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Historical Perspectives

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Editorial Board

Dominic Rios
Jessica Talavera-Rauh

Faculty Advisors

Father Paul Mariani, S.J.
Professor David Skinner

Volume XVIII of *Historical Perspectives* is the twenty-third journal published by Santa Clara University's Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. This edition continues the tradition of providing its readers with articles that reflect the caliber of student scholarship at Santa Clara.

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Introduction

Each year, Santa Clara University's Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta publishes the *Historical Perspectives* journal. This journal, comprised completely of student scholarship, represents the greatest achievements from the History Department. This year, we are once again extremely fortunate to have received an outstanding selection of original research. We thank all those students who submitted their work for review and are excited to present this year's volume of *Historical Perspectives*.

The eight papers selected represent not only the high-quality of student research and writing, but also epitomize the department's emphasis on geographic and chronological diversity. In her essay, Celina Mogan analyzes the decline of the Virginia gentry class at the end of America's colonial period. Jessica Talavera-Rauh's "Comrades for a Common Cause" focuses on the public health reform movement of the Progressive Era from the often ignored viewpoint of Jewish women reformers. Next, Guy Marzorati's essay highlights the ways in which big-business and politics impacted media coverage of San Francisco's Bubonic Plague crisis during the beginning of the twentieth century. Focusing on similar themes of public health, Katherine Karasek examines the haphazard government reaction that has accompanied various environmental disasters throughout Japan's history. Switching over to military history, we next come to Sean Naumes and his piece detailing the development of Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare during World War I. Jacob Newton's "Facial Disfigurement" describes the struggle many British soldiers faced reintegrating to society after injury. Next, in "A Hyphenated Campaign", Dominic Rios examines the interplays of

racial identity in the experiences of Italian Americans serving in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War. Finally, Kevin Laymoun's piece details the motivations behind King Abdullah II's treatment of Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Again, we want to congratulate these students for achieving such a high standard of academic scholarship. Additionally, we want to thank Father Paul Mariani, Professor David Skinner, and Judy Gillette, for their oversight on this project. Finally, we thank all the faculty and students who contributed to the History Department this year. We are extremely honored to serve on this year's editorial board and hope you enjoy this year's edition of *Historical Perspectives*. Thank you.

Dominic Rios
Jessica Talavera-Rauh
Student Editors

Dedication

We dedicate this issue to the outgoing Faculty Advisor of Santa Clara University's Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, **Fabio López Lázaro**, and welcome incoming faculty advisor, **Harry Odamtten**.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the *Historical Perspectives* Faculty Advisors, **Paul Mariani, S.J.**, and **David Skinner**, History Department office manager **Judy Gillette**, and all of the faculty whose mentoring and guidance helped produce the student papers within.

Dominic Rios
Jessica Talavera-Rauh
Student Editors

The History Department expresses its gratitude to **John** and **Lulu McPhee**, whose generous gift has provided the financial support for the publication of this journal.

“As Worthless as an Eldest Son Could Be”: The Decline of the Virginian Gentry in the Revolutionary Era

Celina Mogan

The study of the gentry class of colonial Virginia provides scholars with much amusement and confusion. The members of the few families who dominated the political, economic, and social culture of the colony of Virginia lived an exciting life.¹ As they farmed tobacco and managed slaves on their grand plantations, they also served in the colonial government protecting their accustomed lifestyle. Their identity as both planters and public servants defined the group. Deference was the unwritten law of colonial Virginia society, where the lower classes looked up to the gentry as the ideal. The families were proud of their familial history in Virginia, many tracing their ancestors back to the early seventeenth-century plantations. As they wore the fashions of Europe, conducted the rituals of tea, and practiced the culture of the landed elite of England, the gentry understood themselves as equals with and deserving the same rights as their English counterparts across the Atlantic.² “Taking the English gentry as their model, they tried, insofar as colonial conditions would allow, to follow the ways of the country gentlemen of the

¹ Emory Evans, *A Topping People: The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

² Evans, “A Topping People,” 170-1.

homeland.”³ This placed the Virginia gentry in an awkward situation on the eve of the American Revolution. They were required to redefine themselves and their place within a society no longer tightly bound to England.

The second generation of gentry patriarchs had established a successful system that did not fail them. The young gentry inheriting this lifestyle believed they were coming into all the power and prestige in Virginia, blind to the reality that their class was not invincible. They inherited political authority, slaves, thousands of acres in the best areas of Virginia. They had all the power and money of which they could have dreamt. However, by the 1790s, the gentry had lost their standing in Virginian society in both the economic and political realms.⁴ The men were losing their coveted spots in political leadership; for example, the first governor of Virginia after independence was not a member of the gentry.⁵ Additionally, the men found themselves deeply in debt, unable to pay back their creditors, but still making purchases on the latest styles and trends to maintain their gentility. By the 1790s, the gentry found their affluent lifestyle to be disappearing. How could this prestige melt away in such a short time? Had their fathers and grandfathers failed them, or had they failed themselves?

Much has been written about the colony of Virginia

³ H.D. Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion*, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1965), xvi.

⁴ Evans, “A Topping People,” 10.

⁵ Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate. *Colonial Virginia: A History*. (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986) 356.

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both during the colonial years and during the Revolution, including works that discuss the gentry class within Virginian society as well as texts about specific gentry families. The texts that specifically discuss the decline of the Virginian gentry or even just the gentry class are few, however, as many take on the Revolution as a whole or choose to focus on a theme such as race or gender.

One of the most reputable historians of colonial Virginia is Rhys Isaac. His work, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, is often cited and considered a great source on Revolutionary Virginia.⁶ Although not completely focused on the gentry, this work covers a wide variety of factors that could affect the gentry's downfall. The time period Isaac covers is pre-Revolutionary, so he provides an incredible amount of context for the Revolution and the world of the second and third gentry generations. His scope is so broad and covers so many aspects of Virginian life that it fails, however, to dig deeply into any one topic.

Emory Evans provides the most comprehensive study of the Virginian gentry families in his work, *A “Topping People”: The Rise and Decline of Virginia’s Old Political Elite, 1680-1790*.⁷ Complete with statistics and numerical data as well as narrative evidence, Evans details the rise and fall of twenty-one gentry families.⁸ His scope is both broad and detailed about every aspect of Virginian life. He uses evidence from twenty-one gentry families with statistics and personal

⁶ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

⁷ Evans, *A Topping People*.

⁸ The family names Evans uses in his study and I will use in this paper can be found in the table on page 2.

accounts. For continuity, this paper will use the same twenty-one families as Evans.

The one major fault in Evans' text is the inadequate attention he pays to the decline of the gentry class.⁹ He places the discussion of the class's decline in his epilogue where he also provides a semi-detailed description of the Virginian experience leading up to the Revolutionary War. Evans presents the reasons for the gentry's decline—although part of the book's title—as more of an afterthought than as a main focus. He chooses to narrate the experience of the Revolution in Virginia while adding minimal details about the gentry class. Despite his focus on the rise and glory years of the gentry, Evans gives insufficient attention to their decline.

This paper will attempt to explain why the third generation of Virginian gentry failed to succeed in the years around the American Revolution. It will discuss the variety of factors for the gentry's failure to succeed into the nineteenth century. While some of the blame can be placed on the unlucky political and economic climates of their generation, most of their problems can be attributed to their own shortcomings. Among these reasons are the indebtedness of the families, the loss of political power as the Revolution approached, and the families' stubbornness to adapt to change. This paper will ultimately argue that the gentry experience a self-induced decline which was caused in part by their personal faults. Providing more evidence of the decline than Evans, this study will critique and add to the arguments he provides.

