters "Reagan Democrats" – white, middle-aged, working-class, traditionally loyal Democrats who transgressed party lines to vote for Reagan. These writers also reported that this was a national phenomenon. Warren and Macomb County were not unique. Instead, they were "bellwether" communities for this new variety of voter discontent.[3]

Alarmed with Reagan's showing in the 1984 election, the Michigan Democratic Party hired political analyst Stanley Greenberg to conduct a focus group survey in order to learn the reasons for this rejection of Democratic Party candidates. Greenberg's report, "The Democratic Defection," underscored the urgency of the problem. He tried to get beneath the mystique of Reagan, the campaigner, to uncover changes in voter attitudes. His report concluded that Macomb County voters were indeed rebelling against the Democratic Party, but they were not switching parties. Greenberg announced, "These Democratic defectors voted Republican, not because of a new partisan identity, but because the

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[3] The origins of the term "Reagan Democrat" remain unclear. For most of the Reagan years, newsmagazine writers referred to "weak Democrats" (*Business Week* November 5, 1984, 32-33), "moderate Democrats" (*National Review* September 21, 1984, 19-20), or "conservative Democrats" (*National Review* November 7, 1988, 11). *U.S. News and World Report* may have coined the term in a 1986 article titled, "A Reagan Democrat?" (*U.S. News and World Report* July 14, 1986, 22). *Time* magazine's Laurence I. Barrett offered a definition of Reagan Democrats as "white, working class Americans" who had crossed party lines to vote for Reagan. (*Time* October 31, 1988, 14-15). An article in *Business Week* referred to Macomb County as prime Reagan Democrat territory (*Business Week*, 24 October 1988, 27).

Democrats, in their view, turned away from them." It was a case of party "de-alignment," rather than "re-alignment." [4]

Greenberg offered explanations for the changed voting behavior. He discussed the growing vulnerability of the individual voter during the early 1980s, when high levels of unemployment accompanied the flight of capital from the "rust belt." He also reported a complex set of attitudes that the focus group interviews revealed among Macomb County's "Democratic defectors." They registered negative attitudes towards African-Americans, support for on-the-job rights for working wives, and luke-warm attitudes towards unions. A decade later, Greenberg followed up this report with a more reflective treatment of the crisis in the Democratic Party. In his *Middle Class Dreams,* Macomb County again took center stage in the struggle over disaffected voters. "Macomb County," he wrote, "is the site of the real drama in our political life. This is the site of an historic upheaval that has wrecked the old and promises a new volatile kind of politics."[5]

Greenberg's studies reflect an outpouring of recent books and articles on the crisis of modern liberalism and party politics. The genre crosses academic boundaries. Political scientists conduct post-mortems on the New Deal as the most recent of the great party eras. Sifting through vote returns to discern new electoral alignments at turning points in American political history, they portray the Reagan Democrat as the harbinger of party system decline. For them, the Reagan Democrat is a sort of political barbarian who votes

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[4] Stanley Greenberg, *Report on Democratic Defection Prepared for the Michigan House Democratic Campaign Committee* (New Haven, Connecticut: The Analysis Group, 1985), 3.

[5] Stanley B. Greenberg, *Middle Class Dreams: The Politics and Power of the New American Majority* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 24.

not out of principle or party loyalty, but out of attraction to the candidate, an attitude that negates party and threatens political stability.[6]

Sociologists and ethnographers give the Reagan Democrat credit for responding to ideology rather than personality, but it is the ideology of conservative "populism." This version of the Reagan Democrat is a hard-working, blue-collar voter plagued by rising taxes and declining living standards. He blames the lack of opportunity in his life on government regulations and programs that unfairly penalize him to make up for past discrimination against African-Americans and women. Espousing narrow self-interest, this angry voter expresses the very opposite of the inclusive culture of solidarity that, we are told, animated industrial unionism and built the Democratic Party's New Deal coalition in the 1930s and 1940s.[7]

Some political journalists see Reagan Democrats as pawns in the high-stakes game of national politics. The key events for these writers are the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the

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[6] Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Decline of American Political Parties, 1952-1980* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1973).

[7] Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Jonathan Rieder, "The Rise of the Silent Majority," in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 243-268; David Halle, *America's Working Man: Work, Home, and Politics Among Blue-Collar Property Owners* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). For the solidaristic culture of the 1930s, see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On the "populist" aspect of Reagan Democrats, see Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 220-266. In my view, although the term "populist" captures the grass-roots, insurgent flavor of the Reagan Democrats, it misrepresents the original populists, most of whom wanted more, not less, government regulation.

War on Poverty programs of the Johnson years, and the Democratic Party's reform of party rules in the early 1970s. With these changes, the Democratic Party began responding to "special interests" who shifted the focus of government programs from reforms benefiting the middle class to a civil rights agenda focused on African-Americans and women. Kevin Phillips pioneered this analysis even before the changes had fully taken place, when he wrote, "The Democratic Party fell victim to the ideological impetus of a liberalism which had carried it beyond programs taxing the few for the benefit of the many (the New Deal) to programs taxing the many on behalf of the few (the Great Society)." Meanwhile, the Republican Party deposed its Eastern liberal leadership in favor of Sunbelt conservatives and soft-peddled civil rights, recognizing the vote-getting potential of the race issue. The Reagan Democrats play a passive role in this scenario. They were simply "abandoned" by the Democratic national leadership and "picked up" by the Republicans.[8]

Over the past 40 years, historians participated in this discussion, mainly in relation to the issue of the decline of "the New Deal order." Richard Hofstadter began this line of inquiry in 1955 with his *Age of Reform*. He wrote that "just as the cycle of American history running from the Civil War to the 1890s" was defined by industrial development, western expansion, and political conservatism, so "the age that has just passed," ending with World War II, should be considered "an age of reform." The book was greeted with

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[8] Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991); E. J. Dionne, Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Touchstone, 1991). Thomas Ferguson, *Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986). Ronald Radosh, *Divided They Fell: The Demise of the Democratic Party: 1964-1996* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). The quote is from Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 37.

acclaim. Life in the 1950s seemed so different from the hard times of the Depression years that maybe Hofstadter was right in his view that movements for reform were not part of the modern, post-war American scene. But before long, critics began poking holes in Hofstadter's thesis. Some objected to his harsh view of the Populists. Others took issue with his dating of the closure of reform. After all, in 1955, the civil rights movement was moving onto center stage in the nation's consciousness; the clash between Cold War containment doctrine and the de-colonization of the Third World had led American policy-makers to back the French in Indochina, a decision that would send the U.S. down the road to its first military defeat; and American popular culture was blending different strains of working-class music in a powerful mixture that implicitly challenged racial divisions in society. Exciting times were still ahead. The age of reform was not over.[9]

In 1995, historian Alan Brinkley published a study of government policy during the late New Deal and war years, entitled *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Depression and War*. Implicitly endorsing Hofstadter's dating of the closure of the reform era, Brinkley wrote that, although the early New Deal revealed the possibilities of state intervention in the economy and society, the reform impulse proved weaker than anyone expected. According to Brinkley, with the onset of the "Roosevelt recession" in 1938, the New Dealers beat a general retreat, abandoning, in the first place, the old Progressive policy of busting the trusts. Unable to master the intricacies of planning war production

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[9] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955), 3. For a summary critique of Hofstadter's interpretation of Populism, see Robert C. McMath, *American Populism: A Social History: 1877-1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 12-13. For a more general critique of Hofstadter, see Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 190-193.

during World War II, they also backed away from the challenge of planning post-war economic development. By the time the war was over, they had traded the goal of meaningful economic regulation for the promise of a "full-employment" post-war economy. They stopped calling themselves "New Dealers" and became "liberals." [10]

Historians have extended the study of liberalism to the recent past. Arnold Hirsch, Thomas J. Sugrue, and Heather Thompson produced important works on the racial aspects of the unraveling of liberalism in the post-war northern cities.[11] But it was in the suburbs that this trend played itself out. Suburban migration gutted the big-city strong-holds of Democratic Party voting strength.[12] The suburban "fragmentation" of the city was the geographic aspect of the disintegration of the Democratic Party's "New Deal coalition." Suburbanization sorted the city's population into more distinct race and class

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[10]Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1995), 48-64, 86-105, 227-264.

[11] Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago: 1940-19160* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Thomas J. Sugrue "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* Vol. 82 No. 2 (September 1995), 551-578; idem., *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Heather Ann Thompson, "The Politics of Labor, Race, and Liberalism in the Auto Plants and the Motor City, 1940-1980," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1995). See also Kevin Boyle, "Politics and Principle: The United Automobile Workers and American Labor-Liberalism, 1948-1968," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*; George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1994); Nicholas Lemann, *The Promise Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America:* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Michael B. Katz, ed., *The Underclass Debate: Views From History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[12] In the 1968 election, Wayne County (which includes Detroit) cast over one million votes, 470,000 more votes than suburban Macomb and Oakland counties combined. In 1988, Wayne County about three-quarters of a million votes, 5,448 fewer votes than the suburban counties. Edsalls, *Chain Reaction*, 230-231.

cohorts. Shaped by this class differentiation as well as by the racial boundaries with the city, the suburbs incubated political cultures which proved inhospitable to liberalism.[13]

This dissertation examines the crisis in post-war liberalism and in the Democratic Party[14] between 1964 and 1984 in suburban Warren, Michigan. Using quantitative techniques, archival research, oral history interviews, and a narrative presentation, it argues that, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Warren's voters experienced a series of shocks that alienated many of them from the Democratic Party. The HUD controversy of

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[13] On suburbanization, see the general study by Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: the Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 187-218, 231-253, 272-282. On the politics of suburban incorporation, Gary Miller, *Cities by Contract: The Politics of Municipal Incorporation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981). On the real estate industry, Marc Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders; The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (New York, 1987). Also see Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967). Ronald Edsforth studies the material culture of Michigan's working class, although only with oblique reference to suburbanization. See Ronald Edsforth, "Affluence, Anti-Communism, and the Transformation of Industrial Unionism Among Automobile Workers, 1933-1973," in Ronald Edsforth and Larry Bennett, eds. *Popular Culture and Political Change in Modern America* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 101-125; also Ronald Edsforth, *Class Conflict and Cultural Consensus: The Making of a Mass Consumer Society in Flint, Michigan* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987). On the suburban nuclear family of the 1950s, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); idem., "Cold War, Warm Hearth," in Fraser and Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order,* 153-191. For a cautionary discussion of stereotypes of the post-war nuclear family, see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992). On the rise of the shopping mall, see Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 101, No. 4 (October 1996), 1050-1081.

[14] It is useful to distinguish between the Democratic Party, a political institution, and liberalism, an ideology. Though a vote for the Democratic Party should not be read as a vote for liberalism, during the years in question, the national Democratic Party *was* the main vehicle of liberalism. On the other hand, as we will show, support for liberal causes did not always penetrate to the county level of the Democratic Party.

1970, the Vietnam war and the antiwar Warren Tank Plant protest march of 1971, and the cross-district busing controversy of 1971-1974 led an increasing number of Warren's voters to rethink their old attachment to the Democratic Party. The churches and the unions – especially the Catholic Church and the UAW – proved unable to cool the passions generated by these controversies. Especially during the cross-district busing crisis, pleas for patience and calm seemed to be without effect. As George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign made clear, the union also lost the ability to deliver votes for the Democratic Party.

In addition to these specific controversies, the very structures of authority seemed to be crumbling in Warren during these years. The Dodge Truck wildcat strike of June 1974 signaled the alienation of a generation of young workers. Facing assembly line speedup and unsafe working conditions, these young workers held the union leadership accountable for its inability to improve these conditions. By their style of dress and bearing, they challenged the culture of factory labor. The increased entry of women into the paid workforce posed even more fundamental agendas for reform in the workplace and at home. Women protested their exclusion from certain lines of work, as well as other forms of on-the-job gender-based discrimination. The women's movement in Macomb County, although it included many housewives, took up the cause of working women in both blue-collar and professional occupations. Women supported one another in the struggle against the unequal division of labor at home. Thus, young workers and women workers registered their distress and called into question the relations of authority in Warren's two most important institutions: its factories and its families.

The job insecurity during the recession-prone 1973-1983 decade ultimately restored management's authority in the factory. The recessions (and in the case of Chrysler, the near demise of the company in 1979) taught workers to appreciate their jobs and even to request the overtime that they had once rejected. The abortion issue, in turn, helped to deflect the Detroit Archdiocese of the Catholic Church from its earlier posture of support for liberal causes during the civil rights and antiwar movements. After the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, the Macomb County Right to Life movement, with the support of the Catholic Church, undertook a grass-roots, protracted campaign to re-criminalize abortion. They led this campaign of conservative social activism in the name of the family. The defense of the family became a slogan for the presidential campaigns of Ronald Reagan and a hallmark of New Right politics in the 1980s.

The rest of this introductory chapter has three parts. It sketches Warren's early history, describes the city's voting characteristics, and, finally, takes a preliminary look at the correlation between precinct voting data and census data. The balance of the dissertation recounts crucial incidents on the path which led many voters away from the Democratic Party and into a new, independent political identity.

* * * * * * *

The City of Warren emerged from a rural past. When Michigan became a state in 1837, the citizens in present-day Warren formed Hickory Township out of the 6-mile-by-6-mile township grid established in the Northwest Territories Act. The name was later changed to Warren Township. In the early days, it contained beet farms, scattered villages, and carriage stops. That the balance between nature and human habitation was as

yet unsettled is apparent from the fact that the local town board paid bounties on wolves, bears, and crows. In 1893, one settlement, Beebe's Corners, incorporated as the Village of Warren, on the west side of Warren Township. Centerline, a smaller community inside the township, incorporated as a city in 1936. In the early days, Centerline boasted a stop on one of the "interurban" rail lines connecting Detroit with out-lying communities. Warren's local historian, Gerald Neil, noted that this rail line stimulated growth in southern Warren, "since it provided rapid low cost transit to Detroit's shopping center and industries. It was, therefore, possible to move out to suburbia and still have close contact with the big city." The rail system fell into disrepair during the Great Depression.[15]

By that time, Warren had begun to sprout its own auto and defense plants. Its oldest major physical structures – the Rotary Electric Steel plant (1933), the Dodge Truck plant (1938), the General Electric Carboloy plant (1940), and the Detroit Tank Arsenal (1940) – were heavy industrial facilities. When Franklin Roosevelt paid a visit to the Tank Arsenal in September 1942, he saluted the facility as "an amazing example of what can be done by the right organization, spirit and planning." In December of the same year, the plant was running at peak production, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and produced 896 tanks.[16]

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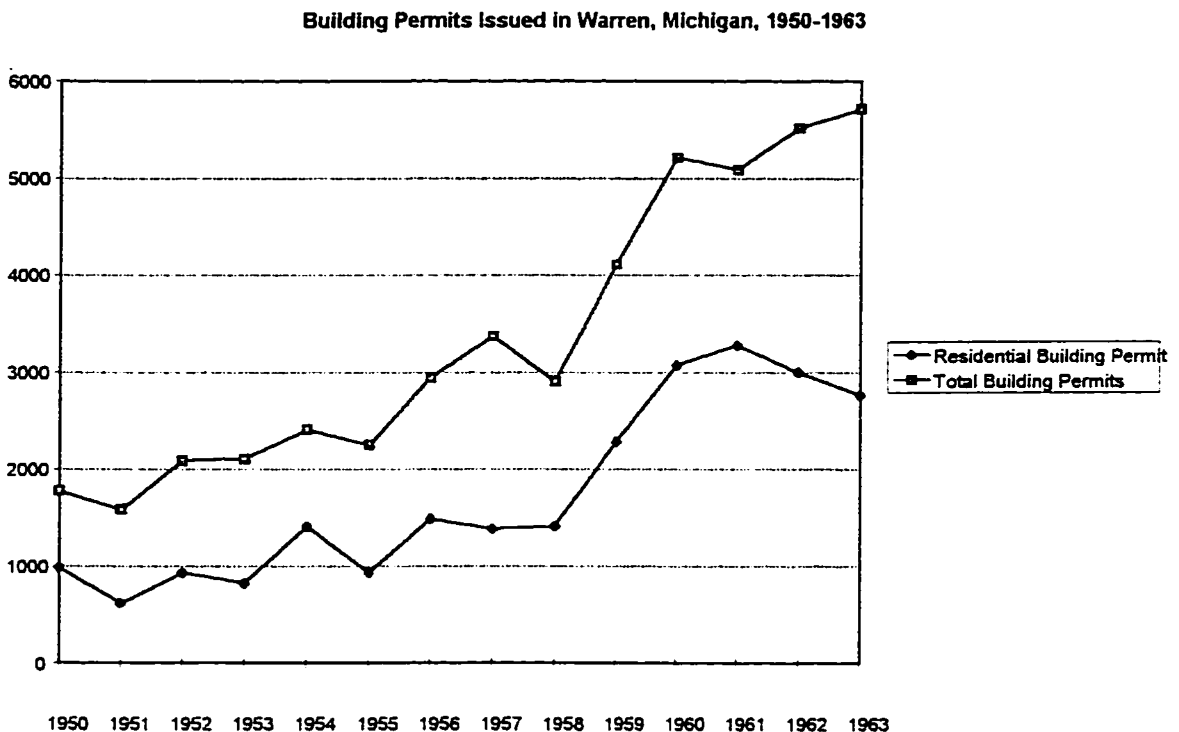
[15] See Appendix A for a map of Warren. For the period before Warren's incorporation, see Gerald L. Neil, *History of Warren, Michigan: 1837-1970* (n.p., 1971), 4-25, quote on page 17.

[16] Ibid. Quote from Roosevelt in Kevin Thornton and Dale Prentiss. *Tanks and Industry: The Detroit Arsenal, 1940-1954.*" (Warren, Michigan: TACOM History Office. 1995), 7.

When it incorporated as a city in 1957,[17] Warren already had a strong and growing manufacturing sector. This, along with residential construction, is reflected in the number of building permits issued and utility service hook-ups between 1950 and the mid-1960s. (See Charts 1.1 and 1.2, below.) From the start, Warren "lived or died" by the auto industry: not only the production schedules of the big automobile plants, but, also,

CHART 1.1[18]

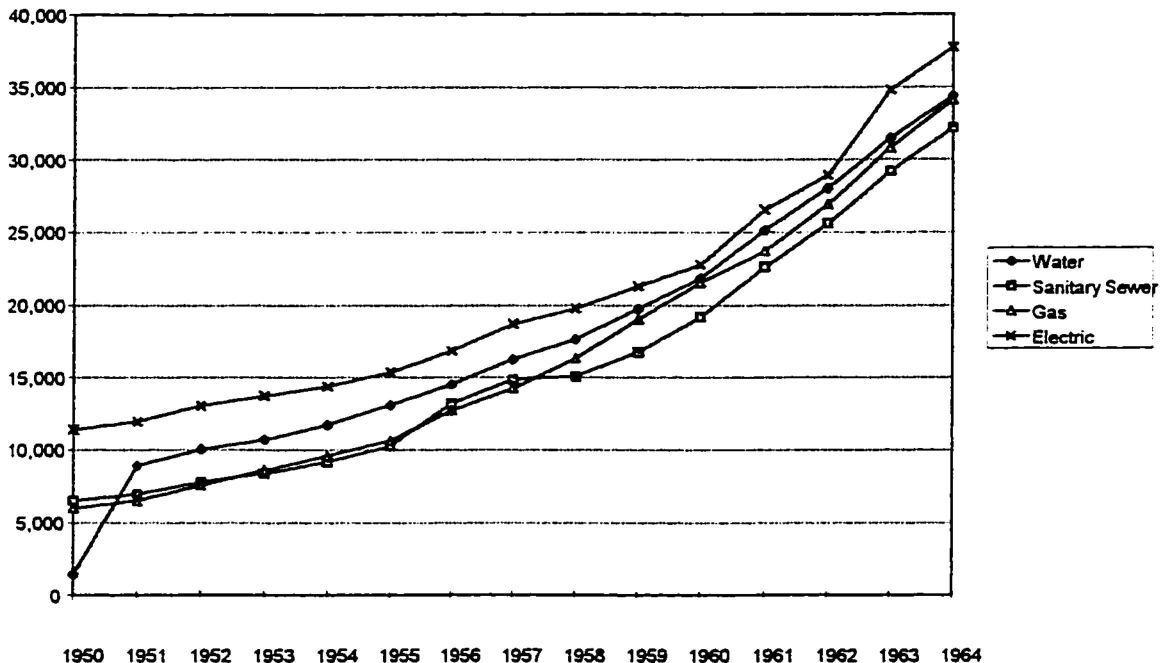


[17] The most complete treatment of Warren's incorporation is John Hooyer, "The Transition from Township to City Government in Three Michigan Townships" (Thesis, Michigan State University, 1964).

[18] The data is from an unpublished study on Warren done in 1964 by the Urban Renewal Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, *Population Warren, Michigan 1964*, 17-18, (copy in author's possession). The category of "total building permits" includes residential, commercial, industrial, garages, public, quasi-public, alterations, additions and miscellaneous permits.

the clusters of small manufacturing companies and tool and die shops scattered among its strip-malls and residential neighborhoods. In 1966, the city had close to a thousand industrial plants. In a move that underscored the importance of auto-industrial investment to Warren's economy, the General Motors Corporation built the GM Technical Center directly across Van Dyke Street from Warren's City Hall. Opened in 1956, the "Tech Center" was a sprawling, thousand-acre think-tank and administrative center. In 1996, the center employed 22,000 workers and paid 6.4 million dollars in taxes to the City of Warren. By the 1970s, Warren's workforce was a modern one, with a high quotient of

CHART 1.2[19]



[19] Urban Renewal Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, *Population Warren, Michigan 1964*, 17-18, (copy in author's possession)..

skilled trades and technicians. Among Detroit suburbs, Warren ranked high both in the number of manufacturing jobs and in workers prepared to fill those jobs. In 1970, 48 percent of Warren's workers worked in blue-collar manufacturing jobs, while 47 percent worked in white-collar jobs.[20]

Like hundreds of suburbs across the country, Warren owed its growth to the combined effects of federal government incentives: the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and the Veterans Administration (VA) home loans, the income tax deduction for home mortgage interest, and the expansion of the highway system under the Federal Highway Act of 1956. Along with the wave of post-war industrial plant relocation and the continued proliferation of automobiles, these federal programs created the conditions for suburban development which eased the wartime demand for housing in Detroit. By 1970, Warren was an established, viable, and reasonably tranquil community of 180,000 people, the largest city in Macomb County and the third largest city in Michigan.[21]

Warren's suburban settlement took place in several waves. The first, before World War II, was the early migration to the inexpensive neighborhoods along Eight Mile Road in southern Warren. The "inter-urban" street car service to Centerline in the 1920s facilitated this early migration. The second wave was the post-World War II move to

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[20] "Welcome to Warren: If this Was America's Fastest Growing City, Why Are All the Sidewalks Empty?" *The Detroit Free Press,* 6 August 1972."GM Tech Center Tour, Community Profile: Warren, Michigan," General Motors – North American Operations (internal document), 1996. Also see, Neil, *History of Warren, Michigan.* The Center For Community Studies, *Macomb County: A Historical Perspective, Bellwether Report Book I* (The Center For Community Studies: Macomb Community College, 1992), 6-8.

[21] *Macomb County: A Historical Perspective, Bellwether Report Book I* (The Center For Community Studies: Macomb Community College), 6-8.

escape Detroit's crowded neighborhoods. This migration filled in the neighborhoods in southern Warren. The third wave, to central and northern Warren, was the post-1960 flight from Detroit's disappearing jobs and declining neighborhoods. These three stages of suburban migration may have produced a "layering" of attitudes concerning a number of matters, including the racial dynamics of Detroit.[22]

Census data reveals that Warren attracted a sizable migration of people from Detroit. In 1960, 18,792, or 25 percent of residents who had moved to Warren during the preceding five years, came from Detroit. In 1970, the figure was 18,342, or 11 percent. In the 1980 Census, it was 11,132, or 7 percent. Although some of these suburban newcomers were no longer living in Warren in 1980, the number of migrants from Detroit was quite large, especially since the census tally of relocations from Detroit to Warren from 1955 to 1980 – 48,266 – counts only the second half of each decade. The migration from Detroit was clearly big enough to give Warren's citizens a common "exodus" (or, as some of them would have it, "refugee") experience in relation to Detroit.[23]

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[22] This theory of the "layering" of attitudes of the successive migrations should not be pushed too far, however, given the tendency of many of Warren's homeowners to keep on moving to more desirable homes in northern Warren or across city lines. Donald Binkowski, letter to author, 9 November 1997. On the over-crowding of Detroit in the 1950s as a reason for moving to Warren, Margaret Sinclair, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 January 1997; Donald Binkowski, interview by author, tape recording, 1 February 1997, Detroit, Michigan; William O'Brien, interview by author, tape recording, 2 July 1995, Warren, Michigan.

[23] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Censuses of Population and housing: 1960, Census Tracts, Detroit, Mich.* Table P-1; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Mich.* Table P-2; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Mich.* Section 1: Table P-9.

The suburban migration in the 1950s settled the neighborhoods of "Baseline," "Van Dyke," "Fitzgerald," on the central and western parts of south Warren Township, and, on the southeast corner, the community of "McKinley Park." As more expensive housing tracts extended north, the southern part of Warren remained relatively poor. A 1969 study on Warren sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found the "highest proportions of social, economic, housing and social disorganization" in the southeast quadrant of town.[24]

To serve the spiritual needs of Warren's people, churches grew with the community. In 1965 there were 14 Catholic Churches within Warren's 36 square mile area. The Protestant community also kept pace. The Baptists had 25 churches in Warren; the Lutherans maintained 11 churches. In canvassing neighborhoods to drum up membership, one former minister estimated that the city was 65-70 percent Catholic in 1960. Many of Warren's citizens, however, had let their church membership lapse. One source estimated that only one-third of Warren and Centerline's residents maintained an active church affiliation.[25]

Rural Macomb County had been undisputed Republican Party territory for decades. As the county filled up with a working-class electorate in the habit of voting

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[24] *The Macomb Daily*, 6 May 1965. Donald Binkowski, letter to author, 26 November 1997. For the HUD community survey of Warren, which was released in installments, see *Warren, Michigan: Community Renewal Program Michigan R-175 (CR), Final Report – March, 1971* (Mishawaka, Indiana: City Planning Associates, Inc., March 1971): 3-4, 17.

[25] "The City of Warren," unpublished history produced for the Warren City Council, n.d.), and Harold F. Stilwell, *History of Warren* (Warren: Published by Manufacturers Bank, 1976). For the estimate of the percentage break-down of Warren's religious denominations, Herbert Lowe, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 20 May 1997.

Democratic, some Republican politicians simply switched parties. For most of them, it was a pragmatic decision. Many voters, however, had a genuine attachment to the Democratic Party. The benefactor relationship of national government to the individual citizen that people remembered from the Depression days and New Deal programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA), as well as the interlocking relationship on the county level between the Democratic Party and the unions, evoked a periodic outpouring of voting loyalty to the Democratic Party as the champion of a top-down solution to problems of economic growth, job creation, and housing. The unions, especially the United Automobile Workers (UAW), played an important part in the Macomb County Democratic Party. Many city officials learned campaigning and administrative skills from their years in the unions. The UAW locals and the regional headquarters contributed political and administrative talent to Macomb County's fledgling cities at a time when their early growth frequently outran their administrative talent.[26]

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[26] For the building of governing institutions in Warren and the main personalities in Warren's early politics, see Hooyer, "The Transition from Township to City Government" and Neil's *History of Warren*, 26-35. On Warren's early politics, Bill O'Brien, interview by author, tape recording, 2 July 1995, Warren, Michigan. According to former Warren City Councilman Donald Binkowski, among Macomb County's "converted" Democratic politicians were Arthur Miller and Tom Welsh. Donald Binkowski, letter to author, 3 December 1997. Arthur Miller's previous history as secretary-treasurer of UAW Local 771, as well as his conversion from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party is confirmed in Hooyer, "The Transition from Township to City Government," 50-51. On the general subject of labor and the Michigan Democratic Party, see Arthur Kornhauser, Albert J. Mayer, and Harold L. Sheppard, *When Labor Votes: A Study of Auto Workers* (New York: University Books, 1956), 29-34. On this, as well as early Macomb County politics and the political aftershocks of the suburban migration to Macomb County, see Dudley Buffa, *Union Power and American Democracy: The UAW and the Democratic Party 1935-72* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 178-179. (Hereafter, Buffa, *Union Power,* Vol. 1.) More on these subjects in Ralph Liberato, interview by author, tape recording, 10 March 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. For the UAW's hand in the Michigan WPA program during the 1930s, see James J. Lorence, *Organizing the*

Warren's civic culture reflected the varied national and ethnic origins of its population. Southern whites made up an important part of Warren's population. As reported in the 1970 Census, of the 19 percent of Warren's native-born residents who came from a different state, 42 percent, or about 13,000, were from the southern United States. What gave Warren its distinctive civic culture, however, was its population of Catholic eastern-, and southern-Europeans, especially Poles and Italians. In the 1970 Census, 22 percent of Warren's population reported "foreign or mixed parentage."[27] Among the 38,667 Warren residents who made up this group, 9,068 traced their heritage to Poland, followed by 7,008 from Canada, and 5,924 from Italy. (See Chart 1.3.)[28]

During the heyday of Southern and Eastern European immigration, from 1870 to 1914, immigrants had settled in ethnic clusters in Detroit. Often, one or several young "pioneers" sailed to America, secured employment, and made arrangements for the passage of others from the same village. The immigrants moved into neighborhoods near jobs and ethnic institutions, such as predominantly Polish Catholic churches. Detroit's

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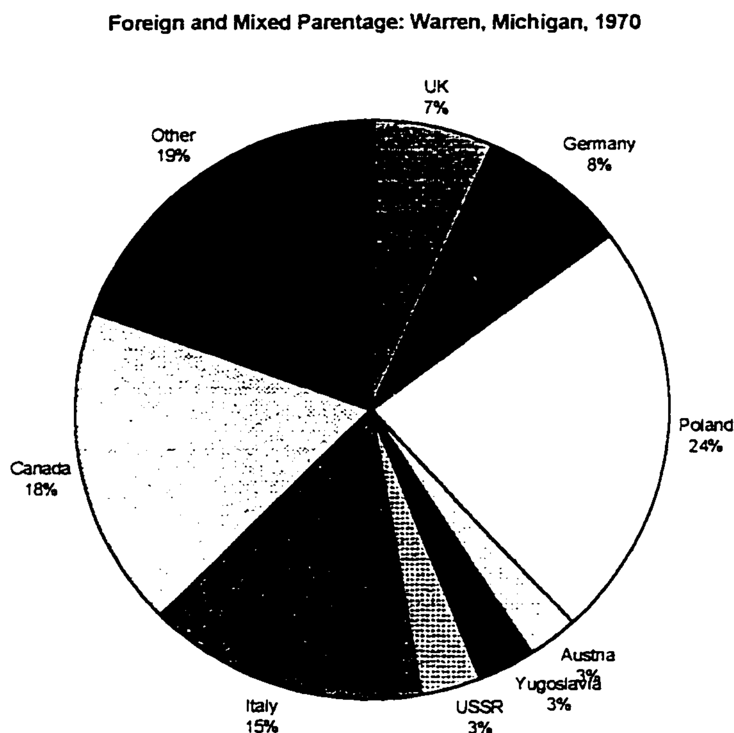
Unemployed: Community and Union Activists in the Industrial Heartland (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 125-216.

[27] This meant that a parent on at least one side of the family was a first-generation immigrant. In a careful discussion of Polish-Americans in the Detroit region, one team of historians argued that the census normally under-counted the ethnic populations. John J. Bukowczyk and Peter D. Slavcheff, "Polish-Americans in Metropolitan Detroit," Wayne State University, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center Census Discussion Papers: Metro Detroit in the 80's, Number 9 (September, 1989), 4-6.

[28] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan* (Washington, D.C.), Tables 81, 82. On the perils of interpreting ethnicity from the U.S. Census, see Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Polish community had two such clusters, on the east side and on the west side of town. A strong Polish community also established itself in Hamtramck, an older east-side industrial suburb surrounded by Detroit.[29]

CHART 1.3



Spurred by the crowded housing conditions in mid-twentieth century Detroit, the east-side Polish community, along with Italians and Germans, moved north, eventually

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[29] John J. Bukowczyk, *And My Children Did Not Know Me: A History of Polish-Americans* (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1987), 11-13. For the Detroit east-side and west-side Polish clusters, see Stanley Makun, "The Changing Patterns of Polish Settlement in the Greater Detroit Area: Geographic Study of the Assimilation of an Ethnic Group," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1964), 45, map 5. For an interesting study of assimilation among earlier immigrants to Detroit, see Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrialization, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

into Warren and other east-side suburbs. The move from the city weakened ethnic consciousness, as Detroit's ethnic whites now made their own individual family decisions about which suburban neighborhood to buy in. The result was a mixed suburban population and a dilution of ethnicity. Families stopped using the mother tongue at home; and, before long, marriage alliances were being formed outside the ethnic pale.[30]

Moving to the suburbs was an important step in the process of assimilation. One sign of this declining ethnic identity during the suburban migration was the change from parochial to public schools. In 1980, Polish-Americans living in Detroit and eastern Wayne County sent a majority (57.3 percent) of their children aged 6-15 years old to church-related (mostly Catholic) schools. Polish-Americans living in Warren and Centerline made greater use of the public schools. (See Table 1.1.)

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[30] See Makun, "The Changing Patterns of Polish Settlement," 115-116. Makun found that some of the families living in the "fringe zones" of the Polish settlements acted as a "future attraction to their friends and former neighbors." Ibid., 94-95. Another exception to the rule of individual suburban migration might be an aging parent making the move to the suburbs to be near her or his children. (See Bukowczyk and Slavcheff, "Polish-Americans in Metropolitan Detroit," 22.) One observer remarked that, in some cases during the 1960s, whole blocks of families seemed to have picked up and moved out of Detroit to the same neighborhood in Warren. Herbert Lowe, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 20 May 1997. On the "Americanization" of the Detroit Polish community and the practice of Anglicizing names, see Makun, "Changing Patterns of Polish Settlement," 95-98. For a color-coded map showing weakened ethnic consciousness in the Detroit suburbs, see Bryan Thompson, "Detroit Area Ethnic Groups 1971," (Detroit: Wayne State University Department of Geography, 1971). On the loss of ethnicity through exogamy, see Stanley Lieberson and Mary C. Waters, *From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988), Appendix Table 6.1, 199; also, more generally, 162-246. For discussion of Polish assimilation, Janice Kleeman, "Polish-American Assimilation: the Interaction of Opportunity and Attitude," *Polish-American Studies* Vol. 42, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 11-26; Eugene E. Obidinski, "Beyond Hansen's Law: Fourth Generation Polonian Identity," *Polish-American Studies* Vol 42, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 27-42.

Table 1.1[31]

Polish-American Enrollment in Public or Church-Related Schools (Percent) for Ages 6-15, 1980

	Detroit,East Wayne Co./	Warren,Centerline
Public	40.7	85.1
Church-related	57.3	14.9

The contrast between the reluctance to attend public schools in Detroit and the willingness to do so in the suburbs reflected the racial friction in Detroit schools during the 1970s. There was, however, an affirmative aspect to the decision to use Warren's public schools. They had a good reputation. Warren's Catholic parents were paying property taxes anyway and the "parochiaid" referendum to use state funds to subsidize transportation and other costs of Catholic schools had failed in 1970. The move to Warren often entailed the change from Catholic schools to public schools.[32]

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[31] This table is taken from data contained in Bukowczyk and Slavcheff, "Polish-Americans in Metropolitan Detroit," Table 14, page 25.

[32] "Parochiaid" was an issue in the 1970 election. In the race for governor, the Republican, William Milliken, supported it, while Democrat Sander Levin opposed it. Although parochiaid lost, Milliken won and gained some credit among Polish Catholics. Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa, Douglas Matthews, *The Almanac of American Politics: The Senators, the Representatives – Their Records, States and Districts, 1972* (Boston: Gambit, 1972), 362. Also see Buffa, *Union Power and American Democracy,* Vol. 1, 227-228. Warren political observer Binkowski believes that parochiaid was important in the early alienation of Polish blue-collar Catholics from the Democratic Party. Donald Binkowski, interview by author, tape recording, 2 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan. On the mobilization of the Catholic Church in the parochiaid campaign, see Donald Binkowski Collection, Box 6, "School Bus Issue" Folder, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan (hereafter, Bentley Library). On changing from Catholic to public school, Al

Along with the change from parochial to public schools, suburban relocation affected church membership. Some Polish-Americans continued to attend mass at the old Polish churches, like St. Albertus, long after they moved to Warren. For most, however, the move from Detroit to Warren meant joining a suburban parish. The suburban churches were as new as the suburb itself, and they had diminished ethnic significance, compared to the old city parishes. As others have noted, the Protestant concept of the congregation-based church in some ways proved more suited to twentieth century American mobility than the old-world Catholic concept of the parish rooted in the history and in the land that it stood on.[33]

Whereas in Hamtramck and in Detroit, the people tended to identify their neighborhood by the parish, in Warren many residents (including Catholics) identified their neighborhood by its public high school (such as the "Van Dyke" or "Fitzgerald" neighborhoods). Warren's school systems had grown out of the township schools that pre-dated Warren's 1957 incorporation as a city. Thus, in a variety of ways, the consciousness of European ethnicity declined during the suburban migration of the late 1960s and the 1970s. Suburbanization brought the opportunity to start out anew as Americans, rather than as Polish-Americans or Italian-Americans, away from the peer

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Benchich, interview with author, tape recording, 7 July 1995, Detroit, Michigan.

[33] Donald Binkowski, interview by author, tape recording, 2 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan. For the spatial aspect of the Catholic parish, see John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 19-23.

pressure and the gossiping of the "old neighborhood."[34]

For a brief period in the1950s, Warren Township served as a "bedroom community" for Detroit, when the larger city's industry was still booming and its housing was scarce. The lack of affordable housing led white families to begin trickling out of the old east-side Detroit neighborhoods to occupy the new tract housing (or, in some cases, to build a house themselves) in Macomb County. They continued commuting to work in plants like Dodge Main, Ex-Cello, and Freuhauf in Detroit or Hamtramck until Detroit's big employers began closing their plants. By the mid-1970s, the list of shuttered factories included many of the city's major employers. Historian Thomas Sugrue notes that in 1960, "Detroit's East Side was devastated by the sudden loss of its manufacturing base," and manufacturing employment in the city declined from 338,400 in 1947 to 153,300 in 1977.[35]

Disinvestment, joblessness, crime, and racial tension fed on one another as the African-American population continued to push against the borders of Detroit's

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[34] For the importance of the public high school to neighborhood identification in Warren, Mark Steenberg, interview by author, tape recording, 25 February 1997, Warren, Michigan. Marilyn Donlin, interview by author, tape recording, 30 January 1997, Warren, Michigan. For the peer pressure in the old ethnic Detroit neighborhoods and the absolute importance of the parish to the neighborhood, see Paul Wrobel, *Our Way: Family, Parish, and Neighborhood in a Polish-American Community* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 39-45, 53-58. On patriotic Americanism as a solvent to ethnic and working class identity in a predominately Catholic community, compare Gary Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[35] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 149, 144, Table 5.2.

historically segregated neighborhoods.[36] One of the results, reinforced by the growth of factory employment in Macomb County, was that the trickle of migration to the suburbs turned into a flood in the 1960s. Warren's population doubled, from 89,000 in 1960 to 180,000 in 1970. White homeowners gave up their tidy brick bungalows in Detroit and succumbed to the panic spread, in part, by the city's real estate brokers.[37] Unless he sold early, the seller of the home usually lost money. As one white homeowner complained to a researcher in the early 1970s, his house would be worth $35,000 in Troy (a northern suburb of Detroit). "But because it's in the city, we got $10,000. And what really makes me angry is that we got real plaster walls, oak floors, and stained glass windows." The suburban home- builders, he noted, used plasterboard for walls and plywood for the floors. "So I'm getting ripped off. They'll take my house and sell it for $15,000. Now I'm going to have to get a big mortgage for a house in Warren, a house that is not as good as they one I just sold." But the dynamics at work in devaluing the neighborhood were impossible to fight, in his view. "What if I waited? My house would have sold for $10,000, and the one in Warren would have shot up to $40,000. So the longer I wait, the more chance I have of getting screwed. Looks like the wife will have to get a job."[38]

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[36] For the previous history race relations and housing in Detroit, in addition to Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis,* and Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality,* see David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1973); David Allen Levine, *Internal Combustion: The Races in Detroit 1915-1926* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976); Dominic Capeci, Jr., *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984);

[37] On "block busting" real estate practices in Detroit, see Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 44-46, 194-197.

[38] Quoted by Paul Wrobel, *Our Way,* 134.

The 1967 Rebellion in Detroit further alienated Warren residents from the "downtown." The smoke on the horizon was a frightening sign and it increased the apprehension of Warren's residents, especially on the south-side of the city near the Eight Mile Road boundary with Detroit. One former resident of this neighborhood remembered as a teenager watching his agitated neighbors: "I remember we were all standing on our porches. We were near Eight Mile. The people had their guns within easy reach. They had their radios on and their feeling was, 'They can burn their own city down if they want to, but they'd better not come over here.'" For several days, the Macomb County Sheriff imposed a prohibition on the sale of alcohol throughout the county. The authorities also imposed a 9:00 P.M. to 5:30 A.M. curfew in Warren and adjoining cities.[39]

The Rebellion fed the fear of racial integration among Warren's homeowners. This became apparent on the few occasions when African-Americans attempted to move into Warren. The most notable "move-in" happened just before the Detroit Rebellion. In June 1967, the Bailey family bought a house in the "Wishing Well" subdivision on the west side of Warren. Corado Bailey was a 48 year-old African-American skilled trades worker. His 49 year-old wife, Ruby, was white. They were raising two children. For several nights after they moved in, a crowd of whites, sometimes numbering as many as 200, assembled in the front yard of an adjoining house. On the fourth night, one female member of the crowd told reporters, "If this was a Negro family, there wouldn't be this kind of a disturbance. But this is a racially mixed couple. We want these people to move out

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[39] Al Benchich, interview with author, tape recording, 7 July 1995, Detroit, Michigan. *The Macomb Daily,* 25, 28 July 1967.

because our children will start believing that marriages of this type are acceptable."[40]

At various times during the next few months, unknown individuals threw rocks, eggs, and a stink bomb at the Bailey house. They cut phone lines, and poured gasoline and ignited it on the Baileys' lawn. While driving his car, Mr. Bailey was cut off and threatened. The Warren police made no arrests, although on one occasion they dispatched the "riot squad" to disperse the crowd. The Commissioner of Police, Charles L. Groesbeck, spent the better part of one night inside the house during the initial siege, while a detachment of the Michigan State Police stood in reserve. A few months later, in October 1967, someone burned a cross on the Bailey's front yard. One of the factors contributing to the crisis, according to the Director of the Pontiac Regional Office of the Civil Rights Commission, was that, "[n]o one in the community with any political, economic, or social stature . . . has ever said that the Baileys have a right to live. . . in Warren."[41]

As historian Thomas Sugrue relates, Detroit white homeowner groups felt that

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[40] "Police Quell Race Scene," *The Macomb Daily*, 14 June 1967.

[41] Memo from Don Bauder to Burton Levy, 13 November 1967. Civil Rights Commission Collection, Part 3, Box 25, Folder 116, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University (hereafter, ALUA). Memo from Don Bauder, 3 May 1972, Civil Rights Collection, Box 3, "Warren" Folder, State Archives of Michigan, Lansing, Michigan. Also see the leaflet from the local right-wing group, Breakthrough, announcing a rally at a local high school to protest integration in Warren, in the Binkowski Papers, Box 6, "Integration" Folder, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan (hereafter, Bentley Library). For newspaper accounts of the Bailey move-in, *The Detroit Free Press*, 13 June 1967; *The Macomb Daily*, 14 June 1967. Neal Shine, telephone interview by author, tape-recording, 14 July 1997. (Shine was an eye-witness to some of the mob action.) For the Bailey incident from the viewpoint of the Police Commissioner, "Charles," telephone interview by author, tape recording, 1 March 1998.

their own property rights were being violated by blacks moving into their neighborhoods. The belief that whites had the right to violently protest housing integration carried over to the white reception of the first few blacks in Warren. During the Bailey family's 1967 "move-in" to the "Wishing Well" subdivision, a member of the Executive Board of the local Homeowners' Association advised Mr. Bailey in a remarkable "public letter," that he had to "earn" the respect of his new neighbors and that his neighbors had the right to resist: "Mr. Bailey, I suggest to you that you have the right to live where you please, but you do not have the right to tell your neighbors they have to, by law, accept you. . . [T]he more attention you draw to your home and family, the more attention, may it be good or bad, you will receive." Although the Bailey family nearly gave up and was preparing to move out in the spring of 1968, they and the whites who had befriended them were still there (and still being harassed) five years later.[42]

In reporting this period of Warren's past, the historian has to face the undeniable fact of racism. It permeates the record and it changed the community. The failure to uphold the tradition of racial tolerance in Warren crippled liberalism and made the community insular and reactive. But much of the current scholarship on the crisis of liberalism oversimplifies the issue of racism. Scholars tend either to reduce the crisis to the single factor of white racism or else they go to the opposite extreme of blaming it on

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[42] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis,* 218-229. The letter from the head of the Homeowners' Association is in the Binkowski Collection, Box 6, Folder "Integration," the Bentley Library. As late as 1975, African-Americans attempting to move in to Warren were being fire-bombed. One African-American family home in Warren was firebombed on the morning of January 17, 1975, just after the husband and wife left their home in the care of their daughter to go to their jobs at the LTV Aerospace Corporation in neighboring Sterling Heights. *The Macomb Daily*, 18 January 1975.

the government's (or the Democratic Party's) failure to empathize with the racial anxieties of the white working-class. The former view oversimplifies, while the latter view condescends to whites and, at the same time, denies their measure of responsibility for the conflict-ridden quality of public life.

Denying the historical agency of working-class whites, such an interpretation requires an external force to explain the conservative realignment of communities like Warren. For Thomas and Mary Edsall, Alabama Governor George Wallace played this role. Wallace, for the Edsalls, was a sort of political magician, even more successful than Nixon in separating workers from the Democratic Party:

> Nixon's strategic contribution . . . to the politics of race and the formation of a Republican majority was less crucial. . . in forging a new conservative majority than was the contribution of George Wallace – both in terms of Wallace's assault on liberalism and in his successful effort to confer moral legitimacy upon political conservatism.[43]

According to the Edsalls, Wallace created a new symbolic language for whites threatened by civil rights, high taxes, and economic insecurity. His "new demonology" included socially privileged, flag-burning student protesters; indolent "welfare moms," and "bureaucrats in Washington." He mounted the attack on liberalism by appealing to white working-class racial prejudice and by tying it to a "populist" complaint about high taxes. "Wallace, the demagogue" thus becomes the explanation for the conservative transformation of white working-class consciousness.[44]

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[43] Edsalls, *Chain Reaction*, 76-77.

[44] Ibid., 77-79.

From a distance of twenty-five years, the "demagogue" interpretation seems persuasive, but when we look at the day-to-day life in a single community, it becomes clear that things were not so simple. While Wallace's message resonated among many white people in Warren, its power was as much a function of the level of social anxiety in Warren as of Wallace's skill as a demagogue. Wallace won over 60 percent of Warren's votes in the 1972 presidential primary election, in part because he ran as a Democrat rather than on the American Independent Party ticket, as he had in 1968. But the main condition of his popularity in Warren in 1972 was the maelstrom of anger and apprehension among the voters. As this dissertation will show, they were frustrated with the Vietnam war, resentful of federal government intervention during the 1970 HUD open-housing controversy, and, most important, they were severely agitated over the threat of cross-district busing of school children into Detroit. Their level of anxiety reached a peak in the late spring of 1972, as Federal District Judge Stephen J. Roth pondered his imminent ruling to include Warren's school districts in the cross-district busing remedy in the *Bradley v. Milliken* NAACP lawsuit over discrimination in the Detroit school system. This fatefully coincided with the 1972 Michigan presidential primary. Recognizing the opportunity that the political upheaval over busing offered, Wallace made Warren his 1972 Michigan primary campaign headquarters. He gave speeches against busing and the anti-busing organizations supported his nomination. But Wallace was a creature of this controversy rather than its author.[45]

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[45] On George Wallace, see Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

The need to examine the crisis of liberalism by looking at the interaction between race, class, and gender consciousness (as well as national, ethnic and religious sensibilities) suggests the usefulness of conducting a local study. By narrowing our focus to one community (as well as the federal and state policies toward this community), we can better describe the complex pressures that produced the "Reagan Democrat."

Reduced to essentials, the hypothesis of this study is that a specific set of controversies altered the political climate of opinion in Warren and facilitated the spread of anti-liberal consciousness, resulting in fewer votes for Democratic candidates. To make the case, we must first describe Warren's voting behavior from the 1960s through the mid-1980s. Chart 1.4 shows the trend in Warren's support for Democratic presidential candidates. Support for the Democratic Party declined from 1964 to 1972, rebounded from 1974 to 1976, in the wake of the Watergate scandal, and then resumed the decline through the 1984 election. The overall trend was one of reduced support for the Democratic Party. The percentage support for Democratic candidates for President in Warren dropped from 77 percent in 1964 to 35 percent in 1972, followed by the second decline from 50 percent in 1976 to 35 percent in 1984. This decline was part of the longer term trend of Warren's Democratic presidential vote from 69 percent in 1960 to 51 percent in 1992. Compared to the national Democratic vote for President, Warren's vote for the Democratic candidates displayed greater volatility and a more pronounced overall decline.[46]

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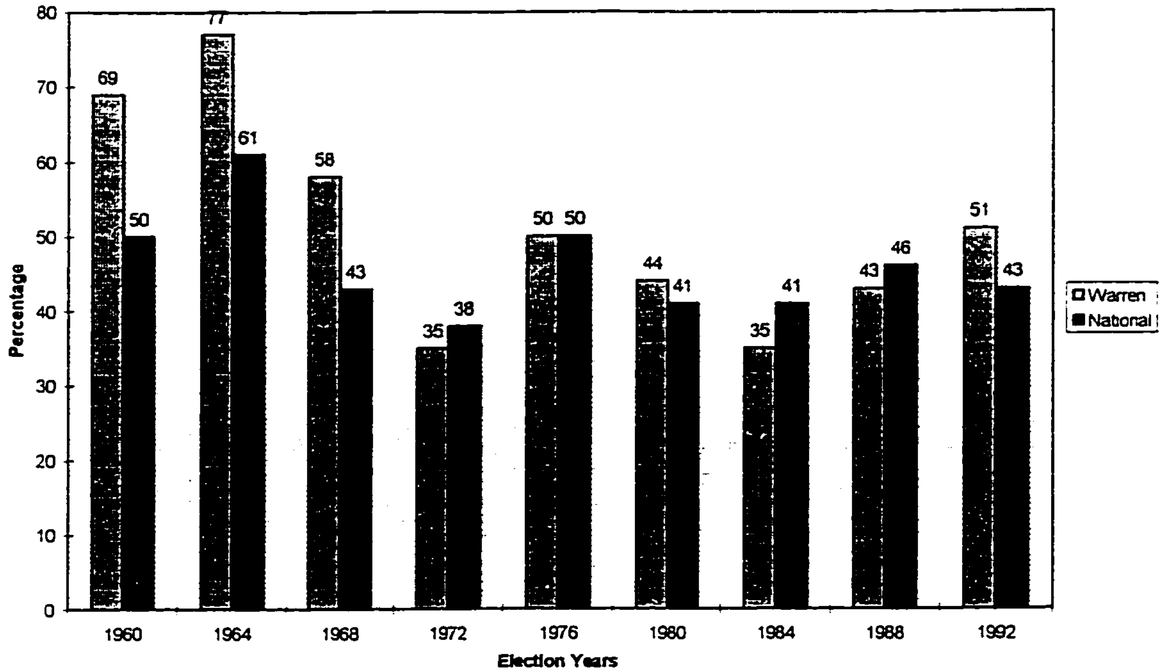
[46] Unless otherwise noted, voting data in the following pages comes from the Macomb County Clerk, Office of Elections, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. In order to facilitate comparison in Warren voters' party preference, I covered elections for offices which a) were partisan; b) spanned the whole of Warren; and c) spanned the whole time-frame from

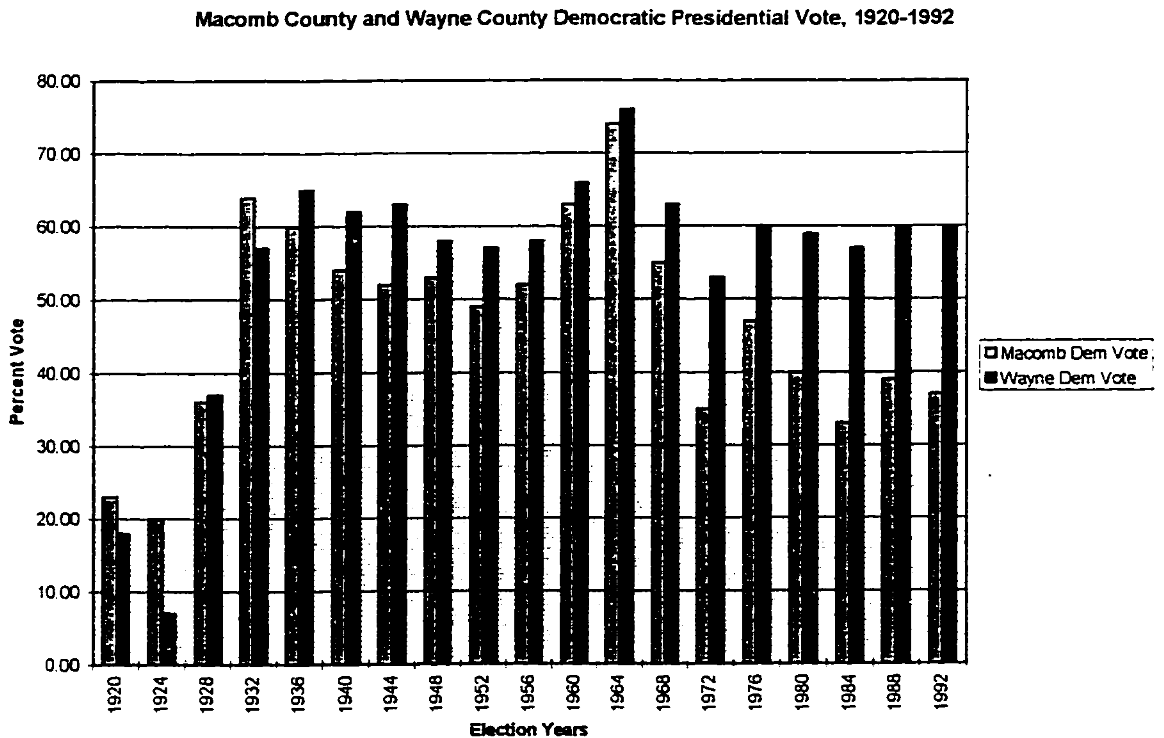
Chart 1.4



Since Warren did not incorporate until 1957, we can use the Macomb County presidential vote for a longer range view of east-side suburban voting behavior. (See Chart 1.5.) This shows the 1964 election to be the high point in Democratic Party support from 1920 to 1992. Comparing Macomb County and Wayne County long-range voting trends shows a divergence between the two counties dating back to 1936. After 1968, the Macomb County support for the Democratic Party presidential candidate sank to under 50 percent, whereas Wayne County maintained Democratic Party loyalty at a consistently higher level approaching 60 percent. (Chart 1.5)

1964 to 1984. Thus, I did not cover races for the office of Mayor of Warren, a non-partisan position; I also omitted elections for State Representative and State Senator, whose districts included only portions of Warren; and I ignored elections for County Commissioner, an office which was redistricted in 1970, midway through the series.

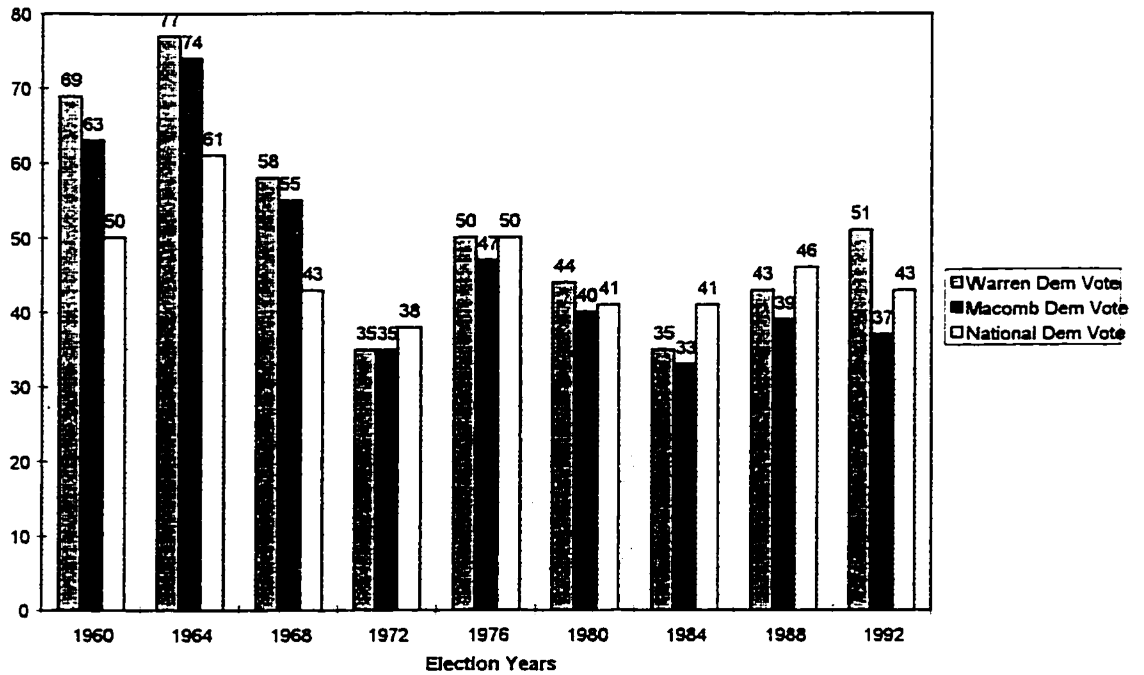
Chart 1.5[47]



From 1960 to 1992, Warren voted more Democratic than did Macomb County. That gap between Warren and Macomb County has gotten larger in recent years. In 1992, the county gave Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton only 37 percent of the vote, in contrast to Warren voters, with a 51 percent vote for Clinton. (See Chart 1.6.)

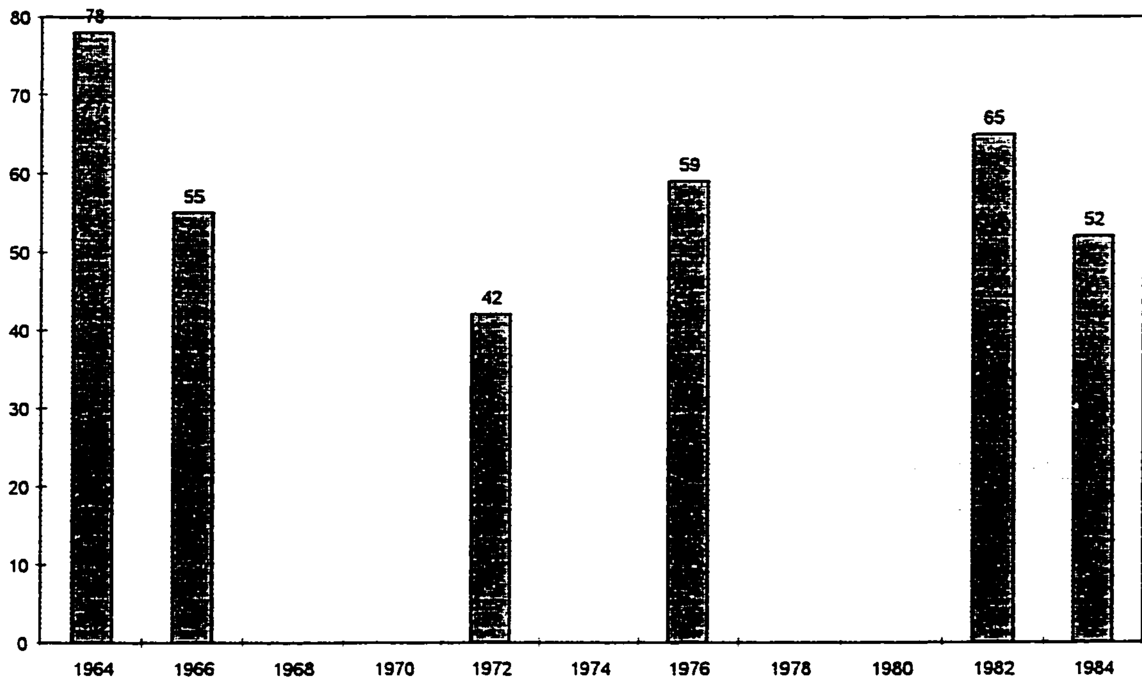
[47] Data for this chart is from *America at the Polls: A Handbook of American Presidential Elections, Congressional Quarterly* Vol. 1, 1920-1956; Vol. 2, 1956-1992.

Chart 1.6



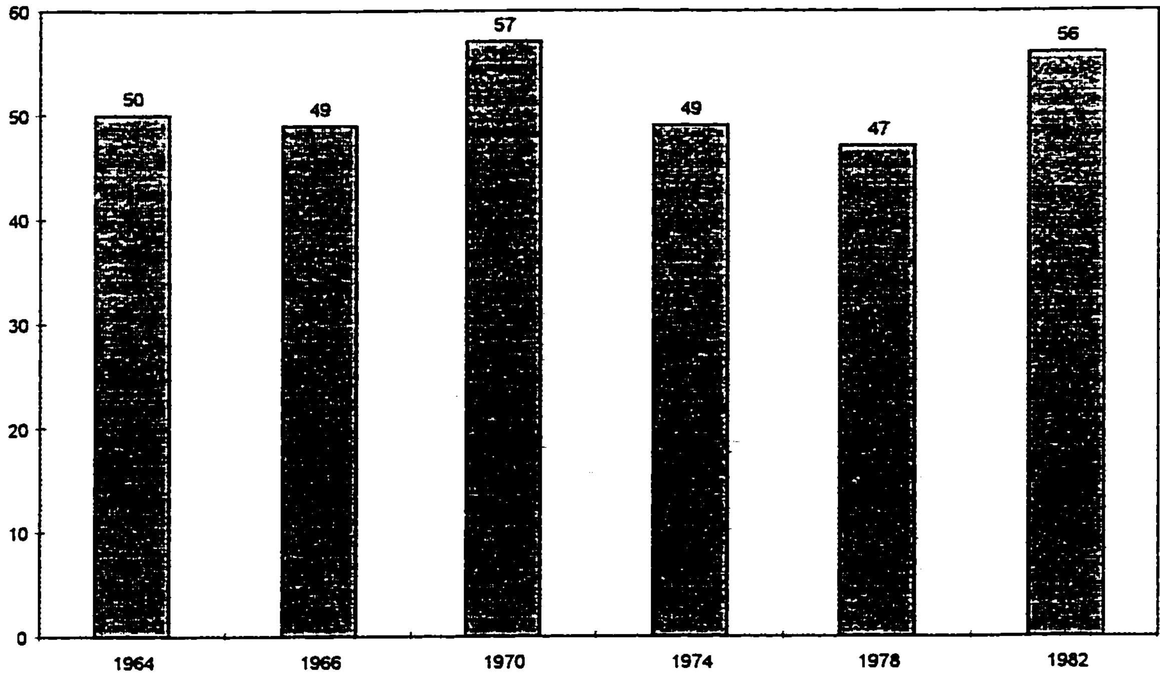
This overall pattern of two receding waves of support for the Democratic candidates between 1964 and 1984 is evident in the other races. The race for U.S. Senator (Chart 1.7) roughly follows the same pattern.

Chart 1.7



The willingness of Warren voters to stray into Republican columns first became apparent in the Governor's race, although Democratic gubernatorial candidates retained a solid core of support throughout this period. Auto executive George Romney received 50 percent of Warren's vote in 1964, when he was the Republican candidate for governor. When President Nixon brought Romney to Washington to head the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1969, the little-known Lieutenant Governor, William Milliken, took over as Governor. Though Warren voted against him a few months later in his first run for Governor, Milliken's conciliatory style came to be appreciated in Warren, as in the rest of the state, and he improved his standing with Warren voters throughout

CHART 1.8

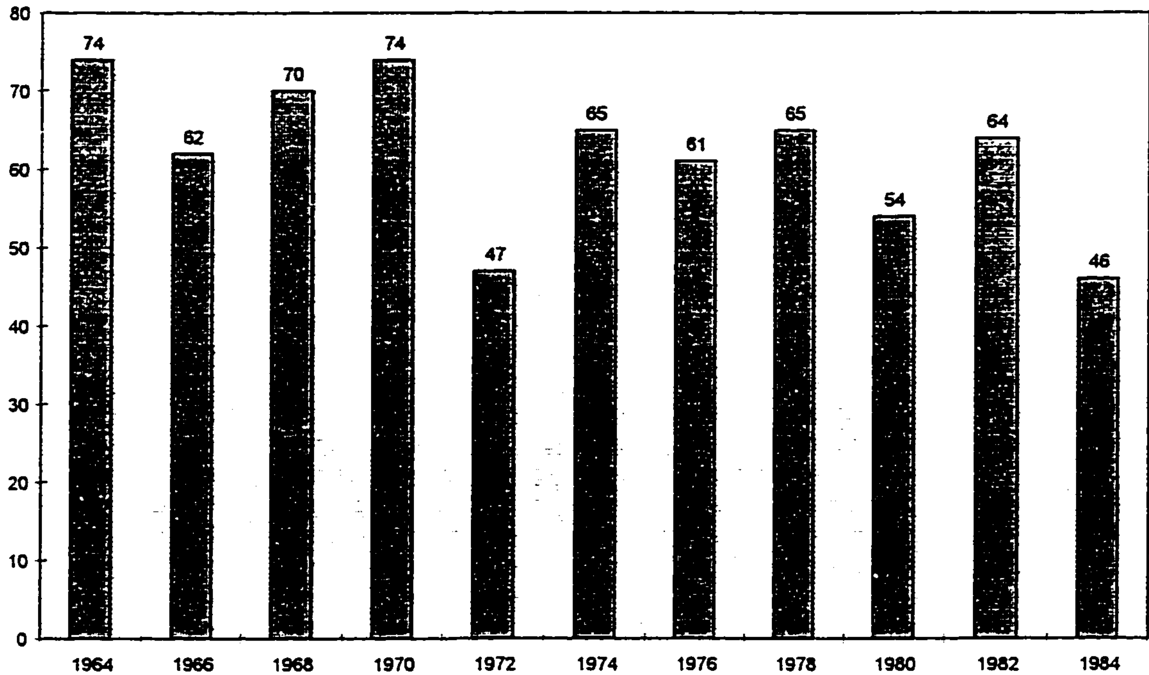


the 1970s. (See Chart 1.8.)[48]

To examine this more closely, the State Board of Education vote is a useful index of party loyalty because of the relative anonymity of the candidates. This race has the advantage of occurring every two years, providing a regular measure of voter behavior, one that follows the general trend of decline noted above. In three of the five Board of Education elections between1964 and 1972, the Democratic Party received between 70

[48] The voting pattern for the office of governor is uniquely stable. The reasons for the strength of Republican support and for the stability of voting blocs have to do with the history of fierce party battles over this office and the powerful personalities who occupied the governor's chair, like G. Mennen Williams (Democrat, 1948-60) and George Romney (Republican, 1962-69). According to Dudley Buffa, party rivalry in Michigan from the New Deal onwards was shaped by the underlying struggle between the automobile companies and the UAW-CIO. Dudley Buffa, *Union Power, Vol I*, 26-73.

CHART 1.9

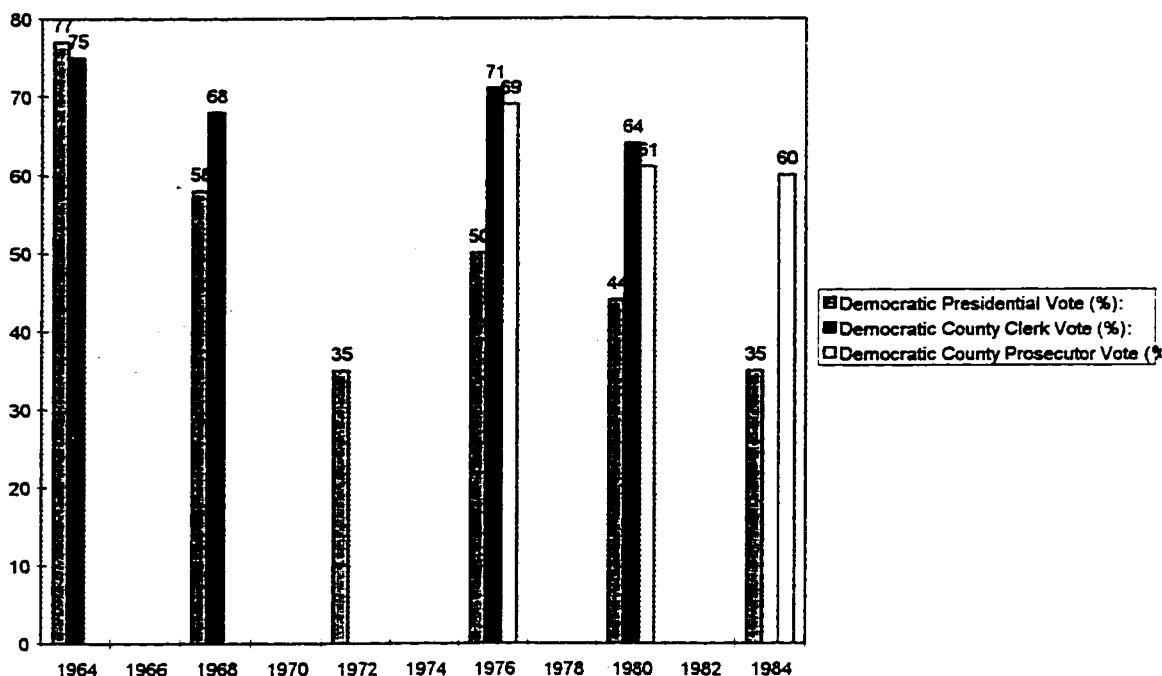


and 74 percent support. This initial wave of support, interestingly, did not "ebb." It declined to 62 percent in 1966 but then rebounded to 70 percent in 1968 and 74 percent in 1970. Then, in 1972, the Democratic vote in the State Board of Education race collapsed to 47 percent, the first election since Warren's 1957 incorporation in which less than half of the voters supported the Democratic Party. From 1974 to 1984, the Democrats generally received less support than they had enjoyed during the earlier period and they ended up with a new low (46 percent) in 1984. (Chart 1.9)

Within the declining Democratic Party vote, certain trends are evident. For one thing, Warren's voting in national races, especially the presidential race, is more volatile than the vote for local offices.(Chart 1.10) This trend may be explained by the greater use of political advertising and the resulting importance of the candidates' images in

presidential races, in contrast to the lower profile character of local office. As long as the Democratic county clerks or prosecutors did their job, they were relatively immune to national decline in Democratic support.

CHART 1.10



Breaking the vote down to the precinct level allows a closer look at Warren's political history.[49] The 1970 precinct map in Appendix A shows the highest 20 percent of precinct support for the Democratic Party in the State Board of Education race. This map suggests that the city's southern third (the earliest of Warren's post-war suburban settlement) was a Democratic Party stronghold. This north-south voting polarity is

[49] Using a similar methodology, Gerald Gamm correlated census data with precinct votes to describe the ethnic aspect of New Deal politics in Boston. *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 203-213.

common to all the partisan races for the period under study. A survey conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Warren in 1969 described a north-south polarity in socio-economic characteristics. The south-east corner of Warren reported significantly lower household income and fewer years of formal education. percentage of participation in civic or religious organizations. The survey also discovered that the southeast quadrant reported the lowest percentage of participation in civic or religious organizations. [50]

Grouping voting precincts into the somewhat larger census tracts and ranking the combined Democratic votes in these census tracts allows us to establish correlation between the vote and selected census data. The results are displayed in Table 1.2.[51] It shows that in 1966, four categories of census data had greater than ±.5 correlation (out of a possible ± 1.0). The strongest correlation with voting behavior were median household income (-0.80) and blue collar occupations (0.84). This means that in 1966, for instance, voters in census tracts with higher median incomes tended not to vote Democratic, whereas those in census tracts with high concentrations of blue collar workers tended to vote Democratic. Two other categories of census data (which could be considered

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[50] Warren Michigan Community Renewal Program, "Community Attitude Survey," (Mishawaka, Indiana: City Planning Associates, Inc., March 1970), 4-6, Table B-4.

