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SOUTHEND STRUGGLES: CONVERGING NARRATIVES OF AN ARAB/MUSLIM AMERICAN ENCLAVE

Abstract

This paper explores political struggles that took place in the Southend of Dearborn in the 1970s that coincided with the rise of Arab nationalist and Islamic movements in Michigan and linked these interests to those of Arab-American activists involved in the civil rights movement, labor organizing, and other campaigns for social and economic justice. These struggles launched the careers of activists who cooperated in the 1970s and 1980s to establish several of the nation's leading Arab- and Muslim-American service, religious, and community-based institutions and played a significant role in transforming Dearborn into the well-known Arab American hub of today. In the Southend, newer and older Arab constituencies joined forces to build an unprecedented institutional infrastructure, both the left-liberal, secular, politically empowered Arab-American establishment of Dearborn and its equally engaged, but pious and socially conservative Muslim-American establishment. Thus the Southend struggles provide key insights into the social challenges that came to define Arab-American (and Muslim-American) identities in the half century that followed. In this essay I bring these histories together and explain why more work needs to be done before we can make sense of the political challenges Arabs and Muslims—as distinctive and overlapping communities—have faced in the US.



In the 1950s the city of Dearborn, Michigan, led by Mayor Orville Hubbard, began a campaign to declare the Southend neighborhood a “blighted area,” evict its ethnically diverse, working class residents, and turn their properties over to the Ford Motor Company and the Edward C. Levy Company (a local asphalt producer) for development as an “industrial park.”¹ Neighborhood residents decided to stand their ground and fight. The Southeast Dearborn Community Council (SEDCC) mounted a long and politically costly effort to save the Southend. In 1973, after 350 homes and several important public buildings had been demolished, community activists finally halted the

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mayor's bulldozers in a courtroom action led by a young Lebanese-American attorney named Abdeen Jabara.²

Three years later another legal battle took place that was equally critical to the future of the Southend. This conflict began when a group of Yemeni and Palestinian autoworkers broke into the Lebanese-led American Moslem Society (AMS) and performed the *Īd al-'Aḏḥā* prayers. Rather than celebrate the holiday on the nearest weekend, which was the established practice of the thirty-eight-year old congregation, these "trespassing" worshippers insisted on praying on the actual holiday, following the religious norms of their homelands. Shortly thereafter, the two factions went to court over control of the mosque. In 1976, a judge ruled in favor of the new, Yemeni-majority board of directors.³

These Southend struggles brought people together from a remarkable array of backgrounds. They coincided with the rise of Arab nationalist and Islamic movements in Michigan and linked these interests to those of Arab-American activists involved in the civil rights movement, labor organizing, and other campaigns for social and economic justice in Detroit. They created and sustained a relatively safe space in which the tens of thousands of Arab refugees who began arriving in Detroit in the 1970s (from Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq) could establish a foothold in America. They launched the careers of community activists and "culture brokers" who worked together in the 1970s and 1980s to establish several of the nation's leading Arab- and Muslim-American social service, religious, and community-based institutions. The Southend struggles, in other words, played a significant role in transforming Dearborn into a city that, by 2013, had a population of 97,140, of which 42 percent was Arab.⁴ Today, Dearborn is home to fifteen mosques, while greater Detroit has over eighty. Roughly 230,000 Arab Americans live in Detroit and its suburbs, and nearly half of them are Muslim.⁵

The Southend struggles of the 1970s were projects of place making. They produced new identities for the neighborhood, involving its residents in existential conflicts and a search for consensus. According to Arif Dirlik, place making "defuses claims to 'pure' identities that may be essential to struggles against existing structures of power" and encourages people to imagine and realize alternatives.⁶ Contests over space illuminate the flexibility, temporality, and constructed nature of identities, be they religious, ethnic, or geographical in origin. The political struggles that took place in the Southend in the 1970s are important because they explain how the

Dearborn of today came into being. The city and its Arab population were transformed by these conflicts in vital ways. Within Michigan, the Southend struggles matter because they allowed Dearborn to persist and grow as the epicenter of both a large, diverse, and politically empowered Arab-American community and an equally large and similarly empowered Muslim-American community. Nationally, the Southend struggles matter because they represent, in highly concentrated form, the seismic changes that took place in Arab-American communities in the post-1965 era. The new immigration regime, coupled with new geopolitical conflicts and opportunities overseas, drew a broader spectrum of immigrants from the Arab countries. Unlike those who came to the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the post-1965 arrivals were much more likely to be Muslim and from sending nations other than Syria/Lebanon. Like their predecessors, they were eager to remain involved in the politics of their homelands, but as American interventions in the Middle East increased during the Cold War, it became obvious to new Arab migrants and their established American co-ethnics that their ability to participate fully and equally as US citizens would depend on how the US pursued imperial policies in the Middle East. In the Southend, the newer and older Arab constituencies joined forces to build an unprecedented institutional infrastructure that addressed these domestic and international changes. For all these reasons, the Southend struggles provide key insights into the political and social challenges that came to define Arab-American (and Muslim-American) identities in the half century that followed.

Because they represent different constituencies, the two narratives presented here—one centered on neighborhood preservation, the other on the takeover of a mosque—are rarely integrated in a single telling. One storyline is deployed to explain the rise of Dearborn's left-liberal, secular, politically empowered Arab-American establishment. The other is used to explain the rise of Dearborn's socially conservative, pious, and politically engaged Muslim-American establishment. Arab-American leaders frequently point out that Dearborn is the "largest and most highly concentrated Arab community in North America," while its Muslim spokespeople refer to it as "the Muslim Capital of the West."⁷ These equally real, equally imaginary, spaces overlap in Dearborn. Here, Arab-American history and Muslim-American history move in parallel orbits, intersecting at key moments, but resisting attempts to situate them in integrating frameworks. In this essay I will try to bring the two histories

together and explain why more work, especially on the post-1965 era, needs to be done before we can make better sense of the political challenges Arabs and Muslims—as distinctive and overlapping communities—have faced in the US.

The institutions that grew out of the Southend struggles—principally, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) and the reformed AMS—gave their support to a variety of Arab and Muslim causes that were often at odds. They contributed to national organizations that, during the 1980s and 1990s, pulled Arab and Muslim networks in different directions, which may be why it has been important to keep the two histories separate for so long. Focusing on the left or the right, the secular or the pious, has inevitably privileged one identity at the expense of the other. In the post-9/11 era, as Arab and Muslim institutions have been driven together by crisis and opportunity, it has become possible (even necessary) to stitch these historical threads together. By doing so in this essay, I hope to illuminate the broader array of circumstances that compelled Arab Americans to work together across their many differences to defend a way of life and an urban space that offered them limited but important refuge. These conditions shaped the Southend in the 1970s, and they are essential to understanding the role of Arabs and Muslims in the city of Dearborn (and elsewhere) in the 2010s.

FROM VITAL TO EXPENDABLE: HENRY FORD'S MULTIETHNIC WORKER'S RESERVE

I began working in the Southend of Dearborn in 1987, when I was hired to establish a cultural arts program for ACCESS, then a neighborhood-based social service agency. My new colleagues were eager to fill me in on local history and folklore; they had wonderful stories to tell of labor organizing, goon squads, personal encounters with Henry Ford, Depression-era survival strategies, and life in Dearborn's working-class "melting pot." Those who lingered with me over cups of coffee in neighborhood haunts, or pored over newspaper clippings collected in family albums, exposed me to what Lucy Lippard aptly designates the "lure of the local."⁸ Many of these narratives were passed on to me as preparation for the task of representing the local community in the grants I wrote to support ACCESS's fledgling arts program. Like the storytellers all around me, I soon became a "culture broker and image-maker"⁹ in my own right. My job, after all, required me to explain who Detroit's Arabs were, how they had come to live there, and what their

lives were like. At ACCESS, these narratives always began in the Southend itself.

The Southend, I was told, took shape as a home to industrial workers in the late 1910s and early 1920s after Henry Ford began work on what would quickly become the world's largest industrial complex, the Rouge Factory, along Miller Road.¹⁰ In its heyday, the Rouge employed over 90,000 workers who converted iron, coal, and rubber into automobiles. New migrants from the American South, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Mexico, and the Middle East settled in the Southend, as long as they were not black. Ford helped develop housing in Inkster, just west of Dearborn, for his black workers; the rest were encouraged to remain in Detroit.¹¹ The white and off-white migrants who settled in the Southend had a great deal in common, although they had come to Michigan from very different places. They struggled to learn English, to earn enough money to get ahead in the world, and to build the social clubs, churches, and mosques that fostered the cultural forms they had brought with them. They faced the perils of urban life together.

Those who grew up in the Southend in the 1930s to 1950s delight in describing its broad ethnic spectrum. Joe Borrajo, using an allusion common in Dearborn, told me "In the 1950s, Ripley's *Believe it or Not* had Dearborn listed in its book as being a very unique demographic area. It had thirty-three different nationality groups in that particular community. And, little did I know, or any of the guys I ran with (and the guys I ran with were of Mexican background, Italians, Romanian, Southern boys and Lebanese) and we would all go to each other's homes and taste each other's foods [. . .] And we went with each other to the different churches that each of us belonged to."¹² Borrajo is himself the child of immigrants; his father was from Yemen and his mother from Yugoslavia. Despite having grown up in an isolated neighborhood during hard times, most former Southenders are conspicuously proud of their neighborhood's complex ethnic mix. In his detailed examination of census data from 1940, neighborhood historian Rudy Constantine places this number of ethno-national origins carefully at forty-nine.¹³

The Southend is also notorious for the brutal labor battles that took place there in the 1930s, when the United Auto Workers (UAW) fought to organize the last major automobile manufacturer that resisted unionization, the Ford Motor Company, or "Ford's," as it is still known in Dearborn. The Ford Hunger March took place on Miller Road in 1932. The four white men killed by the Dearborn Police in this

confrontation are buried in nearby Woodmere cemetery.¹⁴ The “Battle of the Overpass,” which took place on Miller as well, in 1937, was a significant turning point in the campaign to unionize Ford.¹⁵ And in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the neighborhood’s “militant” UAW Local 600 led a “right to work” campaign that sought, despite tremendous opposition from their national leadership, to disrupt the decentralization and automation of the industry and end its growing reliance on the use of overtime.¹⁶ For neighborhood residents, participation in union struggles was not uniformly glorious and heroic, nor was it one-sided. Henry Ford’s best union-buster and all-around-thug, Harry Bennett, recruited several members of his “goon squad” in the Southend.¹⁷ This private militia enforced company policy in the neighborhood, at the factory gates, and on the shop floors.