⁹ Emory Evans, "Epilogue," *A Topping People*, 177-202.

Indebtedness

The first and greatest failure of the gentry was their indebtedness that accrued throughout three or more the generations. Thomas Jefferson notes that “these debts had become hereditary from father to son for many generations, so that the planters were a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses in London.”¹⁰ The third generation of Virginian gentry was haunted by the incredible debt they had inherited. While the men had grown up in a world of luxury, they could not have been aware of the great debt for which they would soon be responsible. Data of the family accounts of around 1780 survives for only seventeen of the twenty-one families in this study, but even this data sample shows that these families had enormous debt. Most gentry families’ debt averaged around £10,000 with a few owing more than £35,000.¹¹ These sizeable debts did not lend themselves to easy repayment—they were simply too great. How could things get so bad? The answer lies in the exceptional economic landscape in which their fathers raised them and the failure of previous generations to plan for the future.

Gentry families were not new to Virginia in the mid-eighteenth century; they had grown up in the colony’s genteel culture and were accustomed to its comfortable lifestyle. Their fathers had established well-run enterprises with their slaves and fields, but

¹⁰ As quoted in Lawrence H. Gipson, “Virginia Planter Debts before the American Revolution,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 69 (July 1961): 259.

¹¹ Evans, *A Topping People*, 195-196. See chart on page 197.

they continued to look to western lands for increased property and diversification of wealth. The second generation of gentry had inherited a great blessing from their fathers but may have not inherited the same business aptitude. "Not a few appear to have been worse managers and businessmen than their fathers and grandfathers, or they simply were not willing to devote the necessary time to running complicated agricultural enterprises."¹² Just because a man was the eldest son did not bestow upon him the ability to run an estate. Some were not skilled or intelligent, while others were simply uninterested in plantation life. Their genteel life lent itself to recreational pastimes such as gambling and horseracing, and some men found their days more enjoyable when occupied with recreation rather than business. But even for the most learned and savvy of businessmen, the economic world of tobacco was extremely complex. "Planters did not often understand the details of the sale of their tobacco."¹³ This added another level of complication to an already shaky economic situation. Because they marketed their products in the metropole, the colonial patriarchs of gentry families were required to trust in merchants of London, many of whom they may have never met and who may not always have their colonial clients' best interests in mind. The merchant was out to make money and would oftentimes return to the planters less profits and lower quality goods than they had expected.¹⁴ The gentry, through the complex and flawed agricultural and commercial system, heavily

¹² Evans, *A Topping People*, 112.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

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relied on others—merchants, slaves, and farming experts—for their economic success.

The system in place to sell tobacco and purchase British goods was far from perfect. The way tobacco was grown and sold had been evolving since the establishment of the colony. Beginning in the eighteenth century, planters sent barrels of tobacco to British merchants. This was an unstable situation as planters waited for the slow transportation of their product across the Atlantic, the sale in London, and the slow repatriation of their profits. They hoped and trusted that their British merchant would provide them with the best possible price on their tobacco. However, Virginians were oftentimes disappointed in their merchants.¹⁵ Many felt they were being cheated. John Custis IV complained of his poor prices on his tobacco and was “startled to see such a crop of tobacco given away.”¹⁶ Gentry clients blamed their merchants for their problems. As Landon Carter wrote in his diary, “for by profession a broker is a villain in the very engagements he enters into. He must buy and must sell as cheap and as dear as he can.”¹⁷ Despite the low profits returning on their tobacco crops, the gentry surprisingly did not fear increasing their spending. Many never knew how much their tobacco earned as their profits were used in London on luxury goods without ever being repatriated to Virginia.¹⁸

Although the gentry planters often blamed their

¹⁵ Ibid., 117

¹⁶ Ibid., 102

¹⁷ Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 255.

¹⁸ Evans, *A Topping People*, 102.

merchants for their apparently small profits, the fault cannot be solely placed on the dishonesty of merchants for the economic problems of the gentry. The gentry were spending far more money than their crops earned. An English visitor in the early 1770s commented that the problem was not that “their husbandry is not profitable,” but with “the general luxury and extravagant living which obtains among” the gentry.¹⁹ The gentry had a lifestyle they were pressured to maintain which included excessive spending. Robert ‘King’ Carter put it best when he wrote, “too many among us, when a good market offers for their tobacco, will lay it out in stores and leave their old debts unpaid.”²⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century Virginia became more established as a colony, and gentry families increasingly spent their earnings on luxury goods. “Indebtedness to British merchants grew as Virginian society expanded and became more stable.”²¹ A consumer revolution made buying manufactured goods affordable to a larger segment of the population.²² “In the 1760s the importation of these articles [luxury goods] increased 75 percent over that of the 1750s.”²³ The culture of buying was shifting as “manufactured goods inundated the households of people of all classes.”²⁴ The gentry, along with the

¹⁹ Ibid., 116.

²⁰ Ibid., 104.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Further reading on the consumer revolution can be found in T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²³ Evans, *A Topping People*, 169.

²⁴ Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 52.

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common Virginians, were gaining wealth and power and wanted an external way to display it. Additionally, as common Virginians were suddenly increasingly able to buy, the gentry felt more pressure into buying bigger, better, and more fashionable goods. It was becoming much more difficult for the gentry to display their status through their appearance, because it was becoming easier for the lower classes to make purchases that gave them an appearance of wealth. The gentry began to add on to their fathers' estates, updating the furnishings to be the most fashionable and genteel, and importing the latest fashions from London and Paris, ensuring their appearance would set them apart from the more common Virginians. Excessive buying, especially after the consumer revolution, contributed greatly to the indebtedness of the gentry.

Appearance was of great, if not indeed the greatest, importance to the gentry. Thus they avoided any acknowledgment of their debt and poor business dealings. It is hard to imagine that the gentry failed to realize their debts were increasing or that they ignored the fact that they did not have the funds to repay their merchants. Therefore, they did their best to keep their debts secret to the outside world in order to maintain the appearance of gentility and grand wealth. “As debt grew, there also came increased sensitivity to criticism and the questioning of one’s ability to pay.”²⁵ There are multiple instances of gentry patriarchs writing that they were offended that anyone would question their ability to repay their debts. For example, when merchant John Norton wrote to John Baylor insisting

²⁵ Evans *A Topping People*, 171.

on repayment, Baylor wrote back saying he “took the word Insist...extremely unkind.”²⁶ Thomas Jones replied to his merchant, who had written asking for money, that “I must say...you did not treat me genteely.”²⁷ While many of the gentry must have known that their fellow elite were indebted to British merchants, they would not allow their appearance to give them away. They would continue to buy the newest trends from England, fooling others into thinking they did not have economic troubles. Increased spending only led to increased debt, putting the family into a worse financial situation.

The economic climate of the end of the eighteenth century is important to factor into the debt problem of the gentry. In the mid-eighteenth century, about twenty-five years before the Revolution, the economic situation in Virginia was ideal. “The tobacco trade tripled between the 1720s and the 1770s.”²⁸ Planters believed the golden age would never end and saw no foreseeable problem with spending more than their tobacco was making. On top of that, British merchants did not see much of a risk extending more credit to the gentry. “Yet from a British viewpoint the investment was generally good business...merchants normally competed intensely to advance credit to planters in order to secure as much of their product for resale as possible.”²⁹ Merchants were not going to stop advancing credit to the gentry any more than the gentry was going to stop spending. Both merchants

²⁶ Ibid., 118

²⁷ Ibid., 119

²⁸ Ibid., 111.

²⁹ Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, 202-203.