[51] Appendix B describes the way Table 1.2 was constructed. Thanks to Professor Mary Herring of the Political Science Department at Wayne State University for showing me how to juxtapose precinct and census data. Any mistakes are my own. For census data, I consulted the *U.S. Department of Commerce Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960 Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan; the 1970 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan; the 1980 Census of Population and Housing Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan;* and the *1990 Census of Population and Housing; Characteristics for Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas: Detroit-Ann Arbor, Michigan, Sections 1 and 2.*

TABLE 1.2

Correlation of Percentage Democratic Vote with Socio-Economic Characteristics*								
	Median Household Income	Unemployment rate of males over 16	Percent foreign-born	Percent moved from Detroit in last 5 years	Median Age	Percent Divorced	Percent blue-collar job	Percent units occupied by renters
1966 n = 11 **	-.80	.59	-.36	-.26	.16	.60	.84	.08
1968 n = 11	-.78	.56	-.35	-.24	.21	.61	.81	.19
1970 n = 30	-.78	.55	-.39	-.25	.10	.61	.77	.14
1972 n=30	-65	.55	-.37	-.60	.18	.60	.58	
1976 n = 30	-.60	.63	-.45	-.02	-.54	.52	.75	.14
1980 n = 43	-.49	.56	-.38	-.08	-.43	.40	.64	.08
1984 n = 43	-.54	.49	-.36	.03	-.31	.38	.55	.17

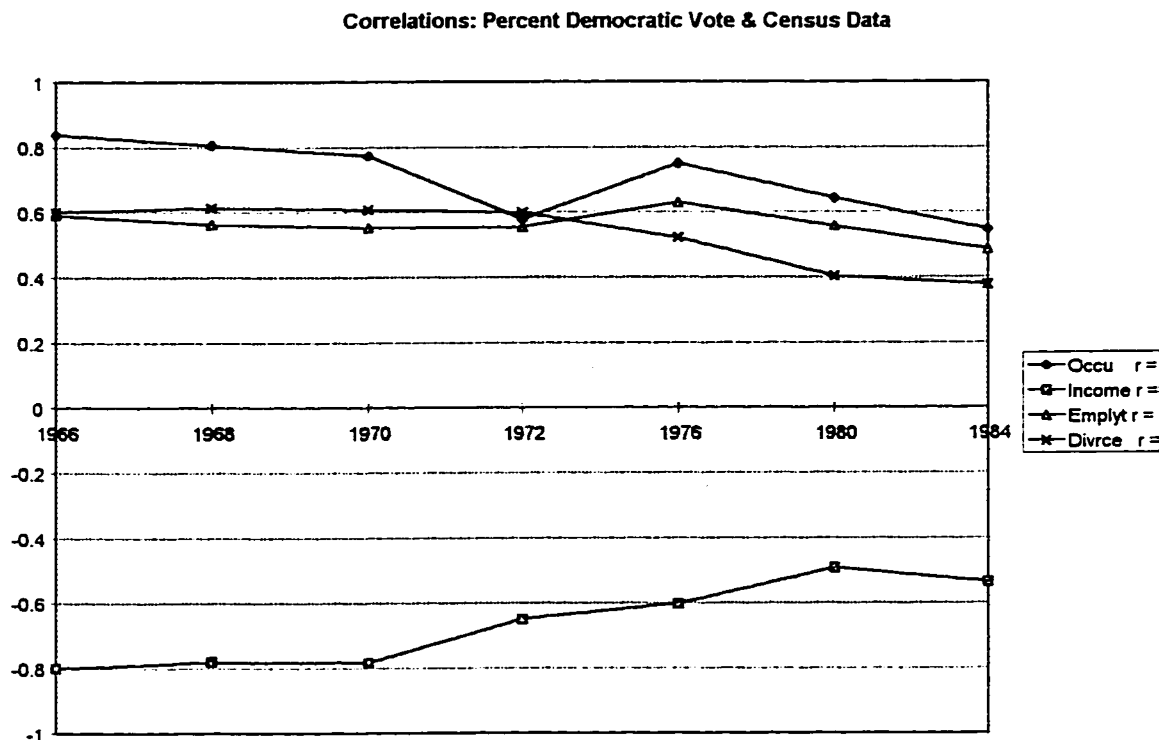
* Absentee Counting Boards are not included.
** n = number of census tracts

indexes of social stress) – unemployment and divorce rate – also tend to correlate positively, though less strongly, with Democratic voting behavior. Thus, voter behavior between 1966 and 1970 appears to be strongly associated with social class. (Chart 1.11)

Finally, Chart 1.11 describes another interesting trend. From 1970 until 1984, the correlation *decreased* between Democratic Party voting behavior and blue-collar social class indicators. In 1966, the two best predictors of Democratic Party voting loyalty were household income and blue-collar occupational status. By 1984, the correlation declined

respectively from -.80 to -.53 and from .83 to .54.[52] These statistics describe a decline in Democratic Party loyalty among Warren's working-class voters.

CHART 1.11



These correlations and voting trend charts confirm what Stanley Greenberg's focus groups told him. The level of confidence in the Democratic Party among working-class voters was in decline in Macomb County (and Warren) from 1964 to 1984. How did this happen? The rest of this study will try to answer that question.

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[52] Note the absence of 1974, 1978, and 1982 from the chart. The precinct maps are missing. It makes the lines appear steeper than they should.

Chapter 2

The 1970 H.U.D. Controversy in Warren

On the night of November 12, 1969, a bomb exploded in the garage of the Gyurkovics family of Warren, Michigan. The family had recently put their house up for sale through an African-American Realtor in adjoining Detroit. The police suspected that the motive for the bombing was "racial fear," although no black couples had viewed the property and, according to the newspaper report, the Realtor had promised not to sell to blacks. Although there were no injuries, the husband, a former Hungarian freedom fighter, complained, "We are afraid to live in this neighborhood." One neighbor, when asked if he would mind living next to a black family, said, "I lived with them almost 20 years in the old neighborhood. What difference would it make, if I was against them or not. They have the law on their side."[1]

Such was the state of race relations in Warren in the late 1960s. Race was a divisive and emotional issue, but, with the exception of the real estate agent, the only black people in the story were in the memories or the anxious expectations of Warren's white residents. "The law" was on the side of the blacks in the view of many of these residents. The civil rights legislation of the mid-1960s bore this out. But that did not prevent the bombing, nor did it lead to the solution of the crime.[2] With the exception of the liberals who favored housing integration and the individuals who planted bombs to prevent it, the common

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[1] *The Macomb Daily,* 15 November 1969.

[2] The Police investigation appeared to have developed at least one strong suspect although no arrest was reported. The investigation also uncovered rumors that the Gyurkovics were known "blockbusters" who had threatened to "sell to niggers." Warren Police Department Complaint No. 699-33924.

attitude regarding integration in Warren and in Macomb County was one of passive, if sullen, fatalism.

Then a review of Warren's application for urban renewal funds brought federal housing officials into contact with Warren's political leadership. During the winter and spring of 1969-1970, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) attempted to pressure Warren to adopt a policy of "open housing." The issue exploded, with local politicians running for office on the strength of their declarations in opposition to "government coercion" and "forced integration." For the better part of a year, Warren was embroiled in bitter controversy. At one point, a councilman complained that the issue had brought chaos to the workings of city government. The controversy ended in November 1970, when, in a city-wide referendum, Warren voters directed the city council to withdraw its application for HUD urban renewal grants. The national media covered the referendum and reported on an earlier raucous protest demonstration when HUD Secretary George Romney came to town to make the case for open housing. This was Warren's first taste of notoriety.[3]

The Warren HUD controversy unfolded on local, state, and national levels of government. The story is interesting for a number of reasons. For one thing, Warren's residents were not in the habit of turning down federal money. Nor were they ignorant of

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[3] "Michiganites Jeer Romney Over Suburbs' Integration," *The New York Times*, 29 July 1970 and "HUD Tests Integration Drive in Mich.," *The Washington Post*, 27 July 1970 are representative of national press coverage of the HUD controversy. The 1970 HUD controversy in Warren is little studied. Joe Darden, Richard Child Hill, June Thomas, and Richard Thomas, devote a few pages to it in their *Race and Uneven Development*, 140-144. Samuel Kaplan mentions the controversy in *The Dream Deferred: People, Politics, and Planning in Suburbia* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976): 119-126.

federal programs. But the federal rules were changing. The controversy became part of the wide-ranging debate over the proper role of the federal government in enforcing civil rights policy in local communities. The federal housing policy part of this debate involved the clash between President Richard Nixon and HUD Secretary George Romney.

George Romney was never Richard Nixon's favorite cabinet appointee. He had been Nixon's chief rival for the Republican presidential nomination. In fact, he had been the front-runner for the nomination until his famous gaff on being "brain-washed" by the military and the State Department during a campaign trip to Vietnam. Some historians believe that Nixon installed him as HUD Secretary as a signal to liberals of both parties that Lyndon Johnson's social programs were not under imminent attack. Others hold that Nixon picked Romney to prove his commitment to an "open administration," in which his cabinet heads and advisers would "not have to check their consciences at the door" and could speak freely. But Romney spoke too freely. In cabinet meetings he criticized policies that Nixon favored, such as terminating the Model Cities program. When Nixon suspended regular meetings of the cabinet, Romney organized a short-lived series of breakfast meetings of other cabinet members in March 1971 to discuss economic policy. Disillusioned with the cabinet approach to policy, Nixon had already turned to an inner circle of advisers who shared his views. Among this shifting cast of political "outsiders" were Daniel Patrick Moynihan, John Connally, or Henry Kissinger – academics or Democrats to whom Nixon turned for strategic insight; others were "insiders" either owed political favors or trusted to accomplish the details of administration policy. Romney was outside the loop. Nixon repeatedly bruited his intention to fire him (just as he had fired Interior Secretary Walter Hickel and forced the resignation of HEW Civil Rights chief,

Leon Panneta); but when Romney gave notice that he would make his dismissal a public issue, Nixon kept him on until his second term.[4]

The tension between Romney and Nixon went deeper than turf war or personality clash. George Romney was a member of a vanishing breed: the progressive Republican motivated by moral concerns and willing to use the power of the federal government to accomplish social reform. As former Chief Executive Officer of American Motors, his effectiveness as a businessman rested not only on his considerable personal magnetism, but also on his willingness to listen to subordinates and to incorporate their ideas into policy. He brought the same eclectic entrepreneurial spirit to government. He believed that society was heading, not only towards greater prosperity, but towards the eradication of social problems like racial segregation. Romney was intent on moving the civil rights agenda forward. Part of his commitment was ethical. His Mormon upbringing taught him the moral aspect of political leadership. Part was urged on him by the people who worked at HUD. He inherited a department, formed during the Johnson administration, whose ranks were sprinkled with idealistic young Democrats. Onto this body he grafted a handful of his own cadre – forward-looking Republican advisers who had served him when he was Governor of Michigan. Finally, part of his commitment to civil rights was pragmatic in the sense that he felt that black people would accept nothing less than a society which guaranteed them equality of opportunity. His recent experience as

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[4] Richard W. Waterman, *Presidential Influence and the Administrative State* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Boooks, 1994), 56-57; John Erlichman, *Witness to Power: the Nixon Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 104-110; Richard P. Nathan, *The Plot that Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency* (New York: Wiley, 1975), 39-45.

Governor of Michigan during the Detroit Rebellion of 1967 convinced him of the seriousness of racial divisions in society.[5]

Romney's success as an automobile executive gave him an optimistic, "can do" attitude to virtually any problem – from providing housing to a nation with an aging and inadequate housing stock to the challenge of "keeping the lid on" the inner cities. Romney's optimism plus his personal energy made him an ideal "salesman" for his policies. One example of this was his vigorous attempt to promote "Operation Breakthrough," the housing production offensive of his early months as HUD Secretary. The program, announced in May 1969, was to be a mass production solution to the housing crisis. Although it included some low and moderate income housing, it was not primarily a poor peoples' program. Romney worked hard lining up support among mayors and governors and haggling with the construction trades over work rules for industrialized housing. One reporter, impressed with his salesmanship, noted that the program's success was predicated on the "messianic nature of Romney's approach" to the local communities. The fact that his enthusiasm was not always sufficient to win the day is illustrated in the fate of Operation Breakthrough. Within a year, it bogged down over the demonstration communities' growing fears of "racial and economic integration."[6]

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[5] None of the biographies of Romney is adequate. These impressions of Romney's personality are gleaned from tape-recorded telephone interviews conducted by the author with Edward M. Levin, 16 March 1996; Mary Ann Taranowski, 24 March 1996; and with Charles Orlebeke, 23 March 1996. All worked for HUD, Levin and Taranowski in the Chicago regional office and Orlebeke in the HUD Washington headquarters. Orlebeke also worked on Romney's gubernatorial staff.

Richard Nixon's views on social problems are more problematic. Many of his biographers note his pessimistic view of human nature and of the ultimate worth of government social programs. But Nixon's motives are hard to discern. Scholars argue over his true feelings about civil rights. Historian Joan Hoff believes that Nixon's record was better than any of the political opponents that he ran against, with the exception of Hubert Humphrey. Black civil rights leaders, on the other hand, are skeptical. Both Vernon Jordan of the Urban League and James Farmer, formerly of CORE, thought that Nixon's stand on civil rights was a matter of political calculation. Farmer said, "[Nixon] had no strong feelings on any social issues. . . He was capable of doing either good or bad with equal facility. He made decisions based on politics, not right or wrong."[7]

Nixon's election in 1968 caused many who counted themselves friends of civil rights both inside and outside of government to wonder whether Lyndon Johnson's initiatives in fighting discrimination would be continued. Speculation centered on Nixon's cabinet appointments. Depending on whether jobs, housing, or education were seen as key to unlocking the mechanism of institutional racism, civil rights advocates turned to the Labor Department, HUD, or to the Health, Education, and Welfare Department (HEW). Nixon's Labor Department deployed programs to train and employ African-Americans on federal contracts. With the "Philadelphia Plan," Nixon and Vice President Agnew promoted affirmative action to increase the percentage of blacks in the building trades.

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[6] On Operation Breakthrough, see William Lilley III, "Romney Lines up HUD money programs to back Operation Breakthrough Housing Push," *National Journal*, 31 January 1970, 232-241.

[7] Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 78. James Farmer quoted in Lemann, *Promised Land*, 203.

The Small Business Administration tried to do the same for black small business owners under the slogan of "black capitalism." HEW funded a cornucopia of programs, but the administrative shortcomings of HEW Secretary Robert Finch, Nixon's old friend from California, plus the fact that the President himself was changing his views on some of these programs, blunted HEW as a means of forwarding the cause of racial equality.[8]

Some civil rights activists saw in HUD a more likely instrument for ending segregation. The National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH), a coalition of fifty national religious, labor and civil rights affiliates and an annual budget of $800,000, was the main umbrella group for coordinating civil rights pressure on the housing question. NCDH demanded that the federal government go beyond the narrow construction of the law and bring decisive force to bear against discrimination in housing, using the leverage of federal grants to create suburban housing for blacks.[9]

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[8] On the apprehensions of civil rights supporters after Nixon's election, see Leon Panetta and Peter Gall, *Bring Us Together: the Nixon Team and the Civil Rights Retreat* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1971), 4-13, 59-69. On the Philadelphia Plan and Small Business set-asides for minorities, see Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered*, 90-97. For a policy analysis of Nixon's jobs programs, see Margaret Weir, *Politics and Jobs: The Boundaries of Employment Policy in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 99-123. On HEW and Finch, see Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered*, 77-144. For an overview of Nixon's civil rights policies, Hugh Davis Graham, *Civil Rights and the Presidency: Race and Gender in American Politics, 1960-1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[9] The NCDH urgently pressed its case by pointing out that the segregated northern slums that had housed black migrants from the south in the 1940s were being abandoned and even burned down in the 1960s, as the children of these migrants rejected the ghetto as the answer to their demands for better housing. Another source of liberal pressure on HUD was the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, which urged HUD to adopt a more activist posture in desegregating housing. In the spring of 1970, the Staff Director of the Commission, Howard Glickstein, authored a report criticizing HUD's past practice on civil rights. The report charged that HUD "has barely begun to use the variety of available enforcement techniques and strategies at its command" to require compliance with the

For these activists, and for those who worked on the staffs of the War on Poverty programs and were inspired by the civil rights movement in the South, the question boiled down to: how could racism be dispelled as long as blacks and whites lived in different worlds? Thus, as Secretary of HUD, George Romney had to deal not only with the crisis in the availability of housing, but also with the question of fair housing. How should HUD interpret its mandate under the laws – Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act (also called the Fair Housing Act). The 1964 Civil Rights Act guaranteed the right of civil action against housing discrimination. But relying on aggrieved individuals to police housing discrimination presumed both a knowledge of the law and the legal connections that the poor lacked. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act also gave the government the power to deny federal funds to local communities that failed to provide housing for black and poor people. Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act directed all federal agencies and departments to cooperate with HUD "affirmatively to further" fair housing polices.[10]

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law. It urged HUD to expand the definition of fair housing policy. Rather than limiting itself to serving as a complaint center for housing discrimination, it should develop programs to assure non-discriminatory housing policies throughout the metropolitan areas. "Draft Report on Civil Rights Efforts at HUD," Box 4, "Civil Rights" Folder, Romney Post-gubernatorial Collection, Bentley Library. On the lobbying efforts of the NCDH, see Michael Danielson, *The Politics of Exclusion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 114-116, 212. For evidence of NCDH's attempts to coordinate grass roots organizing for open housing, see Rose Kleinman Collection, Box 5, Folder 5-8, ALUA.

[10] The relevant legislation is Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964,* Title VIII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1968,* and, on the state level, the *Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1976*, PA 453. On the political attitudes of HUD staff, Mary Ann Taranowski, telephone interview by author, 24 March 1996, tape-recording. On fair housing provisions of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, Danielson, *The Politics of Exclusion,* 212-213, 219-220; William Lilley III, "Romney Faces Political Perils With Plan to Integrate Suburbs," *National Journal*, 17 October 1970, 2252.

HUD administrators also worried about the unintended consequences of housing policy. One unwelcome outcome was getting sued. Between 1967 and 1969 several law suits charged federal, state, or municipal levels of government with using federal funds to perpetuate housing segregation. A 1969 ruling by a U.S. District Court, in *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority,* found the CHA guilty of a "deliberate policy to separate the races" in its site- and tenant-selection procedures in public housing. In short, by building housing projects in the black part of Chicago the CHA was held guilty of maintaining segregated housing patterns.[11]

Concern over further "ghettoizing" black housing by building projects in the inner cities led to the strategy of "dispersal" advocated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the head of Nixon's Domestic Policy Council. Moynihan, the most prominent Democrat in Nixon's entourage, had long criticized the War of Poverty for "gilding the ghetto" with ill-conceived and poorly administered federal programs. Instead, Moynihan argued, both the people in the ghetto and the federal money that was flowing into it should be dispersed throughout the metropolis.[12]

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[11]William Whitbeck to George Romney, memorandum, 19 May 1970, in Romney Post-gubernatorial Collection, Box 12, "Tenant and Site Selection Policies" Folder, Bentley Library. "Site Selection Policy for Housing Assisted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development," Romney Post-gubernatorial Collection, Box 12, "Tenant and Site Selection Policies" Folder, Bentley Library. On the *Gautreaux* cases, Vernarelli, Michael J., "Where Should HUD Locate Assisted Housing," in John M. Goering, ed., *Housing Desegregation and Federal Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 214-218. R. Allen Hays, *The Federal Government and Urban Housing: Ideology and Changes in Public Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 32; Lemann, *Promised Land,* 233.

[12]Moynihan held that "efforts to improve the conditions of life in the present caste-created slums must never take precedence over efforts to enable the slum population

Romney seems to have been favorably disposed to the dispersal strategy. In May 1970, a memo circulated inside HUD calling for a "clear statement of the Administration's urban policy." The memo, authored by a subordinate, declared that Nixon should break with Democratic Party urban policies which ignored the relationships between the "core city and suburbs." These outmoded policies determined the organizational structure that Romney inherited at HUD, a structure which "separated program elements serving the suburbs and those serving the cities into distinct units." Instead, the memo urged Nixon to adopt a housing policy which addressed the twin problems that "the poor and black can't live near suburban jobs because they can't find suburban housing," while "the middle income white is increasingly unwilling to live in the central city because of its physical and social deterioration."[13]

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to disperse throughout the metropolitan areas. . ." Moynihan quoted in Lilley III, "Romney Faces Political Perils," 2253. In his 1970 article, "Toward a National Urban Policy," Moynihan noted the beginning of black migration to the suburbs. "This process is to be encouraged in every way, especially by the maintenance of a flexible and open housing market." This liberal consensus that something had to be done about housing segregation received additional support in July 1970, when the White House released a report completed by a panel on urban renewal headed by Washington economist Miles L. Colean. The Colean report recommended, among other things, that federal aid be withheld from communities that resisted federal low-income housing, in order "to break the suburban barrier around the central cities." See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Toward a National Urban Policy," in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed., *Toward a National Urban Policy* (New York: Basic Books,, 1970), 3-25. Also, Danielson, *Politics of Exclusion*: 218. For Moynihan's impact on Nixon's domestic policies, Lemann, *Promised Land*, 202-218. For the Colean Report, *The New York Times*, 23 July 1970. For the dispersal strategy, Anthony Downs, *Opening Up the Suburbs: An Urban Strategy for America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

[13]According to the HUD memo, cutting this Gordian knot would involve "opening up the suburbs and outlying portions of central cities to new low and moderate income housing." It would require "giving priority in the allocation of federal resources to those suburban jurisdictions which do make housing opportunity available to low income and minority families" and removing the obstacles to low-income urban renewal projects posed

For Romney, the task in juggling these policy considerations was further complicated by the bureaucratic culture of HUD. Hatched in 1965 as a sort of two-headed monster, the Department of Housing and Urban Development was not yet four years old when Nixon became President. One side contained older programs such as the Federal Housing administration, which had been guilty of facilitating housing discrimination from the 1930s to the 1950s. The staff of these programs tended to be older. They defined their tasks in terms of overseeing the nation's housing stock. The other side of HUD comprised newer programs like Model Cities. The staff of these programs were younger and more liberal. With nearly 14,000 employees, HUD was a big department for one so young. Its Chicago regional office, one of five regional offices in the nation, employed 500 people in the central office, with 1500 people reporting to it from around the Midwest. It administered 90 different programs, from supervising FHA-insured and government subsidized mortgages for housing construction and rehabilitation to assessing housing needs throughout the region.[14]

Francis Fisher had taken the job as Regional Administrator of the Chicago HUD office in 1967. A career civil servant, Fisher's last job had been in Bogota, Colombia with the Agency for International Development (AID). Fisher was a Democrat from an old

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by local zoning powers. At a July 1970 retreat for his national staff held at Camp David, Romney incorporated the operational language of this memo into HUD's policy and legislative proposals. For the HUD memo on suburban strategy, see Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 12, Folder "Urban Affairs Council," Bentley Library. For the Camp David retreat papers, Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 28, Folder "Staff Meeting Camp David, July 7, 1970," the Bentley Library.

[14]On the bureaucratic culture of HUD, Danielson, *The Politics of Exclusion,* 203-204. Francis Fisher, telephone interviews by author, tape recording, 31 March 1996 and 18 August 1996.

Republican family in Winnetka, Illinois. His grandfather had been Secretary of the Interior under President Taft. His father, also a Republican Progressive, helped to found the American Civil Liberties Union and was appointed Chairman of the Illinois Public Service Commission by the state's Democratic Governor, Adlai Stevenson.[15]

Faced with the problems of program duplication and the dissonant organizational cultures of this hybrid department, Fisher decided to centralize authority and rationalize procedure by creating a new position: the HUD Representative. The "HUD Rep" was supposed to take stock of the housing needs of a given city and to represent HUD and all of its programs to the city administration. The HUD Rep was also charged with maintaining "the annual arrangement" – an informal contract which summarized the mutual obligations between the Chicago office and its client cities. The annual arrangement was meant to introduce coherence and discipline into the relations between the cities and HUD by using the leverage of the Department's allocation of funds to require local compliance with federal policy (such as non-discrimination in housing). As Charles Orlebeke, Special Assistant to Romney at HUD, remembered it,

> There was an understanding here, that the city in question would get certain things, but they'd have to behave in way the federal government thought you ought to behave. . . This was an innovation, because prior to that, programs were always operated by separate bureaucracies. . . It introduced the element of leverage with local government.[16]

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[15] Francis Fisher, telephone interviews by author, tape recording, 31 March 1996 and 18 August 1996.

[16] Edward M. Levin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 16 March 1996. Mary Ann Taranowski, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 24 March 1996. Francis Fisher, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 31 March 1996. Francis Fisher, letter to author, 4 July 1996. Quote taken from Charles Orlebeke, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 23 March 1996.

By 1969, under pressure of lawsuits and lobbying from liberals and in light of the new administration's seeming continued support for desegregation, the Chicago HUD office was pulling itself together under Francis Fisher's leadership to make sure that federal policy was consistent and coherent on the local level.[17] That year, the Chicago HUD office considered Warren, Michigan's application for $2.8 million in urban renewal funds for 1970. It was precisely in the matter of bringing its programs into line with the federal government's commitment to desegregation that Warren impressed Fisher's staff as a community where HUD might do some good.[18] Neither Fisher, his boss, Romney, nor Romney's boss, Nixon, knew that within a year, events in Warren would push them all

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[17] As an administrator, Francis Fisher tried not to let the rules get in the way of achieving results. As he became familiar with his job, he realized that Chicago happened to be a regional center, not only of HUD, but also of HEW, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the War on Poverty, and the Department of Labor. Fisher took the initiative of calling regular meetings of these regional administrators so that they might coordinate their efforts. The group called itself the "Federal Regional Council." Fisher recalled the irony of having to go outside of regular channels to enhance efficiency in making programs conform to policy: "So the four of us guys just said, 'Look, let's just start meeting. We don't need any authority from Washington, we'll just coordinate. If I'm approving the Plumbers' Union in Cincinnati for having enough black plumbers to build public housing it doesn't make any sense for HEW across the street to decide that they don't have enough black plumbers to authorize building a hospital. So we'll each rely on each other's investigators. We'll cover twice the space and, because it affects all of our programs, we'll have twice the influence.' . . . That attracted the attention of the Office of Management and Budget and they liked it. . .They got very excited about it." Francis Fisher, telephone interviews by author, tape recording, 31 March 1996 and 28 August 1996.

[18] Eddie McGloin, who worked for the FHA section of HUD in Detroit, recalled a conversation with Edward Levin, in which he offered the advice that HUD target Dearborn, rather than Warren. McGloin argued that Dearborn had a more established segregationist reputation. "I told him that I felt that it might be a good idea, but that the target was wrong. . . I told him that I knew a lot of the people in Warren and that he wouldn't get very far in Warren." Eddie McGloin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 22 August 1997.

towards their respective destinies. For Fisher, the confrontation in Warren would end in a bitter stalemate. Warren would remain a segregated suburb, but it paid a price, receiving no urban renewal money for ten years. Fisher ended up leaving Chicago for another assignment in HUD's Washington headquarters. For Romney, the episode was a defeat that weakened his position in the Nixon administration and undermined his standing among liberal Republicans. After Nixon's reelection in 1972, Romney retired from public service on the national scale. For Nixon, the controversy brought neither victory nor defeat, but – as was so often the case – survival and transformation. The episode contributed to a political realignment on Nixon's part that would carry the nation into the post-liberal future.

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In the fall of 1969, the issue of race and housing in Warren emerged as the city council considered a rezoning request for a proposed 100-unit low-income apartment complex in the McKinley Park neighborhood between Eight and Nine Mile Roads and between Groesbeck and Schoenherr, near Warren's southeastern border with Detroit. The project originated in a grant application from the City Planning Commission submitted in the fall of 1968 for a new HUD program called the "Neighborhood Development Program" (NDP). It was the first such grant awarded in Michigan and the eighth in the country. The Warren City Council had a history of denying rezoning requests for apartment complexes. As the legislative body in a city of ranch-style tract housing (and as sometime real estate dealers and investors themselves), the City Council looked askance at apartment projects. Not only would apartments lower real estate values, but the location of the proposed site near Detroit posed the threat of becoming a beachhead for an influx

of low-income black residents into Warren. The residents in the McKinley Park area feared this outcome. In September, they presented petitions including 2,500 signatures opposing the plan. In October, by an eight-to-one vote the council withdrew this portion of its NDP grant request, rejecting the apartment project in favor of an alternative proposal for a commercial project.[19]

After the McKinley Park debate, the council split into two opposing groups. One group (composed of members who had previously served on the council) accepted the need for federal help with urban renewal. Mayor Ted Bates shared this viewpoint. "Warren was the first city in Michigan to [win approval for] for a Neighborhood Development Program. Let us work together to keep our rating of first in community improvements," he stated in December. The pro-urban renewal group cited the increased costs of maintaining aging neighborhoods and expected the federal government to share this burden. Many of these homes in south Warren were in poor condition. Some had been constructed by the homeowners themselves. The population was poorer and the delivery of services, from schools to police protection, was more expensive. For its part, the population of southern Warren was pulled in two directions. It stood to benefit from urban renewal money, especially since much of it was slated for individual house

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[19] *The Macomb Daily*, 19 September, 10 December 1969. *The Detroit News, 22* July 1970. For the overall narrative of events, memorandum of 1 July 1970 from Edward M. Levin to Francis Fisher (copy in author's possession). On the opposition of the city council toward apartments or any high-rise development, see the debate over rezoning land for condominium construction in the Twelve Mile-Schoenherr neighborhood in *The Macomb Daily*, 11 March 1970. Also see Warren City Council Minutes, 14 April 1970. The Warren City Council Minutes are in the Office of the Warren City Clerk.

rehabilitation. But it fretted over relocation and feared black migration into Warren.[20]

The opposing group on the council (mostly composed of first-term members) expressed less interest in the physical needs of these neighborhoods and more concern with the intrusion of the federal government on the community at large. This "anti-urban renewal" caucus received grass-roots support from homeowner groups throughout the city, though the most active support came from southern Warren in the neighborhoods slated for urban renewal. The leader of the anti-urban renewal caucus was Richard Sabaugh, a former Detroit teacher and a public relations consultant for the Chrysler Corporation. In December 1969 and January 1970, the anti-urban renewal caucus dug in its heels and slowed the process of approving the documents that had to be submitted to HUD as part of the "workable program" for HUD grants. At that point, a "workable program" meant simply specifying what the city intended to do with the money and how it expected to involve citizens in the program. The anti-urban renewal faction on the council claimed that the Mayor and the federal government were "putting a shotgun to our heads" in demanding that they approve the report after allowing only a few days of study. At a subsequent meeting, the anti-urban renewal faction secured amendments to the workable program stipulating that the money be spent on housing for senior citizens rather than on "low income families" and that the city council, rather than the city planning commission,

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[20] Mayor Bates' quote from *The Macomb Daily*, 10 December 1969. At different points in the controversy, the factions were divided over different issues: planning, urban renewal, open housing, and the role of the federal government. The language of the early debates is laden with references to planning and urban renewal. At the same time, both factions muted their criticism of the federal government. It was only as the controversy ripened and as animosity towards HUD grew that the debates contain more negative references to the federal government.

retain control over the funding for staff positions.[21]

The grants in question encompassed three development projects, all in Warren's southern half: at Nine Mile and Van Dyke, at Nine Mile and Schoenherr, and at Ten Mile and Schoenherr. The Planning Commission was also preparing four additional grant requests for 1970 – three in the Nine Mile and Van Dyke area and one in the Eight Mile and Dequindre neighborhood. The total package involved $8.5 million. Long-range plans included the rehabilitation of thousands of homes over a ten year period in the south end of the city.[22]

Not all of the disputes over urban renewal involved race. Some questioned whether planning itself was any good for the community. In December 1969, residents of the Ten Mile and Schoenherr neighborhood protested a City Planning Commission's proposal to rezone their neighborhood. The disputed land was a forty-acre plot situated in an industrial corridor on the city's southeast side. A manufacturing firm had gone to court requesting the rezoning. The problem was that 22 homes were situated on the land. The City Planning Commission argued that a residential builder would not be likely to develop the area, since it was already surrounded by factories. They recommended rezoning for industrial use, using urban renewal money to buy the homes slated for destruction and to relocate the families. The affected homeowners had formed a Neighborhood District Council the previous year. They lobbied against this plan, arguing that, given the runaway

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[21] *The Macomb Daily*, 10 December 1969, 10 January, 6 April 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 16 December 1969.

[22] "Warren's Neighborhood Development Program," UAW Region 1 Collection, Series 3, Box 238, "Warren HUD Urban Renewal" Folder, ALUA.

cost of housing, the City would never provide them adequate relocation compensation.[23]

Mary Ann Taranowski, a young field representative from HUD's Chicago regional office, spoke at the meeting and assured the homeowners they had nothing to fear from HUD. "The government doesn't dictate to you on urban renewal," she said. "This is your city and you have to make the decisions. Our only function is to help on programs that meet federal specifications." Although the cut-off date for the "workable program" had expired, in a gesture of good faith HUD extended it to March 30, 1970. But Taranowski and others in Chicago were taking a closer look at Warren. In a routine review of the city's grant request in November 1969, Elmer Binford, Director of the Working Program Division of the Chicago HUD office, flagged the application because the "city reportedly was one-third Negro population [in the workforce] with practically no Negro residents." Binford suggested action: "Using the OCCASION OF Workable Program, I strongly urge an EO [Equal Opportunity] Review of all HUD assisted programs in Warren."[24]

Edward Levin was the Special Assistant to Frank Fisher in the Chicago HUD office. In 1968, Fisher tapped the former Chicago suburban real estate lawyer to serve as "HUD Rep" for the Detroit metropolitan area. Levin recalls Mary Ann Taranowski's suspicions as she learned more about the situation in Warren. "She was concerned that in this absolutely lily-white suburb. . . this working class community, that whatever discrimination was going on was not economic, because this was a largely union

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[23] *Macomb Daily*, 10 December 1969, 7, 9, 10 January 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 16 December 1969.

[24] Memorandum of 6 November from Elmer C. Binford to Robert L. Tucker, Assistant Regional Administrator for Equal Opportunity, emphasis in original, (copy in author's possession).

workforce, plus there was this history of racial hostility whenever some black family tried to move in." Since Warren was requesting federal funds, "we decided to carefully establish a procedure that would break down these artificial barriers. . . Our assumption was that this housing segregation was not by accident but was a matter of local tradition and custom. . . The civil rights laws on housing were weak and the only enforcement tool we had was the 'workable program' which detailed how a community would use the urban renewal money." Based on these concerns, a February 16, 1970 memorandum to Francis Fisher from several of his officers in the Chicago HUD office recommended disapproval of Warren's "workable program" until the city complied "with HUD policy re open occupancy."[25]

Meanwhile, the process of negotiating a "workable program" ran into difficulty in Warren. A City Council meeting in mid-January erupted into a shouting match over the rent-subsidy portion in one of the project areas. The stated cause for concern in this instance was class, not race. Citizens in attendance stated their fear that the city's south-side tenants might not keep up their property. These rent-subsidy critics expressed a strong "home-owner ethos," as they demanded to know, "Are you trying to start a welfare program for people who fail to keep up their homes?" Others denounced the allocation of funds to help "some guys who have no home pride." The council rejected the proposal by a 5-to-4 margin even though this jeopardized the negotiations with HUD. After a week of unfavorable press coverage, the council reversed itself and passed the rent subsidy

[25] Thomas S. Kilbridge, Renewal Assistance Office, Robert L. Tucker, Equal Opportunity Office, and Dean Swartzel, Program Coordination and Services Office to Francis D. Fisher, Regional Administrator, memorandum of 16 February 1970, (copy in author's possession).

package.[26]

Things were quiet for the next two months. Then, in mid-March, *The Macomb Daily* reported that Francis Fisher had written a letter to Mayor Bates outlining HUD's concerns that Warren was not doing enough to assure access to housing for the 30 percent of its industrial workforce that was black.[27] Fisher noted that only about thirty black families resided in Warren, although the city's population approached 190,000 people. Unless the city demonstrated its commitment to "open housing," the article warned, "the entire program will be cut off from further funding."[28]

The letter was meant to apply pressure to the city's leaders, but Fisher also sweetened the pill by extending the deadline for the cut-off of funds until April 30. He coupled this with specific recommendations of actions that Warren could take to demonstrate its commitment to fair housing: passing an open housing ordinance with adequate funding and enforcement; passing a City Council resolution in favor of open housing signed by the Mayor; proceeding with the 100 units of low- and moderate income housing in the McKinley Park neighborhood that the council had canceled in September; setting up a community relations division within the police department to ease tensions with minority residents; and developing a HUD-assisted program of low-rent housing units. In addition, Fisher suggested that Warren might initiate "educational activities,"

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[26] *The Macomb Daily*, 14, 15, 21 January 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 13, 20 January 1970.

[27] The 30 percent figure probably refers to employment at the big-three automobile plants in Warren, not the city's entire workforce, which included many all-white commercial, service, and small manufacturing businesses.

[28] *The Macomb Daily*, 20 March 1970.

such as running ads in the minority-owned Detroit media declaring Warren an "open community."[29]

The reaction was heated. It focused on the issue of open housing. Councilman Sabaugh stated, "I am opposed to open housing. . . and the people of Warren don't want it." He called for the resignation of City Planning Director Jerome Schmeiser, whom he accused of "using urban renewal as a vehicle to get an open housing ordinance adopted in Warren." Sabaugh declared, "We don't need low-cost housing in Warren – I'll fight it to the end." Other councilmen expressed surprise over the detailed nature of HUD's demands, but at least one senior member stated his willingness to endorse the concept of open housing. Several councilmen supported Planning Director Schmeiser. Most on the council agreed that Warren didn't need an open housing ordinance, because such legislation already existed on the state and federal level.[30]

In late March, liberal organizations and residents of the affected neighborhoods appeared before the council to support open housing or at least to argue that the council should be in compliance with government guidelines for receiving HUD funds. The liberals of Warren were not completely without resources. Since 1963, the "Warren-Centerline Human Relations Council" had been advocating racial integration in the suburbs. The group was an ad hoc private network of local residents committed to integration. They hosted conferences on ethnic diversity. They received aid and encouragement from the local religious communities, Catholic as well as Protestant. The

[29] Francis Fisher to Ted Bates, memorandum, 9 March 1970 (copy in author's possession).

[30] *The Macomb Daily*, 21 March 1970.

Sisters of St. Clement were active, as were a number of liberal priests. Among its membership were black couples who had managed to survive the harassment after the initial move-in. The group was in touch with similar organizations in other suburbs and in Detroit. By early 1965 their mailing list included about 150 names.[31]

When it came to pressure from HUD to adopt an open-housing stand, however, the community was rapidly becoming polarized. This was apparent at a city council meeting in late March 1970. The audience listened to the pleas of the representative from the Lincoln Junior High School PTA that without urban renewal relocation funds the school board would never be able to acquire the land needed for the construction of a new school. But when the head of the local League of Women Voters addressed the council in support of the principle of fair housing, she had to speak over cat-calls and hissing. The mix of homeowner anxiety, racial fear, and recollections of the incendiary Detroit Rebellion of 1967 was evident as one resident rose to reply, "We don't need any fair housing ordinances in our city to invite people to come in and burn our homes. . . If these women don't like this town, let them move out and stop their meddling."[32]

On April 1, Chicago HUD office staff traveled to Lansing, Michigan to meet with Governor Milliken. Later that month, Milliken spoke in the affluent Detroit suburb of Birmingham on breaking down suburban racial barriers. "The suburbs will never be able to heal the inner cities until they first heal themselves. . . The trouble doesn't lie in River

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[31] For the Warren-Centerline Human Relations Council, see CCR papers, Part 3, Box 25, Folders 16 and 19, as well as Part 3, Box 38, Folders 14, 16 and Part 3, Box 7, Folders 16 and 19, ALUA. Herbert Lowe, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 20 May 1997.

[32] Ibid., 25 March 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 24 March 1970.

City [Detroit] . . . It's right here in Birmingham, and in Grosse Pointe, and in Bloomfield Hills, and in Warren, and all through the affluent ring that surrounds Detroit and other major cities of our country." Milliken's urban affairs adviser, Jack Dempsey, began working with the Chicago HUD office to prepare a series of profiles of Michigan suburbs implicated in racial and economic discrimination.[33]

In early April, Councilman Sabaugh discovered an article reporting HUD Secretary Romney's remarks before the Senate Housing Subcommittee. The article quoted Romney discussing the option of withholding federal aid to communities that refused to abide by HUD provisions on low-income housing. Sabaugh sent an open letter to Romney protesting that such action would infringe on the zoning function of local government. With this, the anti-planning forces raised the issue of federalism. Criticizing Romney for "withhold[ing] the taxpayers' moneys to force your ideas down their throats," Sabaugh was really asking the Nixon administration whether it intended to press integration on northern communities the way the Democrats had in the South in the 1960s.[34]

One of the problems in the negotiations was the mixed signals that HUD seemed to be sending local officials in Warren. On April 9, five Chicago office HUD administrators met all day with the Warren City Council. As the meeting broke up, Edward Levin assured the press that there were just a few "loose ends" that needed to be

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[33] Edward M. Levin to Francis Fisher, memorandum, 8 April 1970. (Copy in author's possession.) Warren City Council Minutes, 7 April 1970. *The Detroit Free Press*, 24 April 1970.

[34] *The Macomb Daily*, 6 April 1970.

tied up before the city would be certified for NDP funds. As Levin remembered, "[after the meeting] we went back to the hotel and I asked Leonard Rubinowitz [of the Chicago HUD office] how he thought it went. 'Well, Ed,' he said, 'I think we can salvage it,' by which he meant that he felt that I had given the false impression to the Warren officials that this was just a minor technicality and that they didn't have to do anything. That had definitely not been my intention."[35]

On April 13, Levin sent the mayor and council letters indicating that the "loose ends" included meeting all five suggestions made in Fisher's March 9 letter to Bates, suggestions that members of the council had already rejected. Especially rankling to the council were two measures: the formation of a citizens' group to oversee the implementation of fair housing policies and the formulation of a plan "to address the needs of people of all income levels now residing in Warren, as well as future residents regardless of race, color, religion or national origin." The fact that HUD officials had given the impression that there were no serious remaining obstacles to certifying the "workable program" when in fact there were actually substantial differences angered the pro-planning members of the City Council as well as the Mayor.[36]

In spite of their anger at the "hypocrisy" of the HUD officials, the April 30 deadline for submitting the "workable program" convinced a number of councilmen that they had no alternative to adopting the HUD guidelines or at least attempting to re-

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[35] Edward M. Levin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 16 March 1996. *The Macomb Daily*, 10, 17 April 1970.

[36] Ibid., 17 April 1970. Edward M. Levin to Mayor Ted Bates, 13 April 1970 (copy in author's possession). *The Detroit Free Press*, 25 April 1970.

negotiate them. Some councilmen favored a follow-up meeting in Chicago with Edward Levin. Others, including Councilman Sabaugh, scorned this idea and demanded a meeting in Washington with HUD Secretary Romney. Mayor Bates sent a telegram to Romney requesting the meeting. The sense of the Council and the Mayor, editorially endorsed by *The Macomb Daily*, was that the federal government was taking a heavy-handed approach to the negotiations and that, as taxpayers, Warren residents might have to take this fight "all the way to the nation's Capitol to get our fair share of renewal funding."[37]

The U.S. invasion of Cambodia on April 30 and the resulting protest demonstrations, including a student strike at Macomb County Community College in Warren, overshadowed the housing issue. Still, when Romney sent word that he would meet with the Warren City Council at HUD's Washington headquarters, Councilman Harold Stilwell urged the rest of the council to "face up to our responsibilities" in light of the "more than 1,000 sub-standard homes in the south-end section of our city. . ." The moderates' hopes for compromise were buoyed by the fact that HUD had granted another thirty-day extension of the deadline. Meanwhile the Warren-Centerline Catholic Vicariate issued a statement deploring the "foot dragging posture and negatively unprofessional statements some of our officials are reflecting in reference to today's social problems in the area of human justice and civil rights." The Vicariate ran an ad in the May 13 local newspapers signed by all of Warren's twenty-six priests stating their regret "that so many incidents and situations relating to equal opportunity, racial justice and civil rights occur so frequently in the City of Warren, as for example, in the current controversy with

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[37] *The Macomb Daily*, 20, 21 April 1970.

HUD."[38]

From the standpoint of Warren officials, the Washington meeting with Romney in early May did not go well. Romney flatly demanded that the city establish a community relations committee in return for certification of the workable program. When Mayor Bates stated, "We have no problem in equal opportunity in housing," Romney responded, "If you have no problem, how come you only have thirty black families in Warren as compared to a black workforce of more than 30 percent?" Romney recalled his concern as governor in 1967, when the Warren Police Department responded sluggishly to the mob violence at the move-in of the interracial Bailey family. "And then he did the most amazing thing," Edward Levin recalled. "He waved his arms towards the window and said, 'Don't you see those students in the streets? It's reform or revolution! What's it going to be?' We learned later that Romney had to be almost physically restrained from resigning over Cambodia." Romney tried to illustrate the notion of moral leadership by referring to his own stand as Governor in support of open housing in Birmingham, Michigan. This prompted Councilwoman Lillian Klimecki Dannis to ask, "And can you tell us how many non-whites moved into Birmingham through your efforts?" Romney was silent. When the meeting broke up, Mayor Bates came over to Edward Levin and

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[38] The statement cited the 1969 Declaration of the Archdiocese of Detroit: "No person is to be excluded from living in the neighborhood of his choice on grounds of race, color, religion, or national origin. All Catholics have a serious moral obligation to respect and promote this right." *The Macomb Daily*, 1, 3, 6 May, 25 April 1970. Bishop Krawczyk, interview by author, 15 February 1996, Livonia, Michigan. Catholic Vicariate statement and advertisement in Bishop Krawczyk papers (un-catalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan. *The Macomb Daily*, 1 May 1970.

commented, "I think I'd rather deal with you guys."[39]

Romney's strong stand in the meeting bolstered the bargaining position of the Chicago HUD office. No longer could the pressure from HUD be attributed to the liberal "bad advisers" to the Secretary. An editorial in *The Macomb Daily* expressed the shock of recognition:

> What is the new role of urban renewal? At its inception (most of us were led to believe) urban renewal was designed to help communities help their local citizenry. . . But it is apparent now that Mr. Romney had come up with some new ground rules that are bound by strings and mandates. . . From this vantage point, it looks like the long arm of the federal government is talking to Warren with a clenched fist – instead of a helping hand.[40]

On May 25, Edward Levin and Mary Ann Taranowski were back in Warren trying to nail down the wording on a council resolution creating a community relations board. In a presentation to the city council they got support from Councilman Stilwell. The debate extended into the evening as Councilmen Stilwell and Sabaugh both spoke at a "Learn-in" meeting of the Van Dyke Schools PTA. The meeting was called to invite the council to consider the implication of turning down the urban renewal funds. As the meeting's chairperson stated, "While you, the members of the city council, are in the process of

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[39] Edward M. Levin to Francis Fisher, memorandum, 1 July 1970 (copy in author's possession). Edward M. Levin, telephone interview with author, tape recording, 16 March 1996. Charles Orlebeke, telephone interview with author, tape recording, 23 March 1996. *The Macomb Daily*, 8, 11 May 1970. For the Birmingham open housing ordinance campaign, see "Report of the Campaign to Carry the Fair Housing Ordinance in Birmingham, Michigan, Spring 1968," in the Fair Housing Ordinance, Birmingham, Michigan Collection, Box 1, "Report of the Campaign to Carry the Fair Housing Ordinance in Birmingham, Michigan" Folder, ALUA, and "Address by Governor George Romney. . . March 21, 1968," in Fair Housing Ordinance Collection, Box 1, "George Romney, Governor of Michigan" Folder, ALUA.

[40] *The Macomb Daily*, 9, 11 May 1970.

making a decision about urban renewal, some of the people in Warren have been asking each other, compared to $10 million and blight in a community, what is wrong with a citizens' human rights commission?'"[41]

Despite this prodding, the following evening the City Council voted down three versions of the community relations board resolution. The strongest measure was proposed by Mayor Bates in conformity to HUD's requirements. A weakened version would have denied the human relations council full city commission powers. A third measure was a verbatim replica of the Birmingham Open Housing Resolution (which contained no enforcement language). The Council's suspicion of being manipulated by the federal government sent all three versions down to defeat. The next morning's newspaper headline was, "Warren councilmen KO Urban Renewal." Almost predictably, the very next edition carried the headline: "Reprieve for Warren Urban Renewal Plan," as the council reconsidered and passed the weakest of the resolutions on May 28.[42]

This put the Chicago HUD office in a bind. As Edward Levin phrased the dilemma, "Should the package be accepted, the firm position of the Department, particularly as expressed by the Secretary at the Washington meeting, would be

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[41] Ibid., 15, 26 May 1970.

[42] In council session, Councilman Ronald Bonkowski argued, "This ordinance is an exact duplication of the Birmingham ordinance which Mr. Romney boasted about to us in Washington – if it was good enough for Birmingham to get Romney's support, then he'll have to approve our total workable program of urban renewal." Councilman Sabaugh was less impressed. He and Lillian Klimecki Dannis voted against the resolution. "My colleagues are playing a game of political football with Mr. Romney. . . in my opinion that's the cowardly way out," said Sabaugh. Levin to Fisher, memorandum, 1 July 1970. *The Macomb Daily*, 26, 27, 28, 29 May 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 26 May 1970.

undermined. But if Warren's programs were rejected, the effort would be lost and the Department could be involved in an unwelcome legal controversy." Thus, to the surprise of observers, in early June the Chicago HUD office tentatively approved the ordinance.[43]

Edward Levin came to Warren on June 12 to assure the city council that a favorable vote on two remaining proposals slated for the June 16 council meeting would secure certification for the city's workable program. In that meeting, before a sharply divided audience, the council considered a motion to include language on low-income housing in the proposed fair housing resolution. Speaking to the fears of many spectators in the packed council chambers, Councilman Sabaugh proposed a "grandfather clause" to restrict low-income housing to applicants who had been residents of Warren for at least five years. The amendment was defeated, and the resolution on low-income housing passed. Then the council fulfilled another HUD requirement by passing a resolution creating a community board "charged with responsibility for. . . implementation of an affirmative fair housing program." The vote on both measures was 5 to 4. With this victory of the pro-urban renewal forces, the HUD controversy appeared to fade. The *Macomb Daily* published an editorial calling for reconciliation of factions in the city, the

[43] While commending the city for acting on the fair housing resolution, HUD Chicago Regional Administrator Francis Fisher urged the city to undertake a survey of the housing needs of non-resident workers in Warren in order to receive complete approval of the "workable program." One councilman complained, "That's like asking us to go out and recruit blacks to live in Warren." Still, momentum was on the side of reaching agreement with HUD, because of the lobbying of Jerome Schmeiser, Warren chief city planner, the pleadings of the city's Catholic priests (Father Chateau had addressed the council on fair housing the previous week), and also through the limited lobbying efforts of UAW Region 1 Director, George Merrelli, who sent the council a telegram urging passage of a strengthened fair housing ordinance. Edward M. Levin to Francis D. Fisher, memorandum, 1 July 1970 (copy in author's possession). *The Macomb Daily*, 8, 10 June 1970.

HUD Washington office okayed the city's plan to rehabilitate portions of the south end of town, assuaging some injured feelings by stipulating that the low-income housing concept did not have to be implemented in all Neighborhood Development Program grants, and the Mayor began to sort through candidates for the 15-member community relations board.[44]

The preceding six months of pressure still angered some members of the city council. At the next council meeting, Councilman Jury requested the city attorney to draft a resolution to be sent to all members of Congress protesting the encroachment of the federal government on local zoning powers. The resolution expressed the city's fears that Washington was intending to "usurp local rezoning authority for the purpose of constructing low-income federal housing developments. . ." He also proposed that any low income housing be restricted "only for Senior citizens of Warren."[45]

Although the anti-urban renewal forces had been defeated, they were gearing up to continue their fight through recall campaigns and regular elections. But the mobilization of the pro-urban renewal forces also had been impressive, though it lacked coordination. This disparate coalition had helped to convince a thin majority of the City Council to go along with the HUD guidelines. The Parent-Teacher Associations had explained that their school districts' budgets were based on the expectation of urban renewal money. *The Macomb Daily,* though it regularly stoked the fires of anti-Washington sentiment, also ran an occasional story on the benefits of HUD-sponsored home rehabilitation in Warren's

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[44] Levin to Fisher, memorandum, 1 July 1970 (copy in author's possession). *The Macomb Daily*, 13, 15, 17, 18 June 1970.

[45] Ibid., 23 June 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 23 June 1970.

poorer neighborhoods. The arguments of the pro-urban renewal forces – the pragmatic politicians, who argued that Warren should get its fair share of federal money, the Catholic churches, many of whose priests preached the immorality of racial segregation, and the UAW – all had their effect. Although the councilmen resented being bullied by HUD, once the Neighborhood Development Program money began to flow, they would be less likely to reverse themselves. It is far from certain that the anti-urban renewal elements would have prevailed, either in an anti-HUD referendum or in an electoral contest to replace the pro-urban renewal councilmen, had the issue been allowed to rest.[46]

In early July, members of the Chicago staff who had negotiated with Warren wrote a lengthy memorandum to Francis Fisher in which they summarized the different stages of the negotiations. They felt that the process had been flawed, but basically constructive, and that it might be repeated in other cities. Fisher forwarded the memorandum to the Washington HUD headquarters. According to Charles Orlebeke of the Washington HUD office, a subordinate unwittingly made this memo available to a *Detroit News* reporter, Hugh McDonald. On July 21, the paper's front-page headline proclaimed, "U.S. Picks Warren as Prime Target in Move to Integrate All Suburbs." Quoting from the memorandum, the article (which was serialized over several days) depicted a concerted strategy to sever the "white noose" of segregated housing surrounding Detroit and other

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[46] Signs had already appeared in public meetings promising a referendum in the August primary election on the future of HUD in Warren and threatening to vote out the councilmen who had conciliated HUD. Councilman Sabaugh, who was considered a likely mayoral candidate in the next election, was taking every opportunity to criticize the performance of Mayor Bates in the controversy. Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 6 October 1995, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

largely black cities.[47]

This destroyed the support for the settlement that had been so painstakingly negotiated. As the uproar exploded in Warren, HUD Under-Secretary Richard Van Dusen vainly protested that department policy was not set by memoranda written on the regional level. He sent a telegram to Mayor Bates assuring him that "our position has not changed in any way" and that the city had only to adopt a community relations board to have the grant approved. But *The Detroit News* series was dynamite. As Sabaugh remembered, it transformed the controversy from one over rights of the city to govern itself into a fight over race:

> Originally, the people who were the grass-roots movement against HUD in Warren were involved because they were afraid of losing their homes. They came out of those parts of town where urban renewal was wiping out housing. When *The Detroit News* story happened, all these other people got involved who were primarily opposed to "forced integration." Of the people who voted against urban renewal [in the subsequent referendum], maybe 20 percent of them were against urban renewal and 80 percent were against integration. The original group wasn't racist.[48]

Three days after the story broke, Romney came to Warren for a special Sunday afternoon meeting with Mayor Bates and City Council members to "clear the air" and salvage the Neighborhood Development Project plans in Warren. Romney denied that HUD had targeted Warren for "forced integration." He complained that the *News* articles were biased, sensationalistic, and put the HUD program "in deep jeopardy." Some of the

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[47] Levin to Fisher, memorandum, 1 July 1970 (copy in author's possession). *The Detroit News*, 21, 22, 23, 24 July 1970.

[48] *The Macomb Daily*, 24 July 1970. For HUD Under Secretary Van Dusen's telegram to Mayor Bates, see the Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 29, "Warren 7/27/70" Folder, the Bentley Library. Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 6 October 1995, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

audience were unconvinced. One councilman leaving the meeting predicted, "Nothing. . . can repair the damage now – emotional racial fears have just gotten out of hand."[49]

The next evening Romney spoke to 200 officials from 39 Detroit suburbs in a closed-door meeting at Warren's Fitzgerald High School in what turned into a public relations disaster. Romney lambasted *The Detroit News* articles, reiterated a "no forced integration" position, and declared, "[T]he position of this Department is that we must carry out what the law requires of us: affirmative action to implement the fair housing provisions of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This means a policy of non-discrimination in housing and that is what this Department will enforce." He promised, however, a light-handed approach: "In practical terms, this means HUD will not set the numerical quotas for the suburbs and that we are opposed to the creation, either in the cities or the suburbs, of new concentrations of housing for minorities or low income families."[50]

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[49] *The Macomb Daily,* 27 July 1970.

[50] In his presentation, Romney reviewed the relations between the Chicago HUD office and Warren. He stated that the original workable program contained two kinds of provisions: affirmative integration and elimination of discrimination. The distinction was whether blacks would be recruited to move to Warren or whether they would simply not be harassed if they did move. Romney noted that when the city council objected to the "affirmative integration" provisions they were dropped. Now the department was only requiring measures to make sure that a black prospective homeowner would not face discrimination in Warren if he or she chose to seek housing there. "Specifically," HUD required "that Warren appoint a human relations council. This Warren has agreed to do and as a result we are prepared to move ahead with our grant. . ." *The Macomb Daily,* 28 July 1970. For the draft and the official transcript of the speech, see the Post-gubernatorial Collection, Box 29, "Meeting of Suburban Officials" Folder, Bentley Library.

Romney acquitted himself well under the circumstances. The image that stuck in the minds of observers as Romney left the July 27 meeting, however, was the crowd of several hundred protesters (including members of the local right-wing group, Breakthrough) who howled, booed, and threatened him. Edward Levin remembered the scene:

> There were hundreds of demonstrators. We were in the second car. When Romney's car pulled away they started rocking our car and banging on the windows. The police tried to stop them but there were too many. Then a funny thing happened. Robert Tucker, a black lawyer and Director of Civil Rights in the Chicago office, was driving our car. He was a big tall guy and he was unfamiliar with the headlights – couldn't get them on. (It was a rented car and it had gotten dark while we were in the meeting.) We just sat there with the car rocking and Mary Ann [Taranowski] saying in this tight, calm voice, "We can go now, Bob, we can go." Then Tucker just opened the door and got out and very politely said, "Excuse me, can anyone here tell me how you work the headlights on this car?" The crowd hushed in surprise and a man showed him how to do it. Then he got back in, the crowd started yelling and rocking the car again, and we gradually pulled away.[51]

With the press coverage of this near-riot, the housing controversy bubbled up stronger than before. At an overflow council meeting covered by the national press, Councilman Sabaugh got a standing ovation when he asked, "Just because Warren is an all-white community, does that mean we are all racists? No. But the federal government seems to think so. . . the question of race is not one that the residents of Warren have brought into the urban renewal program – it is something that the federal government has brought into our community." Urban renewal still had its supporters, however. Councilman Howard Austin replied, "Sabaugh has created the impression that he is going to keep Negroes out of our town – yet he tells us racism is not an issue." By a 5 to 4

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[51] Edward M. Levin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 16 March 1996. "Detroit Suburbanites Jeer Romney, and He Eases HUD's Stand on Integration," *House and Home*, September 1970.

vote, the Council rejected Sabaugh's "move to reconsider" the votes of June 16. Warren was still in conformance with HUD open housing guidelines.[52]

Having failed to roll back urban renewal in the city council, its opponents turned to the ballot box. Macomb County attorney Robert Lord recalled a visit to his office by five Warren citizens who wanted to know how to conduct a referendum campaign:

> I told them how you prepare a referendum petition. . . I said, "This is how you do this legally. . . but it's impossible, because it takes nearly 12,000 petitioners to put it on the ballot and it has to be done within a matter of days." They said, "Don't you worry about that!" And the remarkable thing was, in a matter of eight days or so, they got, not only 12,000 signatures, they got 15,000. . . In looking back, it seems to me that the key to this was *The Detroit News* articles. That was the provocative event.[53]

On August 2, the citizens group announced a drive to gain the required number of petition signatures for a city-wide advisory referendum in the November general election to withdraw from the urban renewal program. Two councilmen with mayoral ambitions (Sabaugh and Jury) publicly declared their "unofficial" support for the petition drive. Eight days later, the group, which had taken the name "Greater Warren Civic Association," presented petitions with 14,800 signatures for the referendum. Led by Jack Gardner, a 50-year-old auto parts manufacturer, the group denied reports that it was also planning a recall drive against the mayor and the five councilmen who had supported urban renewal.[54]

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[52] *The Macomb Daily*, 29 July 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 28 July 1970.

[53] Robert Lord, interview by author, 21 November 1996, tape recording, Fair Haven, Michigan.

[54] *The Macomb Daily*, 12 August 1970. Warren City Council Minutes, 11 August 1970. *The Detroit Free Press*, 21 August 1970.

The council meetings got uglier as the two sides girded themselves for the referendum. A council meeting on August 11 turned into a shouting match over the terms of office and the salaries of the Citizens' District Council appointed by the Mayor for the administration of the neighborhood development urban renewal projects. During the meeting, members of Breakthrough distributed leaflets and waved anti-urban renewal placards. Tempers ran short during the late summer as councilmen threatened lawsuits and accused each other of using political connections to profit on real estate deals. In one meeting, the police detained the leader of the Greater Warren Civic Association and charged him with carrying a concealed weapon into the city council hearings. Some people were embarrassed by the tone of the debate. In mid-August, the Macomb County Democratic Party passed a resolution censuring any party official who may have appealed to racial bigotry in the dispute and called on Warren residents to reject the upcoming referendum. Other organizations opposing the referendum were the Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Warren Jaycees, and UAW Region 1. The Catholic Church had also made plain its support for urban renewal. Except for Breakthrough, the only group to publicly support the referendum was the Greater Warren Civic Association.[55]

Even though the tally of organizational support seemed weighted in favor of the pro-urban renewal forces, the actual support was thin. This was evident in a UAW Region 1 meeting called on October 12 by Regional Director George Merrelli. Local union officers and their families who lived in Warren were invited to the meeting in order

[55] *The Macomb Daily*, 22, 28 August 1970; *The (Royal Oak) Daily Tribune*, 19 August 1970; *The Detroit News*, 28 August 1970.

to mobilize opposition to the referendum. Jerome Schmeiser, Warren's Planning Director, presented a slide show detailing the dilapidated state of southern Warren's housing stock and explained the Neighborhood Development Program. The UAW's Merrelli then spoke in favor of taking the federal money. Councilman Sabaugh had heard of the pending meeting and persuaded Merrelli to allow him to speak for the opposition. In the question-and-answer period after Sabaugh spoke, the questions were plainly hostile to the UAW position, even though the audience was composed of UAW shop floor representatives. An overwhelming vote at the conclusion of the session gave the victory in the debate to Sabaugh. "It was a shock to me, because I didn't know that I had that much support," recalled Sabaugh. "But then, I shouldn't have been so surprised, because most of the people who supported me were blue-collar guys."[56]

Not only was the level of support for urban renewal dangerously shallow, but some of it came from unwelcome quarters. To the annoyance of Mayor Bates, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission demanded that HUD pressure Bates to appoint the members of the newly created community board. The Macomb County branch of the NAACP also expressed concern that the controversy might lead "radical groups and irresponsible people [to] enter into the picture and cause serious problems." More galling to the Mayor was Secretary Romney's testimony in late August before the Senate Select Committee on Equal Opportunity. Romney stated that Warren "had an obvious policy of discrimination in housing" which it must rectify before receiving urban renewal funds. He

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[56] UAW Region 1 Collection, Series 3, Box 238, Folder "Warren HUD Urban Renewal," ALUA. Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, Mt. Clemens, Michigan, 6 October 1995.

also declared that Warren would have to appoint all the members of the community board before it could receive any Neighborhood Development Program money. Mayor Bates threatened to "abolish urban renewal in Warren" unless Romney "publicly apologized" for making the "discriminatory remark" about Warren.[57]

The warring factions spent the final weeks before the referendum vote lining up endorsements and haggling over whether city funds could be used to pay for an informational brochure on Warren's urban renewal programs. The dispute over the brochure revealed the lack of coordination among the pro-urban renewal forces. The council majority succeeded in passing a resolution to use city funds for the brochure, but the anti-urban renewal forces sued to stop the mailing. Fearing legal repercussions, HUD refused to intervene and provide funds for the brochure. Consequently, the only piece of

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[57] Interestingly, *The New York Times* report on Romney's testimony highlighted his advice to "go slow" in pressing suburbs to accept low-income federal housing projects. The Secretary observed that the issues were so volatile that pushing too fast might build up "resistance that could defeat the [open housing] effort." *The Washington Post* quoted Romney warning that "pushing too hard too fast" might backfire and that "we can make real progress or build up resistance." Perhaps thinking of the scene at Fitzgerald High School a month earlier, he added, "I've had some experiences with latent resistance." Despite this cautionary tone, Romney's testimony also resurrected the issue of federal overrides on local zoning powers. He described anti-discriminatory housing legislation which, in the wake of local zoning resistance to low-income projects, he hoped to see enacted. The legislation would have prohibited local governments from using zoning actions to block federally subsidized low-income housing. Given the fact that Warren City Councilmen had been making speeches for months on the constitutional sanctity of local zoning powers, this remark further undercut the pro-urban renewal support in the referendum. (As it happened, House Republicans had already scuttled this legislation, though Romney didn't mention it in his testimony.) Text of Romney's statement before the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity ("Mondale Committee") in Romney Post-gubernatorial Collection, Box 29, Folder "Mondale Committee," Bentley Library. *The New York* Times, 27 August 1970; *The Washington Post*, 27 August 1970; *The Macomb Daily*, 3, 10, 11, 17, 20 August, 9, 11 September, 8 October 1970; *The Detroit News*, 18 August 1970.

literature handed out before the vote was a tabloid, *Citizen*, printed by the anti-urban renewal Greater Warren Civic Association. The anti-HUD forces concentrated their door-to-door distribution of the tabloid in the southeast section of town where much of the urban renewal was slated to take place. The main message in the tabloid, Sabaugh recalled, was that a "yes" vote on the referendum was a "no" vote against urban renewal. "There was not one word in the brochure about race. We had pictures of nice houses that were going to be torn down." Although *The Macomb Daily* ended up editorially supporting urban renewal, as did practically every other civic, neighborhood, religious, and labor organization in the city, it was to no avail. The final vote was 26,471 to 19,906 in favor of rejecting the urban renewal programs – a 57 to 43 percent split. It was a victory of a grass-roots movement, whose volunteer canvassers were mainly working class white women motivated by a mix of racial fear and distrust of the federal government. The other side was an untested coalition of local organizations united on little more than a belief in the need for federal housing money. The real leadership for the losing side came, not from the local community, but from the Chicago offices of HUD.[58]

A week later, in response to the referendum, the City Council passed resolutions rescinding local authority for the three HUD Neighborhood Development programs. The Michigan Civil Rights Commission then sought an injunction in Circuit Court to stay the Council's action. Mayor Bates announced his intention to terminate the program anyway, in late November. In December 1970, the NAACP filed suit in federal court to nullify the

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[58] Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 6 October 1995, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. *Citizen*, kindly donated by Mr. Sabaugh, copy in author's possession. *The Macomb Daily*, 23, 30 September, 6, 8, 19, 21, 29 October, 2, 4 November 1970; *The Detroit News*, 14 October 1970.

referendum. The new Detroit Director of HUD, William Whitbeck, held a press conference to announce that HUD funds for Warren were frozen pending resolution of the lawsuit. The suit dragged on until 1974, when Federal District Judge Philip Pratt ruled that the plaintiffs had not proven discriminatory intent by the City of Warren.[59]

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Warren paid a price for its principles. The city received no federal housing funds for ten years. Between 1970 and 1980, the south end of Warren continued to deteriorate. As late as 1998 , much of the asbestos shingle housing stock in south Warren compares unfavorably with the tidy brick bungalow neighborhoods across Eight Mile Road in northeast Detroit. How did this happen? In 1969, HUD had friends both in the city administration and among the city's homeowners. Their support for the federal government went back to the days of the Great Depression when many of the people who later lived in Warren benefited from New Deal programs, often with the help of their unions. Why did they change their minds? Why did HUD, which neither taxed nor drafted its population, become the most hated arm of the federal government in Warren? Why did HUD have such a difficult time negotiating the terms of an agreement with Warren's city council despite the fact that it held the purse strings to money that Warren desperately needed? Why did Warren's voters reject this aid? And why did HUD Secretary George Romney lose control of the controversy? Romney had received half of

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[59] *The Macomb Daily*, 21 November, 1, 4, 16 December, 1970, 16 January 1975. For HUD Area Coordinator Whitbeck's remarks, see Detroit Commission on Community Relations Collection (hereafter, CCR), Part 3, Box 36, Folder 36-20, ALUA.. For a detailed summary of *NAACP v. Warren,* Robert Lord, unpublished essay on the NAACP lawsuit prepared for Warren City Councilman Louis J. Burdi, dated July 7, 1975 (copy in author's possession). The lawsuit is summarized in 383 *Federal Supplement*: 676.

the votes for governor in 1966 in strongly Democratic Warren. Though Councilman Sabaugh scorned Romney almost from the start of the controversy, several of his fellow council members evidently expected the secretary to rein in his over-zealous Chicago office. He never did. When Romney testified before the Mondale Senate Committee in late August, he only made things worse. Mayor Bates was so outraged that he first demanded a public apology and then declared that he would not believe anything Romney said anyway.[60]

Another paradox involves the fact that the HUD debacle occurred during Nixon's watch. With all the frustration and agitation that the HUD controversy generated, one would expect Warren's voters to punish Nixon in the next election. Instead, Nixon, who received less than 28 percent of Warren's 1968 vote, amassed over 62 percent in 1972. Of course, Humphrey was a far more attractive candidate in 1968 than McGovern was in 1972. But this trend of weakening support for the Democrats is confirmed in other races on the state and national level. From U.S. Senator and Michigan Governor to State Board of Education, during the early 1970s, Warren's blue-collar voters began to drift away from the Democratic Party. What role did the HUD controversy play in this shift?[61]

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[60] For Mayor Bates' reaction to Secretary Romney's testimony, *The Macomb Daily*, 28 August 1970.

[61] In Warren, the Republican vote for Senator increased from 36 percent in 1966 to 54 percent in 1972. For Governor it rose from 40 percent in 1970 to 49 percent in 1972. In the State Board of Education race, the combined totals for Republican candidates rose from 36 percent in 1970 to 53 percent in 1972. This is important, not only because it marks the beginning of a breach between Warren's voters and the Democratic Party, but also because it qualifies the importance of the HUD controversy in this process. The fact that the Democratic vote declined between 1970 and 1972 suggests that the HUD controversy was less powerful than the cross-district busing controversy which was raging

Part of the answer to this question may lie in the rumors and myths that circulated in the aftermath of the controversy. One popular belief, especially outside the city, was that as a result of the HUD controversy, all of Warren stood indicted of racism. This is not borne out by the facts. Forty-three percent of the referendum votes favored complying with the settlement that had been negotiated with HUD rather than rejecting the urban renewal grants. In addition, it must have been the case that some portion of those who voted to reject urban renewal were moved more by the rhetoric of local control rather than by the hatred of black people. But to many observers, both in Detroit and in the affluent, all-white suburbs of nearby Oakland County, it was beyond dispute that the HUD controversy exposed the vilest form of white supremacy. Indeed, this myth probably influenced the self-image of the people of Warren themselves. Standing accused of racism and unable to convince anyone of the contrary, some Warren whites most likely tired of trying to distinguish their true motives, embracing instead the idea that a certain level of racial animosity was the norm in Warren.