Alan Amen, whose father worked at the Rouge for thirty-four years, explained to me that the union issue was not as clear-cut to Southend workers in the 1930s as it is today. Both sides promised better pay and working conditions. “You have to remember, Dearborn was Henry Ford: the benefactor, the old man, the guy who took care of you. Organizing in opposition to Ford’s wishes was not an easy task for immigrants who looked at Ford as a, what was he? This guy was the icon of American opportunity.”¹⁸ Don Unis, a Dearborn fire fighter who grew up in the Southend, tells a number of “clever fox” stories about his immigrant father and other Lebanese workers from the neighborhood celebrating their skill at escaping work by making the best of chance encounters with Ford himself or, a few years later, with Jimmy Hoffa.¹⁹ Many workers in the first immigrant generation were not interested in class struggle but in using personal connections and raw wit to leverage job security.

Stories about the multiethnic past and labor activism already seemed sepia-toned and a bit surreal in the late 1980s. The Southend’s six thousand residents were by then overwhelmingly Arab, immigrant, and disproportionately unemployed.²⁰ When I visited Dix Avenue, the Southend’s commercial strip, for the first few times on my own, I was treated with outright suspicion and occasional hostility. The only non-Arabs left on Dix, it appeared, were INS officials, social workers, cops, and the occasional sex worker. By 1987, a new set of stories had emerged alongside the older ones, and they expressed the same eagerness to connect the local to the national and transnational, to assert the importance of this small, neglected place. These narratives were also about labor organizers and unions, immigration, diversity, and political activism. Yet neighborhood politics and class interests

were now rendered in explicitly Arab terms. In the new stories Arabs were the leaders. Arabs defeated Dearborn's infamous racist mayor, Hubbard. Arab workers, and their compatriots in the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, shut down the Dodge Main assembly line to protest UAW support for Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Arabs took over (and Arabs lost control of) the city's oldest mosque. Most importantly, Arabs created the community organizations that now empowered them to tell these stories, like ACCESS and the AMS. In the Southend, Arabs were constructing a new politics that would connect Dearborn to an Arab/Muslim community that was decidedly American, yet global in orientation and impact.

This newer way of talking about the Southend evolved against the backdrop of Arab Detroit as a whole, a community that spread across urban and suburban boundaries in ways the older, Southend-centric, multiethnic, working-class identities could not. The story of Detroit's "Arab-American community" begins in the Ottoman Province of Syria (today's Lebanon and Syria) with a handful of Christian villagers who decided to seek their fortunes in "Amreeka," a world they had learned about from French and American missionaries in the Levant. By 1900, Detroit was already home to a small colony of Syrians, mostly peddlers and their local suppliers.²¹ Muslim Syrians had joined the migration and were quickly establishing themselves in Highland Park when Henry Ford, desperate to staff his newly minted and hopelessly tedious moving assembly, doubled the daily wage of workers in 1914. The economy of Detroit took off in this period, and the Syrian enclaves in Highland Park and near the Jefferson Avenue Chrysler plant on Detroit's East side took off along with it. Village clubs and religious associations established in the 1910s developed into a half dozen Syrian-majority churches and mosques in the decades that followed. The Muslim families who migrated with Ford to Dearborn in the 1920s opened their first mosques, the Progressive Arabian Hashmie Society and the American Moslem Society in 1937 and 1938 respectively, near the intersection of Dix Avenue and (today's) Vernor Highway. A small network of Iraqi and Palestinian Christians also established themselves in Detroit in the early part of the century. Most of these communities, once firmly in place, would sponsor the chain migration of relatives. This steady trickle of arrivals continued until 1965, when the liberalization of US immigration laws, combined with political conflict in the region, encouraged the migration of tens of thousands of Middle Easterners to Detroit.²²

The Arabs who settled in Dearborn's Southend were mostly Muslim and working class, which set their community apart from the Arab Christian enclaves which were, by mid-century, largely middle class and dispersed among the city's eastern suburbs. In addition to the two mosques, the Southend business district along Dix Avenue was home to Kamel's, a small neighborhood restaurant, Ozman's and Abbass's restaurants, Shaheen's Supermarket, several Turkish and Arab coffee houses, Berri's Halal Meats (the first explicitly halal business in Michigan),²³ Mr. Saad's grocery, a cobbler, Louie's Coney Island, and a plethora of non-Arab businesses: a small theater, a Chinese laundry, a bar, a five and dime shop, a drug store, and a gambling joint known as "the Hole." This business district, usually referred to as "Dix" by Arabs living in other parts of Detroit, was the "symbolic center and heart" of the city's Arab communities, and it was known not only for its tight concentration of businesses and people, but also for its "receptivity to and involvement with politics in the home country."²⁴

Abdo Elkholy, in his 1966 study of the local Muslim community, captures the feel of the Southend:

Members of the Detroit community. . . came from the old country directly to Detroit, where they established their ghetto-like colony in Dearborn . . . One cannot but observe the Arabic atmosphere on Dix Street: here are many coffee-houses whose patrons speak Arabic and drink the same strong tea and Turkish coffee in small cups that they drank in the old country and play the same games . . . The Syrian groceries import food from Syria. The Syrian bakeries and pastry shops provide familiar foods too.²⁵

In the 1950s and 1960s, Lebanese, Palestinians, and a growing Yemeni population co-existed comfortably with their non-Arab neighbors, who were still, far and away, the Southend's majority population. In the wake of the civil rights movement, however, cracks began to appear in the collective narrative of immigrant struggle and assimilation. Newly arriving Arabs were increasingly viewed as disruptive to the *status quo*, and, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the pan-Arab alliances that formed in solidarity and defiance quickly threatened earlier bonds that had encouraged Arab inclusion in the Southend's white working class.

YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL

By the 1950s, Dearborn's Southend had become politically expendable. It was an isolated neighborhood with a reputation for horrific pollution, militant autoworkers, and over-crowded housing. As Dearborn's available landscape filled with homes and shopping malls, schools and "residents only" parks (a Dearborn euphemism for "whites only"), Mayor Hubbard was under pressure to set aside more land for heavy industry. Ford Motor provided over half of the city's revenues,²⁶ and this gave the auto manufacturer immense clout in city hall. The Ford Leasing Development Company, a division of Ford, constructed upper-middle class housing and shopping malls on their land in central and west Dearborn, but zoning ordinances kept their heavy industry away from the city's white collar precincts. The Southend also lay inconveniently between the gates of the Rouge factory and those of the Edward C. Levy Company, which converted slag and other industrial waste into asphalt for local roads. This combination of factors led Hubbard and the City Council to plan for the gradual rezoning of the Southend as an industrial park.

The Southend's housing stock, much of it built quickly and cheaply in the 1920s, was deemed run down and inadequate in the 1950s. Iris Becker, a teacher and longtime neighborhood activist, described the conditions under which neighborhood housing was first created: "Some of [the housing] was very fast and part of it was self-built. You know, the people who were foreign-born or came from other places built small homes and some of them were larger. They did a lot of work themselves. Some of it was quality work and some of it was not quality work."²⁷ A report written about the neighborhood in 1940 by Sociologist Albert Ammerman described the housing as much more likely to be substandard than in other parts of Dearborn, reaching "near slum conditions" in some places and suffering from intense overcrowding. The data he drew on for this report was collected during the Great Depression, when the number of unemployed in Detroit reached over 400,000 workers.²⁸ Many families doubled up during this period, but the boom years that followed (during World War II) did little to alleviate overcrowding as hundreds of thousands of new people flocked to the city to work in wartime industries. Detroit's factories spilled out jeeps, tanks, and airplanes at record speed, but many new arrivals to the area lived in tents and other forms of temporary housing. In the post-war period, Ford, in particular, began to decentralize automobile production, introducing automation and

reducing the size and power of the labor force at the Rouge.²⁹ This too affected the Southend. The generation of neighborhood men who walked to their jobs at Ford's was quickly passing away. When veterans returned from the war, many of them bought houses elsewhere. The Southend had come to be viewed as an immigrant ghetto. Many residents, despite their warm feelings toward the place, fled it as soon as they had the chance, moving usually into more stable, middle-class parts of Dearborn and its neighboring suburbs.

To make matters worse, the Southend was a residential island in a sea of heavy industry. The mile-long Rouge colossus bordered the community to the west and overshadowed its skyline. To the east, there was the Levy Company, with its uncovered mountains of slag. To the north, a series of trucking facilities, brick manufacturers, and other light industries added noise and exhaust. To the southeast lay Woodmere Cemetery and Patton Park, in Detroit. Just southwest of Dearborn, in Melvindale, was the Darling soap works and several oil refineries. Prevailing winds brought the emissions of the Rouge plant directly over the Southend. Winds from the south brought the sickening smell of offal that had not yet been perfumed to make soap. Winds from the east brought flecks of slag so steadily that in the 1960s, residents' homes were covered by a thick film of residue.³⁰ In 1971 the Air Pollution Control Division of Wayne County found the Southend's air to have "on the average twice as many suspended particulates – dust, fly ash, coke, iron oxides (to name a few) – as the federal standards permit for health. On some days, it has more than three times the maximum."³¹ Fly ash from the factory slowly ate away the paint on neighborhood cars. Houses were filthy on the outside, and difficult to keep clean inside as well. Drying laundry while keeping it free of soot and ash was an endless battle in the era of the clothesline.³² Neighborhood residents referred to Hashmie Hall, one of the mosques on Dix, as "the coal mine" because its uninsulated windows let in so much soot that the surfaces of the furniture had to be cleaned before each and every use.³³ By the 1970s, the roof of the local elementary school began to collapse from the heavy weight of accumulated pollutants.³⁴

It was the Southend's location between the Ford and Levy facilities that led to the first confrontation between Southend residents and city officials. Levy had begun hauling slag away from the Rouge in 1922, and in 1948 opened a new slag processing facility at 8880 Dix Avenue, just across the border in Detroit, to deal with increased production at Rouge Steel and other nearby factories on Zug Island.³⁵