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and planters found great profit in the mid-eighteenth century. This growth in wealth meant an increase in debt, and the second generation of Virginia gentry could not see the end of their golden years.

Once the Revolution began, the economic situation in Virginia declined. Most of the late 1770s and 1780s saw terrible economic conditions. This was due to the political consequences of the American Revolution, but also to causes not related to the political climate. The American Revolution caused problems such as the closure of ports, the inability to trade with Britain, and the freeing of the slaves by Governor John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore.³⁰ Additionally, British merchants were recalling their debts. “With the collapse of their own sources of credit, British merchants were by 1773, pressing their Virginia clients for payment, bringing suit against them in the courts of the colony if necessary, and denying most of them additional credit.”³¹ On top of this, the planters were affected by problems out of their control. For example, in late spring 1771, there was a great flooding of the James and Rappahannock Rivers. The colonial government attempted to help the plantations, but many had not yet recovered by the time of the American Revolution.³² Additionally, the gentry continued to use credit to purchase necessary goods and luxuries. The economic situation for the gentry was just as unstable as the political situation with Britain. Ralph Wormeley Jr. describes a colony where there was “little money in the

³⁰ Evans, *A Topping People*, 195.

³¹ Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, 322.

³² See footnote on pages 321-322 in Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*.

country, no price for lands, none for Negroes, except on credit, and laws of so little stability.”³³ Despite all of this, the gentry had hope that economics would return to the way they were in the past.

Fortunately—at least in the eyes of the gentry—their increased debt did not contribute to a loss of social status. While other aspects of the life of the gentry seemed doomed, the families were able to maintain their position at the top of Virginian society. The men of the gentry class were still highly educated, well-mannered, and well-connected in society. The already established deference between the gentry and common Virginians was mostly kept intact. They continued to be addressed with respect and maintained the social standings they had always followed.³⁴ This was reassuring for the gentry as their world fell around them. Despite their maintained social standing, the gentry did suffer from their increasing debt. Many were required to make repayments, leading to loss of land and property. Others decided to ignore their debt but lived with the internal struggle and anxiety. But while the gentry were happy to maintain deference in Virginia, they found themselves losing their greatest power. The most significant fall the gentry experienced was their loss of political power and position, not their social standing. Social standing and political power were not, in the decades after the Revolution, dependent upon one another.

While debt was not a direct cause of the gentry's decline, it was an important factor in the decline of their influence and participation in politics. With their

³³ Evans, *A Topping People*, 196.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 172-173

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increased debt, planters were now required to spend more time at home managing their estates rather than devoting time to travel and participation in public service.³⁵ Following many years of neglecting their estates, the gentry now realized that they needed to focus on managing their plantations. The gentry's absence in Virginia's politics proved to be an important factor in their decline, especially because of their great political influence in previous years.

Loss of Political Power and Influence

An identifiable marker of the power of the Virginian gentry was their presence in the colony's politics. As the eighteenth century saw its final decades and the conflict of the American Revolution was becoming more serious, the presence of the gentry in Virginian politics was dwindling.

The colony of Virginia had two governing bodies. The House of Burgesses, or the lower house of the General Assembly of Virginia, was a democratically elected body where each member represented a county in Virginia. The other body, the Governor's Council, or Council of State, consisted of around a dozen men who were elected by the Crown for life. They were the wealthiest and most prominent members of Virginian society. Their role was to advise the governor on matters of the colony. These two bodies made up Virginia's colonial political structure and power.

Members of the gentry dominated both the House of Burgesses and the Governor's Council. This gave them the ability to ensure matters of the colony were

³⁵ Ibid., 199

decided in their favor. Similarly, the governor wanted to keep the gentry happy, not only to protect his own interests, but to keep the colony thriving. In a letter to the Board of Trade, Lieutenant Governor William Gooch protected the gentry by pursuing more favorable tobacco trade laws and preventing laws which allowed for easier debt collection.³⁶ The status of the colony and its people, among the rest of the British colonies, was important to the Governor and to the gentry. Thus, the gentry's ability to win seats in the House of Burgesses or be appointed to a seat on the Governor's Council allowed the gentry to create and reinforce laws that benefitted their class, and for most of the colony's history the system worked extremely well in the gentry's favor.

The greater political influence of the gentry may be seen in the change in power from the Governor's Council to the House of Burgesses.³⁷ The number of gentry in the Governor's Council was diminishing as the Virginian families increasingly identified themselves as Virginians rather than as British. The gentry then focused on being elected to the House of Burgesses, where they expanded the power of this section of colonial authority. Social rank would be retained through election to the House, as well. Especially for the Speaker of the House, the most powerful politician in Virginia, an elected seat in the House of Burgess meant that the system of deference in Virginia society remained intact with the gentry on top.

³⁶ Paul G. E. Clemens, ed., *The Colonial Era: A Documentary Reader*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 127-130.

³⁷ Evans, *A Topping People*, 23.

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From a first glance, the overlap of the political system and its elected representatives appears to make sense. Simply, the gentry claimed to act as the big planter representing the smaller planter. The gentry were the group with the free time and disposable income needed to travel to Williamsburg and serve in the government. In addition to deference, this claim made it easy for the gentry to be elected year after year. However, despite what they intended or thought they were doing, the gentry who represented their county in government ended up serving their own interests. The needs and desires of the large plantations did not completely coincide with those of the smaller planter.

One important aspect of their political influence was that the gentry families were only comfortable being ruled by their peers. They had the “belief that power should be, as in the past, ‘in the hands of Substantial landholders.’”³⁸ They feared a future with a government ruled by the middle classes or those with “new money.” They believed that the only way the colony could be successful and remain equal with the British was for it to be ruled by the landed elite. It was not surprising that their definition of public service was consistent with creating and enforcing laws that benefitted themselves. This could really only be achieved by the gentry dominating the colonial government and ensuring that every decision went their way.

The gentry used their political power to their advantage. Some laws were beneficial to the colony as a whole, while others were used to serve the gentry’s

³⁸ As quoted in Evans, *A Topping People*, 201.

own interests. For example, in 1762, the Virginian colony government passed a bankruptcy law. One merchant commented, "The Virginians are in a bad plight and no appearance of recovery except they can get an Act passed to exclude 'em from paying their Debts."³⁹ As the ones creating these laws, the gentry were able to address and fix their own situations by passing laws that got them out of trouble, saved or made them money, and ensured their position on the top of society.⁴⁰

Serving in the colonial government was not all business for the gentry. Members traveled to Williamsburg, where they were able to participate in nightlife as well as socialize with their peers, something that was not common to the large planter. The capital city of Williamsburg perked up when the government was in session. The men resided in one of the taverns located around the Capitol building where they were surrounded by other gentry and wealthy Virginians. They socialized in the taverns and coffeehouses where they discussed politics and entertainment as well as partook in the current gossip. There was other entertainment available in Williamsburg such as traveling shows or plays. The gentry also loved to gamble and won or lost large sums of money while playing cards or betting on horseraces. These trips to Williamsburg exacerbated the gentry's

³⁹ As quoted in Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 61.

⁴⁰ John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775-1783* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), 244.

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debt problems, by taking them away from their plantations for many months as well as allowing them to waste money by excessive eating, drinking, gambling and spending on other entertainment. The time and money commitment became too overwhelming and the gentry needed to remove themselves from the government. Not only were they not elected, they were not putting themselves in the running to be elected and serve. Many of the gentry families needed their patriarch at home and could not afford for them to spend months away traveling. It was a tough decision for many, but spending the time on their plantations and families was crucially needed.