The most bizarre explanation of the HUD debacle appeared under Mitch Kehetien's byline in a *Macomb Daily* article six weeks after the referendum. Purportedly based on an interview with an anonymous informant who worked in the Chicago HUD office, the article stated that a plot existed in 1970 among the HUD officials administering the Warren application for NDP money. The conspirators (including Francis Fisher, Edward Levin, and Mary Ann Taranowski) allegedly met every Friday at a jazz club called "The London House" on the ground floor of the building that housed the HUD Chicago

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in 1972. *Canvassed Records*, Macomb County Clerk's Office of Elections, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

regional offices. There, they hatched a daring plot to provoke Warren into rejecting the NDP money. The goal was to discredit the new "dispersal" policy of spreading the inner city population (and HUD funds) throughout the suburbs. When it looked as though, despite their provocation, Warren was going to comply with the HUD requirements, the conspirators leaked the July 1 memorandum to *The Detroit News*, a move they knew would doom urban renewal in Warren.[62]

The story strains credibility. For one thing, the informant stated that the "first step in the strategy" was the leak of the Chicago memorandum to the *Detroit News*. In fact, although it was the single most damaging blow to urban renewal in Warren, the leak happened relatively late in the game. The war of nerves between HUD and the city council had been going on for months at that point. Another problem with this story is that, contrary to Kehetien's informant, the "leak" of the memo occurred in Washington, not Chicago, and therefore could not have been the work of the Chicago "conspirators." The article stated that all of the persons named as "ultra-liberals" and their colleagues in the Chicago office either denied the story or were unavailable for comment. Romney's press secretary called the story "just plain nonsense." Mayor Bates (perhaps because the story got him off the hook of being on the "losing side" of the referendum) reacted as if it were true, and demanded a congressional investigation to determine whether employees of HUD had sabotaged their own program. "It is difficult to believe that a federal agency could be so corrupt, but these are the questions that have been raised, and to be very blunt, the history of the HUD dispute here offers plenty of evidence to support such

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[62] *The Macomb Daily*, 21 December 1970.

charges." Councilman Sabaugh, who came out looking like one of the principal dupes in the story, was understandably skeptical: "If there was a plot," he said, "it was to integrate; and that was exposed." Looking back twenty-five years later, Sabaugh believes that the story may have been fabricated by some bitter HUD official to boast that they had hoodwinked Warren out of urban renewal funds. For his part, Ed Levin of the Chicago HUD office, was unrepentant: "We were honestly hoping to use the power of the purse to bribe communities to lower racial barriers and I remain quite proud of that fact, and I'm only sorry that we failed."[63]

The "cabal of the ultra-liberals" is one of the myths generated by the HUD controversy. There are others. One which surfaced in the pages of the *Macomb Daily* four years later, was that the 1970 HUD controversy stemmed from a conspiracy between the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) and HUD's Washington office to implement a "pilot program" to integrate Warren as a test case for housing policy in the rest of the country. According to these articles serialized in *The Macomb Daily* in January 1975, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and HUD's Washington office collaborated in the 1970 effort to force Warren to adopt open housing. "HUD and the Michigan Civil Rights Department were allies in a program known as 'The Pilot Project'. . . [T]he Pilot Project was to integrate Detroit suburbs through 'a team effort' between HUD and the Department of Civil Rights. . ." The article asserts that when Warren voters turned down the urban renewal money, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights pursued

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[63] Ibid., 22 December 1970. Edward M. Levin, telephone interview by author, tape-recording, 16 March 1996. Charles Orlebeke, telephone interview by author, tape-recording, 23 March 1996.

a policy of "drumming up as much adverse publicity on a national scope as possible against the city." They tried to get the federal government to cut off all funding to Warren (not just HUD funding) and, finally, by organizing the lawsuit against Warren.[64]

The kernel of truth in this story was that the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC)[65] advocated passing and enforcing strong open housing laws. Along with other lobbyists and interest groups, they attempted to exert influence on HUD. As Milton Robinson, Executive Director of the MCRC, put it, the declining employment opportunity in Detroit coupled with the lack of suburban housing for blacks put black job seekers in an impossible position. The way out was to enforce equal housing opportunity for blacks in the suburbs. "Some people, including federal officials, would call this 'forced integration.' To them I say: As you would not accept 'forced integration,' don't expect others to accept 'forced segregation' or forced substandard living conditions." After the Warren referendum, the MCRC met with the Detroit area director of HUD to urge that all federal housing funds be cut off.[66]

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[64] *The Macomb Daily*, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 January 1975.

[65] The Michigan Civil Rights Commission was created by the 1963 Michigan Constitution (Article V, Section 29). Composed of eight Commissioners (two of each major party), the MCRC set policy and served as arbitor on cases involving unresolved complaints of discrimination in Michigan concerning education, public accomodation, law enforcement, and housing. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights monitored compliance with the state's civil rights law and investigated complaints of discrimination. During the 1970s, the MDCR employed as many of 300 staff. Clifford Schrupp, unrecorded telephone interview by author, 15 December 1997.

[66] *The Michigan Chronicle*, 29 May 1971. For the meeting between MCRC and the HUD Detroit area director, see "Commission on Civil Rights" collection, Part 3, Box 36, Folder 20, ALUA.

But, the assertion that the civil rights agencies conspired with HUD against Warren is not supported by the evidence. Rather than conspiring with HUD, the MCRC was a tenacious public critic of HUD's waffling in Warren. In a telegram to Romney in August 1970, Julian Cook, Jr., President of the MCRC, laid at Romney's doorstep the racial polarization that was developing in the wake of the *Detroit News* articles and Romney's appearance at Fitzgerald High School. "On July 30, I sent a wire to you. . . express[ing] our serious misgivings that your public statements made in Warren may have seriously jeopardized the right to equal housing opportunities for black, brown and other minority group citizens. . . Subsequent events have reinforced our earlier misgivings. . ." Cook urged Romney to meet with him, but Romney politely declined to comply. In a January 1971 press release, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission described its relations with HUD in terms very different from the *Macomb Daily* story: "During the past summer and fall Cook, as president of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, has challenged . . . HUD and its failure to state a 'clear anti-segregation policy' in the city of Warren." Another problem with this story is that it alleges that it was the Washington office of HUD, rather than the Chicago office, that collaborated with the civil rights groups. This does not fit with what we know about who actually negotiated for HUD.[67]

The "myth of the liberal cabal" and the "myth of the HUD/civil rights conspiracy" contradict each other. The former alleges that HUD liberals in the Chicago office sabotaged their Department's own program in order to prevent the implementation of the

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[67] For Cook's telegram to Romney, see the Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 29, Folder "Meeting With Suburban Officials," the Bentley Library. For MCRC's January 1971 press release, see CCR Collection, Part 3, Box 32, Folder 32, ALUA.

"dispersal" national housing policy. The latter story says that, spurred on by an all-powerful civil rights establishment, HUD eagerly pursued an ambitious, if ill-considered, policy of strict enforcement of penalties for non-compliance with desegregation of suburban housing. On the other hand, there are significant similarities between the two stories. Both are conspiracy theories. Both allege that during Nixon's first administration liberals were in charge of social policy. Both stories portray the leadership of HUD as a secretive clique of bureaucrats. In a 1970s replay of the 1950s conservative nightmare of Communists in the State Department, both versions asserted that a cadre of shady liberals had infiltrated the government and exercised vast power over the lives of ordinary Americans. These myths fed a recurrent fear that haunted Warren and Macomb County over the years: that powerful and unseen forces were exploiting and disrupting the local community. Whether these forces took the form of imperious HUD officials or abrasive Detroit politicians like the city's first black mayor, Coleman Young, whether it was the civil rights establishment or the advocates of regional government that were conspiring to ruin them, the variations on this localist victim-myth helped to break Warren's voters away from the Democratic Party, which still favored vigorous federal enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. In any case, these stories, propagated by *The Macomb Daily*, kept race relations raw in Warren.[68]

The significance of these stories is that they furnished Warren's population with crucial explanations for the fact that Warren missed out on a decade of federal housing

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[68] On January 16, 1975, one day after the conclusion of the *Macomb Daily* series on the HUD-MCRC connection, someone firebombed the house of an African-American family that had moved into Warren a few months earlier. *Macomb Daily*, 17 January 1975.

funds. These explanations variously treated civil rights groups and liberals in the federal government as the source of Warren's difficulties. This shifted the blame away from Nixon and the Republican Party. There are scraps of evidence that, for their part, Nixon and his advisors paid attention to developments in Warren as they considered how to break socially conservative working class voters away from the Democratic Party. A September 1970 note from Nixon speech writer Pat Buchanan to H. R. Haldemann, which passed through Nixon's hands, recommended paying more attention to political trends in places like Warren. Nixon underlined "Cultivate local leaders who are strongly patriotic, anti-student, and who are keenly aware of the race question (witness: Michigan and the Wallace hard core in the UAW.)"[69] Indeed, Nixon used the Warren controversy as an opportunity to think through a political approach to the problem of integration and housing. On questions of discrimination as well as of the government's role in improving the national housing stock, Nixon carefully distanced himself from Romney. Then, threatening cuts in the HUD budget, he forced Romney to conform to the new policy.[70]

The White House became aware of tensions over open housing policy as the Warren controversy developed. John Ehrlichman sounded the alarm in June 1970 in a

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[69] On the Republican strategic thinking during these years of "realignment," see Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, 349-357. For the Buchanan quote, see President's Ofice Files, Box 7, Folder 1 (contested), Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. I am indebted to Professor Melvin Small for this reference.

[70] For Romney's protest against Nixon's decision to cut the proposed HUD FY1974 budget by imposing cuts on the programs affecting inner-city neighborhoods, see Romney's letter to the President of December 28, 1972, in the Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 2, "Budget Miscellaneous, September-December 1972 Folder, the Bentley Library.

memo to Romney: "The White House is receiving the strongest sort of representations regarding the proposed 'open communities' policy. . . [T]his proposal has not had the usual policy review. . . Do you anticipate that it will be submitted to the President for his review and approval in the near future?" Romney waited a full three weeks before writing an evasive reply which promised that a "complete 'open communities policy'" would be ready for presentation to the Domestic Council by the early fall. Ehrlichman commented in a memo to Nixon that problems were on the horizon regarding suburban housing integration. "This is a serious Romney problem which we will apparently have as long as he is there. There is no approved program as such, nor has the White House approved such a policy. But he keeps loudly talking about it in spite of our efforts to shut him up." Nixon responded, "Stop this one." Ehrlichman's problem with Romney probably had as much to do with Romney's "go it alone" approach to making policy as with the substantive issue. This came up again in Romney's remarks on Warren's record of housing discrimination during his August 1970 testimony before the Mondale Senate Select Committee. Romney testified without White House clearance, reneging on a promise he had made to Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman complained, "The President has asked me to be certain that this circumstance was called to your attention." Romney replied in a typically hearty brush-off: "Responding to your memorandum of September 3, you are right, absolutely right! I apologize."[71]

In the wake of the Warren HUD referendum, relations between Nixon and

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[71] Memoranda between Ehrlichman and Romney in the Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 13, "The President-Ehrlichman 1970" Folder. The Bentley Library. Ehrlichman's communication with Nixon in Lemann's *The Promised Land*, 209.

Romney grew more strained. A few days after the vote, Romney gave an interview to a television station in Detroit in which he staked out a defiant position, criticizing the off-year election campaigning by the White House for not emphasizing the "positive aspects" of the Administration policies in the area of school desegregation and housing. When asked about the Warren referendum, Romney blithely observed that, by rejecting the funds, Warren simply proved his point "that there's no such thing as forced integration, that local communities have it within their power to decide whether or not they want to make use of federal funds." If they wanted the money, they had to conform to minimum open housing guidelines. He went on to declare his undiminished commitment to racial integration:

> In my opinion, the most fundamental thing that's happening in this nation internally is the racial revolution. And the most fundamental need in this nation is racial reconciliation. . . [W]e can't keep the black and the poor bottled up in the cores of the central cities, and the more affluent and white people living in surrounding areas, without absolutely catastrophic consequences.[72]

At the same time, he admitted, "I don't think it's going to come on any quota basis or forced integration basis."[73]

Romney gave a press conference in Washington on November 25. He had just met with Attorney General Mitchell and the reporters wanted to know whether he had been asked to resign. The Secretary denied that he had and the spent the rest of the conference talking about opening the suburbs to racial integration. Romney denounced the rumor that HUD was engaged in an effort to "integrate the suburbs." "I'm opposed to

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[72] Transcript of WJBK interview in the Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 29, Folder "WJBK Interview," the Bentley Library.

[73] Ibid.

that. I think it's wrong. I think it would fail." At the same time, he indicated that, under Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, "our department is directed by statute not to make funds available where discrimination exists." As to his relationship with Nixon, Romney averred, "If I thought the President didn't want me in his Cabinet, I wouldn't stay in his Cabinet. I mean, I'm not trying to hang on here."[74]

However composed he appeared in public, Romney was under a good deal of pressure as a result of the Warren HUD referendum. The previous week he had written Nixon a memo which has the caption scribbled on it: "Read to John Mitchell but not sent." It begins, "Attorney General Mitchell on Friday conveyed your concern about our being on a collision course because of a difference in ideology with respect to the racial aspects of HUD's programs. To avoid this he said you thought I might be interested in appointment as Ambassador to Mexico." Declining the appointment, Romney suggested that the apparent conflict derived from the fact that the President had yet to define his housing policy. The absence of such a policy "has contributed to the . . . publicity difficulties such as occurred in Warren, Michigan." Recounting his own personal achievements as businessman, governor, and cabinet member, Romney pleaded that his views on housing integration deserved serious consideration in policy formation. "It is becoming increasingly apparent that the lower, middle income and the poor, white, black and brown family cannot continue to be isolated in the deteriorating core cities without broad scale revolution. This can only be avoided by providing genuine hope for reform

[74] Transcript of November 25 1970 press conference in Washington, D.C. in Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 29, Folder "John Mitchell Discussion," the Bentley Library.

based on honest conformance of our constitutional principles and current statutory requirements."[75]

Nixon didn't fire Romney, but he used him as a foil in defining his own position. About a month after the referendum, Nixon gave his own press conference. In response to a question concerning HUD's policies in Warren, Nixon promised not to "force integration" of the suburbs through federal programs. "[I]t is not the policy of this government to use the power of the federal government or federal funds. . . in ways not required by law for forced integration of the suburbs. I believe that forced integration of the suburbs is not in the national interest." In conformity with the 1968 Fair Housing Act, local communities with a history of discriminatory housing policies could not receive federal housing funds; but all-white communities, where no policy of discrimination could be proved, would not be denied funds. This distinction between a community's policy of discrimination, on the one hand, and the existence of "naturally" all-white communities, on the other, recalled Nixon's policy statement on school desegregation issued the previous March, where he distinguished between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation in schools and promised that only in the latter would the government consider the busing remedy.[76]

In early January 1971, Romney gave an interview to Bernard Kalb on the CBS morning news. Kalb probed to see if there was any difference between the views of Nixon and Romney regarding integrating the suburbs. He alluded to Romney's reputation as

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[75] Romney's memo to Nixon in Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 4, "HUD Civil Rights Policy Folder, the Bentley Library.

[76] *The Detroit News*, 11 December 1970. For Nixon's position paper on school integration, *The New York Times*, 25 March 1970.

"crusty" and "more aggressive" in achieving racial balance in the suburbs. "Now, to listen to you speak, it seems to me, at least as far as I'm concerned, a sense of retreat to accommodate the President. . ." Romney replied that he had, in effect, blazed the policy trail for Nixon and that there was no difference between himself and the President: "[T]he President's position is the identical position that I took in Warren, Michigan last summer and consequently, I'm in complete agreement with the positions that he stated in his recent press conference."[77]

Nixon was searching for a housing policy that would reduce the federal government's role and gain the support of communities like Warren. In an undated memo to Nixon, John Ehrlichman announced the formation of a working group on discrimination in housing composed of one individual each from HUD, HEW, and the Civil Rights section of the Justice Department, as well as some White House staff from the Domestic Policy Council. In creating the group, Ehrlichman called attention to the fact that the administration had to develop a housing policy before the 1972 election. It was still not too late to decide "how narrowly we can construe the law successfully and how much affirmative action we are willing to allow HUD to undertake" in pressuring communities to accept open housing.[78]

During the spring of 1971, the working group exchanged papers on fair housing,

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[77] Bernard Kalb interview in Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 1, "Attorney Generall Mitchell" Folder, the Bentley Library.

[78] Ehrlichman's memo to Nixon on forming the "working group" on housing policy in George Romney Post-gubernatorial collection, Box 4, "HUD Civil Rights Policy" folder, the Bentley Library.

the right of local government to shape housing development through zoning authority, the right of minority home buyers to be free from discrimination, as well as the question of how active the federal government should be in this area. A first draft of a position paper argued that the legal precedents were weak and vague for withholding federal funds to achieve fair housing in the suburbs. Leonard Garment, Special Consultant to the President took a leadership role in the group. Garment attempted to bridge the gap between the Nixon and Romney. He argued that even where the legislation is ambiguous, "It is in the national interest . . . [for the federal government] to assist communities in attempting to overcome" discriminatory housing practices. He also recommended a different public relations approach, emphasizing the federal government's rewards of grants to complying local governments, instead of stressing the punishment of withhold federal funds to recalcitrant ones.[79]

Garment unveiled the resulting Presidential Statement on Housing at a press conference on June 11, 1971. The statement defined the Administration's commitment to "individuals of similar income levels in the same housing market area hav[ing] a like range of housing choices available to them regardless of their race, color, religion or national origin." As Leonard Garment commented in the announcement of the Presidential Statement on Housing, "the Message. . . has as one of its principal objectives an explanation of the limitations as well as the mandates of various laws pertaining to equal opportunity in housing. . ." John Ehrlichman was more blunt in response to a reporter's observation that the statement appeared to give local communities "the right to choose

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[79] Drafts of Working Group on Housing Policy in ibid.

whether or not to admit low income and/or black" residents. "We are not giving anybody anything. The Constitution gave [the local communities] that right because. . . the Constitution separated governmental functions as between the Federal Government and the State Governments. One of the things that was left to the State Governments was the control over land use, and the States, in turn, have delegated. . . this land use control to counties and cities. We call it zoning. The Federal Government never was in that business."[80]

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In addition to its impact on the Nixon administration's thinking about the politics of national housing policy and civil rights, the Warren HUD controversy is also important for what it reveals about the changing social bases of political behavior in Warren. Comparing the precincts favoring the Democratic candidates for State Board of Education with the precincts with the highest percentage votes against HUD in the referendum, we find that they overlap. Both votes were highest in the south end of Warren. South Warren, the perennial Democratic stronghold of the city, and the area which stood to benefit most from the program, was also the area most willing to dispense with federal money for a mainstream Democratic Party social program, urban renewal.[81] Indeed, the

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[80] Post-gubernatorial Romney Collection, Box 13, Folder "President and Ehrlichman, 1971," the Bentley Library.

[81] See Appendix A for shaded precinct maps for the HUD vote and the Democratic vote for State Board of Education. This comparison is possible because both votes were on the same 1970 general election ballot. These maps show that the precincts with the highest 20 percent of both votes were concentrated in the southern part of the city. The southern, poorer neighborhoods voted heaviest to reject the HUD money. We can confirm this by grouping Warren's precincts within its (slightly larger) census tracts. We can then model an ordinary least squares regression equation for both the HUD vote and the

precincts where the HUD projects were underway were the heart of this opposition. Former Councilman Sabaugh explained this in terms of the fear of forced relocation on the part of south Warren's homeowners. He also recalled that most of the door-to-door canvassing by the anti-HUD forces was in south Warren near on-going HUD projects.[82]

Although Richard Sabaugh's explanation is persuasive, it should be considered in light of an attitude study of Warren commissioned by HUD in the summer of 1969. Among its other findings, the study tabulated responses to two statements regarding the impact of urban renewal on neighborhoods. One, "Urban renewal breaks up neighborhoods," received only about average affirmative response in south Warren neighborhoods (44.4 percent compared with 43.9 percent city-wide). The other, "Community a better place to live because of urban renewal," received an above-average affirmative response in these same neighborhoods (64.8 percent compared to 58.1 percent

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Democratic Party State Board of Education vote as a function of several independent variables: the median income, the median age, and the presence or absence of a HUD proposed project in the immediate vicinity. For the Democratic Party vote, holding the other independent variables constant in all cases, for every thousand dollars increase in the census tract median income, the Democratic vote declined by 2.66 percent; for every one year increase in median age within the census tract, the Democratic vote declined by .4 percent. But the presence or absence of a HUD project in the immediate vicinity had no significant impact on the Democratic vote. Thus, the typical Democratic Party voter tended to be poorer and younger. When we model a regression equation for the "yes" vote on the HUD referendum (directing the city to reject the HUD money) using the same independent variables we find that, for every thousand dollars increase in the census tract median income, the "yes" vote declined by .008 percent. [This small but statistically significant number (at the .10 level) demonstrates that the poorer parts of town voted more heavily to reject the HUD money.] Age had no significant impact on the HUD vote. Most interesting, if the census tract in question contained an on-going HUD project, the "yes" vote increased by 7.3 percent. Thus, the typical voter rejecting the HUD program tended to be poorer and living in the vicinity of a HUD project. (See Appendix B for the regression print-outs.)

[82] Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, Mt. Clemens, Michigan, 6 October 1995.

city-wide). Evidently, Warren's southern neighborhoods became more nervous about urban renewal between the summer of 1969, when the survey was done, and the fall of 1970, when the HUD referendum came to a vote.[83]

It was the HUD controversy itself that frightened south Warren. It evoked fears of neighborhood instability. This fear revolved around the ability of the individual homeowner to control the changes in the neighborhood. Part of the threat came from the planners who produced the urban renewal projects. Homeowners began to feel that the planners were operating with a kind of Olympian disregard for their concerns. In some cases the planners angered residents by recommending the demolition of houses and relocation of individual households. But the main fear of neighborhood instability concerned race and the proximity to Detroit of those neighborhoods targeted for urban renewal. These urban renewal projects on Warren's southern border with Detroit might become beachheads for a black invasion of Warren. Some of the residents of south Warren had already experienced "block busting" in post-war Detroit, as blacks moved into all-white neighborhoods. This shaped their attitudes about race and residency. This fear of community instability made the south end of Warren a fruitful area for anti-HUD canvassing by the Greater Warren Civic Association.

So it is not surprising that the 1969 HUD-commissioned attitude survey found that southeast Warren registered above-average negative responses to the statement: "I would not oppose the racial integration of my neighborhood with groups having economic and

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[83] *Community Attitude Study, Warren Michigan Community Renewal Program* (Mishawaka, Indiana: City Planning Associates, Inc., March 1970): Table B-10. (Copy in author's possession.)

social backgrounds similar to mine" (between 50-55.6 percent negative, compared to 45.2 percent negative, city-wide). The highly publicized HUD demands for open housing in Warren exacerbated this racial anxiety and led Warren's strongly Democratic southern precincts to vote against a program that had been shaped in the mid-1960s by liberal Democrat policy makers in the Johnson Administration.[84]

Thus, in addition to its impact on national housing policy, the HUD controversy of 1970 is important for two reasons. First, it revealed a conservative fault-line in Warren's political geology. The fact that the oldest and neediest parts of the Warren were also closest to Detroit had the effect of "cross-cutting" the Democratic Party's social base in Warren. Without the complicating factor of race, it is unlikely that southern Warren would have turned down the HUD grant. But, as the controversy developed, it spread confusion among rank-and-file Democrats, some of whom found the politics of race more compelling than the politics of class. Neither the churches, the unions, nor the Democratic Party were able to provide effective moral leadership on the issue of racism as it related to the ethos of home-ownership. Of the three, the Catholic Church probably tried the hardest.

Secondly, the HUD controversy is important as the first in a series of conflicts pitting the Democratic Party's rank-and-file against the federal government and the party's

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[84] Table B-9b, "Community Attitude Survey, Community Renewal Program, Warren, Michigan R-175" (City Planning Associates, Inc., March, 1970) (A copy of this survey commissioned by HUD is in the author's possession). The racial anxiety factor also explains why Warren's northern neighborhoods were more inclined to vote to accept the HUD money in the referendum. For one thing, renovation of the city's older neighborhoods was in their long-term interest. For another, even if they were apprehensive of the notion of open-housing, they were a long way from the front lines of a possible racial "invasion."

national policies. Soon, the city would become embroiled in other controversies – the war in Vietnam and the anti-war movement's right to protest it, the cross-district busing crisis, the youth rebellion in the factories, and the feminist movement. Each of these crises and controversies hurt the Democratic Party, as Warren's rank-and-file Democrats and their national and state leaders found themselves on opposite sides of significant social issues.

The government programs enacted to resolve these issues were being imposed on Warren's citizens by federal agencies, federal judges, and Supreme Court Justices, over whom they had no control. The people of Warren came to feel that there was no restraining power on agencies or federal district courts. On the other hand, these agencies and authorities felt that they were only using the enforcement language of the law to insure the local community's compliance with federal policies. Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act gave HUD Regional Administrator Francis Fisher the power to do exactly what he tried to do – to enforce housing desegregation by threatening to withhold federal funds. But, although he was within the bounds of his authority, he offended Warren's tradition of "home-rule democracy." The people of Warren believed in a democratic system that worked for the benefit of the majority. That, more or less, is how the New Deal was supposed to have worked. In the 1970s, however, the voters began to feel that the political system that they had grown up with was being corrupted by powerful and entrenched liberal elites who favored minorities. They responded by organizing grass-roots political pressure. They learned how to run "single-issue" political campaigns outside the Democratic Party. The 1970 HUD episode was part of this education. It taught them how to petition, how to call neighborhood meetings, how to produce and distribute political literature, and how to use the rivalries of the local politicians to forward

their cause. In these ways, the HUD controversy not only temporarily forestalled the breach of the "color line" at Warren's southern boundaries with Detroit; it also laid the groundwork for the rise of the culturally conservative and politically independent "Reagan Democrats" of the 1980s.

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In June 1970, a Detroit housewife wrote George Romney a letter. She stated that, although she had voted for him twice for Governor and though she felt sure that he was a moral and compassionate man, "very compassionate towards Negroes and other minority groups," she was beginning to wonder if he understood the plight of "the ordinary, law-abiding, average citizen." She asked Romney to imagine that he were a working man ("a driver") who had worked at the same job for thirty years and provided for his wife and family. Finally he had saved the money to take out a mortgage on a $10,000 home and had made improvements on the property so that its worth grew to $15,000, although he still had twenty years left on the mortgage. Then he read in the paper that the federal government was allowing jobless people to buy $29,000 homes "paid for with our money through federal and local taxes" and that the maintenance costs would be subsidized through taxes:

> If all this happened to you, what would be your reaction? A sense of futility of working, a furious anger at the injustice of it, a bitterness and resentment? I think so. We are not cruel or bigoted people. We believe everyone should have a decent place to live. Surely, though, if we manage to live in a decent home, in a decent neighborhood and bring up our children decently in a $15,000 home it is not necessary to reward people who do not work with a home worth twice that value. Surely, you must know that pride of ownership comes with earned ownership. Isn't owning a home a privilege that should be earned? Isn't it an insult to a working man to use his money to purchase homes much more expensive than his own for those who have not earned it? . . . You seem to be capable of putting yourself in the

> position of members of minority groups and understanding their problems. Are you also capable of putting yourself in the place of an ordinary working man even though he is a member of the majority? [85]

In his reply, Romney did not take issue with the woman's version of the mortgage subsidy provisions of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Instead, he frankly confessed, "I wish I had favorable answers to all the points you raise. Unfortunately, I do not, but I do appreciate your taking the time to write me as you did." This Detroit housewife might just as well have been living in Warren. Her complaint echoed a dawning dissatisfaction of working class whites, whether they lived in the city or the suburbs. Raised in the Depression or in the shadow of the Depression and having benefited from New Deal programs aimed at alleviating some of the hardship of working class people as a whole, they were beginning to question liberal federal programs – programs which, in their view, they paid for but did not benefit from. Had she been living in Warren at the time of the referendum, she would probably have voted to reject the HUD money. Had she cast a vote in favor of rejecting the HUD funds it might well have been as much in defiance of the liberal elites as out of the fear of integration. It was this federal intrusion into the lives of "ordinary, law-abiding, average citizens" and homeowners that inspired the bitterness with which people remember the Warren HUD controversy.

Twenty-five years later, former Councilman Richard Sabaugh wrote a guest editorial in the *Macomb Daily* in which he celebrated the victory of the anti-HUD forces as the harbinger of the populist conservative reaction against liberalism. For Sabaugh

[85] George Romney Post-gubernatorial collection, Box 22, "'W' Miscellaneous 1970" Folder, the Bentley Library.

(who became a Republican member of the Macomb County Public Works Commission), the HUD controversy revealed the people of Warren in an heroic light:

> The [referendum] election in Warren was the first shot in the revolution against big government telling the people of a community what it thought was best for that community. Now, Democrats and Republicans alike decry big government and promise to "get big government off our backs." The term "big government" has come to mean faceless government bureaucrats deciding what ridiculous mandates had to be followed to get our tax dollars returned to us. Warren rejected that, and the political landscape changed forever. [86]

Francis Fisher, the Chicago HUD Regional Administrator in charge of the Warren program, also remembers the Warren HUD episode as a victory of sorts, but for different reasons. For Fisher, the Warren HUD saga demonstrated the possibility of administering government programs in a way that supports a coherent government policy:

> Our efforts were to structure the administration of the federal programs so that they would be responsive to policy. . . and we had a lot of success in that. . . . In the case of Warren the policy of the President was able to be exercised in a coherent way rather than just as a series of programs. The problem was that that fell right into Nixon's hands. Nixon's policy turned out to be to ignore his responsibilities to enforce the fair housing legislation in an effort to court the blue collar vote. [87]

In other words, the HUD Chicago office ran the programs in Warren so as to forward the Administration's presumed policy of desegregation and to improve the efficiency of this policy. Only Nixon's decision to back away from integration and play the politics of race prevented this outcome. For Francis Fisher, the HUD debacle had a fundamentally ironic meaning. It was a reminder that the best efforts of people who work

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[86] *The Macomb Daily*, 8 September 1995.

[87] Francis Fisher, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 31 March 1996.

for the federal government – even when they succeed in applying principles consistently and overcome the tendency of bureaucracies to scramble their programs and subvert their policies – in the end, these efforts may be thwarted by the human weakness of a venal and opportunistic higher-up. The HUD story was a bitter farce. The operation was a success, but the victim died.

Gladys Kane, a Warren housewife turned newspaper reporter who ended up as Chief Housing Counselor for Warren's Planning and Urban Renewal Department before she and her colleagues lost their jobs as a result of the referendum, doesn't think of the HUD controversy as a victory for anybody. She remembers it with pain:

> It was a tragedy. I don't know if I'm still over the hurt. It was a devastating experience to go through. After it was all over I just couldn't believe that people could be so bad. But then I also met a lot of people who I felt were really good people. It did make me more able to see two sides to a controversy. . . It was a failure of political leadership, both local leaders. . . using racism for personal gain by feeding the fears of people. . . and also HUD didn't do anything to help things in Warren. . . If they had just let us work this through, the ordinary people would have seen through the racial agitation of some of the local leaders. . . [88]

[88] Gladys Kane, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 March 1996.

Chapter 3

The Vietnam War and the Democratic Party

The "Wall," the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., where the names of America's Vietnam war dead are chiseled into black marble in order of date of death, includes forty-one residents of Warren. Warren's first official Vietnam war fatality was Corporal Ronald Skoviak, an enlisted Marine helicopter crew member killed by hostile fire in Quang Nam province on October 8, 1963. The record does not say when Corporal Skoviak began his tour of duty in Vietnam, but he was just twenty-one years old when he died, though he had already completed four years in the service. Warren's last officially recorded Vietnam war death, Army Corporal Robert Enos, Jr., was an unmarried twenty-year-old draftee who had been in Vietnam for six months when he died of wounds sustained in an explosion[1] in Thau Thien province on January 14, 1971.

As disturbing as the loss of forty-one young men is to any community, Warren's quotient of war deaths was less than three one-hundredths of one percent of the city's 1970 population. This was about average for the nation as a whole. In other ways, Warren's contribution to the war effort was typical of blue collar communities in other parts of the country. The men went to war young; the average age of Warren's war dead was not quite twenty-one. Patriotism or wanderlust prompted many to enlist; only a third were draftees. And for those who met death in Southeast Asia, it usually came early. Among Warren's dead, the average survival time in Vietnam was a little over four months. Fifteen percent died accidentally; a third were killed by small arms fire; the rest were either

[1] The military record groups fatalities caused by the explosion of land mines, booby traps, and grenades.

shot down in helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft or died on the ground as a result of artillery, mortar, or rocket fire, grenades, booby traps, or land mines.[2]

Vietnam was the first major American war fought since Warren became an incorporated city in 1957. The local newspaper, the *Macomb Daily*, tried to cover the local impact of the war in various ways. When the Selective Service system instituted the draft lottery in early 1970, it duly printed the order of call. There also were the grim reminders of war in the death notices of soldiers like Sp.4 Albert J. Carrier III on August 28, 1969, or Pfc. Thomas Petela ("Somewhere in Cambodia. . .") on May 20, 1970. Occasionally, too, the growing national debate over Vietnam found its way into the pages of the local press. In the wake of the antiwar protests following the invasion of Cambodia, the *Macomb Daily* printed excerpts of a letter from Pfc. Duane W. Furton of neighboring Clinton Township, who wrote home that the demonstrations "hurt the morale of the men fighting here. . ." The paper also printed the views of Sgt. Gary Stephens, a recently returned decorated veteran, who thought that the war was "senseless" and that "the Vietnamese people do not want American troops in their homeland."[3]

The years of U.S. engagement in Vietnam coincided with the period when Warren's voters began to stray from the Democratic Party fold. Was there a connection? What was the impact of the Vietnam war on the people of Warren and their political loyalties? How did the war affect the attitudes of Warren's voters on matters of

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[2] "Michigan Military Personnel on the Wall," EDS Corp., 1993. A copy of this document is held by Macomb County Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 154.

[3] *The Macomb Daily* 28 August 1969; 20 May 1970; 29 May 1970; 23 August 1969.

patriotism and isolationism, on the impact of the federal government in their lives, and on their views of what one could expect from the two major political parties? Although generally accorded a pivotal role in the political life of the nation during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the influence of the war in Vietnam on American politics and voting behavior remains subject to debate. Most of the studies of voting behavior in relation to the war are national statistical surveys. Local studies are rare and usually limited to one aspect of the question, such as blue-collar attitudes towards antiwar demonstrators. They are typically conducted by sociologists or political scientists with little interest in narrative. In the case of Warren, we unfortunately lack good historical public opinion polling data on attitudes about the war. Nor can we compare primary election voting data for antiwar presidential candidates over time, since Michigan did not conduct presidential primary elections before 1972. In short, our quantitative data is sparse, and whatever conclusions we draw must be tentative and circumstantial.[4]

Among historians and political journalists, views of the political impact of the Vietnam war vary with the focus of study. Alan Matasow's *Unraveling of America* emphasized the split that the conflict in Vietnam precipitated in the foreign policy outlook

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[4] National statistical studies on voting and the Vietnam War include John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973); Benjamin I. Page and Richard A. Brody, "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process: The Vietnam Issue," *The American Political Science Review* Vol. LXVI (September 1972), 960-978. One local study (of Buffalo, New York) is by Kenneth Heineman, "The Silent Majority Speaks: Antiwar Protest and Backlash, 1965-1972," *Peace and Change*, Vol. 17 No. 4 (October 1992), 402-433. Another non-quantitative local study is Peter Osnos, "The War in Riverdale," in Anthony Lake, ed., *The Vietnam Legacy: The War, American Society and the Future of American Foreign Policy* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 66-76. See Harris, *The Anguish of Change* for a "snap shot" of American attitudes in 1970 based on this pollster's extensive experience in interpreting trends.

of the post-World War II liberal elites – pitting defenders of the Cold War containment doctrine, like Lyndon Johnson and most of his advisers, against critics like Senators J. William Fulbright, George McGovern, and author Norman Mailer, who rejected containment theory. Most of the critics worried that the war was gutting domestic programs. Moreover, they charged that containment thinking was outmoded in a world where the socialist bloc itself was poly-centric. For them, foreign policy should be flexible and governed by the spirit of John F. Kennedy's well-publicized social programs for nations undergoing de-colonization. The result was a quarrel over the very meaning of liberalism in the realm of foreign policy.[5]

Enlarging on the changing meaning of liberalism in relation to foreign policy, Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall's book, *Chain Reaction*, described the growing strains between the Democratic Party's traditional constituency and its concern for protecting the rights of cultural minorities. The antiwar insurgency among the Democrats, "dove-tailed in many respects with the rising assertion through-out the 1960s and 1970s of expanded rights by blacks and women . . . and also by groups with far less public support – gays, lesbians, prisoners, pornographers, sexual liberationists, the mentally ill, atheists, undocumented workers, and so on." Thus, according to the Edsalls, the antiwar liberals who took over the Democratic Party after 1972 defined liberalism more in terms of cultural pluralism than in the New Deal tradition of class-based economic reforms. The Vietnam war was important primarily as a cultural-political reference point that these

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[5] Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 376-394. Matusow notes that Senator Fulbright (of Arkansas) was no liberal on civil rights, though he led the Senate in opposition to the war in Vietnam. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 380.

"special interests" shared.[6]

In *Why Americans Hate Politics*, E. J. Dionne discussed the ill fit between politics as practiced by both major parties and the changing attitudes of the electorate. He believed that the New Left played a pivotal role in creating the conditions of the growing rift between mainstream Democratic voters and their party's liberal leadership. It was the New Left that succeeded in isolating liberalism by holding it responsible for the war while at the same time eliding the differences between liberalism and the unruly behavior of its critics:

> In a sense, liberal and left-of-center Democrats got the worst of all worlds: on the one hand, they were blamed for a conflict that became 'liberalism's war,' and the New Left played no small part in establishing that Vietnam could fairly be seen as the product of liberalism. On the other hand, the Democratic Party's subsequent close association with the antiwar movement tarred it in the eyes of moderate and conservative voters as the party of military weakness, flag burning, and draft dodging.[7]

Telltale Heart, a recent book by Adam Garfinkle, agreed with Dionne on the importance of the New Left. Indeed, Garfinkle had not yet forgiven the New Left for stabbing cold-war liberalism in the back. In his view, it was the New Left that prevented the United States from establishing in Vietnam "a Southeast Asian democracy" along the lines of South Korea. Garfinkle discussed the government of South Vietnam in the late 1960s as a "friendly tyranny," worth preserving, and the Vietnam War as "winnable." Unfortunately, the New Left leaders of the antiwar movement "paralyzed" the Johnson administration, causing it to adopt a policy of disengagement in the wake of the 1968 Tet

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[6] Thomas and Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction*, 69.

[7] E. J. Dionne, Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 51-52.

Offensive, just at the point when the war became winnable. As to the effect of the antiwar movement on the Democratic Party, Garfinkle joined other writers in the judgment that the antiwar movement "aided in the disintegration of the Democratic Party" by offending its "critical base, the coalition of Franklin Roosevelt and the liberal internationalists that followed him."[8]

What offended the Democratic Party's "critical base" in the working class, in Garfinkle's view, was the same thing that attracted much of its base among youth: the counterculture of drugs, outlandish dress, and conspicuous absence of the work ethic. Although the mounting casualties of the war gave the antiwar movement an opening for talking to workers about the war, "the irreverent counter-cultural style adopted by the movement destroyed that chance forever. Working-class men and women hated the movement as much or more than they hated the war." This was the "negative follower" effect – a situation arising when the public's negative attitudes towards a group with a well-known position on an issue (in this case, antiwar protesters) outweigh the attitudes towards the issue itself.[9]

The counterculture and the limits it imposed on the potential coalition between the New Left and the labor movement also attracted the attention of Peter B. Levy in his book, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*. Not only did the counterculture antagonize workers more than the New Left's politics, but the source of that antagonism went to the

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[8] Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Heart: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 18-19, 30-31, 280-282.

[9] Ibid., 123.

heart of the cultural divide between older workers and the New Left and its youth following:

> The New Left perceived alienation as the main problem, not exploitation or material deprivation. . . [They] maintained that the workplace or the economic sphere were secondary and that leisure-time in itself did not provide authenticity. Indeed, they argued that in modern American society leisure in itself was alienating.[10]

According to Levy, the New Left critique of America entailed an elitist rejection of the life-style of the older generation of workers who had survived the Depression and fought their way into a modicum of economic security. This security, however, was always conditional, and workers "continually faced the threat of slipping back into poverty." These threatened workers were bound to react with hostility to New Left critiques of American materialism and to New Left disdain for the "privileged" status of white male workers (compared to the condition of blacks, women, youth, and Third World workers). The flash point in this mutual disregard, according to Levy, frequently involved the flaunting of symbols, especially flags. The May 1970 "hard-hat riot" of construction workers against antiwar protesters on Wall Street in New York City crystallized this antipathy.[11]

This brief survey of historical scholarship on the Vietnam war, liberalism, and the Democratic Party suggests a common motif. Historians, many of whom have roots in the post-World War II liberal tradition, conceive the break-up of liberalism as a narrative of decline. The usual list of suspects responsible for this decline includes the New Left, the

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[10] Peter B. Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 86-87.

[11] Ibid., 94-95, 99.

antiwar movement, and the youth counterculture. By attacking liberal ideology, the New Left leadership of the antiwar movement demoralized and confused the Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the more outlandish aspects of youth culture reflected in the antiwar movement sorely tried the patience of ordinary citizens, who associated these excesses with the permissive attitudes of liberalism. This view is shared by the antiwar movement's sympathizers as well as its critics.[12]

The war in Vietnam created its own critics, even in Warren, which never had a reputation for radicalism or, for that matter, even for liberalism. Eventually, the antiwar movement took to the streets in Warren. First, however, critics of the war attempted to change the Democratic Party's policy from within. In the state Democratic Party, a faction emerged – the Conference of Concerned Democrats (later, the New Democratic Coalition, or the New Democrats[13]) – dedicated to changing the party's pro-war platform. This division ran rift throughout the Michigan Democratic Party, including Macomb County. As one Macomb County party regular recalled, the war caused disagreements even among party leaders:

> The party leaders were starting to divide over Vietnam, so I'm not sure that we wouldn't have had problems anyway. In 1966, [former Michigan Governor] Mennen Williams was on one side. He was a hawk. Phil Hart [Senator Philip Hart] was on the other side. He was a dove. . . This was a deeper division than the party versus the New Democrats. The New Democrats were a bunch of young people who thought

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[12] Within this historical consensus one might also cite such widely divergent treatments as Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties* (New York: Summit Books, 1990) and Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987).

[13] The "New Democrats" of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Michigan should not be confused with the "New Democrats" associated with the national Democratic Leadership Council of the 1980s and 1990s.

> they were going to change the world, but in fact, they were just reflecting what was going on every place else. . .[14]

A former Macomb County antiwar activist agreed that the war created divisions among the party leadership. More important, however, was the split between rank-and-file reformers and the party leadership. This split crippled the party's ability to recruit and mobilize younger members:

> The war in Vietnam was a destabilizing event for the Democratic Party. . . You had these party leaders, especially out of the UAW, who took the Great Society position that the war was unfortunate, but that you could have guns and butter. Then there were the antiwar members of the party who built a caucus inside the party and they would fight it out tooth and nail with the party leadership. The Democratic Party. . . is still split over these issues, for instance in Oakland County, after twenty years. . . This weakens the party and cuts it off from a potential source of activism.[15]

The antiwar activists did not want to split the party. They wanted to change the party's position on the war. But when the state party leaders refused to support Eugene McCarthy's 1968 antiwar bid for the presidential nomination, the antiwar caucus poured its energy into what became a multi-issue fight over the party platform. In the midst of this fight, they also forced changes in the party rules. Thus, in a sense, the insurgents got what they wanted. By 1972, the national Democratic Party adopted George McGovern's peace platform and embraced the reform of party rules. On the other hand, the insurgents never gained control of the party and, in Michigan's 12th Congressional District, which included Warren, the Democratic Party continued to lose voter support during those years. After backing the Democratic presidential ticket by 77 percent in 1964 and 58

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[14] Paul Donahue, interview by author tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan.

[15] James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

percent in 1968, only 35 percent of Warren's voters cast their ballots for McGovern in 1972. The first part of this chapter tells the story of the antiwar movement in the Macomb County Democratic Party. The second part discusses the antiwar movement in the streets, using the example of the Warren Tank Plant march of April 30, 1971.[16]

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In early 1966, liberal faculty members at Wayne State University in Detroit began talking to one another about urging the state Democratic Party to adopt an antiwar position. In March, ten of these activists formed the "Council for Democratic Action." They drafted a proposed platform plank on Vietnam (stop the bombing, hold free elections in South Vietnam, etc.), which they sent to the Central Committee of the state party. When the Central Committee rejected the demands, the group decided to organize a caucus within the party. To find allies, they examined precinct delegate voting records on liberal issues such as endorsing black activist George Crockett for Detroit Recorder's Court Judge. They began organizing in the 17th Congressional District in northwest Detroit, an integrated neighborhood of liberal professionals. After a year of gathering their forces, they called a meeting of the "Liberal Conference" in March 1967 "to form a permanent conference for increasing liberal influence in the Democratic Party." Otto Feinstein, who participated in the conference, recalls:

> As the war escalated, more and more people became convinced that this was not . . . a secondary political issue, that this was a key issue of what could be done in the United States, and that you had to change the path that the United States was on, and

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[16] *Macomb County Canvassed Records*, 1964, 1968, 1972, Macomb County Clerks' Office, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

> realize that what was going on in Vietnam was, in a sense, more important than what was going on in the United States.[17]

The group held a statewide conference on June 10, 1967, at Wayne State University, where the body adopted the name, "Michigan Conference of Concerned Democrats." Four hundred people attended the meeting. The speakers, Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh, State Senators Roger Craig and Coleman Young, and State Democratic Party Chairman Zolton Ferency, repeatedly drew the connection between the weaknesses in the national party's domestic program and the war in Vietnam. Speakers from the floor stressed the need to continue with similar forums and to organize within the Democratic Party by running slates of precinct delegates. The group began publishing a newsletter, *The Concerned Democrat*, in July 1967.[18]

These events reflected the national upheaval over Vietnam inside the Democratic Party. In the fall of 1967, Eugene McCarthy began to campaign against President Johnson and the war. Two antiwar activists from Americans for Democratic Action, Allard

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[17] This paragraph follows an unpublished paper by Tom Moore, "Michigan Democrats and the Vietnam War: The 17th District Liberal Conference and Michigan Concerned Democrats." Quote from Otto Feinstein, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 12 September 1996.

[18] *The Concerned Democrat* 1, no. 1 (July 1967); 1, no. 3 (September 1967). Copies of internal documents and early numbers of *The Concerned Democrat* donated to the author by Al Fishman, who served as Chairman of the New Democrats (hereafter, "Fishman Papers"). The entire Al Fishman Collection has since been deposited in Wayne State University's Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs and should soon be open to researchers. Coleman Young's participation in the founding conference of the Concerned Democrats did not guarantee his continued participation in the organization. He, like most of the politicians, ended up supporting Hubert Humphrey's presidential bid, although he later supported the New Democrats on certain issues, such as the 1972 party platform plank in defense of black activist Angela Davis. Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

Lowenstein and Curtis Gans, organized a National Conference of Concerned Democrats in Chicago that December, with Eugene McCarthy as the featured speaker. Other Democrats across the nation were raising demands that the party abandon its defense of President Johnson's war policies. One of these was Ferency, the maverick Chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party. (Although Ferency occupied the post of party chairman, his views on the Vietnam war diverged from most of the state party leadership.) On September 17, 1967, Ferency gave a speech attacking the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy and urging the party to choose a different presidential candidate. The speech caught the state party leadership off guard. Ferency followed this with two press releases in October, arguing against a second term for LBJ. In November, he repeated his opposition to Johnson in a meeting of the district leadership of the party in Port Huron. Isolated by the party leaders, Ferency resigned the party chairmanship, but not before he invited the antiwar element in the Party to organize and "take over" the party. As one activist remembers a meeting of the Concerned Democrats about this time:

> [M]ost of the people who were rebelling had absolutely no power, no authority, no standing in the Democratic Party. . . So Zolton began to preach, "You know, the Democratic Party is there for the taking. You want to take control of the Democratic Party? Run for precinct delegate. It's yours for the taking!". . . Theoretically, this was true. . . But when a few people became precinct delegates and started to get involved in the Democratic Party, what they found was that the Democratic Party was a closed corporation. Between the labor movement, which was very supportive of Johnson and the war. . . and the fiefdoms of the party leadership, they had no chance.[19]

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[19] Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan. On Lowenstein, see Willliam Chafe, *Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1968* (New York: Atheneum Press, 1969), 83-88. On Zolton Ferency's criticism of the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy and subsequent resignation, Dudley Buffa, *Union Power and American Democracy: The UAW and the Democratic Party 1935-72* (Ann Arbor: University of

This turmoil in the Michigan party also touched Warren. One young "McCarthy kid," Chuck Wilbur, who attended Cousino High School in Warren, remembers that he and his classmates became McCarthy enthusiasts during the Senator's New Hampshire campaign. Wilbur canvassed neighborhoods in Detroit as well as in the suburbs. He even traveled to Indiana in the spring of 1968 to knock on doors during the primary, though his mother wouldn't let him go to Chicago for the Democratic National Convention:

> I had a group of friends in school and we were fairly clean-cut and serious students. We took the accelerated classes and we talked about the war together. . . I started going down to the McCarthy office which was at Six Mile and San Juan in northwest Detroit. I was too young to drive then and my father would drive me down there . . . or I'd go set up a card table at the Tech Center shopping plaza in Warren and sell McCarthy buttons and posters.[20]

Another reformer in the Macomb County Democratic Party was Moira Sims, a young housewife who moved to Macomb County from Ohio. Sims came from a cosmopolitan background; her father had been a correspondent for *The New York Times*. Her new next door neighbor in Macomb County was Hy Fireman, a Democratic Party activist who encouraged her to run for precinct delegate. "Well, I won. . . I ran as a 'Shirley Chisholm Delegate' and I had this button which said, 'End Racism in Macomb County By Any Means Necessary!' . . . I mean, we were more than just [Democratic] Party people, we were revolutionaries! . . . So, obviously, if anybody had looked at what I

Michigan Press, 1984), 70-71, 107-108 (hereafter, Buffa, *Union Power* vol. 1.) Like George Romney, Zolton Ferency awaits his biographer. See Zolton Ferency's 1988 oral history interview with Tom Downs, 38-40, ALUA. On Ferency's press releases, see *The Concerned Democrat* 1, no. 4 (October 1967), Fishman papers.

[20] Chuck Wilbur, interview by author. Tape recording, Southfield, Michigan, 27 July 1996.

ran on, they would never have voted for me."[21]

The state Democratic regulars treated the Concerned Democrats as upstarts and amateurs. The judgment was largely true. On the other hand, the state leadership was oblivious to the gravity of the war issue. Few of the party leaders, with the notable exception of Ferency, had any qualms about U.S. policy in Vietnam when the issue first arose. After Lyndon Johnson decided not to seek reelection in March 1968, they fell in line behind the nomination of Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who had supported Johnson's war policies as vice president and was reluctant as candidate to drift too far from administration policy. In its defense of established policy, the Michigan Democratic Party was not above harassing individual Concerned Democrats. The Macomb County party committee censured one of its members, Clarence R. Simon, who belonged to the Concerned Democrats. Simon, an autoworker, also served on the state Democratic Party Central Committee and mentioned that fact while giving a speech for the Concerned Democrats. Macomb County party chairman, Leon Garwood of Warren, threatened Simon with expulsion from the county committee if he again used his official title "while speaking on behalf of another political group." Garwood again displayed the Macomb County party's absolute loyalty to the state party line in his reaction to Ferency's resignation as party chairman: "I'm happy to see that Ferency has resigned the post. If he has any comments he can make them as a private citizen. . . [W]e are in support of

[21] Dr. Moira Kennedy Sims, interview by author, tape recording, 7 November 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

President Johnson."[22]

In part because of this hostile reception and also due to their strong commitment to civil rights, the Macomb County Concerned Democrats somewhat self-consciously called themselves "the Liberal Coalition." One wing of the group evolved out of the effort to unionize public school teachers. For a while, this "political community" of younger teachers incubated and grew on its own, often in the context of defending teachers' rights to present controversial material in class in the face of opposition from principals, parents, and more conservative teachers. Only later did it contact the Michigan New Democratic Coalition. James Johnstone, an early activist in the teachers' union, recalled those years:

> [Early in the 1960s] the county officers ran the party. And that was people like Carl Parris and Tom Welsh. . . Now, they frequently operated from behind the scenes, but they ran the party. They had the support of the UAW and the AFL. . . My own political community consisted of the union activists that I was working with at Kennedy Junior High School in the Fraser School District. . . One of these people was Jim Saad. Jim was a very strong idealist. And also a very good speaker and organizer. . . He took the lead and was absolutely committed on issues of fighting racism and the War in Vietnam. . . We took the war issue to the national conventions of the American Federation of Teachers in order to challenge [AFT President] Albert Shanker's position on the war, but of course we failed.[23]

After it affiliated with the state Conference of Concerned Democrats, the Macomb County Liberal Coalition began to compete with the party leaders in district and state conventions over precinct delegates, party platform, and rules. In the May 1968 county convention, the Macomb County party leaders refused to allow members of the Liberal

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[22] *Macomb Daily* (early 1968); Chuck Wilbur, interview by author, tape recording, 27 July 1996, Southfield, Michigan; John Bruff, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 19 September 1996; *Macomb Daily*, 1 December 1967.

[23] James Johnstone, interview by author, tape recording, 13 September 1996, Clinton Township, Michigan.

Coalition to fill the vacant precinct delegate slots. One member of the Liberal Coalition remembered the confrontation:

> We went to the county convention . . . and they had the slate all set up for the party line and they slammed the door on us. So we went outside and formed a rump convention and elected our own precinct delegates. Then we filed a lawsuit and went to court. . . and the judge we got was a Republican, so he loved it and kept it in the air for awhile. Then he referred it to the state convention and naturally they gave it a kangaroo court hearing . . . and seated the regular delegation.[24]

Probably the most turf-conscious member of the Michigan Democratic Party "establishment" was Sam Fishman,[25] Director of the UAW Michigan Community Action Program (CAP) since 1967. Paul Donahue, longtime Macomb County party regular, described Fishman's view of the Concerned Democrats as "not so much communists, he saw them as just a threat to his political power." Fishman's power derived from the system of UAW influence that had grown up in Michigan politics since the New Deal. As the historian of this system of influence notes, by the late 1960s, the UAW had "representation in virtually every county and district in the state. . ." It could thus "exert influence at every level of the party and at every step of the process that began with the election of precinct delegates and culminated in the selection of the state delegation to the national convention."[26]

Traditionally, the Macomb County Democratic Party Committee was a top-down organization. Prior to 1964, the members of the county committee were appointed by the

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[24] Ibid.; quote from Gerald Deneau, telephone interview by author tape recording, 11 July 1996.

[25] Sam Fishman, of the UAW, is not to be confused with Al Fishman of the Concerned Democrats.

[26] Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan. Buffa, *Union Power* vol. 1, 234.

Democratic Party county officials and state legislators. In 1964, a state law loosened the system somewhat. Now, the elected precinct delegates selected half of the county committee. Still, the county party apparatus was far from responsive to the party's rank-and-file and internal party matters were decided by the leadership.[27]

One of the powers in the Macomb County Democratic Party was UAW Region 1 Director, George Merrelli. Merrelli was a machine-politician, both in the union and in the Democratic Party. Since the thirties, he had built his union career on the twin principles of loyalty to the CIO and opposition to the Communists. In 1964, Merrelli fought off a challenge to his power in the Democratic Party county committee by Congressman James O'Hara. O'Hara was a liberal in the Hubert Humphrey mold who had represented Macomb County in Congress since 1958. O'Hara's attempt to wrest control of the county party from Merrelli ended in failure as the UAW precinct delegates fell in line behind the Director. The UAW did cede some of its controlling influence in the county committee in 1968, when O'Hara's campaign manager, John Bruff, served as manager of Hubert Humphrey's Michigan campaign. Bruff succeeded Leon Garwood as Democratic Party county chairman in 1968. As chairman, Bruff introduced reforms to increase the rank-and-file participation in the county committee. He also attempted on several occasions to mediate differences between the Liberal Coalition and George Merrelli.[28]

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[27] Buffa, *Union Power* vol. 1, 234.

[28] Ibid., 180-185. James Johnstone, interview by author, tape recording, 13 September 1996, Clinton Township, Michigan. John Bruff, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 19 September 1996. For a brief note on George Merrelli's UAW background, see Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 133.

The Liberal Coalition got along better with Bruff than with Merrelli. But, although Bruff was more flexible than Merrelli and more open to party reform, the two had one thing in common: they both supported the war in Vietnam. Thus, from the fall of 1967 until the Chicago National Democratic Convention in August 1968, the Liberal Coalition propagandized its Macomb County constituency, recruited, and consolidated its organization. Gerald Deneau, an officer in a Detroit pressmen's union who lived in Warren, remembers the phone-tree character of much of the organizing:

> We tried to find other people. . . by divying up names of precinct delegates. So we would call them and ask them how they stood on the war. . . Most of them supported Johnson, but we began to find some "gold mines" as we went along. Some were hesitant about the war. . . We knew that most of the delegates would fall in behind the party line no matter what, but we felt that there was also a concern out there.[29]

In a September 1967 letter to the state Central Committee, the state Concerned Democrats somewhat impertinently outlined two goals: educational (so that the party faithful would once again be able to recognize the difference between a Democrat and a Republican) and political (to strengthen the will of the Party to undertake programs in the best interest of most of the people of Michigan). The letter also assured the party leadership that the Concerned Democrats were "not interested in the destruction of the Democratic Party" nor did they even regard themselves "as a group of 'dissenting' Democrats." They based their claim to legitimacy on their adherence to the 1964 party platform which said little about Vietnam and much about domestic reform. Between January 1968 and the Democratic National Convention in August, the Concerned

[29] Gerald Deneau, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 July 1996.

Democrats claimed to have recruited 1,000 members.[30]

The first, and in some ways most important, crisis for the Concerned Democrats came in the chaotic days leading up to and following the 1968 national convention in Chicago. McCarthy made an unexpectedly good showing in the New Hampshire primary in March 1968 and Johnson withdrew his candidacy, making way for Hubert Humphrey. Robert Kennedy began campaigning in late March and was assassinated in early June. These were heady and confusing times for the Concerned Democrats. On the one hand, Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race heartened them. As a public statement issued a week after Johnson's abdication exulted:

> The Michigan Conference of Concerned Democrats wishes to point out to the party professionals – to those who said that an incumbent is always renominated, to those who said that all Democrats must stand by their President, to those who said that dissent was unhealthy for the Party, to those who chastised Zolton Ferency for speaking out, to those who said there would be no other candidate in 1968, to those who said Senator Eugene McCarthy would be humiliated in New Hampshire and Wisconsin, to those who said Senator Robert Kennedy would never enter the 1968 race, to those who said Lyndon B. Johnson would never withdraw from the race – that history has proven them wrong. History has proven the Michigan Conference of Concerned Democrats and similar groups right.[31]

But events were moving at break-neck speed, and the Concerned Democrats were not sufficiently unified to make the decisions that were thrust upon them. Initially, they needed to figure out how to pressure the state Central Committee to withhold support from Hubert Humphrey. Failing this, they had to decide what to do in the wake of

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[30] Letter signed by James Pino, Becky O'Malley, Alan H. Jones, Al Fishman, and Lynn Parsons to officers of the Democratic State Central Committee, 25 September 1967, Fishman papers; Richard Baker, "Can Sander Levin Save the Democratic Party in Michigan?" *Scope Magazine* [Detroit, Michigan], (5 October 1968), 11.

[31] "An Analysis of Recent Events," in Fishman papers.

Humphrey's nomination. The first problem had to do with the fact that the party rules stipulated that Michigan chose its delegates to the national convention at the most recent state party convention. The 1968 delegates from Michigan were chosen in the 1966 state party convention. This precluded much of a Concerned Democrats presence at the national convention, although they issued press releases claiming that the state party's intention to go to the convention with 70 percent of the delegates committed to Humphrey went against "all indications both here in Michigan and nationally that 60-80 percent of the Democratic Party wants change."[32]

The state party Central Committee ignored the Concerned Democrats' plea that members of the antiwar caucus be included as at-large delegates in the Michigan delegation. The insurgents went to the convention anyway. James Pino, Chairman of the statewide Conference of Concerned Democrats, expressed their collective dissatisfaction at an August 20 press conference: "The nomination of Hubert Humphrey on a platform supporting the Johnson administration's policies of total engagement with communism abroad and limited engagement with poverty at home will enhance the possibility of a Nixon victory in November." He hinted at a revolt in the liberal ranks of the party and announced a special state convention of the Concerned Democrats in September, should Humphrey receive the party nomination. Pino promised, however, that they would "continue working within the Democratic Party so long as it appears to hold the most

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[32] Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan. "Michigan Delegates to the National Democratic Convention," "Balanced Representation Sought" in Fishman papers.

promise for meaningful political change."[33]

While the regulars in the party cast 72 ½ of Michigan's 96 delegate votes for Humphrey, the riotous events outside the Chicago convention center horrified even the mainstream Michigan Democrats. As one alternate delegate remembers, the police attack on the demonstrators, reporters, and bystanders convinced him that "we were in serious trouble in the party and that the war was a major contributing factor." This mood carried over to a one-day state Democratic Party convention in Grand Rapids held immediately after the national convention. Outrage at the Chicago Convention may have temporarily inflated the appearance of support for McCarthy. Liberal-leaning party members teamed up with the McCarthy supporters to pass the "peace plank" on Vietnam which the Chicago convention had just defeated. They also passed a resolution condemning Chicago Mayor Richard Daley for "the shocking display of brutality on the streets of Chicago."[34]

The second problem – how to respond to Humphrey's nomination – was more trying for the Concerned Democrats. How to approach the Humphrey campaign was the subject of the special convention of the Concerned Democrats held on September 27, 1968, in downtown Detroit. There, they changed their name to the New Democratic Coalition of Michigan and adopted a full platform of positions, including "Changing America's Priorities," "Racial Discrimination in the Democratic Party," "On the Farm

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[33] "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (August 20, 1968)," in Fishman papers.

[34] *The New York Times*, 1 September 1968; quote from John Krnacik, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 July 1996; Douglas Crase, "New Politics for Democrats," *The Nation*, 4 November 1968; on state party chairman Sander Levin's attempts to placate the Concerned Democrats, see Richard Baker, *Scope Magazine*, [Detroit, Michigan], 5 October 1968, 9-11.

Workers," "Foreign Policy and Disarmament," and a position in defense of the right to abortion. The really pressing business before them, however, was whether or not to fall in line behind Humphrey. They had three options. Their lack of unity made it easy to eliminate the first: collectively supporting a candidate other than Humphrey. The second option was to negotiate with Humphrey to persuade him to speak out in favor of disengaging from Vietnam, endorsing the Kerner Report on civil disturbances, and voicing "frank criticism of Chicago's Mayor Daley and the tactics of some of his police force." If he took those positions, the group would "offer generous and active" support of his candidacy. They had sent a telegram to Humphrey on September 26, the day before the convention, asking him to spell out his position on "the critical issues of justice and peace."[35] The third option was to leave it up to the members and "take no formal position" on the 1968 presidential race. This decision divided the leadership of the New Democratic Coalition even at the moment of its inception. Otto Feinstein, who had helped to found the organization as an early supporter of McCarthy, argued for negotiating with and, ultimately, endorsing Humphrey. After the convention, State Senators Roger Craig and Coleman Young and half a dozen other prominent pre-convention backers of McCarthy or other peace candidates publicly came out for Humphrey. A majority at the meeting could not bring themselves to do it. They voted to make no formal endorsement of any candidate. This was an important fork in the road. On refusing to reach an

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[35] Even the "regular Democrats" by this time were pleading with Humphrey to distance himself from President Johnson. Paul Donahue remembered arguing with Humphrey one night at the Book Cadillac Hotel in Detroit. Humphrey refused to break publicly with Johnson as long as he was a member of the administration. Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan.

accommodation with Humphrey, some would argue, the antiwar Democrats split the party and isolated themselves.[36]

Having opted out of the final act of the 1968 presidential campaign, the focus of New Democrat activity changed. Education and outreach in the congressional districts became more important than the public pronouncements of the leadership. In a sense, the group had already made its point. For the next few years, the state party leadership would pay court to the liberal element in the party, both on questions of party rules and platform. But in the fall of 1968, the group seemed unsure of its course. Observers questioned whether the New Democrats had become a "paper organization." In late October, the group issued a press release denouncing the George Wallace campaign. Even here, the New Democratic Coalition leaders blamed "the Johnson Administration . . . which has helped to create the atmosphere for demagogues like Wallace and Nixon to thrive." Noting that an increasing number of New Democrats had decided to work for Humphrey in spite of the group's decision not to endorse, the New Democrats' leaders regretted that the state party regulars would blame Humphrey's likely defeat on "those who have sincerely sought to avert such a defeat." Closing on a note of grim determination, they exhorted the faithful to continue "independent political activity and organization beyond November 5." Many members of the New Democratic Coalition did rally and build the organization inside the Democratic Party parallel to the protest movement in the streets.

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[36] Program of New Democrats convention of September 28, 1968, "Temporary Organization," "Resolutions," telegram to Humphrey, "Workshop on Campaign Action, 1968 Plurality Resolution," "Workshop on Campaign '68 Alternate Resolutions," all in Fishman papers; Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan. On the decision to support Humphrey, see "For Immediate Release," Fishman papers. Otto Feinstein later withdrew from active participation in the group.

For five years and two presidential campaigns the New Democrats championed issues related to peace and racial justice and served as a Left reference point in Michigan politics. They united disaffected New Deal liberals, antiwar activists, segments of the civil rights movement, union people, and advocates of environmental reform. Some would later join the Michigan Human Rights Party in the mid-1970s.[37]

If any issue area was under-represented in the early days of the New Democratic Coalition, it was women's concerns. The group's leaders were mostly white males, although its neighborhood grass-roots support – to the extent that it did sink roots in neighborhoods – was frequently composed of women, such as the East-side Women for Peace in the 14th congressional district. The New Democrats did adopt a platform position on abortion rights. But according to one activist, several women withdrew from the New Democratic Coalition, angered over its undistinguished record on behalf of women. As the evolution of party platforms and the movement to reform party rules would show, women's issues would play an increasingly important role by 1972.[38]

In spite of this uneven development, in its early days, the Michigan "New Dems" seemed to be making headway in the party. In the delegate elections at the state convention directly following the 1968 National Convention, they claimed (perhaps

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[37] On post-convention lag in activity, see Peggy Cronin, "Is the New Democratic Coalition Fading Away?" in *Scope Magazine*, [Detroit, Michigan], (12 July 1969); "NEW DEMOCRATIC COALITION October 28, 1968"; on internal organizational matters, "Minutes of Coordinating Committee Meeting, December 8, 1968," in Roger Craig Collection, Box 28, Folder 5, ALUA.

[38] Marianne Yared McGuire, interview by author, tape recording, 4 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan; Dr. Moira Kennedy Sims, interview by author, tape recording, 7 November 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

optimistically) 35 to 40 percent of the Michigan party's precinct delegates. One of their leaders, Otto Feinstein, estimated that they controlled nine of Michigan's nineteen congressional districts. In the following months, their delegate strength waxed and waned in the different districts. A New Democratic Coalition internal document assessing delegate strength in early February 1969 shows them relatively strong in precinct delegates, but weak in the district executive boards and in the state delegations. In both the 12th and 14th Districts, on the east side of Detroit and its suburbs, the New Democrats reported control of 25 percent of the precinct delegates and none of the executive boards. According to Al Fishman, by 1970 the New Democrats consolidated their delegate strength at about one-third of the state's total delegates. As historian Dudley Buffa argues, however, the party regulars never lost control. Even at the reformers' height of influence, when they attained "significant and even majority strength in Kalamazoo County or Washtenaw County . . . that strength was greatly diluted when filtered through first the district and then the state convention."[39]

Thus, the New Democratic Coalition (and its Macomb County affiliate, the Liberal Coalition) became encapsulated inside the Democratic Party. They continued to compete for delegates, but they also settled into the role of pressure group in the party's state conventions, parceling out their precinct votes to support the best available person or platform position. This proved successful in the platform positions adopted. One

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[39] Crase, "New Politics. . ," 462; on events in the 12th District, "NDCM Communication to District Leadership and Coordinating Committee - March 9, 1969," in Roger Craig Collection, Box 28, Folder 6, ALUA; "Analysis of Leadership, Strength as of February 1 & 2 State Convention, 1969," Fishman papers; Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 1 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan. Buffa, *Union Power* Vol. 1, 234.

Macomb County activist remembers the Liberal Coalition's exhausting but exhilarating all-night caucuses over the party platform at the state conventions:

> [At the convention] we would get a report on the various people and platform positions that the party was considering. And then we [the Liberal Coalition] would caucus and decide how to spend our precinct votes. It was very democratic. Sometimes it took hours. . . I remember being up all night at these meetings. . . It wasn't so antagonistic to the party leaders as it was. . . using our votes as effectively as possible. . . It was pretty interesting, actually, to see the platform take shape, like on the [United Farm Workers'] grape boycott issue. . . It was a powerful feeling, working together, you had the sense that you could make a difference.[40]

Passing progressive-sounding platform planks proved to be no substitute for influencing political attitudes at the base of the party. By the early 1970s, it became increasingly difficult to balance the party's appeal to Detroit and its suburbs. For instance, in 1972, the party's state platform included a demand to free Black Panther activist Angela Davis in California. Although this may have built bridges to some African-American voters in Detroit, it did little to bolster the image of the Democratic Party in Macomb County. By 1972, it was evident that George Wallace was far more popular in Macomb County than Angela Davis. (Running as a Democrat, Wallace took 71 percent of Warren's vote in the 1972 primary election.) To forestall a Wallace sweep of delegates in the 12th District, the Liberal Coalition attempted to negotiate a joint slate of precinct delegates with the UAW. They relied on John Bruff, Democratic Party County Chairman, to mediate the deal. Bruff arranged a meeting, but UAW Region I Director George Merrelli stormed out of the room when he recognized the Liberal Coalition leaders who had come to meet with him. Rather than risk exclusion altogether, the Liberal Coalition

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[40] Dr. Moira Kennedy Sims, interview by author, tape recording, 7 November 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

then struck a deal with the Wallace forces to assure their own delegates' selection, a tactic which ended up squeezing out the UAW-backed delegates in the 12th District. That year, even George Merrelli failed to receive a seat as precinct delegate. This behavior stunned and infuriated the Democratic Party regulars in Macomb County. From Paul Donahue's perspective, the Liberal Coalition reflected the impatience of youth. In spite of its elaborate platforms and programs, it was essentially a single-issue reform group:

> Our biggest problem with them is we really couldn't figure out what they wanted to do. They didn't seem to be interested in organizing the party. They didn't seem to be interested in really fighting the Republicans. They just seemed to want to raise hell about this war. So we started to think, the quicker the war was over, the quicker we'd be rid of them. Give them what they want. . . Most of them hadn't been around prior to this. And then when it was all over, they disappeared again.[41]

Eventually, the party leaders' prayers were answered; the New Democrats faded away – but not before they helped to change the way the state party governed itself. Reform of party rules had not been the original goal of the New Democrats; their reason for coming together was to change the party's position on Vietnam. But the resistance they encountered from party leaders and their own conviction that they represented a majority opinion on the Vietnam issue led them into the thicket of reforming the party's rules. This effort paralleled the delegate selection rules changes that the McGovern Commission proposed in 1972 on the national level.

In Michigan, the New Democrats focused on three reforms. The first one was the unit rule. This was a "winner take all" provision in which the candidate who received a

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[41] On the Wallace vote in Warren, *Canvassed Records, 1972,* Macomb County Clerk's Office of Elections, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. James Johnstone, interview by author, tape recording, 13 September 1996, Clinton Township; Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan.

majority of the district or county votes received the entire delegation's votes. The second issue was the two-year lag between choosing delegates and the presidential nomination convention. The third problem was the overwhelmingly white and male character of the state party leaders and delegates. In each case, the New Democrats championed the most "democratic" and participatory variety of reform. Party Chairman Sander Levin was open to discussing reforms. On the unit rule, he gave in early and granted the demand for proportional commitment of delegates to different candidates. A press release prior to the 1968 national convention virtually promised to change this rule. The state party convention on August 30, 1968 made good on the promise, abolished the unit rule, and adopt proportional voting.[42]

The issue of the two-year lag between the election for delegates and the presidential race was folded into the movement for a binding state presidential primary. In the spring of 1969, the "New Dem's" Committee on Electoral Reform undertook an initiative petition campaign for a state primary. Republican Governor William Milliken, whose party was less troubled by the up-coming presidential election of 1972, agreed to sign such a bill if enacted. Fearful of alienating the youth and liberal vote, a wavering majority in the August 1970 state Democratic central committee meeting voted in favor of the reform. The decision angered the UAW, as it jeopardized the union influence on

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[42] "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Wednesday, August 14, 1968" in Fishman papers; Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan. *The New York Times*, 1 September 1968.

the state's Democratic presidential nominee.[43]

As historian Dudley Buffa observed, the UAW and the New Democratic Coalition "agreed on one thing: a direct primary would significantly decrease the influence of the organized Democratic party in the selection of a delegation to the Democratic national convention." The difference was that the UAW deplored this while the "New Dems" applauded it. For them this was simply a matter of "opening up the process" to direct participation by the people. The popularity of George Wallace in the 1972 Democratic campaign gave the party's labor realists second thoughts about direct democracy. So did the fact that, since Michigan voters did not register to vote by party, the direct primary system left the choice of the state Democratic presidential nominee up to anybody who cared to vote, including Republicans and independents.[44]

The third area of reform was the most far-reaching. It was the issue of proportional representation for women, minorities, and youth in state delegations. The reform came out of the 1969 Reform Commission of the state party, created by Sander Levin in January 1969. Headed by a former administrator of the WPA in Michigan, William Haber, the commission's deliberations paralleled the national party's (McGovern) Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection. A joint meeting of the two commissions in 1969 heard the New Democratic Coalition Chairman Al Fishman charge that the party's undemocratic structure was driving away new members. He exhorted the

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[43] *The New Democrat: Quarterly Voice of the New Democratic Coalition of Michigan,* no. 1 (April 1, 1969), 7-10 in Fishman papers; Buffa, *Union Power* Vol. 1, 232-238.