Their somewhat convoluted entrance on Dix was not convenient to their new facilities, so they began to exploit their back entrance at the end of Eagle Street in the heart of the Southend's residential area. To facilitate this shift, the city began repaving Eagle with reinforced steel roadbeds designed for multi-ton trucks in the early 1950s, even though city-zoning ordinances prohibited such industrial usage of residential streets. Soon thundering tandem vehicles, spraying slag as they drove past, were a constant nuisance and threat to local residents. The slag itself was stored in large, unprotected berms, directly across the street from neighborhood homes.³⁶ In response, Octavius Germany, head of the Southend's Homeowners Association, called on a young neighborhood resident, Michael Berry, who had just passed the state bar exam, to see if anything could be done to force the city to intervene on the residents' behalf. Berry and Germany convened a meeting for affected homeowners at Romanian Hall and laid out a plan to draw media attention to their plight. They organized a series of protests that are best remembered today for the human chains local housewives formed to bar the trucks from their street. These tactics generated sympathetic press accounts, which helped Berry win a temporary injunction to halt the traffic and construction. A young and very green Berry then found himself facing off in court against William Henry Gallagher, among the leading trial attorneys in Michigan, who had the resources of Ford Motor behind him. The judge nonetheless found in Berry's favor and halted the plans of the city and its corporate patrons.³⁷

This courtroom defeat did not deter the city of Dearborn from its efforts to gradually phase out housing in the Southend. Instead, municipal authorities began to ignore levels of blight that were not tolerated in other parts of the well-resourced suburb, reduce city services, and pressure residents to leave. Neighborhood health hazards, including the trash-filled, stagnant "Baby Creek" and rat infestations, received no attention from city officials. In 1961, led this time by Darrell Donaldson (a Southend resident with roots in Kentucky), Joe Borrajo, and Helen Atwell (a Lebanese American), the Southeast Dearborn Community Council (SEDCC) organized to redress the area's sagging appearance and endangered environment. According to Donaldson, "We fought absentee landlords – buildings filled with code violations – abandoned cars – etc. We took jars of bugs we gathered from rooming houses and took them to the health department. Mayor Hubbard would never meet with us. We lost every battle."³⁸ Joining with the International Institute of Detroit,³⁹ residents

began a “keep Dearborn clean” campaign to rectify environmental dangers and clean up neglected municipal spaces. Suzanne Sareini, whose family owned a Coney Island on Dix that later became a well-known nightclub, Uncle Sam’s, remembers complaining to business owners on Dix about the shoddy appearance of the business district. With a water hose in hand, she would spray the windows of offending store owners, yelling at them, “If you don’t wash your windows, no one is going to come down here and buy anything from you!”⁴⁰

The early members of the SEDCC were representative of the neighborhood as a whole and not of any one ethnic constituency. The three presidents who followed Donaldson, for example, were Italian, Greek, and Cherokee in turn.⁴¹ Much of the SEDCC’s success was attributed to the multiethnic alliances the group enacted. Ironically, the city justified its plans to rezone the Southend by pointing to the same environmental factors SEDCC activists had long complained about, especially the poor air quality. As one city brochure put it, “one has to drive through the area himself to determine that the location is not best suited for residential use. The South End should have been, and some day will be, an industrial park.”⁴² When, in 1961, the City began refusing to issue building permits to Southend residents, set about condemning homes that needed repairs, purchasing them at below market rates, and tearing them down—all with funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development—the SEDCC was positioned to fight back.

The first blocks of houses were destroyed in 1962, at a loss of eighty-five homes, and sold to the Levy Asphalt Company and Mercier Bricks. In 1966 another ninety-two families were displaced. Their properties were sold to the Ford Leasing Development Company. Eventually, more than 350 homes were destroyed and their families evicted, while the distance between Ford and Levy shrank, block by block.⁴³ What is more, the city posted signs in front of recently acquired homes that said, “Free at your risk, take any part of the house. First come, first served. Hurry.”⁴⁴ By neglecting the properties they acquired, the city drove down the value of the homes of those who refused to sell, further contributing to the environmental crisis facing the community. Another sign, “Whoever wishes to sell to the city of Dearborn, call City Attorney,” followed by a telephone number, became ubiquitous in the neighborhood. Working with Detroit’s FHA and commercial lenders, the city was able to deny loans and loan insurance to private citizens attempting to make home improvements or purchase neighborhood properties.⁴⁵

When the city of Dearborn, using strong-arm tactics like these, made an offer on Lebanese-American Katherine Amen's house, she and her son, Alan, decided to stand their ground. They were joined by the newly committed membership of the SEDCC, which had grown and become more radical in its tactics as the city targeted scores of neighborhood homes and institutions. "[Ford and the city of Dearborn] messed with the wrong people," remembers Ismael Ahmed, another Lebanese American who entered neighborhood politics in the early 1970s. "A lot of the older workers here were people who had organized the union—old Italian anarchists and Marxists—and a lot of people in the neighborhood who had nothing to lose but their homes."⁴⁶ They "shared tactics and strategies" with younger SEDCC activists, who then went out and applied them. If the council received news that a building was ear-marked for destruction, they would occupy the building and organize human chains to stand in front of the city's bulldozers. Sometimes these tactics worked, but only for the short term. Residents sought support from the Teamsters (who operated the city's tractors). Alan Amen went on a public speaking tour in West Dearborn and gave tours of the neighborhood to church groups from the west side and urban rights organizations that were forming in Detroit.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the businesses along Dix also began to organize. Understanding that without a neighborhood to sustain them they would soon lose everything, several store owners set about repairing shabby storefronts and attracting new business to the area. The South East Community Development Corporation (CDC) was formed in the late 1960s and worked with Congressman John Dingell's office to leverage low interest loans and grants from the federal government to provide the business district with a facelift and to rebrand the area as "Arabian Village." Allan Mallad, whose family had long managed a restaurant on Dix, led this effort. In 1970, he and his father, Sam, converted their Coney Island and adjoining stores into a 225-seat night club named Uncle Sam's, spending a half million dollars on the project. The full-service bar and nightclub featured more than Arab food. It also presented live music and belly dancing, which were new to the Southend commercial district. Mallad, an admirer of Mayor Hubbard, remembers adopting the mayor's personal slogan—"Clean your own doorstep and the whole world will be clean!"—as his own. Mallad's sister, Suzanne (Sareini), ran a grocery store next to the restaurant that also catered to the "Arabian Village" theme. It was the first truly full-service Arab grocery in the area, offering imported goods from the

Middle East, fresh Arab breads and sweets, and the spice and grain bins that are ubiquitous in such stores today. Despite their shared goal of cleaning up the neighborhood and investing in its stability and growth, the CDC did not collaborate well with SEDCC activists, whose leftist politics were at odds with those of the entrepreneurs. Instead, Mallad encouraged Ford, his primary employer, to renovate its mile-long parking lots and other facilities along Miller Avenue. Mallad's efforts to transform this corridor into a "gateway" to the neighborhood failed.⁴⁸

Renewed interest in the neighborhood by these different factions notwithstanding, time was running out for the Southend. A public school was destroyed in 1966. Dearborn bus lines reduced their services to the Southend, cutting it off further from the rest of the city. The neighborhood library and police sub-station were closed. While some of the neighborhood's older, non-Arab activists began to abandon the struggle and sell to the city, Alan Amen quit his job and took on the fight to save the neighborhood full time. He became vice-president of the SEDCC in 1968 and president in 1970. In 1971 he filed a class action suit against the city, with the support of Wayne County Legal Services, to halt the destruction, and in 1973 he won an injunction to force the city to stop seizing properties and to end their urban renewal campaign.⁴⁹ In the decision's wording, "Thus far this court has determined that the city of Dearborn through its agents [. . .] has mounted a campaign in the South End and Eugene-Porath areas that constitutes a taking and that many of the sub-plans and clearance projects have been without a public purpose."⁵⁰ Among other actions, the city was forced to reimburse homeowners for the full value of their property, to work with the newly minted Environmental Protection Agency to enforce air quality regulations in the area, and to stop intervening in the acquisition of loans and loan insurance for residents. The issue was tied up in the courts for several years, but the neighborhood had won.

"FINALLY GOT THE NEWS HOW OUR DUES IS BEING USED"⁵¹

By the time the fight against city hall ended, roughly twenty-five years after Mayor Hubbard first declared the Southend a "blighted area," the demographics of the neighborhood and the SEDCC had changed significantly. Many of the activists who supported the council in its early years had lessened their involvement or moved away, leaving the organization firmly in the hands of Amen and Atwell, with many of the community's older Lebanese families providing manpower and

moral support. These families were among the pioneer residents of the neighborhood. They had built Dearborn's first mosques during the Great Depression: Hashmie Hall, which was Shi'i, and the American Moslem Society (AMS), which was Sunni. The Shi'i community, which was larger and more dispersed, had also established a second, more impressive and modern mosque, the Islamic Center of Detroit, a few miles away in 1963. By the early 1970s, Hashmie Hall was a shadow of its former self, whereas the AMS was an important Southend institution with an active Sunday school program and youth group, a new, American-born imam (Mike Karoub), and an active outreach program to local churches and universities. The mosque and the UAW Local 600 had clearly become (and still are today) the most vital institutions on Dix Avenue. Local residents who worshipped in Baptist churches or Roman Catholic parishes could (and did) find similar congregations in other parts of Detroit, but the same was not true for the Southend's Arabs, who were overwhelmingly Muslim. For Lebanese Sunnis, in particular, the Southend felt like a hard won and irreplaceable home.

Along with the mosque, the area's increasingly visible Arab businesses began to draw new immigrants to the Southend (initially, Yemenis and Palestinians). Arab student activists from Wayne State University and the University of Michigan were also a growing presence in the neighborhood. In fact, these young activists played a significant role in helping the SEDCC fund and even staff its legal campaign.⁵² Members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Black Panther Party, and the White Panther Party were active in Dearborn, and members of the Organization of Arab Students (OAS), a national student organization founded in Ann Arbor in 1952 to advocate for the development of the Arab region, began to hang out in the coffee houses on Dix, as did members of several far-left factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁵³ They got to know the established Lebanese-American population, the new Yemeni autoworkers, and the equally new Palestinians, who were mostly from Beit Hanina and El Bireh, West Bank villages that had recently been occupied by the Israeli military.