While some gentry did choose not to run for office and remain home on their plantations, others wanted to serve in office, but were not reelected. One example of this is Landon Carter who was defeated in the election of 1768. Carter writes in his diary, “I can well remember when I was turned out of the House of Burgesses. It was said that I did not familiarize myself among the people.”⁴¹ In an era as significant as the American Revolution, voters wanted to elect men who would represent their desires and needs. The viewpoints and stances of the gentry were not what some voters were looking for. The gentry were not seen as obsolete; they appear to be respected but not always taken seriously about their political stances and positions.

The gentry’s participation in the House of Burgesses was dwindling, but remained strong until

⁴¹ Isaac, *Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom*, 300.

Governor Dunmore dissolved the group in 1774.⁴² Political participation in Virginia following this dissolution was through committees and conventions held in Richmond and Williamsburg. The new political situation the colonies were in made way for creating new laws and new structures of government, and for the gentry, a group not fond of change, this was a hard situation.

A clear representation of the decline of gentry in government was seen between the Fourth and the Fifth Virginia Conventions. In December, 1775, the Fourth Virginia Convention was held in Williamsburg, Virginia. The political stance of the men was changing as they moved closer to supporting independence. The gentry families were well represented at this convention, about seventeen of the twenty-one gentry families were present. There was a steep drop in the few months that separated the Fourth and Fifth Conventions. In May, 1776, the Fifth Virginia Convention declared their support for independence. About one-third of the members were newly elected from the emerging elite families who had more free time to serve and were open to new ideas. Patrick Henry, a man far from being gentry, was chosen as the new governor of Virginia. This was the beginning of the downfall of the gentry, who were perceived as being old-fashioned and not open to new ideas, and in a debate on something as important as independence, the positions of the members were crucial. The

⁴² George F. Willison, *Behold Virginia: Fifth Crown, Being the Trials, Adventures, and Disasters of the First Families of Virginia, the Rise of the Grandees, and the Eventual Triumph of the Common and Uncommon Sort in the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951) 365.

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declining representation of the gentry in these important Virginia Conventions is a significant indicator of their decline in public service in the 1770s.⁴³

The emerging powerful non-gentry politicians both scared and comforted the gentry. They were familiar with these men, as they had served with them in the House of Burgesses. Many were of “new money,” those who were just as wealthy as the gentry but were not a part of the old gentry families. The gentry had experience serving alongside many of them in government and were aware of their choices and perspectives. However, they were nervous about placing so much power in the hands of the “inexperienced,”⁴⁴ as Landon Carter put it. The gentry were nervous about their new colleagues’ inexperience both in government but also in the elite Virginian society. The gentry were proud of being Virginians and did not want that identity to be tainted. In any case, in stepping down from public service, the gentry knew the hands in which they were leaving the government. While they were familiar with their replacements, the change that was to come in Virginia scared them.

Change was on the horizon for the gentry. They were giving up their political power and the benefits it provided. They also risked losing status and deference among the lower classes as the new emerging elite were taking their places. While they understood that change was necessary, they were reluctant to give up the lifestyle to which they were accustomed. They would resist any change and found themselves

⁴³ Evans, *A Topping People*, 189-191.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

stubbornly stuck in the past.

Resistance to Change

The young, new patriarchs were certainly expecting to live the genteel lives of their fathers, lives of luxury and extreme power. They had grown up watching their fathers leave for Williamsburg to serve in the government, they attended church services on Sundays and saw the way their fathers were treated by the lower classes, and they sat at the dinner table listening to the news and gossips brought by the dinner guests. Hoping to inherit similar lifestyles, they were surely disappointed to find the only thing they inherited from the past was debt, failing plantations, and well-known family names. Whether or not they were previously aware of their fathers' economic and agricultural situation, they were suddenly thrust into lives of responsibility. These young men were finding themselves in a new position of power that they had long awaited. They were the new patriarchs of their estate having to make decisions to keep the plantation successful and thriving. And because they believed they were to inherit the lifestyle of their fathers, they were determined to regain that lifestyle for themselves. "They 'believed that the path to prosperity lay in following the traditions of the past. The image of the independent planter who grew tobacco and dominated the household powerfully resonated with them' even while they were already witnessing 'the collapse of many tidewater families.'"⁴⁵ These newest members of the gentry class were determined, despite indicators of

⁴⁵ As quoted in Evans, *A Topping People*, 201.

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the futility of this path, to live the life of their ancestors and their way of accomplishing this was to follow the ways of the past.

The determination to carry on the life of the gentry tobacco planter was very strong in these young men. Remembering the past and the life led by their ancestors pushed them even further in their pursuit of the plantation life. “The young men believed they could prosper as planters despite the picture of economic distress among them. They wanted to live, as they believed as their parents had, entertaining lavishly and importing foreign goods.”⁴⁶ And as the gentry found themselves in more and more trouble, the further they romanticized the past. These failing men believed they were born too late. They lamented over the great gentry lives of the past. They were disappointed to find that “the ‘old gentry’ had disappeared.”⁴⁷ However, the evidence did not stop them from continuing to pursue a planter life.

The gentry’s stubbornness to change is visible in many ways. First, the new gentry were set on being planters. They inherited grand plantations with many slaves and, in their minds, they inherited a planter way of life. They were not interested in learning of their other career options, because they did not envision themselves as anything other than planters. They only saw their status being tied to the land, the crops they planted, and the grandness of their plantation homes. While the up and coming non-gentry wealthy young men of Virginia used the avenues of the law to gain status and wealth, the gentry were standing by the

⁴⁶ As quoted in Evans, *A Topping People*, 200.

⁴⁷ As quoted in Evans, *A Topping People*, 201.

traditions of their past. It was only to be expected that the failures of the gentry would lead to the emergence of a new Virginia elite that included Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and James Madison.

Second, the plantations of the young gentry continued to be planted with tobacco. Many of their fathers had begun to experiment with crop diversification planting crops such as grain, which they hoped would be easier to grow and be easier sold in the colonies. They looked into other investments while continuing to survey and purchase western lands. These men knew that tobacco was not going to fuel their wealth in the long term, especially with decreasing prices and the common planter's ability to grow tobacco and purchase more land. However, the new young patriarchs looked to the past beyond their fathers' time and wanted to mirror the lifestyle of the wealthy tobacco planter. The men believed that "if they were going to maintain their lifestyle and status, they would have to do so through planting alone."⁴⁸ So, in an attempt to decrease debts, they sold newly acquired lands to reduce debt and only planted tobacco on their families' plantations. This proved to be a terrible choice as tobacco was expensive and hard to grow, requiring many more slaves than most other crops. Additionally, the tobacco continued to deplete the soil of its nutrients, resulting in decreasing success of the crop each year.⁴⁹ Philip Vicker Fithian, a tutor on a gentry plantation notes in his diary, "their land in

⁴⁸ Evans, *A Topping People*, 171.

⁴⁹ Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia: Intellectual Qualities of the Early Colonial Ruling Class* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1940), 351-2.

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general being so poor that it will not produce it—and their method of farming is slovenly, without any regard to continue their Land in heart, for future crops—they plant large quantities of land, without any manure and work it very hard to make the best of the crop.”⁵⁰ Unfortunate problems with weather, such as the flooding in the early 1770s, caused problems with the gentry’s tobacco crops. Also, trade with England was decreasing, if not halted, by the time these men were marketing their tobacco. This meant they needed to sell their tobacco elsewhere, which usually resulted in less profit. Yet despite these problems, the men were set on growing tobacco. “They were trapped by the assumptions of a staple culture.”⁵¹ This stubborn misunderstanding of growing tobacco only contributed to their decline.