[44] Ibid.

reform commissions to turn the party into "an instrument for necessary political change." Both the state and national reform commissions eventually ruled that affirmative steps had to be taken to insure that minorities, youth, and women were guaranteed positions in the national convention delegations in proportion to their presence in the population. The state party convention of August 1970 reached out to these constituencies by enacting platform planks on abortion rights, an eight-part "Women's Rights Platform," a package of "Youth Resolutions," and resolutions on amnesty for Vietnam war draft resisters, defense of African-American activist Angela Davis, and one which endorsed an African-American jurist, Robert Evans, for state Supreme Court. The state party was going out of its way to placate the liberals.[45]

Some observers believed that the New Democrats' reforms entailed a radically new and idealistic conception of the relationship of the party to the people. The proposal for a state presidential primary assumed that "a party that left the selection of its nominee to the unfettered discretion of the people could count on the continued support of the people." Similarly, the reformers' delegate selection proposal would make the party's convention delegations reflective not of the party itself, nor even of the electorate, but rather of the entire society. In short, the New Democrats proposed to jettison the rules of the "old pluralism," in which the ethnic and class groupings within the party's New Deal coalition competed for resources even as they supported one another in battle with the Republicans. The party was no longer to be an association of interest groupings negotiating on behalf of

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[45]Ibid., 220-232; "Statement of the NDCM, Presented by Al Fishman. . . April 26, 1969," in Fishman papers. On the "McGovern Commission, see Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972 (New York: Atheneum Press, 1973), 22-32; Al Fishman, interview by author, tape recording, 21 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

the people. Instead, it was to adopt a "new pluralism" which incorporated heretofore politically inert members of society into the decision-making apparatus of the party. The process wasn't exactly participatory democracy – not everybody could be a precinct delegate. And the people weren't actually supposed to "seize political power," in the parlance of the day. Instead, political power was to be granted as a guaranteed outcome in the delegate selection process to members of the "under-franchised" categories of citizens – minorities, women, and youth – through the good offices of the party. It is not clear whether most voters were aware of these reforms, but even if they weren't, the reforms illustrate how far the state and national Democratic Party was falling out of step with the pragmatic political culture of communities like Warren.[46]

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In addition to the turmoil that it stirred inside the Democratic Party, the war in Vietnam affected public attitudes about the political system. It is a curious fact, however, that at a distance of less than three decades, the imprint of the war on the community consciousness of those days is not easily discerned. Attitudes towards the war are obscured by several conditions. One is probably the desire to "put the war behind us" and shake the "Vietnam syndrome." Louis Harris ranked the Vietnam war high on the list of frustrations that plagued the American people in the early 1970s. The bitterness of the defeat contributed to a sort of national amnesia making it difficult to assess the impact of the war on public attitudes. A more practical problem is that no opinion polls were

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[46] Buffa, *Union Power*, vol. 1, 243-245; Carl Marlinga believed that the public was largely unaware of these internal party reforms. Carl Marlinga, interview by author, tape recording, 14 August 1996, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

conducted in Warren concerning the war, and "letters to the Editor" on the war were infrequent in the local press. Local editorials were neither very hawkish nor dovish, though they did reflect increasing public fatigue with the war. Beyond the newspaper obituaries and the stone monument to Warren's war dead that UAW Region 1 placed in front of the City Hall, there were few official observances of the war. The war cut into the lives of the friends and relatives of Warren's forty-one servicemen who died in Vietnam, but that was private grief.[47]

Why this silence? Perhaps the absence of evidence of public feeling about the war derives from the simple fact that, other than providing overtime for Warren's defense factory workers, the war in Vietnam did not immediately affect most Warren residents. This reticence might also reflect the tendency of suburban culture to restrict public space and to avoid public spectacle.[48] Perhaps it was also a distant echo of the old world tradition of subordinate classes silently "suffering what they must" from the military authorities. For whatever reason, the war in Vietnam seems not to have been much of a public issue in Warren, despite the occasional arguments it may have inspired in the semi-public space of the tavern. The major exception to Warren's lack of public debate on the war was when antiwar activists took to the streets in the Warren tank plant march of April 30, 1971.

The Warren tank plant march, involving 2,500 participants, provides a glimpse of the attitudes of Warren's residents towards the war and the antiwar movement, youth

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[47] Harris, *The Anguish of Change*, 3-14.

[48] On suburban public space, see Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center."

culture, and patriotism. The controversy surrounding the march recalls some of the same attitudes of "home-rule" and "localism" that George Romney and his Chicago HUD staff encountered in Warren a few months earlier, during the HUD controversy of 1970. Like Romney and HUD, the antiwar movement was fueled by forces it could not control. These forces led the antiwar movement to "intervene" in Warren. The impact of this controversy weakened the bonds of loyalty between Warren voters and the Democratic Party.

In the Spring of 1971, Warren attracted the attention of the Detroit antiwar movement. Since 1966, the largest antiwar group in Detroit was the Detroit Coalition to End the War in Vietnam (DCEWV). Led by the Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party, the DCEWV conducted marches down Woodward Avenue chanting slogans like "Bring the Boys Home Now!" and "Out Now!" Defended by its supporters as the best way to unite the broadest possible coalition of opposition to the war, the tactics of the DCEWV attracted criticism from "anti-imperialist" activists as "lowest common denominator" politics lacking mass educational value. These radicals decided to take the war issue into the heartland of Detroit's industrial suburbs by confronting one of the largest and most visible military contractors in the region, the Chrysler tank plant located on 11 ½ Mile and Van Dyke in Warren.[49]

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[49] Ronald Reosti, interview conducted by author, tape recording, 9 July 1996, Detroit, Michigan. Designed by Albert Kahn and constructed on a beet-field during the winter of 1940-1941, the Detroit Tank Arsenal exemplified Franklin Roosevelt's phrase, "the arsenal of Democracy": the application of mass production technique to arms manufacture. From the start, the factory was a joint enterprise. It was owned by the Army and run by the Chrysler Corporation. Its peak production work force in 1942 totaled 5,389 employees on three shifts. After fifty-six years, the tank plant closed in December 1996. Kevin Thornton and Dale Prentiss, *Tanks and Industry: The Detroit Arsenal, 1940-1954* (Warren, Michigan: TACOM History Office, 1995). "Vast Plant for Tanks has Closed," *The New York Times*, 21 December 1996.

The march was a product of the collaboration between *The Fifth Estate* underground newspaper collective, located near Wayne State University's downtown Detroit campus, and the Macomb Liberation Front at Macomb County Community College, whose main campus was on Warren's east side at 12 Mile and Hayes Road. This short-lived alliance was called "The Mayday Coalition." Its members shared a common perspective on the war. They called it an "imperialist adventure" and held corporate capitalism responsible. They believed that the antiwar movement had to "raise consciousness" and to link the war with the oppression of workers at home. Failure to do this, they warned, would drag the war on interminably.[50]

This vision of an unending bloodletting in Vietnam took on new and ominous meaning with the election of Richard Nixon in 1968. Compared to Nixon, Lyndon Johnson had been a relatively easy target for the antiwar movement. Though he used his enormous power in Congress to obtain the "blank check" for escalation in the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Johnson had been unable to effect the primary military goal of escalation – to defeat the army of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam and the North Vietnamese Regular Army. This military goal proved so hard to attain that it subverted Johnson's political goal: to create a South Vietnamese government that could win the allegiance of the people and persuade them to abandon their broadly held goal of reuniting the country under the leadership of North Vietnam's national hero and Communist leader, Ho Chi Minh. The massive infusion of U.S. troops and materiel in 1966 and 1967 made the conflict an American war and stripped South Vietnam's political

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[50] See the editorial, "'Smash GM' - 'Peace Now'" in *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 12-25 November 1970.

leaders of legitimacy. Unable to win Vietnamese "hearts and minds" with these policies, Johnson tried to bolster political consensus at home. His scorn for the dovish "nervous Nellies" in the halls of Congress eventually turned into befuddlement over how simply to end the conflict. The enemy refused to negotiate, even under the pressure of an aerial bombardment of North Vietnam initiated in February 1965. American public opinion polls turned sour in the wake of the spring 1968 Tet Offensive. Johnson bowed to the inevitable and in March 1968 announced his retirement after one full term.[51]

The new president, Nixon, had campaigned hinting that he had an approach for achieving peace in Southeast Asia. This new approach turned out to be non-existent. Once elected, however, Nixon made two policy changes to defuse domestic discontent with the war. First, he "Vietnamized" the war, withdrawing American troops and shifting the burden of combat to the South Vietnamese Army. U.S. troop levels in Vietnam declined from 538,700 in late June 1969 to 239,200 two years later. In early 1970, Nixon also put in place the draft lottery. Instead of the traditional system of local draft board monthly "pot luck" drawings, this was a national system of draft call-ups by birthday, randomly chosen each year, and published. The fact that the list was published and that everyone knew his draft status on a yearly basis alleviated much of the anxiety concerning who would receive induction notices and who would not have to worry about it. These two policies threatened to shrink the base of the antiwar movement and render the war invisible, once again, to masses of American people.[52]

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[51] On the war, see Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

[52] On the effect of public opinion on the administrations of Johnson and Nixon and

It was the fear that Americans might become desensitized to the war that motivated the factions in the nation's most dynamic New Left organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Emerging in the June 1969 SDS Convention in Chicago, the ultra-militant "Weatherman" faction opposed the attempt of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) to capture SDS. PLP rejected youth culture, kept their hair clipped short, and projected a "worker" image while calling on students to take up the "Worker-Student Alliance" (drop out of school and get factory jobs) in hopes of jump-starting the labor movement with the energy of the student movement. The Weathermen and their allies in SDS posed the alternative strategy of the "Revolutionary Youth Movement" (RYM), the idea that the baby-boom generation constituted something akin to a social class and that the oppression visited upon this group ("Twenty years of schoolin' and they put you on the day shift. . .") made it possible to organize white working class youth in support of Third World revolutionary movements.[53]

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for handy tables on troop levels, national demonstrations, and opinion poll numbers see Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988). On Nixon's strategy for defusing the antiwar movement see Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 377-380. See also the editorials in *The Fifth Estate Newspaper* "WE Must End This War," 24 December 1970, "Vietnam: 2nd Decade," 14 January 1971. Adam Garfinkle holds that two other limiting factors on the antiwar movement came into play after 1970: the weakness of New Left ideology and the economic down-turn which, after 1970, made college students more serious about their studies. Garfinkle, *Telltale Heart*, 197-198.

[53] On Progressive Labor see Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 180, 190. On the "baby boomers as an oppressed group" theory behind Revolutionary Youth Movement, see John and Margaret Rowntree, "Youth as a Class," Radical Education Project reprint; also see Jerry Farber, "The Student As Nigger," Radical Education Project reprint; on the theoretical basis of Weatherman see James Mellen, "More on the Youth Movement," *New Left Notes*, 13 May 1969; on the Weather Manifesto see Karin Ashley, *et al.*, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," *New Left Notes*, 18 June 1969. Both

As a matter of fact, the baby boomers were the most pampered generation in American history, and the Weathermen were among the most pampered of this generation.[54] But, however dubious their theory, the Weathermen at least tested it in practice. In the spring and summer of 1969, the Weatherman "Motor City collective" of the Michigan Region of SDS moved from Ann Arbor to Detroit. Their communal house, in a run-down neighborhood just west of Wayne State University's campus, became the laboratory of an ideological experiment. Two dozen activists from various parts of the Midwest tried to make the group into "something more than itself," to "transform itself from a student movement into a working-class youth movement." Despite these expansive goals, the group quickly became a political cult. Studying Marxist texts together, training in karate, and engaging in "criticism/self-criticism" sessions, they planned ways to "bring the war home" to the Detroit area.[55]

Interestingly, they chose to stage their most visible organizing actions in Macomb County and in Warren itself. The group called one such action in mid-July 1969 at Metropolitan Beach Park on the shores of Lake St. Clair, a few miles from Warren. They marched onto the beach, planted a red flag in the sand, and alternately fought and argued with the crowd that gathered. As described by a Motor City SDS member:

> Loud arguments began in the center of the crowd, which included many Vietnam veterans. The reaction of the kids was a vehement defense of American myths. The arguments centered around communism, and especially the Viet Cong, upward

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New Left Notes articles are reprinted in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1970), 39-90.

[54] On the class background of Weatherman leadership, see Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 386.

[55] Quote on aims of Motor City SDS in Bill Ayers and Jim Mellen, "Hot Town: Summer In The City Or I Ain't Gonna Work On Maggie's Farm No More," *New Left Notes*, 4 April 1969, reprinted in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman.*, 30.

> mobility, and white-skin privilege. Many of us got into good raps with people on the fringe of the crowd who wanted to know what was happening. When we heard that the beach rent-a-pigs had called the sheriff's patrol, we moved to regroup. One Viet vet yelled "Let's get the flag!," and about 40 people charged it. Sticking together as a group, we fought the attackers to a standstill and left the beach chanting.[56]

The Weathermen also targeted Macomb County youth in the "White Castle" action that took place on the Eight Mile Road border with Detroit. They spent three nights in the parking lot of the White Castle on Gratiot Avenue leafleting youth and fighting with security guards.[57] In yet another Macomb County organizing sortie, this one in Warren, nine women members of the collective invaded a Macomb County Community College sociology final exam in late July to hand out leaflets inviting the students to attend the upcoming October 1969 "Days of Rage" demonstration in Chicago. As they entered the classroom they chanted, "Work, Study, Get Ahead, Kill!" They barricaded the door with a desk and "rapped about the war in Vietnam and about how the Vietnamese women carry on armed struggle together with Vietnamese men against US imperialism." They chose this venue because of their analysis of the ambivalent class standing of young whites in Warren:

> Macomb Community College is located in an all-white working class community and trains the local white youth in the skills necessary for lower managerial jobs, positions that objectively oppress black people. By busting into a classroom during final exams, and by talking to people about what's happening in the world, we confronted them with their dual position in capitalist society. They are oppressors because of their acceptance of [white skin] privilege, and they are oppressed because of their objective

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[56] Motor City SDS, "Break On Through To The Other Side," *New Left Notes*, 23 August 1969, reprinted in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman*, 152-153.

[57] SDS, "Break on Through. . ." in Jacobs, *Weatherman*, 156-160.

relationship to the ruling class.[58]

The Weatherman accounts of these actions express a mixture of class arrogance and a millenarian acceptance of political isolation. By the fall of 1969, this self-defeating approach to recruitment, the resulting paltry turn-out at the Chicago "Days of Rage," and the hit-and-run vandalism into which that demonstration degenerated resulted in the collapse of Weatherman into scattered bomb factories and armored car hold-ups. The effect on the anti-imperialist sector of the antiwar movement was predictably depressing. As one Macomb County antiwar leader recalls, "the experience of the Weathermen . . . smashed our view of revolution, youth movement. . ."[59]

Thus, by early 1970 the antiwar movement in Detroit feared becoming smothered by a grudging public acceptance of U.S. policy in Vietnam. The most energetic sector of the movement was lapsing into what V. I. Lenin, in another era, called "infantile Leftism," and the shift in public attitudes against the war was stalled. Although close to 60 percent of national polling respondents in early spring 1970 felt that intervention in Vietnam had been a mistake, only about one-third favored immediate withdrawal. In the midst of this crisis, Nixon invaded Cambodia. The outpouring of public concern over the May 1970

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[58] Motor City SDS, "Break on Through. . ." in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman*, 154; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, "SDS Girls Visit Macomb," 7 August 1969; *The Macomb Daily*, 1 August 1969.

[59] James Jacobs, interview conducted by Bret Eynon, Columbia University Oral History Research Project, October 1984, transcript in author's possession, 48. In addition to the disillusion with Weatherman SDS, the Macomb County Community College chapter of SDS had to contend with harassment from parents. In one instance, "umbrella-swinging" mothers of Macomb students broke up a meeting of SDS. The disruption was orchestrated by the Right-wing group, Breakthrough. See *The Macomb Daily*, 10 April 1969 and *The Detroit Free Press*, 4 October 1969.

Cambodia incursion and the horror over the National Guard shooting of students at Kent State and Jackson State universities helped to breach Nixon's containment of the antiwar movement. A growing segment of the public was troubled by the administration's Vietnam policy; the numbers of respondents in favor of withdrawal from Vietnam jumped from 35 percent in February 1970 to 55 percent in September 1970.[60]

A little-noticed protest action amid the hundreds nationwide in the wake of Cambodia and Kent State was the first antiwar march in the history of Warren. On May 13, 1970, between fifty and a hundred students at Macomb County Community College marched in the rain down 12 Mile Road to the Warren tank plant. Tom Black, a student at the college, claimed that the march shut down the plant for the afternoon. Although it had reported that Army officials had requested protection of the Warren Police Department from possible "mob violence" at the tank plant, *The Macomb Daily* did not report that the facility had been shut down. Instead, the news story credited the march with remaining peaceful, although it noted disapprovingly the presence of "Viet Cong" flags among the protesters.[61]

James Jacobs, a teacher at the community college, remembered that it was Cambodia that provided the spark for mass antiwar organizing on Macomb's campus:

> The invasion of Cambodia in 1970 was the first crystallization of mass antiwar activities in Macomb County. . . Before the invasion, we had a teach-in and

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[60] For opinion polling numbers, see Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves*, Table 6, 194-195.

[61] Tom Black, "Macomb Moves" in *The Fifth Estate*, 28 March 1970; *The Macomb Daily*, 25, 26 March 1970, 14 May 1970.

> workshops on the war and a draft counseling center on the east side of Detroit, but the invasion of Cambodia had a major impact. . . I had fellow teachers who had never been active before who told me, "We've got to do something about this. We've got to have a strike." And so we had a student strike and a little march over to the tank plant in May 1970. It was a rainy day and there were only about fifty or so marchers, but that formed the basis of organizing the Macomb Liberation Front. The decision a year later to march on the tank plant came naturally out of this experience.[62]

In the summer of 1970, a small group of Macomb students formed the Macomb Liberation Front (MLF). They invited speakers from radical organizations. A representative of Detroit's League of Revolutionary Black Workers advised them to concentrate on organizing young white factory workers on an anti-racist basis. They formed a rock band, "RPM" (Revolutions Per Minute), in an attempt to use youth culture to reach fellow students. In late 1970 and 1971, the MLF helped publish a newspaper by the same name, "RPM." They distributed the paper outside the auto factories and steel mills in the Detroit area. They carried a banner of the Macomb Liberation Front at a subsequent march of the Detroit Coalition to End the War in Vietnam in downtown Detroit.[63]

In the fall of 1970, the MLF organized a demonstration of between two hundred and three hundred people to protest a speech by Michigan Ku Klux Klan leader Robert Miles in the white working-class suburb of East Detroit. At that event they handed out a leaflet, "Bring East Detroit Into the Twentieth Century!" The main reason that the

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[62] James Jacobs, interview by author. Tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

[63] James Jacobs, interview by Bret Eynon, Columbia University Oral History Research Project, 24 October 1984, transcript in author's possession, 47. *RPM*, copies in author's possession; on the class character of students at Macomb County Community College, see interview with Macomb students ("Serving Time at McComb" (*sic*) in *Leviathan* Vol. 1, No. 9 (March 1970), 12-15.

students were willing to participate in the demonstration, according to Jacobs, is that they were anti-authoritarian. This anti-authoritarian impulse came out of their own experiences in the factories (despite the Weatherman view, many Macomb students had held production jobs in factories) as well as out of conflicts with their parents over the length of their hair or the way they dressed. They opposed the Klan partly out of their anti-racism, but also because they viewed the Klan as an authoritarian organization.[64]

This small band of radical students soon developed an extensive agenda of concerns. Lending support to the demands of a small but vociferous Association of Black Students on Macomb's campus; calling for the abolition of non-resident tuition (as discriminatory to black students from Detroit); pointing to the fact that only 20 percent of Macomb's students finished their two-year Associates' program; protesting the imposition of rules of conduct by the college's administration; and attending talks and presentations by such figures as Allen Ginsberg, Jane Fonda, and Rafael Viera (head of the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican political youth group in Chicago).[65]

In its political radicalism, the Macomb Liberation Front was atypical of most of the students at the community college. More common were those students who assumed the cultural trappings of the youth movement without adopting a revolutionary critique of

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[64] James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

[65] Ibid. Copies of "The Vanguard – Macombs First Student Newspaper," dated December 10, 1968 and June 3, 1969 in author's possession; copy of "Macomb Liberation Front" ('When Tyranny is Law, Revolution is Order!'), February, 1971, in author's possession. Charles Chalgian, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 18 June, 1996. On the black students at Macomb Community College, see communications between college administrators and black students in John Kelsey Collection, Box 2, Folder "Issue Files: Thank You Letters, 1969-72," the Bentley Library.

society. For these cultural rebels, however, this frequently led to bitter conflict with their parents. As one observer of Warren politics in the late 1960s recalled, the parents were puzzled and frightened by the youth culture (and the antiwar movement) that called their children into the streets: "[T]he youth culture offended [the adults]. The [Polish Americans] raised their children to be very conscious of obeying law. . . They didn't like to see these young people in the streets with their long hair and their looks and their language."[66]

Sometimes this tension took non-violent forms, such as the letter that "SIX FREAKS who live in 'Subdivision City' Warren" wrote to the *Macomb Daily* in the summer of 1969. The letter described Warren as a city "with trees like toothpicks and look-a-like mass produced houses," a place whose "prejudiced" and "bigoted" populace forced its rebellious youth to "leave the city every night for Detroit where such prejudice is practically nonexistent." Sometimes the youth rebellion was more unruly. During the summers of 1969-1971, a cultural uprising was occurring in the neighborhood parks throughout the Detroit metropolitan area. Groups of long-haired white youth congregated in the parks to drink beer or wine and smoke marijuana in full view of older residents. The police responded with force. This conflict peaked in 1970 with two of the biggest "youth riots" at Memorial Park in Royal Oak and at Balduck Park on the east side of Detroit. Two hundred were arrested and many injured at the Balduck Park riot.[67]

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[66] Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan.

[67] For the letter to the editor, see *The Macomb Daily*, 31 July 1969. James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan; also see article in *The Macomb Daily*, 9 August 1969 for an account of the rioting and arrests of "disgruntled youth" in Macomb County's Shelby Township.

It was this youth rebellion that *The Fifth Estate* championed, beginning with its first issue in 1965. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, this underground newspaper tried to bridge the gap between youth culture and the antiwar movement. One of its policies was to send free subscriptions to servicemen. During 1969-1970, upwards of a third of its "letters to the editor" came from GIs stationed in Vietnam. Few of these letters allude to actual mutinies, but they convey the impression of a demoralized and disintegrating fighting force. The paper printed articles supporting efforts to organize soldiers, especially into the American Serviceman's Union. As Peter Werbe, one of the main personalities of this collective, recalled, "Our goals were general strike at home and mass mutinies in the military. . . and hence we sent free papers to GIs in Vietnam."[68]

The paper's focus reached beyond the antiwar movement. In 1971, the International Women's Day issue was written and produced entirely by the Detroit women's movement, which also ran a regular column on women's health.[69] The paper also carried articles in defense of the Black Panther Party and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and printed interviews with Robert Williams and other representatives of what it called "the Black liberation struggle." It denounced police abuse, such as the STRESS program ("Stop the Robberies; Enjoy Safe Streets"), a police robbery decoy campaign which killed seventeen young black men, many under suspicious circumstances,

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[68] Millard Berry and Peter Werbe, interview by author, tape recording, 12 June 1996, Oak Park, Michigan. For samples of letters from GIs, see *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 3 April 1969, 15 May 1969, 12 June 1969.

[69] The International Women's Day issue of the paper was so popular that it had to be reprinted and, at 18,000 copies, became the best selling in the paper's history, despite the near walk-out of the newspaper's mostly male distribution cooperative.

before Mayor Young disbanded it in 1974. *The Fifth Estate* covered labor news from a different perspective than that of the city's established labor movement. Indeed, it held the city's labor leadership in low esteem and made its mimeograph facilities available, not only to alternative high school newspapers, but also to dissident union caucuses. The paper printed interviews with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and articles on other union reform movements such as the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Reflecting the anarchist leanings of many on the staff, it supported workers' struggles while criticizing the nature and even the necessity of work.[70]

The Fifth Estate's main attraction was its "underground" character. It reveled in parody in the tradition of cartoonist R. Crumb. It exploited the themes of sex, drugs, and the tensions between long-haired youth and the "straight" world, with a scatological sense of humor that defied censorship. It offended many members of the older generation, and its graphics were sometimes sabotaged by the culturally conservative pressmen who printed the paper. On the other hand, the paper's "total assault on the culture"[71] attracted younger readers. It celebrated the generation divide and gleefully printed the occasional outraged protests of parents, one of whom wrote:

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[70] Peter Werbe and Millard Berry, interview by author, tape recording, 12 June 1996, Oak Park, Michigan. Women's issue of *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 8 March 1971; article on The American Serviceman's Union, ibid., 12 June 1969. For labor coverage see ibid., 29 April 1971. See manifesto of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in ibid., 1 May 1969; coverage of the Algiers Motel murder trial in ibid., 29 May 1969. See Appendix C for examples of *The Fifth Estate* graphics. For a history of *The Fifth Estate*, see Bob Hippler, "Fast Times in the Motor City – the First Ten Years of *The Fifth Estate*: 1965-1975" in Ken Wachsberger, ed., *Voices From the Underground: Volume 1, Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press* (Tempe, AZ: Mica's Press, 1993), 9-36.

[71] The phrase was borrowed from John Sinclair, the Chairman of the hippy-political "White Panther Party," quartered for a time above the offices of *The Fifth Estate*.

> Sirs, I find it most distasteful to deal with people of your ilk, but at least 2 pandering bills were supposed to have been served to your Quote Unquote Paper. We are asking for the discontinuance of this perverted trash from coming into our home. It was sent to our 16 yr. old son as a Christmas subscription. We want it stopped immediately or we shall go higher than the U.S. Post Office. I pray to God you are not the hope of this country and the toilets you are so wont to show could flush you all away. (A Mother)[72]

Although delivered in a spirit of irreverence, *The Fifth Estate* was more politically "hard line" than most underground papers of the 1960s and 1970s. In calling for an end to the draft it also called for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and insisted on the heroism of the Vietnamese people.[73] It carried Robert Shelton's cartoons of "The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers" and a column by "Dr. HIP-pocrates" responding to readers' questions on sexual practices and hygiene, but it also printed challenging material like an interview with the anarchist philosopher, Murray Bookchin, on urban culture and the possibilities of liberation. It may have "pandered" to youth culture, but it also ran articles on school decentralization plans and carried editorials addressing white high school students who were already involved in racial confrontations with black students in the rapidly changing Detroit school system: "The enemy is *The Free Press*, *The News*, and the rest of the racist media. The enemy is the state legislature, the School Board, and all other administrators of racist educational policies. The enemy is not the black brothers

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[72] Peter Werbe and Millard Berry, interview by author. Tape recording, Oak Park, Michigan, 12 June 1996; letter from outraged mother, *The Fifth Estate*, 20 February 1969.

[73] The newspaper paid tribute to Ho Chi Minh at the time of his death in a way calculated to appeal to its young readers: the cover of the issue featured a photograph of the Vietnamese leader shown smoking a hand-rolled cigarette alongside the text of one of his poems. *The Fifth Estate*, 18 September 1969.

and sisters you'll be going to school with."[74]

Disseminating rebellious politics and New Left rhetoric, *The Fifth Estate* would have been unwelcome in most Warren households. In Warren, however, *The Fifth Estate* was more a rumor than a reality. It was a measure of Warren's cultural insularity that, although the paper's "Keep on Truckin'" distribution collective tried to cover the whole metropolitan Detroit area, they were unable to develop any regular drop-offs in Warren, the third biggest city in the state. The paper may have appeared occasionally on the campus of Macomb County Community College, but the closest drop-off points were the few "head shops" along Gratiot Avenue east of Warren.[75]

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After the upheaval subsided over Cambodia and Kent State, the debate over Vietnam shifted literally to the field of battle, even as Vietnamization lowered American troop commitment. The testimony of those who had been in combat became more important as veterans returned from Vietnam troubled by the war. Some who were anxious to lend their support to the antiwar movement joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) which had been formed in 1967. By early 1971, VVAW had 45 chapters and 5,000 members nation-wide. They planned to participate in the Washington, D.C. demonstrations in late April. The spectacle of hundreds of veterans throwing their medals over the fence at the Capitol made a great impact on the media and

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[74] Bookchin interview, ibid., 24 July 1969; article on school decentralization, ibid., 3 September 1970; editorial on race confrontations in high school, "A Pawn in Their Game," ibid., 16 April 1970 .

[75] Michael John and Bruce Montrose, unrecorded interview by author, August 11, 1996. The term "head shop" refers to a distributor of "hippie" and drug paraphernalia.

Congress.

Building for the April 1971 Washington demonstrations, the VVAW convened the "Winter Soldier Investigation" in late January 1971 at a Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge in Detroit's New Center area. Its stated purpose was to expose war crimes in Vietnam like the My Lai massacre and, beyond that, to make "an inquiry into military policy that leads to war crimes." The three day conference produced forty-two hours of testimony from about one hundred honorably discharged Vietnam veterans. The printed program stated that Detroit was chosen for the hearings because the city was "the home of the working class" and declared that the veterans had "come home to speak to their parents." Speakers included parents of POWs. One mother demanded that the U.S. government take up the North Vietnamese offer to release prisoners once the U.S. set a date for the total withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.[76]

The testimony included stories of summary executions of Vietnamese civilians and the rape and mutilation of Vietnamese women by U.S. servicemen, unfavorable comparisons by returned U.S. POWs of U.S. treatment of enemy POWs with enemy treatment of U.S. POWs, and a discussion of U.S. military censorship of the news emanating from Vietnam. The veterans also talked of the abysmal morale in the military, the prevalence of drugs and the practice of pooling bounty money for the assassination of particularly gung-ho superior officers. (Nearly eight hundred of these "fragging" incidents

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[76] Richard R. Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Elliott L. Meyrowitz and Kenneth J. Campbell, "Vietnam Veterans and the War Crimes Hearings," in Melvin Small and William D. Hoover, eds., *Give Peace a Chance* (Syracuse: New York, 1992); Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves*, 213, 216; Garfinkle, *Telltale Heart*, 196-197; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 18 February 1971.

occurred in Vietnam between 1969 and 1972, according to a recent history of the war.) Actress Jane Fonda lent her celebrity, as did author Mark Lane. A talk by Fonda at Macomb County Community College prior to the hearing prompted eighteen student veterans of the war to sign up to testify about war crimes they had witnessed. Organizers estimated that there were 2,000 Vietnam veterans on Macomb's campus.[77]

The hearings were an impressive success for the antiwar movement, judging from the respectful reports in the local media. It demonstrated, once again, the effectiveness of the antiwar message when delivered by national heroes instead of by national pariahs. The fact that many Americans were still unmoved, however, became clear during the course of the Winter Soldier hearings when the father of a Michigan POW spoke at a meeting (in Warren) of the Warren Jaycees. Virgil O'Connor, whose son, was a POW and who headed the Prisoner of War Committee of Michigan, disputed the contention of the Winter Soldier Investigation that American POWs were being treated humanely: "I am confident that the vast majority of our citizens will not fall for the testimony coming out of the Detroit session that our boys are getting excellent treatment: if that was so, why won't the communists allow the Red Cross or some neutral party to inspect their camps?" O'Connor asked the audience to write letters to his son's captors requesting his release. Two weeks later the Jaycees held a ceremony at Cousino High School in Warren and presented O'Connor with 15,000 letters to be handed over to the NLF and North

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[77] *The Winter Soldier Investigation: An Inquiry into American War Crimes*, by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972). *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 21 January 1971, 4 February 1971, 18 February 1971; figures on "fragging" in Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 255. *The Macomb Daily*, 13 January 1971; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 21 January 1971.

Vietnamese delegations at the Paris Peace talks. The Michigan Jaycees and Jaycette Auxiliary chapters had been working on the letter writing project since the previous November.[78]

The 1971 court-martial of Lieutenant William Calley for the 1968 My Lai massacre further polarized public opinion. For anyone who was already opposed to the war, the My Lai massacre was a reminder of all that was wrong in Vietnam. The victims were old people, women, and children. U. S. servicemen raped several of the women before killing them. All these facts, which Seymour Hersh documented in *The New York Times*, not to mention the unforgettable accompanying photograph of the massacre, could only deepen the resolve of the antiwar forces.[79]

But the important question was what the general public thought of it. One didn't have to read *The New York Times* to get the story. In late February 1971, *The Macomb Daily* carried an Associated Press article on the progress of Calley's court-martial for personally killing over a hundred of the prisoners, including an elderly Buddhist monk and a two-year-old child. The story quoted Calley denying killing the monk (he admitted to striking him in the mouth with his rifle butt), accepting responsibility for shooting the child (who was reported in trial testimony to have crawled half-way out of the killing pit only to have Calley grab him by the arm, fling him back, and shoot him point-blank), and denying

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[78] *The Macomb Daily*, 4 February 1971, 22 February 1971.

[79] Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 243-244; Seymour Hersh, *My Lai 4: A Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970). The photograph of the My Lai massacre became a subject of editorial debate within *The Fifth Estate* collective, as some argued that it should be run as a centerfold poster, while others held that the image was too offensive. The photo was not run.

being present when thirty of the prisoners were killed. According to the report, he did not answer questions regarding the total body count or how many prisoners he killed. He did testify that the prisoners were initially taken to be used to clear mine fields, that platoons frequently competed for body counts, that he had been ordered by Captain Medina, his superior officer, to "waste the people," and that the killing "wasn't any big deal."[80]

Calley became a folk hero for many residents of Warren and Macomb County. They viewed him as a sacrificial lamb chosen to take the blame for the decisions of higher-ups, rather than the perpetrator of a massacre. As the court-martial wound down, the editors of *The Macomb Daily* noted the shock that the trial had inflicted on the American public, now forced to acknowledge the fact "that such a brutal mass murder could be perpetrated by American officers and servicemen." Still, the editors did not demand an end to the war. Instead, they wondered cautiously whether Calley could be held responsible for murdering the civilians since he was only following orders: "Innocent civilians are killed in all wars. . . Some cannot help but wonder if Lt. Calley should ever have been brought to trial. They ask in a larger sense, was not the entire American military establishment guilty through the succession of grades of authority?"[81]

After the four month trial, on March 29, 1971, the military court found Calley guilty of murdering twenty-two civilians and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Almost immediately, a national movement emerged in his defense. *The Macomb Daily* covered the outcry in Macomb County with a series of interviews. Most of the respondents

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[80] *The Macomb Daily*, 25 February 1971.

[81] Ibid., 17 March 1971.

emphasized the "duty" aspect of the question and the necessity of following orders. Calley was "just a soldier doing his duty," who unfortunately felt that he had to kill civilians. "War is war and if he did this he must have felt in his own mind that this was an order," one woman told the reporter. Another said, "I have three sons and they have all been in the service. I think he was just doing his duty." One man expressed a fear that Calley's guilt would spread to others should his conviction be left to stand : "I don't think Calley should have been found guilty. I think many Americans sent over there probably did the same thing."[82]

Among the veterans of Vietnam interviewed by *The Macomb Daily*, the Calley verdict was personally threatening. As the reporter noted, "they thought his conviction reflected back on them." Veterans expressed a strong suspicion that the military brass were using Calley as a "scapegoat" to shift the blame away from themselves. One veteran complained, "We demonstrated our faith in the establishment by going to Vietnam in the first place and now they're doing this to us." A strong sense of resentment rooted in the class differences between the "grunt" and the "brass" colored the responses. The head of the Macomb County Community College Veterans' Club charged, "Because we're fighting a dirty war over there they seem to feel that we're dirty too." Veterans identified with Calley and were troubled by a sense of group guilt: "If he's guilty then we all are." The Macomb Community College veterans' group collected signatures on a petition in Calley's defense. As it turned out, President Nixon ordered Calley released from the stockade and put on house arrest. He was later pardoned. No one interviewed by *The*

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[82] Ibid., 31 March 1971.

Macomb Daily expressed the sentiment quoted in *The Fifth Estate* of the father of one of the men in Calley's platoon: "If it had been me there, I would have swung my rifle around and shot Calley right between the goddamned eyes."[83]

Thus, the New Left's determination to wake up a benumbed American public turned out to be no problem at all. Americans had not forgotten the war. What they wanted to do about it was less clear. The challenge now was to convert this inchoate discontent into pressure to withdraw all the troops, end the bombing, and sign a peace treaty. The sense that the public was still deeply divided over the war – supported by the wide spectrum of reactions to My Lai, the Calley trial, the Winter Soldier Investigation and the POW question – haunted the antiwar movement. Of course, this was quite natural as the pro-war consensus was changing into an antiwar consensus. As far as the anti-imperialist wing of the Detroit antiwar movement was concerned, however, none of this was happening fast enough. More work needed to be done to educate and mobilize public discontent with the war. Millard Berry, then a member of the *Fifth Estate* staff, remembers this feeling of impatience:

> We felt that the antiwar movement was becoming repetitive with demonstrations downtown, demonstrations in Washington, none of which seemed to be really effective. The discussions in *The Fifth Estate* in the wnter of 1970-71 were that we had to do something new, that we had to build more of a real local base and that we couldn't do that just demonstrating in front of some buildings downtown.[84]

By the early spring of 1971, this discussion brought about the formation of the "Mayday Coalition" and the decision to march on the Warren Tank Plant. The coalition

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[83] Ibid., 1 April 1971; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 15 April 1971.

[84] Millard Berry and Peter Werbe, interview by author, tape recording, 17 June 1996, Oak Park, Michigan.

combined the impatient desire to mount an action which would bring the issue of the war into working-class communities with the confidence based on a year of organizing in Macomb County:

> By 1971, the actions like the Warren Tank Plant March were conscious attempts to build off of the earlier spontaneous mass mobilizations that occurred in 1970 on the college campuses as a result of Cambodia and Kent State. In fact, we had been building for a year, in the case of the Macomb Liberation Front. In addition, we decided we had to broaden the base of protest and move it off the college campuses and into the community.[85]

Another difference with earlier antiwar actions was that the flaunting of the paraphernalia of revolution, especially the NLF flag, seemed to the organizers to be less divisive. The "shock value" of the flag had worn off with time to the extent that it had become part of the insignia of the local youth movement. According to Jacobs:

> The flag issue got nicely woven into the culture question. . . In some ways, the NLF flag became a part of the whole 'youth rebellion' aspect of the antiwar movement. There were people who were hippies carrying the NLF flag with no idea what the hell it was. . . The fact that somebody in authority would tell these young people that carrying the flag was 'improper' only made them want to carry it more. And you'd better not try to take it away from them.[86]

This swayed the outcome of the debate among march organizers between those who favored the "peace now" wing of the antiwar movement and those in the "support for the NLF" wing. "When the flag became an issue in Warren, we couldn't back down. It wasn't just a civil liberties issue. It was more than that. It was in fact the essence of having the march."[87]

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[85] James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

The Fifth Estate undertook much of the "propaganda" work of building the march. A series of wall poster centerfolds advertising the march appeared in the newspaper with the instructions, "paint both sides with Pet Milk and this will stay up forever." Staff members spoke at community events, showed films distributed by the "Newsreel" national collective of radical film makers, and otherwise publicized the march. They teamed up with local members of the VVAW to speak in high school classrooms of sympathetic teachers. *Fifth Estate* members also helped pull together an organizing conference for the march on March 27 at the University of Detroit.[88]

Concern that a demonstration at the tank facility might be perceived as an attack on the jobs of workers at the tank plant (members of UAW local 1200) led the *Fifth Estate* to run a series of five articles entitled, "Hard Times in Detroit." These articles attempted to explain in ordinary language some of the economic reasoning behind the widely held belief that Detroit in early 1971 was already in economic decline. Although nobody could foresee how severe this decline would be, the articles took the position that "stagflation" (the coexistence of high inflation and high unemployment) represented a long-term change in local and national economic conditions, rather than a short-term phenomenon related to the business cycle. The series discussed the effects of the recession on different categories of workers in Detroit – blacks, women, and youth (understood as a "reserve army of labor"). It presented charts and tables on the escalating cost of living in Detroit, the rising monthly unemployment claims in Michigan, the credit

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[88] The late Brian Flanigan, VVAW member and former Marine, was particularly effective as a high school speaker. See Appendix C for a tank plant march centerfold wall poster by artist Tom Sincavitch, a draft resister whose case *The Fifth Estate* had publicized in 1969.

crunch, and the inequities of the tax system. Concluding with a section on "Imperialism and U.S. Workers," it argued that, whatever benefits American workers may have received in the past from U. S. world-wide economic dominance, the "good times" were ending. U.S. corporations had already begun investing in low-wage Third World countries, while the government taxed its citizens and drafted its unemployed youth to defend the system. The Radical Education Project reproduced the series as a pamphlet and the Mayday Coalition distributed it free and without incident in the parking lot of the tank plant.[89]

The Macomb Liberation Front shouldered the burden of organizing in Macomb County for the march. Recent graduates of area high schools themselves, MLF members used their contacts to encourage high school students to join the coalition and to call student strikes on the day of the march. The tank plant march energized the antiwar forces in Macomb County and provided a focus. Radical faculty members at Macomb County Community College as well as antiwar high school teachers talked about the march in their classes. At Cousino High School, government teacher Jerry Eggen had been talking to students about Vietnam since he started teaching there in 1964. The Kent State shootings a year earlier had almost led to a walk-out at the school until administrators agreed to allow an optional outdoor "Teach-in" in the school stadium.[90]

The "East Side Women for Peace," a group of antiwar women from the east side

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[89] Bob Hippler and Dave Riddle, *Hard Times in Detroit* (Detroit: Radical Education Project, 1971).

[90] Sally Chalgian, interview by author, tape recording, 10 November 1995, Warren, Michigan. Chuck Chalgian, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 18 June 1996; Jerry Eggen, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 22 July 1996.

of Detroit and the neighboring suburbs, helped publicize the tank plant march through phone chains, coffee meetings, and mailings. The group had grown out of the antiwar faction within the Democratic Party, the New Democrats, in 1968 and 1969. As one member remembered:

> We were all mothers with small children. We were all opposed to the war. And none of us were on the campuses. None of us could take off and go to the Washington demonstrations. . . So we were all really frustrated as to how to oppose the war. We wanted to show that the movement against the war was bigger and more wide-spread than just the campuses. We finally decided to buy a copy of this film that Bess Meyerson did, "You Don't Have To Buy The War, Mrs. Smith." And we started showing it and our numbers really expanded. . . The march was a big thing for us. . . The most important aspect of the march for us was to see that we weren't working in a vacuum here on the east side. All of a sudden there we were marching down Van Dyke curb to curb . . . and a lot of the people on the march were from Macomb County. That feeling of solidarity made us feel good. . . We organized maybe 50 people to come to it. I was pregnant at the time and I was marching pushing a baby stroller. . .[91]

On April 21 the MLF members of the Mayday Coalition held a press conference to stress that, "We are not marching against the production workers at the Chrysler-Army tank plant – we are marching against the imperialist forces who exploit working Americans to turn out war machinery." Despite their leftist rhetoric, the student activists were joined at the press conference by William Ross, a Mt. Clemens attorney, active in the Macomb chapter of the ACLU and in the Liberal Coalition, who called for cutting the military appropriations for the Vietnam War. Al Fishman, head of the New Democrats of Michigan, praised the young organizers of the action and urged them to register and vote. When reporters asked whether or not communists were involved in planning the march, the reply was that everyone was welcome to join the march regardless of their political

[91] Marianne Yared McGuire, interview by author, tape recording, 4 June 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

beliefs. Ed Bruley, vice president of the Macomb County Community College Student Senate, returned to the theme of the tank plant as a target for the march. "War production does not help people: a tank once built is either destroyed or ceases to be of any use to the community. . . We should be creating machinery which is socially useful in helping to improve the conditions of our daily lives. We need good medical care and safe working conditions – we don't need tanks."[92]

The other main task undertaken by the MLF was working out the logistics of the march. Among other things, this meant negotiating parade permits with the Warren Police. The proposed three-mile route went from the South Campus of Macomb County Community College down 12 Mile Road to Van Dyke where it turned south for half a mile to the tank plant. In early April, both the City Council and *The Macomb Daily* learned of the march. On April 13, Councilman Richard Sabaugh, who had spearheaded the fight against urban renewal in Warren, introduced a proposed city ordinance prohibiting "the flying the flags of any nation engaged in armed conflict with the United States." Apparently, the flag issue was far from moot. "In my opinion, marching with a flag that represents an enemy force to our boys in uniform is close to being a traitor," Sabaugh declared. The proposed ordinance had the early support of Council Secretary Louis Burdi, who moved to have the resolution prepared for a vote at the council's April 27 meeting. Sabaugh announced that he had contacted local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) units in the area.[93]

[92] James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan; *The Macomb Daily*, 8, 22 April 1971.

[93] Ibid., 8 April 1971, 14 April 1971.

Sabaugh's resolution, however, ran into opposition. One letter to *The Macomb Daily* stated, "for a city government to outlaw the public display of flags representing governments not engaged in a congressionally declared war with the United States is to cast contempt upon both the Constitution and the federal legislature." At the same time, members of the coalition stressed that they expected the march to be peaceful. When Sherman Faunce, City Attorney for Warren, reviewed the proposed flag ordinance and deemed it unconstitutional, Councilman Sabaugh reworded it and declared his intention to present it for adoption anyway at the April 27 meeting. He predicted that more than 150 VFW members would pack the council chambers in support. Spokesmen for the Mayday Coalition reiterated their stand that if the ordinance were adopted they would test it. Mayor Ted Bates and William Beck, Chairman of Macomb County's Loyalty Day Committee, urged all citizens to display the American flag on the day of the march.[94]

The Macomb Daily termed the mood at the April 27 City Council meeting, "ugly." Over three hundred spectators crowded the hall, including perhaps two hundred VFW members, along with a score of right-wing activists. As the outnumbered opponents of the flag ordinance tried to speak, they were interrupted with shouts of "Hang the Jew!" and "Kill the traitor communists!" One member of the Mayday Coalition, a 17-year-old student from Cousino High School, was struck by spectators several times as he entered the meeting carrying a Viet Cong flag, marched up to the council table and dumped it in front of the startled council members. Another "long-haired youth" attempted to speak against the ordinance. Interrupted by chants of "You're a commie," he "shrieked back,

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[94] Ibid., 21, 22, 23, 26 April 1971; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 22 April 1971.

'I'm an Ameri-Cong!'" Donald Lobsinger, leader of the right-wing group, Breakthrough, handed out leaflets warning those "who would display the Viet Cong flag (or any communist flag), let him be prepared to shed blood in defense of it and accept responsibility for whatever violence results. . ."[95]

Once things settled down, William Ross, head of the Mt. Clemens chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, tried to speak:

> The place was full of people from the American Legion and Lobsinger was there with his. . . thugs and . . . as I walked down the aisle to the microphone I got all sorts of labels slung at me. . . "Jew" and "Communist". . . (It so happens that I'm Scotch Catholic.) And I tried to tell them that you can't pass this ordinance – it's unconstitutional. . . It was a scary meeting.[96]

In spite of the intimidating atmosphere, the City Council rejected Sabaugh's ordinance by a vote of 6-2. He could not even get the vote of Councilwoman Lillian Klimecki Dannis, who had been a staunch ally a few months earlier during the urban renewal controversy. Dannis, as it turned out, was against the war. "We should adopt a resolution that we oppose the war in Vietnam," she stated.[97]

As it turned out, the march was high spirited and relatively peaceful. The weather was sunny and warm. The Macomb Liberation Front rock band, "RPM," played at the marshaling point on Macomb's campus. The march sponsors had worked out a long list of speakers, but the people soon tired of the speeches and started marching, led by a

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[95] *The Macomb Daily*, 28 April 1971.

[96] As an ACLU attorney, Ross had previously defended Lobsinger in a free speech case. William Ross, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 14 September 1996.

[97] Warren City Council, *Minutes of the Meeting*, 27 April 1971; The *Macomb Daily*, 28 April 1971.

contingent of Vietnam veterans and a score of bikers in full leather regalia. The organizers had to rush to catch up with the march. About 2,500 people participated. There were a sprinkling of NLF flags, but many marchers carried American flags. A few dozen Breakthrough members dogged the march with a banner: "Peace? *Yes*. Communism, Never!" As the procession approached Warren Woods High School, students started piling out of the windows and running towards the march. Several teachers (four from Cousino High School) also joined the demonstration.[98]

At 12 Mile and Van Dyke, where the march turned south, the Breakthrough hecklers attempted to grab a couple of the NLF flags but they were repulsed and the Warren Police prevented large-scale fighting between the groups. There were nine arrests, roughly divided between the marchers and the hecklers. One of the arrested antiwar marchers was a Marine Vietnam veteran who was wearing his sergeant chevrons on his shirt. The arresting officer sarcastically asked him if he was a real sergeant. "The cop couldn't believe that somebody who was in the Marine Corps, especially an N.C.O., would be involved in the march. I had to show him an ID card from when I got out of the service." After parading up and down in front of the plant for half an hour chanting, "One, Two, Three, Four – We Don't Want Your Fucking War!," the march broke up. The organizers and Breakthrough's Donald Lobsinger each declared victory and, as *The Fifth Estate* reporter noted, the kids "went home to get cleaned up for the Grand Funk

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[98] Ibid., 29 April 1971; Jim Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan; Jerry Eggen, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 22 July 1996.

concert that night."[99]

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The march was a great success. Not only were the city fathers unable to stop it, but Breakthrough proved to be a manageable problem, especially as the Warren police were in the position of containing the disruption of the Breakthrough crowd. There were, of course, some ugly stares from people in houses flying the American flag along 12 Mile, but there were also peace signs and smiles from supporters in other houses and from passing cars. James Jacobs remembered the march as "the major antiwar event ever organized in Macomb County," one that had a galvanizing effect on the organizers. "Ever since then, among the faculty at Macomb Community College the fact that we helped organize that march has always bonded people together." On the other hand, Jacobs noted, when Judge Stephen J. Roth ruled in favor of cross-district busing a few months later, the anti-busing movement organized a 15,000 person protest meeting in a matter of hours.[100]

We can never know for sure the effect of Warren Tank Plant March on the Democratic Party loyalty of Warren residents. The voting behavior in presidential elections – for instance, the decline in Warren's vote for the Democratic presidential candidate from 58 percent in 1968 to 35 percent in 1972 – obviously involves too many factors to attribute the variation to a single demonstration or even to the single issue of the

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[99] Al Treska, interview by author, tape recording, 16 August 1996, Detroit, Michigan; *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*, 13 May 1971.

[100] James Jacobs, interview by author, tape recording, 31 May 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

war. The prevailing opinion of writers treating the politics of the period is that the public's perceptions of the Democratic Party's policies on race eroded Democratic loyalties more than the war issue did. On the other hand, the Tank Plant March was probably the largest demonstration in the history of Warren to that point. It concerned a public policy issue which sharply divided the entire country. It seems reasonable to assume that there was some impact.[101]

Assessing the political effect in Macomb County of the antiwar movement involves distinguishing between several questions. First, what was the effect of the Tank Plant march on the attitudes of Warren's citizens concerning the war in Vietnam? The march probably helped to legitimize and build an antiwar consensus in Warren and Macomb County. Despite the tumultuous city council meeting of April 27, the very fact that the organizers were able to pull the march off without serious incident showed that antiwar sentiment was tolerated in Warren. Further evidence comes from the Warren city council's rejection of Councilman Sabaugh's flag resolution. There were few better judges of the attitudes and opinions of their constituents than the members of the city council. Yet one of the shrewdest, Councilwoman Dannis, was not afraid to take a public antiwar position herself during council deliberations. The other council members

[101] Much of the literature on these subjects involves hypothesis testing of attitudes held by one or another sector of the population. An early example is H. Edward Ransford, "Blue Collar Anger: Reactions to Student and Black Protest," *American Sociological Review*, 37 (June, 1972), 333-346. Political Scientists Benjamin I. Page and Richard A. Brody remind us that both Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey appeared to be moderates and promised gradual withdrawal without capitulating to North Vietnam in negotiating peace. See Benjamin I. Page and Richard A. Brody, "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process: The Vietnam War Issue" in *The American Political Science Review*, 66 (September 1972), 979-995.

apparently believed that the electorate was sufficiently ambivalent on the Vietnam war issue to allow them to vote their consciences. Compared to the cross-district busing issue, for instance, a vote to allow an antiwar demonstration in Warren was a "safe" vote.

A second question involves the political effects of youth culture. Was there, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the emergence of an identifiable youth cohort which behaved differently in the voting booth from its elders? How did youth voting patterns vary over time? Statistical regression of median age and median income on the percentage Democratic votes from 1966 to 1980 shows that, holding the other variables constant, a generational split in Democratic Party voting behavior was *not* happening and, in fact, was *declining* rather than increasing. With the exception of 1972 (an exceptional year also in the collapse of the Democratic vote), the voting behavior of younger and older voting precincts became slightly *more similar* during the late 1960s and 1970s, all in the context of a declining Democratic voting trend line. (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

Table 3.1: Coefficients for Regression of Democratic Vote in Election for State Board of Education by Median Age [102]

1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980
-0.00644	-0.00453	-0.00474	0.00060	n.a.	-0.00462	n.a.	-0.00413

How can we explain this? For one thing, as the baby boomers matured and became encumbered with jobs, families, and debt, and as the older generation passed on,

[102] See Appendix B for regression print-outs. In 1966, the coefficient of the median age of voters in the different census tracts of Warren regressed on the percentage vote for Democratic Party candidates for State Board of Education was negative .00644 percentage points, holding constant the median income of voters. By 1980, this coefficient for median age had risen to a negative .00413 percentage points, holding constant the median income of voters. This means that, holding median income constant, for each one-year increase in the median age of voters, the Democratic Party vote declined by six tenths of one percent in 1966 but by only about four-tenths of one percent in 1980.

the cultural differences that helped to define the younger generation faded in importance.[103]

Table 3.2: Mean Democratic Percentage Vote for Board of Education 1966-1980, Warren Michigan

1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984
74%	62%	70%	74%	47%	65%	61%	65%	54%	64%	46%

That does not mean that the war or the special concerns of the young had no affect on Democratic Party voting loyalty. For all the anxiety that the youth culture caused parents, however, it proved to be a relatively minor disturbance of the fundamental structures of the political culture. More enduring was the change in the economic roles of women.[104] Compared to the "race consensus" that the HUD controversy and the cross-district busing issue instilled in Warren, the impact of the Vietnam war was too diffuse to have a clear and immediate affect on voting behavior.

Thus, the 1960s youth culture rebels turned out to be politically less cohesive and conscious than they seemed to be at the time. In spite of the best efforts of the Weatherman SDS faction or the Macomb Liberation Front, New Left politics had little influence on them. If, as march organizers admitted, the "hippies carrying Viet Cong flags" did not know what the flags stood for, it follows that the "consciousness raising"

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[103] The fact that a long-term split in voting behavior based on age did not occur is all the more remarkable because in 1971 the twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution gave eighteen-year-olds the right to vote. If the cultural and political upheavals of the late 1960s and early 1970s were producing a "generation gap" in voting, one would expect the 18-year-old vote to exaggerate this gap. Instead, the voting variation dependent on age shrinks markedly in 1972. But the trend towards less difference between the generations in voting behavior was well established at least by 1976.

[104] See Chapter 5, below.

goal of this wing of the antiwar movement was hardly meeting with success. Even if they did know what the flag meant, the radical individualistic side of their rebellion may, years later, have attracted them to the Republican critique of big government. One former high school student leader recalled, "One of the legacies of that time is young people's developing distrust of government. At the time, this was a non-ideological kind of distrust, but increasingly it led them into the libertarian wing of the Republican Party."[105]

In any case, the liberal students in Warren were outnumbered by their more conservative classmates. As one Warren high school teacher from the period observed, although the average student seemed more open to controversial ideas in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the "silent majority" was amply represented among Warren's high school students. Among this group, as among their elders, the rhetoric of the New Left probably turned off more people than it attracted. In what opinion pollsters call "the negative follower" effect, "Public opinion polls make abundantly clear. . . that a majority of Americans found the antiwar movement, particularly its radical and "hippy" elements, more obnoxious than the war itself. In a perverse sort of way, the protest may even have strengthened support for a war that was not itself popular."[106]

One young Warren resident, Carl Marlinga, marched in the demonstration although he was offended by the hippies and the Viet Cong flags. Marlinga had come early to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was a tragic foreign policy miscalculation. As an earnest

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[105] Chuck Wilbur, interview by author. Tape recording, Southfield, Michigan, 27 July 1996.

[106] Jerry Eggen, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 22 July 1996. On the negative follower effect, see George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United*

young student at Notre Dame High School in neighboring Harper Woods, he had pondered Saint Thomas Aquinas, ***On The Just War.*** He also learned of President Dwight Eisenhower's comment that if the U.S. had allowed elections in Vietnam in 1956, as the 1954 Geneva Agreements stipulated, 80 percent of the Vietnamese people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh. This, and the knowledge that Vietnam contained many anticommunist Catholics, convinced Marlinga by 1968 that the war was bad policy, though not immoral. Following a stern ethical logic that would later make him county prosecutor, despite his opposition to the war, he volunteered to be drafted "rather than have my place taken by an African-American draftee from the inner city." Meanwhile, inspired by the memory of John Kennedy and already active in the Democratic Party, Marlinga went to work for the McCarthy campaign.[107]

Three years later, in 1971, his continued opposition to the war led him to join the Warren tank plant demonstration. Having already decided to work against the war from inside the Democratic Party, he felt troubled by the cat-calls that the march drew as it passed the UAW Regional headquarters: "I can remember marching down 12 Mile Road past UAW Region 1 . . . and hearing the guys in the building booing us and holding up signs . . . We were saying 'You should be with us' and they were giving us the finger and yelling, 'You commie pinko traitors!'" Marlinga's conflicted feelings were compounded by the fact that during the Second World War, his father, who still supported the U.S.

States and Vietnam, 1950-1975, second edition (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 173.

[107] As it turned out, Marlinga's draft board rejected him because of a history of rheumatic fever, although he twice appealed the ruling. Carl Marlinga, interview by author, tape recording, Mt. Clemens, Michigan, 14 August 1996.

policy in Vietnam, had worked at the Tank Plant. "I remember marching down Van Dyke and thinking, this is where my Dad worked . . . and here I am on the other side."[108]

If, despite such tensions within individual families, the Vietnam war did not prompt the young to vote significantly differently from their parents over the long run, what effect did it have on the older generation? According to political observer Paul Donahue, the war weakened the bonds of loyalty between Warren's voters and the Democratic Party. Initially, most Warren residents supported the Democratic Party's foreign policy of vigorous prosecution of the war under Lyndon Johnson: "When the war first started, it was clear that most people in Warren supported it. . . The Polish residents [of Warren] associated Communism with losing their homeland . . . Communism took over their country and it was fighting their Church. The Poles are extremely devout Catholics and anticommunist. . ."[109]

This anticommunist orientation of Warren's Polish parishioners and priests canceled the impact of the antiwar position taken by Detroit Archdiocese Cardinal John Dearden. The Archdiocese and the Catholic churches in Warren were not speaking with one voice on the issue of the war in Vietnam. This stands in contrast to the Church's more unified stand in support of civil rights during the HUD controversy of 1970. Torn between Cold War consensus and antiwar liberalism, most Catholics accepted the Democratic Party's pre-1968 policy of containing and winning the war against

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan. Ralph Liberato, interview by author, tape recording, 10 March 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

international communism. This received enthusiastic support from Warren's largest ethnic group, Polish-Americans. They did not break with the Democratic Party over Johnson's war policies.[110]

According to Donahue, the crisis of authority in the Democratic Party occurred after 1968. The Democrats lost the presidency and began "coddling" the protesters. It was the authority issue, the feeling that the Democratic Party leadership was both permissive and weak in caving in to the protesters, that offended many voters in Warren:

> The war in Vietnam opened the door to these loyal Democrats becoming independent voters. It was their feeling that these crazy kids in the street were being listened to by the Democratic Party leaders. And, by 1972, they were right. . . The Vietnam War was the first instance of the Democratic Party leaders accepting things that the people of Warren just couldn't go along with. It wasn't that they had trouble with the war. They had trouble with these groups protesting the war. . . They didn't like them in the streets. . . And, to be candid, I think to some extent there was always a strain of anti-Semitism in the Polish community. It was never overt, of course. And that caused a reaction, because so many in the antiwar movement were Jews.[111]

One Macomb County political observer remembered that the feeling against the marchers reached into his own neighborhood. "They thought the tank plant demonstrators

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[110] On the reticence of Catholic Church in Warren regarding the War in Vietnam, Carl Marlinga, interview by author, tape recording, 14 August 1996, Mt. Clemens, Michigan; for the antiwar position of John Cardinal Dearden, see "Statement on Viet Nam War, June 13, 1972," Cardinal John Dearden Collection, Box 5, "Indochina War" folder, Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit. For criticism of Cardinal Dearden by the anti-communist Catholic laity, see 28 April 1970 letter to John Cardinal Dearden from Frank J. Quinn, Commander of Department of Michigan Catholic War Veterans and reply of 6 May 1970, Cardinal John Dearden Collection, box 3, "Consciencious Objection" folder as well as correspondence between Donald Lobsinger and the Archdiocese, 22 January 1968 and 26 January 1968 and letter to John Cardinal Dearden from Donald Lobsinger, 10 July 1965, Cardinal John Dearden Collection, Box 1, "Breakthrough" folder; in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Paul Donahue, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1996, Warren, Michigan.

[111] Ibid.

were 'weakening the country.'. . . [My neighbors] saw it as a patriotic/non-patriotic kind of thing. None of them had sons in the war, by the way. They weren't personally affected, they just seemed by that time to buy the Nixon view of things." Frightened by the specter of violence in the streets, they were looking for strong leadership. "There was a feeling that, if we didn't unite behind the war, that somebody was going to take over."[112]

Troubled by charges that national Democratic leadership seemed to have adopted a policy of "appeasing" international communism, and responding to Nixon's wooing of the "silent majority," formerly loyal Democrats in Macomb County began to feel uncomfortable in the Democratic Party:

> Some . . . [Democrats] who have migrated to being Republicans . . . seemed to have been pushed along that path by what they saw as a wrong Democratic Party position on the Vietnam War. . . They identified national Democrats like Fulbright and Frank Church and Phil Hart on the state scene as being appeasers and compromisers. . . and they found themselves a little bit more spiritually akin to Nixon.[113]

Carl Marlinga remembers the confusion among Warren's Democrats at the convergence between the increasingly antiwar position of the national Democratic Party after 1968 and the rudely expressed message of the antiwar protesters: "The burning of draft cards, the burning of the American flag, the carrying of the Vietnamese flag, people would look at that and say, 'Well, these people are not members of any party,' but it did seem that if there was a party which was *not condemning* these things, it was the Democratic Party."[114]

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[112] John Krnacik, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 July 1996.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Carl Marlinga, interview by author. Tape recording, Mt. Clemens, Michigan, 14 August 1996.

At the same time, they felt more at ease with Nixon's refusal to pose the issues of Vietnam war policy in moral terms:

> Richard Nixon . . . made some changes in the draft lottery and in the Vietnamization program. . . But he wasn't saying that the United States was doing anything immoral in Vietnam. . . Whereas if you listened to Kennedy, McCarthy, and McGovern or all of these radicals who seemed to be being accepted into the [Democratic Party] . . . it was the Democrats who were questioning the moral stance of the United States in Vietnam. . .[115]

The result, for the young Marlinga, was a feeling of isolation as an antiwar Democrat in Warren, along with the perception of growing political demoralization of formerly staunch Democrats. As he marched in front of the tank plant in 1971, he felt torn between his antiwar beliefs, his patriotism, and his loyalty to his father:

> In that march in front of the Tank Plant in 1971, I wanted to stay clear of the people who were carrying the Vietnamese flags and wearing the hippy clothing . . . [Later,] my Dad never talked to me about the march itself. The people who worked in his store who knew that I was there at the march. . . it was just one of those things where you would avoid their eyes and you wouldn't talk about it. . . This was too deep and painful. Why would you do this? Why would you be so unpatriotic? It was like a disease or something that nobody wanted to even talk about. And so it was not only a retreat from the Democratic Party itself, it was a retreat from politics. That politics was now a subject that was too fearful and painful to talk about. And people would therefore stay home and not even vote. Because I don't want to have to think about something that raises such terrible thoughts in my mind.[116]

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What impact did the war in Vietnam have on the Democratic Party in Warren? Gerald Deneau, one of the stalwart members of the New Democrats, believes that the war and the reform movement that it spawned in the Democratic Party actually broadened the base of the party and shook up the power structure:

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

> The war . . . drew all kinds of people into the party that would have never been there otherwise. I think some of them are still there. Some of them may have turned into hacks by now but some are still real decent Democrats. A lot of them were drawn into the party at that time because of the antiwar organizing in the party. . .The party became more broad-based and more progressive as a result of trying to absorb the new elements. . . When we first had to deal with the Macomb County Democratic Party power structure – John Bruff and Congressman O'Hara – they used to rule like gods. By the time we finished, they had to deal with us and I think we denied Bruff a lot of power and possibly prevented him from succeeding O'Hara. The current congressman, Bonior, benefited from all that. We actually destroyed the Old Guard, I believe.[117]

Bruff, himself, recalled the efforts of the New Democrats in more modest terms. Although the group was strong in Ingham County and Washtenaw County, he noted, it never gained much leverage in Macomb County. "But to the extent that they attracted new people into the Democratic Party (which they did), they were helpful. . . a lot of them were teachers and they eventually became more aligned with the O'Hara organization in Macomb County because we were liberals and they were too."[118]

Bruff's former law partner, William Ross, also believes that the liberal Democrats' antiwar stand ultimately strengthened the party, although he stresses that, in the short run, it split the party leadership and weakened voter support for the party in places like Warren. In Ross' view, though, people of conscience had little choice in the matter. "On the Vietnamese War, although it divided the party, I think we did a lot of good. I mean, we got out of the goddamned war, we got Lyndon Johnson back on his ranch in Texas, so I think we did OK. It was a cleansing process. It was tough but it has been justified."[119]

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[117] Gerald Deneau, telephone interview by author. Tape recording, 11 July 1996.

[118] John Bruff, telephone interview by author. Tape recording, 19 September 1996.

[119] William Ross, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 14 September 1996.

Otto Feinstein, who helped to found the Concerned Democrats, looked at the war as a catalytic event. Like the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914, the war in Vietnam brought on something larger than itself, according to Feinstein. But what it brought on was the failure of the Democratic Party coalition to maintain itself by accommodating a new generation of activists:

> Just by the natural flow of human life, all coalitions have to continuously be rebuilt because new generations of people are coming in and the natural tendency of structures and institutions is to not let them in easily. . . Somehow the system has to be able to accommodate that natural change. . . The activists living in Macomb County were young . . . Who was going to receive these people into the party? .[120]

Feinstein believed that the New Democratic Coalition represented this new generation of activists knocking on the door of the Democratic Party. The gate-keepers of the party, unfortunately, were mainly interested in maintaining control, not in assimilating the new generation. For Feinstein, the tragedy of Vietnam was not just the war itself, but also the fact that it symbolized a task of inclusion that the party was not ready for at the moment when it was posed. "Just look at what Roosevelt had to do to continuously maintain his coalition during the Depression and World War II. To think of political coalition as natural and permanent is [wrong]. . ." Rather, political coalition has to be continually revitalized with new constituencies. In Feinstein's view, the issue of the Vietnam war did not "split" the party; it heightened a proprietary attitude among the party regulars and prevented the revitalization of the party.[121]

The war in Vietnam weakened the Democratic Party in Warren. It did not

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[120] Otto Feinstein, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 12 September 1996.

[121] Ibid.

discredit or disable the party in a single, dramatic blow. Instead, it ate away at it in obscure ways that are not easily discerned. The human cost of the war – the forty-one young residents of Warren who died in Vietnam and the many more who were scarred in combat – was not directly borne by a large proportion of Warren's residents. As we have noted, the war was strangely invisible in Warren. Never a popular war, it droned on in the background and failed to become the public issue that one might have expected. Still, it evoked a patriotic response from many Warren residents who supported President Johnson's war policies. But as it dragged on, it reminded people, some of whom had already become critical of big government, that federal programs, whether foreign or domestic, can extract a costly tribute in blood and taxes. It thus raised the issue of cost, not only of the war, but of government itself. It prepared the way for Ronald Reagan's crusade against the Democratic Party's belief in government as an instrument of reform.

The war also heightened tensions between the generations and reflected these tensions back on the Democratic Party in Warren. Well-behaved "McCarthy kids" like Chuck Wilbur and Carl Marlinga had trouble negotiating their eventual involvement in the Democratic Party precisely because of the party's position on the war in Vietnam. Were it not for the war, a much larger contingent of Warren's young people might have become active Democrats. Instead, the war contributed to a cynical rejection of politics among youth as well as to the general dissonance of youth and age both inside and outside the Democratic Party. The war lent a strident tone to the youth culture. This, in turn, provoked a harsh and uncomprehending reaction against youth on the part of the older generation. And after Vietnam became "Nixon's war" and Democratic politicians finally adopted an antiwar stand, the perception became fixed that the liberal national leadership

of the Democratic Party had caved in to the uncouth and unruly young antiwar protesters.

Finally, the war prompted the liberals inside the Macomb County Democratic Party to stage an uprising. This uprising was part of a nation-wide phenomenon which eventually forced the party on the county, state, and national level to confront the issue of the war. But the initial reluctance of party leaders to do so led the insurgents to demand changes in the rules of party governance. The reforms, like those of the McGovern Commission on the national level, expressed a vision of political equity far removed from the thinking of many rank-and-file Macomb County Democrats. Although it is unclear how many ordinary voters were aware of the rules changes, the opposition inside the party led the New Democratic Coalition to lose its bearings on the mainstream political culture and on its original mission.

The New Democratic Coalition did open the party up to debate. Ironically, after a couple of years, the party tired of debate. According to Carl Marlinga, who became Macomb County Prosecutor in 1984 and served as officer-at-large in the state party from 1985 to 1993, the war caused the party to shut down discussion of important differences. Controversial platform ideas were referred to the officers of the state party where they were quietly buried. As Carl Marlinga remembers it, the war in Vietnam, coupled with Republican success at the polls, created such turmoil in the party that the leaders "felt that things were slipping away." They had been used to large Democratic majorities, but in 1972, the reformists gained control of the nominations process, only to witness Nixon trounce their presidential candidate, George McGovern. The party leaders responded by clamping down on the resolutions process in state conventions. Consequently, "we don't bring serious issues to debate in our state conventions. . . As a result, we never developed

the think tanks that the Republicans did. That's why the 1980s belonged to the Republicans and that's why, even today, to be a Democrat now is really to be *not* a Republican."[122]

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[122] Ibid.