To the Arab student activists, the Southend represented an open field for political recruiting. George Khoury, who was prominent among these students, arrived in Detroit in the 1960s to study engineering at Wayne State. Khoury had been active in the OAS, but the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Sinai motivated him to abandon campus-based politics.⁵⁴ He and his compatriot in the

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Mohsin Abdul-Munim, headed to Dix to seek a following among local Arab workers. Nabeel Abraham, a Palestinian American who grew up in Southwest Detroit and also became active in student movements and the Palestinian resistance movement in the late 1960s, described the interaction between campus activists and local community members: "I remember as a student activist at Wayne, guys like Hasan Newash – DFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine], oriented completely toward Palestine—started connecting with Dix."⁵⁵ Dix, with its coffee houses and Yemeni workers, represented "Arabs." "We met Ali Bilead [a Yemeni nationalist and labor organizer], and we were impressed. "This is a community," he continued. "Hasan and the Palestinian activists hadn't gotten anywhere with Arab students on campus, so they went to the Southend to get in with the people. [. . .] This is the time when we were showing the *Battle of Algiers* at the mosque."⁵⁶

Laurel Wigle and Sameer Abraham capture this moment on Dix:

Late 1968 and the year 1969 saw Palestinian nationalism at its peak. Though the Palestinian sector of the community felt closest to the Resistance, every Arab identified himself with the struggle to liberate Palestine. In place of Nasser's photo, posters of the fedayeen [freedom fighters] were pinned up in homes, stores, restaurants and many coffeehouses. . . Talk turned from Nasser and the affairs of Arab states to the activities of the fedayeen. The daily incursions into Israeli occupied territory were followed with great zeal in the news reports. . . These issues provoked a great deal of intense discussion and debate in the coffeehouses and restaurants.⁵⁷

Ismael Ahmed, the son of a third-generation Lebanese-American mother with deep local roots and an Egyptian father, became involved with the SEDCC in this period. Connected to the SDS, both Panther parties, and other local Marxist groups, Ahmed entered Arab nationalist politics through his association with Yemeni and Palestinian autoworkers he met at Dodge Main in 1970. He joined forces in the factory with other radical labor organizers who had organized the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in 1968 to fight worsening labor conditions and anti-black racism in the UAW. By this time, it was apparent that the several thousand newly-arrived

Yemenis were routinely being assigned the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs in the plant, often being given the workload of two men. With poor English skills and little exposure to organized labor tactics, they were easy targets for management, while their UAW representatives looked the other way. They were also desperate for work, relatively isolated from other workers, and the wages they received were, by Yemeni standards, fantastically high.⁵⁸ DRUM leaders became concerned over the plight of Yemeni workers and argued that Chrysler sought "to make conditions worse for all of us by first attacking conditions for the Arab workers."⁵⁹

In 1973, Ahmed brought together these radical black workers, Arab leftists, and Arab autoworkers to form the Arab Workers Caucus (AWC), modeled on, and in solidarity with, DRUM. The AWC sought to improve working conditions in the urban factories DRUM and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers operated in, where both black and Arab workers were concentrated. Just as significantly, they sought to compel the UAW to divest its sizable holdings of Israeli war bonds (a bad economic investment undertaken for political reasons that were hardly progressive). Among Arab workers (and many of the radical black workers) the insult of handing over part of their paycheck, via union dues, to support Israeli occupation forces was rich fuel for mobilization. As Ahmed wrote in 1975, "the role of Arab nationalism in building an Arab workers caucus should not be underestimated."⁶⁰

Yemeni workers were propelled into action by two dramatic events that took place back to back in late 1973. The first, in August, was the shooting death of a Yemeni farm worker in California during a United Farm Workers (UFW) protest.⁶¹ While Naji Daifullah's death discouraged his co-nationals in California from joining the UFW, in Dearborn, it had the opposite effect. Yemenis organized a large demonstration in support of the UFW in September and sought to become more involved in the AWC. When the October Arab-Israeli War broke out, they joined Palestinian leftists who were active outside the factories and were even more galvanized to take action.⁶² The AWC chose to picket the 28 November 1973 B'nai B'rith banquet where UAW president Leonard Woodcock was set to receive an award for his unflinching support of Israel. AWC and DRUM demonstrators demanded that the UAW sell off its Israeli war bonds, then valued at more than \$750,000. Over 2,000 (mostly Arab and black) workers on the afternoon shift at Dodge Main walked out to attend the rally. This forced the closure of one of the two Dodge assembly lines and seriously slowed the second. AWC leadership was ecstatic. DRUM and other

radical movements within the local black and left communities were also impressed. By working together, they had pulled off something akin to a wildcat strike. Surely this meant Arab Americans were a constituency to be reckoned with.⁶³

The UAW was less impressed. In response to this labor action, it sold off \$50,000 of its Israeli bonds (less than ten percent), and both Chrysler and the union soon began targeting Arab workers in retribution for their unsanctioned strike.⁶⁴ This led to a serious rift between Yemeni workers, now cast as irresponsible hotheads, and Arabs from other national backgrounds. Many Yemenis were permanently laid off and forced to return to their homeland.⁶⁵ In droves, Detroit's Yemeni (and other Arab) workers walked away from the AWC and from work-related, class-based political organizing after their pyrrhic victory at Dodge Main. They were not alone. Despite their cathartic success at organized resistance, won by an alliance of Arab and black autoworkers opposed to US imperialism in the Middle East and their own mistreatment by the UAW and their corporate employers, the fleeting nature of this victory, compounded by the longer lasting corporate retribution, resulted in a major shift of direction by Detroit's radical Arab-American leftists. In the Southend itself, where Palestinian activists continued to vie with one another for local support, events in the Middle East (such as King Hussein's crushing blow to the Palestinian resistance movement in Jordan in 1970) and intense local factionalism, led to a decline in their fortunes. Eventually many of the "locals" (Southend residents) came to suspect that the "revolutionaries" would never accomplish, and perhaps did not have, goals of practical significance. For some of these locals, the mosque began to provide a compelling retreat. For others, SEDCC and its neighborhood-based model of activism provided a more attractive outlet for their political energies.⁶⁶

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY: A MARRIAGE OF AGENDAS

A slightly different set of campus-based activists were drawn into the mix of Southend politics in the same period. The Association of Arab University Graduates (AAUG), which was established in 1967, provided a forum for Arab scholars in the US who wanted to counter hegemonic representations of the Middle East and its conflicts, with a special focus on Palestine, human rights, and American policies toward the region.⁶⁷ These scholars were leftists who cared deeply about Palestine, but they were better able than others to connect the dots between the displacement of Palestinian refugees overseas and the

sought-after displacement of Southend residents, an increasing number of whom were also Palestinian. Abdeen Jabara and Barbara Aswad, in particular, helped develop this new angle on the Southend struggle, turning it from a class-based, multiethnic campaign into a civil rights campaign on behalf of the neighborhood's Arab minority. In very real ways, this framing of the struggle would fundamentally reshape Arab-American identity in Dearborn and Detroit for the next generation or more.

Abdeen Jabara, a Lebanese-American attorney from Northern Michigan, belonged to an immigrant family that had come to the US at the same time, from the same region, and along the same routes as many other Lebanese in Dearborn. He grew up attending the AMS when his family came to Dearborn to celebrate Muslim holidays or the weddings of kin and friends. While not a resident of Dearborn, Jabara was also not a stranger there. When he first learned about the SEDCC campaign, he volunteered to work on the Amen class action suit and eventually filed a legal brief on their behalf. The lead attorney on the case was Michael Barnhart, who worked for the Center for Urban Law and Housing, a division of Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services. Barnhart had actively advised the SEDCC since 1965, long before Jabara's involvement. Jabara nonetheless acted as a bridge between the civil rights legal community in Detroit and the AAUG, and he was able to leverage financial and personnel support from these outside constituencies for the neighborhood campaign.⁶⁸

For instance, Jabara introduced anthropologist Barbara Aswad to the Southend when she was hired at Wayne State in 1968. Of Scottish ancestry, Aswad had carried out her field research on the border between Syria and Turkey and later married a Syrian engineer, Adnan Aswad, who was also a founder of AAUG. From her position at WSU, Aswad carried out a landmark needs assessment study of the Southend's Arab community in 1971 that established a baseline portrait of a population that accounted for only a quarter of Southend residents at the time, but was in the midst of significant change and on the brink of exponential growth.⁶⁹ Aswad's study framed the Arab population of the Southend as a newly arrived, fragile, and disadvantaged population, an image very unlike the white, working class, well-established American identity that was more familiar to the Amens themselves, or to other SEDCC activists like Ismael Ahmed, Helen Atwel, Don Unis, and Joe Borrajo, all of whom were American born. Aswad's team found that 85 percent of the Southend's Arab residents were foreign born and of rural origins, with a third having lived in the

US for fewer than five years. The educational attainment of this population was low relative the rest of the city, with 21 percent having received no formal schooling whatsoever and another 30 percent having no more than an eighth grade education.⁷⁰ It was this vivid representation of the population as minoritized, recently arrived, economically marginal, and consisting mostly of disenfranchised post-colonial subjects, that became central to the new Arab-American identity with which Dearborn was associated in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ironically, this way of seeing Arabs in the Southend has been retrofitted to explain the Southend struggle itself, which is nowadays depicted as a distinctly Arab-American campaign. While it is true that the victory of the SEDCC had the greatest consequences for Arabs who remained in the Southend, and that the group was led by Arabs in its final days, it is important to remember that the Southend was still a majority non-Arab neighborhood in 1973. Moreover, the SEDCC still had prominent non-Arab supporters, like Donaldson and Iris Becker, local school teachers who had a long history of working closely with the SEDCC. According to Barbara Aswad, most neighborhood Arab Americans did not participate in the SEDCC campaign at all. Instead, they were “waiting to see who emerges the victor, the City or the Council.”⁷¹ Nor were the Palestinian student activists involved. Jabara and Aswad were the rare outside activists who clearly understood how the local plight of Southend residents was related to US foreign policy and Arab nationalist causes overseas.