Another way the gentry men stubbornly fell into decline was their weariness of living a more simple life as a way of decreasing their enormous debt. While they did cut back on a few luxuries, they did too little to make a decent dent in repaying their debt. To maintain their status and power through deference, the men felt that they needed to keep up the appearance of wealth. “Pressure to maintain a genteel lifestyle created insecurity because they had to be constantly vigilant to maintain ‘complete gentility’ on the English

⁵⁰ Philip Vickers Fithian, “Fryday April 1st 1774” in *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion*, edited by Hunter Dickinson Farish, (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1965), 88-89.

⁵¹ Timothy H. Breen, “The Symbolic World of the Tobacco Planter” in *Major Problems in Colonial History*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1993), 439.

model.”⁵² They continued to buy and increase their debt, ignoring the declining economic situation in which they found themselves.

The Revolution presented additional problems for the young gentry. They found themselves needing to choose a side, Loyalist or Patriot, which was hard for many who considered themselves equals with the landed elite of England. Although the Virginian gentry had some representation, many of these men did not participate in political events of the Revolution such as the Continental Congress. Virginia was, rather, represented by an emerging new elite while the gentry were at home tending to their failing plantations. Additionally, they were accustomed to their imported goods and struggled as they were unable to make new purchases through their British merchant. Along with the other colonists, the gentry were affected by closure of ports and the inability to trade with England. Life was unpredictable as change was constantly happening around them.

There are two good examples of the gentry being directly affected by a Revolution-related decision. The first was in 1775 when Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, promised freedom to any slave who left their homes and fought for the British.⁵³ Landon Carter, along with many of the gentry planters, suffered from this proclamation. Carter writes in his diary of the struggle, “much is said of the slavery of negroes, but how will servants be provided in these times? Those

⁵² Evans, *A Topping People*, 170-1.

⁵³ “Lord Dunmore Promises Freedom to Slaves Who Fight for Britain, 1775,” *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, 2nd edited by Richard D. Brown, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 259-60.

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few servants that we have don't do as much as the poorest slaves we have.”⁵⁴ The gentry planters, who heavily relied on their slave labor, struggled to run their plantations as they were in constant fear of their slaves running away. Another decision that was troubling and difficult for the gentry was the Continental Congress' passing of “The Non-Importation Agreement” during the Virginia Association in the fall of 1774. This act declared, “To obtain redress of these grievances which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty, and property of His Majesty's subjects in North America, we are of an opinion that a nonimportation, nonconsumption, and nonexportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure.”⁵⁵ Virginia had signed this agreement, pressuring the gentry into its terms. While the gentry did want peace and an end to the conflict and troubles with Britain, these were hard terms for the gentry to adhere to.⁵⁶ They were being asked to give up the luxuries that defined their class. The Revolution was not presenting the gentry with many changes which pleased them.

Overall, the young gentry men were unwilling and stubborn to change. They were determined to be successful tobacco planters and live the lives of their fathers and grandfathers. As they faced increased debt they failed to live a more modest lifestyle and drastically cut back on their spending. And as the Revolution changed the identity of the colonies, it also

⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁵ “The Non-Importation Agreement” as cited in Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, 330.

⁵⁶ Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, 335.

changed the gentry's world and presented them with new insurmountable challenges.

Conclusion

As a whole, the third-generation gentry class failed to live up to the lives of their fathers and grandfathers. They were unable to save their families or their plantations from the many problems they faced. While their decline was largely due to their own shortcomings, the third generation did inherit a terrible economic situation unfamiliar to their fathers. The debt they inherited and contributed to became so large it was completely unbearable and impossible to repay. This contributed to a loss of political power as the gentry stopped running for public office to focus on their plantations. The biggest failure of the gentry, however, was their inability to react to change and adapt to the changing world. The gentry feared the future and held onto the memory of the past so tightly that they were unable to see the reality of their situation. They believed that the old ways would always be the best ways. Their wariness of change can be seen in their planting of tobacco, failure to diversify, and continued buying of luxurious goods. Although they did what they thought was best, they were unable to pull themselves out of difficult times, as a new emerging elite took their place on history's main stage. They were truly "as worthless as an eldest son could be."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Evans, *A Topping People*, 202.

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Celina Mogan is a senior History and Religious Studies double major at Santa Clara University. Her emphasis is United States with her favorite area of study being colonial and Revolutionary America. In the future, Celina hopes to do graduate work in Museum Studies or Material Culture and pursue a career in museums.

“Comrades for a Common Cause”: Jewish Women, Social Clubs, and Public Health Reform in the Progressive Era

Jessica Talavera-Rauh

Lillian D. Wald, Jewish nurse and founder of the Henry Street Settlement in New York City, was working in a hospital as part of her training when she was called to the home of a woman who became ill after giving birth. In her memoir *The House on Henry Street*, Wald recounts the horrid conditions she encountered on the Lower Eastside of Manhattan, which at the time was an area of tenements inhabited by some of the city’s poorest residents. The family she met included a crippled father and seven children sharing just two rooms. Wald described her encounter with life outside the walls of her medical school as “a baptism of fire.”

Deserted were the laboratory and the academic work of the college. I never returned to them....my mind was intent on my own responsibility. To my inexperience it seemed certain that conditions such as these were allowed because people did not know, and for me there was a challenge to know and to tell....my naive conviction remained that, if people knew things,--and ‘things’ meant everything implied in the condition of this family,--such horrors would cease to exist, and I rejoiced that I had had a training in the care of

the sick that in itself would give me an organic relationship to the neighborhood in which this awakening had come. (sic)¹

Lillian Wald was one of many American women compelled to improve the bleak living and working conditions of the poorest American citizens. The various reforms women fought for during the Progressive Era, including labor, public health, education, and public policy reforms, along with the struggles women faced to obtain the right to vote, occupy volumes of historical research of the era. Progressive women took up the fight for social reform as part of their feminine duty to lift up the parts of America that had been left to suffer while a select few citizens flourished.² Keith A. Zahniser details the many reforms in Pittsburgh spearheaded by both men and women, and emphasizes the importance they played in many programs championed by the Protestant community.³ Historians Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider have detailed the experiences reformist women called “New Women” by their contemporaries. Their book *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920*, is an excellent primer to explore the main issues at the heart of Progressivism as well as the

¹ Lillian D. Wald, *The House on Henry Street* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), 7-8.

² Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 158-165.

³ Keith A. Zahniser, *Steel City Gospel: Protestant Laity and Reform in Progressive-Era Pittsburgh* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

diversity within the movement.⁴ However, as their narrative covers a broad scope of topics, it barely deviates from the prevailing narrative of the traditional Progressive women. More recently, Charlotte J. Rich and Martha J. Patterson challenge the prominence of the “New Women” as they examine the multiethnic impact it had on American women

The role of Jewish women as part of the fight for labor reform has been heavily researched by scholars of the Progressive Era interested in looking outside the main realm of white Protestant women. Scholars have found that the number of Jewish immigrants working in the garment industry, estimated to be over half of all working women in New York City, provided a base for Jewish women to form unions to defend themselves against dangerous and exploitative labor practices. Incidents like the Triangle Factory Fire, in which female workers became trapped in the burning factory resulting in 146 deaths and many more injuries, united Jewish women of different classes and backgrounds. Leon Stein’s analysis of the tragic event’s effect on the labor movement, with particular emphasis paid to the immigrant women who had worked and died in the factory, is an important narrative in the history of labor reform.⁵ Other historians have focused their narratives on the efforts of Jewish women as they came together to form unions across the country. Gerald Sorin recounts the work of Rose Pesotta, a Jewish immigrant active in the

⁴ Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (New York: Anchor, 1994).