Chapter 4

The Cross-District Busing Controversy in Warren, 1971-1974

Carmella Sabaugh was a young mother with two children under five years old when she moved to Warren from Detroit, in 1965. Her new home was near 11 Mile Road and Schoenherr, on the east side of town. Her husband commuted to work in Detroit, where he taught school. Her neighbors were also young. "There were a lot of new homes being built at that time, and a lot of new families from the Detroit area moved up. . . It was a young community," she remembers. Her children were too young for school when she moved to Warren, and over the next five years, she had three more. She recalls the traditional nature of the families living in her neighborhood. "All the mothers were at home with the children. . . The husbands were working. . . I was totally immersed in raising the family." Although nobody had much money, people were happy to be bound up in their family responsibilities. Carmella enjoyed the back-fence camaraderie with her new neighbors. She found, in conversations over coffee, that she shared the simple expectations of her friends. "You had this nice, new house, . . . you were supposed to raise your family and go to church . . . Pretty much, things were going to be good." There was a sense that Warren offered a protective environment for raising children. The congestion and dangers of the city seemed far away.[1]

To its new residents, Warren seemed designed for bringing up a young family. Of course, the suburb did lack some amenities. Its acres of sprawling tract housing offered little in the way of organized recreation. There were few parks. The children's exercise

[1] Carmella Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 28 January 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

opportunities were limited to school gyms, subdivision streets, and drive-way basketball hoops. A 1971 study funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a proposed Community Renewal Program noted, "currently the City has provided less than 12 percent of the total park and recreation land required according to generally accepted standards and only 68 percent of the park land that has been provided has been developed." An attitude survey conducted as part of the same research project indicated that the lack of recreational facilities was second (behind traffic congestion) in residents' ranking of concerns as a "serious problem" throughout the city (29.8 percent), as well as in the respondents' own neighborhoods (23 percent).[2]

On the other hand, the city had plenty of schools. Margaret Sinclair remembers moving to Warren in 1955. "The thing I really liked about the location was that there was a working farm behind us, and right next to the farm was a school. And that's what attracted us to that subdivision." In fact, Warren had six different school districts, some of which overlapped other communities. The reason for the lack of "fit" between the school districts and the municipalities was that most of the school districts pre-dated the cities. The districts had grown out of one-room rural schools which served the farming population when the area was a township, prior to suburban development and municipal incorporation.[3]

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[2] Warren Planning and Urban Renewal Department and City Planning Associates, Inc., *Warren, Michigan Community Renewal Program Michigan R-175 (CR) Final Report* – March 1971, 33, 20-21.

[3] Margaret Sinclair, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 January 1997.

For some residents of Warren, the school districts constituted the most important community boundaries, even after Warren became a city, in 1957. People identified where they lived in terms of their school district. One long-time resident observed, "The old-timers still do. They live in Van Dyke, they live in Fitzgerald. They identify with the school system more than with the city sometimes. They went through these schools and their kids did." This community identification in terms of the school districts is evident in the way that the Warren sports programs pitted one city high school against another. "Warren's neighborhoods then were very close-knit," remembered one city official. "We had six school districts and, at that time, we had our own athletic conference. Within the city of Warren we had nine high schools. All our games were basically played inside the city of Warren. . . Nobody wanted to be shipped away from their own neighborhood. They wanted to stay and go to school wherever they lived." [4]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the people of Warren generally supported their schools. Most of them felt that the schools were doing a good job. The 1971 Community Renewal Program study concluded that only 6.3 percent of the community's leaders and 4.1 percent of the residents felt that the quality of the schools posed a problem for the city. The survey also showed that the respondents felt that the schools were conveniently located. Only 2.1 percent of the community leaders and 3.8 percent of the residents listed

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[4] Interview with Marilyn Donalin, tape recording, 30 January 1997, Warren, Michigan. Interview with Mark Steenberg, tape recording, 25 February 1997, Warren, Michigan. Letter from Donald Binkowski to author, 4 January 1997. For a map of Warren's school district boundaries in 1964, see Appendix A.

"convenience of schools" as a major problem for the city.[5]

The school systems were funded through property taxes, supplemented by grants from the state. The level of state aid depended on whether the student per capita school district real estate base was above or below the state average. The funding of the school districts depended on the composition of the tax base. Some districts, like Fitzgerald, in the south of Warren, relied on manufacturing property for part of the tax base. Others, like Warren Woods, on the city's east side, financed themselves almost entirely through residential property taxes. These factors influenced the (infrequent) decisions of the school boards to redraw district lines, depending on whether the affected neighborhoods were rich enough in real estate value to cover the costs of absorbing their students.

Another factor determining taxes was the aging of Warren's population. With each census report, the median age of Warren's population increased. It went from 24.5 in 1960 to 35.6 in 1990.[6] Even in the Warren Consolidated School District (an amalgamation of several smaller school districts serving northern Warren and the neighboring city of Sterling Heights), the median age increased, beginning in 1975. Many of these older tax payers lived on fixed incomes and their children were already grown. They were, understandably, harder to convince to vote for a raise in school millage rates. Thus, the school systems of Warren, though they enjoyed a good reputation, were

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[5] *Warren, Michigan Community Renewal Program Michigan R-175 (CR) Final Report,* Tables 9, 10, on pages 20-21.

[6] U.S. Census of Population: 1960, General Population Characteristics, Michigan, Table 20; 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Population and Housing Characteristics for Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas, Detroit-Ann Arbor, MI, Section 1, Table 1.

undergoing complex fiscal pressures at about the same time that cross-district busing became an issue.[7]

Complaints over taxes aside, the prevailing attitude in Warren in the early 1960s was one of optimism. This sense of suburban complacency burst in July 1967, when a police raid on an after-hours bar on 12th street in Detroit resulted in four days of rioting, 43 officially recorded deaths, and between $80,000,000 and $125,000,000 in damage. Carmella Sabaugh's suburban neighbors reacted with disbelief. She remembered, "No one ever thought that there was a reason to riot. . . [Even] if they thought that the people were oppressed, they wouldn't think that this was a way to settle it." The riot called into question the feeling of security that accompanied the earlier years of suburban settlement. It gave Warren's people a "feeling of uneasiness about Detroit, and where it was going. And now, they definitely wanted that separation [between the cities.]" At first, other than the influx of new white refugees from Detroit, the bulwark along Eight Mile Road between Detroit and Warren seemed to hold, even when, in 1970, the Department of Housing and Urban Development tried to pressure Warren's city fathers to adopt a policy of open housing in return for urban renewal funds.[8]

In 1971, however, a law suit filed by the Detroit branch of the NAACP, *Bradley v. Milliken*, threatened to breach that barrier. This happened when Federal District Judge Stephen J. Roth ruled that, to be effective, the plans for the transportation of students

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[7] Robert Freehand, interview by author, tape recording, 27 February 1997, Warren, Michigan; Richard Lange, interview by author, tape recording, 28 February 1997.

[8] Carmella Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 28 January 1997, Mt. Clemens. For the HUD controversy, see Chapter 2, above.

within Detroit to remedy the school system's racial segregation had to be expanded to include fifty-three first- and second-tier suburban school districts surrounding Detroit. The cross-district busing controversy quickly enveloped Warren in a cloud of anxiety at the prospect, not only of becoming entangled in the affairs of an increasingly black Detroit, but that the currency of this renewed engagement with Detroit was to be the most precious treasure of Warren's residents, their children. [9]

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In 1971, Arthur Johnson was employed as Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Community Relations Commission of the Detroit Public School system. Born in 1925 in Americus, Georgia, raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and educated at Morehouse College, Johnson was an African-American student activist pursuing graduate studies in Sociology at Fisk University in 1950 when the national NAACP invited him to head its chapter in Detroit. Johnson, who had immersed himself in the sociological thought of W. E. B. DuBois, the founder of the NAACP, had the intellectual foundation and the dignified

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[9] There is extensive literature on *Bradley v. Milliken*. For the historic significance of the case, see Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus?Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978). For a more recent appraisal, Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996). The trial transcripts of *Bradley v. Milliken* contain much valuable information on the Detroit school system as well as on residency and race in Detroit. They are in 27 volumes at the Wayne State University Law School library. For the Detroit school system, see Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-81* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). For the political background to the law suit, see William R. Grant, "The Evolution of School Desegregation in Detroit: The Detroit School Case: an Historical Overview," *Wayne Law Review* Vol. 21, No. 3 (March 1975). For a narrative of the case, Paul R. Dimond, *Beyond Busing: Inside the Challenge to Urban Segregation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985). Eleanor P. Wolf, *Trial and Error: The Detroit School Segregation Case* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981). Wolf criticizes the methodology and conclusions of the sociology under-girding the plaintiffs' case.

bearing of that stratum of black leaders, "the talented tenth," on whom DuBois rested his hopes for improvement of the black race. Johnson took up the challenge and, although he planned to resume his studies after only two or three years in Detroit, he ended up serving as Executive Secretary of the Detroit branch until 1964. Of his years in Detroit, Johnson remembered:

> In that period, we were very much concerned with job discrimination, housing segregation (which was very firmly fixed in Detroit), police brutality, and we were always concerned with problems in education. The school system . . . and problems of equal opportunity in education loomed large, and we found ourselves giving increased attention to how to make the public schools in Detroit serve black youngsters adequately. [10]

This increased attention on expanding the education opportunities of the city's black youth followed from the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education. Brown* reversed the 1896 *Plessy v. Fergusson* decision, that providing "separate but equal" public accommodations satisfied the states' constitutional obligations to African-Americans for equal treatment under the law. Arthur Johnson remembered, "[*Brown v Board of Education*] was the most ringing, most significant statement of the Court. . . [It bolstered] our belief in America and our ability to be optimistic." Not until a decade after *Brown*, however, did the federal government begin actively to exert pressure on school systems to desegregate. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prescribed the withholding of federal funds from local governments engaged in segregation, plus the setting of executive branch standards for desegregation in education, were the main mechanisms of this pressure. In case after case during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the

[10] Arthur Johnson, interviews by author, tape recording, 25 November, 17 December 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

federal courts broadened the meaning of desegregation. Eventually, the Supreme Court confronted the limitations on school desegregation posed by residential segregation. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* in 1971, the Court ruled (over the arguments of the Nixon Justice Department) that busing was an acceptable way to desegregate education if the segregation were the result, at least in part, of past government actions (*de jure* segregation). By 1972, over forty judges (mostly in the South) had rendered decisions requiring the transportation of students to counter racial segregation in gerrymandered school districts. The proof of *de jure* segregation was relatively easy in the South, given the history of officially enforced segregation in that region of the country. The question remained whether or not busing across school district lines were constitutionally required in the North, where an entire central city school district might be segregated because of racial residency patterns, but it could not be proved that the segregation involved governmental actions in the outlying districts. This was the issue posed by *Bradley v. Milliken.* [11]

The decision of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP in the early 1960s to intervene in the Detroit school system also reflected the fact that the leadership of the Detroit school board had passed into the hands of a coalition of liberal, labor, and civil rights activists. This liberal coalition inherited a school system fraught with almost insurmountable problems, however. For one thing, the property tax base of the system eroded with the

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[11] Ibid.; Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation*, 8; Davison M. Douglas, ed., *The Development of School Busing as a Desegregation Remedy* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), xi-xiii; Stephen C. Halpern, *On the Limits of the Law: The Ironic Legacy of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 1-5.

flight of industry from the city and the suburban white exodus. From 1958 to 1963, the assessed valuation of real estate fell from $5.1 billion to $4.6 billion.[12]

Another problem besetting the school board was the fact that, while the black population of Detroit rose from 16 percent to 29 percent from 1950 to 1960, the proportion of black students in the school system rose from 17.3 percent in 1946 to 45.8 percent in 1961 and 55 percent in 1966. Thus, the racial composition of the school system was changing faster than that of the city as a whole. Beginning in 1963, the city's schools were majority black, while the adult population of the city was still majority white. Thus, the school system was in the position of having to ask an aging white population (many on fixed incomes) to vote to raise its property taxes for the benefit of the city's black students. It frequently refused to do so. Between 1949 and 1977, Detroit voters rejected 12 out of 23 votes for millage renewals or increases. This gap contributed to the chronic under-funding of the Detroit school system at a point when the system was laboring under the combined effects of years of inadequate maintenance, plus ballooning enrollments of the baby-boom generation.[13]

In addition, the support that might have been expected from the growing black community was stifled by its frustration over accumulated grievances. The traditional attitude of many white administrators and teachers in the Detroit school system towards black students was one of neglect. Prior to the election of the school board's liberal leadership in the mid-1950s, the building and maintenance program spent most of its

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[12] Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 219.

[13] Ibid., 219-220, 404, Appendix Table 10.

budget on white schools in the northwest and northeast parts of town, while neglecting all-black schools in the center city. In addition, the school district's personnel department assigned teachers by race. There was a dual seniority list and black teachers were placed in black schools. Perhaps the most devastating policy of all was the channeling of black students into the "general track" program. The "general track" was little more than a holding-pen for the black proletariat. Little effort was made to educate black students. Even the apprenticeship programs run jointly by the school system, the unions, and employers closed their doors to black students. These students were expected, after all, to get unskilled jobs in heavy industry or in service work, requiring little academic or vocational instruction.[14]

The black community was made aware of these problems in part through the creation of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on School Needs. Formed in 1958, the racially integrated Citizens Advisory Committee included a number of civil rights leaders such as Arthur Johnson. It legitimized the long-standing complaints and demands for educational equity on the part of the black community. It was African-American Detroiters during the early 1960s who helped elect a progressive school board. White liberals on the school board, like steel broker Leonard Kasle, and representatives of labor, like U.A.W. attorney A. L. Zwerdling, along with black school board members, like Dr. Remus Robinson, commissioned studies and attempted to put into place a number of programs designed to respond to the needs of the black community. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, for instance, Detroit School Superintendent Samuel Brownell introduced the

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[14] Ibid., 186-196, 201, 250-257, 263, 275; George E. Bushnell, Jr., interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

"Great Cities" project which ran pilot programs in seven Detroit schools, with 420 staff members and 10,400 students.[15]

The liberal-labor-civil rights coalition on the school board implemented a program of school construction and repair in the previously neglected black sections of the city. It recruited and trained black teachers from the South and imposed a moratorium on the purchase of textbooks while it fought with publishers to eliminate the racial bias in text books and generated its own teaching materials. In addition, it halted the policy of assigning teachers and principals by race. It also implemented a policy of affirmative action for contractors doing business with the school board.[16]

The school board's commitment to dismantling the system of white privilege inside the school system encountered resistance. One such flash point occurred at the start of the school year in 1960, with the decision to bus 300 black students from overcrowded central-city schools into three majority-white schools on the city's northwest side. In a community uprising reminiscent of the city's white homeowner protests over housing integration in the 1940s and 1950s, meetings were held in which hundreds of angry white parents demanded that the busing plans be suspended and vowed to keep their children home from school. Thirteen hundred white students boycotted the schools. In the face of school Superintendent Brownell's threats to fine and jail parents for contributing to the

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[15] Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 253-258. On A. L. Zwerdling and other personalities on the school board, see William R. Grant, "Community Control vs. School Integration in Detroit," *The Public Interest*, 24 (Summer 1971), 62-79.

[16] Ibid.; Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 65; George E. Bushnell, Jr., interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan; Arthur Johnson, interview by author, tape recording, 17 December 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

truancy of their children, the protests eventually died down, but the 300 black students were kept segregated within their new schools.[17]

The white parents' outrage over the administration of the Detroit school system was matched by the disgust of black parents. As the issues of inequality in education came to the fore, the accumulated record of the Detroit school system towards the city's black youth became notorious in the black community. By the early 1960s, black parents were in a state of near-rebellion against the school board, even though the liberal majority on the board agreed with the parents' complaints. This rebellion expressed itself in the black community's unenthusiastic response to millage campaigns for a school system marked by such a record of inequality and hypocrisy. Black parents also protested specific school board policies, as in the Sherrill School controversy of January 1962. There, the reassignment of overcrowded black students to other black schools rather than to majority-white Mackenzie High School led the Sherrill School parents to sue the Detroit school board.[18]

By the mid-1960s the students were frequently in the vanguard of black protest against the school system. In the Northern High School boycott of April 1966, black students denounced the lack of academic substance in their school curriculum. They pointed to the fact that Northern High School had a good academic reputation in the days when it served white students. Their ultimately successful demand for the reassignment of

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[17] For the white homeowner protests of the 1940s and 1950s, see Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 230-258; Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 259-261; Darden, et al., *Race and Uneven Development*, 221-222.

[18] Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 261-263.

the school's principal contributed to racial polarization in the city.[19]

Both the magnitude of the problems of the Detroit school system and the example of white resistance to black encroachment in "white" schools convinced a substantial proportion of the city's population, as well as its political leaders, that the school system's problems could be better addressed if its administrative functions were divided into geographic regions. State Senator Coleman Young authored a bill in 1969 requiring the decentralization of the Detroit school system.[20] Arthur Johnson believes that this turn towards decentralization was borne out of the despair of the black community that integration could ever be achieved in the Detroit school system:

> As we began to focus more and more on education problems. . . there began to grow a sense of retreat and disenchantment with the goal of integration. Black families began to say, "OK, if we can't have an integrated school system, then let us control our own neighborhood schools." And the idea of black control of black schools became a rallying call. . . . Black control of black schools became a political strategy that backed away from school integration. In all fairness, all the efforts that blacks had made to participate in integrated education were frustrated. No wonder they came to question integration as a policy.[21]

Even among the liberal leadership of the city, however, by the mid-1960s, school decentralization was becoming a panacea for the ills of the school system as well as an alternative to the seemingly unattainable goal of integration. The Detroit Rebellion of 1967 transformed the debate over decentralization by bringing to the fore a new generation of black leaders. To varying degrees, this new leadership embraced black

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[19] Ibid., 301-305.

[20] *Michigan Public Act* 244, (1969).

[21] Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 326-337; Arthur Johnson, interview by author, tape recording, 17 December 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

nationalism. Its political style was strident. Its strategy for educational reform excluded coalition with whites. And it went beyond the administrative critique of the school system (and its preferred solution of decentralization) to demand black control of black schools. This implied a different kind of relationship between the school board, the teachers' union, and the community, one which divested the central school board of much of its authority and invested that authority in "the community," although the mechanisms of community control were as yet undefined.

This emergence of new leadership entailed a rift between the black nationalists like Reverend Albert Cleage, Jr., who demanded black control of black schools, and the established civil rights leaders like Arthur Johnson, who still believed in the NAACP goal of complete integration of black people into American society. The Reverend Cleage and others accused Dr. Remus Robinson and Arthur Johnson of having allowed themselves to be co-opted by the white liberals on the school board. Together with the white parents' entrenched defense of white schools, this split in the black leadership embittered the debate over educational reform in Detroit and weakened the position of the liberals on the school board.

Notwithstanding these developments, the liberal leadership of the school board, led by A.L. Zwerdling, still pursued desegregation. Despite the 1969 passage of Public Act 244 mandating decentralization of Detroit schools, the Zwerdling faction decided to exercise its power under the act to draw the boundary lines of the regions of the decentralized system in such as way as to include both black and white schools in the same regions. This did not alter the existing attendance lines for the schools, but it left open the possibility of integration of the schools in the same region at some future time. Then, in

March 1970, in response to pressure from the black community and in order to gain the vote of one black member of the school board, Zwerdling proposed redrawing attendance lines of 11 of the city's 22 high schools, a change which would have resulted in the reassignment of 3000 students to new schools. Over a three-year period, 9,000 high school students would be affected. On April 7, 1970, the school board voted 4 to 2 to adopt this integration plan.[22]

This precipitated a firestorm of protest in the white working class neighborhoods on the northwest and northeast corners of the city. Parents kept over 2,000 students home from school. White leaders called a meeting at the Slovene Hall on the west-side of Detroit and a new, city-wide group emerged: the Citizens' Committee for Better Education (CCBE). The group elected twelve representatives from the east side and twelve from the west side of Detroit. These delegates had the support of several already active white parents' groups, as well as up to a dozen white homeowner groups. Edward Zaleski, a Detroit police officer, was named temporary chairman. A metalurgist at General Motors, Aubrey Short, served later as chairman of the organization. An attorney in attendance at the meeting, Alexander Ritchie, became a delegate at-large and the group's legal advisor. Ritchie, a 48-year-old real estate lawyer raised in a Detroit working-class Scotch family, was happy to serve:

> I sincerely believed . . . that a local school district, a small school district, which gave the people in the neighborhood the opportunity to go and express their concerns about principals, about teachers, about curriculum, could be a far more effective instrument of public education than a massive school district where you had people

[22] Grant, "The Evolution of School Desegregation in Detroit," 854-857; Arthur Johnson, interview by author, tape recording, 17 December 1996, Detroit, Michigan; Mirel *The Rise and Fall*, 338-340.

> downtown who really didn't give a damn. . . After they got down there in that elevated office. . .they were so remote from the problems of working parents, both black and white. They had no idea about the problem of discipline, for example.[23]

The group floundered for awhile, first attempting to file a lawsuit and then sending a delegation to Lansing to complain to the legislature. Neither tactic worked. Then the CCBE decided to mount a petition campaign to recall the liberals on the school board. They needed 114,000 valid signatures to force the recall vote. In five days, the group gathered 35,000 petition signatures. On June 15, 1970, they filed petitions with 130,000 signatures. Impressed by this level of support, the Michigan legislature passed Public Act 48 in July, nullifying the April 7 school board plan, and in August the voters recalled the liberal school board members. This recall campaign, the only successful one in the history of the school district, was arguably the highest point of mobilization and coordination in the history of the Detroit white community's rearguard battle against racial integration. The CCBE relied on long-established networks of white homeowner resistance to residential integration. Ritchie recalled that delegates from some of the white homeowner neighborhood groups served on the governing board of the CCBE.[24]

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The recall of the school board liberals precipitated the *Bradley v. Milliken* school desegregation lawsuit. On August 18, 1970, the NAACP filed suit in federal district court. The purpose of the lawsuit was to overturn the section of Public Act 48 which

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[23] Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan; Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 340; Grant, "Community Control," 74.

[24] Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan; Grant, "The Detroit School Case," 858; Grant, "Community Control," 72-75; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 246-249.

nullified the April 7 high school integration plan. The NAACP national legal staff soon decided to expand the lawsuit, however, to ask the court to order the full-scale integration of the Detroit school system. This option had become more attractive in the wake of the school board recall. Judge Stephen J. Roth was randomly picked to hear the case.

Judge Roth was born in Austro-Hungary and grew up the son of an auto worker in Flint, Michigan. He liked to tell people that he came from a blue-collar, Catholic, melting-pot neighborhood with few manifestations of racism. From his home town of Flint, he had been a leader in the conservative, blue-collar wing of the state Democratic Party. He had served one term (1948-1950) as state attorney general and had the reputation of being a cautious judge. Appointed for life to the federal bench in 1962 by President Kennedy, his previous rulings did not leave the impression that he would be particularly sympathetic to the plaintiffs. His only other case of note was the Algiers Motel case in which three police defendants were charged with murdering three black men in the Algiers Motel on Woodward Avenue during the 1967 riot. The officers were acquitted by the jury.[25]

Judge Roth took his time in setting up the hearing of the Detroit school case, letting the NAACP attorneys know that they could not "expect push-button relief here. . . I am not going to move hastily." He also rejected the plaintiffs' request to reinstate the April 7 plan, observing that the plan was merely "integration by numbers" and "forced-feeding," rather than a considered approach to devising the best possible educational

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[25] Grant, "The Detroit School Case," 858; Paul R. Dimond, *Beyond Busing: Inside the Challenge to Urban Segregation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 31; *The Macomb Daily*, 25 April 1972. John Hersey, *The Algiers Motel Incident* (New York: Knopf, 1968).

experience for all the affected students. The NAACP appealed Roth's ruling to the Sixth District Appelate Court in Cincinnati, which overruled Judge Roth. But rather than reinstate the April 7 Plan, Judge Roth directed the Detroit school board to prepare a selection of possible desegregation plans. In December 1970, he chose one of the voluntary magnet desegregation plans.

This was only a provisional solution to the problem, and the trial on the lawsuit to desegregate the entire Detroit school system began in Judge Roth's courtroom on April 6, 1971. The testimony lasted four months. The first two months were devoted to the issue of residential segregation in Detroit. The NAACP attorneys presented what they believed to be the most extensive and best supported case to date on residential segregation. Real estate agents were called who described the federal government's racially restrictive practices, beginning with the Home Owner Loan Corporation in the 1930s. Realtors also discussed the practice of "restrictive covenants" and the custom of "steering" prospective home buyers on the basis of race. Charts and tables were displayed. A giant map illustrating the phenomenon of racial neighborhood succession dominated the courtroom.[26]

It was this map that eventually seemed to wear on the minds of the participants. Alexander Ritchie recalls a speech he delivered, three weeks into the trial, concerning the map:

> The map itself . . . showed . . . what the NAACP called "the invasion tracts." It showed that, as the blacks moved in, the whites moved out. . . I made a speech on that map. . . I said, "This map tells us that the middle class in Detroit has moved to Warren, to Southfield, to Birmingham, to Bloomfield Hills, and the people who are

[26] Grant, "The Detroit School Case," 859-863.

left are the people who work at Chrysler, Fords, and General Motors. . . The professional class is gone. That's what that map tells me!" [27]

As William Grant, the *Detroit Free Press* reporter assigned to the case, later wrote, "It was one of the trial's most dramatic moments, and from that point, Mr. Ritchie seized every opportunity to press a demand for a metropolitan remedy." The leaders of the CCBE decided that by demanding cross-district busing they could expand the anti-busing movement to the suburbs and greatly increase its clout. Ritchie, however, had undergone a genuine conversion and had come to the conclusion that working class blacks and whites in the city were being pitted against one another by a professional class that had already deserted the city. Grant believed that Roth experienced the same revelation. Ritchie thought so too. It was possible to win Roth to an appreciation of the plight of both black and white students in the city because, in Ritchie's words, "Roth came out of the same working class background as me."[28]

On the other hand, Ritchie was not oblivious to the dynamic that the metropolitan remedy would unleash in the suburbs. And he knew how to convince the white parents in the CCBE to discard the fading hope of neighborhood schools in favor of the demand for cross-district busing:

> I had a special meeting with the CCBE, and I told them, "This case is going down the tubes! You can't win. Judge Roth is bound by the testimony. He's an honest judge. . . [The plaintiffs] have at least one glaring example of segregation [in the Detroit public school system]. The proofs are there!" . . . They said, "What should we do?" So I said, "Well, think about it. Your kids are going to go to school, and they're going to

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[27] Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan.

[28] Grant, "The Detroit School Case," 863, 863 n. 52; Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan.

> be bused, whether you like it or not. . . Now do you want your kids to go to school where they're the minority in a basically black school system, or do you want them to go to school where you're still the majority?" They said, "We'll be in the majority, why not?" I said, "OK. I'll do my best to bring the suburbs in."[29]

Ritchie was in an enviable position. He not only had the mandate of the white parents of the CCEB to argue for cross-district busing, he also felt certain that he had established a rapport with Judge Roth, in part because the judge was concerned that restricting the busing plan to Detroit would stimulate "white flight" from the city, further eroding its tax base. Ritchie was convinced – correctly so, as it turned out – that the judge would let him argue for cross-district busing. He fashioned his argument out of the behaviorist psychological theory that the NAACP was presenting regarding the relationship between racial self-image and student achievement. The thrust of this argument was that students in all-black schools did poorly because the students and parents, as well as the school administrators and staff generally absorbed the notion that, in the absence of white schoolmates, blacks perform poorly in school. The NAACP used this evidence to argue for busing for racial balance inside the Detroit district boundaries. All Ritchie had to do was to draw this testimony out in cross examination and then make the argument that, within a few years if not already, there would simply not be enough white students in the city's schools to "leaven" the educational experience of the black students. For this reason, he concluded, the only realistic solution was cross-district busing with the suburbs.[30]

On July 15, 1971, Ritchie asked the court to include the suburban school systems

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

in the remedy, should the court rule that the school system in Detroit was segregated *de jure*. On September 27, 1971, Judge Roth announced his finding, that the school system was, indeed, segregated *de jure* as a result of the "action and inaction" of federal, state, and local governments. That left the question of the scope of the remedy. Everybody knew that the remedy was going to involve busing children. Was the judge going to confine busing to the city or was he going to include the suburbs? On October 4, 1971, Judge Roth ordered the Detroit school board within 60 days to bring him a set of city-wide integration plans. These plans would include maps of the "paired" schools where black and white students would be bused to the schools in each other's neighborhoods. The judge then gave the State Board of Education four months to come up with a similar set of plans for integration of Detroit and suburban schools on a unitary, metropolitan-wide basis.[31]

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The people of Warren responded in a mercurial fashion to the developments in the trial. Two points in the trial produced peaks of anxiety and activism in Warren. One was the September 27, 1971 finding by the judge that the Detroit school system was segregated *de jure*. The other was Judge Roth's June 14, 1972 order for the transportation of 780,000 students in Detroit and fifty-two suburban school districts, including all of Warren. A third important date, which brought closure to the legal struggle and relief to the citizens of Warren, was the U. S. Supreme Court ruling two years later, on July 25, 1974, striking down Judge Roth's busing order.

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[31] Detroit Public Schools Community Relations Papers, Box 7, folder 7-9, ALUA; *The Macomb Daily*, 16 July 1971.

Already in the spring and summer of 1971, observers in Warren were following the trial in Detroit with increasing concern. When the CCBE announced its intention to press for metropolitan-wide busing in the event that the judge ruled that the Detroit school system was segregated, chairman Aubrey Short appealed to suburban voters to join the anti-busing movement: "We also believe a child should attend the school nearest to his home, and I think that's what the people in the suburbs want. . . so if they want to help, they should be backing our effort."[32]

The leadership of the CCBE understood the strategic implications of their position in relation to the black students in Detroit and the white students in the suburbs: they had the power to connect the two. They announced that, as a last resort, they would demand cross-district busing in order to forestall busing confined to Detroit. Aubrey Short warned, "[W]e're not trying to force busing on [Macomb County] schools, but if the court says busing must be the rule in Detroit, then as part of that solution we will then consider asking the court to include metro-wide busing. . ." At the same time, he disingenuously invited the suburbs to join the coalition against busing. "If they want to help the fight against cross-boundary busing. . . [the suburbs] should be backing our efforts. . ." He went on to characterize his group as firmly opposed to liberal plans for integration. "If the suburbs want to help us fight the NAACP busing plan. . . then they can help with support, not by lulling the people to think we are a bunch of liberals. . . which we are not by any point of imagination.[*sic*]" Aubrey Short took the occasion to reach out to the whites who had already fled the city: "Maybe now the suburbs will take heed of our dilemma in

[32] Ibid., 13 July 1971.

Detroit and support our fight against the NAACP suit."[33]

Suburban observers understood the significance of these developments. *The Macomb Daily* quoted an unnamed opponent of busing, "It will take an army to enforce that kind of a ruling if the court was foolish enough to try and force integration on suburban school districts." Robert Lord, the attorney who had ably defended Warren in the NAACP lawsuit to overturn the results of the 1970 HUD referendum, predicted, "Any day now, the motion to include the 87 districts will be entertained – in what could become this nation's most historic school desegregation battle."[34]

Mitch Kehetian, the Warren Bureau Chief for *The Macomb Daily* who had covered the 1970 HUD controversy, also recognized the explosive potential of the looming crisis. Indeed, Kehetian soon became so engaged in the struggle against busing that many of his articles dropped all pretense of journalistic detachment. In one article he declared, "I think the American people are getting fed up with the social planners who delight at experimenting with the lives of people. If black children are being denied quality education, then let's do something to give them quality education – bus riding through the suburbs is not the answer." It would be an overstatement to say that *The Macomb Daily* "created" the anti-busing movement in Macomb County, but the paper clearly took sides on the issue.[35] It kept the topic in front of the public, running articles that were mainly

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[33] Ibid., 13, 16 July 1971.

[34] Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 13 February 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan; *The Macomb Daily*, 16, 14 July 1971.

[35] It was not to be the last time that *The Macomb Daily* was connected with the blurring of lines between reporting and editorializing. The paper was part of the Panax newspaper chain owned by conservative publisher, John McGoff. In 1986, McGoff was

summaries of previous news stories when there were no new developments to report. It created a special "busing" section of the letters to the editor. It also took care to announce up-coming anti-busing rallies.[36]

The liberal Northeast Center for Racial Justice investigated *The Macomb Daily*'s coverage of the busing issue. The study noted that "*The Macomb Daily* has lost its objectivity on the issue of 'court-ordered desegregation'. . ." The result of its coverage would be "a continuation of the anti-busing hysteria. . . We think the end result will be violence. . . *The Macomb Daily* is yelling "fire" to a large audience and when these frightened people begin to react, then those who used this fear to sell newspapers and/or build political careers will share responsibility for their acts."[37]

It was the local politicians, however, who mainly exploited the fear of cross-district busing,. The busing panic hit Warren during the 1971 mayoral campaign and became the main issue in the contest between incumbent Ted Bates and challenger Richard Sabaugh. Bates was a Democrat, but he had learned to bend with the political wind, and he believed that he had been "burned" once already by the liberals a few months earlier in

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charged by the Justice Department with failing to register as an agent of the South African Apartheid regime. The South African government was purportedly engaged in a scheme to buy up American news organizations to do covert propaganda on behalf of the South African government. The charges were dropped because no trial was held within the statute of limitations. Russ Bellant, *The Coors Connection: How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism* (Boston: The South End Press, 1991), 39, n. 114. "Newspaper Baron McGoff Dies at Age 73," *The Macomb Daily*, 22 January 1998.

[36] *The Macomb Daily*, 4 October 1971.

[37] Sally Chalgian, interview by author, tape recording, 10 November 1995, Warren, Michigan; "The Message is Violence: a case study of *The Macomb Daily* September 1971-June 1972," prepared by the Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice Media Task Force (copy in author's possession).

the 1970 HUD controversy. Richard Sabaugh also identified nominally with the Democratic Party and had been active in his union when he was employed as a teacher in Detroit, but his political reflexes were growing increasingly conservative.

Early in the campaign, Sabaugh introduced a resolution to the city council deploring "the concept of busing to foster so-called racial balance." His colleagues on the council voted to table the motion and criticized Sabaugh for exaggerating the busing threat to help his campaign. But Sabaugh kept bringing the issue up. The tactic may even have hurt him in the election among those voters who had formed the opinion that he was politically overly ambitious, but it kept busing in the news. Bates countered by denouncing busing as "an infringement on the will of the people" and calling for a constitutional amendment banning busing, while slamming Sabaugh for using the busing issue for political gain. In any case, Bates won the election.[38]

Busing became the shibboleth of Warren politics in the early 1970s. As one observer put it, "Busing was a huge horse, that many people rode."[39] The issue literally "made" the political career of some people in Warren. One example is George E. Montgomery. A Warren resident with a small law practice, Montgomery ran for a seat on the city council in 1970. He put little time and money into the campaign and did poorly. The next year, in 1971, he ran again in the primary. He had heard of Richard Sabaugh's

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[38] *The Macomb Daily,* 14, 21 July 1971. For the busing controversy in Warren politics, Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 13 February 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan; Margaret Sinclair, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 January 1997. Mayor Bates' counterattack on Richard Sabaugh, in "A Message to the Citizens of Warren from the Mayor," in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan.

[39] Donald Binkowski, letter to author, 6 December 1996.

attempt to get the city council to pass a resolution against busing. Concerned that his own children might be bused to Detroit, Montgomery made his opposition to busing a part of his campaign. He did much better this time, placing tenth with a campaign that was financed on a shoe-string and depended on his own family for door-to-door flier distribution.

Montgomery's showing in the primary had been good enough to get him into the general election for council. He decided to concentrate on the busing issue by handing out petitions against busing. He picked up his petitions from the printer on September 27, the same day that Judge Roth announced his finding that the Detroit school system was segregated. This increased the likelihood that the judge would order cross-district busing. Montgomery's petitions hit the street in the midst of the furor that followed the judge's finding. That night, he handed them out at an anti-busing rally in Fitzgerald High School, on the city's south side. His law office became the drop-off point for completed petitions. A local media personality, Lou Gordon, invited Montgomery to appear on his television show and a roving NBC News crew in Cleveland picked up the story and gave Montgomery national coverage. George Montgomery thus went from being an anonymous city council candidate to a national spokesman against busing at the point when the issue exploded in Warren. He placed fourth in the council race and went on to become a circuit court judge. In October 17, 1971, Montgomery presented his petitions with over 52,000 signatures to Congressman O'Hara.[40]

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[40] George E. Montgomery, interview by author, tape recording, 25 January 1997, Warren, Michigan; *The Macomb Daily*, 17, 18 October 1971.

George Montgomery was not the only politician to fashion a political career out of the busing issue. Although Lillian Klimecki Dannis was already a forceful personality on the city council, she consolidated her reputation as a no-nonsense defender of Warren's families with her work on the busing issue. She was one of five founding members of one of Warren's anti-busing groups, Warren Residents Acting Positively (WRAP). The group, formed in July 1972, grew out of a year of anti-busing activism by its organizers. WRAP made a solemn pledge never to allow itself to become a sounding board for any politician, but Dannis, as an organizer, was an exception. Her political standing in Warren naturally benefited from the community out-reach that WRAP did on the busing issue. Dannis went on to serve as Treasurer of Warren. [41]

The power of the busing issue in political circles derived from the practically unanimous sentiment in the community against busing. Douglas Fraser, who was the head of Michigan Community Action Program (CAP), the political arm of the UAW, recalled phone calls he got from union members in Warren who were angry with the union's official position in support of busing:

> [W]e'd get an awful lot of irate phone calls from our membership in Warren. And you had to listen to them, and they were so emotional! The story that was most repeated was, "I lived in Detroit. I came out to the suburbs for good schools. I paid my taxes. . ." They might have accepted one-way busing of black kids from Detroit, "but taking my kids from my neighborhood school that I fought so hard to get and why I built a house out here, taking them and moving them back to all the dangers in Detroit. . ." Well, you could understand the emotion.[42]

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[41] Geri Suma, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 March 1997; *The Macomb Daily*, 18 July 1972.

[42] Irving Bluestone and Douglas Fraser, interview by author, tape recording, 3 April 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

This sentiment was the overwhelming consensus in Warren. The 1972 primary election included a county advisory on busing. It was worded, "Do you approve of the bussing of students across school district lines?" The Warren precinct results ranged between 82 percent and 99 percent responding: "No." The average was 95 percent opposed to busing. With these numbers, it is no wonder that the issue enforced a certain discipline on the politicians. If "busing was a huge horse that many people rode," it was also capable of bucking the rider. Virtually no local political leader came out openly in support of busing in Warren.[43]

Sometimes the anti-busing anger targeted one individual. The main focus of hatred was, of course, Judge Roth. Bumper stickers soon appeared in Macomb County proclaiming: "Roth is a four-letter word," "Judge Roth is a child-molester," and "Pith on Roth." In Wyandotte, a downriver Detroit suburb, the local anti-busing group hung Judge Roth in effigy in July 1972, after Pontiac anti-busing leader Irene McCabe found him "guilty" of destroying neighborhood schools. His coffin, labeled, "Here Go the Judge," was then thrown in the river to "float back to Detroit where it belongs," according to the rally leader. Judge Roth was politically invulnerable to this backlash, however. As a federal district judge, he was appointed for life. That probably made him all the more unpopular. When he was dying of heart disease just before the Supreme Court announced

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[43] Returns on the busing advisory in the *1972 Canvassed Records*, Macomb County Clerks' Office, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Joseph M Snyder, a Democratic state representative from St. Clair Shores, was an exception to this general rule in his unruffled pronouncements on the issue. See correspondence between Snyder and John Cardinal Dearden, in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan. Donald Binkowski stated that he refused to answer questions on the subject of busing when he ran for circuit judge. Donald Binkowski, interview by author, tape recording, 2 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

its 1974 decision striking down his cross-district busing order, people phoned his home and hospital to express joy at his impending death. Alexander Ritchie, the lawyer for the white parents in Detroit who argued for expanding busing to the suburbs, also came in for a certain amount of harassment. He recalled that he received twenty-three telephone threats on his life during the course of one afternoon in the height of the busing panic.[44]

The fact that busing was a regional solution to the problem of racial segregation in Detroit's school system heightened the fear of regionalism in Macomb County. Sometimes the pressure to conform to the anti-busing majority's views took on the aspect of a witch-hunt. In October 1971, "Save Our Children" (SOC), Warren's first anti-busing group, published an accusation that six candidates in the up-coming local elections were soft on issues related to "remov[ing] local control of our schools and local government." The press release cited the League of Women Voters' guide, where the six candidates "agreed that they would vote to join SEMCOG [Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments] and <u>cooperate in their Regional Programs</u>!" In response, the named candidates protested that SEMCOG did not support busing and that they all opposed it. Three other local candidates pressured by the anti-busing group had already reversed their initial response and were now opposing SEMCOG.[45]

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[44] Grant, "The Detroit School Case," 865-866. On the Roth "hanging," *The Macomb Daily*, 31 July 1972; Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1997, Southfield, Michigan.

[45] "SOC Fights SEMCOG, Bulletin #4 – October 29, 1971," in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, emphasis in original. *The Macomb Daily*, 1, 2 November 1971.

SEMCOG became a symbol of dreaded regionalism (or "metropolitanism") in the era of busing. The semi-public authority was formed by state act in 1967 to spur economic development. It conducted studies on such questions as regionally coordinated transportation, water, and sewage treatment proposals. It also processed federal HUD and Block Grant fund requests. Macomb County joined SEMCOG in 1970 and then pulled out again in early 1972. The reason for the withdrawal was the fear on the part of the county commissioners that planning by SEMCOG posed a threat to county planning. But the metropolitan nature of the busing remedy also raised suspicions of SEMCOG among some citizens in Macomb County. Fear of regionalism was becoming a feature of Macomb County politics because of the fear of busing. In 1977, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners fired the chairman of the county's Planning Commission, Glenn Peters, because of his connection to SEMCOG. Peters, a founding member of the Planning Commission, had represented the Macomb Intermediate School District on SEMCOG's school committee. Macomb County did not rejoin SEMCOG until 1986.[46]

Hostility to regionalism reflected the institutional rivalry between the Board of Commissioners and SEMCOG as well as the growing fear in the electorate of big government and government-dictated racial integration. The fear found its most hysterical expressions among the supporters of George Wallace. The theme of the 1974 Macomb county convention of the American Independent Party (AIP) was metropolitanism. The AIP's Wallace supporters in Macomb County regarded "METRO-GOVERNMENT" as a

[46] On the bickering between SEMCOG and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners throughout the mid- and late-1970s, see SEMCOG papers, Part 2, Boxes 38, 39, 42, ALUA. On Macomb County's withdrawal from SEMCOG, *The Macomb Daily*, 1 March 1972; on the firing of Glenn Peters, ibid., 23, 28 December 1977.

conspiracy, but, strangely, a conspiracy with a mailing address. As the convention program revealed, "METRO-GOVERNMENT . . . IS A GROUP of national and international organizations located at 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago Illinois." The main threat to the impending conspiracy was its connection to the looming "World Government" and its "INTERNATIONALIST PLAN FOR COMPLETE WORLD DOMINATION." The apocalyptic harangue of the AIP aside, the busing controversy convinced many Macomb County voters of the dangers that regionalism posed for home rule, and "running against regionalism" became an enduring feature of Macomb County politics.[47]

Busing gave Right-wing organizations an organizing issue. In early December 1971, the perennial anti-Communist group, Breakthrough, held a rally in the auditorium of Warren Woods High School. The group's leader, Donald Lobsinger, spoke for three hours to an audience of 250 supporters. His message was that busing was one aspect of a coordinated communist-inspired effort at sapping the nation's strength. "[T]he trouble in our schools and in our core cities is the sinister work of white and black communists." He also predicted, "If they're successful in forcing school integration through forced busing, next they'll send your kids to special Marxist-communist learning schools." The response, "Hang them. . ." echoed through the auditorium.[48]

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The anti-busing movement mobilized a broad cross-section of Warren's parents. It

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[47] "American Independent Party of Macomb County Convention – June 8, 1974," in SEMCOG papers, Part 2, Box 38, Folder "Macomb County 1974," ALUA.

[48] *The Macomb Daily*, 1 December 1971.

united people who had been divided on the HUD referendum or the Vietnam war. Fueled by parental apprehension coupled with racial anxiety and a willingness to defend the principle of home-rule, it was bigger and stirred up stronger emotions than these earlier issues. It also did more damage to liberalism and to the Michigan Democratic Party.

The anti-busing movement developed its own leadership though it also responded to outside influences. One local source of guidance and coordination was *The Macomb Daily*. The National Action Group (NAG) led by example in nearby Pontiac. NAG had emerged in 1969 in response to a desegregation lawsuit in Judge Damon Keith's federal district court over the Pontiac public schools. Keith found that the Pontiac school board was guilty of *de jure* segregation and he ordered the busing of about 8,000 of the school district's 24,000 students. After the school board lost its appeal of Keith's order, NAG sponsored a rally attended by 5,000 people featuring NAG leader Irene McCabe and Alabama Governor George Wallace.[49]

Pontiac was in a state of near rebellion the week before the implementation of its busing plan at the start of the 1971 school year. On August 30, ten of the school district's buses were destroyed in a night-time dynamite attack. Acting on an informer tip, Pontiac police arrested six members of the Ku Klux Klan, including Michigan Klan leader Robert Miles, ten days after the bombing. On September 7, six women were arrested after they padlocked themselves to a fence surrounding the school bus parking lot. On September 14, five hundred pickets blocked three gates at the Pontiac General Motors Fisher Body plant to protest busing. UAW officials, including Irving Bluestone, Director of the GM

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[49] Darden *et al.*, *Race and Uneven Development*, 231.

Department of the union, tried unsuccessfully to get workers to cross the picket lines. "They were massing outside of the gates, to keep the people from going in," recalls Bluestone. "What we did . . . was to order them to go to work on the basis that they were in violation of the contract, in violation of the UAW constitution, in violation of the law and, in any event, that the UAW was supportive of busing. . . We got a lot of 'Boos.'" Less than half of the 650 man shift went in to work and management closed the plant for the day. [50]

These events in Pontiac unfolded at the same time that Warren residents anxiously awaited Judge Roth's finding regarding *de jure* segregation of the Detroit school district. Given the already announced intention of the white Detroit parents in the Citizens' Committee for Better Education to argue for cross-district busing in the event of such a ruling, the prospect of busing for Warren's children would be one step closer. The variety of measures taken by the Pontiac anti-busing movement to protest and forestall busing served as an example in Warren. It taught people, many of whom had never participated in a protest movement, how to organize against busing.

Some, of course, brought with them a talent for organizing borne of their union backgrounds. One Warren housewife whose parents were both UAW members and who, at her father's urging, had canvassed neighborhoods in support of liberal Senator Philip Hart, recalled the suspicion that busing was being tried out in Pontiac in order to imposed it on other suburbs. "Not that I'm conspiratorial or anything, but it seemed like it was going to go into other suburbs as well. . . The first thing we thought of was, 'They're

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[50] *The Macomb Daily*, 31 August, 7, 9, 11 September 1971; Irving Bluestone and Douglas Fraser, interview by author, tape recording, 3 April 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

going to bust up the schools! What about the after-school programs these kids have? How are they going to play baseball, how are they going to attend catechism class if they're riding a bus?'"[51]

The example of Pontiac also impressed the anti-busing activists of Warren with the need to avoid violence and to keep control of the movement out of the hands of "radicals." Although many people in Warren admired Irene McCabe and her movement, most dissociated themselves from the violence that occurred in Pontiac – in particular, the school bus bombing. Looking back at the history of the anti-busing movement in Warren, one activist stated, "The one thing that we told people was that we do not advocate violence. We believe in doing things through the democratic process." She noted that "radical" elements frequently attach themselves to social movements. "The five of us [the founding members of Warren Residents Acting Positively (WRAP)] knew who we were and we knew what we were. You let some radical . . . get in there and they can destroy your entire organization."[52]

One important feature of the anti-busing movement in Warren, as in other cities, was that the hard work of organization was done mainly by women. For the most part, men played the roles of formulating language on the petitions and holding forth in the city council debates. Women did most of the unglamorous and indispensable work of maintaining phone trees, going door to door, gathering signatures on the petitions, collecting pledges not to allow their children to be bused, and soliciting a dollar donation with each pledge. Women not only did the menial work of organizing – they frequently

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[51] Geri Suma, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 March 1997.

[52] Ibid.

served as the visible leadership to the anti-busing movement. Male politicians suggested that this was natural: "With women. . . the cross-district busing thing impacted on their concern for education for their children."[53]

That women led Warren's anti-busing movement held true in other anti-busing movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Irene McCabe headed the National Action Group (NAG) in Pontiac. In Boston, Louise Day Hicks and Pixie Palladino furnished the public leadership of ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights). Of course, men sometimes took leadership roles. Philip Lee was a former principal officer of a UAW local who led SOS (Save Our Schools) in Warren, but the five founding members of WRAP were all women. All but one of them were housewives with no careers outside the home. The community acceptance of women as leaders of the anti-busing protest movement has been remarked in studies of other cities, as has the fact that the anti-busing crusade seemed to "empower" these women. Ronald Formisano argues that in Boston the anti-busing movement provided conservative women a traditional but activist vision of their role in society in the early 1970s, when many women were influenced by the women's liberation movement. For these conservative women, the anti-busing movement allowed them to exercise their initiative as organizers at the same time that they espoused traditional moral values. Lillian Rubin's work on the anti-busing controversy in the working class community of Richmond, California notes the traditional attitudes of the anti-busing women that she studied regarding the role of "housewife," compared to the liberals who supported busing. The conservatives embraced traditional family roles, while

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[53] Ibid.; Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 13 February 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

the liberals downgraded them. The conservative vision of women secure in their role as housewives and willing to go to heroic lengths to protect their children found favor in Warren.[54]

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Warren's busing panic began on September 27, 1971, as the news spread that Judge Roth had issued a finding of *de jure* segregation in the Detroit school system. Less than ten hours after the judge's ruling, a rally in Fitzgerald High School attracted 1,000 angry parents. Philip Lee, the leader of Save Our Children (SOC), took the podium and charged, "The legislators don't have the backbone to stand up and be counted. . . They are trying to shove off their ill deeds on the white community and force us to accept what we don't want. Let's face it – we're getting government of the minority against the majority. It's time to wake up." Mr. Lee claimed credit when 20,000 students boycotted Warren schools three days later. The following night, October 1, more angry speeches filled the air in another meeting at Carter Junior High School in Warren. The *Macomb Daily* reporter was struck by the fact that, "some of the loudest cheers from the audience were for racially-tinged remarks." County Commissioner Robert Verkulen, for one, took up the "minority" theme: "This country is supposed to be based on majority rule, but a minority of ten percent is dictating to us, the majority. We are being discriminated against." On the other hand, Warren City Councilman Floyd Underwood got a round of applause when

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[54] Ronald Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina Press, 1991), 146-150; Lillian B. Rubin, *Busing and Backlash: White Against White in a California School District* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 60-61. Ralph Liberato, unrecorded telephone interview by author, 1 April 1997.

he urged, "If there's enough money to bus kids, then I say we put that money into the deprived areas to bring about equality. Give them new buildings and good teachers."[55]

In the welter of confusion that prevailed during the busing panic, some groups tried to mobilize support through spreading rumors by telephone. Signs were posted in public places claiming that busing was already going on, although Judge Roth had not ruled on the remedy for segregation in the Detroit school system. Mayor Bates set up a rumor control center and urged calm, as did the editors of *The Macomb Daily*. On October 2, Mayor Bates and four members of the city council left for Washington, D.C. to deliver postcards and anti-busing petitions with over 40,000 signatures to Congressman O'Hara. The delegation also intended to confer with Rep. Louise Day Hicks, formerly a leader of the anti-busing movement in Boston. Representative Hicks had introduced a bill in the House six months earlier (the "Nondiscriminatory Education Act") prohibiting "the forcing of a child to leave his neighborhood school to attend another more distant school because of his race, color, creed, religion, or national origin."[56]

The hysteria grew with the headline, in the October 5 *Macomb Daily*, that Judge Roth had ordered "Metro Integration Plan. . . To Include 'All-White-Suburban Districts. . .'" Only at the end of the story did the reporter state that Judge Roth had not, in fact, "ordered a metro district plan. . . nor even suggested that metro wide busing" would be the ruling. What he had done is to order the Detroit School Board and the State Board of Education to submit alternative plans for district-wide and cross-district busing. Still, the news story had the effect of heightening the anti-busing furor. Ad-hoc groups held

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[55] *The Macomb Daily*, 28, 30 September, 2 October 1971.

[56] Ibid., 28, 30 September, 3 October 1971.

impromptu rallies in high school auditoriums and on the campus of Macomb Community College throughout the month.[57]

During this period of confusion, some anti-busing groups lasted only a short time; some went through name changes, or merged with other groups. "The Silent Majority" was the name of a group that appeared shortly after the Fitzgerald High School rally, only to join SOC a day later. Another short-lived Warren group, Residents Opposing Busing (ROB), favored working through the Congress and the courts to oppose busing, rather than resorting to violence or boycotting schools. By March, still another group, the Warren branch of the National Action Group (Warren-NAG) joined the crowded field of anti-busing organizations. Some groups came on the scene later, during the second infusion of energy into the anti-busing movement, when Judge Roth was moving closer to ordering cross-district busing in the summer of 1972. Warren Residents Acting Positively (WRAP) and Kids Attend Their Schools (KATS) both date from July 1972. In spite of the potential for rivalry, most of the groups agreed in principle to maintain unity. "We were all involved in this lawsuit and we all had the same objective. . .," remembers one activist. In an effort to coordinate and unify the legal strategy of the suburban anti-busing movement, a new group, "Tri-County Citizens"[58] came together in early December 1971. Led by three Macomb County lawyers, including Robert Lord, the attorney who had helped to organize the 1970 HUD referendum campaign, this group took on the task of critiquing the constitutional reasoning behind the expected cross-district busing order. On

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[57] Ibid., 6 October 1971.

[58] The legal name of the group was "Tri-County Citizens for Intervention in Federal School Action No. 35257."

March 15, 1972, prior to hearing arguments on the district-wide and cross-district busing plans, Judge Roth allowed Tri-County Citizens to join the newly created group of suburban intervenors in the case.[59]

The suburban political coalition against busing soon included school officials. In early October, the Superintendent of Schools in neighboring Roseville announced, "I will take any legal steps that could be taken. . . I'm against busing students out of Roseville. . ." The Fraser school district Board of Education sent parents a letter declaring that it "never has and is not now planning to bus students out of the district." The school board president of the Warren Consolidated district noted its commitment to "a community school concept, and we would pursue this. . . through the legal means available." The Director of Community Relations of the Fitzgerald school district reiterated the district's "commit[ment] to the neighborhood school concept." Had there been any skeptics on the scene, they might have observed that a cross-district busing plan would have collapsed the existing districts into one metropolitan school district, thus eliminating some of these administrators' jobs. In any case, the public statements of these leaders in the field of education helped to legitimize the anti-busing movement.[60]

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It took three years for the *Bradley v Milliken* lawsuit to wend its way through the courts. Hence, the anti-busing movement exhibited symptoms both of a crisis and a chronic condition. Although the busing issue continued to dominate Macomb County

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[59] *The Macomb Daily*, 30 September, 5, 6 October 1971, 16 March, 18 July 1972; quote from Geri Suma, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 March 1997.

[60] *The Macomb Daily*, 6 October 1971.

politics throughout the fall of 1971, speakers at rallies began to notice a fall-off in attendance by mid-October. This may have had to do with the fact that local political leaders increasingly favored non-violent tactics, such as legislative or constitutional steps to make busing for racial balance illegal. In an illustration of the consequences of violence, five members of the Ku Klux Klan were indicted in the Pontiac school bus bombing case on October 19. Even school boycotts lost their appeal. A Macomb County NAG school boycott called in late October failed. Thus, the panic phase of the anti-busing movement lasted less than a month. Once the panic ran its course, the movement settled down to the task of long-range organizing.[61]

Warren Residents Acting Positively (WRAP), discovered that it had to delegate chores to as many people as possible. It was too hard to have people calling the main organizers' houses at all hours of the day and night. The leaders of WRAP came up with an "area chairman" system which divided the city into different neighborhoods. Fundraising for lawyers' fees relied on door-to-door pledge drives of a dollar per family. Occasional educational meetings kept the supporters up-to-date on the progress of the lawsuit or invited outside speakers, like Irene McCabe of Pontiac's National Action Group, to describe other anti-busing struggles. At every critical point in the legal process the organizers were able to call mass rallies.[62]

Sometimes these rallies took on the aspect of high theater. The evening of October 19, 1971, the Macomb County anti-busing forces held a "fact-finding" meeting at Sterling Heights High School to listen to their arch-nemesis, Alexander Ritchie, discuss

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[61] Ibid., 16, 26, 28, 29 October 1971.

[62] Geri Suma, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 March 1997.

the busing case. Ritchie, the attorney for the Detroit white parents' group, the Citizens' Committee for Better Education, began his remarks by noting, with disarming lack of modesty, "You are here tonight because of the action I have taken. . ." (Ritchie was referring to the pleading he had made to Judge Roth to expand the busing plan to include the suburbs.) "But I think you realize you wouldn't be in opposition if you lived on the other side of Eight Mile Road." To an increasingly restive crowd, Ritchie described the expert testimony of psychologists and sociologists called by the plaintiffs in the lawsuit: "It is the opinion of these experts that a black child cannot be properly motivated in a predominately black school. . . Every school district must have blacks but maintain a substantial white majority." The conclusion was simple: "Since 65 per cent of Detroit's 287,000 students are black, there can be no real integration without including the suburbs." Ritchie remembers the reaction after he finished speaking:

> I held that audience for forty-five minutes in total silence, and when I finished, . . . the place exploded. Brooks Patterson [the Pontiac NAG lawyer who later became Oakland County Prosecutor] grabbed me by the arm and said, "Oh, my God, they're going to kill you! . . . I had to get a police escort to the car. . . I told them, "What makes you think, with buses rolling all over the South, that you guys are not subject to the Constitution of the United States? . . . We're either a government of laws, or we're nothing." I said, "Come on, my clients are just like you." But they didn't like it.[63]

The other speakers, including Irene McCabe, Brooks Patterson (a NAG attorney), and Philip Lee (Chairman of SOC), distanced themselves from Ritchie's reasoning. "Misery likes company, so white Detroiters drag us into it!" protested Lee. Lee said he didn't believe that a black student would do better in school just because he was sitting

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[63] Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan.

next to a white student: "We don't owe the blacks a thing and it is time they learned to live together."[64]

Regardless of their educational value, these meetings served to keep the busing issue in the public eye and to infuse new energy into the anti-busing movement. A more ambitious effort was Irene McCabe's march to Washington in support of an anti-busing constitutional amendment. NAG announced this action in late February 1972. Scheduled to depart Pontiac on March 15 and to rally in the nation's Capitol on April 23, the march immediately received the blessing and support of Alabama Governor George Wallace. As McCabe's "Journey for America" passed through Dearborn Heights, a west-side Detroit suburb, two Warren city councilmen briefly joined the march and presented Mrs. McCabe with a transistor radio and the good wishes of "180,000 men, women and children living in Warren." *The Macomb Daily* kept readers abreast of the progress of the march and reported on Warren Mayor Ted Bates' trip to Ohio to greet "Irene and her brave companions" – now dwindled to a hard-core of four marchers – as they approached Akron.[65]

McCabe's march provided Warren's politicians an opportunity to take a symbolic stand in support of the anti-busing movement. Councilman Howard Austin, when asked why he had brought his young son to meet Mrs. McCabe as she marched through Dearborn Heights in mid-March, captured the sentiment of middle-class rebellion that the anti-busing cause had come to stand for. "They can draft my 18-year-old son to fight for

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[64] *The Macomb Daily*, 20 October 1971.

[65] Ibid., 28 February, 17, 27 March, 3 April 1972.

this country, but I'm not going to sit by and let some federal judge draft my 4-year-old boy into a foolhardy social experiment someone concocted on middle-class America."[66]

On April 13, 1972, Judge Roth announced that he intended to order cross-district busing. Although he did not specify which of the metropolitan-wide plans he would choose, the tension in Warren began, once again, to build. The next evening, 1,000 people jammed into Warren's Fitzgerald High School auditorium for a rally called by Warren NAG. Speakers from both the Democratic and Republican parties agreed on the need for unity in fighting the imminent busing order. Rally organizers called for volunteers to travel to Washington for a welcoming rally for the McCabe's march. For those who could not make the trip, they announced a "mini-march" in Warren on April 23. Warren high school students boycotted classes on April 21 and 400 of them picketed the Warren city hall to wish Mayor Bates good luck in his trip to the Washington rally. Between 10,000 and 15,000 people marched in the Warren "mini-march" the following Sunday. When McCabe's marchers arrived in Washington on April 29, they were met by 1500 supporters mostly from Macomb County, a turn-out that disappointed the organizers. [67]

On June 14, 1972, Judge Roth issued his ruling naming a panel to develop a final plan for metropolitan school integration through busing. His ruling limited the cross-district remedy to 53 of the 83 school districts within the metropolitan area. He also specified the "clusters" into which the 53 school districts would be organized. Residents in Warren's six school districts learned that their elementary and high schools would be paired with Northeastern, Osborn, Denby, Finney, and Kettering schools in Detroit. There

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[66] Ibid., 3 April 1972.

[67] Ibid., 14, 21, 22 April 1972.

would be two-way busing (Detroit children to Warren and Warren children to Detroit). The nightmare was becoming real. Community leaders expressed "shock" and "dismay." They criticized Judge Roth for issuing a busing order even though Congress had just passed an 18-month "moratorium" on busing as part of the education bill. The language of the bill, however, (which Nixon had not yet signed) prohibited federal court desegregation orders from taking effect for 18 months only if all appeals were exhausted. Judge Roth's order was certainly headed for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and then, to the Supreme Court.[68]

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As the anxiety level bounced from the initial busing "panic" in the fall of 1971, to the restoration of calm a few months later, to the sudden spike of anxiety as the judge prepared his busing order in the summer of 1972, there were voices in Warren urging an open mind on the busing issue. These moderates were increasingly isolated as the controversy developed. One of the main liberal groups in Macomb County on questions of race relations was the Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice (NEIFCRJ). The Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice evolved out of the Warren-Centerline Human Relations Council in 1968.[69]

A leader in the Interfaith Center recalled that, although the busing controversy attracted a few new people to the anti-racist movement in Macomb County, the overall impact of the controversy was probably to isolate the liberals within the population at large. Founded in 1968 and rooted in the religious community, NEIFCRJ had built up a

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[68] Ibid., 9, 15 June, 1972; Dimond, *Beyond Busing*, 80-87.

[69] Herbert Lowe, telephone interview by author, 20 May 1997.

mailing list of 979 names and conducted 9 seminar sessions with a combined participation of 278 in 1971. In 1972 the Northeast Interfaith Center had a membership of 95 individuals and eleven churches. The churches included six Protestant churches and five Catholic churches. When the busing issue exploded, the Interfaith Center founded a group called "Peaceful Schools" which urged patience and calm. NEIFCRJ also charged that the *Macomb Daily* was serving as "public relations" for the anti-busing movement. The Interfaith Center produced bumper-stickers urging non-violence in the schools, and released statements to the press.[70]

Anti-racist individuals wrote letters to the editor of the local press. One such letter pleaded, "suburban school districts have a responsibility to help in the integration process. . . [They] cross local district boundaries – by busing – in order to cooperate with each other in the education of the physically handicapped, the blind, the emotionally disturbed: is there any difference in principle in providing good education for economic and culturally deprived children in the inner city of Detroit. . .?" A few months after the busing panic, *The Macomb Daily* printed another letter deploring, "the deeply racist political maneuvering that anti-busing public officials are stooping to." In a despairing admission of isolation, however, the letter continued, "If so many people in Warren had not been hostile to integration in our city in the past, and if our public officials had taken positive

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[70] Sally Chalgian, interview by author, tape recording, 10 November 1995, Warren, Michigan. Records of the Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice, 1971, 1972 (copy in author's possession). Three of the Protestant churches and none of the Catholic churches were in Warren. Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice Media Task Force, "The Message is Violence"; "Action Centers Combat 'Institutional' Racism," *Warren Community News*, 17-21 December 1968; "Religious Group Endorses Busing," *The Daily Tribune*, 15 August 1972. Unrecorded telephone interview with Sally Chalgian, 21 April 1997.

action to help change these attitudes, we would not be faced now with the issue of busing." A week later, an anti-busing leader wrote a sarcastic reply, suggesting that those who favor busing should move to Detroit. "Their children can have the great experience they so desire for them (not only for a few hours a day, but full-time and the parents can share that experience). . ."[71]

There were other voices of moderation in the midst of the anti-busing panic. Some were to be found among educators. As one such moderate wryly put it, "We were teachers, after all, and used to seeing school buses." Early in the controversy, the principal of Pennow elementary school expressed outrage at the distraction that the anti-busing furor imposed on school children. He wrote a letter to parents criticizing the school boycott following Judge Roth's September 1971 ruling on school segregation:

> Actions such as this help tear down the respect for the school and make the job more difficult in doing what we are supposed to do – educate boys and girls. . . We now know people's feeling regarding school busing. Of course, these feelings were known before the children were kept home from school. We are sure this is a very slight accomplishment.[72]

Such expressions of liberal sentiment within Warren were usually drowned in the uproar over busing. But the two main institutions that had served as the moral conscience of the working class in southeastern Michigan, the Catholic Church and the UAW, each tried to take a stand on busing. The most decisive moral leadership came from the Catholic Archdiocese in Detroit, under John Cardinal Dearden. In the uproar that greeted

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[71] Ibid., 29 July 1971, 2, 9 March 1972.

[72] Richard Lange, interview by author, tape recording, 28 February 1997. "William H. Pennow School, September 30, 1971," in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan.

Judge Roth's June 14, 1972 busing order, Dearden reminded the priests in the Diocese of Warren of the Catholic Church's policy not to capitalize on the crisis in public education occasioned by the busing controversy in order to bolster enrollment in Catholic schools:

> Parents who have demonstrated no previous interest in Catholic education but now seek to enroll their children in a Catholic school, must expect to be questioned carefully regarding their motivation at this time in seeking a Catholic school education. Because it is so important to eliminate any possibility that our schools become – or even seem to become – places of refuge for people who are seeking to avoid integrated education, it is to be expected that these people will not automatically be permitted to enroll their children in the Catholic school.[73]

How effective was Cardinal Dearden's policy of restricting enrollment in Catholic schools purely in order to escape integration? By way of comparison, in Boston, following a similar directive from Cardinal Medeiros, the Catholic schools went ahead to receive 2,000 new students. Cardinal Dearden, however, meant what he said. Records on the total attendance in Catholic school located in public school districts subject to Judge Roth's busing order shows a decline in attendance from 1966 to 1979, marked by a sharp fall-off between 1970 and 1971. (See Chart 4.1.) The two cases are not precisely comparable, since in Boston the busing order was in force, but the data for Macomb County at least shows that the Catholic Church was not using the busing crisis to go on a recruitment drive for new students. In fact, the Archdiocese closed four schools in Macomb County in 1971. Two of them, St. Marks and Ascension, were located in Warren.[74] Cardinal Dearden's stand reinforced the feeling among some Macomb County

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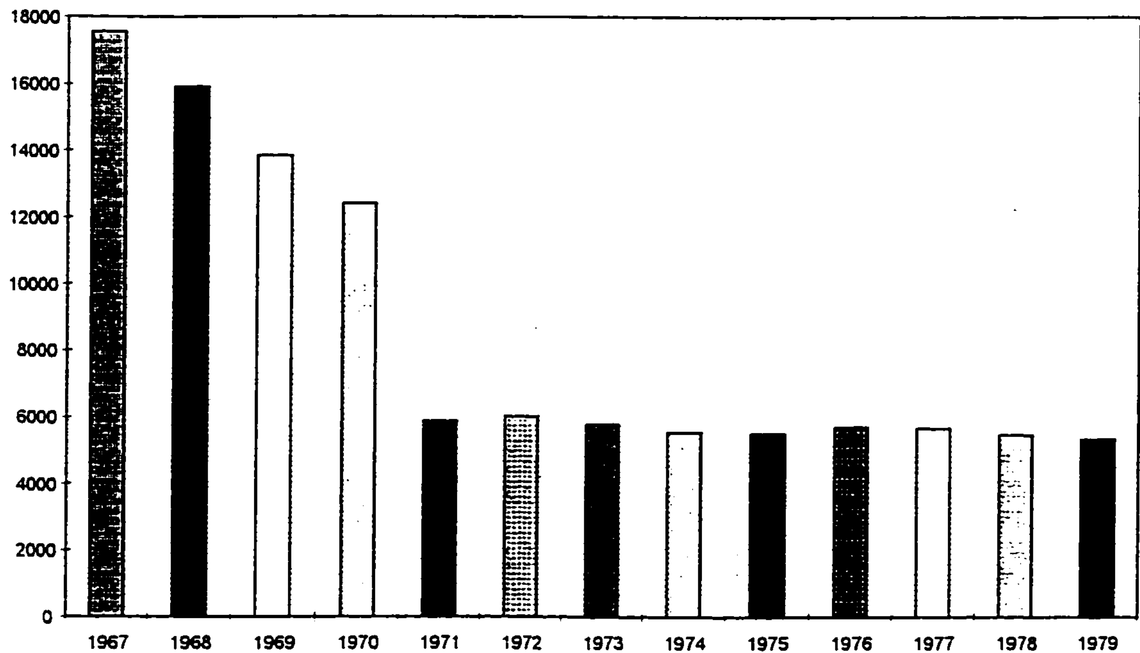
[73] "Policy Statement Regarding Enrollment in Catholic Schools," ibid.; John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 238.

[74] Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, 210. For the chart data, Macomb Intermediate School District, *Macomb County Intermediate School District Surveys (1966-1979)*.

Catholics that the Archdiocese was abandoning the suburbs in its liberal zeal to serve the city. This impression was strengthened by the Cardinal's decision in March 1971 to spend

Chart 4.1



$200,000 to keep three inner-city Detroit Catholic schools open for another year while at the same time allowing the four Catholic schools in Macomb County to close. This decision followed a ten-day sit-in by liberal priests at the Cardinal's office in support of black community leaders' demands for aid to city schools serving mostly black students.[75]

Cardinal Dearden continued to be guided by a policy of calming racial anxieties throughout the busing crisis. As the Supreme Court's ruling loomed in 1974, Dearden circulated instructions to priests in the Archdiocese concerning the proper way to prepare the parishioners for the announcement of the ruling. The goal was to open the minds and

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[75] *The Macomb Daily*, 16 March 1971.

hearts of the faithful, not simply to read them a resolution prepared by the Archdiocesan Pastoral Board. The Cardinal suggested an approach involving, "not . . . a series of discourses from the pulpit. The discussion route is the better one. There may come a time when we will need to use the pulpit for this purpose. But at the present time the better course seems to promote discussion. . ." He predicted that, by consolidating Catholic opinion among the laity in the parish council and its committees, "the work then can move out through other circles. . . so that people begin to talk about the issue in a serious, mature way." In an effort to help establish the institutions which could carry on the work of anti-racist education in Macomb County suburbs, the Archdiocese also gave financial support to the Northeast Interfaith Center for Racial Justice. Catholic parishes always housed the offices of the Interfaith Center.[76]

It was not an accident that a man of Dearden's commitment to peace and civil rights led the Detroit Archdiocese. Historian John T. McGreevy has shown that the anti-racist mission of the Catholic Church in the northern cities grew out of a social movement both inside and outside of the Church, as well as through the evolution of doctrine. Dearden was a product of this movement and he had the support of a group of liberal priests in the Detroit area. It was, however, fortuitous that his own individual temperament and commitment to civil rights was as strong as it was. His courage in sticking to his position on busing, which became so unpopular among white Catholics,

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[76] "Archdiocese of Detroit, June 11, 1974," in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan. Sally Chalgian, interview by author, tape recording, 10 November 1995, Warren, Michigan; "Churches Fight Racism in Suburbs," *The Detroit Free Press*, 14 September 1968.

earned him the nickname, "Iron John."[77]

In taking this stand, which was reported in the daily papers, Cardinal Dearden came in for bitter (and sometimes barely literate) criticism from the Catholic grass roots:

> Dear Cardinal: If you think we are going to send our white children to the Black schools in Detroit where Dopers, Rapers, Purse Snatchers, etc., the schools is full of them. And send black Hudlums to suburban schools that dont make sense. First of all you and your priests, nuns, etc. should go among Black Hudlums and . . . Preach to them Gospel 10 Commandment etc. in Detroit and all over U.S. for that matter teach them there is god and god laws. Befor we mixed our white children with Black. . .[78]

Other critics among the Catholic faithful rebuked the Cardinal for "looking down upon us to the extent that, as you would seem to imply, we are immoral people simply because we do not accept Bussing. . . Before I go to bed tonight I will pray that somewhere, some way, some how you will begin to understand people. For, candidly, at least at the moment, you simply do not."[79]

The Catholic Church was not the only voice calling for racial tolerance in the suburbs in the early 1970s. The UAW had a history of trying to reduce racial tensions going as far back as the "hate strikes" of 1943 in the Detroit war production factories. In the early stages of the busing controversy, the President of the union, Leonard Woodcock, issued a public statement in support of busing. "[Busing] is an inadequate solution but given our segregated housing patterns, busing within reasonable limits appears the only

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[77] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 238; (unrecorded) telephone conversation with Roman Godzak, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Detroit, January, 1996.