Another somewhat anachronistic way of describing the Southend struggle is the attribution of anti-Arab attitudes and an ethnic-cleansing agenda to city planners and Mayor Hubbard. Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin suggest that “Mayor Hubbard had never made it a secret that Dearborn was a ‘white man’s town,’ and the Arabs were considered to be so many ‘white niggers’.”⁷² In a similar vein, Barbara Aswad links the mayor’s stepped up actions to the growing Yemeni population in Dearborn.⁷³ The newly-arrived Yemenis, as these writers point out, were generally darker-skinned than the Lebanese, and they certainly had fewer English language skills or other socioeconomic advantages. Most Yemeni auto-workers were in the US without their families, and they were widely seen to have a destabilizing impact on the neighborhood. Suzanne Sareini, who sold beer and wine at her Arab grocery store, remembers binge drinking, qat chewing (a stimulant narcotic consumed legally in Yemen that went unregulated in Dearborn until the 1980s), and frequent street-level fighting. “We had a hard time getting people to come down to the

Southend. It was like the Wild West down there, with guys throwing punches and bullets flying through the windows," Sareini recalls today.⁷⁴ And yet in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Yemeni population lived mostly in an area south of the mosque, which was not included in the city's urban renewal plans.⁷⁵ It is unclear the extent to which city officials were even aware of the diversity of the Arab community at the time.

Alan Amen likewise attributed the mayor's hostility to the Southend to several factors, race primary among them. "The issue of racism as it played in the Southend of Dearborn had a particular bent when it came to the dark-skinned citizens of the Southend, who were the Arabs. That's a term used by Orville Hubbard. He referred to what he needed to do with his 'dark-skinned citizens' in the Southend. But it's basically an issue of racism, an anti-black and anti-African American sentiment extended onto people who are dark."⁷⁶ Joe Borrajo adds that by the 1950s and 1960s many of the older Lebanese families in Dearborn were doing well enough financially to purchase homes in East Dearborn, a neighborhood that was then largely Irish, Italian, and Polish. "Arabs were confined to the Southend at the time, so we weren't looked upon as a threat to be concerned about. But when we started moving into the east end, holy jeez, then . . . that's when the problem starts."⁷⁷

Hubbard's anti-black racism was well known in Michigan and nationally. In Dearborn, the popular slogan "Keep Dearborn Clean" was a euphemism for keeping it white, and while Ford Motor had depended on black labor, Henry Ford had been equally careful to maintain racially segregated housing for his workers. The most infamous segregationist mayor in the North, Hubbard also expended a great deal of energy trying to keep blacks out of the city. During the housing shortages of WWII, he adamantly opposed the construction of public housing in Dearborn, arguing that "housing Negroes is Detroit's problem," and, more evocatively, "When you remove garbage from your backyard, you don't dump it in your neighbor's."⁷⁸ A generation later, during the 1967 uprisings in Detroit, Hubbard also stood alongside his police force on the Michigan Avenue border and commanded them to "shoot any looters on site."⁷⁹ As Amen puts it today, "People knew where they were supposed to live by your color and your level of assimilation and your job."⁸⁰ Those who lived in the Southend in the 1950s and 1960s certainly understood their privileged status as white workers. They also sensed their less than privileged ranking in the class divisions of Dearborn, where it was generally felt

that “only persons of foreign birth would live in the South End.”⁸¹ In Joe Borrajo’s words, “we were all from immigrant backgrounds. We were called ‘culturally deprived.’ The stigma of being from the Southend... We were treated as pariahs in the rest of Dearborn.” Ismael Ahmed recently asserted that the discrimination he experienced growing up in the Southend was class based, and that he felt it “not as an Arab, but as a person of the Southend. Because as you began to go out of the neighborhood, the Southend had this terrible reputation in the city, mainly because it was a low-income neighborhood, I think. We were called ‘factory rats’ then and so forth.”⁸²

This sense of exclusion was a far cry from the violent, anti-black racism of Hubbard and his supporters. Nonetheless, as the Southend became more Arab, existing classist and racist sentiments were projected onto the newly arriving Arabs, who were described in the local press as “arrogant, unclean and sloppy, untruthful and clannish beyond belief”; who were referred to as “camel jockeys” and “sand niggers” in the hate-mail received by the mosque; who were euphemized as “the foreign element” by representatives of the city; and who were told, in a familiar refrain, to “go back where you came from” at the SEDCC.⁸³ “So pervasive” was “the Arabic atmosphere” of the neighborhood that many of the non-Arabs who remained there began to complain of feeling “‘in a foreign country’ in one’s own neighborhood.”⁸⁴ Yet there is no evidence to suggest that Dearborn stepped up its efforts to replace Southend housing with heavy industry in direct response to the increasing Arabization of the population. The latter trend developed only toward the very end of the Southend struggle. The neighborhood itself was not a majority-Arab enclave when the SEDCC began its fight in the early 1960s. It is more a matter of coincidence that the most heavily Arab-populated areas happened also to be those located nearest to the Amazon entrance to the Levy Company. Yet because the Southend became an Arab majority area in the period immediately following the SEDCC legal case, the memory of the Southend struggle has been Arabized in retrospect. In the 1980s, this narrative twist allowed the earlier-arrived Arab families and the new Arab immigrants to attach themselves to a locality, and a local history, that now belonged uniquely to them.

Additionally, many of the activists who took part in the Southend struggle—a small group from the AAUG, several leaders of the SEDCC, Palestinian and Yemeni leftists, and the leadership of the AWC—came together to found the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in 1974, with George Khoury,

Helen Atwell, Ismael Ahmed, and Charles Albert as its first officers.⁸⁵ Initially, in 1971, a smaller collection of Arab leftists and AAUG supporters opened a storefront organization on Vernor Highway in Southwest Detroit that they called the Arab Community Center for Employment.⁸⁶ There they began to address “the pressing domestic problems plaguing the immigrant community, problems which were largely ignored by them in the past. In so doing, the activists sought to link the social and economic concerns of the immigrant workers to the broader issues of Arab nationalism.”⁸⁷ The fledgling organization initiated efforts to redress the problems Aswad had identified in her 1971 study via English classes, employment services, and translation services. The volunteers quickly recruited SEDCC members and a few leaders from the growing South Yemeni National Liberation Front and their neighborhood assistance outlet, the Yemeni American Benevolent Association (YABA), who all insisted the group relocate onto Dix Avenue, where they operated out of Hashmie Hall. Ron Amen (Alan’s older brother), George Khoury, Hasan Newash, Ali Bilead, Mohsin Abdel-Munim, Abdeen Jabara, Sobhi Abdel Sater, the Aswads (Barbara and her husband, Adnan), and Don Unis were the activists who joined forces to build ACCESS in its earliest days.⁸⁸

Ismael Ahmed joined the group in 1973, shortly after the excitement and disappointment of the AWC campaign led him to re-evaluate his goals and to walk away from the radical left. In a 1985 interview with Robert Mast, he describes this transition in the following language:

During those years in the plants, I worked with a lot of Marxist groups. But there was a parting of the ways at a certain point. This was a very rhetorical time among the left. I would work in the community and see that talking about Soviet revisionism didn’t make sense. That’s the last thing on people’s minds. The main difference I had with a lot of the left people was that they called community work reformist. And to me it was the only thing that mattered. So I resigned from the plant and began writing grants for ACCESS. I wanted to help develop it into a community-based organization that not only provided services but took on social issues and built allegiances with other, mainly minority, working-class folks.⁸⁹

Ahmed was welcomed at ACCESS because the student activists thought he might hold the elusive key to mobilizing Arab workers. He

instead steered the organization toward providing much-needed services to Arab workers and immigrant families. These goals were supported in the beginning by small grants from AAUG, the International Institute of Detroit, the Presbyterian Church, and by the gratis use of the YABA building on Salina Street. Inspired initially by the breakfast program of the Black Panther Party, the Saul Alinsky community organizing model, and Latino service organizations in Southwest Detroit, the ACCESS agenda gradually came to be dominated by Ahmed and several SEDCC organizers, whose initial success at landing government block grants distributed by the city of Dearborn turned their heads away from the radical left and toward municipal, state, and federal funding sources.

While they remained sympathetic to revolutionary aspirations and Third World liberation movements of every stripe, Southend activists increasingly focused their efforts on rebuilding the neighborhood and improving the quality of life for its residents. In the years after it defeated Orville Hubbard, the SEDCC was able to leverage a \$3.4 million grant from HUD to develop public housing on the site of destroyed neighborhood homes. They also received a National Endowment for the Arts grant to explore the aesthetic traditions of their once-diverse community.⁹⁰ The Community Development Corporation active on Dix was finally able to give the business district a facelift using city block grant dollars, constructing a series of Arabesque arches along the street's storefronts and officially renaming the district "Arabian Village." These efforts were not administered by ACCESS, but by its neighborhood rivals. By 1979, Arabs made up roughly three-quarters of the area's residents. The Southend had lost its multicultural working class profile and was now an enclave of newly-arrived, poor, often unskilled Arab immigrants. ACCESS and the SEDCC came to resemble one another in personnel, form, and intent. They began to compete, not for workers and volunteers, but for government assistance, especially Dearborn block grant funds. ACCESS won this competition, and the SEDCC closed its doors in 1985.⁹¹ Today, the ACCESS annual budget tops \$18 million. Many of its activities are national in scope, including the Arab American National Museum, which ACCESS launched in 2005. In creating ACCESS, a confluence of organizers discovered the power of language and identity to shape political alliances. They came together to address the immediate concerns of Arabs in Dearborn. Rather than focus principally on nationalist movements in the Arab world, ACCESS turned its energy toward quality of life issues in the Southend,

labor movements in Detroit and elsewhere, and the civil rights movement. Pam Pennock argues that this merging of political and social issues was not unique to Dearborn or Detroit. The OAS, AAUG, and other activist organizations of the period were also “creating a transnational, activist, increasingly Arab *American* identity built upon a leftist, non-sectarian political orientation that championed Palestinian Revolution.”⁹² What these organizations lacked, however, were the firm links to American public and private funding sources that ACCESS had managed to create out of this long process of struggle and place making.