⁵ Leon Stein, *The Triangle Fire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962).

garment trade union activities in California.⁶ Susan A Glenn provides a narrative of these issues by bringing together immigration, working-class life, the labor movement, and gender roles within the Jewish community in her own analysis.⁷ Scholars have shown that Jewish women played a significant role in the creation of regulations to maintain employee safety as well as to improve their way of life.

In addition to the scholarly research into Jewish women and labor reform, scholars have addressed Jewish women championing of causes that are frequently attributed to women of Protestant or Catholic background. One way of advocating for social change was through their own social clubs. Often facing discrimination within Christian groups, Jewish women created their own communities which came together to form their own social organizations. The largest and most influential was the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Faith Rogow's survey of the organization's first century in *Gone to Another Meeting* is a thorough account of a network of Jewish women across the United States.⁸ Rogow addresses the Council's founding in 1893 while also examining its agenda's roots in both the burgeoning trend of women's clubs in the nineteenth century and the

⁶ Gerald Sorin, “Rose Pesotta in the Far West: The Triumphs and Travails of a Jewish Woman Labor Organizer,” *Western States Jewish History* 35, no. 3/4 (April 2003): 201-210.

⁷ Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Publishing, 1990).

⁸ Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1993).

Progressive social reform agenda. In Jewish “Junior League” (2008), Hollace Ava Weiner examines the efforts of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women to elevate their community within Fort Worth, where they experienced harsh anti-Semitism and felt estranged from the dominant Protestant female social networks in the South.⁹ Weiner’s narrative is only one of many close-up looks at individual sectors of the NCJW. For a comprehensive list of relevant books and articles, see Rogow, 289-290.

For Progressive women, public health reform was a key issue in their efforts to make the U.S. a better place to live. Their goals were both to educate the public about the best ways to prevent the spread of disease in overcrowded cities and to provide routine services to families and individuals who otherwise could not afford them. Many Jewish women were involved in the public health reform movement yet, with the exception of Lillian Wald, less has been said about how they as a community contributed to the movement on both a local and national level. This paper will connect the experiences of grassroots activists working on the local level and those defining the policies of national organizations, using both primary and secondary sources. In one of the few secondary sources available related to public health, Susan Lee Abramson Mayer enriches nursing history by identifying the role Jewish women played in the development of modern American nursing.¹⁰ Valuable

⁹ Hollace Ava Weiner, *The Jewish Junior League: The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Susan Lee Abramson Mayer, *The Jewish Experience in Nursing in America, 1881 to 1955* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996).

works on Jewish voluntarism include analyses by Arlene Kaplan Daniels¹¹ and June Sochen.¹² I will use a variety of primary sources, including writings by leaders in the field including Lillian Wald, Hannah Solomon, and Naomi Deutsch. I will also rely on record kept by organizations like the NCJW and settlement houses that are available to the public, as well as newspaper articles from the Los Angeles Times, the New York Post, the New York Times, and the Jewish Advocate. The information shows that Jewish women and their social organizations played an under-appreciated, but significant role in the fight for public health reform during the Progressive Era.

Feminist scholars have found that constructions of gender cannot be understood apart from race. It is impossible to understand the ways in which Jewish women engaged in health care reform without first understanding the relationship between gender and Jewish identity, which were further complicated by issues of class. Like their Christian counterparts, married Jewish women were viewed as belonging in the home, and they were often regulated when appearing in public settings. However, they were also seen as important economic and political actors within their families and communities. Husbands allowed their wives to handle the wages they brought home, giving their wives authority over income they were

¹¹ Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *Invisible Careers: Women Civic Leaders from the Volunteer World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

¹² June Sochen, “Some Observations on the Role of American Jewish Women as Communal Volunteers” in *American Jewish History* 70 (September 1980): 23-24.

prohibited from earning themselves.¹³ Jewish women also played a public role organizing protests and boycotts against unfair landlords and corrupt merchants. According to scholar Paula Hyman, these acts were part of their identity as Jewish mothers, responsible for protecting their families and communities.¹⁴ Women's community activism linked to motherhood was reflected in the Jewish community's advocacy of suffrage and support for Jewish feminist agitation.¹⁵

A new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia in the late nineteenth century, tended to be poorer than their Western counterparts, most of whom had come to America from Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe a generation earlier. They took on the low-skill, low-wage jobs in urban factories and lived in the most crowded parts of the city. Unlike the married women of an earlier time, the new immigrant women, especially young single daughters, had to work outside the home, often becoming the primary breadwinners for the family when their fathers and brothers struggled to find work. In addition, they learned from their mothers how to assert their influence outside the home in the economic and political spheres, most often through unionizing and strikes. Their mothers supported their aspirations to

¹³ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998) 125.

¹⁴ Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representations of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995) 112.

¹⁵ Brodtkin, 125.

create a better life.¹⁶ The Jewish community came to reject the contemporary ideals of American domesticity in favor of alternative measures of womanhood that supported women as wage earners, family managers and political citizens within and beyond their communities.¹⁷

This openness to public roles allowed Jewish women to enter the field of public health advocacy. For Jewish women interested in health reform, a sure way of creating a career was through nursing school and then working within target communities. During the 1880s settlement houses were created to provide recreation, education, medical, and social service programs for residents, especially immigrants in impoverished neighborhoods. Many settlement houses were founded by Christian social workers and benefactors, such as Jane Addams’s Hull-House in Chicago. Educated nurses and social workers lived in the impoverished communities they served to easily provide direct services to their residents. The push to create support services in these communities extended to Jewish women, who acted as benefactors, organizers, and administrators for American settlement houses.¹⁸ The work they did at the local level provided them with the knowledge and authority to speak out on health issues.

Lillian Wald’s Henry Street Settlement was the most distinguished settlement founded by a Jewish woman. Raised in Cincinnati, Ohio and later Rochester, New York in a prosperous German-Jewish

¹⁶ Ibid, 130.

¹⁷ Ibid, 131.

¹⁸ Rogow, 87.

family, Wald studied at the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses from 1889 to 1891. In 1893, she enrolled in the Woman's Medical College in New York City where she had the opportunity to organize home nursing classes for immigrants on the Lower East Side, where she claimed "ward work scarcely admitted freedom for keeping informed as to what was happening in the world outside."¹⁹ After the visit to the tenements that year, Wald pledged her life to public health nursing and reform, leaving medical school, and moving with Mary Brewster to College Settlement on the Lower East Side. Later, using funds contributed by Elizabeth Loeb and Jacob Schiff, the two moved to their own apartment and established the Nurses Settlement at 265 Henry Street, in 1895.²⁰ Wald envisioned a team of nurses that would provide their services "on terms most considerate of the dignity and independence of the patients."²¹ They felt the work of nurses should be taken as seriously as the work of physicians, with the nurses responding to calls from patients at home. This distribution of services where they were most needed, regardless of connections with a religious institution, contrasted sharply with other visiting nurse services, where the nurses were often assigned exclusively to assist one physician. The new protocol required the nurses to have a more immediate relationship with the patient, reversing the position nurses traditionally held. Welcoming all groups of immigrants, both Jews and non-Jews, Wald did not think of Henry Street as a Jewish-only settlement,

¹⁹ Wald, 2.

²⁰ Rogow, 91.

²¹ Wald, 27.

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although she depended on Jewish benefactors to support her work.