[78] "Christian Response Asked," *Detroit Free Press* 14 June 1974; "Cardinal Dearden, 6-16-74," in John Cardinal Dearden papers (uncatalogued), Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan.

[79] "Archbishop John F. Dearden, June 18, 1974," in ibid.

way that integration can be brought about." In other statements, the union took the position that the busing issue was for the courts to decide, and that more attention needed to be paid to the larger issue of defining goals for quality education.[80]

The UAW leadership thus publicly supported busing. But, when the issue involved racial tolerance in the community instead of the workplace, the union found it hard to exercise effective moral leadership over its membership. In confronting the Pontiac anti-busing wildcat strikers in the fall of 1971, the union's GM Department tried to dissuade the membership from opposing busing, in part because of its contractual obligations to the General Motors Company. But, with this exception, plus a couple of local union membership meetings in the Pontiac area where Irving Bluestone spoke on the busing question, the top leadership was unable to reach many of the members in the Detroit suburbs. George Merrelli, the union's regional director in Macomb County, took a hands-off attitude.[81] This may have reflected his experience a few months earlier in failing to convince the local UAW leaders living in Warren that they should vote against the referendum rejecting HUD money because of the fear of "forced integration."[82]

Douglas Fraser recalled that on the general topic of racism the union made continual efforts to educate the membership. The programs at the "FDR Camp" near Port Huron and at other education centers around the country were conducted in a racially integrated atmosphere and the local union leadership who attended those retreats was

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[80] On the "hate strikes" of 1943, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 162-174. The *Macomb Daily*, 5 October 1971. Dudley Buffa, *Union Power*, Vol. 1], 191.

[81] Ibid., 191-192

[82] See above, chapter 2.

instructed in UAW policy on fighting racism. But Fraser remembered that the members had different attitudes about segregation at work and in the community:

> Brendan Sexton was our Education Director and he used to have these surveys of attitudes before and after these educational programs. And, to the question, "Do you believe in equality in the workplace?" the response was "absolutely!" on seniority, wages, etc. But then you get into the more personal questions, "What about in your neighborhood?" and, of course, this was fifty years ago, but they drew the line there.[83]

Educating the membership on the union's general positions on anti-racism was one thing. Trying to provide leadership on the hot issue of cross-district busing was another. Douglas Fraser confessed, "there are certain issues that you ran into where there was so much passion that you just got overwhelmed. . ." The top leadership might take the most liberal positions, but the top leadership did not have to stand for election by the rank and file. "We were sort of immune," he noted. "We could say all these things and pass all these resolutions," but the officers of a local union were in a different position. "You had to look at their situation, where they're looking at an election in a year or two. They might step out and take some risk, but they're not going to be suicidal. In terms of getting it down on the shop floor, that would be a risk that, I guess, people were unwilling to take."[84]

Thus, on the busing issue, the union did not have much impact on the membership. In the end, the anti-racist principles of the top leadership meant little to the members if the local leadership was unwilling to propagate these principles. The union's ability to exert its will on issues of racial equality inside the plants did not extend to the neighborhoods.

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[83] Irving Bluestone and Douglas Fraser, interview by author, tape recording, 3 April 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

[84] Ibid.

As Fraser remembers, going all the way back to the hate strikes of the 1940s, "all of us instinctively knew that [on issues of race in the shops], if you bent, if you showed any semblance of prejudice or bigotry, the issue would be lost." But racial integration in the community was a different matter. "We didn't have the same influence that we did in the work place."[85]

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As a white-hot local issue disrupting the post-war Democratic Party coalition, busing turned out to be a bigger problem for the Democratic Party in Macomb County than Watergate did for the Republicans. Watergate revealed the leader of the Republican Party to be an unbalanced, prevaricating, and vindictive politician, even a criminal. It was possible, however, to distinguish between the moral frailty of Richard Nixon, the individual, and the Republican Party as an institution. Most importantly, Watergate was not a local issue. Although it took the Republican Party the latter half of the 1970s to live down, the Watergate affair did not divide the Republican Party internally. In comparison, the busing issue crippled the Democratic Party in southeastern Michigan. It subverted the national and state Democratic leaderships' attempts to shore up a working coalition between urban blacks and suburban and out-state whites. As anti-busing sentiment intensified, these Party leaders' careers became vulnerable. The outcry against busing encircled and isolated the liberal elements (and intimidated the moderates) on the county level of the Democratic Party. The "Democratic defection" in Macomb County began, not just among the voters, but also with the politicians.

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[85] Ibid.

This failure of political leadership was clear from the beginning of the controversy. At a news conference on September 29, 1971, at the height of the busing panic, the Chairman of the State Democratic Party, James McNeely, stated that busing was, perhaps, "the only way" to eliminate educational inequality in Michigan. McNeely was merely restating the luke-warm endorsement of busing that the Democratic State Central Committee had just adopted in Battle Creek. At that meeting, the vote had been 67-40 in favor of the wording: "We accept busing as an imperfect and temporary mechanism to help erase the imbalances in our educational system." Eleven of the state's top Democratic Party leaders, including Attorney General Frank Kelley and Senator Philip Hart, endorsed this position. But only one of Macomb County's delegates voted for it. Seven voted against it and one abstained. Early on, busing provoked a split between the leadership of the state Democratic Party and its Macomb County leadership.[86]

Congressman James O'Hara soon felt the heat from his anti-busing constituents. O'Hara was astute enough to come out early against busing. He arranged photo opportunities to receive anti-busing petitions from his district and announced early in October 1971 that he would "take a leading role" in calling for a constitutional amendment banning busing. But in March he failed to sign House Resolution 620, which would have released the bill from committee. The reaction was swift, as three hundred anti-busing activists picketed his district offices. Anti-busing groups like Save Our Children and the Roseville Action Group attacked O'Hara in a mailing to 2,500 county residents. They pledged to picket an upcoming O'Hara dinner-dance and to make a list of any Macomb County politicians who attended the event. O'Hara soon signed the

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[86] *The Macomb Daily*, 30 September, 1, 27 October 1971.

resolution to release the bill from committee.[87]

O'Hara's political rivals also used the busing issue in a round-about way to unseat him. In 1972, Macomb County conservative Democratic State Senator John Bowman decided that he wanted to run for U.S. Congress. His chances against incumbent O'Hara were slim, so he struck a deal with state Republicans. He voted for the Republican reapportionment plan and, in return, the Republicans redrew the lines in the 12th District, moving O'Hara out of the 12th District and into the 14th, a seat held by his colleague, Lucien Nedzi. This would leave a vacancy for Bowman in the 12th District. However, since the House version of the reapportionment bill differed from the Senate version and time was drawing nigh for the filing deadline for congressional candidates, Federal District Judge Damon Keith intervened to insure the adoption of a redistricting plan. The judge divided Macomb County into three congressional districts (the 12th, the 14th, and the 18th) and left Bowman in the same district as O'Hara. Conservative State Representative Thomas Guastello denounced the judge's reapportionment plan for politically fragmenting Macomb County (even though it increased the county's congressional representation). He also accused Judge Keith (a black jurist) of avenging the black caucus of the state Democratic Party on Macomb County for its outspoken resistance to busing.[88]

Busing provided tactical advantages to county conservatives and, at the same time, contributed to the growing sense of mutual offense between the suburbs and the city of Detroit. Even though Bowman's challenge collapsed and O'Hara ran uncontested in the 12th District primary, the busing issue crowded the political space of Macomb County

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[87] Ibid., 5 October 1971, 9 March 1972; Buffa, *Union Power*, Vol. 1, 191.

[88] Buffa, *Union Power*, Vol. 1, 185-189; *The Macomb Daily*, 24 May 1972.

Democrats like James O'Hara. O'Hara's slowness in abandoning his support for the Vietnam war had already angered the party's antiwar wing. During the early 1970s, the state Democratic Party leaders' goals of placating the liberals and building a coalition with Detroit's black leadership led them to adopt a mealy-mouthed endorsement of busing, a position which pleased no one and angered conservative suburban Democrats.[89]

One illustration of the gulf that separated the state party leaders from Macomb County's rank-and-file Democrats was the speech that Senator Philip Hart gave on October 16, 1971 at the fifth annual Phil Hart Day dinner hosted by the Macomb County Democratic Party in Mount Clemens. A revered figure in the Democratic Party, Hart had a sterling reputation for honesty and integrity. He was called "the conscience of the Senate." A dedicated liberal, Hart enjoyed such respect in the Senate that he was able to maintain a cordial and principled, though adversarial, relationship with Senate colleagues as conservative as James Eastland of Mississippi. Coming directly to the topic of busing in his remarks at the dinner, Hart acknowledged the political and practical weaknesses of busing and he attested to the sincerity of those who favored neighborhood schools out of concern for their children's safety. He stated that no one should be "accused of bigotry" for reluctance to have his or her child bused "to a school where the education is the same or worse than the one within walking distance or if you think the new environment might be hostile." But there were certain moral lines that he could not bring himself to cross, and he went on to declare simply that "racial segregation in public schools is wrong," and that busing was justified "on those occasions when a constitutional guarantee [to equal education] can't be delivered any other way." The applause was sparse, and the Phil Hart

[89] See above, Chapter 3.

Day dinner was never held again. Three days later, a meeting of Roseville NAG voted to mount a recall campaign against Hart, who had polled overwhelmingly in those precincts in the last election. The recall campaign fizzled, but Hart's attempt to reason with Macomb County Democrats over the busing question also failed.[90]

The busing threat wrought a transformation in Warren's politics that was evident from the tumultuous response to Wallace in the 1972 Michigan presidential preference primary on May 16. The primary coincided with mounting anxiety over Judge Roth's expected order for cross-district busing and the Wallace campaign focused on the busing issue. Although the state Democratic Party leaders did their best to deflate Wallace's popularity prior to his trip to Michigan, anti-busing activists asked Wallace to speak at a rally in Warren. The mayor and several city councilmen were there to welcome him to the city. The Alabama Governor stood before Warren's voters and averred that he had never heard of anything "so cruel or asinine as busing little school children." The reaction was an emotional outpouring of support.[91]

Two days earlier, George McGovern had puzzled onlookers at the Macomb Mall in neighboring Roseville when he promised that as president he would implement the court's busing ruling, even though he personally opposed cross-district busing. Perhaps even more frustrating was his statement that busing was "an overblown issue." Few people in Warren were surprised when he received only 16 percent of the city's votes in the primary and 35 percent in the general election. There is an undeniable link between

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[90] *The Macomb Daily*, 18 October 1971; Dudley Buffa, *Union Power*, Vol. 2, 7-10; Michael O'Brien, *Philip Hart: the Conscience of the Senate* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), 185-188.

[91] *The Macomb Daily*, 15 May 1972.

the busing sentiment and the voting in the 1972 primary and general elections.[92]

Meanwhile, in the congressional primary elections several veteran liberal Macomb County Democrats scrambled to stay in office. In a close race, Lucien Nedzi of the new 14th Congressional District fought off a determined challenge from Warren City Councilman Richard Austin, who ran against busing and against Nedzi's liberalism. As noted above, Nedzi's colleague, Congressman O'Hara won the primary unopposed, thanks to the collapse of State Representative John Bowman's reapportionment strategy. State Representative Joseph Snyder survived a close race although he was under attack for voting against several constitutionally questionable anti-busing measures in Lansing. Snyder, who came out of UAW background, received help from a column penned by *Macomb Daily* city editor, Mitch Kehetian, who assured readers that "Joe Snyder is opposed to forced busing."[93]

Still, the busing issue made everybody nervous. No political office seeker was too humble to escape the heat of the anti-busing anger. One teachers' union organizer with moderate views on busing lost an election for precinct delegate in neighboring St. Clair Shores, even though he was unopposed in the election. He remembers:

> I was running unopposed and I got a call at maybe ten or eleven the night before election day. The person said, "I understand that you're in favor of cross-district

[92] Ibid., 12, 15 May 1972. In the precinct returns, the correlation between the Wallace vote and the "no" vote in the busing county advisory proposal is .573753. The correlation for the McGovern vote in relation to the "no" vote on busing is -.60383.The correlations are computed from voting precinct data in the *1972 Canvassed Records* for Macomb County located in the office of the County Clerk, Mount Clemens, Michigan. (Complete positive or negative correlation is indicated by ± 1.)

[93] "Rep. Snyder And Busing: His Opposition Clear," in ibid., 24 July; 9 August 1972. On O'Hara's soul-searching on the busing issue, Buffa, *Union Power*, vol. 1, 190-191.

> busing." And I said, "I don't know that I'm in favor of it. I think it might be one of the ways to improve education for all the kids." That next morning, they were out there at 7 O'clock with their write-in stickers. And I got beat. . . probably four- or five-to-one.[94]

Initially the Republicans had been as startled as the Democrats over the busing issue. When asked his reaction to the possibility of cross-district busing in September 1971, Republican State Representative David Serotkin from Mount Clemens side-stepped the issue, "This is not really a state legislative issue, and I cannot speak on it . . . I'm learning about it just as my constituents are." The Republican State Chairman, William McLaughlin, took a moderate stand when the busing controversy burst upon the scene: "If the election were held today, it would be the number one issue. . . My great hope is that it comes out of the political arena and we get more reasons and less rhetoric." And although Republican Governor Milliken opposed busing, he also opposed an anti-busing constitutional amendment. He also went out of his way to slam George Wallace as a racist demagogue.[95]

But the Republicans could not ignore the political opportunity that busing offered. As they positioned themselves to take advantage of the Democratic dilemma over the issue, they found that Nixon had already deployed an argument on busing that they could adopt. Back in the spring of 1970, Nixon announced that, although his Justice Department would enforce school desegregation in those districts (mostly in the South) where segregation was, *de jure*, a matter of law and local ordinance, he would do nothing

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[94] Richard Lange, interview by author, tape recording, 28 February 1997.

[95] *The Macomb Daily*, 1, 27 October 1971, 12 June 1972. For Milliken's position on busing, see "Milliken Blasts Wallace Tactics," ibid., 17 March 1972, and "None Pleased by Milliken Busing View," ibid., 3 March 1972.

about the *de facto* school segregation resulting from housing patterns. The implication was that Nixon intended to let places like Warren off the hook regarding school segregation. This, of course, did not prevent the Judge Roth from finding *de jure* segregation in the Detroit school system. And both the Sixth District Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court upheld this aspect of Judge Roth's rulings. But Nixon's statement communicated his reluctance to press the matter. Similarly, Nixon's December 1970 statement following the HUD controversy in Warren, that, "it is not the policy of this government to use the power of the federal government or federal funds. . . in ways not required by law for forced integration of the suburbs" meant that he intended to move slowly on residential segregation in the big city/suburban context.[96]

These two statements left the clear impression that the Nixon Administration remained reluctant to press for desegregation in the North. On May 17, 1972, musing over the upcoming campaign, Nixon remarked in a memo to John Ehrlichman, "Lead in on the busing issue on a state and local basis. . . Hit busing hard in Michigan. . ." Nixon tried to make his opposition to busing known in southeastern Michigan. *The Macomb Daily* frequently accommodated him, as in the story it pieced together out of a letter that the President wrote to U.S. Rep. William S. Broomfield (R-Royal Oak) congratulating him on his anti-busing amendment to the Higher Education Act. The public relations import of these statements assured many of Warren's disaffected Democrats that the President was

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[96] On Nixon's distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, see *The New York Times*, 25 March 1970. On Nixon's statement concerning "forced integration of the suburbs," *The Detroit News*, 11 December 1970, and see above, Chapter 2. Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land*, 209.

on their side.[97]

By the 1972 election, the state Republicans had decided where their advantage lay. They tried to attract anti-busing Democrats by adopting an anti-busing plank in the party's platform. The wording of the resolution did not address the question of the tactics of opposition to busing. It merely recorded the party's opposition: "While we believe in and will continue to work for equal educational opportunity for all children, we believe that this cannot be achieved, and should not be sought, by forced busing programs. . ."[98]

The contrast with the Democrats was plain. At the 1972 state Democratic Convention, the party took no action on a number of anti-busing resolutions that were up for consideration. The same thing happened at the National Democratic Convention in Miami Beach. In spite of local opposition, the busing resolution flatly declared that busing "is another tool to accomplish desegregation. It must continue to be available." The Michigan delegation included many grass-roots busing foes, however. As a result of the 51 percent Wallace victory in the primary election, a majority of the Michigan delegation was pledged to Wallace for the first two rounds of balloting in the presidential nomination. The Macomb County delegation was even more lopsidedly in the Wallace camp. Labor delegates were completely excluded from the Macomb County delegation which voted 8-2 in favor of a platform resolution (which went down to defeat) calling for a constitutional

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[97] Nixon's quote from "President re Ehrlichman file," Ehrlichman Files, Box 24, folder 3 (contested), Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. Thanks to Melvin Small for this reference. On Nixon's letter to Broomfield, *The Macomb Daily*, 29 June 1972. Rep. Broomfield's amendment had no bearing on the *Bradley v Milliken* lawsuit, since it did not apply to busing cases already in federal court.

[98] *The Macomb Daily.*, 12 June 1972.

amendment prohibiting busing for racial balance.[99]

Following the 1972 presidential primary and the national conventions, the gravity of the Democratic Party situation in Macomb County began to sink in. Democratic Party regulars found themselves in an impossible bind. George McGovern's nomination, plus the busing plank in the national party platform struck Democratic county leaders like county chairman John Bruff as political suicide. They reacted in mid-July by releasing a "county platform" opposing busing. The position paper urged the adoption of a constitutional amendment prohibiting the "forced busing of school children." The statement pointedly failed to mention the national party's presidential nominee, George McGovern.[100]

George Wallace's announcement that he would not run on a third-party ticket further aided the Republicans. Warren's Mayor, Ted Bates, became a "Democrat for Nixon" in September. Two more Macomb County mayors, Al Martin of Sterling Heights and Walter Bezz of East Detroit, signed on in support for Nixon and for Robert Griffin, who was running for U.S. Senate against Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley. In the general election, Kelley, who had originally endorsed the state party resolution of qualified support for busing, tried, unsuccessfully, to shift his position. Kelley lost to the lesser-known candidate, who campaigned heavily on the busing issue. As Douglas Fraser recalled, "I remember Frank Kelley ran for Senator, and Bob Griffin beat him. . . I was chairman of Michigan CAP [the UAW political action committee]. And I invited Frank

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[99] Ibid., 12, 28 June, 12 July 1972. Buffa, *Union Power*, vol. 1, 191-192.

[100] "Area Dems Reject Busing, Endorse 'County Platform,'" in *The Macomb Daily*, 17 July 1972.

[to speak] right after the election and he got up and said, 'I got hit by a yellow bus on my way to Washington.'"[101]

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The cross-district busing controversy finally subsided on July 25, 1974 when, in a 5 to 4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled Judge Roth's order for mass two-way busing of students between Detroit and its suburbs. The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice Warren Burger, declared that the busing remedy for segregation in the Detroit school system could not extend into the suburbs because there was insufficient evidence that the suburbs were guilty of *de jure* segregation. Consequently, the limit of the "constitutional right of the Negro [children] residing in Detroit is to attend a unitary school system in that district." Justice Douglas wrote a passionate dissent in which he predicted: "When we rule against the metropolitan area remedy, we take a step that will likely put the problems of the blacks and our society back to a period. . . of separate [and unequal]." [102]

Having struck down Judge Roth's metropolitan busing remedy for segregation in Detroit schools, the Supreme Court remanded the question of the remedy back to the federal district court. Judge Robert DeMascio, who was assigned the case after Judge Roth died, ordered an intra-city busing program for 22,000 Detroit students (the school

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[101] Fraser's quote in Irving Bluestone and Douglas Fraser, interview by author, tape recording, 3 April 1997, Detroit, Michigan. On Frank Kelley's defeat, "What is Your Position on Busing? An Open Letter from U.S. Senator Robert P. Griffin to Attorney General Frank Kelley," a full-page ad in *The Macomb Daily*, 28 July 1972, 13 July, 21, 22 September 1972.

[102] Dimond, *Beyond Busing*, 110-114.

system was 75 percent black at this point), a revised student code of conduct, a city-wide reading program, as well as other aspects of a "quality education" package. These measures were meant to remedy the ill effects of the segregated educational experience that the Detroit School Board was guilty of imposing on black students. (The Supreme Court had already upheld Judge Roth on this question of guilt.) Judge DeMascio ordered the State of Michigan to pay the $70 million cost of this remedy. The state appealed the order and the Supreme Court, in *Bradley v. Milliken II*, upheld Judge DeMascio.

The busing controversy had the overall effect of contributing to increased segregation in the Detroit metropolitan area, as whites continued their exodus to the suburbs and as the city's schools became increasingly black. Although they view the world from quite different perspectives, Arthur Johnson, George Bushnell, Jr., and Alexander Ritchie agree on this: the outcome of *Bradley v. Milliken* impoverished the city and further estranged the white and black people of southeastern Michigan from each other. Richie remembers his reaction to the news of the Supreme Court's decision:

> I learned about it in the staff room of *The Detroit Free Press* . . . I almost broke into tears. I was speechless . . . [Had the ruling gone the other way] Detroit would not have been an all-black city . . . It would have saved the city . . . [If we had gotten cross-district busing], there would have been no motivation for the whites to move to the suburbs. . . My clients felt that, if they were going to get cross-district busing, that they were not going to move, because there was no incentive to move.[103]

George Bushnell, Jr., the original attorney for the Detroit School Board in the lawsuit, agreed that *Bradley v Milliken* had an immediate negative effect on the city, through "white flight." This, according to Bushnell, created the conditions for a bitter and

[103] Alexander Ritchie, interview by author, tape recording, 12 December 1996, Southfield, Michigan.

uncooperative relationship between Detroit, under the administration of Detroit's first black mayor, Coleman Young, and the rest of southeastern Michigan. The cross-district busing controversy "confirmed in the minds of the black community what they had already become convinced of through other experiences, namely, that the white community did not care to have anything to do with them. It made for very, very angry relations between the black and white populations of southeastern Michigan."[104]

Arthur Johnson felt this bitterness over the outcome of the busing controversy. He believed that the remedy imposed by Judge DeMascio was inadequate and that the judicial and political system allowed white society to escape its responsibility to deal equitably with Detroit's black school children. This reinforced Johnson's pessimistic view of the future of race relations in Detroit:

> Nothing really worked. Not integration [and not the promise to upgrade the Detroit school system]. I came to the realization that a system . . . that will not tolerate some rational measures leading to integration cannot be trusted to make these funds available to do the job otherwise. And the black community in Detroit today . . . demonstrates this in the condition of our public schools. . . So we have today the legacy of this system. I must say that it is a condition . . . that leads me to the conclusion that there is no solution to the problem [of racial integration]. . .[105]

In Warren, the busing controversy had several outcomes. One, ironically, was the beginning of decline in enrollment in its own school systems. Chart 4.2 shows 1971 (the year when cross-district busing became breaking news) to be the peak attendance year for the Macomb County public school districts that ended up being included in Judge Roth's

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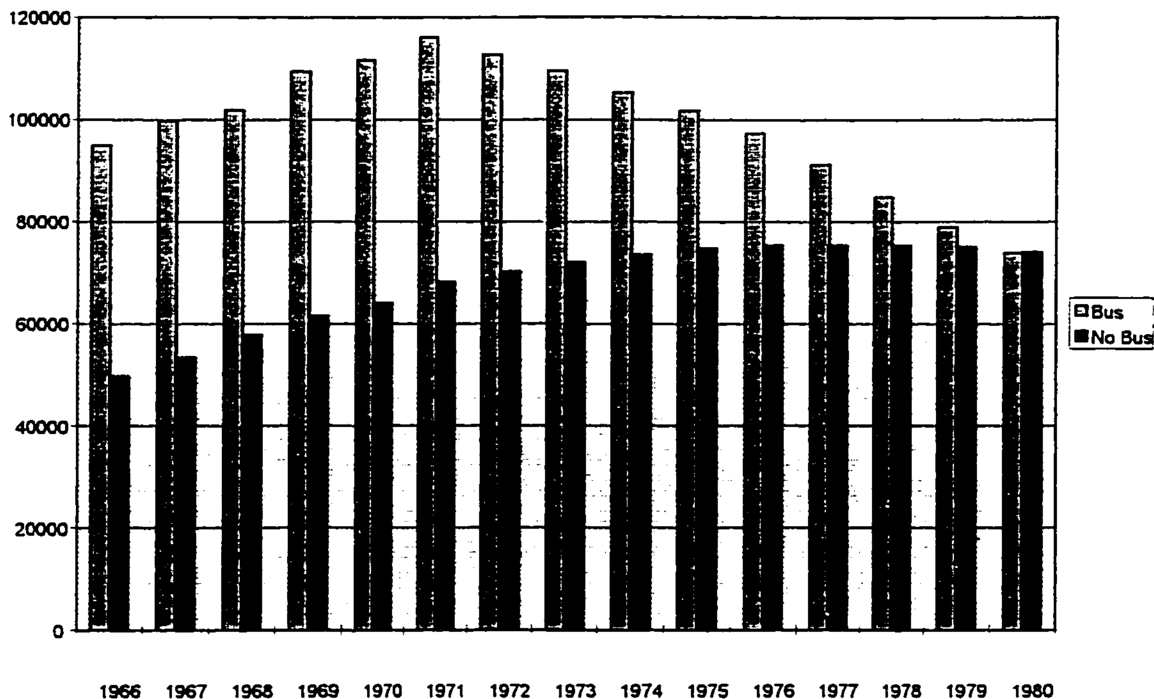
[104] George Bushnell, Jr., interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

[105] Mirel, *The Rise and Fall*, 357. Arthur Johnson, interview by author, tape recording, 17 December 1996, Detroit, Michigan.

Chart 4.2[106]



busing order (including Warren's six school districts). The fear of cross-district busing prompted young families to move further north, outside the likely boundaries of busing. A former teachers' union organizer recalled that his office began hearing of this out-migration in the midst of the busing crisis:

> They moved or they moved their kids [to reside, legally, with relatives living north of the busing zone]. That's one thing that you can really trace. The student population in Macomb County dropped precipitously . . . We had lots of reports from St. Clair Shores and East Detroit – in that southern tier – across to Van Dyke and Fitzgerald, you had a large number of kids leaving, and the requests for records would go to [the school districts]. The administrators knew that this was happening.[107]

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[106] For the chart data, Macomb Intermediate School District, *Macomb County Intermediate School District Surveys (1966-1979)*. The decline in enrollment also stemmed from lower birth rates in these years.

[107] Dick Lange, interview by author, tape recording, 28 February 1997.

When informed of the Supreme Court's decision overturning Judge Roth's busing order in July 1974, one shopper at the Macomb Mall remarked, "We're moving out to St. Clair County soon because we thought [cross-district busing] would go through. Maybe we wouldn't have decided to move so far if it weren't for busing, but the house is almost finished."[108]

Another important result of the cross-district busing controversy in Warren was that it unified the city. Whereas opposition to urban renewal in the HUD referendum of 1970 was concentrated in the southern parts of town, the county advisory vote on cross-district busing exhibits a more homogeneous pattern. The highest quintile of percentage precinct vote against busing is spread out fairly evenly from south to north. Although the biggest precinct majorities against busing were on the city's east side, the anti-busing sentiment encompassed the entire city. Since all of Warren was under the proposed busing order, the city united in opposition to this plan for school integration.[109]

The busing issue also reinforced the home-rule quality of Warren's politics, in reaction to reform imposed by the federal government. Once the Supreme Court overturned Judge Roth's busing order, many anti-busing activists felt elated over their successful defense of the city's self-determination. For them, the anti-busing movement had prevented the federal government from interfering in their relationship with their children. The movement thus became a stirring example of "democracy in action." As one activist recalled, the busing controversy was "a phenomenon . . . that was really

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[108] *The Macomb Daily*, 26 July 1974.

[109] See chapter 2, above.

interesting, because so many people at the grass roots level became involved, and the politicians followed the people, *which is the way it should be*. . ." "And we did it all non-violently," boasted another anti-busing organizer.[110]

Although some anti-busing organizers congratulated themselves that Judge Roth's busing order was quashed, the controversy heightened the community's distrust of the federal government. In this instance, "the government" was a federal district judge. It so happened that this judge was overruled by nine even more remote judges on the Supreme Court. But, to many, this did not bring a feeling of relief, or a sense of security, or an appreciation of the fact that "the system worked" and that their rights had been protected. They remained suspicious of centralized political power. The anti-busing movement, like the 1970 HUD controversy, was reactive, insular, and explicit in its desire to be left alone.

The anti-busing movement called into question two aspects of the liberal world-view. One was that the future belonged to the liberals. For the liberal activists in Macomb County, the busing controversy brought the devastating realization that they were a small minority with little influence. The movement deflated the conceit that liberals wielded influence over the opinions of their mainstream neighbors, that their neighbors' social attitudes were malleable, and that these mainstream voters lacked a political culture of their own. The other dashed liberal belief was that popular movements in the U.S., almost by definition, are progressive. The anti-busing movement was a mass movement that captured the imaginations and commanded the allegiance of most of Warren's

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[110] Richard Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 13 February 1997, Mt. Clemens; Geri Suma, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 11 March 1997.

people.[111] It was this "democratic" aspect of the mobilization against busing that was so troubling. The fact that the anti-busing movement was popular did not mean that it was progressive. One union official summarized the liberal nightmare that busing became: the busing issue "got people involved in politics who never had been, people who perhaps had never even bothered to vote before. It was the worst issue I ever encountered."[112]

The busing controversy revealed the shallow waters that liberalism in Macomb County was sailing in. It wasn't just a question of culture and race. It ran aground on a rapidly changing economic reality. When, in 1972, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that, at $13,452, Warren had the highest median family income among the 100 biggest cities in the country,[113] Mayor Bates immediately remarked, "At that rate, we probably pay a lot of income taxes. I hope we're getting back enough in federal revenue sharing." The question of taxes meant trouble for the Democratic Party. An ex-teachers' union organizer views the drift away from the Democratic Party, in large part, as a function of the emerging "middle class" situation of the suburban voter. Ironically, the union movement had improved its members' standard of living to the point that they accepted Republican attacks on big government and high taxes.

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[111] It is futile to speculate on how much of the resistance to busing was based on racism and how much expressed the home-rule quality of suburban culture and on the legitimate concerns over the safety of children. There is no way to measure the mix of motives. Both elements entered into the anti-busing movement. Like the HUD controversy of 1970, one theme that united them was a growing distrust of the federal government.

[112] UAW official quoted by Buffa, in *Union Power*, Vol. 1, 191.

[113] *The Macomb Daily*, 14 October 1972. At 189,000 people, Warren ranked 71st in population. In median family income, Warren beat out Honolulu, San Jose and Anaheim. Of course, many small municipalities had higher median family incomes.

> When I started teaching in 1962, I made $4900 for the year. . . Generally, today, teachers in Macomb County above Hall Road who have a Masters degree and 14 years in the system are making about $60,000. That's a comfort level. It wasn't a comfort level when it was $4900. So, [in the old days] you listened to your [union] leadership and you tolerated it when they went to liberal social ideas, but now, more [union members] are voting Republican because there's this perception that the Republicans will protect your money.[114]

On the other hand, even if they had risen on the economic ladder high enough to feel that they had something to protect, the mass of Warren's residents still retained fundamentally conservative views on social issues. They hadn't absorbed the cultural relativism of the upper middle class professionals in neighboring Oakland County:

> [Busing] was. . .a manifestation of the [Democratic] Party and the union leadership veering away from the membership's feelings on social issues. . . Even though we had the Irene McCabes of Pontiac coming over to do the stirring up, there really was – and is – a strong opposition to that kind of social engineering in Macomb County. In a sense, they're not rich enough to be totally liberal, like the Birminghams and the Bloomfield Hills.[115]

Whatever the liberal principles of the well-to-do residents of Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills, it should be noted that they weren't actually busing their children. The only community in Oakland County that was busing its children for racial balance in the early 1970s was Pontiac. Warren escaped this fate and, in the process, reiterated the stand it had taken in the 1970 HUD controversy against federally imposed "forced integration." This time, however, the impact on the political establishment was considerably greater. In Macomb County, the Democratic office holders who survived the ordeal of the anti-busing movement did so only by distancing themselves from the liberal platforms of the state and national Democratic Party. They survived only by running against the Democratic Party.

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[114] Richard Lange, interview by author, tape recording, 28 February 1997.

[115] Ibid.

Thus, just as the Vietnam war divided the Democratic Party from its antiwar liberal wing, the busing controversy divided the party from its grass-roots, culturally conservative base.

Chapter 5

The Reconstitution of Authority in the Factory and in the Family

In the years between 1964 and 1972 the citizens of Warren experienced a series of controversies that altered their collective political world-view. The HUD controversy of 1970, the war in Vietnam and the antiwar Warren Tank Plant march of 1971, and the cross-district busing controversy of 1971-1974 concerned different issues, but they affected Warren's voters in similar ways. In each case, the local community seemed to be under pressure to conform to the dictates of outside forces identified in some way with the liberal agenda of the Democratic Party.

Beneath these controversies lay more fundamental concerns. The unpredictability and violence of society, the youth culture and the danger that drugs posed for young people, the sexual revolution, and the women's movement – all these developments were in some ways more disturbing than any particular political controversy. The very optimism that suffused the suburban migration was called into question as the economy lurched into a decade of recession and recovery from 1973 to 1983. Although auto production revived in 1976-1978, the boom-and-bust character of the decade eroded the social bases of authority in Warren. In particular, it affected two key institutions: the factory and the family. This chapter examines the challenges to authority in the factory and the family during those years.

In June 1974, the Dodge Truck plant in Warren was the scene of a large wildcat strike which cut off production for four days. Although the strike occurred after the onset of recession, the demand for pickup trucks was still strong and the plant was still scheduling overtime. The strike exhibited some of the same characteristics as the string of

unauthorized work stoppages in Chrysler's east-side Detroit plants that occurred a year earlier, in the summer of 1973. These wildcat strikes at Detroit Forge, Mack Avenue Stamping, and Jefferson Assembly shared important characteristics with the Dodge Truck strike. They all demanded improvements in working conditions and in the pace and volume of production. Although black workers joined and sometimes led these strikes, they were not mainly about racism. They concerned health and safety issues, forced overtime, and line speed. Also, these strikes reflected the undigested presence of a "youth movement" in the union's membership. This was a new cohort of factory workers who viewed the union with a critical eye. In some cases, especially at Mack Avenue Stamping and at Dodge Truck, New Left activists appeared to have been active in instigating the strikes. Eventually, the high unemployment levels accompanying the recessions smothered the wildcat strike movement and suppressed the rebellious workplace culture of young factory workers.

In the family, women challenged patriarchal authority. Whereas the recessions of the 1970s repressed the youth rebellion in the factories, they created the conditions for the women's movement in Macomb County by driving women to seek wage work. This created problems of adjustment, as the myth of the traditional suburban family met the reality of economic restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s. Women confronted on-the-job discrimination; they also contested their husbands' customary exemption from housework. Sharing the burdens of wage work, they demanded a re-negotiated division of labor at home. It was not on issues of equal rights at work or in the family that the Macomb County women's movement met its severest test, however. It was the abortion controversy that summoned forth a powerful and dedicated anti-feminist movement. The

anti-abortion movement first arose in response to "Proposal B," an advisory referendum on the 1972 general election ballot calling for the liberalization of access to abortion in Michigan. A sophisticated campaign against abortion, aided by both the Catholic Church and the Christian Reformed Church, turned the tide of public opinion and defeated the referendum. Just a few weeks after the defeat of Proposal B, however, the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision. In response to this ruling, the Macomb County Right to Life movement, aided by the Catholic Church,[1] undertook a protracted campaign against abortion as a threat to the family. The Right-to-life movement became part of Macomb County's conservative network and the defense of the family became a watch-word of the New Right movement of the 1980s.

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In the winter of 1973-74, a young worker on the second shift at the Dodge Truck plant in Warren had a problem with working conditions. He was stationed at the east end of the building at the head of the assembly line that began with truck frames and ended a hundred yards down the line with assembled pickup trucks. His problem involved a door and a heater near his work area:

> They put me on this job where they would bring in the raw frames from outside with ice and snow on them and I would put some parts on them and send them down the line. . . It was in the winter and this huge door was broken and stood open. . . and there were pools of water and you'd be standing in ankle-deep water. . . and the heater overhead was broken. . .[2]

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[1] The Catholic Church was the main denomination active in Warren's anti-abortion movement. The Protestant wing of the anti-abortion movement in Michigan, the Christian Reformed Church, drew most of its strength from rural western Michigan.

[2] Millard Berry, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 5 July 1996.

For several days, the worker complained to the foreman and later asked to see his union steward, with no results. In desperation, he and his partner "just sat down under a heater that was working fifty feet away. And we wouldn't talk and we wouldn't move." This meant that the other workers couldn't perform their tasks, because no frames were coming down the line. When the foreman noticed the break in production, he yelled at the two workers to get back to work. "We said nothing. We pointed at the broken door and at the broken heater." After a while, the steward appeared. "And he said, 'Why aren't you working?' I had never seen this guy before. So I pointed to the heater and I pointed to the door." Eventually, management called in skilled trades workers, who made repairs to the heater and the door. The episode lasted over an hour.[3]

The Dodge Truck plant was one of the older factories in Warren. Located on Mound Road just north of the Eight Mile Road boundary with Detroit, it was built in 1938. Producing pick-up trucks and vans, the workers in the plant were represented by UAW Local 140. During the early 1970s, Dodge Truck ran two shifts and employed about 6,000 workers. Pickup trucks were selling reasonably well, and management frequently scheduled 14 hours of mandatory overtime per week. The second shift was composed mainly of younger white and black workers.[4]

Chrysler had employed black workers at Dodge Truck since World War II. The integration of the plant had begun painfully, however. In June 1942, the plant was the

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Thomas McPherson, *The Dodge Story* (1975), 139. This citation was forwarded to the author by H. Eugene Weiss, Chrysler Historical Foundation. This and the following paragraphs rely in part on the author's experiences as an assembly line worker at the Dodge Truck plant from the fall of 1971 to the spring of 1973.

scene of one of the war-time "hate strikes" over the assignment of black workers to assembly-line jobs. White workers walked off the job to protest having to work with black workers, although UAW leaders managed to talk the whites back to work. By 1970, the plant had a thoroughly integrated assembly-line work force, with African-Americans making up between a third and half of the production workforce.[5] The plant thus stood out as a dense mixture of black and white factory culture in all-white Warren. Blacks were still dramatically under-represented in the skilled trades and in management, but on the assembly-line, they worked shoulder to shoulder with whites. There were few overt signs of racial antagonism in the plant, although fraternization was limited between black and white workers, especially after they "punched out" their time-cards to go home. The relative lack of racial friction on the line was due in part to a sprinkling of older black workers with considerable seniority. These senior black workers often held politically influential assembly jobs like "relief man." Partly because of their experience in the plant, but also because they had the power to extend or shorten the workers' breaks, the "relief men" exercised a kind of moral authority over the workers, both black and white.[6]

Still, race was an explosive issue in the late 1960s in Detroit area auto plants. This

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[5] In 1960, black workers comprised 20 percent of the workforce at Dodge Truck, according to Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Table 4.1, 97.

[6] For black employee recruitment policies at the Chrysler Corporation, see Steve Jefferys, *Management and Managed: Fifty Years of Crisis at Chrysler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36, 162-163. For the wildcat "hate strike" at Dodge Truck during the Second World War, see James A. Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency: The League of Revolutionary Black Workers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 35. For the larger story of the racial integration of the automobile industry, see August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

was especially true in Chrysler factories inside the city of Detroit, which employed a high percentage of black workers. Violence sometimes erupted when the regime of full-tilt production was enforced by a practically all-white and sometimes individually racist management on an increasingly black workforce.[7] At Dodge Truck too, young black workers nursed suspicions of managerial racism involving such questions as the initial job assignment of new workers.[8] It was, however, the racially unifying issues of line speed, heat, safety, and other working conditions that sparked most of the unauthorized work stoppages at the Dodge Truck plant. On particularly hot summer days, the foremen would sometimes make wagers among themselves on the likelihood of a heat walkout in the poorly ventilated plant.[9]

Women had also worked at Dodge Truck since World War II. In 1971, a handful of them could still remember the days thirty years earlier when the plant was converted to produce heavy-duty military trucks. But after the war, during re-conversion from war production in the summer of 1945, Dodge Truck management discharged thirty-one women from the plant for "incompetence" even though their work had apparently been

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[7] In one famous case involving management racism and the violent reaction of a black worker, James Johnson shot and killed two foremen and one job-setter at the Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle plant in 1970. He was acquitted in a jury trial on the defense argument that societal racism plus Chrysler Corporation's racist management policies had driven him insane. See Heather Thompson's dissertation, "The Politics of Race, Labor, and Liberalism in the Auto Plants and the Motor City, 1940-1980" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1995).

[8] Initial job assignment was important because workers typically continued to work in the area of the plant to which they were first assigned and some areas of the plant were safer and cleaner than others.

[9] For these and other background issues, Sam Stark, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 26 May 1997.

satisfactory during the war. UAW Local 140 defended the women and won them a cash settlement of $55,000 in back pay. Most of the more recently hired women were African-American. By 1970, women made up as much as a quarter of the total workforce.[10]

Because they had worked in the plant since World War II, the presence of women in the factory was not a novelty. The behavior of the men towards the women ranged from sexual predation, masked as banter, to acceptance and, occasionally, genuine and mutual friendship. That a woman assigned to a job on the line could not leave her work station shaped the etiquette of male-female relations on the line. In order to claim a measure of space and dignity for themselves, and as a defense against the unwanted attentions of male workers, the women sometimes resorted to humorous ritual insult. But for one woman who worked on the second shift, the relations between both men and women and blacks and whites were good. "I thought they could work side-by-side without a problem. And sometimes those relationships became almost like family. . . When you're working under that kind of pressure all day, you just kind of develop this loyalty. . ." Many (but not all) women were assigned to the cleaner and safer areas of the plant, like the motor line or the sub-assembly lines. She remembered, "I think they were pretty good to women. . ." although "if you got a foreman who didn't like women, you could get a horrible job." Women still had to endure the problems of line speed and ventilation in the

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[10] On the firing of women at the Dodge Truck plant during post-war reconversion from military production, see Nancy F. Gabin, *Women in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935-1975* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 117, 124.

plant.[11]

Some of Dodge Truck's younger workers were newly returned Vietnam veterans. By the early 1970s, the U.S. conduct of the war in Vietnam had unraveled to the point that some of these veterans had witnessed the disintegration of authority in the military. This was a troubled and rebellious generation of auto workers, one which did not willingly comply with the dictates of any authority in the plant, whether from the company or the union. Some of them came to work, high on drugs, barreling down Eight Mile Road with their eight-track tape players blasting, "Won't Get Fooled Again," the smash single by the British rock group, The Who. The lyric to the song captured their jaded view of power and their despair over the possibilities of liberation: *"Meet the new boss, same as the old boss."* [12]

Largely because of the age of the workers, the second shift at Dodge Truck became an intersection of this emerging cohort of young workers, both black and white, many of whom viewed the union as just another institution run by insiders for their own benefit, and an older, mainly black rank-and-file tradition which demanded that the union do its job and patiently relied on the imperfect workings of local union democracy to assure that they got the best possible representation. In the view of many of the workers, the union was not doing its job as well as it should. The alienation was greater among the

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[11] Mickey McGee, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 August 1997. For the dynamics of race and sex in the auto factory, see Kevin Boyle, "The Kiss: Racial and Gender Conflict in a 1960s Automobile Factory," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (September 1997), 496-523. For "sex typing" of industrial jobs assigned to women, see Ruth Milkman, *Gendered at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 6, 8, 17-20.

[12] The Who, *Who's Next*, 1971, 1978 MCA Records, Universal City, California, recorded in England. See Appendix C for photos of young workers at Dodge Truck.

young. The young worker who sat down underneath the heater remembered: "I had almost no contact with the union at all. I mean, I went to a few union meetings, to see what that was like, but it was almost as if the union was a church that was down the street or something." A woman who worked at the plant agrees that the union was not of much use in resolving problems on the line. "The union would never show up if there was a line speedup or if you didn't have the proper tools, they would never, ever show up. To me, the union was a waste of time."[13]

Instead of trying to resolve problems through the grievance procedure, some of these young, mostly white workers on the second shift built a protective barrier of drugs, alcohol, and music around themselves. They fashioned hide-away "club houses" with posters, portable radios, and pallets inside the mountains of stock adjoining the assembly lines. They sought escape from the monotony of the assembly line through the diversions of marijuana and alcohol. One woman worker on the second shift remembers, "On the dash-board line, you'd be doing your job and here would come a joint down the line, and everybody would take a toke and keep on working." This culture of escape by getting high was so strong that it was even tolerated on special occasions by management. There was, for instance, the second shift "party" on the last afternoon before the Christmas holidays:

> People would bring marijuana and alcohol. And immediately, at the beginning of the shift, they would start passing joints up and down the line – completely ignored by

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[13] Telephone interview with Millard Berry, 5 July 1996. For a comparative treatment of the working conditions and factory youth culture in the Lordstown, Ohio General Motors plant, see Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1973), 21-50. Mickey McGee, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 August 1997.

> management. . . Most of [the foremen], I think, realized that the marijuana really didn't stop people from working. . . But people would get increasingly drunk and, on the first break, they would down even more alcohol and marijuana, so that it was barely possible to walk. . . There would be bottles of Tequila and whiskey in the club houses. So, at the end of lunch, people were so blasted that they couldn't work, and they'd go back to their work stations laughing and throwing things around. . . And the line never got going. . . And then, everybody would just walk out.[14]

This unrestrained cultural insurgency of young workers did not last much beyond the first year or two of the second shift. The story, however, recalls an earlier Christmas tradition at Dodge Truck, one which had lapsed by the early 1970s among the older, mostly white workers on the first shift.[15] In this story, people brought bottles of liquor into work on the last morning before the Christmas holidays and, as they finished off the contents, they placed the bottle on a partially assembled truck proceeding down the line. When it arrived at the end of the line, the foreman attached the empty bottle to a large Christmas tree which the company had erected. By the end of the shift, the tree was decorated with an assortment of sparkling ornaments. In both traditions, the foremen tolerated and even encouraged the temporary release from factory discipline.[16] On the

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[14] Mickey McGee, interview by author, tape recording, 30 August 1997; Millard Berry, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 5 July 1996.

[15] The story regarding alcohol on the first shift is, quite possibly, apocryphal. The author heard it while he was employed at Dodge Truck from 1971 to 1973, at which time the practice was no longer in place. The author has been unable to verify it. But, as part of the folklore of the plant, it has intrinsic interest. The story assumed different guises. One innocuous version was that the workers brought in food which was shared among the workers on the last day before the Christmas holidays. Unrecorded interview with a secretary employed at UAW local 140, 13 May 1997.

[16] The parallel with Frederick Douglass' observations on the use of alcohol in the planter-sanctioned ritual release of holiday merriment among slaves is unmistakable. See Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, ed. Benjamin Quarles (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 106-107. See, also, the treatment of another incident involving a challenge to authority on the Dodge Main assembly line in Hamtramck, not far from the Dodge Truck plant. There, on the last

second shift, however, the revelry was less contained and ritualized. And, it generally ended in a walkout.[17]

These stories illustrate the problems that both management and the union faced in containing the self-destructive energy of the younger workers. Most of the union leaders remembered vividly the *lack of work* during the Depression, but some found it hard to understand the seriousness of the younger workers' complaints about *too much work*, in the form of forced overtime and speed-up. As UAW Vice President Irving Bluestone observed, the young workers were a "new breed" of autoworker who were as riled about working conditions as they were about the pay. Their alienation with the work process stemmed, in his view, from their lack of power:

> Today's worker in the factory is a different kind of worker from the worker of 20 or 30 years ago. He is not willing to subject himself to the same degree as his predecessors to the unpleasantness of factory life and to the alienation which it brings about. He will insist increasingly on being a direct participant through his union and on the shop floor in decisions which affect him and his welfare both in the plant and outside the plant. He will not be satisfied just to bargain over economic issues in the

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day before Christmas 1955, when workers traditionally brought liquor into the plant and socialized as they worked, the racial and sexual decorum of the plant was shattered when a black male autoworker gave "a Christmas kiss" on the cheek to a young white female autoworker. The author uses this incident to explore the militancy of white male workers as they sought to defend "their claim, as a matter of right and privilege, to shape shop floor culture in their image." In any case, the company-sanctioned "party" recalls the Christmas party at Dodge Truck. In the author's words, "The celebration [at Dodge Main] was quite literally a carnival, an inversion of authority. Foremen, who had spent all year locked in a power struggle with their workers, surrendered control to them for the shift. The inversion of authority took a particular form. Alcohol flowed freely, workers wandered at will from their stations. . . Foremen had surrendered control to the semiskilled hands." Kevin Boyle, "The Kiss," 513, 519.

[17] For youth culture on the assembly line, see Aronowitz, *False Promises*, 20-32. For a sociological interpretation of the conditions of management "hegemony" in the plant, see James R. Zetka, Jr., *Militancy, Market Dynamics, and Workplace Authority: The Struggle Over Labor Process Outcomes in the U.S. Automobile Industry, 1946-1973* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

> traditional sense. He will not be satisfied simply to discuss working conditions as they affect him directly. He will want to be involved in those management decisions as well which in a larger sense govern his life and affect his security.[18]

Bluestone was arguing for the increased participation of the union in decision-making over a whole range of issues, from product design to health and safety, and even the environmental impact of industrial production. From his public utterances on the topic, however, it appears that he had not fathomed the depth of disaffection of younger workers from the production process, the company, and even the union. The "industrial democracy" that he recommended, which followed the German "co-determination" model, required more, not less, collaboration between management and labor. This was not what most of the young workers had in mind.[19]

In any case, Irving Bluestone's desire to understand and heal the divisions of youth and experience was not a top priority in the union's higher circles. More pressing issues crowded the agenda. Health and safety was one. The older Chrysler factories on the Van Dyke, Joseph Campau and Mound Road corridors radiating out from the east-side of Detroit into Warren were increasingly unhealthy places to work. The list of plants that were the scene of wildcats or significant worker violence includes Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle, Mack Avenue Stamping, Detroit Forge, Jefferson Avenue Assembly, and Dodge

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[18] Irving Bluestone, speech before the American Society of Women Accountants, Detroit, Michigan, October 7, 1971, 36-37, copy in author's possession. Also see Irving Bluestone, "Public Policy and the Evolution of Change in Industrial Relations, in Steve Babson, ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 350-361. Irving Bluestone, interview by author, tape recording, 3 April 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

[19] See Ulrich Jürgens, "Lean Production and Co-Determination: The German Experience," in Steve Babson, ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995) 292-308.

Main. The company shut all of these factories within a few years. (In the case of Jefferson Assembly, they built a new plant on the site of the old one.) These factories were decrepit buildings overdue for razing or renovation. Many had poor safety records and lacked adequate maintenance programs. They were industrial relics designed for a different generation of product. (In the case of Dodge Main, the multi-storied building posed special problems in getting the partially assembled vehicles from one floor to another.) They often had standing pools of oil on the floors, broken windows in the skylights, jitneys lacking brakes and exhaust systems, poorly ventilated paint shops, and a steady stream of lost limbs and fatalities resulting from these unsafe conditions. One common complaint was the company's failure to supply gloves for workers handling sharp-edged pieces of metal. The company was running these plants into the ground and its workers to the point of exhaustion as it pounded out the last pulses of production in the waning days of the great mid-century American automobile boom.[20]

Chrysler's decision not to reinvest in plant and equipment resulted in backlogged grievances. In what was probably a public-relations gesture for its membership, the UAW leadership called a one day halt to national contract bargaining sessions with Chrysler in the late summer of 1973. They made a tour of twenty Detroit area Chrysler plants and reported "distressingly bad" health and safety conditions. Union Vice President Douglas

[20] After making inquiries with the Chrysler Corporation and checking the annual reports of the corporation, the author has not been able to locate figures on the company's investment in plant upkeep. On the conditions in the Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant, see Weinberg, *Detroit Auto Uprising 1973* (Highland Park, Michigan: Network Publications Group, n.d.), 10-11.

Fraser gave the company one week to make improvements.[21]

There seemed to be no solution to the dirty and hazardous conditions in the plants. Even when on May 23, 1973 the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sent investigators into the Dodge Truck plant in response to complaints, they were able to accomplish little. They cited 18 violations, such as "failure to install fire extinguisher" or "failure to keep area clean and in sanitary condition," but the total fine levied against the company was only 260 dollars.[22] This "slap on the wrist" on the part of OSHA conveyed the impression that the workers had little hope of resolving their concerns through established channels. The reason that the company temporized with the union and the government may have been its expectation of an impending down-turn in car sales. Although car sales in 1973 were strong, market analysts expected a fall-off in sales in 1974. Auto industry reporters noted the car companies' unwillingness to spend more money on their plants or to relax the regime of forced overtime. Rather than build new plants only to end up with excess capacity when sales slumped, they ran their existing plants on double shifts with overtime. As one article in the *Wall Street Journal* reported, "For the most part, it appears that Detroit is sticking with a strategy of squeezing as many cars as it can out of its existing plants, even though

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[21] "UAW Finds 'Distressingly Bad' Conditions in Plants," *The Detroit Free Press*, 15 August 1973; "UAW, Chrysler Talks Suspended One Day Due to Unrest at Plants in Detroit Area," *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 August 1973. In light of the substantial backlog of safety problems in the plants, it is the "one week to make improvements" ultimatum that suggests the public relations aspect of Fraser's safety tour.

[22] U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration Citation (CSHO) number R-8309, OSHA-1 number 73-38, citation issued 4 June, 1973. The author is indebted to Ellis Boal for this document. Boal served as attorney for the wildcat strikers in the National Labor Relations Board case arising from the Dodge Truck wildcat strike.

many facilities are already operating at their effective maximums."[23]

Thus, the worker discontent at Dodge Truck stemmed from the policies of the Chrysler Corporation, rather than from the union. But it was the union that became the focus of worker discontent. As *Detroit Free Press* labor writer, Ralph Orr, noted during the Mack Avenue wildcat strike in 1973, the radicals' "screechy rhetoric" offended many workers, but they had a growing audience. They seemed to be taking the issue of working conditions seriously, while the union seemed lethargic in addressing the problem. Orr worried about the failure of both the company and the union to take the situation seriously. "There is unrest. There is dissatisfaction. There is alienation. There is a growing feeling that the contract is so ponderous that it allows employers to take an 'it'll-all-blow-over' view of problems."[24]

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[23] "Despite Auto Boom, Makers are Cautious and Plan No Expansion," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 May 1973. The only exception to this in the Chrysler system was a plant that they were building in New Stanton, Pennsylvania. They later sold the factory to Volkswagen. "Chrysler Plant Completion Seen Costing $125 million," *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 August 1973.

[24] "A Faster UAW. . . A Safer Chrysler," *The Detroit Free Press*, 19 August 1973. As others have noted, the "ponderous" rationalization of labor relations in the auto industry was immanent in the logic of the grievance machinery adopted in the early days of union organization. The essence of the grievance process is that it allows work to proceed without disruption while the grievance is adjudicated away from the point of production. Eventually, this system produced a body of jurisprudence based on the outcomes of previous grievances. The union "fights the grievance" in a multi-stage legalistic arena involving interpretation of the language of national contract as well as the "memoranda of understanding" between the local union and plant management. This domestication of industrial conflict was rendered explicit in the union's concession of management's prerogative to organize production as it saw fit. The operative language of the "management rights" clause was Section 2 of the contract: "The Corporation has the exclusive right to manage its plants and offices and direct its affairs and working forces, except as limited by the terms of this Agreement. . ." See the Dodge Truck 1973 contract, *Agreement between Chrysler Corporation and the UAW*, September 21, 1973, section 2, page 6. On this and other aspects of the "Treaty of Detroit," first negotiated with General Motors in the 1948 contract, see Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in*

To be sure, this was not an easy time for the leadership of the UAW. For one thing, the death of Walter Reuther in 1970 shook the leadership. For over two decades, Reuther had ruled the union by the force of his intellect, his social vision, and his political machine. He had not groomed a successor, although he reportedly favored Douglas Fraser. The union's executive board included men of experience and talent, but, compared to Reuther, most were short on charisma. Notably lacking in this regard was Leonard Woodcock, who barely won the executive board vote in 1970 to become the next President of the union. But it was the unfolding structural crisis in the automobile industry, more than the personal qualities of the leadership, that spelled trouble for the union. Beset by the oil shortage and the competition from imports, the automobile companies were trying to turn the corner from an era of constantly improving wages and benefits to an era of concessions and more intense supervision. This contributed to the UAW leadership's problems in governing the union in the mid-1970s.[25]

In the midst of this confusion, the union leaders had trouble distinguishing between the radical "trouble makers" and the mass of apolitical but discontented union members. The most serious internal challenge to UAW leadership in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The League grew out of a wildcat strike at the Dodge Main plant in Hamtramck on May 2, 1968. The issue was line speed and the picket lines were inter-racial, but the action was led by African-American workers.

Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 289-290. On the post-war trend of labor relations in the auto industry, see James R. Zetka, Jr., *Militancy, Market Dynamics, and Workplace Authority: The Struggle Over Labor Process Outcomes in the U.S. Automobile Industry, 1946-1973* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

[25] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 439-445.

Dodge Main management fired seven of the strikers and refused to rehire two of them, General G. Baker, Jr. and Bennie Tate, both African-American workers. The failure of Dodge Main UAW Local 3 to save these two jobs contributed to distrust between the black workers and the white, mainly Polish leadership of Local 3. It also led to a three-day wildcat strike on July 8-10, in which the picket lines were manned by community supporters rather than by workers in the plant. The pickets attempted to prevent black workers from entering the plant. White workers were allowed in. The loss of production of almost two thousand cars demonstrated the importance of black workers to the operation of Chrysler's factories.[26]

The Inner City Voice, a black radical community newspaper formed in the wake of the 1967 Rebellion, published the League's pronouncements on the situation of black workers in the factory and in the neighborhoods of Detroit. According to one of its historians, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers formally came together as a merger of the leaders of the Dodge Main wildcat and *The Inner City Voice*. As can be imagined, the League viewed UAW leadership with the fine disdain that black revolutionaries of that era reserved for liberal whites, at the same time that it accused the union leadership of maintaining itself in power by exploiting racism in the plants.[27]

The League addressed pointed questions to the union's leadership, such as the concept of "Niggermation." As Mike Hamlin, a spokesman for the League, described it, the issue had to do with rising productivity in the auto factory:

> [T]he bourgeois response to the fact that 650,000 production workers in auto in 1947 produced 4.5 million cars and now 650,000 workers are producing 10 million cars is

[26] Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency*, 87-92.

[27] Ibid., 88, 90-91.

> what? Automation. That's right. But that is not the case. I mean, in no way is automation responsible for that increase. What is responsible for that increased output is what we would call "niggermation." And what it means is that they will speed up on a particular job. If a guy can't make it, or refuses to work at that rate: fire him. Then they'll bring a new guy off the street and tell him the rate that they have established via the speed up is the actual rate of that job. And the union goes along with this. It has been going along with this for many years. The result is that production has been going up higher and higher on these jobs. . . Make one man do the work of two or three. And that's how that increase in production has come about; not through automation.[28]

The leadership of the League synthesized the rhetoric of the Left with black nationalism in a street-talk patois that most whites (including the leaders of the UAW) found either objectionable or incomprehensible, as when League attorney Kenneth Cockrel held forth on the issue of capitalist investment:

> There's a cat who would stand up and say to you he's in mining. And he sits in an office, man, on the 19th floor, or the 199th floor, in some motherfucking building on Wall Street. And he's in mining! And he has paper: certificates which are embroidered and shit. You know, stocks, bonds, debentures, obligations. He's in mining! And he's sitting up in Wall Street and his fingernails ain't been dirty in his motherfucking life. He went to Phillips, Andover, or Exeter. He went to Harvard. He went to Yale. He went to the Wharton School of Business. And he's in mining? And he got people fucking with shit in Bolivia. He's fucking with shit in Chile. He's Kennecott. He's Anaconda. He's United Fruit. He's in mining. He's in what? [29]

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[28] Hamlin quote from *Leviathan* 2 (June 1970). On the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, see Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975). Also, Heather Thompson, "The Politics of Labor"; James A. Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency: The League of Revolutionary Black Workers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 83-109; William Serrin, *The Company and the Union: The 'Civilized Relationship' of General Motors Corporation and the United Automobile Workers* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), 13-14. On the League accusation that the UAW leadership actively fomented racism in the plants, see Thompson, "The Politics of Labor," 204.

[29] Cockrel quote in *Leviathan* 2 (June 1970). See also "Finally Got the News," Detroit Newsreel, 1970. This documentary movie by Newsreel, the radical film making collective, includes interviews with several of the League's leaders. The title of the film comes from a picket line chant directed at the UAW leadership during a wildcat strike at Dodge Main: "[We] Finally got the news how our dues are being used!" See also "Our Thing Is DRUM," (Detroit: Black Star Printing, n.d.), 36-37. The League of

The international union leadership might try to ignore this challenge, but when it came down to control over union locals, the League found that it was not dealing with liberals. The clash between black workers and the white incumbent local officials could be brutal. In one instance at the Dodge Main plant in neighboring Hamtramck, union leaders reacted harshly to attempts by black workers in the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement to run their own slate in the local union elections. In one account, George Merrelli, UAW Region 1 Director, is reported to have led an assault on DRUM members during the Dodge Local 3 run-off election in March 1970. According to this story, along with fifty members of the UAW regional staff plus Hamtramck police officers, Merrelli expelled the election challengers from the DRUM slate before the ballot boxes were sealed.[30]

One historian of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers argues that union leaders often acted as though they believed that protests against working conditions involving black workers must be the work of black nationalist militants, just as young white wildcat strikers must be responding to the propaganda of the "hippy communists." This blinded the union leaders to the actual causes of discontent. Thus, the union leaders

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Revolutionary Black Workers became a federation of local "RUMs," such as the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, the Ford Revolutionary Union Movement, etc.

[30] On the Merrelli raid, Heather Thompson, "Politics of Labor,"293-295; Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, 46-51, Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency*, 117-120. From his discussion of these events, Geschwender seems to believe that, although some voting improprieties probably occurred, not all of the League's charges were factual. "The degree of truth in the charges is, in many ways, less relevant than the fact that the charges were made, were sufficiently compatible with observed facts to be plausible, and that they were believed by enough people to serve as useful organizing propaganda." Ibid., 120.

were initially at a loss to explain the spate of wildcat strikes at Chrysler plants in the summer of 1973. On July 24, two African-American workers at Jefferson Assembly locked themselves inside a cage housing the main electrical power switch for the assembly line at Jefferson Assembly. In response to a 13-hour sit-in, management finally agreed to transfer their hard-driving foreman. Two weeks later, on August 7, another wildcat strike idled the Detroit Forge plant. Within another week, workers at Mack Avenue Stamping conducted a sit-down strike over health and safety issues on August 14. The Mack wildcat was instigated by members of the "Workers' Action Movement" (WAM), a factory organizing off-shoot of the Progressive Labor Party. This lent credence to the union leaders' view that any job action must be the work of communists. At 5:00 AM on August 16, several hundred UAW loyalists from across metropolitan Detroit, led by UAW Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey and Vice President of the union's Chrysler Department Douglas Fraser, broke up the Mack Avenue wildcat. Wielding baseball bats and iron pipes, they dispersed the picket line, chased one of the WAM leaders into a parking lot, and beat him. Fraser vowed to repress the radicals: "We're going to be constantly alert. We aren't going to let them take over the union or the plants."[31]

[31] Heather Thompson, "The Politics of Labor, Race, and Liberalism," 19. For the wildcat summer of 1973, see Heather Thompson, "Auto Workers, Dissent, and the UAW: Detroit and Lordstown," in Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth, eds., *Autowork* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 191-200. See also Jack Weinberg, "Detroit Auto Uprising 1973," (Detroit: Network Publication Group, n.d.). Douglas Fraser quote in *The Detroit Free Press*, 15 August 1973. At Chrysler, the wildcat strike was a well-established tradition. As historian Steve Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 7, notes, "all but 2% of Chrysler's recorded strikes between 1940 and 1980 were unauthorized." On the wildcat strikes of 1973, see Jefferys, *Management and Managed* 189-191. On wildcat strikes protesting racism in the auto plants, Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency*, 83-102; Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 168-187; on the same topic and on the actions of union leadership, Thompson, "The Politics of Labor, Race, and

These events probably influenced the attitudes of the young workers at Dodge Truck less than their assessment of their own local union's performance in representing them. In the eyes of many younger workers, the union was not effectively leading the fight for decent working conditions. As one worker remembered:

> We joked about the union . . . because all the people who had gotten steward and committeeman jobs on the second shift had been appointed by the union, so some of them were just friends of the union guys . . . Now, stewards are supposed to have regular jobs unless they're called on a specific union complaint. . . Not a single one of them did. They could float around, do what they liked, and most of the time they were up in the union office – which was the only air conditioned place for the workers at all – and the company kept it stocked with lots and lots of comic books. So, we never saw them, we never had anything to do with them.[32]

Instead, when a problem arose – especially around line speed – rather than going to the union, some of the younger workers became adept at stopping the line. It was a less drastic mode of resistance than organizing a wildcat strike, and it was easier to do. One way to stop the line at Dodge Truck was to shift the weight of a chassis so that it went down the line slightly askew until it jammed up when the line went over a hump. In a few minutes, a bottleneck of chassis would develop and the foremen would have to shut down the line and move in the cranes to sort out the mess. Rather than an individual act performed in secret, this kind of sabotage involved organizing workers in the immediate

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Liberalism," 187-198, 306-308, 322, 342-343; Thompson, "Auto Workers, Dissent, and the UAW," 181-208; Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency,* 103-109. Irving Bluestone believes that the 1973 wildcat strikes were mainly the work of the radicals. "My judgment . . . is that something was going on in those plants over and above the issues over which those strikes occurred." Irving Bluestone, interview by author, tape recording, 13 January 1998. Douglas Fraser emphasizes the fact that Chrysler was operating very old and obsolete factories and had less money for maintenance than Ford or GM. Douglas Fraser, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 19 January 1998.

[32] Millard Berry, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 5 July 1996.

vicinity, because they had to let the chassis stack up without telling management. The reward was an hour's break and the knowledge that the workers exercised a kind of power, if only the power of veto, over the production process.[33]

Although these extraordinary means of resisting factory discipline were, in a sense, contagious, the insurgency at Dodge Truck was not simply a spontaneous rebellion. A New Left group from California, the Revolutionary Union (RU), had been active in the factory since 1970. This group came under surveillance by the Detroit Police Department "Red Squad" and by the FBI. According to a report authored by a company security supervisor, in early 1972, "we were approached by members of the Detroit Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation." The FBI and the Detroit Red Squad provided names and addresses of RU members and sympathizers outside as well as inside the plant. "We were told that this group had come to Detroit from the west coast by way of Ohio" and that they were intent on "infiltrating industry." The report stated that the RU had adopted a national policy of taking blue-collar jobs and becoming active in the union. "They were told after infiltrating the unions to ridicule and belittle the union leadership so as to form a separate cell of dissatisfied employees."[34]

By the summer of 1972, the RU had been able to place a few cadres in different

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[33] Ibid. For a discussion of sabotage in a Detroit automobile factory in the late 1960s, see Bill Watson, "Counter-Planning on the Shop Floor," *Radical America* Vol. 5 No. 3 (May-June 1971). Another interesting study of sabotage on the auto assembly line, this one in Van Nuys, California in the 1970s, is Craig A. Zabala, "Sabotage in an Automoble Assembly Plant: Worker Voice on the Shopfloor," in Asher and Edsforth, *Autowork*, 209-225. For a sociological analysis of worker insurgency and wildcat strikes, see Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 82-120.

[34] "RE: THE REVOLUTIONARY UNION," April 23, 1973, copy in author's possession.

departments and put out a newsletter, *On the Line*, which they distributed inside the plant. The newsletter reported favorably on unauthorized work stoppages, and it criticized the union, both the international and the local, for weak leadership. In the winter of 1974, it demanded that the local union confront the company's "racist hiring practices" against black job applicants. In the fall of 1972, it published the news that Chrysler's profits were up by 400 percent and speculated on the connection between this fact and the increased speed of the assembly line. In the same issue, it ran an editorial on the upcoming elections in which it criticized the UAW's support for George McGovern. "[E]ven if McGovern were elected, he couldn't change things that much. That's because his party, the Democrats, are about the same as the Republicans." The root of the similarity, according to the newsletter, was that "[t]he Democratic Party serves the same class of people who run the Republican Party. This class is the big businessmen who control giant corporations like Chrysler and run the whole country." Months before the wildcat strike, this insurgent group began holding meetings after work in a nearby tavern. These meetings attracted as many as three dozen workers. It included about an equal number of whites and blacks.[35]

The leader of this band of radicals was a white worker in his early thirties named Steve Smith. Smith was popular in the plant. Hired as a spot-welder at Dodge Truck on September 15, 1970, he won election as a delegate to the 1972 UAW Constitutional

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[35] Chrysler Employment Jacket for Stephen Smith, copy held by Ellis Boal, attorney for Smith in his NLRB lawsuit against Chrysler Corporation. "Racist Hiring," *On the Line* No. 6 (February 1973); "UAW in Politics," *On the Line* No. 4 (November 1972). Copies in author's possession. Sam Stark, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 26 May 1997.

Convention. He combined a respectful attitude, especially towards older workers, with an insistence that they face up to problems in the plant. When asked a direct question about his politics, Smith would usually affirm that he was a communist. Relatively few workers, however, knew of the Revolutionary Union or of his role as a leading local member. In comparison to the style of other radicals, he also seemed reasonable, almost deferential with local union leaders. Even when he was interrogating them during union meetings, he was usually able to frame his questions in a face-saving and constructive manner. So, when the company added the second shift at Dodge Truck, the local union officials appointed Smith as second-shift steward for Department 9110, the metal shop, composed mostly of spot-welders.[36]

Over a two-year period, Smith tried to graft the desperate energy of the younger workers onto the cautious but dedicated unionism of the older black workers. By urging them to attend union meetings and ask questions, Smith introduced younger whites to the politically sophisticated methods of pressure from below that black workers had long employed in the local union. Black workers were determined to make the union serve them. The incumbent "green slate" (sometimes called "the Reuther slate") was made up mostly of Appalachian and Polish leaders in the local union. The black members formed an opposition caucus called "the blue slate." Rather than contesting the top officers' spots, they quietly built their caucus and helped their younger members run for steward.

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[36] For a note on Smith's early organizing efforts on behalf of the RU at a steel plant in Santa Clara, California, see *America's Maoists: The Revolutionary Union, The Venceremos Brigade, Report by the Committee on Internal Security* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-second Congress, Second Session, June 22, 1972), 154.

Then, in the local union elections of May 1973, they won the presidency of the local, although the "green slate" still controlled the bargaining committee.[37]

With the union leadership divided between the rival blue and green slates, grievances piled up and the membership became more vexed. The Chrysler contract ratification in the fall of 1973 revealed the depth of dissatisfaction among the workers at the plant. The members went out on strike the day that the old contract expired. On Midnight of the same day, UAW President Leonard Woodcock gave the strike official status in what turned out to be a week-long work stoppage while the union and company bargained the new contract. When the negotiators failed to make sufficient headway on local issues such as mandatory overtime, the membership of local 140 voted down the proposed contract. The local union called a second vote, but the members voted it down again. The local leaders then scheduled a third vote and threatened to take the plant out on strike just before Christmas if the contract were rejected a third time. This would have meant the loss of holiday pay. An angry membership, including many younger black workers, finally ratified the contract.[38]

During the spring of 1974, Steve Smith was having trouble fostering worker resistance to company policies at the same time that his job as steward required that he smooth over the tensions that produced this resistance. On May 31, about 100 metal shop

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[37] This and the preceding two paragraphs draw on the author's observations as a worker at Dodge Truck during the period of September 1971 to March 1973 as well as from a telephone interview recorded with Sam Stark, 25 May 1997.