ISLAM IS THE (OTHER) SOLUTION

Today, stories about the Southend struggles of the 1970s are a tremendous source of power and legitimacy for ACCESS, and they appear often in print, public art, and museum exhibitions. They summarize the complex, messy chain of events that gave rise to the Arab-American community ACCESS serves, administers and, in very real ways, hopes to control. The left/secular/engaged identity formation these narratives sustain is embraced by many of the Arab-American institutions that evolved in the wake of ACCESS and AAUG: for instance, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Arab American Institute, the American Arab Chamber of Commerce, the Arab American Political Action Committee, and the Arab American News, to name just a few. And yet the Southend struggles also contributed to a much more conservative Arab/Muslim identity, one that is equally common in Detroit (and especially in representations of Dearborn) ever since. Because this identity did not emerge out of campaigns waged against the state (city officials) or industrial interests (Ford, Chrysler, and the UAW), but out of conflicts waged among Arab Muslims themselves, it has been much more difficult to narrate in public contexts. This silence should not be interpreted as evidence that the events I am about to describe are less well known in Detroit, or that they are less vital to Dearborn’s Arab/Muslim communities. Instead, it suggests that another kind of public is at stake.

In the 1960s and 1970s, not all recently arrived Arab workers in the Southend spent their spare time and money in the coffee houses and bars on Dix Avenue. Many had chosen to settle there, despite the neighborhood’s shrinking size and apparent neglect, because there was a mosque in the neighborhood, and not just any mosque. The AMS was the oldest mosque in Michigan. Expanded and renovated in the 1950s, it had a sizeable prayer area, classrooms, a simple dome and small,

symbolic minarets. It looked and felt like a mosque to those who worshipped there. Although it was one of a handful of mosques in the US that had been built explicitly as a mosque, rather than renovated from an earlier structure, the AMS was not like a Middle Eastern house of prayer. Its American born imam, Mike Karoub, who assumed leadership of the congregation when his father, Hussein Karoub, passed away in 1973, preached in English. The younger Karoub's left-progressive perspective was of a piece with that of the SEDCC, AWC, and ACCESS. He worked closely with Masjid al-Mu`mineen, Detroit's oldest black Sunni congregation, and with other black converts throughout the city. He supported women's rights, civil rights, legal access to abortion, and worker's rights, while opposing the Vietnam War, Israel, and other US-backed imperial projects. Under his leadership, the AMS was not uniformly open on Friday at noon for prayer, instead holding its communal prayers on Sunday mornings. The Women's Auxiliary of the mosque held almost as much sway over the institution as did its all-male Board of Directors, and women came and went from the mosque as if it were their second home, wearing the fashions of the period, including shorts, short skirts, and sleeveless dresses. Scarves were donned in the mosque by women only when they entered the prayer hall to pray. Just as importantly, the mosque was kept under lock and key when not in use. If a group wanted to use the mosque outside its regular worship hours, they were asked to pay a small fee to help maintain the building. This was equally true of weddings, funerals, practice sessions for the mosque's dabka troupe, and for groups who met at the mosque to hold Qur'anic recitations or other religious programs not overseen by the board or the imam.⁹³

As the demographics of the Southend began to change in the 1970s, the Lebanese families who had sustained the mosque since it was established in 1938 found themselves increasingly on the defensive. The younger Karoub's leadership style, which had long been problematic for the board's more conservative members, was odd and offensive to many new immigrants. Some felt that the imam's Arabic was not strong enough, even though he was fluent and had long edited an Arabic language newspaper. Some felt that his informal religious education, consisting of long tutelage at his father's feet and a religious studies degree from WSU, was inadequate. Many were uncomfortable with his politics. For Abdo Alasry, the problem was one of spiritual leadership. Alasry arrived in Dearborn from Yemen in 1967, and like many of his fellow nationals, he embraced a conservative lifestyle and religious orientation that were explicitly averse to the leftist politics of

the period. He was not impressed with the AMS, the Southend, or the Muslim Americans who lived there.

The institution was very bad. If you looked at it from a [Muslim perspective], lot of people they do not practice Islam. They do not pray. It doesn't matter. You could not make a difference between them and other people, you know. Lot of them. You might see a few people practicing Islam, but the majority, no. You see gambling places. You see bars. They have alcohol, a lot of places. Also they had some Arab people being killed in this area, too.⁹⁴

This perspective was common among the new, post-1965 migrant cohort, most of them recently displaced by the Israeli Occupation, related political instability in Lebanon, or the independence movements and civil wars that beset North and South Yemen in the 1960s and 1970s. Echoing patterns from the early twentieth century, the newcomers who settled in Dearborn were often bachelors or married men whose families remained in the homeland. Their religious expectations were different from those of the already established congregation at the AMS, which was now predominately American born. The new Muslim immigrants endorsed a general turn away from the secular left and toward a more intentional and explicit Islamic practice. They also sought to preserve their culture and identity in ways the AMS founders, who now felt very at home in the US, found irrational and extreme. The mosque's board became nervous, not just about Karoub, but also about the tensions that came with this new demographic reality.

Nihad Hamed, an Egyptian engineer who was the mosque's president, worked with Imam Karoub to change the mosque's bylaws in order to protect the status quo. The imam asked for a permanent seat on the board, and the president attempted to have his own term extended from one to four years. Additionally, the women's auxiliary tried to deny voting rights to new members of the congregation. The board, however, fearing the influence of Karoub and the women's auxiliary, and in some cases siding directly with the conservative doctrines and social values expressed by the mosque's newest members, blocked these proposals.⁹⁵

As these conflicts brewed at the AMS, Muslim revivalists began to visit the coffeehouses on Dix. The most visible of these missionaries

were associated with the Tablighi Jama'at, a Pakistan-based piety movement that encouraged Muslims to focus on the everyday practice of their faith. Tablighis had first targeted Detroit's Muslim enclaves in the early 1950s, sending Pakistani missionaries who were welcomed at Masjid al-Mu`mineen, a black Sunni mosque in Detroit. By the 1970s, many African Americans had joined the movement and became missionaries themselves. To them, the Southend's Arab Muslims represented a curiosity and a prize. According to Alasry:

They start going to the places, to the coffee shops, the stores where the people go. Sometimes they go even to the bar to talk to the people. They do this until 1976, and then some of them start talking to some of the people who are in charge of this mosque, the Lebanese people. Some people told him [Nihad Hamed], "OK, can we have the key for the mosque? Can we have the key so we can open the mosque and go inside and pray?" He said, "Yes, we can issue you a key, but you have to pay the bill." Because at that time the society was very poor.⁹⁶

The new Muslim activists convinced the board to let them use the mosque, but it struck them as odd that they should have to pay a fee to pray in the mosque or hold religious classes there. The newcomers also complained about the infrequency of the formal *jum`a* congregational prayer at the mosque and the overall laxity of religious observances there. As their complaints gradually escalated into demands, Hamed devised a radical strategy to fend them off. He organized a meeting of the city's Muslim clerics and scholars and asked them to issue a formal edict—to "make shura," as Alasry put it—declaring Sunday a legitimate substitute for Friday as the day of congregational prayer for Detroit's mosques. "Of course, the imams and the scholars are not going to ask for this," Alasry assured me, "to move the prayer from Friday to Sunday. I think it was the members, because the majority does not have knowledge. They want to have it on their day off. To them, they said, 'OK. Everybody can come on Sunday, we'll have the meeting on Sunday.'"⁹⁷ The Shura Council rejected this suggestion outright,⁹⁸ and the mosque began (or returned to) hosting formal congregational prayers on Friday in addition to their Sunday lectures.

The issue of rescheduling religious observances for the weekend, however, resurfaced later that year on *Īd al-'Aḍḥā*. The English-language faction planned to celebrate the holiday on the weekend, as they always had. The Arabic-language faction showed up instead on the *Īd* itself, a Wednesday, and were blocked by Hamed and

others on the board. "Today is the eid," Alasry remembers the newcomers crying. "We have to pray today. Today is eid." Rather than be turned away, the would-be worshippers broke the lock on the door and went inside to pray.⁹⁹

Shortly after this incident, another conflict took place that ultimately doomed the Lebanese congregation at the AMS. On a Friday evening, the Yemeni faction was hosting a class upstairs in the mosque, and the Lebanese faction was hosting a dance downstairs in the social hall. The building was not soundproofed, and the loud, raucous music was disruptive to the group gathered upstairs. When the *adhān* was called for the evening prayer, the Yemenis expected the music to pause for the prayer itself. When it did not, the upstairs crowd became angry and asked the others to stop the music so the prayer could be conducted in peace. Their request was denied. The Lebanese felt their right to hold a party in the social hall of the mosque was being violated. The Yemenis felt their right to hold a prayer in the mosque was being violated.¹⁰⁰ At this point, the newcomers decided to take over the mosque's board. In 1977 they elected (Hajj) Fawzi Mura`i president of the AMS board. Hajj Fawzi was a Palestinian from Beit Hanina, a West Bank village on the outskirts of Jerusalem where Israel was constructing one of its earliest and largest settlements. He was a very conservative Muslim, sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood, and a staunch supporter of Palestinian rights. His election—by a Yemeni-dominated but culturally diverse block of voters—marked the end of nearly forty years of Lebanese control over the mosque.

The new board reflected a very different political position from that of the founding congregation. Dissatisfied with the failures of Arab nationalism and the Arab Left in general, and equally critical of American materialism, social injustice, violence, mistreatment of Arab immigrants, support for Israel, immorality, and hollow religiosity, the new board turned instead to the precepts of the Qur'an and sunna as a guide for personal and collective reform.¹⁰¹ The two groups attempted to use the mosque jointly, but the new board quickly solicited an imam from Yemen and established a new set of rules for the AMS.¹⁰² These included gender segregation in all the mosque's activities, including Sunday school classes and congregational prayers. The hijab had to be worn by women at all times, everywhere in the building. This hijab could no longer be a simple scarf to cover the hair, but also entailed covering all parts of the body except for the hands, face, and feet. All social functions hosted by the women's auxiliary were banned from the premises. When the women's group protested these moves, the new

imam told them, "I am here to teach you the right way; you have gone astray."¹⁰³ When the women protested further, they were banned from the mosque outright.