Worried that patients must be ashamed to receive charity, Wald and Brewster charged those who could afford to pay a small fee for their services. Their focus on providing services was always on those who needed the most help. Wald recalled, most especially during the early days of the settlement, “how often paying patients were set aside for more urgent non-paying ones; the counsel freely given from the highest for the lowliest.”²² When a patient required treatment for which the nurse had not been trained, the settlement called upon physicians and surgeons to use their expertise, in some cases without compensation. The Henry Street Settlement allowed for the creation of a network of doctors to work as “comrades” alongside nurses who embraced their “common cause” approach to helping the impoverished.²³ Their staff of nurses grew from four to a contingent large enough to cover house calls from anywhere in Manhattan, with divisions by district and specialty, such as the obstetrical staff.²⁴ Among the patients treated at home by the visiting nurses, recovery rates were greater than those treated in hospitals.

Programs like the Henry Street Settlement would not have been possible without the trained nurses who defied contemporary social norms to create a career for themselves, and then dedicated their lives to working in some of the most squalid communities. Early

²² Ibid, 30.

²³ Ibid, 34.

²⁴ Edward Marshall, “Good Metal in Our Melting Pot Says Miss Wald,” *New York Times*, November 16, 1913

Jewish American nurses were pioneers at a time when it was difficult to gain admission to training schools which had strict requirements designated by nursing organizations, and which also required nurses to register as members. Early public health leaders during this period include Lillian Wald, Amelia Greenwald, Naomi Deutsch, and Regina Kaplan. Even Emma Goldman, better known for her advocacy of anarchism, received medical training and worked as a nurse and midwife in the Lower East Side to help support herself. Goldman proved not to be an especially strong advocate for the settlement movement.²⁵

The training program for nursing students was rigorous and made marriage and raising children impossible for most women entering nursing school at the age at which most women married. The decision to enter nursing meant choosing to have a career in public service over marriage. Marriage, a home and children were the ideal roles for all American women, especially those from a middle-class background who did not have to work. For women entering a profession, they felt they had a calling that could be a substitute for a family. The responsibilities of working in social work, in hospitals, and other health care projects were seen as extending the mothering and nurturing role from the home, making this type of work a suitable calling for women. Another obstacle for Jewish women to contend with was the discrimination in admissions to training schools for nurses. Many had quotas designating how many students could be of

²⁵ Evelyn Rose Benson, *As We See Ourselves: Jewish Women in Nursing* (Indianapolis: Center Nursing Publishing, 2001) 68.

Jewish descent. To receive training women often had to attend Christian and Catholic schools where they were forced to participate in religious activities, such as reading the New Testament, which made many of them uncomfortable.²⁶ Exceptions to these rules existed, like Mount Sinai Training School for Nurses which, as a nonsectarian institution, made efforts to recruit qualified Jewish girls. In their first year alone they accepted thirty Jewish applicants.²⁷

The requirements for entering nursing school could be demanding, especially for immigrant women. However, some were able to overcome these limitations. Naomi Deutsch immigrated to Ohio with her family from Austria. She graduated from the Jewish Hospital School of Nursing in 1912 and then worked at the Irene Kauffman Settlement House in Pittsburgh before receiving a B.S. from Teacher's College. All the while she continued settlement work with Henry Street.²⁸ She became director of the San Francisco Visiting Nurse Association in 1925 and eventually became an assistant professor at UC Berkeley in charge of the public health nursing program.²⁹ Deutsch, along with several of her peers, would go on to be very influential in shaping health policy in America.

Public health work was not limited to urban centers like New York City and San Francisco. Many Jewish women made a career in public service in the south and midwest, where rural communities required

²⁶ Ibid, 64.

²⁷ Ibid, 31.

²⁸ Mayer, 125.

²⁹ Ibid, 138.

similar support services to fulfill their own needs. Regina Kaplan was first in her graduating class of twelve women at Mercy Hospital Training School for Nurses in Denver, Colorado, in 1908, proceeding to work as a “private duty nurse.”³⁰ Rejected from military service during World War I because of her small stature, she enrolled with the American Red Cross on January 14, 1915.³¹ Kaplan worked for thirty-five years as superintendent and administrator for Leo N. Levi Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Kaplan organized and ran the hospital’s outpatient dispensary, an early forerunner to the modern emergency room that admitted all Hot Springs residents. She set up the Hot Springs chapter of the Red Cross, which taught health education classes for home nursing and first aid for men, women, and students. Kaplan also called for the hiring of the first school nurse for Hot Springs while also advocating for the creation of a no-cost public health nursing program.³²

The importance of nurses in reforming public health was illustrated by Josephine Goldmark in *Nursing and Nursing Education in the United States* (1923), a report Goldmark oversaw for the Committee for the Study of Nursing Education that was founded by the Rockefeller foundation. Goldmark, secretary for the committee and an accomplished social reformer in the area of labor reform for women and children and who worked on the *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) case with Louis Brandeis, reported that there was a great need

³⁰ Mayer, 100.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Benson, 77.

for both more intense training of nurses and an emphasis on public health as part of their training. The report also endorsed an increase in the number of trained nurses to “50,000 public health nurses to serve the population of the United States,—as against 11,000 now in the field”, as the shortage of nurses was “the largest outstanding problem before the health administrator of the present day.”³³ The committee’s findings prompted significant changes to nursing education, including the establishment of the Yale University School of Nursing where public health was emphasized in its curriculum.³⁴

Though some Jewish women like Wald, Deutsch, and Goldmark chose to pursue a professional career in service at the expense of starting a family, most Jewish women conformed to the societal expectation to marry young and start a family. Jewish women who were not willing to give up on their traditional duties as wives and mothers soon found other ways to participate outside the home through women’s social organizations. Middle-class white women had for years formed various secular clubs as venues for women to socialize and practice philanthropy. Those from middle-class families, like Hannah G. Solomon, were granted entry to prestigious organizations like the Chicago Woman’s Club, although admittance of Jewish women in general remained low. As a member of the most prominent Reform synagogue, Temple Sinai in Chicago, Solomon was part of a strong and influential

³³ Josephine Goldmark, “Report of a Survey” in *Nursing and Nursing Education in the United States: Committee for the Study of Nursing Education* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1923), 8.

³⁴ Benson, 68.

middle-class community strongly committed to Jewish life.³⁵ Known around both the Jewish community and the secular women's group networks, Solomon appeared to be the clear favorite to chair the Jewish Women's Committee during the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Solomon made the decision to move the meeting from the Women's Building and instead convene the group of Jewish women as part of the World Parliament of Religions at the exhibition.³⁶ The four-day Jewish Women's Congress discussed the possibilities of creating a national Jewish women's organization. The congress concluded with the founding of the National Council of Jewish Women and election of Hannah Solomon as the founding president.³⁷

NCJW study circles epitomized the Council's method of adapting an American practice to fit the circumstances of a Jewish organization. They borrowed the structures of literary clubs popular with Protestant, upper-class women, simply replacing literature discussions with analyses of Jewish texts and topics. The NCJW study circles distinguished themselves from Protestant and secular groups because they offered Jewish women the first chance to examine their religious background on a deeper level. They also gave women an opportunity to engage in religious debate from which they were previously prohibited, as scholarly religious study was limited to

³⁵ Hannah G. Solomon, *Fabric of My Life: The Autobiography of Hannah G. Solomon* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1946), 42-44.

³⁶ Ibid, 79-100

³⁷ Ibid, 86.

male scholars.³⁸

Clubwomen were a major influence in the NCJW's early years, as some pre-existing groups only had to transform from sewing groups into NCJW sections. However, a second minority group would prove to be influential in the development of goals for the NCJW. Characterized by women like Sadie American and Julia Felsenthal, who played major roles at the founding of NCJW, these women tended to be younger and single in comparison to their clubwomen counterparts. Many of them had received training and were employed as social workers. While older members raised money to cover operating costs of the settlement houses, only occasionally organizing programs there, the young women staffed the settlement houses on a regular basis.³⁹ For the young workers, simply belonging to a group was not enough; they wanted to utilize the connections and networks they created to effect change through service to the community. They were responsible for guiding the NCJW along a more active path that emphasized giving back to the immigrant Jewish community over creating incentives for members.