[38] Millard Berry, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 5 July 1996; Sam Stark, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 25 May 1997; see also the pamphlet, *Wildcat: Dodge Truck, June 1974,* published by Black and Red Press, Detroit, Michigan and distributed by *The Fifth Estate Newspaper*.

workers represented by Smith called in sick to protest working conditions. The company's stated intention to discipline the workers led to a brief work stoppage a few days later, as dozens of the workers walked off the job and invaded the labor relations office to protest the threatened suspensions. The company backed down at this show of force, but it scheduled a meeting with the union leadership the following Monday, when the union leaders were expected to return from a UAW Convention in California. At this meeting on June 11, Smith and three other workers were fired. The firing sparked a plant-wide walk-out of the second shift. The next morning, the first shift refused to cross the picket lines.[39]

The Dodge Truck wildcat strike of 1974 lasted four days. The wildcat was big and effective. It idled 6,000 workers. The local and international union leaders pleaded in vain with the strikers to return to work. But the jubilant strikers even defied a temporary restraining order against picketing granted at the company's request by Macomb Circuit Court Judge, Hunter D. Stair. When they violated the judge's order by picketing and keeping the plant shut on June 12, the second day of the strike, Judge Stair convened court before dawn the following morning in the parking lot of the plant from the back of a flat-bed truck driven by the plant manager. About 150 pickets chanted and ignored Stair's bull-horn announcement, "I'm now holding court. Do you want to listen to me out or do you want to go to jail?" Smith had another bull-torn. When he called Stair a "flunky" and a "Chrysler Judge," the black-robed jurist banged his gavel on the roof of the truck cab and pointed out Smith and nineteen other pickets to be arrested for contempt of court. Smith and sixteen other male pickets and three female pickets were taken into custody and

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[39] Ibid.

transported to the Macomb County jail. The picket line broke up as the strikers returned to the union hall where they collected bail for the arrested pickets.[40]

Judge Stair came back the next morning and directed the Warren Police to arrest an additional ten pickets. The arrests effectively ended the wildcat. Since the company refused to negotiate with workers engaged in an unauthorized strike, an increasing number of workers saw no reason to continue the walk-out. A few days later, after the plant was up and running, the company fired seventy-nine of the strikers by telegram. Both UAW Vice President Douglas Fraser and UAW Region 1 Director George Merrelli promised that, if the company did not make improvements in working conditions, the international union would hold a sanctioned strike vote in the near future. The members voted to strike by a majority of 2,043 to 377, but the union never pulled the workers out.[41]

The wildcat was crushed and the authority of management was restored at the Dodge Truck plant, leaving observers to ponder the meaning of the strike. For some participants, the one scene they would remember from the strike was the image of the black-robed judge, flanked by two Macomb County sheriffs, directing arrests from the back of the flat-bed truck driven by the plant management. That seemed to sum up the relationship between labor, management, and the government. But the wildcat was more than political theater. It signified a new stage in the rank-and-file workers' movement. Like the previous summer's wildcat strikes, it was provoked by speed-up, compulsory overtime, and health and safety issues. But it also had its own peculiar quality.

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[40] "A Judge Holds Court on the Picket Line," *The Detroit News*, 14 June 1974; "Touring Judge Ends A Strike at Chrysler," *The Detroit Free Press*, 14 June 1974.

[41] *The Macomb Daily*, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21 June 1974.

One difference with the spate of wildcats in other Detroit area Chrysler plants 1973 was that although the company was still running two shifts and scheduling overtime at the truck plant, the automobile industry as a whole was in decline. An ebbing of the business cycle coincided with the Arab oil embargo following the October 1973 Yom Kipper war in the Middle East. Already in early 1974, *The Macomb Daily* carried articles on the gas shortage and its negative effect on the economy. Sales of Chrysler's product line of heavy, gas guzzling automobiles dropped off. The company's annual report for 1974 showed a twenty percent decline from the previous year in truck and car sales in the U.S. and Canada. Auto analysts had been hinting at a slack year for several months and the company lost 52 million dollars in 1974. The fact that the Dodge Truck wildcat strike occurred as the economy teetered on the brink of down-turn suggests the high degree of discontent in the plant. [42]

Another important aspect of the strike was that it did not significantly involve race. Arthur Harvey, the African-American president of the UAW local 140, at one point stated that the workers were being misled by "hippie communists," but the wildcat did not involve much racial rhetoric. If anything, it probably promoted inter-racial solidarity. The work stoppage had supporters and critics on both sides of the color line. Instead, support for the strike broke down along the lines of youth versus age. The strike was one last act of defiance of young workers against the prospect of a lifetime on the assembly line, with

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[42] On Chrysler's condition in the early 1970s, see Doron Levin, *Behind the Wheel at Chrysler* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1995), 19-25; for the company's losses in 1974, *Chrysler Corporation 1974 Annual Report*, 3; for indications of the declining economy in 1974, "Area Pumps Running Dry," *The Macomb Daily* 27 February 1974; "Blame production decline for 200,000 lost jobs," ibid., 3 May 1974.

its speed-up, its monotony, and its threats to life and limb. Like the 1972 strike against the General Motors' Assembly Division at Lordstown, Ohio, the Dodge Truck wildcat revealed the profound alienation of a generation of younger workers from the "drive" system of automobile production. It was younger workers, both black and white, who led the wildcat. Although most of the older workers honored the picket line, they harbored the gravest doubts about the outcome of the strike. They had a lot invested in the job, including their seniority and the promise of a pensioned retirement. It soon became apparent to them that the strike was going nowhere. By definition, it was an unauthorized work stoppage, and therefore illegitimate. (Non-conformance to the established rules of labor relations, of course, was precisely what attracted many of the younger workers.)[43]

The other defining characteristic of the Dodge Truck wildcat strike was that it was a "no-confidence vote" with the union. The strikers were unhappy with the company, but they were even more disillusioned with the union. Their thinking was, roughly: "What can you expect from the company? But the union is supposed to be on our side." This feeling of abandonment must have been heightened by *The Detroit News* story that, had Judge Stair not shown up to enforce his own order against picketing, the UAW was prepared to mobilize the same crew that had broken the Mack Avenue wildcat the year before. The international union's official position on the strike was that it was fomented by left-wing outsiders. "Once again," the article quoted Fraser, "a tiny minority has

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[43] On young workers and the drive production system at the GMAD plant at Lordstown, Ohio see, Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises*, 33-50; Emma Rothchild, *Paradise Lost: The Decline of the Auto-industrial Age* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1973), 95-96, 113-119 and Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf, *Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1983), 106-107.

attempted to deny the overwhelming majority of UAW members their right to work. . .No small group has the right to circumvent the wishes of the overwhelming majority of our 6,000 members to enter their work place. . ."[44]

Fraser was speaking about the radicals, but their role in the strike should not be exaggerated. It is not even clear what their objectives were in the plant. From their newsletter, *On the Line*, it appears that they went into the factory to expose the workers to their own radical perspective on a broad range of issues, such as the 1972 elections, the Vietnam war, and racism. Also, for three years they lambasted the union, preaching that the union and the management were a single structure of authority, a Janus-like "two-headed monster" of Lynn Townsend (the Chairman of the company Board of Directors) and Leonard Woodcock (President of the UAW). Most of the workers ultimately rejected the radicals' "flip side of the coin" analysis of the company and union.

Furthermore, once they became directly involved in the struggle between the union and management, the radicals found that they could not control the timing of developments. The longer Smith served as chief steward, the more he became preoccupied, even overwhelmed, with the raw facts of industrial exploitation. The real force driving the strike was the workers' anger over working conditions. Though his firing was the catalyst for the wild-cat strike, Smith was never in control. As one observer noted, the strike "caught [the radicals] entirely off balance. . . [T]he Dodge Truck uprising was *begun, continued, and ended* by the workers, with only minor influence by

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[44] For an over-view of labor relations in the automobile industry in 1970, Serrin, *The Company and the Union*, 13-24. Fraser's quote in "UAW Won't Tolerate Radicals, Fraser Insists," *The Detroit News*, 16 June 1974.

organizers." But, Smith still retained a following, even after his firing. After a year's absence from the plant and in spite of extensive red-baiting, he still got 36 percent of the 1975 election vote for president of the local.[45]

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The Dodge Truck wildcat strike of 1974 was among the last outbreaks of worker resistance against *too much work*. Soon, these work-weary rebels would find themselves unemployed, and later, they would face a decade of job insecurity during the recession-prone 1970s through the early 1980s. The strike was a kind of last hurrah for these disaffected young workers. By the time economic stability and managerial authority were restored in the mid-1980s, this generation of workers would be politically inert, culturally less cohesive, older, married, and saddled with debt. They were not likely to disrupt the structures of industrial authority again.

From Chrysler management's perspective, the wildcat was a momentary glitch in the cycle of investment, production, and sales. They had much bigger problems to worry about. Under the leadership of Lynn Townsend and John Riccardo, the Chrysler Corporation entered the late 1970s with inefficient plants and little cash to renovate them. The auto maker also had to divide its attention between plant, product, and sales strategies on one hand and government-ordered recalls and demands for a lower levels of exhaust

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[45] On the propaganda aspect of the RU's activity in the plant, see *On The Line*, No. 2, 4, 6 (copies in author's possession). On the RU's inability to control the wildcat once it got started, see the pamphlet, *Wildcat, Dodge Truck, 1974*, 18-19. On the results of Smith's 1975 run for President of Local 140, see "Maoist Fails to Win UAW Local Control," *The Detroit News*, 13 May 1975. On management's red-baiting campaign against Smith (before and after he was fired), Mickey McGee, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 August 1997.

emissions on the other. Most disturbing was the fact that their cars were not selling. In the late 1970s, Chrysler was still building cars at a furious pace, but not many people were buying them. They tried forcing dealers to store excess cars under the "sales bank" program, but the dealers resisted, sometimes by devious means such as charging the company for unneeded warranty work. Often, Chrysler simply parked thousands of cars in the weeds of the unused school playgrounds and vacant lots around Detroit.[46]

Although the recession cut into the profits of both the auto makers and most of the rest of American business, some scholars believe that the downturn was engineered by management associations, like the Business Roundtable, to tame inflation and, at the same time, to discipline the rebellious workforce. In *Beyond the Waste Land,* Samuel Bowles calls this downturn, "the Great Repression." This conspiracy theory of the economic contraction inspires little confidence.[47] Still, many in management seemed to welcome the downturn. One insurance executive predicted a salutary outcome during the mini-slump of 1970: "Corporate executives I've checked with are cautiously optimistic. . .
There is what I call a wholesome recession. . . As for employees, with a fear of losing jobs they're really putting their heart into their work. Formerly, it was, 'What's the

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[46] Steve Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 198-206; Doron Levin, *Behind the Wheel at Chrysler*, 19-29. Douglas Fraser, of the UAW, remembered that the government demands around fuel efficiency and emissions control hit Chrysler harder than GM or Ford. "When you get demands made upon you by the government. . . the smaller companies have a great burden, because they don't have the resources [to comply]." Douglas Fraser, interview by author, tape recording, 19 January 1998.

[47] One important factor in both down-turns of 1973 and 1979 was the rising price of crude oil charged by the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries cartel, sparked, in the first case, by the aid that the U.S. government was extending to the State of Israel. This does not fit neatly with the view that the recession was engineered by American big corporations.

difference?'" Another executive declared, "We need a sharp recession. . . People need to recognize that a job is the most important thing they can have."[48]

Freed by the recession from the constraints of a tight labor market, management pursued a policy of increased "intensity of supervision" in the plants. According to one analyst, American companies were already in 1973, "tighten[ing] their surveillance and control of workers":

> [M]anagement's leverage over employees diminished in the late 1960s; the lower the cost of losing one's job and the more muted the divisions among workers, other things being equal, the lower management's ability to extract additional work effort from their employees. . . The corporate counter-offensive after 1973 was aimed in part at restoring the earlier workplace environment.[49]

Just as the wildcat strikes of 1973 grew out of the workers' confidence that their labor was in demand, their militancy was shaken by the automobile manufacturing slump between 1974 and 1976 and, again, between 1979 and 1983. One indication of this is that, as the unemployment rate climbed in the late 1970s, the workers' attendance at Chrysler and Ford improved. (See Table 5.1)

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[48] On the recessions and the auto industry in the 1970s and early 1980s, see Harry C. Katz, *Shifting Gears: Changing Labor Relations in the U.S. Automobile Industry* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 50-51. Quotes from Bowles, *et al.*, *Beyond the Waste Land*, 104, 110.

[49] Ibid., 107, 131.

Table 5.1[50]

Absenteeism rate (%)

Year	Chrysler	Ford	General Motors
1979	7.3	3.9	9.2
1980	5.9	3.0	9.4
1981	5.6	2.4	9.6
1982*	5.1	2.1	8.0

* (January to June)

The main reason for declining absenteeism was that workers were beginning to fear for their jobs. As an historian of Chrysler's labor relations suggests:

> By 1980 workers' fears of company bankruptcy and plant closures or lay-offs had created such insecurity that strike action (and other forms of open resistance to managerial authority as well) became 'illegitimate' in the eyes not only of management, the UAW and the courts, but also in the commonsense consciousness of virtually the entire workforce.[51]

Regardless of whether management consciously used unemployment as a bludgeon to reestablish management control, the effect on worker militancy was the same. By the late-1970s, most workers would not willingly risk losing a job at Chrysler. The recession thus played a major role in shaping the attitudes of automobile workers. It not only idled them and cooled out their militancy; at the end of the decade, it nearly brought down the

[50] On the increasingly cooperative relationship between the local union and plant management after the wildcat strikes and lay-offs during the 1970s, Bowles et al. *Beyond the Waste Land*, 194-198, 210. The absenteeism table is borrowed entirely from Jefferys, *Management and the Managed*, 40.

[51] Jefferys, *Management and the Managed*, 41. It is unclear from this source whether the absenteeism rate refers to unscheduled absenteeism (rather than vacations, holidays, etc.). Presumably, it does.

Chrysler Corporation. The employees had to give up concessions to secure the government bail-out which saved the company. Having done this, they would henceforth adopt a more "constructive" attitude towards the employer.[52]

In order to save the company from going under and to secure the government loan, UAW President Douglas Fraser allowed the 1976 contract to expire ahead of schedule and negotiated a new contract in 1979 that broke the national pattern and saved the company $203 million. Chrysler continued to falter, however. In December 1979, the Senate bill authorizing the federal loan guarantee stipulated that the union would have to give back $259 million in additional "unrecoverable" concessions. The union agreed to an additional year of frozen wages. In return, the company transferred shares worth $162.5 million in stock to a Chrysler Employee Stock Ownership Plan. Car sales continued to stagnate. On January 14, 1981, the union gave Chrysler a third round of concessions amounting to a $622 million cost advantage compared to the national pattern contract at GM and Ford. The new agreement entailed a twenty month wage freeze and canceled some of the scheduled pension increases. When GM and Ford reported losses and demanded relief in 1982, the union had to give them concessions too.[53]

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[52] On the Chrysler bailout, see Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (London: Verso, 1988), 151-156.

[53] On the management offensive against labor from 1973 through the early 1980s, see Bowles et al., *Beyond the Waste Land*, 107-110; on plant closings in the 1970s, see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *Capital and Communities: The Causes and Consequences of Private Disinvestment* (Washington, D.C.: The Progressive Alliance, 1980), 19-61. On concession contracts, see Kim Moody, *An Injury to All*, 165-191; also, Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 206-213. See also David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards, and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 215-220.

Chrysler emerged from its 1979 brush with extinction with a new CEO, a clearer vision of how to improve its product line, an aggressive sales agenda, a more cooperative relationship with the union, and with the cash on hand to renovate its plants. The company also began to take seriously the reorganization of work with an eye to improving worker productivity. As it shrank its domestic workforce, management laid off many of the low seniority younger workers who supposedly had caused so much trouble. The days of mass hiring off the street were over by the mid-1970s. When it needed to hire, the company dipped into the pool of unemployed workers. When recalling laid-off workers did not suffice, the company carefully screened new job applicants with tests and evaluation. (Under the old system of recruitment, the company merely tried to weed out job applicants with felony convictions.) The careful hiring procedures may have helped restore peace in the plants, but the company also benefited from the fact that its workforce was chastened by its recent experience of unemployment, As one historian notes, " [O]n the shop floor the non-adversarial policy [adopted by the union's international leadership] was not as important as the experience of the recession in disciplining the workforce." [54]

The recessions of the 1970s and early 1980s reestablished management's authority in the auto industry. The power to lay-off proved to be the strongest sanction that management had, one that cast a pall over the entire community. Management gestures in response to the union's concessions – inviting UAW President Douglas Fraser to serve on the company's Board of Directors, the profit-sharing and employee stock ownership plans, the quality of work circles, the promises of consultation with the union prior to closing

[54] Steve Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 210.

plants[55] – all these measures, which would have meant something different had they been fought for and won by the union, took on the aspect of tokenism.

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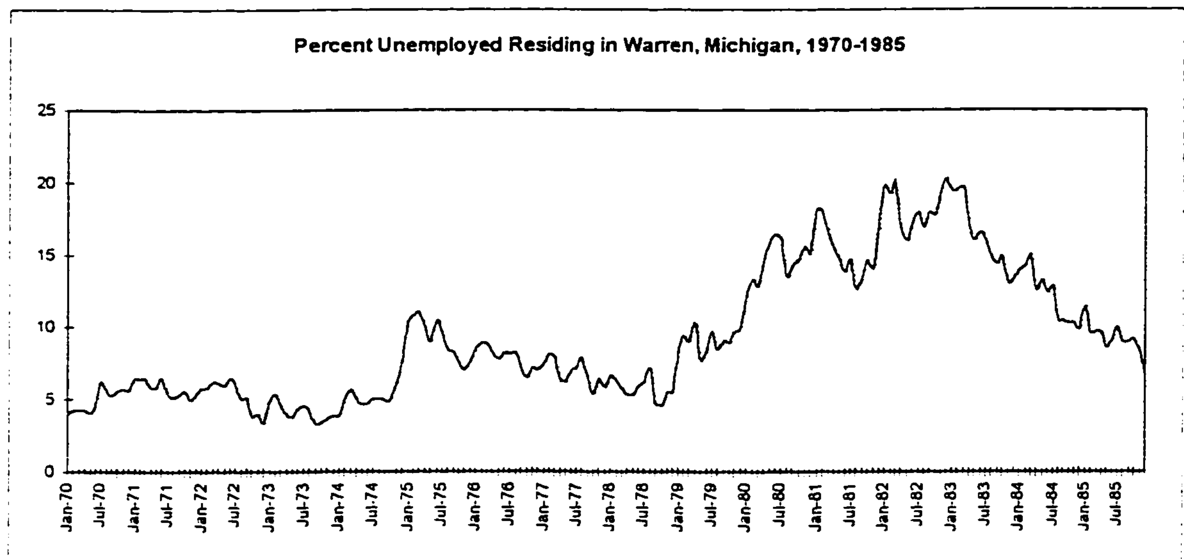
The recessions affected Warren's citizens, whether or not they worked for the auto companies. Warren experienced two significant down-turns in employment during the 1970s-1980s. One was from 1975 to 1977. The other was from 1979 to 1984. (See Chart 5.1.) The second was more severe. The worst year of the recession was 1982, when the automobile companies slashed production by almost 50 percent. Macomb

Chart 5.1[56]



County's 17.6 percent annual average unemployment rate exceeded the jobless rate in other counties in the Detroit metropolitan area. At 18.2 percent, Warren's 1982 average unemployment rate was even higher than that of Macomb County. In December 1982,

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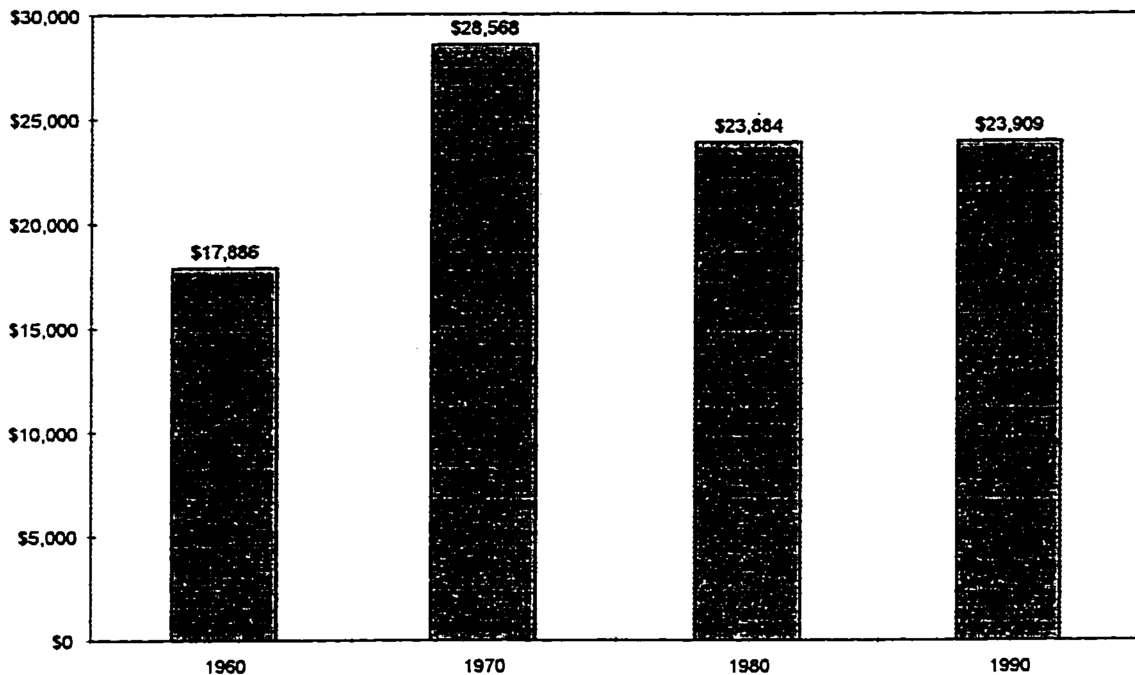
[55] The company closed 16 plants by early 1983. Jefferys, *Management and Managed*, 212.

[56] This chart is based on data received from the Michigan Employment Security Commission, Department of Research and Statistics. Lansing, Michigan.

unemployment in Warren reached a frightening 22.2 percent, twice the national rate. (See Chart 5.1.) Between 1970 and 1980, the median household income (in constant 1980 dollars) fell by 16 percent, from $28,568 to $23,884. (See Chart 5.2.) The inflation rate magnified the sense of insecurity that accompanied the rise in unemployment. Chart 5.3

Chart 5.2[57]



shows the median household income in raw figures, without converting to constant dollars. These figures, which were the actual dollars in take-home pay, conveyed the mistaken impression that Warren was enjoying a boom instead of a recession. This lagging of wages behind inflation was an additional source of anxiety, especially as the

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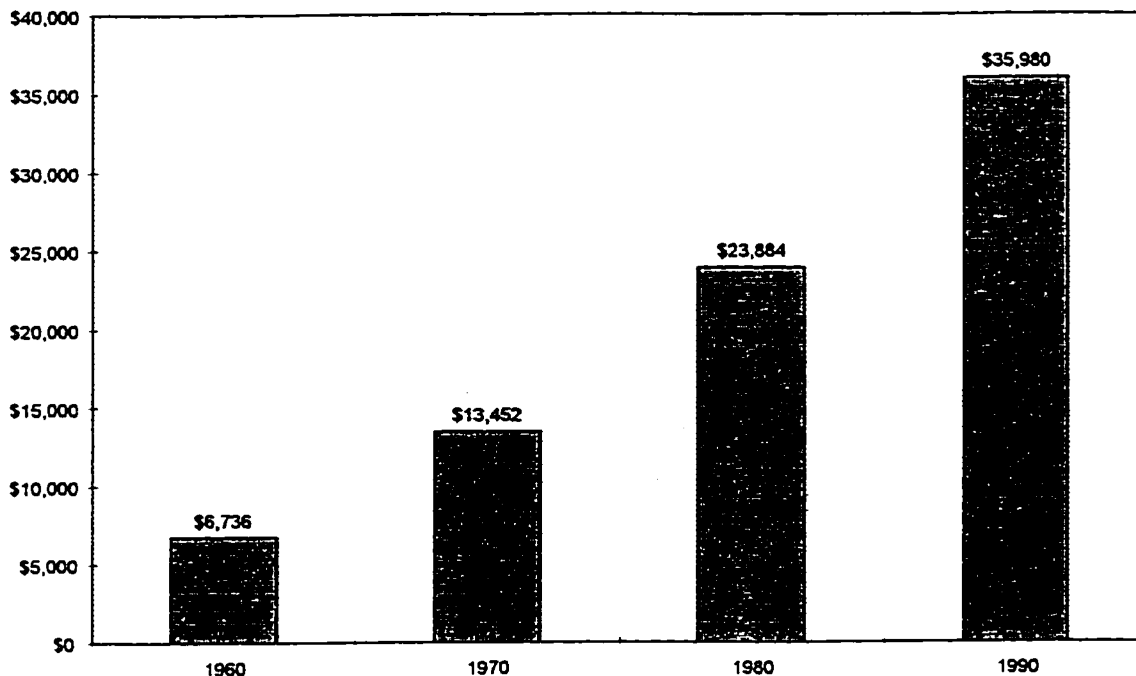
[57] Chart 5.2 uses *U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960: Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan*, Table P-1; *1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan*, Table 41; *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan*, Table P-13; *1990 Census of Population: Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan*, Section 1, Table 3. All figures are converted to 1980 dollars.

credit crunch jeopardized family assets.

Chart 5.3[58]



Economic researchers have since revealed the dimensions of economic decline during the 1970s and early 1980s. Using national data, one study estimates that as many as 60 percent of workers who were laid-off due to plant shut-downs in the 1970s suffered a decline in occupational status. Another study puts the average annual income loss by laid-off automobile workers in the 1970s at 43.4 percent during the first two years after

[58] Chart 5.3 uses *U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960: Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan,* Table P-1; *1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 41; *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan,* Table P-13; *1990 Census of Population: Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan,* Section 1, Table 3. All figures uncorrected for inflation.

plant closure.[59]

There is an obvious connection between the decline in manufacturing employment and the decline of median household income. In Macomb County between 1979 to 1989, the number of manufacturing jobs fell by 9.2 percent. The decline in manufacturing jobs was off-set by job gains in retail (+37.6 percent), service (+70.3 percent), and health care (+49.3 percent) over the same period. But the share of the total Macomb County *payroll* in these non-manufacturing job categories remained stagnant. Between 1979 and 1989, for instance, the retail share in the number of jobs grew by 37.6 percent while the retail share of the total county payroll remained at 10 percent. The reason is that wages in the retail sector did not keep pace with the rest of the economy. In other words, Macomb County workers were losing relatively high paying jobs in manufacturing, and the

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[59] This figure of 43.4 percent income loss during auto workers' first two years of layoff is surprising, given the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and the Supplementary Unemployment Benefit (SUB) programs of income subsidy for unemployed auto workers. TAA was in place from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. (The Reagan administration cut these funds in 1982.) Supplementary Unemployment Benefits has been an item in national contracts bargained by the UAW since the 1955 contract with GM. The program was up-graded in 1967. On these programs, see Katz, *Shifting Gears*, 50. The first study mentioned in this paragraph is Herbert S. Parnes and Randy King, "Middle-Aged Job Losers," *Industrial Gerontology*, Vol. 4, No.2, Spring 1977. The other is Bluestone and Harrison, *Capital and Communities*, 66-67, 69. Extrapolating from the suicide rate among displaced workers during the shutdown of the Federal Mogul roller bearing plant in Detroit, Bluestone and Harrison claim that such a rate would have produced 4,000 suicides among the population of laid off workers in New England alone, and nation-wide, would have resulted in more suicides than the number of deaths that the U.S. forces suffered during the Vietnam war. At the Federal Mogul plant there were 2,000 lost jobs and 8 suicides. Bluestone and Harrison, *Capital and Communities*, 80-81. For a more sanguine appraisal of the economy, see Robert J. Samuelson, *The Good Life and its Discontents: The American Dream in the Age of Entitlements, 1945-1995* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

replacement work that they found (or that their spouses found) usually paid less money.[60]

As the recession dragged on and unemployment benefits ran out, people began looking for work in other states. Local news stands sold out of newspapers with help-wanted ads from cities in the southwest. News magazines and newspapers carried stories of "rust-belt" migrants to Texas and other sun-belt states. Some moved to Alaska to take advantage of the boom created by the construction of the oil pipe-line. Wherever they went, the Michigan migrants were readily identified by their black automobile license plates. Many of the migrants eventually returned to Michigan. But they didn't go back to Warren. The 1980 Census recorded a 10 percent decline in Warren's population (161,000 in 1980, compared to 180,000 ten years earlier).[61]

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While it brought to heel a rebellious generation of young factory workers and sapped Warren's population and vitality, the recession uncovered another reform constituency: women. During the recession years, women took on new responsibilities both in the workforce and in the family. In Michigan between 1960 and 1970, although the percentage of single women working outside the home remained constant at 54 percent, the percentage of married women in the paid workforce rose from 29 percent to

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[60] This paragraph relies on "Macomb County: A Historical Perspective," *Bellwether Report Book I,* (Warren: The Center for Community Studies, Macomb County Community College, 1993), 3-5, 10; and on "The Macomb County Economy: Industrial Suburb in Transition," *Bellwether Report Book IV* (Warren: The Center for Community Studies, Macomb County Community College, 1993), 3.

[61] *1980 Census of Housing, Part 24, Michigan,* Table 2; *1970 Census of Population, Michigan,* Table 7. The lay-offs brought out the desperation of Macomb County's population in small ways, such as the fact that, in 1974, Macomb County led the rest of the state in lottery ticket sales (eight tickets per week for every ten residents), see "Macomb – Home of 'big shooter'," in *The Macomb Daily,* 23 December 1974.

37 percent. The economic squeeze of the mid-1970s brought an additional infusion of women into the paid workforce to supplement their husbands' wages. Between 1970 and 1975, the participation rate of all women in the Michigan wage labor force increased from 40 percent to 45 percent. During those years, white women increased their participation rate from 40 to 46 percent, while the figure for non-white women dropped from 46 to 44 percent, reflecting the impact of race on women's job-hunting prospects during recession.[62]

Women's increased participation in the labor force changed the gender profile of the Macomb County's workforce. Between 1970 and 1980, women increased their share in the paid labor force from 32.4 percent to 39.6 percent. By 1990, women made up 44.3 percent of the wage-earning work force in Macomb County.[63] Census data confirms that Warren's women increasingly took paid jobs outside the home. In 1960, 31.5 percent of Warren's women were in the paid workforce. By 1990, the figure had grown to 53 percent. The largest percentage increase (a 28 percent gain) was between 1970 and 1980, in the midst of a decade of boom and recession. (See Table 5.2.)

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[62] These figures are from Tables I and II of "Women in Michigan's Work Force," prepared by the Detroit Labor Market Analysis Unit of the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1978. A copy of this report is in the Joyce Hennessee Collection, Box 2, Folder 2-3, ALUA.

[63] "The Macomb County Economy: Industrial Suburb in Transition," *Bellwether Report Book IV*, 4.

Table 5.2[64]

Percentage of Women in the Workforce,

Warren, Michigan, 1960-1990

1960	31.5
1970	39.3
1980	50.4
1990	53.0

Even more striking are the statistics of working women with young children. In 1960, 16.3 percent of Warren women with children under six years of age worked outside the home. By 1990, the figure was 54.8 percent (higher, even, than the 1990 percentage of all women in the workforce). Here, the biggest increase (137 percent) was between 1980 and 1990. (See Table 5.3.)

These figures reflect a significant change in the domestic and work culture of Warren. As the median household income in Warren declined after 1970, sending women into the job market, the family began to show signs of stress. According to one sociologist of the working class family, job loss affected women and men differently. The married woman who found work outside the home often rated the job a positive experience, validating her feelings of competence outside of domestic life. Losing the job, however, did not necessarily shake her sense of identity to the same degree as it did the

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[64] For 1960, the population is women over 14 years old. For the other years, women over 16 years old. *U.S. Census of Population: 1960, General Population Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 33; *1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 41; *1980 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan, Section 1,* Table P-12; *1990 Census of Population, Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan, Section 1,* Table 2.

Table 5.3[65]

Percentage Women in the Workforce

with Children Under Six, Warren, Michigan, 1960-1990

1960	16.3
1970	17.6
1980	23.0
1990	54.5

man, for whom the job frequently *was* his identity:

> Like so many other men, Paul [one of the subjects of the author's study] hasn't just lost a job; he's lost a life. For his job meant more than a living wage. It meant knowing he had an identity and a place in the world – a place where his competence was affirmed, where he had friends who respected and admired him, men with whom he could share both the frustrations and satisfactions of life on the job.[66]

Unable to deliver on his part of the traditional marriage bargain, the unemployed or under-employed husband might experience mood depression and alcohol or drug abuse.[67]

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[65] For 1960, the population is women over 14 years old. For the other years, the population is women over 16 years old. *U.S. Census of Population: 1960, General Population Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 33; *1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 41; *1980 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan, Section 1,* Table P-12; *1990 Census of Population, Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan, Section 1,* Table 2.

[66] The fall-off in Warren's median household incomes since 1970 described in Chart 5.2 above included the increased contribution to the family finances by housewives going to work. It seems reasonable to conclude that the decline would have been sharper had they stayed at home. Hence, the incentive for women to get jobs was great even if it only meant *losing ground less rapidly* on the treadmill of "stagflation." Quote from Lillian B. Rubin, *Families on the Fault Line: America's Working Class Speaks About the Family, the Economy, Race, and Ethnicity* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 112.

[67] On the ways that the traditional family imposed pressure on men, see Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1983).

The results showed up in the increasing public awareness of "personal distress," domestic violence, and in divorce statistics.[68] It wasn't that men were unappreciative of the contribution that their working wives made to the family finances. A focus-group survey conducted on men in Macomb County in the mid-1980s revealed that (at least in the focus group setting) most men supported women's right to equal pay for equal work. When asked about sex discrimination on the job, the responses displayed an "extraordinary sensitivity on women's issues," in the opinion of the pollsters. One respondent declared:

> The working women have come a long way in this country. But I think they have a long way to go yet. There is still a lot of problems there. . . Men don't respect positions women hold, as far as in the working wages. The women might get $5.00 per hour and the guy doing the same thing might be getting $6.00 or $7.00 per hour.

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[68] Governor's Milliken's staff in the summer of 1980 gathered research on "unemployment and personal distress"; see "Background Information for Governor's Briefing on Unemployment and Personal Distress, June 11, 1980," in William Milliken Collection, Box 769, "Unemployment and Stress" Folder, Bentley Library. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find reliable historical data on domestic violence for Macomb County. The Warren Police Department did not use a separate category for domestic violence complaints in the early years, nor did the Michigan State Police. Unrecorded interview with Warren Police Sgt. Gallivan, 5 June 1997; unrecorded interview with Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga, 5 June 1997. Suzanna Stempowski, who works at "Turning Point," a shelter for battered women in Macomb County, cautions against explaining domestic violence purely as a reaction to economic hard times: "[W]hen we look at the economy we find, even now during better times, that domestic violence is still on the rise. So that tells us that it really has nothing to do with the economy. . . The primary cause [of domestic violence] is power and control." Suzanna Stempowski, interview by author, tape recording, 29 May 1997. Notwithstanding this well-taken caution against economic determinism, the author believes that the recession did subject the family to severe stress during these years, although it was not only source of stress. Two sociological studies, both of which describe the complex impact of economic recession on families are: Lillian B. Rubin, *Families on the Fault Line*, (cited above) and Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in the Late Twentieth Century America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). See Governor Milliken's press release of July 11, 1978 announcing the signing of four bills into law dealing with domestic violence. The bills expanded the arrest authority of police, even without warrant, when they have a reasonable cause to believe that domestic violence is being committed. "Executive Office, July 11, 1978, For Immediate Release," in William Milliken Collection, Box 1222, Folder "Domestic Violence," Bentley Library.

> They're not on the same wage scale. I think that if the woman is doing the same job that a man is they are both doing the same job, she should be entitled to the same wage . . .[69]

Equal pay for equal work was only part of the problem, however. When women got jobs, they found themselves not only under-paid, but also "sped up," as their domestic responsibilities were tallied on top of their work responsibilities. One Macomb County NOW activist notes, "As women have entered the workforce, the husbands, unfortunately, haven't picked up their fair share, once they walk in the door. . . So the women are trying to juggle a lot more hours between work and home." In short, women's new roles required a change in men's roles. The point of friction often involved renegotiating housework responsibilities. Although husbands may have appreciated their wives' contribution to the family income, many of them still expected that their "easy chair" prerogatives in the family would remain undisturbed. One scholar observed, "Many family conflicts associated with the increased involvement of wives in the workplace stem less from adoption of new behaviors and new values than from refusal to adjust traditional expectations to new realities." According to another feminist scholar, "[W]hat seems like a simple trade-off – women using their own wages to purchase the ready-to-eat or ready-to-wear commodities they no longer produce at home – in fact erodes men's domestic power and authority over them."[70]

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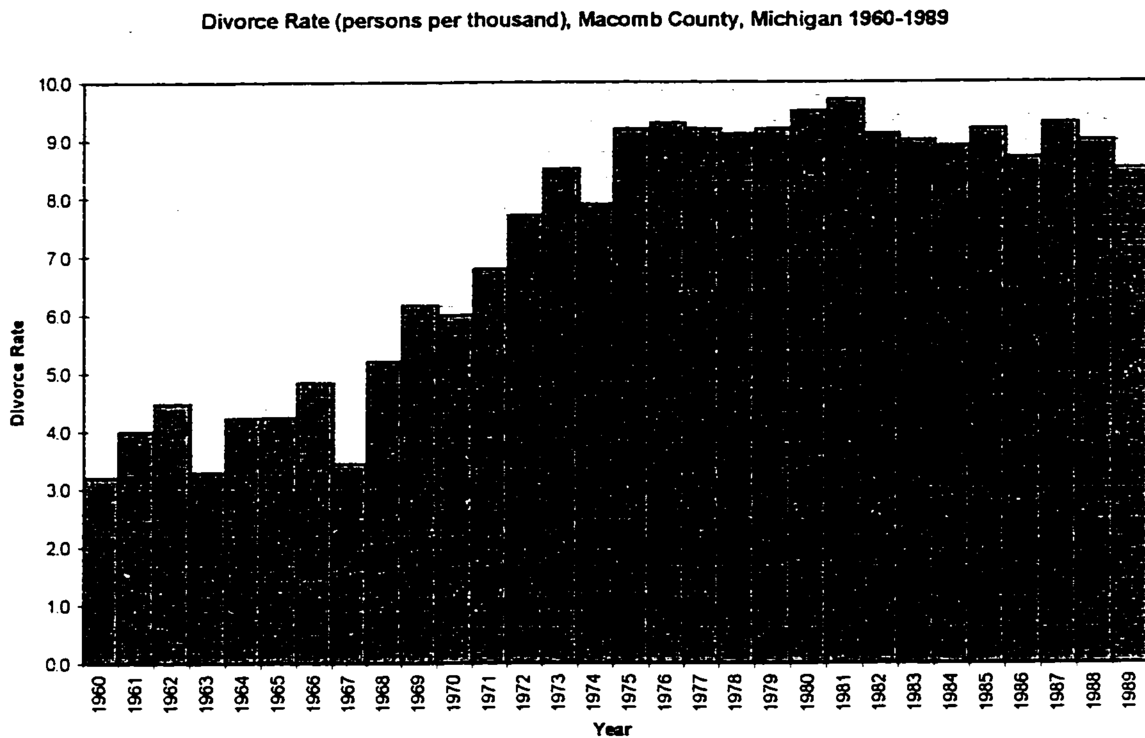
[69] Stanley Greenberg, "Report on Democratic Defection," prepared for the Michigan House Democratic Campaign Committee, April 15, 1985, 31-32.

[70] Nancy Duemling, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 2 June 1997. Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 280-281. Quote on the new "trade-off" from Alice Kessler-Harris and Karen Brodkin Sacks, "The Demise of Domesticity in America," in Lourdes Benería and Catharine R. Stimpson, *Women, Households, and the Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 69.

Families splintered under the pressure of changing social norms concerning marriage and divorce. Warren's rate of divorced individuals per thousand population rose by 165 percent between 1960 and 1989. The biggest increase (58 percent increase) occurred in the decade between 1970 and 1980. The high point, once again, was the recession-plagued late 1970s, early 1980s. After that, the divorce rate seems to have

Chart 5.4[71]



dropped off a bit and stabilized. The 1970 passage of Michigan's "No Fault" divorce law may also have compounded the disruptive effects of economic instability on the family.

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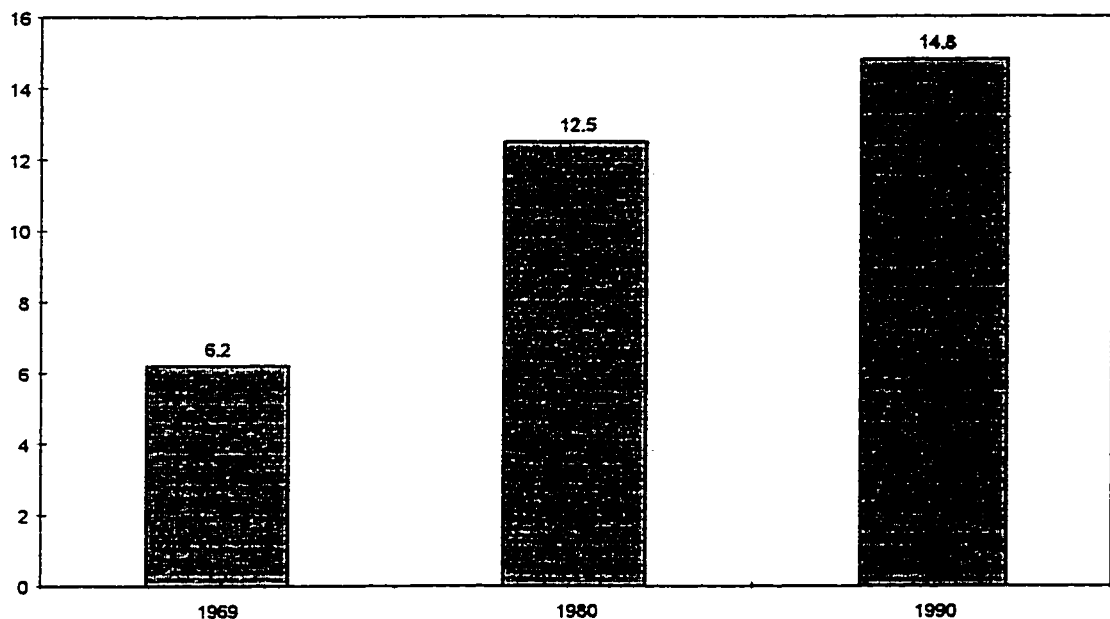
[71] This data comes from the Office of the State Registrar and Division of Health Statistics, Community Public Health Agency, Department of Community Health, Lansing, Michigan.

Like the families in Judith Stacey's study of recession-era Silicon Valley, family life in Warren was increasingly fluid and "recombinant," seeking new ways of coming together on a different basis than that of the traditional family. The necessity of moving beyond the traditional family is clear from the evidence of what actually happened in Warren. The Census record indicates that, during this recession at least, "the man of the house" was beginning to become redundant. Female-headed households became more common in Warren, rising by 139 percent from 6.2 percent to 14.8 percent between 1969

Chart 5.5[72]



[72] *1970 U.S. Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan,* Table 90; *1980 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan, Section 1:* Table P-1; *1990 Census of Population: Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan, Section 1:* Table 170. In order to control for the increase in female-headed families as a result of widowhood in an aging population, we use the census category of "female householder, no husband present, with own children under 18 years."

and 1990.[73]

Some feminist scholars argue that the changes benefited women. Heidi Hartmann asserts that "these changes [were] largely positive for women because they contribute to women's increased autonomy from men and their increased economic independence, whether or not they live with men. . . These changes probably raise women's own standards of living. . ." Granting this, the fact remained that, whether inside or outside of the traditional family, women entering the workforce had to cope with special problems that the recession made worse. Women's role as mother, for instance, often left them the task of arranging day-care for their children while they worked. That day-care for children evolved in this country as a service industry in the private sector rather than as a government program or an on-site employee benefit meant that women constantly had to question the economic logic of taking jobs outside the home. They had to calculate how much money they were actually bringing home, after subtracting the cost of day-care. Depending as they did on tuition for operating capital, the centers often could scarcely afford to pay their employees much above the minimum wage. Thus, even though day-care centers were subject to state regulation, mothers worried about the quality of care that centers were providing.[74]

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[73] Stacey, *Brave New Families*, 16-19.

[74] Heidi I. Hartmann, "Changes in Women's Economic and Family Roles in Post-World War II United States," in Benería and Stimpson, *Women, Households, and the Economy*, 45. For a feminist economist's treatment of this problem, see Nancy Folbre, *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint* (London: Routledge, 1994).

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In Macomb County, the women's movement grew out of the needs of working women. The main women's group was the National Organization for Women (NOW). Modeled on the NAACP as an umbrella-group for supporters of feminism, NOW followed the publication of *The Feminist Mystique* by Betty Friedan in 1963. Carol King, who later led the Macomb County NOW chapter, recalls the first meeting that she attended in the fall of 1972. The women in the chapter were from blue collar working class backgrounds as well as from professional backgrounds. Several were homemakers. King soon learned that to be a feminist in Macomb County meant having to defend the movement from attacks by conservative critics. At her first meeting King witnessed a confrontation with anti-feminists:

> The meeting was held in the Grace Episcopal Church in Mt. Clemens. . . [but it] had been infiltrated by another group [which called itself] HOW (Happiness of Womenhood), who were opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. The NOW people had a speaker on the Equal Rights Amendment . . . but the HOW people kept asking what I thought were very bizarre questions for feminists to ask, like the issue of unisex toilets.[75]

In spite of the harassment by the anti-feminist women, King went to a second NOW meeting and was appointed to lead the abortion rights task force. The Macomb

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[75] For a brief history of Detroit area NOW, see "Detroit Chapter of NOW," in Joan Israel Collection, Box 4, Folder 4.1, ALUA. For the early days of NOW nationally, see Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 49-68. Carol King, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 June 1997. On HOW, see "Observations of a HOW Meeting," a report of a HOW meeting held in Lincoln Park, Michigan in November 1973 and infiltrated by Loretta Moore, head of the Down-river Chapter of NOW, in Harriet Alpern Collection, Box 1, Folder 1-12, ALUA. Another HOW disruption of a NOW meeting took place in Sterling Heights in the summer of 1974. "Anti-feminists disrupt NOW meeting," *The Macomb Daily*, 16 Augusts 1974.

chapter addressed many issues, including support for the Equal Rights Amendment, the struggle for pay equity and against sexual harassment on the job, demands for protection from domestic violence and for child-care for the children of working women, and, prior to *Roe v. Wade*, the campaign to reform laws prohibiting abortion. Some of these issues, like domestic violence and sexual harassment on the job, only gradually attracted widespread attention. Others, like equal pay for equal work, had been on the agenda at least since the Second World War. Some, like day-care, seemed distant goals, as women went ahead and made the necessary arrangements on an individual basis. Others, like the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion, evoked passionate advocacy on both sides. Together, they described a set of overlapping cultural and ideological confrontations between the traditional, religious, and conservative elements in Macomb County and the feminist movement.[76]

Never numerically large,[77] the women's movement in Macomb County

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[76] On the history of sex discrimination in the auto plants, see Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) and Nancy Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*. On the emergence of the "battered woman" issue in the Detroit metropolitan area, see a report on the first meeting of the Battered Woman's Network held at the Women's Justice Center in Detroit in early February, 1977, in the Joyce Hennessee Collection, Box 4, Folder 4-17, ALUA. For a 1977 conference in downtown Detroit concerning violence against women, see NOW Down-river Collection, Box 24, Folder 24-11, ALUA; other material on the "Tri-County Coalition Against Domestic Violence," in Joyce Hennessee Collection, Box 4, Folders 4-18 and 4-19. On the Coalition of Labor Union Women, see ibid., Box 1, Folder 1-21. On the issue of day-care for children of mothers at work, see "Resume of Proceedings: Industrial Day Care Meeting July 10, 1972," as well as several other papers, in Joan Israel Collection, Box 1, Folder 1-9, ALUA.

[77] Nancy Duemling estimates that the Macomb County NOW chapter peaked at 250-275 members in the early 1980s, in the midst of the drive to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Nancy Duemling, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 2 June 1997. Darlene Kaltz confirms that the number of members exceeded 200 during the ERA

included organizations devoted to women's special needs. There was the Shelter, a crisis intervention and pregnancy counseling center in Warren; the East Side Women for Peace, an organization of antiwar women, most of whom were housewives; the Women's Resource Center (also known as the "Displaced Home-makers Project" of Macomb County Community College); "Turning Point," a shelter in Mt. Clemens for battered women, as well as a cooperative child-care center in Mt. Clemens, which was founded by liberal teachers at Macomb County Community College. The college appears to have been a rallying point for the Macomb County women's movement, just as it was for the antiwar movement. The Macomb County women's movement was also influenced by the women's movement in Detroit which was sensitized to racial, as well as gender, discrimination and was influenced by radical feminism.[78]

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drive. She notes that when the drive failed, the chapter lost some its "single issue" ERA supporters. Darlene Kaltz, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 4 June 1997.

[78] On the Detroit and the Macomb County NOW chapters, tape recorded telephone interviews by author with Darlene Kaltz, 4 June 1997; Joanne Kloss, 2 June 1997; Barbara Palmer, 29 May 1997; Nancy Duemling, 2 June 1997. Margaret Kaminski, interview by author, tape recording, 5 June 1997, Detroit. Also see, "Summary of Survey Findings re NOW Members As of January, 1973," in Joan Israel Collection, Box 4, Folder 4-4, ALUA. For the Women's Resource Center at Macomb County Community College, see "Kaleidoscope: Concerns of Women in the 70's," a leaflet for a conference held on November 9, 1974, Detroit Feminist Women's Health Center collection, Box 6, folder 6-4, ALUA. On the Women's Resource Center, newsletter material in the Joyce Hennessee Collection, Box 3, Folder 3-33, ALUA; for a conference protesting the "Economic Down-turn in Michigan," held at Macomb County Community College and sponsored by the "Displaced Homemakers Project," see NOW, Down-River Chapter Collection, Box 30, Folder 30-35, ALUA. Also, Anne Lilla, interview by author, tape recording, 16 July 1997, Berkeley, Michigan. On the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), tape recorded telephone interview by author with Joann Kloss, 2 June 1997 and Ethel Schwartz, 30 May 1997. On Shelter, Inc., see the Detroit Feminist Women's Health Center Collection, Box 10, Folder 10-1, ALUA. On domestic abuse and the Macomb County battered women's movement, Suzanna Stempowski, interview by author, tape recording, 29 May 1997, Mt. Clemens. On the Pied Piper Child Care Center and the Women's Resource Center of Macomb Community College, Jim Jacobs, telephone interview, tape recording, 24 June

One Macomb County NOW leader remembers that, during the mid- to late-1970s, the issues that attracted women to NOW involved job discrimination and equal pay for equal work. As the economy faltered, job discrimination became even more important. For, although the recession exacerbated other problems, like domestic abuse, "for many women, it also led to families breaking up, and so women became even more dependent on their jobs." Another NOW leader remembers that, although the issues shifted over time, even when they were dealing with questions of gay and lesbian rights, the Macomb County women's movement was never very far removed from concern over the conditions of employment. "When I first became active [in 1981], the focus was more on the Equal Rights Amendment, and on economic issues, but there was also a concern with lesbian and gay issues. . . We had members within the NOW chapter [who were lesbian] and this was important for them. . . They were mainly concerned with equal access to employment – like, should you be allowed to teach school if you're gay." The chapter organized support for the 1976 Elliott-Larsen Act in the Michigan legislature, an act which prohibited employment discrimination.[79]

The fact that many of the most active women in Macomb Count NOW were raising their own families or pursuing full-time careers limited the size of the group. In addition, efforts to expand the women's movement and to recruit members into NOW suffered from the fact that NOW did not have access to churches or schools. One

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1997. On the general character of Detroit feminism compared to New York City, Miriam Frank, interview by author, tape recording, 25 July 1997, Detroit, Michigan.

[79] Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, 1976, PA 453. Quotes from Darlene Kaltz, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 4 June 1997; Nancy Duemling, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 6 June 1997.

activist remarked:

> We do not have a ready-made constituency. . . We cannot recruit through a church or through schools. So we don't have a way to draw people in, the way that a lot of other organizations do. . . I have yet to find a church willing to have a NOW Sunday, but there are a lot of churches out there that have Right to Life Sunday. So it's easier for [the Right to Lifers] to inflate their numbers . . . but a lot of those members may just contribute once a year to the cause, whereas we have to be a little more active in recruitment. [80]

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The abortion issue played a significant part in the debate between Macomb County liberals and conservatives in the 1970s. For the conservatives, as we shall see, abortion initially signified the intrusion of government into private matters, though they later embraced the State as a means to prohibit abortion. For feminists, abortion symbolized the freedom suddenly available to women. Increased knowledge and availability of different means of contraception had already gone part of the way in de-linking sexual activity and parenthood. Contraception, however, sometimes failed and, in any case, entailed health risks. Because contraceptive precaution usually fell to women, it was mainly women who ran these risks. In any case, women – especially poor women – continued to have unintended pregnancies. This worry, balanced against women's need to work, underscored for liberal feminists the need for social reforms like abortion to allow women to participate in careers or in the wage labor market. For the (mostly) young women who were having the abortions, however, the motivation was far more personal. One activist remembered, "It was a way to avoid shame for young women. . . . Pregnancy

[80]Nancy Duemling telephone interview by author, tape recording, 2 June 1997. Grace Episcopal Church in Mt. Clemens, which hosted NOW meetings during the 1970s, appears to have been an exception to the hesitancy of the religious community to address feminism. Darlene Kaltz, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 4 June 1997.

could alter futures – limit futures – and cause shame."[81]

The Catholic Church and the feminist movement offered different ways to alleviate these feelings of guilt and shame. Darlene Kaltz, former President of Macomb County NOW, remembers that most of the chapter's members came from Catholic backgrounds, so "they were very aware of the Church and the various issues that the Church got into, as far as their patriarchal society and where they stood on women and the way women were treated in the world." On the abortion question, most of these Catholic NOW members were pro-choice. "That put them at odds with the Church." But they were already at odds with the Church over contraception, and over internal questions involving women's role in the Church.[82]

In Michigan, the abortion controversy began in 1971 with a state-wide advisory referendum (Proposal B) organized by liberal abortion law reformers. That year, the Michigan Abortion Referendum Committee collected 250,000 signatures to place the issue on the 1972 general election ballot. Approval would prompt the state legislature to pass a law liberalizing access to abortions, following the lead of other states, like New York and California. Although September polls indicated that 58 percent of Michigan voters favored the reform, which also had the support of the medical establishment and the editorial endorsement of the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*, it ran into

[81] Anne Lilla, written communication with author, September 1997. For a discussion of these matters, see Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice: The State, Sexuality and Reproductive Freedom* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), 168-197, 141-161.

[82] Darlene Kaltz, telephone interview by author tape recording, 4 June 1997.

opposition from the Catholic Church and conservative Protestant churches.[83]

By encouraging the formation of local anti-abortion committees against the referendum, the Michigan Catholic Conference and the Christian Reformed Church in western Michigan helped to lay the basis for a statewide mass movement against abortion reform. One anti-abortion group, People Taking Action Against Abortion, coalesced as early as 1970. It participated in a "Congress for the Unborn" in April 1971 in downtown Detroit and raised the alarm over Proposal B. An anti-abortion umbrella group, the Voice of the Unborn, coordinated the campaign against Proposal B. Devout Catholics on the east side of Detroit and in Macomb County set up phone trees, arranged mass mailings, and organized fund-raising events. They established resource centers stocked with right-to-life literature.[84]

The tide began to turn against abortion in the final weeks before the referendum. The Voice of the Unborn had hired a Detroit-based advertising agency which produced two campaigns: one aimed at black audiences and another at "lower income and ethnic white voters." Three weeks before the vote, they bought television time and began running commercials picturing fetuses. Statewide, the voters rejected abortion reform, with 61 percent voting against the referendum. Only in Oakland and Washtenaw counties

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[83] These paragraphs rely on Robert N. Karrer, "The Formation of Michigan's Anti-abortion Movement 1967-1974," *Michigan Historical Review* 22:1 (Spring 1996), 67-107. On the promotion of Proposal B, see brochure "Vote Yes" of the Michigan Abortion Referendum Committee, in Loretta Moore Collection, Box 21, Folder 21, ALUA; also, Governor William Milliken's press release statement favoring a change in the abortion laws, "Executive Office March 17, 1970," William Milliken Collection, Box 1219, Folder "Abortion 1973-1981," Bentley Library.

[84] Karrer, "Michigan's Anti-abortion Movement," 78, 89. Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores.

(containing affluent or university populations) did it pass. The "no" vote in Wayne County was 60 percent. Warren voted 65.2 percent against abortion reform.[85]

One early organizer of People Taking Action Against Abortion in Macomb County remembers the group as "mostly a working class of people, but it was a mixture" including small business and professional people, men and women, and, she noted, even agnostics and atheists. Like the cross-district busing controversy or the 1970 HUD referendum, the bulk of the labor on the phone trees and the mailings was done by women. The men, mostly lawyers or doctors, volunteered as speakers against abortion. The titular leadership of Macomb County anti-abortion groups alternated between men and women.[86]

In addition to the organizing work done by the anti-abortion activists, the defeat of Proposal B may have owed something to the "spill-over" effect from the other liberal defeats in the 1972 general election. The popularity of the now-stricken George Wallace, the anxiety of the busing issue, and the lopsided contest between Nixon and McGovern lent momentum to the anti-abortion movement. In any case, a conservative grass-roots movement had turned back the abortion movement, a feat that many had written off as impossible a few months earlier. The campaign against Proposal B drew new people into the conservative protest movement.

Having won the contest over Proposal B, the anti-abortion organizers reacted with disbelief and anger six weeks later when the U.S. Supreme Court rendered the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. This Supreme Court ruling seemed to many anti-

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[85] Karrer. "The Formation of Michigan's Anti-abortion Movement," 92-95.

[86] Ibid.; Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores; .Joseph Zanglin, interview by author, tape recording, 26 June 1997, Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

abortion activists to be cruel and arrogant in flaunting the expressed will of the electorate. It reminded them of the Chicago HUD office's pressure to enact open housing or Judge Roth's rulings on cross-district busing. Like the earlier controversies, the source of the threat seemed to be a liberal elite not subject to election, impeachment, or recall. And like these earlier controversies, the anti-abortion forces responded with a local, tenacious, grass-roots organizing campaign.[87]

The fact that the anti-abortion forces set out to organize popular resistance to a matter that had already been decided by the U.S. Supreme Court revealed, incidentally, their belief in the viability of the democratic process.[88] One anti-abortion organizer remembered, "[after the referendum's rejection] we were all satisfied, and we thought, 'Well, that's the end of that, we succeeded' . . . and then, eight weeks or so later the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on *Roe v. Wade* and destroyed all our work and nullified all the criminal abortion statutes throughout the country." Another organizer recalls, "After recuperating from the shock [of the Supreme Court opinion], we regrouped and became

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[87] Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores, Michigan; Imelda Zeoli, interview by author, tape recording, Michigan, 11 June 1997, St. Clair Shores; Joseph Zanglin, interview by author, tape recording, 26 June 1997, Grosse Pointe, Michigan; Harvey Dean, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997.

[88] Even today, the Right to Life resource center in Macomb County has the feel of a community organizing operation. The office, if not exactly bustling, has a steady trickle of volunteers coming in to pick up literature. A quarter century after *Roe v. Wade*, Macomb County Right to Life has affiliate chapters in St. Clair Shores, Warren-Centerline, Utica-Rochester, Fraser, and Mt. Clemens. In contrast, the Abortion Rights movement in Macomb County has no active office and is not engaged in organizing. For observations of a similar dynamic in a different state, see Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 151-157.

more of a coalition, rather than individual groups."[89]

Most of the people who became active in the anti-abortion movement in Macomb County did so out of religious conviction or because of a personal experience in their own lives. Sometimes the issue involved either childbirth or the inability to have a child. Wayne County Circuit Judge James Ryan, whose children were all adopted, started a group of lawyers who could be called upon to speak against the abortion reform referendum, Proposal B. Another recruit to the anti-abortion cause was a woman who had just given birth to her fifth child in 1973. She related:

> When my last child was born, he had to be put into the neo-natal intensive care unit. . . They put him in an incubator along with other little babies who were mostly premature. I would go down to the nursery and look at him in with these little tiny premature babies. . . So, when I came home from the hospital, my sister came over to help me. And a few days later she said, "Did you hear the news? The Supreme Court legalized abortion up to six months" . . . And I said, "Oh, my God, that's horrible! They're killing these babies that are completely functional, they're just too small!"[90]

On the other hand, sometimes a person was drawn into the anti-abortion movement by the dispassionate realization that the only way to fight for control over this very personal issue was through political involvement. One veteran organizer concluded that, since the government was already involved in the issue, the best defense against abortion was to organize politically:

> I think that most of the people thought that the government should have stayed out of the issue, and there are a lot of people who think that the issue should be left up to . . . the doctor and the patient, but once the government did get involved, you are no

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[89] Joseph Zanglin, interview by author, tape recording, 26 June 1997, Grosse Pointe, Michigan; Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

[90] Joseph Zanglin, interview by author, tape recording, 26 June 1997, Grosse Park, Michigan. Imelda Zeoli, interview by author, tape recording, 11 June 1997, St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

> longer dealing with two people, you're dealing with the system. Since it only can be reversed by the Supreme Court, . . we have to be involved in politics and we have to be involved in government.[91]

Far from settling the issue, the *Roe v. Wade* decision signaled the expansion of the anti-abortion crusade in Macomb County. As had happened during the long waiting period when the cross-district busing case made its way through the court system, the Right to Life movement shifted from the crisis mode that had characterized the Proposal B struggle to a protracted campaign against abortion. From the beginning, the anti-abortion movement focused on voter education. As time went on, their literature and speakers described in increasingly graphic detail the abortion procedure.

With the active support of the Catholic Church and the conservative Protestant churches, Michigan Right to Life[92] joined in the national campaign to reverse *Roe v. Wade*, concentrating first on constitutional amendment or, later, on legislation. The constitutional amendment approach would have stipulated the "personhood" of the fetus and invoked the protection of legal "persons" under the 14th Amendment. But constitutional amendments are major efforts that tend to bog down, as both the Right to Life supporters and the pro-Equal Rights Amendment campaigners were to find out. Eventually, the anti-abortion strategy shifted to passing laws to restrict the availability of

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[91] Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997 St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

[92] The Right to Life forces in Michigan have gone through a number of name changes over the years. The campaign against Proposal B in 1972 was conducted mainly by the Voice of the Unborn. After the *Roe v. Wade* decision, in 1973, the Voice of the Unborn became Michigan Citizens for Life, which changed its name to Right to Life of Michigan in 1979.

abortion.[93]

In the 1970s and 1980s, the abortion issue generated an extraordinary debate in which the opposing sides were supremely confident of their positions. The reason, as Kristin Luker has written in her study of the abortion controversy in California, is that the "world views" of the pro-choice and pro-life activists reflected the essential split between liberal and conservative ideology. Luker found that the pro-choice activists tended to be self-confident and well-educated women already embarked on careers outside the home. Their lives centered on their professions. They stressed the similarity of men and women and supported the right of women to compete with men for jobs and promotions. They were critical of the family in its patriarchal form, though they were not of one mind concerning how they wanted to change it. Their philosophical beliefs tended to be secular and scientific, rather than religious. They valued sexual relationships, but would not part with their autonomy and resisted externally imposed sexual morality. Compared to pro-life supporters, they tended to prefer a relative disjunction between sexuality and other aspects of their lives.[94]

The pro-life supporters in California, according to Luker, were just the opposite. They tended to be less well-educated and were more likely to be housewives, a vocation they vehemently defended. They celebrated the traditional family and religious values. They deplored sex outside the family. They considered this disjunction, and the sexual

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[93] Joseph Zanglin, interview by author, tape recording, 26 June 1997, Grosse Pointe, Michigan. On the role of the churches in the anti-abortion movement, see Petchesky, *Abortion*, 252-262. For a more detailed scenario of the constitutional amendment approach, see Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, 234, 239-240.

[94] Ibid., 175-191.

revolution in general, to be socially irresponsible. They valued chastity and believed that sex between husband and wife inside the marriage was chaste. They viewed men and women as essentially different from one another, inhabiting separate spheres of competence. Their views of sexuality tended to invest it with deep human significance, as a sacrament of life and of the family. The Catholics among them revered the teachings of the Church and accepted the need for the church to teach sexual morality. On the other hand, they were suspicious of moral instruction in public schools, especially in the area of sex education.[95]

The abortion controversy in Macomb County disclosed conservative and liberal world views that recall Luker's typology of the abortion rights controversy in California. Although Macomb Right to Life proclaimed itself a non-partisan "single issue movement," there were political implications to its opposition to abortion. Part of its teaching on abortion is rooted in the debate over the point at which life begins. One critic calls this "biological reductionism" and there is nothing new that the Macomb County Right to Life chapters have brought forth on this subject. According to its feminist critics, this argument begins with a definition of fetal life and ends with patriarchal family values intact.[96] Another part of its teaching on abortion is an intriguing foray into liberal – or at least moderate – climes. This is the doctrine, popularized more recently[97] by Cardinal

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[95] Ibid., 158-175, 186-191.

[96] Petchesky, *Abortion*, 338-342.

[97] The question of how recently this doctrine was elaborated is of some importance. One feminist observer believes that the "culture of death" argument came much later than the period under study in this dissertation. A Right to Life organizer agrees that its full elaboration did not take place until more recently through the teachings of figures such as Pope John Paul II and the late Cardinal Bernardin. But, in his view, the

Bernardin, that abortion is merely a symptom of a larger social problem of violence and disrespect for human life. This doctrine, which takes root among more liberal audiences, views society as increasingly brutal and amoral. This coarseness and brutality is perfectly expressed in the decision of a pregnant woman to "get rid of the problem" by having an abortion. If abortion is "no big deal," as one Macomb County activist said, the reason is that life has already been discounted. Another anti-abortion activist used the example of the Vietnam war to declare that, once the public was exposed to the violence of abortion, its support would decline. "[J]ust like the Vietnam war, when [the media] started finally showing the people at home how barbaric things were and how people were getting slaughtered . . . the public said, 'Hey, that's enough.'"[98]

Another Right to Life activist in Warren wistfully remembered the early anti-abortion movement as something that moved a generation of young people who were also concerned about the war in Vietnam and other expressions of what the youth movement called "the death culture." With a note of resignation, this organizer observed the increasing secularization of modern society, and the failure to teach the young to value life above convenience:

> The Roman Catholic attachment to that issue (the Right to Life issue) can be graphed. People who are now over forty are still strongly pro-life, while those under forty are just like everybody else in the society: they're indifferent. And, of course, that's a problem that the Church is faced with: you see it in the declining attendance at Mass. It's what the Pope calls "the culture of death." And the culture of death has swept over Macomb County just as it has everywhere else.[99]

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teaching was immanent in the anti-abortion movement of the time. Harvey Dean, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1998.

[98] Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores. Gino Vitale, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 June 1997.

[99] Harvey Dean, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997.

Even if the Catholic Church was ceding some ground to the secular world in the era of women's liberation, it was still a powerful force in the 1970s in Macomb County. The power of the Church in shaping women's consciousness is confirmed by one Detroit feminist, who helped to organize and taught in the women's studies program in Wayne County Community College in the early 1970s. She remembers that Appalachian white women in the down-river cities of Wyandotte and Taylor were far more receptive to feminism (and less burdened by guilt) than white women in the Catholic neighborhoods on the east side of Detroit:

> In the 1970s the culture of Down-River was a lot less Polish Catholic than Northeast Detroit and a whole lot more white Southern. I think that is why the Down-River women were a lot more feisty about women's rights – they were from migrants-through-the-USA stock, rather than first or second generation Catholic European, so those traditional patriarchal cultural patterns were not as strong in their characters. There hadn't been an entire linguistic displacement in their families two generations ago, and there is a tradition from the South of female independence and strength that probably was received by the 1970s generation as a role model for what feminism had to say.[100]

As a policy question, abortion involved more than the ideological struggle between patriarchy and feminism. It also involved the expenditure of public funds. During the years following *Roe v. Wade*, the public was divided on federal funding for abortion. An NBC News poll conducted in the summer of 1977 found that, while 59 percent of the respondents supported women's rights to abortion on demand and though two-thirds

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[100] Miriam Frank, letter to author, 7 August 1997. This is not to discount the strength of character of women of Polish extraction. It does suggest that working-class Polish Catholic culture, rooted in the matrix of family and Church, is more resistant to feminist influence and especially repugnant to abortion. For an ethnographic view which emphasizes the strong role that women played in the Polish family on the east side of Detroit in the early 1970s, see Wrobel, *Our Way*, 73-77.

favored federal programs to help poor women pay for the cost of pregnancy, a plurality of those polled (47 percent) opposed the use of federal funds to pay the cost of abortion for poor women. Whether or not this involved a negative identification of welfare moms with their hands out for more federal funding, a large portion of the poll sample clearly felt that the cost of welfare abortions should be paid by the recipient rather than by the tax payer. So, although they supported abortion rights, the respondents in the survey seemed to balk at making abortion a federal entitlement program for the poor.[101]

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What effects did the abortion debate have on voters in Warren? Some observers believe that abortion turned out to be a "gender gap" issue in which women supported the Democratic Party in greater numbers than men, because a higher proportion of women supported reproductive rights. Others think that the abortion controversy cut voters loose from the Democratic Party, because it drove a wedge between the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party.[102]

For a gender gap to come into play, women have to vote. What was women's voter participation rate in Warren during these years? There is evidence that women's participation as voters in Warren exceeded that of men in the 1980s, the point when national data indicate the emergence of a gender gap. Beginning in 1979, the Warren City

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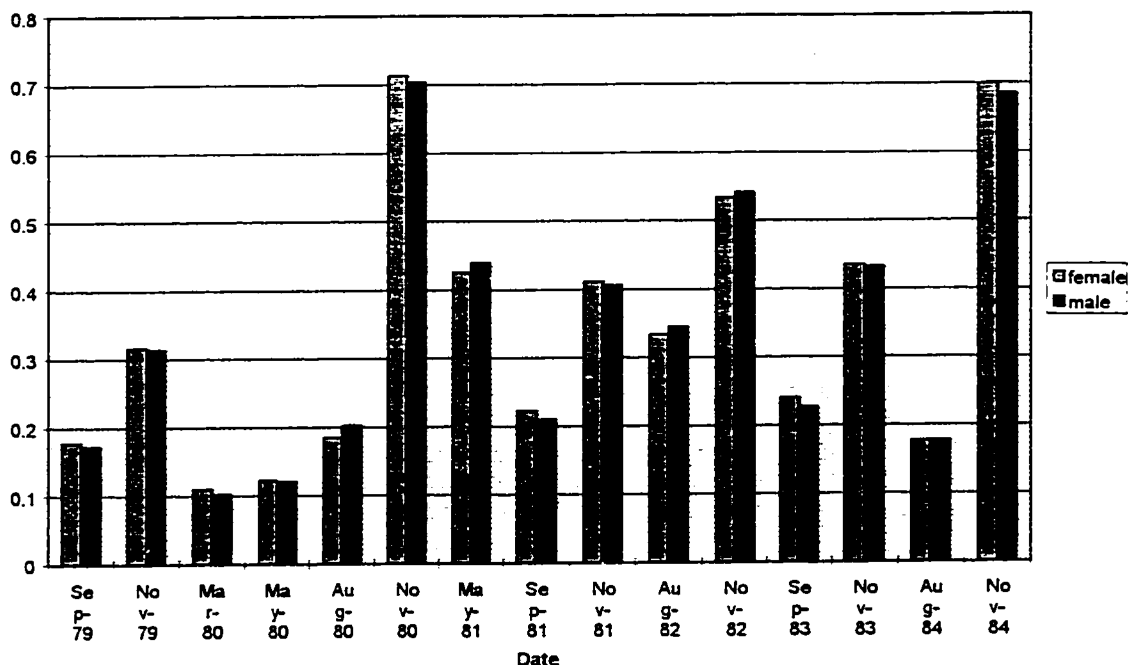
[101] NBC News Poll #77, 4 August 1977, in William Milliken Collection, Box 1219, "Abortion 1973-1981" Folder, Bentley Library.