The two groups went to court over these new, restrictive policies. Representatives of the founding congregation argued that the mosque itself was one room in the larger facility and appropriate religious attire was observed historically in that room alone. They argued that they had built and sustained the mosque for forty years and should be able to determine the facility's rules. But the judge, siding with the new board, asked the Lebanese faction to turn over their keys to the building. "In the beginning," Alasry explained, "we were ok with them. We said, 'You have the key, you can go in anytime. No you cannot make dances, and [wear short dresses]. They may make a wedding with no problem, but not like with dancing as it used to be in a club. Not in a mosque . . . belly dancing, that is what I mean. That's why we don't want it here. We couldn't. We said, 'That is not right.'"¹⁰⁴

The women's auxiliary of the AMS, still in possession of their savings account, was able to open a new, smaller mosque in 1982. Tucked inside a former warehouse on a quiet side street (Chase Road) in northeast Dearborn, this new mosque, the American Muslim Bekaa Center, returned to providing English language sermons at their Sunday lectures and congregational prayers. High school graduation parties, wedding showers, and youth activities were equally at home there. Women at the Bekaa Center did not enter through the back door, segregate themselves from the men in any of the mosque's functions, except prayer, or allow others to dictate when and how they should cover their hair and bodies. This new mosque was located closer to where the majority of the city's Lebanese Americans now lived – in east Dearborn rather than the Southend. This shift was not precipitated solely by the city's efforts to rezone the Southend, or by the loss of the AMS to a more conservative congregation. Many Lebanese and Palestinian families followed their non-Arab neighbors to east Dearborn and other Detroit suburbs in the 1960s and 1970s. Their Southend homes were purchased by newly arriving Lebanese, Palestinian, and, increasingly, Yemeni families. Today the Southend is a Yemeni-American enclave, the business district is overwhelmingly Yemeni, and the AMS leadership is Yemeni also.

In the 1980s Detroit's older Arab communities, which dated back to the early decades of the twentieth century, were reduced to minority status by new Arab migrants, most of whom did not know about or identify strongly with the historical roots of Arabs in the area,

and who arrived with, or would soon develop, a powerful subaltern consciousness of their own. The United States, for the newcomers, was a purveyor of economic and military policies that threatened Arabs, Muslims, and people of color around the world. These immigrants saw themselves, and were often seen by others, as people who had no place in mainstream American political and religious culture. Many of them wanted to maintain this separation and they looked to their mosques and churches to help them do so. This stance was especially hard for the older AMC and SEDCC activists to understand. Not only had they struggled to build the very mosque the newcomers now controlled; not only had they fought to protect the neighborhood and infrastructure of communal life that was now so hotly contested, but they had done so as part of a distinctly white, working-class and (originally) multiethnic alliance. The takeover of the AMS was a paradigm shift that established a new regime, one not of incorporation or accommodation but of confident orthodoxy and (initially at least) principled separation from the larger society.

The conflicts that engulfed the AMS in the late 1970s were just as important to the development of the Southend and the city itself as was the fight against Mayor Hubbard. To most of the community organizers who allied with the SEDCC and ACCESS in its early days, the outcome of these intra-mosque battles was one of devastating loss. They were experienced as a foreign takeover by an extremist, backward, un-American faction – by a misogynistic, fanatical Islam. In the several mosques that were later built elsewhere in Dearborn by refugees from the AMS, this is still how many people speak of the Southend and the Arab-Muslim identity it represents.

To the mosque's new leaders and the tens of thousands of new migrants who joined them in Detroit in the 1980s and 1990s, the story of the AMS takeover is told as a cautionary tale of a very different kind. It depicts a mosque and a larger Muslim community that had strayed far from its roots and was successfully redeemed from error. This tale of victory against unrestrained assimilation is told today in hopes of keeping mosques relevant, vital, and on the straight path. I have heard it told by scores of mosque leaders across Detroit – by Palestinian and Yemeni Americans, by Syrians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and African Americans – and it is a staple narrative at mosque fund raising events. More recently, I have also been told the story by members of the original AMS congregation who have made peace with the Southend's new Arab-Muslim identity. "The new mosque they got, it is beautiful," Hussein El Haje told me in 2005, in reference to the AMS's latest

renovation effort. Now over 1,000 worshippers can pray there at one time. As a young man in 1938, El Hage helped dig the foundation of the original mosque. For him “it is beautiful to see a thousand people praying together. But sometimes they say things about our community [the founding Syrian-Lebanese congregation], and I don’t like that.”¹⁰⁵

CONCLUSION

The Muslim-American establishment in Detroit today rivals that of the secular Arab establishment. Groups like CAIR-Michigan (the Council on American-Islamic Relations), the Michigan Muslim Community Council, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, Muslim Family Services, the Huda Clinic, and the region’s mosques (which now number more than eighty) arguably exceed the secular Arab-American establishment in terms of influence, dollars raised, and services provided. This is a remarkable accomplishment, given that this infrastructure of religious institutions is supported primarily by the Muslim community itself. The same could be said of the Muslim-American establishment nationally, which has gained prominence in the post-9/11 era, as Islam has become one of the key sites of inclusion and exclusion in American public culture. Like Arab-American identity, and other minoritized ethnoracial formations, Muslim-American identity is the product of a complex cycle of trauma, crisis, and incorporation,¹⁰⁶ and the true value of narratives about the Southend is that the traumas described in these stories were not necessarily of the larger, geopolitical kind. The fights over control of housing stock and prayer spaces predated the Iranian Revolution, the Israeli invasion and occupation of South Lebanon, the Palestinian Intifadas, the 9/11 attacks, and the decade of American wars in the Middle East that followed. Arab and Muslim identities in Detroit have always evolved in relation to momentous events that occur overseas, but the traumas of the Southend were local; they warranted local responses and created local identities in the process.

Urban space is a site of contest between strangers, especially those whose lives have been shaped by migration and faith. Today’s scholars are eager to theorize this contest as a locus of creativity and dynamism as well as a generator of racial, class, ethnic, and religious hierarchies. Ayse Caglar and Nina Glick Schiller, for example, encourage us to upend our more traditional focus on how migrants are changed by cities and look instead at “how migrants actively contribute to the restructuring and repositioning” of the cities they inhabit.¹⁰⁷ Dearborn and its Arab/Muslim populations have certainly been

“transformed together” over the past century of dwelling, conflict, and narrative imagining, co-producing a center of belonging through “cooperation, solidarity, the usage of broad networks and resources, [and] shared knowledge.”¹⁰⁸ What has been difficult to see in these narrative imaginings is just how tightly they have been woven together into what Gerd Baumann calls a “convergence.” A convergence occurs when different ethnoracial and migrant populations assert their cultural identities vis-à-vis each other and the state, when they “seek the same point of agreement; but each of them does so from its own point of origin and by its own route.”¹⁰⁹

Precisely such a convergence occurred in Dearborn in the 1970s, and it is time that the narratives that account for the city’s remarkable Arab/Muslim persona also converge. In reality, Detroit’s Arab and Muslim establishments are not now and have never been far apart, even when the struggles of the Southend were waged most heatedly. Once the AMS takeover was accomplished and the mosque moved on to new crises and controversies, activists from the SEDCC and ACCESS quickly came to its aid. They supported the mosque in 1980 when it began broadcasting the call to prayer from loudspeakers on its roof and was taken to court, this time by the city. They supported it a few years later when the mosque broke ground on a large expansion project and the SEDCC stepped in to integrate the new mosque design with the Arabian Village facades. Similarly, ACCESS is predominantly staffed by and provides services to an immigrant, Muslim-majority constituency.

In fact, it is rare to encounter a prominent Arab organization in Detroit today that is not led (or significantly influenced) by Muslims or a high-profile Muslim organization that is not led (or significantly influenced) by Arabs. The AMS is no longer the isolationist congregation that it was in the 1980s, but an integral part of Detroit’s religious landscape and of the public life of Dearborn itself. Likewise, ACCESS is no longer predisposed to wage battles against the state and global capital. Today, like much of the Arab-American establishment, ACCESS runs on support from government agencies (state and federal), corporations (like Ford and Chrysler), and charitable foundations. ACCESS and ADC have long been welcoming to devout Muslims and include hijab-wearing women on their boards and in executive positions. Similarly, Ron Amen, who was once kicked off the board of the Islamic Center of America for his role in founding ACCESS (then rumored to be a hotbed of atheism and communism) is today the board president of this very large and prominent mosque.

The Southend of Dearborn is an urban space whose Arab and Muslim histories continue to converge today as scholars narrate its history on paper, artists paint it into murals, religious leaders teach it to their followers, and activists call it to the attention of a new generation of community organizers. The story of Arab/Muslim Detroit does not begin in the Southend, but it cannot be told without referencing this distinctive space and the many struggles that took place there. The Southend was home to Detroit's working class Arabs, to its most viable and influential mosques, and to its most visibly Arab commercial district from the 1930s–1980s. When threatened with displacement and dispersal, its residents knew that something more than their homes was at stake. They fought to protect the Arab and Muslim identities the Southend made possible. This Arab/Muslim space continues to draw new migrants to Dearborn. Despite its persistent marginality, the Southend remains a compelling space. It is a space of fragile power, amassed over decades of political and cultural struggle, but it is a space of power nonetheless.

NOTES

¹ Kathy Horak, "A Reversal of Fortunes," *Dearborn Press and Guide*, 3 August 1978, 1.

² This landmark battle was first documented in Barbara C. Aswad, "The Southeast Dearborn Arab Community Struggles for Survival Against Urban 'Renewal,'" in Aswad, ed., *Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1974) 53–84; and more recently in Barbara C. Aswad, "How a Dearborn Community Gained the ACCESS it Needed," *Dearborn Historian*, 51, no. 1 (2014): 9–18.

³ This landmark case was first documented in Nabeel Abraham, "Arab Detroit's 'American' Mosque," in Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 279–311; see also Sameer Abraham, Nabeel Abraham, and Barbara Aswad, "The Southend: An Arab Muslim Working-Class Community," in Abraham and Abraham, eds., *Arabs in the New World: Studies on Arab-American Communities* (Detroit: Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies, 1983) 163–85; and Sally Howell, *Old Islam in Detroit: Reimagining the Muslim American Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 30–42, 104–27.

⁴ US Census Bureau, "Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates" for Dearborn, Michigan (DP02), accessed 18 July 2015,

http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_DP02&prodType=table

⁵ For Muslim and mosque estimates see Howell, "Old Islam," 5; for Arab estimates see Kim Schopmeyer "Arab Detroit after 9/11: A Demographic Portrait," in Nabeel Abraham, Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 29–65.

⁶ Arif Dirlik, "Place-Based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place," in Roxann Prazniak and Arif Dirlik, eds., *Places and Politics in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) 39.

⁷ For the origins and veracity of the Arab American claim, see Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, "Introduction: Qualities/Quantities," Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000) 39–44. The Muslim American claim is from Hassan Qazwini, *American Crescent* (New York: Random House, 2007) 112.

⁸ Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: New Press, 1997).

⁹ Anne McClintock, "'No Longer in a Future Heaven': Gender, Race, and Nationalism," in Anne McClintock, Amir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 100. For more on the early days of the ACCESS Cultural Arts Program see "The Art and Artistry of Arab Detroit: Changing Traditions in a New World" in Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 487–514; and Sally Howell, "Cultural Interventions: Arab American Aesthetics between the Transnational and the Ethnic," in *Diaspora*, 9, no. 1 (2001): 59–82.

¹⁰ Heather Barrow, "'The American Disease of Growth': Henry Ford and the Metropolitanization of Detroit, 1920–1940," in Robert Lewis, ed., *Manufacturing Suburbs* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 200–20.

¹¹ Joe Darden, Richard Hill, June Thomas, and Richard Thomas, *Detroit: Race and Uneven Development* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); and Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹² Joe Borrajo interview, Dearborn, 2 December 2000.

¹³ Arabs, at 653, were the fourth largest group in the neighborhood, following "Americans" (mostly Southerner whites), Romanians, and Italians. Rudolph Constantine, personal communication (17 March 2015).

¹⁴ Another young man died several weeks later of his injuries. As a black man, he could not be buried in this white's only cemetery. Steve Babson, *Working Detroit* (New York: Adema Books, 1984), 92–93.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sugrue, "Urban Crisis," 158-62.

¹⁷ Allie Saide was the Arab American member of Bennet's team, which included representation from each of the major ethnic groups in the neighborhood; Don Unis interview, Dearborn, 17 November 2000; Constantine, personal communication.

¹⁸ Alan Amen interview, Dearborn, 1 November 2000.

¹⁹ See, for example, Donald Unis, "Dumb like a Fox," in Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 103-6.

²⁰ Aswad, "Community Struggles."

²¹ See Alixa Naff, *Becoming America: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985).

²² Howell, "Old Islam," 30-42, 104-27.

²³ Ronnie Berri interview, Dearborn, 14 February 2013.

²⁴ Nabeel Abraham, "From Campus to Coffeehouse: The Spread of Palestinian Diaspora Politics (1968-1978)" (unpublished manuscript, 12 April 2002); Laurel Wigle and Sameer Abraham, "Arab Nationalism in America: The Dearborn Arab Community," in David W. Hartman, ed., *Immigrants and Migrants: The Detroit Ethnic Experience* (Detroit: New University Thought Publishing, 1974), 279-302.

²⁵ Abdo A. Elkholy, *The Arab Moslems in the United States: Religion and Assimilation* (New Haven: College and University Press, 1966), 55.

²⁶ Aswad, "Community Struggles."

²⁷ Quoted in Barrow, "American Disease," 208.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Babson, "Working Detroit."

³⁰ Amen, interview.

³¹ Quoted in Aswad, "Community Struggle," 79.

³² Constantine, personal communication; Amen, interview.

³³ Chuck Alawan interview, Dearborn, August 2005.

³⁴ Amen, interview.

³⁵ Edward C. Levy Co., "Our Legacy," accessed 13 May 2015, <http://Edwclevey.com/our-legacy>.

³⁶ Amen, interview.

³⁷ This legal victory launched the political career of Berry, who went on to serve as Wayne County Road Commissioner and was a leader in Michigan's

Democratic Party from the 1970s–1990s. See Susan Griffen, *Michael Berry* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2007), 41–43; Amen, interview.

³⁸ Darrel Donaldson, “Letter to parents and community leaders” (6 August 2000).

³⁹ Borrajo, interview.

⁴⁰ Suzanne Sarieni interview, telephone, 24 February 2015.

⁴¹ Amen, interview.

⁴² Horak, “Reversal.”

⁴³ Aswad, “Community Struggle,” 71.

⁴⁴ Katherine AMEN et al., Plaintiffs, v. CITY OF DEARBORN, a municipal corporation, et al., Defendants. United States District Court Eastern District. Michigan Southern District, 14 August 1973.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ismael Ahmed, interviewed in *Detroit Lives*, ed. Robert Mast (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 28.

⁴⁷ Amen, interview.

⁴⁸ Alan Mallad interview, telephone, 25 February 2015; Sareini, interview.

⁴⁹ Amen, interview, is the source of much detail for the entire paragraph. Published accounts of the Southend struggle can also be found in Aswad, “Community Struggles” and “How a Dearborn;” and in Janice Terry, “Community and Political Activism Among Arab Americans in Detroit,” in Michael Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 241–56.

⁵⁰ Amen v. Dearborn.

⁵¹ This chant was used by DRUM and AWC in the late 1960s and 1970s. See *Finally Got the News* (Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman and Peter Gessner. Icarus Films, Detroit, 1970).

⁵² Abraham, “From Campus to Coffeehouse,” 2002.

⁵³ Ahmed, interview.

⁵⁴ George Khoury interview, Dearborn, 22 October 2000.

⁵⁵ Nabeel Abraham interview, Dearborn, 11 December 2000.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Wigle and Abraham, “Arab Nationalism,” 279–302.

⁵⁸ Abraham, “From Campus to Coffeehouse.”

⁵⁹ SPARK bulletin cited in Dan Georgakus and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1998), 31.

⁶⁰ Ismael Ahmed, “Organizing an Arab Workers Caucus,” *MERIP Reports* 34 (1975), 19.

⁶¹ Mary Bisharat, "Yemeni Farmworkers in California," *MERIP Reports* 34 (1975), 22–26.

⁶² Ahmed, "Organizing," 19.

⁶³ This walkout and demonstration followed an equally large rally that took place in the Southend several weeks earlier. The first march, which was also attended by over 2,000 people, began at the AMS and proceeded down Dix to the UAW Local 600. The mosque was critically involved in this campaign. Ahmed, "Organizing," 19; Abraham, Abraham, and Aswad, "The Southend," 179.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*; and Ahmed 1994.

⁶⁵ Nabeel Abraham, *National and Local Politics: A Study of Political Conflict in the Yemeni Immigrant Community of Detroit, Michigan* (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1978), 136; Ahmed, "Organizing," 19; and Ahmed, interview.

⁶⁶ Abraham interview; Terry, "Community."

⁶⁷ Pamela Pennock, "Third World Alliances: Arab American Activists at American Universities, 1967–1973," *Mashriq and Mahjar: Journal of Middle East Migration Studies* 2, no. 2 (2014): 55–78; and Michael Suleiman, "'I Come to Bury Caesar, Not to Praise Him': An Assessment of the AAUG as an Example of an Activist Arab-American Organization," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3, 4 (2007): 75–95.

⁶⁸ Abdeen Jabara interview, Dearborn, 27 October 2000; Abraham, "From Campus to Coffeehouse."

⁶⁹ Aswad, "Community Struggle," 74.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 75.

⁷² Georgakus and Surkin, "Detroit I Do Mind Dying," 63.

⁷³ Aswad, "Community Struggle," 59.

⁷⁴ Sareini, interview.

⁷⁵ Aswad, "Community Struggle," 72.

⁷⁶ Amen, interview.

⁷⁷ Borrajo, interview.

⁷⁸ See especially Sugrue, "Urban Crisis," 76–77.

⁷⁹ David Good, *Orvie: The Dictator of Dearborn: The Rise and Reign of Orville L. Hubbard* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987).

⁸⁰ Amen, interview.

⁸¹ Quoted in Kathy Horak, "A Home Away From Home for Middle Easterners," *Dearborn Press and Guide*, 20 July 1978: 1.

⁸² Ahmed interview, 12.

⁸³ Quoted in Kathy Horak, "Residents Express Fear, Anger, and Understanding," *Dearborn Press and Guide*, 17 August 1978: 1; and Aswad, "How a Dearborn," 10. See also Kathy Horak, "The Gradual Move to the East End," *Dearborn Press and Guide*, 10 August 1978: 1.

⁸⁴ Abraham, Abraham, and Aswad, "The Southend," 167.

⁸⁵ Articles of Incorporation, Michigan Department of Treasury, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), 22 May 1974.

⁸⁶ Terry, "Community," 248.

⁸⁷ Abraham, "National and Local Politics," 128.

⁸⁸ Amen, interview.

⁸⁹ Ahmed, interview, 29.

⁹⁰ Helen Atwel interview, Dearborn, 1 December 2000.

⁹¹ The battle between the two organizations became bitter and involved back-room meetings with the mayor, the trashing of the SEDCC's offices by angry ACCESS "thugs," and worse.

⁹² Pennock, "Third World Alliances," 61.

⁹³ Howell, "Old Islam," 175-82.

⁹⁴ Abdo Alasry interview, Dearborn, 2008.

⁹⁵ Alasry, interview; Nihad Hamed interview, Farmington Hills, 2005; Abraham, "'American Mosque.'"

⁹⁶ Alasry, interview.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Alex Balooly interview, Dearborn Heights, 2008.

⁹⁹ Alasry, interview; Hamed, interview; Abraham, "'American Mosque.'"

¹⁰⁰ Abraham, "'American Mosque.'"

¹⁰¹ See Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁰² Alasry, interview; Abraham, "'American Mosque.'"; Howell, "Old Islam."

¹⁰³ Quoted in Abraham, "'American Mosque,'" 292.

¹⁰⁴ Alasry, interview.

¹⁰⁵ Hussein El Haje interview, Dearborn, 2005; Howell, "Old Islam," 208-17.

¹⁰⁶ For a fuller discussion of this cycle, see Andrew Shryock, Nabeel Abraham, and Sally Howell, "The New Order and Its Forgotten Histories," In Abraham, Howell, and Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 381-94.

¹⁰⁷ Ayse Caglar and Nina Glick Schiller, "Introduction: Migrants and Cities," in Glick Schiller and Caglar eds., *Locating Migration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 2.

¹⁰⁸ Dimitris Papadoulous, Niamh Stevenson, and Vassilis Tsianoa, *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 220.

¹⁰⁹ Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 126.