[102] On the phrase "gender gap," Kathy Bonk, "The Selling of the 'Gender Gap': The Role of Organized Feminism," in Carol M. Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988), 82-101.

Chart 5.6[103]



Clerk's office kept records of voter participation by gender. Chart 5.6 shows the close tracking between the voter participation rates of males and females from 1979 through 1984. Women had a higher voter participation rate in Warren in ten of the fifteen elections during these years. Although we know that women were voting, we have little direct evidence concerning their political party preferences, compared to men. Attempting to quantify the "gender gap" in Macomb County runs up against the simple, but intractable problem that men and women anonymously cast their votes in the same ballot box.[104]

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[103] *Summary of Voter Participation by Gender, Warren, Michigan, 1979-1996*, Office of the City Clerk, Warren, Michigan, n.d..

[104] According to local political observers, precinct exit polling was practically unheard of in Macomb County during these years. Karl Mark Pall, interview by author, tape recording, 17 June 1997, Detroit, Michigan. On the more general political and methodological problems of charting the "gender gap," see Carol M. Mueller, "The

On the national level, researchers began noticing a gender gap in the early 1980s. During these years, feminist leaders attempted to mobilize the women's vote for a series of campaigns. One was the unsuccessful "count-down" to the deadline (in June 1982) for getting enough states to ratify the Equal Rights' Amendment (ERA). A second was the vice presidential candidacy of Geraldine Ferraro (in the election of 1984). Finally, researchers suggest that the cut-backs in domestic welfare spending and the increased military spending during the Reagan Administration contributed to the gender gap. These national studies noted that the size of the gender gap varied with the issue. On some issues there was little difference between men and women's voting behavior. In white, suburban communities these might include "fear" issues linked to race.[105] On the other hand, in the statewide nuclear freeze referendum of 1982 (which Warren favored by about 61 percent), we would expect to find a gender gap, with women supporting the measure more strongly than men.[106] It may be that women and men also responded differently to personality characteristics of different candidates for election.[107]

Empowerment of Women: Polling and the Women's Voting Bloc," in Carol M. Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap*, 27-30.

[105] Although they occurred a decade earlier, the 1970 HUD referendum on open housing in Warren and the 1972 cross-district busing referendum in Macomb County fall into this category. This suggests an hypothesis that polarization around race issues in the late 1960s and early 1970s may have obstructed the emergence of a gender gap.

[106] Since nuclear war may be seen as the ultimate unwanted intrusion of the State on people's lives, the results of this advisory referendum do not contradict the characterization of Warren as a conservative, insular, home-rule community.

[107] For an older but useful survey of women's national voting behavior since the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, see Ethel Klein, *Gender Politics: From Consciousness to Mass Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 140-164. Klein concludes that a feminist vote (concerned with assuring women's equality with men) emerged in 1972 and that, by 1980, it had evolved into a women's vote (or gender gap)

Carmella Sabaugh, Macomb County Clerk since 1992, noticed a gender gap developing over the years. In her view, women voters responded more favorably than men to "caring" issues, such as programs for disadvantaged members of society. Although some of the gender gap resulted from women's increased participation in the workforce, this political awakening also reached into the ranks of housewives. As recently as the late 1970s, Carmella Sabaugh discerned a certain reticence among women who were not in the public workforce. She believes that this attitude was linked to the belief among some housewives that, since they worked in the home, they didn't have a right to a political opinion. But this political reticence was declining and Ms. Sabaugh herself, who had "paid her dues" as a housewife and was still engaged in raising five children, ran for city council as a voice for these women. She won. She recalls that when she subsequently ran for mayor of Warren, although she did not win, she attracted a higher percentage of women's votes.[108]

Marilyn Donlin, Democratic Party activist in Warren, believes that the gender gap is increasing. She remembers an earlier time when women voted the way their husbands told them to vote. They might prefer another candidate, but they would vote at the

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that went beyond specific issues of women's equality to embody the different ways that women conceived of society and politics. On Ferraro and the gender gap, see Kathleen A. Frankovic, "The Ferraro Factor: The Women's Movement, the Polls, and the Press," in Carol Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap,* 102-123. On the different ways that men and women viewed government spending on welfare programs, see Cynthia Deitch, "Sex Differences in Support for Government Spending," in Carol Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap,* 214. Deitch concludes that women favor government welfare programs more than men do, and that when the gender gap narrowed on this issue, in the early 1980s, it was because men joined women in support for these programs, rather than because women abandoned their support for these programs.

[108] Carmella Sabaugh, interview by author, tape recording, 28 January 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

direction of their husband. "In the beginning, I used to talk to these women, and I could get them to agree that a candidate was better, but they would say that they had to vote for the other one, 'because my husband's voting for him'. . . That just about floored me," she says, "because I had never heard that in Detroit much." This patriarchal influence over the wife's vote began to break down, she believes, during the war in Vietnam. "Women had their sons, you know, and they didn't want them to go. So they were against the war, while their husbands were more patriotic." Thus, the war was a gender gap issue. Then came the cross-district busing controversy, which narrowed the gender gap, because, as she notes, "they were all against busing." But the abortion controversy increased the gap again, "because women are more pro-choice." Today, she believes, women are more independent from their husbands' political tutelage. "They're out in the community, they hear other women talk. They begin to realize that they have some value. They have an opinion. . . They tend to be more oriented towards the Democratic Party."[109]

On the other hand, Carl Marlinga, Macomb County Prosecutor, believes that the abortion issue was a blow to the Democratic Party in Macomb County. For one thing, the issue reunited the Catholic Church and its membership on a conservative footing. Under Cardinal Dearden, the Detroit Archdiocese had supported the positions of the liberal wing

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[109] Marilyn Donlin, interview by author, tape recording, 30 January 1997, Warren, Michigan. Donlin's belief that economic independence brings political independence from the husband is confirmed by researchers. Political Scientist Susan J. Carroll compared men and women's national voting patterns for Ronald Reagan. She found that married homemakers economically dependent on husbands, "voted for Reagan in much the same proportions as did men," whereas "women most economically independent from men voted for Reagan in 1980 in significantly lower proportions than did men." Susan J. Carroll, "Women's Autonomy and the Gender Gap: 1980 and 1982," in Carol M. Mueller, ed., *The Politics of the Gender Gap,* 246-247.

of the Democratic Party on questions of racism or the war in Vietnam. When it came to abortion, however, the church parted ways with the liberals. One member of a Macomb County Right to Life chapter, who feels that the Cardinal was too liberal on most matters, remembers with affection Dearden's statement that "babies belong in bassinets, not buckets."[110]

Marlinga argues that, not only did the Church hierarchy break with the liberals, but the rank-and-file Macomb County Catholic supported the Church leaders' opposition to abortion. Thus, the abortion issue fractured the support base of the Democratic Party in Macomb County. Macomb County's Democrats, especially the ethnic Poles and Italians, had always "[taken] pride in their religion and in their union membership and in being members of the Democratic Party." After 1968, the party seemed to be embracing people in the anti-war movement whose patriotism was questionable. Marlinga believes that the party probably would have lived down that embarrassment; but, as it became more attuned to the concerns of the women's movement, the national and state Democratic Party leaders lined up in support of abortion rights. According to Marlinga, pro-choice planks in the state Democratic Party platform struck many Macomb County Democrats as asking them to vote for "people who really seemed to have no conscience about little babies being killed. . . It cut the legs out from under the Democratic Party. . . [For many people] this undercut every attempt to remain loyal."[111]

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[110] Imelda Zeoli, interview by author, tape recording, 11 June 1997, St. Clair Shores, Michigan. On the Catholic Church's involvement in anti-abortion politics on the national level, see Petchesky, *Abortion*, 252-254. Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, 222-223.

[111] Carl Marlinga, interview by author, tape recording, 14 August 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

After the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the abortion rights advocates practically dropped out of sight in Macomb County. With the exception of the Detroit-based Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR), which since 1975 had attempted to rally the liberal Protestant churches and to lobby the state legislature in support of abortion rights, the same thing holds for the entire Detroit metropolitan region.[112] Concluding that abortion was now a protected right, its early supporters retired the field and became a distant presence, in touch with their constituency mainly through direct-mail fundraising and lobbying through such groups as the National Abortion Rights Action League (NRAL), rather than through grass-roots organizing. According to Carol King, President of the Macomb County NOW chapter, the group turned its attention to other questions. "We were working on a 'Homemakers' Bill of Rights' at that time, and on employment discrimination. . ." The abortion question seemed to have been settled. More pressing issues presented themselves in the struggle to up-grade women in the job market during the recession.[113]

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[112] RCAR made the most consistent effort to make the public aware of the Right to Life offensive against abortion rights. Through its coordinator, Helen Howe, RCAR sought to shake the complacency and revitalize the coalition of liberal Protestant churches which had supported Proposal B in 1972. Even this group, which organized a lobbying campaign to protect abortion rights in the Michigan legislature, faded in influence in the 1980s. On RCAR, Helen Howe, interview by author, tape recording, 15 July 1997, Detroit, Michigan; papers of Helen Howe, photocopies of which are in the author's possession and also exist (in uncatalogued form) at the ALUA; Maryse Long, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 22 July 1997.

[113] Carol King, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 June 1997. This observation of the bureaucratization of the pro-choice movement is in line with much of the literature on the subject. See, Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, 196-215; Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: the Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 181-183; Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 77.

Complacency plagued abortion rights activists across the nation. As one historian of the women's movement notes, in New York state after *Roe v. Wade*, "NARAL tried to mobilize the abortion rights forces to defend what they'd won, but got little response. . . Public complacency became a chronic problem for the reproductive rights movement after 1973." The Macomb NOW chapter did not entirely let down its guard. It worked for the election of pro-choice representatives in the state legislature. It publicized the threat to abortion rights posed by laws to prohibit the use of Medicaid funds for abortion, such as the Hyde amendment, which passed in 1976, and the 1978 Supreme Court decision upholding its constitutionality. It also supported Governor Milliken's use of the power of veto to stop state legislation prohibiting the use of state funds to pay for abortion.[114]

Despite the decrease in energy expended on the abortion controversy, the women's movement had made some bitter enemies who would certainly have objected to Carol King's description of the cultural implications of abortion:

> [The abortion issue] isn't just about abortion, it's about women's sexuality and a woman's ability to enjoy her sexuality, to appreciate it. . . and to be able to take care of it if it turns out the wrong way. And it flies in the face of the patriarchy and it is clearly a contradiction and a repudiation of all the things we supposedly learned as kids: to grow up and have babies and to be submissive. . . So much of it is just a threat to what is, or was, the social order.[115]

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[114] Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 171. Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, 216. Anne Lilla, written communication with author, 18 September 1997. For Governor Milliken's vetoes of bills prohibiting the use of state funds to pay for Medicaid abortion and press releases of his pro-life critics in the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC), see memoranda from the Governor and press releases from the MCC, in the William Milliken Collection, Box 763, "Abortion" Folder, Bentley Library.

[115] Carol King, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 June 1997.

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In trying to understand the climate of political opinion in Warren in the Reagan years, the recessions of the mid-1970s and early 1980s stand out as important events. I have argued that these recessions helped to smother the youth rebellion that was unfolding in the factories. Although they came to nothing, these revolts at the workplace had the potential to extend the democratization of the workplace and of the union and to take up the question of the de-humanization of work. These issues later emerged (some would claim, in atrophied form) in the "Quality of Work-Life" discussions and experiments between the auto companies and the UAW in the 1980s. The layoffs and prolonged job loss, in any case, took much of the fight out of this generation of factory workers.[116]

The effects of recession on women were more complex. Recession brought plunging family incomes as well-paid manufacturing jobs became scarce. This pushed women into the workforce in greater numbers. This increased the level of pressure on women both at work and at home. Whether or not it reflected the sentiment of the mass of women that it claimed to speak for, the women's movement demanded a redefinition of the family and a re-negotiation of family responsibilities. The women's movement also demanded reforms in the workplace and in society as a whole. An adequate response to the feminist agenda (for maternal leave, child care, job training, pay equity, wages for housework, comparable worth; against domestic violence, etc.), would have required

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[116] On the transmutations of the concept of Quality of Work Life, James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World* (New York: Rawson Associates, 1990), 53-55; Steve Babson, ed., *Lean Work*; Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter, *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 8-14; Maryann Keller, *Rude Awakening: The Rise, Fall, and Struggle for Recovery of General Motors* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1989), 240-244.

another installment of the Great Society programs of the previous decade, with working women as the target population. Instead, some feminists argue, government policy towards both white and black working women continues to impoverish women and reinforce patriarchal control over women and children.[117]

The movement of "Displaced Homemakers" in the mid-1970s seemed to have the potential to develop into a pressure group for government assistance to women entering the work place after divorce, widowhood, or "empty nest" syndrome. The Displaced Homemaker movement was especially interesting in the support that it got among older women. With a nation-wide network of supporters, the movement attracted some legislative efforts on the state and federal level. The Detroit branch called itself the Alliance for Displaced Homemakers and in 1975-1976 operated out of the Women's Justice Center in down-town Detroit. The Macomb County branch during the mid-1970s was housed at Macomb County Community College.[118]

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[117] On women and government policy, see Nancy Folbre, "The Pauperization of Motherhood: Patriarchy and Public Policy in the United States," in Naomi Gerstel and Harriet Engel Gros, eds., *Families and Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 491-511. Other Marxist feminists warn against this "simplistic 'social control' perspective" on the state and counsel the need to challenge these policies and turn the state into an instrument for achieving equality and opportunity for all disadvantaged members of society. For this argument, see Frances Fox Piven, "Women and the State: Ideology, Power, and the Welfare State," in Gerstel et al., eds., *Families and Work*, 512-519.

[118] See "Displaced but not Forgotten," in National Organization for Women, Down-river Chapter Collection, box 30, folder 30-35, ALUA; see also literature and various versions of legislation in NOW Down-river Chapter Collection, box 4, folders 4-15, 4-20, 4-3, 4-21, ALUA. Militating against the passage of legislation to address the problems of women entering the workforce was the specter of tax revolt. As inflation soared, so did the necessity for shoring up the fiscal base of state and local government. But middle-class owners of residential property were also feeling pressed. In 1978, Proposition 13 in California led a nation-wide trend of property tax revolt which brought the fiscal crisis down to the level of state and local government. This evolved into a new

Neither Nixon nor his successors were about to undertake a program of this size or with this focus. Under Nixon, the federal government moved away from federal planning and towards the block grant approach to funding programs set up and run by local governments. This system funded relatively few programs specifically designed for working women. One feminist active in the women's studies program at Wayne County Community College observed that women in transition from traditional homemaker roles frequently found jobs in the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) programs. Most young women, however, were thrown back on their own resources and on the child-care available through their extended family.[119]

Although it addressed only one aspect of a complicated problem of women, work, poverty, and changing sexual norms, the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision provided some relief to these women; but it also prodded the conservative forces in Macomb County into action. Already mobilized by the campaign against Proposal B, the anti-abortion movement remained a force in county and state politics long after its "pro-choice" opponents faded away. It succeeded in several of its objectives short of its ultimate goal of overturning *Roe v. Wade*. In one important area, Michigan Right to Life claims that the number of abortions in Michigan dropped from 45,455 in 1980 to 31,091 in 1995.[120] It

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and extremely powerful manifestation of "crab-grass-roots" politics which reverberated in Michigan through numerous referenda and legislative attempts to limit taxes.

[119] On Nixon's block-grant approach to revenue sharing and "the New Federalism," see Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered*, 69-73. On the importance of the CETA grants, interview with Miriam Frank, 25 July 1997.

[120] Right to Life of Michigan, *Together for Life '96* (convention program of 23rd annual conference of Right to Life of Michigan, September 27-28, 1996), 79. This gradual decline of abortions after 1980 is also reported as a national trend by the Alan Guttmacher

also claims success in influencing voters and legislators. Macomb Right to Life eventually set up a Political Action Committee (PAC) and appointed a PAC Director for the county's congressional districts. Starting in the late 1980s, the group screened and endorsed candidates for the congressional races as well as for local positions, such as Warren City Council and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. One organizer estimated that keeping tabs on legislative voting records and endorsing candidates for office proved to have a measurable impact on the state legislature's votes on abortion and euthanasia.[121]

Although it described itself as a single-issue movement, Macomb Right to Life fit easily into the county's conservative network. These Right to Life activists had long suspected that the leaders of the Democratic Party – at the national level and, to a lesser extent, at the state level – were already committed to letting the feminists have their way. When asked why, in her opinion, on the state and national levels the Democratic Party had adopted a pro-choice position over the years, one activist in the Macomb Right to Life Resource Center expressed the suspicion that some well-funded "outside force" had assumed undue influence over the Democratic Party. In her view, the Right to Life movement was fighting an uphill battle, since, "they've got the money, although we've got the grass-roots support." She went on to suggest a "class war" aspect to the struggle over abortion. "Margaret Sanger [a pioneer in the field of planned parenthood] basically didn't

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Institute, the main research affiliate of the pro-choice movement. "Facts in Brief," The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1996.

[121] Right to Life of Michigan, *Together for Life '96*,19. Imelda Zeoli, interview by author, tape recording, 11 June 1997, Mt. Clemens, Michigan; Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice*, 261; Harvey Dean, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997; Joseph Zanglin, telephone interview by author, 16 June 1997; Gino Vitale, telephone interview by author, 29 June 1997.

want poor people to be born. . ."[122]

In part through Right to Life's advocacy during the abortion controversy, this identification of the Democratic Party leadership with a liberal, feminist elite *"unlike us"* became generalized among a larger sector of voters in Macomb County during the 1970s. Warren's and Macomb County's political leadership welcomed the opportunity to champion the politics of insularity in the face of a series of culturally threatening issues. The issues included the youth culture, drugs, and lack of patriotism that was threatening the authority of parents; the commitment to racial "stability" in family residence; the campaign to maintain parental control over the racial character of "neighborhood schools"; and, finally, the movement to restore traditional gender roles in the family through the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* and the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment. The importance of the abortion controversy is that it helped to frame these issues in terms of the defense of the family.[123]

On a philosophical level, the abortion controversy had a conservative effect on Warren's blue-collar Democrats. The debate over abortion popularized a conservative discourse, steeped in Catholic thought, on what might be called the "metaphysical" basis

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[122] On the disenchantment of Right to Life activists with the liberal leadership of the Democratic Party, interview with "Andrea" at the St. Clair Shores Right to Life Resource Center, 23 July 1997. The fact that Right to Life in Macomb County leans to the political Right is evident in the way that they discuss Congressman David Bonior. Bonior's voting record has been pro-life on most occasions, but the Right to Life members that I spoke with universally distrusted his "liberal" stands on other issues.

[123] On the politics of insularity versus liberal "outside forces," see Margaret Weir, "Urban Poverty and Defensive Localism," *Dissent* (Summer 1994): 337-342. For a thoughtful discussion of the connection between opposition to abortion and the "New Right" politics of the late 1970s and the 1980s, see Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice*, 241-276.

of social relations. This discourse concerned the origin of life and the moral implications of the presence of life. This debate focused on the family, the mother, and, ultimately, the mother's womb. Right to Life talked about women almost entirely in terms of their roles in the family as mothers. During this debate, Right to Life took the mythology of the traditional family and cast it as a prominent part of the civic culture. They did this at the very point when powerful forces were drawing many of Warren's women outside of the home and into the job market. Thus, the conservative, anti-abortion forces apotheosized the family in Warren just as the family was experiencing the stress of shifting gender roles and recession-induced unemployment. The simultaneity of the recession and the abortion controversy is important, because it contributed to the force and the bitterness of the controversy. The presence of a women's movement demanding reproductive rights (and other aspects of equality, such as affirmative action) served as scapegoat for the insecurity of the age.[124]

The recessions of the 1970s forced a retrenchment of the woman's movement. From a vibrant and expansive current of reform holding out the hope of making the rest of society more democratic, the women's movement changed – or, at least the perception of it changed – into just another "interest group" seeking to preserve the gains that it had already won in the areas of abortion and affirmative action. The "backlash" anger of white males now had to be endured. Women became targets of the accumulated resentment of those who were losing status and economic security during the recessions. Not only did

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[124] Marge Molech, interview by author, tape recording, 9 June 1997, St. Clair Shores, Michigan; Gino Vitale, telephone interview by author, 29 June 1997; "Andrea," interview by author, tape recording, 23 July 1997, St Clair Shores, Michigan.

hard times expose women to an increasingly pressured existence, they created a threatening situation for women who chose to speak out for reform, either in the family or in public venues. As one Macomb County veteran feminist declared, "The resentment of women and people of color over affirmative action is a direct result [of the recession]. The anger toward women and minorities getting jobs is a clear reflection of the unemployment rate. . ." She believes that the coincidence of abortion and recession produced a spirit of repression against women:

> [The Right to Life people believed that] if women would just stay home and have babies the way they're supposed to do, they wouldn't be out here getting the men's jobs. . . Not only can we not keep these women down by getting them pregnant; not only are they not adhering to the roles that we've assigned to them, now they're trying to go after our jobs.[125]

Anne Lilla, former member of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, believes that the abortion question had a complex effect on the Democratic Party. "[In Macomb County] the fight over abortion brought forward some activists, especially in NOW – women like Carol King, Doris Little, and Nancy Duemling – women who had strong views in favor of the right to abortion. . ." These women spoke out for abortion rights in Macomb County, but many people were unmoved. "Locally, most people were against abortion, even Democrats." The politicians either spoke against abortion or they kept quiet. They sidestepped the abortion issue on the way to getting reelected. They did so at the cost of the internal coherence of the Democratic Party. That is why, in Anne

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[125] Carol King, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 29 June 1997. On the economic insecurity behind the "backlash" against women in the 1980s, see Susan Faludi, *Backlash: the Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1991), 65-70. It should be noted that the anti-abortion movement in Macomb County, though it picketed abortion clinics, does not appear to have engaged in the kind of illegal activity or violence that Susan Faludi chronicles in *Backlash*, 412-413.

Lilla's words, "the abortion question generally hurt the Democratic Party."[126]

The recessions of the 1970s and early 1980s thus played an important part in restoring authority in Warren's factories and families. The movements of young workers and of women who demanded changes in these institutions could both have made substantial contributions to the agenda of social reform. The threat of unemployment stifled the revolt among young factory workers. In the case of the women's rights movement, the recessions fueled the first phase of revolt, as increased joblessness among men forced women to take whatever jobs they could get. This de-stabilized patriarchal relations of authority in the family, while it also exposed women and children to increased pressure, including the threat of domestic violence. But the high unemployment figures also set limits on the political viability of the reforms that working women demanded. Politicians began to worry about tax revolt and became even more firmly wedded to the politics of "home rule" in opposition to federal efforts at social reform. Finally, the abortion controversy deflected the Catholic Church from its support for liberal causes, and it called forth a conservative critique not only of the progressive agenda for social reform, but also of the morality of the liberal elites who championed these reforms.

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[126] Anne Lilla, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 21 July 1997.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

On the evening of January 2, 1974, Coleman Young, Detroit's newly elected black mayor, delivered his inaugural speech. Addressing the issue of crime in the city, Young advised Detroit's criminals to "hit Eight Mile Road," Detroit's northern boundary with the suburbs. The remark, delivered in Young's off-the-cuff manner, drew negative reviews from Detroit's Macomb County neighbors. Warren Mayor Ted Bates said, "I thought it was a direct slap at the suburbs. . . You don't solve the problem just by pushing crime north of Eight Mile Road." Bates said that he had never met Young and had no plans to do so. "Detroit always has had mayors who want the suburbs to help Detroit. They want mutual cooperation as long as that cooperation benefits Detroit." A spokesman for the Detroit mayor tried to put the best face on things: "The Mayor did not mean to say that all criminals were to move north of Eight Mile. . . What he did mean was that he wanted a unilateral elimination of crime from all communities." Nobody was buying that interpretation. An editorial in *The Macomb Daily* observed that Young's remark had "dropped a curtain of anger and distrust between Detroit and the suburbs."[1]

Young's speech hit a raw nerve in the suburbs. By 1974, however, enough friction had been generated between Detroit and its suburbs to make the flap over Young's statement largely symbolic. The fact that Detroit's black community would choose a figure like Young to be mayor was itself a problem for some of the suburbanites who knew of his past. Coleman Young's political biography combined the incendiary ingredients of a youthful association with the Left-wing caucus of the UAW during the

[1] "Two Suburbs Miffed at Detroit Mayor," "New Detroit? Yes, But – Not at Suburb Expense," *The Macomb Daily*, 4 January 1974.

1940s and leadership of the National Negro Labor Council (a group linked to the Communist Party) during the late 1940s and early 1950s. More recently, as State Senator, Young had built the political clout of his black constituency by playing the state Democratic Party off against the moderate Republican Governor, William Milliken, with whom he enjoyed good relations.[2]

Young's brash, combative, and profane personal style further alienated white suburban politicians, who found little reason to maintain the fiction of friendly relations with Detroit. Coleman Young had come to personify everything that the suburbs didn't like about the city. His election as mayor capped the overlapping of racial and political contradictions in Southeastern Michigan that had been underway for a long time. The string of controversies over racial and "home rule" questions in Warren and Macomb County, the suburban distrust of regional government, and the demoralization of formerly loyal Macomb County Democratic voters: all these issues weakened the bonds that tied Detroit and its suburbs together.[3]

Another aspect of this emergent alienation between city and suburb was the suburban political campaign tactic of "running against Detroit," the practice of

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[2] Wilbur C. Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics: From Social Activist to Power Broker* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 61-72, 85-90.

[3] According to Heather Thompson, this conflict boiled down to the question of which race would rule the city. She argues that the turning point in the struggle for power between Detroit's whites and blacks occurred during the period 1969-1973, with the acquittal of black defendants in a series of highly publicized court cases mostly involving the Detroit Police Department. Coleman Young's victory over Roman Gribbs in the 1973 mayoral race formally resolved the question of who would run Detroit. See Heather Thompson, "A 'Ruling Without Reason': Black Militancy, Legal Liberalism, and White Disaffection [in] the Motor City, 1969-1973," a paper read at the Social History Association conference in New Orleans, October 10-13, 1996, 32-33.

communicating an almost subliminal package of racially coded messages to suburban white voters simply by disparaging the city during the campaign. The tradition continued all the way into the 1990s. In 1996, one candidate for Macomb County Commissioner, Anthony Block, used a campaign brochure pitched to exploit racial fears and animosity between city and suburb. The cover of Block's campaign brochure showed a zoom-lens photograph of the "Renaissance Center" in down-town Detroit seemingly surrounded by empty fields. The captions read: "Warren Taxpayers need a fighter who is willing to stand up to politicians in Detroit" and "County Commissioner Anthony Block has fought for Warren taxpayers by standing up to Detroit!"[4] Another local candidate, Circuit Court Judge John Chmura, used a brochure with a doctored cover photo of Coleman Young dressed as Robin Hood tip-toeing through the woods with a bag of loot slung over his shoulder. Inside, the caption read: "Coleman Young and the Lansing crowd cooked up a plan to take your tax dollars and spend them on Detroit's school districts. . . . They stole from our taxpayers, our schools and our children to help prop up Coleman Young. But one person had the guts to stand up to them. . . Judge John Chmura." Both Chmura and Block were reelected.[5]

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[4] Block's brochure cites, as the first item of the incumbent candidate's service, that he "fought to put Macomb County on record to abolish Detroit Recorder's Court!" The relevance of this accomplishment as a qualification for local office in Macomb County is explained by the fact that "Macomb County teenager Rebecca Gordon was shot in the head because her [presumably, black] killer said he was offended by a racial slur. Recorder's Court verdict: NOT GUILTY! Rebecca Gordon screams for justice from the grave. Macomb County residents no longer have to pay for the racist Detroit Recorder's Court where the killer was acquitted."

[5] Chmura found it politically useful to "run against Coleman Young" even though, at the time of the 1996 campaign, Coleman Young had retired from the Mayor's office three years earlier. Covers of the campaign brochures in Appendix B.

The purpose of this study was to explain how the level of political discourse in Macomb County sank to the level of race-baiting and how, in the process, the Democratic Party in Warren and in Macomb County lost the hegemony that it had gained in the early days of mass suburban migration. Charting Warren's voting returns for different offices between 1964 and 1984, this study used quantitative analysis to describe the emerging geo-politics of Warren. Although the poorer, blue-collar precincts of southern Warren were the historic strongholds of the Democratic Party, the correlation weakened between blue-collar working-class census indicators and Democratic Party voting trends from 1964-1984. The balance of this study offered explanations for these changes by narrating a series of controversies that, I argue, dislodged many of Warren's voters from their habitual allegiance to the Democratic Party.

Beginning with a sketch of Warren's history, the dissertation examined the 1970 Warren HUD controversy and referendum to reject the HUD money. It noted the paradox that the vote to reject the HUD grants was strongest in the poorer, southern neighborhoods of Warren that stood to receive most of the money. These were also the neighborhoods with the historically highest voting allegiance to the Democratic Party. Although others have explained this in terms of the fear of relocation on the part of south Warren residents, my treatment of the HUD controversy concluded that south Warren's anxiety over racial succession in its neighborhoods was largely responsible for the high votes against accepting the HUD money. The HUD controversy "cross-cut" blue-collar attachment to the Democratic Party in south Warren.

Next, the study examined the controversy of the war in Vietnam and the antiwar Warren tank plant march in late April 1971. Here, the issues were the foreign policies of

the Republican and Democratic parties, patriotism, respect for the American flag, youth culture, and the public image of the antiwar movement. As the national and state Democratic Party shifted from support for Lyndon Johnson's prosecution of the war to opposition to the war during the Nixon administration, the people of Warren appeared to stick with Nixon's war policies. The Warren tank plant march helped to legitimize antiwar sentiment in the city, but it also linked the antiwar posture of the Democratic Party to the unpopular image of the protest demonstrators and the apparent lack of patriotism of those marchers who carried the Viet Cong flag. I also discussed the actions of the antiwar reformers inside the Macomb County Democratic Party (and in the rest of the state) in forcing the party leadership to pay attention to the issue of the war. The agitation against the war and the rules changes initiated by liberal party reformers disrupted the state Democratic Party, which eventually grew weary of internal debate and to restrict its openness to new strategic thinking.

The biggest headache for the Democratic Party in Warren was the cross-district busing controversy from 1971 to 1974. This issue directed the attention of Warren's citizens once again to the problem of race that had been at the heart of the HUD controversy. The difference was that, whereas the voting returns on the HUD referendum suggest that Warren's northern neighborhoods felt less anxiety than south Warren did over a "black invasion" in the urban renewal projects in southern Warren, the cross-district busing controversy exposed the whole city to the threat of busing. The controversy weakened the Democratic Party in Macomb County and Warren. Although the national and state party remained committed to busing as a last resort to desegregate public education, Macomb County voters overwhelmingly rejected cross-district busing. I

described the grass-roots campaign against busing and noted that, like the anti-HUD referendum vote, the anti-busing movement relied on the energy and dedication of Warren's housewives. The anti-busing movement created a community consensus so solidly opposed to busing that it forced Warren's politicians to join the campaign against busing. In 1972, the busing issue forced the Macomb County Democratic Party to break with the official line of the state and national party and to adopt a "county platform" against busing.

Having described the effects on the Democratic Party of these specific controversies, the dissertation concluded with a discussion of the break-down of authority in two core institutions in Warren: its factories and its families. Using the example of a wildcat strike at the Warren Dodge Truck plant in the summer of 1974, the dissertation depicted youth culture in the factories and recounted the challenge that young workers presented both to the union and the company regarding the nature of factory work. The study also noted the increased participation of women in the paid workforce and the strains that this imposed on the traditional family. Together, these changes altered the most powerful and emotionally grounded institutions of working class life in Warren.

The boom-and-bust decade from 1973 to 1983 restored authority in the factory. The slack labor market and (for Chrysler workers) the experience of the Chrysler bail-out had the effect of "disciplining" and sobering the factory workforce. As for the women's movement, the recessions of the decade 1973 through 1983 both created the conditions for its emergence and, at the same time, set limits on it. The fact that women entered the workforce in greater numbers during the years of high unemployment, job insecurity, and declining real wages contributed to family distress, as is evident in the statistics on divorce

and the increased concern about domestic violence. These developments posed an agenda of reform across a broad spectrum of issues related to women, from spousal abuse to equal employment rights, vocational training, and child care.

In the early 1970s, such a reform agenda could only be accomplished at the federal level under the leadership of the Democratic Party. But liberalism suffered catastrophic defeat in 1972, with Nixon's resounding victory over George McGovern. Then in 1973, the faltering economy and the popular perceptions that the "pie was getting smaller" while taxes were taking a bigger bite out of the paycheck foreclosed on any new installments of the Great Society. The exhaustion of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was apparent in the presidential candidates that the party nominated. President Carter lost reelection by counseling Americans to live with less. Walter Mondale carried only his home state of Minnesota in 1984 when he declared on national TV that, if elected, he would raise taxes to stem the federal deficit. Michael Dukakis ran for president in 1988, not as a visionary liberal (the "L" word was already a damning epithet), but as a competent technocrat who had lured high-tech industry to Massachusetts and supposedly saved the state's economy. Meanwhile, conservatives focused their energies on rolling back the women's movement in the anti-abortion crusade.

What explains the rise of the "Reagan Democrat" in Warren, Michigan? Part of the answer is the racial anxiety and resentment stemming from a long and bitter history of competition over jobs and neighborhoods with Detroit's black population. But race was not the only factor. Liberalism was partly responsible for its own defeat in Warren. Motivated by an idealistic vision, it dictated social reform "from above." It also tended to preach. As a veteran liberal activist in Warren observed, "The people felt, 'I want to be a

good person and do the right thing. But why am I told, if I object to busing or worry about urban renewal, that I must be a bad person?' I've seen it happen with the antiwar movement, with busing, and with the HUD controversy. . . All they could talk about was how bad this country is and how racist its people are."[6]

The "arrogance" of liberalism arose from its optimistic vision of human relations, which held that people change in relation to their environment and that bringing the races together was the best way to counter racism. Edward Levin, the representative sent by the HUD Chicago regional office to negotiate with Warren's political leadership, experienced a conversion to this liberal vision during his stint in the military. Levin joined the Army after he graduated from law school in 1959 and was stationed at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina:

> There were soldiers there from the farms and from the cities. . . There were white G.I.s and also blacks. One black recruit that I noticed was from the inner city of Detroit. He was kind of a tough guy. . . Among the other soldiers were whites from the rural south. . . Initially there was some edginess between this one white guy and the black guy from Detroit. . . Over the course of boot camp, however, they learned to get along together and they became friends. So one evening, this rural southern white soldier said to this black guy from Detroit, "Come on, let's go get a hamburger in town." And the black guy said, "You know, I can't go there, they won't serve me there." And the white guy said, "Oh yeah, I forgot – that's stupid." So they went to another place on the post.[7]

In his negotiations with Warren's political leaders, Levin acted on this liberal belief. But Warren's citizens had a different set of beliefs founded on a different history and a less optimistic view of human relations. For one thing, they believed in the "homeowner ethos" of maintaining neighborhood stability and preserving the market value

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[6] Sally Chalgian, interview by author, tape recording, 10 November 1995, Warren, Michigan.

[7] Edward Levin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 30 August 1997.

of the housing stock. Many of them felt that the racial succession in Detroit's neighborhoods had proved Detroit's black population to be corrosive to neighborhood values. Some had doubtless witnessed or even participated in the white homeowner associations that resisted black encroachment, or silently supported the resistance. Or else, they had moved out when the neighborhood began to change. They carried this racially tinged homeowner ethos with them when they made the trek to the suburbs.

From 1970 on, the federal government seemed intent on forcing the people of Warren to conform to an agenda with which many of them did not agree. They reacted by organizing grass-roots opposition movements. Their willingness to resort to referendum was their answer to this intervention from above. By the Reagan years, the Republican Party was championing the "down-sizing" of federal government. One scholar called this the politics of "defensive localism": "reduc[ing] domestic spending by the federal government, push[ing] responsibilities down to lower levels of government, and contain[ing] the social problems associated with poverty – and their costs – within defined spatial and political boundaries."[8] The Republican call for down-sized government fit nicely with the political trajectory of many of Warren's voters.

By 1980, the south side of Warren continued its slide into disrepair. One researcher predicted that the "leap-frogging" of investment and migration northward would soon leave the southern third of Warren bereft of new residential, commercial, or industrial development. The suburb was going through "urbanization." It was experiencing the same process that had led to its founding, only this time it was on the

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[8] Margaret Weir, "Urban Poverty and Defensive Localism," *Dissent* (Summer 1994), 337.

losing side. Warren was becoming Detroit, minus the black population. Like Detroit, Warren would suffer the indignities of aging cities: the infrastructure would decay, the population would age, and the housing stock would deteriorate, especially in southern Warren. Bank loan and insurance "red-lining" would obstruct home repair. Police and fire fighting would become more expensive. Schools would require more upkeep. Taxes would rise. The city's political leadership would prove to be so compromised by the practice of "running against Detroit" and so paralyzed by the prohibition against crossing racial boundaries that it would be unable to forge a political coalition with Detroit to forward its interests on the state and federal level. Eventually, the Eight Mile Road bulwark against African-American settlement would fail and, at that point, an ominous "explanation" might well arise for the deterioration of the neighborhood.[9]

* * * * * * *

One of the few unforgettable scenes of the 1988 presidential campaign took place on the grounds of the General Dynamics corporate offices in Sterling Heights, Michigan, Warren's neighboring city to the north. It was a photo-opportunity featuring a solemn and diminutive Michael Dukakis riding around in a M1-A1 Abrams tank, his head sticking through the front hatch, his hand resting on the tank's machine gun, and his aviator cap ears flopping in the breeze. The tank had been assembled five miles away in Warren, at the Detroit Tank Plant, now managed by General Dynamics. The Dukakis campaign had orchestrated the visit to shift the public image of the Massachusetts Governor from "bland technocrat" to "strong leader." On another level, the scene was supposed to carry a

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[9] James Jacobs, "The Urbanization of Macomb County," unpublished paper, 9 September 1980.

subliminal message that recalled an earlier age when the Democratic Party, supported by the unions, served as the political leadership of working-class communities like Macomb County. Forty-six years earlier, in September 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt had visited the Warren tank plant to hail the newly-built facility as part of Detroit's growing "Arsenal of Democracy." But, despite the attempt to associate Dukakis with his Democratic Party forebear, the tank ride was a disastrous miscalculation. Some of the crowd of General Dynamics employees carried Bush-Quayle signs and there were scattered boos from the audience when Dukakis asked, "So what do you think? Did I look like I belonged up there?" The driver of the tank was a mechanic named Bob Hildner. A member of UAW local 412, Hildner told reporters that he considered himself a Republican. The event struck observers as both ludicrous and revelatory. It illustrated how far the fortunes of the Democratic Party had fallen since the days of F.D.R.. The Warren tank plant was the same, but the Democratic Party had changed and so had the voters.[10]

[10] "Dukakis Takes a Ride, Backs Tanks," *The Detroit Free Press,* 14 September 1988.

APPENDIX A: MAPS

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Warren and Detroit	343
Warren in 1964	344
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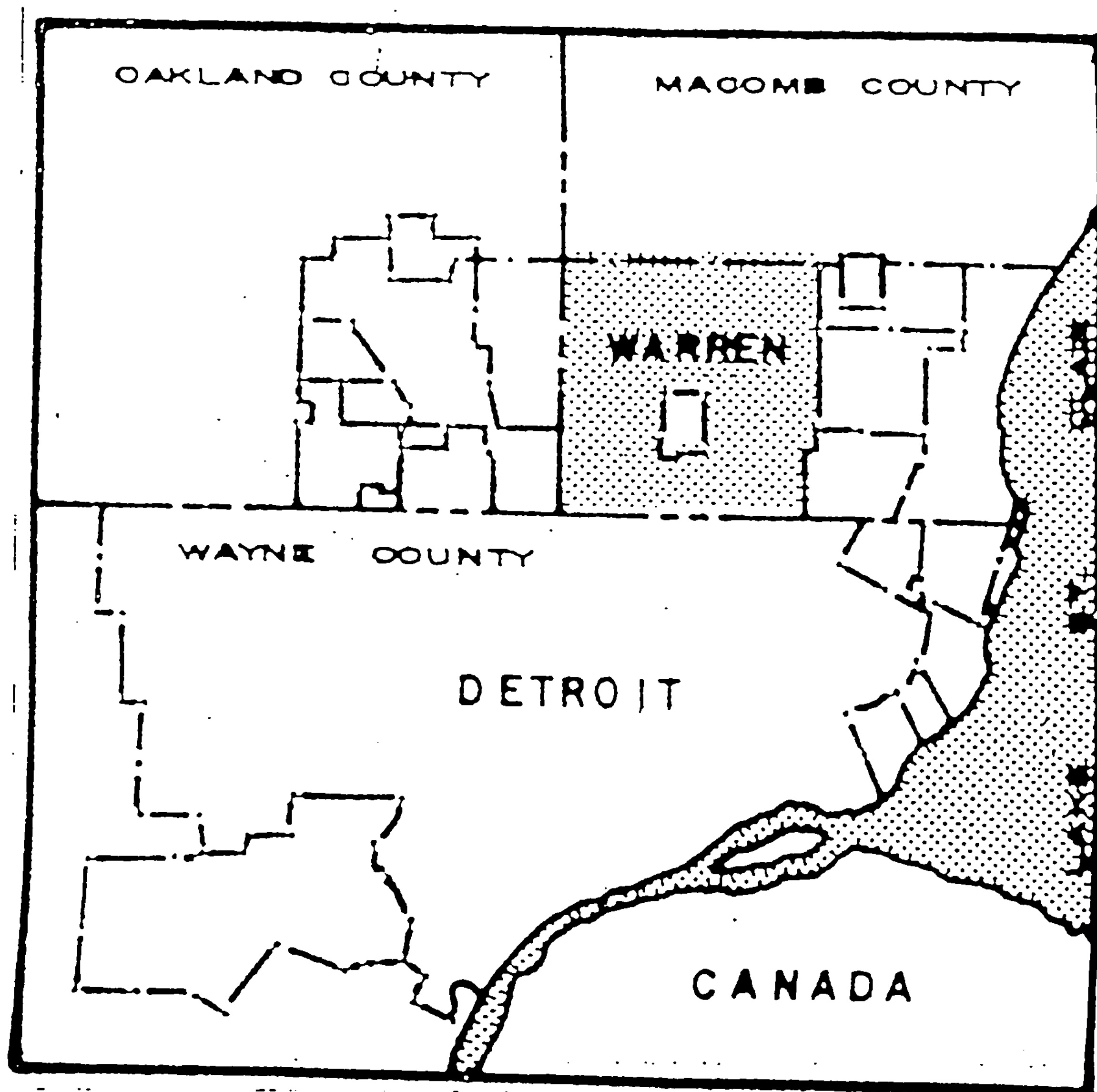
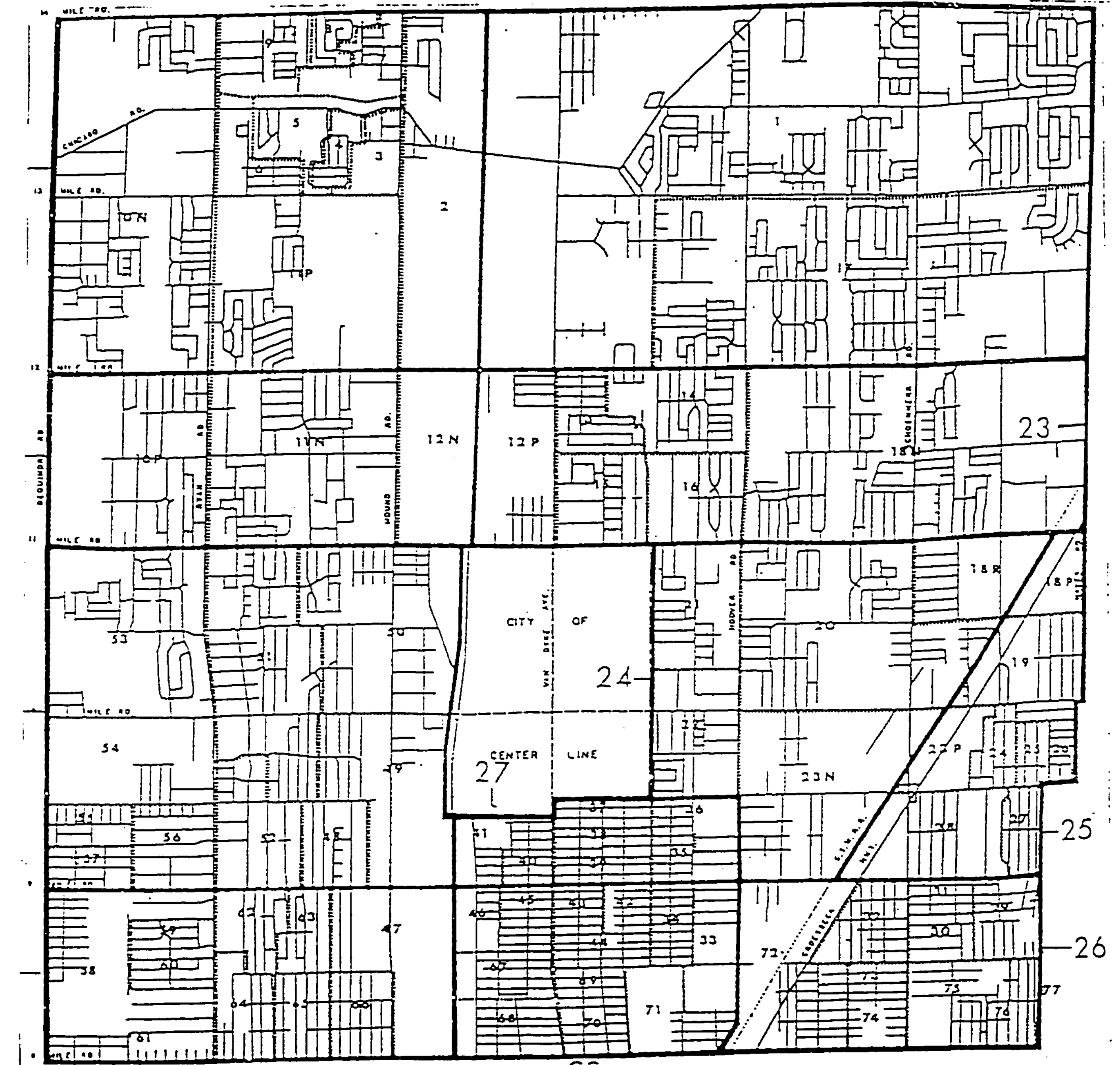
1970 General Election Precincts With Highest Quintile of Percentage Support for Democratic Candidates for State Board of Education (Shaded)	346
1970 General Election Precincts With Highest Quintile of Support for Referendum Proposal Rejecting H.U.D. Grants (Shaded)	347

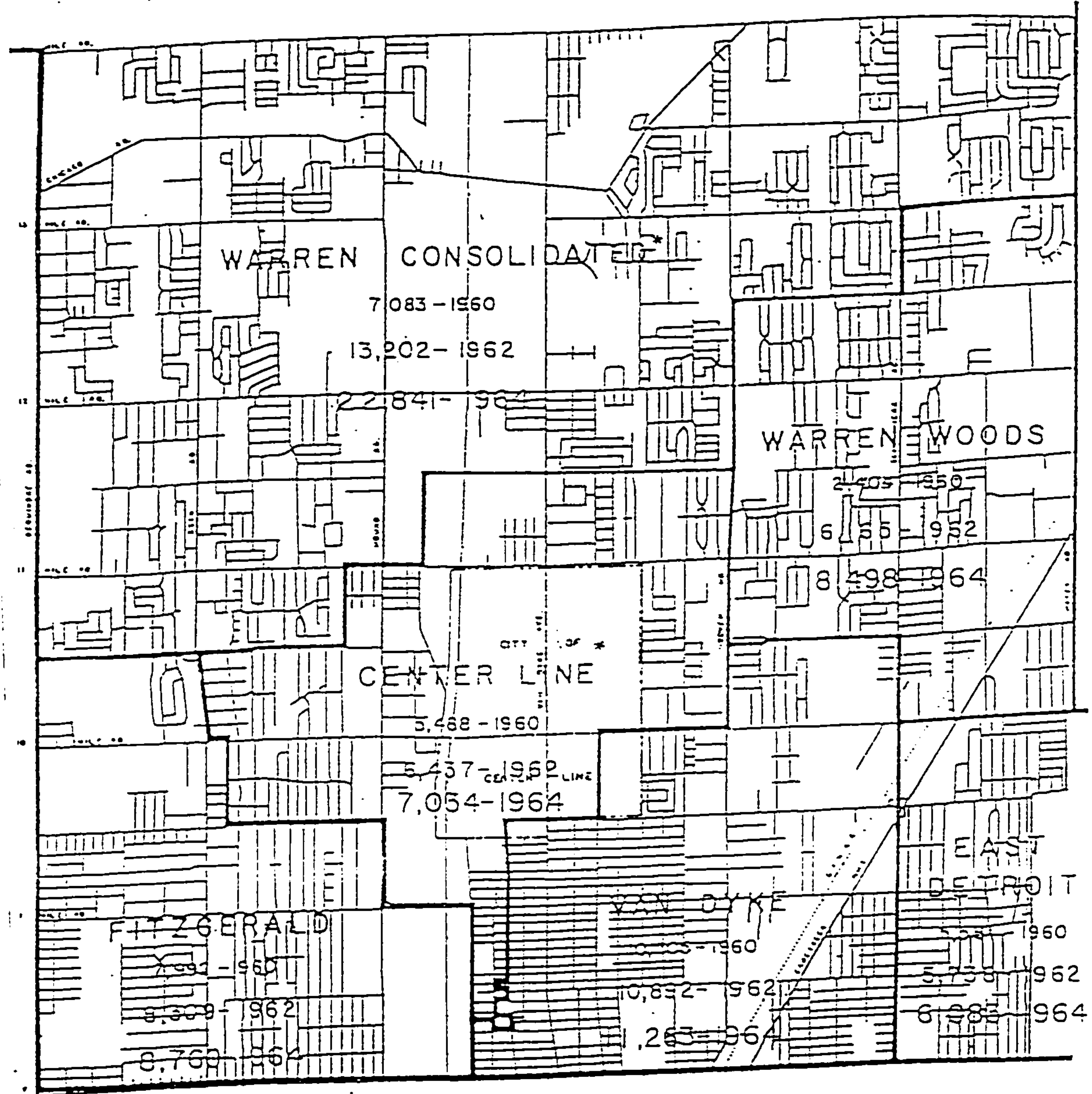
WARREN AND DETROIT



WARREN IN 1964

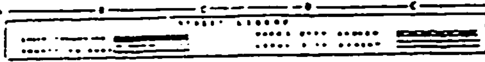


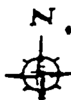
WARREN SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 1964

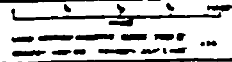


CITY OF DETROIT

JOSEPH S. RAICH, CITY CLERK





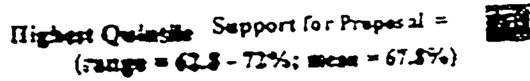


1970 General Election (State Board of Ed.)

Highest Quintile of Democratic Party Support
(range = 56 - 88 %; mean = 74%)

JOSEPH S. RAICH, CITY CLERK

1970 General Election (City Proposal # 2)



Highest Quintile Support for Proposal =
(range = 62.8 - 72%; mean = 67.8%)

APPENDIX B: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

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Constructing Table 1.2	349
Computer Print-Out of Regression of 1970 Democratic Party Vote and of 1970 H.U.D. Referendum Vote	350
Computer Print-Out of Regression of Democratic Party Vote for 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1976, and 1980	351

CONSTRUCTING TABLE 1.2

Table 1.2 was constructed in the following manner. First, I calculated and ranked the percentage Democratic precinct vote for the State Board of Education candidates in the 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984 elections. Next, I established which census tracts the precincts were located in. Because of the small number of census tracts in the 1960 census, I omitted the 1964 election for this portion of the study and began the series with the 1966 election. For the 1966, 1968, 1970, and 1972 elections I used the 1970 census. For the 1976, 1980, and 1984 elections I used the 1980 census. Next, I constructed precinct/census tract spread-sheets for eight categories of census information: 1) median household income; 2) unemployment rate of males over sixteen years old; 3) percentage foreign-born residents within the census tract; 4) percentage of census tract residents who had been living in Detroit five years earlier; 5) median age of census tract residents; 6) percentage of census tract individuals 14 years old and older who were currently divorced; 7) percentage of employed residents of the census tract residents who were working in blue-collar jobs as operatives, including transport but excluding farm workers; and 8) percentage of census tract homes which were rented. In constructing the correlation table, I omitted absentee counting boards. The correlation ranks two categories of data (such as percentage Democratic vote and each of the eight types of census information) and compares the variation. A correlation of +1.0 or -1.0 indicates complete positive or negative correlation.

PRINT-OUT OF REGRESSION OF 1970 DEMOCRATIC PARTY VOTE AND OF 1970 HUD REFERENDUM VOTE

(FOOTNOTE 81, PAGES 95-96)

```
. regress yesvote medinc medage hudproj

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  3,    26) =    7.76
   Model |  .038790809     3  .01293027                Prob > F      =  0.0007
Residual |  .043318181    26  .001666084               R-squared     =  0.4724
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.4116
   Total |   .08210899    29  .002831344               Root MSE      =  .04082

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 yesvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -8.31e-06   4.88e-06     -1.703   0.100      -.0000183    1.72e-06
  medage |  -.0023415    .002844     -0.823   0.418      -.0081874    .0035044
 hudproj |   .0732516   .0265323      2.761   0.010       .0187137    .1277896
   _cons |    .730214   .1086563      6.720   0.000       .5068678    .9535602
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

```
. regress demvote medinc medage hudproj

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  3,    26) =   26.99
   Model |  .069395537     3  .023131846               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |   .02228264    26  .000857025               R-squared     =  0.7569
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.7289
   Total |  .091678177    29  .003161316               Root MSE      =  .02927

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -.0000266   3.50e-06     -7.592   0.000      -.0000338   -.0000194
  medage |  -.0041786   .0020397     -2.049   0.051      -.0083713    .0000142
 hudproj |   -.005476   .0190293     -0.288   0.776      -.0445913    .0336394
   _cons |   1.183934   .0779297     15.192   0.000       1.023747     1.34412
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

PRINT-OUTS OF REGRESSIONS (FOOTNOTE 102, PAGE 167)

1966

```
. regress demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    27) =   30.72
   Model |  .132877902     2  .066438951               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |  .058386729    27  .002162471               R-squared     =  0.6947
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.6721
   Total |  .191264631    29  .006595332               Root MSE      =   .0465

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -.0000508   6.50e-06     -7.828   0.000      -.0000642   -.0000375
  medage |  -.0064432   .0043994     -1.465   0.155      -.0154701    .0025837
   _cons |   1.365085   .1460619      9.346   0.000        1.06539    1.664779
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

1968

```
. regress demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    27) =   36.76
   Model |  .079737047     2  .039868524               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |  .029281185    27  .001084488               R-squared     =  0.7314
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.7115
   Total |  .109018232    29  .003759249               Root MSE      =  .03293

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |   -.000033   3.85e-06     -8.570   0.000      -.0000408   -.0000251
  medage |  -.0045322   .0026732     -1.695   0.102      -.0100172    .0009529
   _cons |   1.224002   .0895225     13.673   0.000       1.040317    1.407687
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

1970

```
. regress demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    27) =   37.30
   Model |  .072596802     2  .036298401               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |  .026277827    27  .000973253               R-squared     =  0.7342
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.7145
   Total |  .098874629    29   .00340947               Root MSE      =   .0312

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -.0000266   3.08e-06     -8.636   0.000      -.0000329   -.0000203
  medage |  -.0047422   .0021456     -2.210   0.036      -.0091446   -.0003398
   _cons |   1.199772   .0736185     16.297   0.000        1.04872    1.350825
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

1972

```
. regress Demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      30
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    27) =    9.87
   Model |  .047690953     2  .023845476               Prob > F      =  0.0006
Residual |  .065248284    27  .002416603               R-squared     =  0.4223
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.3795
   Total |  .112939236    29  .003894456               Root MSE      =  .04916

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 Demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -7.86e-06   1.80e-06     -4.369   0.000      -.0000116   -4.17e-06
  medage |   .0006009   .0033856      0.177   0.860      -.0063458    .0075475
   _cons |   .6616796   .1058797      6.249   0.000       .4444325    .8789267
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

1976

```
. regress demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      42
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    39) =   46.78
   Model |  .146212808     2  .073106404               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |  .060952941    39  .001562896               R-squared     =  0.7058
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.6907
   Total |  .207165749    41  .005052823               Root MSE      =  .03953

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -.0000114   1.38e-06     -8.210   0.000      -.0000142   -8.56e-06
  medage |  -.0046212   .0018354     -2.518   0.016      -.0083336   -.0009089
   _cons |   1.041432   .0543572     19.159   0.000       .9314844     1.15138
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

```
. regress demvote medinc medage

  Source |       SS       df       MS                  Number of obs =      43
---------+------------------------------               F(  2,    40) =   35.56
   Model |  .073547654     2  .036773827               Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual |  .041362514    40  .001034063               R-squared     =  0.6400
---------+------------------------------               Adj R-squared =  0.6220
   Total |  .114910168    42  .002735956               Root MSE      =  .03216

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 demvote |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t     P>|t|       [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
  medinc |  -5.79e-06   1.02e-06     -5.691   0.000      -7.84e-06   -3.73e-06
  medage |  -.0041286   .0010925     -3.779   0.001      -.0063365   -.0019207
   _cons |   .8220995   .0347141     23.682   0.000       .7519396    .8922593
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
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A NEWSPAPER OF DETROIT
August 21 - September 3, 1969
Vol. 4, No. 8 (86)

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Warren Says NO WAR

The Warren tank plant march on April 30th was the first such event of that size in the all white, conservative city of Warren. Many people predicted that it would end in a police riot and/or a right-wing attack on the march.

As it turned out, although the march organizers had previously estimated that perhaps as many as 1,500 people would show up, the march drew anywhere from 2,500 to 4,000 people, kept itself together and repulsed the small number of right wingers who showed up to harass the march.

Before leaving the assembly point at Macomb County Community College, the people saw the Vietnam Cranky Guerilla Theatre Troupe and listened to speakers from the United National Caucus, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the Macomb Liberation Front. At around noon, the march left the Macomb campus, led by a contingent of Vietnam veterans and a swarm of motorcycles.

Along the route of the march, three miles down 12 Mile to the Chrysler-owned tank plant on Van Dyke, the marchers were met with general acceptance, if not always enthusiasm, from onlookers. A few people stood outside of their homes waving American flags. But this wasn't always taken as hostility by the marchers, especially since there were about as many American flags as NLF flags on the march. A surprising number of people who drove past the march in their cars gave marchers the peace sign or the fist.

As the march went past Warren Woods High School students inside crowded to the windows and shouted their support. The march stopped and many ran up to the windows chanting, "Join us, join us!" One student leaped out of the window and joined the march. He was followed by about 20 or 30 more all coming out the windows.

When the marchers finally ran into right-wing resistance, even that was colored by a general acceptance of anti-war sentiment. Donald Lobsinger's Breakthrough was at the tank plant to meet us with his two-dozen anemic punks and their banner, "America Forever, Communism Never!" But among the patriotic hecklers there was another large banner which read: "Peace? Yes. Communism, Never!"

Although the right-wing managed to attract a lot of attention, especially from the media, there were only a couple of fights. The people on the march were clearly ready to deal with the right wing, but the police busted anyone who got into a fight. There were ten busts — five from among the march and five from the hecklers.

After parading up and down the middle of Van Dyke for an hour, the march broke up and many of the younger kids on the march went home to get cleaned up to go to the Grand Funk concert that night.

In addition to the high schoolers who walked out of several schools in Warren and Detroit to join the march, there were lots of people there from Macomb County Community College as well as older marchers who came out because of the organizing which was done especially in Macomb County.

The organizing for the march included a lot of speaking engagements in high schools and among liberal groups in Macomb County. Workers at the tank plant were leafletted several times concerning the fact that we were not there to threaten their jobs. One of the main themes of the educational material put out for the march was that the War in Vietnam is responsible for much of the economic dislocation which hurts all working people in Detroit.

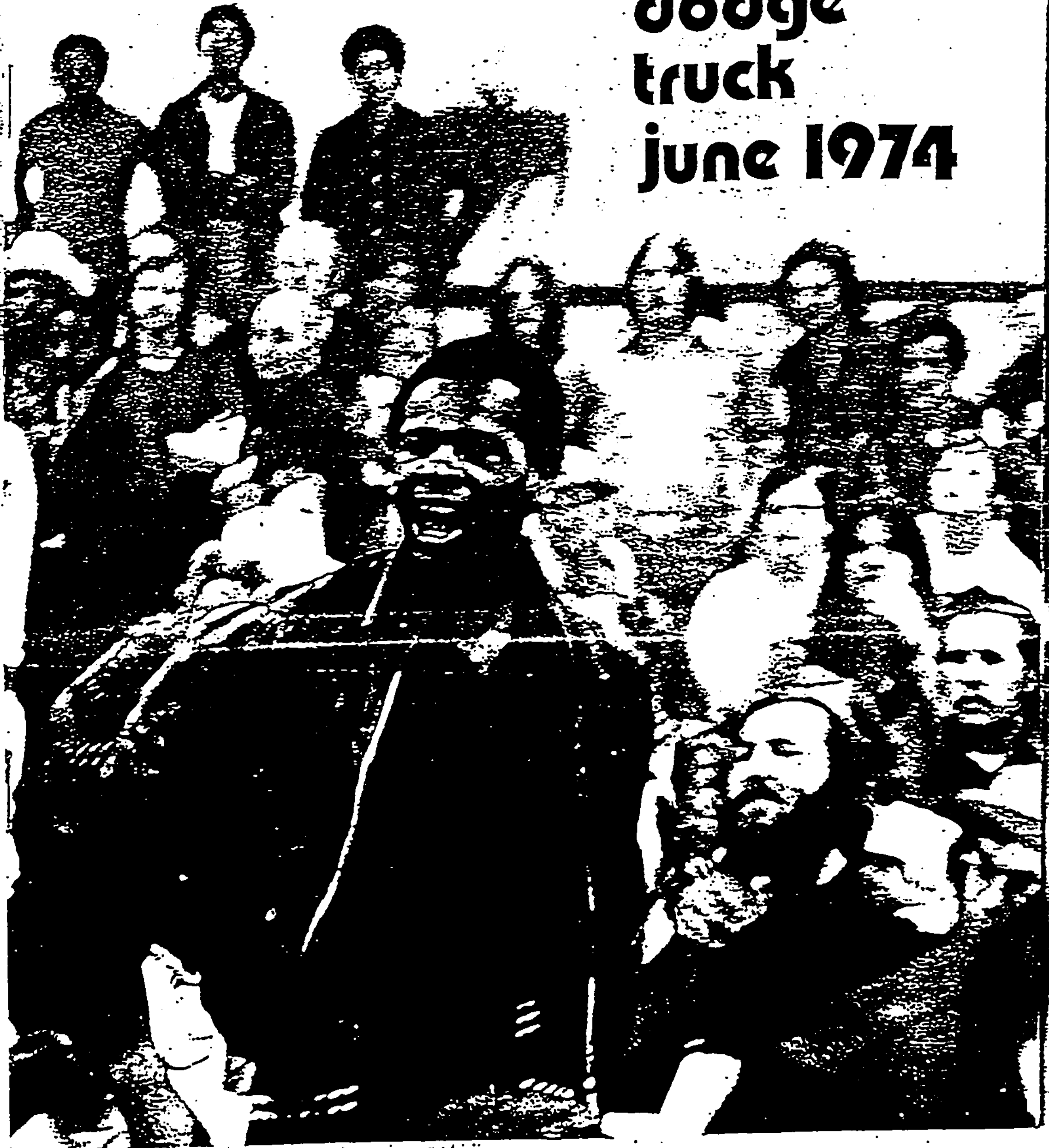
An older woman that I spoke to during the march down 12 Mile was wearing a nurse's uniform. I asked her why she was there, marching next to younger protesters who kept running through the "We don't want your fucking war" chant.

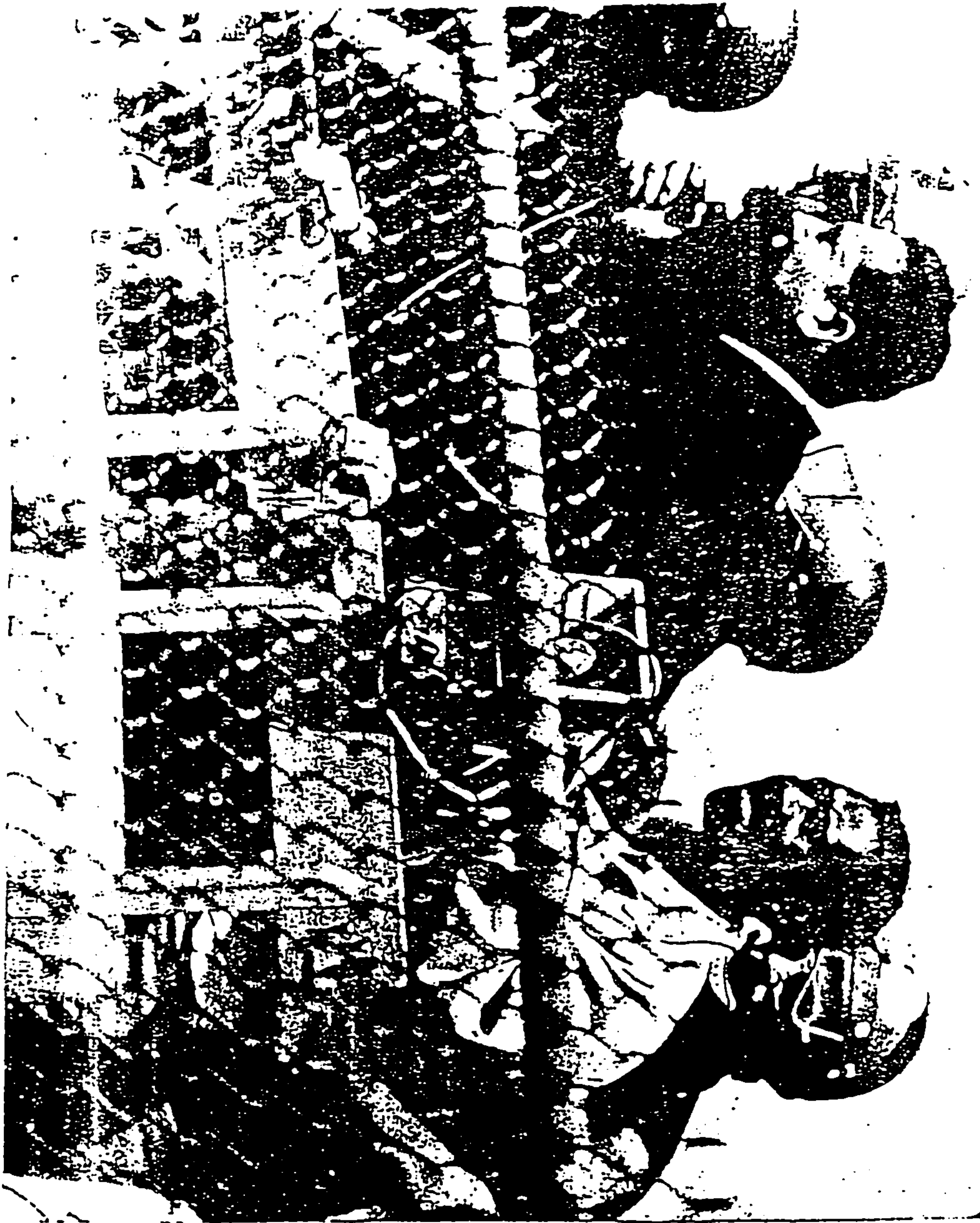
She said that she was marching for her son, who couldn't be there. I asked her why, half fearing that she would say that her son had been killed in Vietnam. As it turned out, he couldn't be there because he would have lost his job if he had missed work. "I'll probably lose mine for doing this, but it's worth it," she said. Her son was draft age and didn't intend to go. She was supporting him.

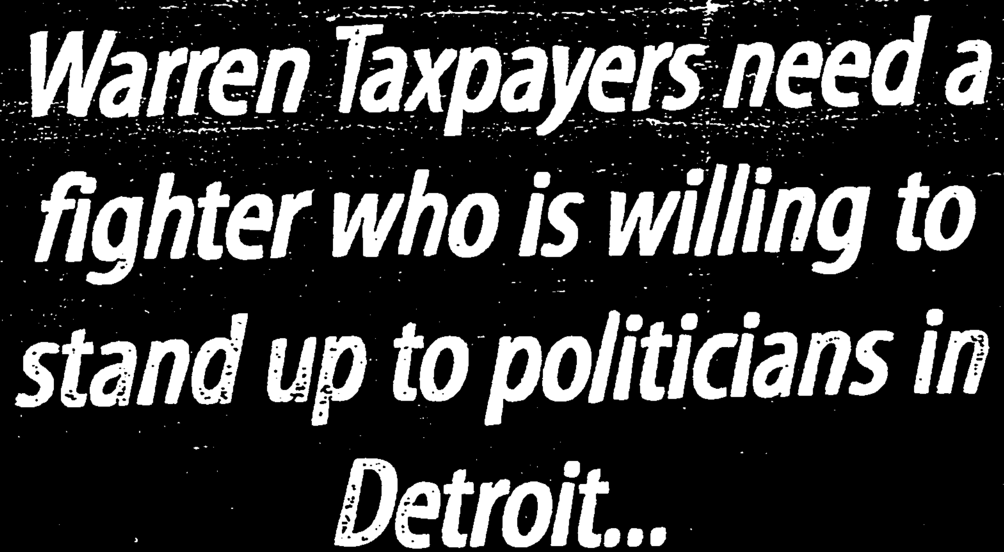
That's basically why we didn't get trashed in Warren

Wildcat

dodge
truck
june 1974






Warren Taxpayers need a
fighter who is willing to
stand up to politicians in
Detroit...

Robin Hood?

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Civil Rights Collection

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ABSTRACT

THE RISE OF THE "REAGAN DEMOCRATS"
IN WARREN, MICHIGAN: 1964-1984

by

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From 1964 to 1984, the Democratic Party lost support in the white working class Detroit suburb of Warren, Michigan, as formerly loyal Democrats defected to vote for George Wallace, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. This study examines three controversies that contributed to this "Democratic defection." The first was the 1970 effort by federal officials to require open housing in Warren in return for urban renewal grants. After months of debate, Warren's voters turned down the funds in a 1970 city-wide referendum. The second controversy, over the war in Vietnam, reflected the division in the national Democratic Party, as antiwar Democrats contested the meaning of liberalism with the party's Cold War leadership. An antiwar protest march on the Warren Tank Plant in 1971 symbolized this division and provoked contention over the right of the marchers to carry the "Viet Cong" flag. The third controversy involved the busing of school children between Detroit and its suburbs in the *Bradley v. Milliken* Detroit school desegregation case. Each of these controversies pitted the local community against policies with which the Democratic Party was in some ways identified. In addition, the

recessions of the 1970s and early 1980s fostered a conservative reaction among voters by exerting pressure on two core institutions of working class life in Warren – the factory and the family. The Dodge Truck wildcat strike of 1974 illustrates the problems faced by both management and the union in absorbing a young, multi-racial workforce into the city's factory culture. While the recessions of 1973-1983 squelched this challenge to authority in the factory, they brought Warren's women into the paid workforce in greater numbers. The local women's movement fought for gender equity in the workplace and at home. After the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, however, the grass-roots organizing initiative passed to the conservatives, as the Right to Life movement attacked abortion and the women's movement in the name of defending the family. During the 1970s, Warren's "silent majority" became vocal, though its values and concerns were anti-liberal, reactive, and insular. This brought forth the New Right politics of the Reagan Democrats at the end of the decade.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Richard David (Dave) Riddle was born in 1942 in Paris, Texas. Raised in Kansas City, he attended DePauw University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1965 and a Master of Arts degree in Early Modern European History at the University of California at Berkeley in 1966. He moved to Michigan in 1969, taking a job as an assembly-line automobile worker during the early 1970s. From 1977 to 1989 he worked as an over-the-road car-hauler. Enrolling at Wayne State University in American History in 1989, he became a Ph.D. candidate in 1995. He lives in Detroit and has a daughter, Katie.