Local chapters of the NCJW found different ways to express their philanthropy, with some focusing on improving health and wellness. For some, this meant founding their own settlement houses or raising money for others within their community. In New York, the NCJW worked closely with Lillian Wald, a member of the organization, to support her efforts through volunteerism and financial assistance. Many younger

³⁸ Rogow, 54-60.

³⁹ Ibid, 92.

women received training in social work as part of the effort to provide legitimate and scientific aid to the communities that needed it.

Much of the focus of other chapters was on preventing future health problems through education and wellness programs. On February 13, 1913, the Los Angeles chapter of the NCJW opened the Ida Strauss Nursery for the children of working mothers. The goal of the nursery was to “lighten the burden of mothers who are compelled to labor in the factories, laundries and shops.” A ten-cent fee provided a child with milk, and children considered “unkempt” would be bathed and given clean clothes.⁴⁰ The nursery project served two key purposes: it provided low-cost child care to help working mothers, while also teaching them how to properly raise and care for their children. To the latter goal, the providing baths and clothes was considered a lesson to working-class mothers. These mothers, many of whom were immigrants, had to be taught American norms and expectations regarding cleanliness and dress. The nursery project demonstrated broader trends in women's public health reform work. The NCJW, which had put its initial focus on maintaining Judaism among Americanized women, shifted to focus on social reforms after debates over proper religious observance split the group at its 1913 convention.⁴¹ The NCJW and its Los Angeles chapter joined thousands of others in taking women's

⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Section Yearbook*, 1913-1914, as quoted by Judith Aronson, “The National Council of Jewish Women: A study of the Los Angeles Section in Transition,” in *Speaking of Faith*, ed. Diana L. Eck and Devaki Jain (London: Women's Press, 1986), 184-89.

⁴¹ Rogow, 126.

traditional care-taking roles from the home into the broader world of immigrant aid and public health reform.

At the Ninth Triennial Convention in 1920, Dr. Luba Robin Goldsmith reported on the activities of the “Sub-Committee on Social Hygiene,” which held the responsibility of identifying needs and which directed programs that included “any activity dealing with the problems of physical, mental and moral health as affecting the individual, family, community or nation.”⁴² The most successful programs provided educational services; these included meetings and classes each designed to reach a specific audience including men, married women, single young women, and children. Each group was taught “the fundamental principles of Health, Right Living and the Single Moral Standard in a clear, scientific and popular manner.”⁴³

The Sisterhoods of Personal Service represented an important group within the network of Jewish social welfare organizations which had a basis within synagogues. Founded in 1890 in response to the influx of immigrants in New York City, the Sisterhoods provided a variety of vocational, educational, and social programs for their benefit. Though each sisterhood carried out its welfare on their own terms and assisting in established settlement houses, many opened their own offices in the communities they had been assigned to, and some established their own settlement houses. Sisterhood settlement houses

⁴² Dr. Luba R. Goldsmith, “Report--Sub-Committee on Social Hygiene,” in *Official Report of the Ninth Triennial Convention*, (1920), 153-54.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 154.

offered an array of services including English and citizenship classes for adults, housekeeping and occupational sewing classes for women, kindergartens and daycares for the children of working mothers, and recreational activities such as opportunities for both children and adults to spend summer vacation outside of the cramped, urban environment.⁴⁴

The Sisterhoods of Personal Service drew on the contemporary tradition of women's charity within American synagogues. In addition, they modeled themselves on the popular middle and upper-class Protestant women's groups formed earlier in the nineteenth century. Inspired by the idea that women held responsibility to uplift the moral standing of society, antebellum Jewish women had formed "ladies' benevolent or aid" societies that offered financial assistance to their synagogues and the impoverished Jewish community.⁴⁵

The push for wellness went beyond just educating women; many Progressives saw a need for better recreational activities, especially for children, as the ability for children to play would improve both their physical and mental health. Arthur Colt Holden, a Progressive reformer, argued that recreation and relaxation would create better citizens.⁴⁶ Sport and physical culture adapted to issues of gender and class in the Progressive Era as the expectations for recreation were passed on to immigrant women.

⁴⁴ Hannah Einstein, "The Federation of Sisterhoods," Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the United Hebrew Charities (1899) 134.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 135.

⁴⁶ Arthur Colt Holden, *The Settlement Idea: A Vision of Social Justice*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 50.

Reformers believed that physical recreation could offset the negative consequences of unsanitary urban conditions, and physical exercise was seen as the answer.

El Nido camp was originally created by the Los Angeles Section of the NCJW. The group had advocated the establishment of a Children's Bureau in Los Angeles in 1925 and three years later built a camp and residential center for underprivileged and “pre-tubercular” girls in Laurel Canyon.⁴⁷ In addition to providing basic health services, the facility was used as a recreation camp during the summer “for poor girls who otherwise would have no vacation.”⁴⁸ Chair Mrs. Albert Eschner and the rest of the Los Angeles NCJW raised the funds that enabled the camp to stay open year round and treat and house 1000 girls within the first five years.⁴⁹ The El Nido camp was just one example of recreational facilities created by Jewish women and community organizations. The Council of Jewish Juniors in Washington, D.C. raised money for the Dorothy Goldsmith Camp Fund, which they established to send needy children to camp during the summer months.⁵⁰ Emma Blumenthal, a prominent

⁴⁷ According to Dr. J. Hilgard Tyndale, “pre-tubercular” described the condition of pretubercular as the period before the development of lesions identifiable as tuberculosis, caused by “an impoverished nutrition.” Tyndale, “The Pre-Tubercular Condition,” in *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association Meeting* (1891, 8), 180-183.

⁴⁸ “Jewish Women to Fete Leader of Girls’ Camp,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1933, pg. B5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Council of Jewish Juniors to Close Season With Dance,” *The Washington Post*, May 24, 1936, pg. F5.

philanthropist in San Francisco co-directed Camp Kelowa for boys and Camp Singing Trail for girls with her husband Louis in the 1930s. Both Louis and Emma were engaged with issues relating to youth, camping, child health, and social work, with Louis co-founding the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco and Emma serving as associate director.

In 1902, Jewish women in Bella Unterberg's home in New York founded the Young Women's Hebrew Association (YWHA), a sister organization to the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA). The YWHA was dedicated to the social and spiritual uplift of young Jewish women. Their goal was to "establish an institution akin in character to the YMHA but combining therewith features of a religious and spiritualizing tendencies."⁵¹ The specific Jewish identity of the YWHA set it apart from the YMHA, which had both male and female members participate in the settlement movement for many years. While the YMHA observed Jewish traditions and sought to preserve their Jewish identity, the guiding principles were rooted in Americanism rather than Judaism. At the turn of the century, many Jewish women challenged these principles and created their version of settlement houses as a positive force for enhancing Jewish life. Their rebelliousness was part of a backlash against the tendency to assimilate, and was also part of the movement of, as superintendent Sophia Berger explained to the Jewish Advocate, "preserving the

⁵¹ *Israel and Bella Unterberg--A Personal and Communal Record*, quoted in David Kaufman, "The YMHA as a Jewish Center." In " 'Shul with a Pool': The Synagogue Center in American Jewish Life, 1875-1925." Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1994, 145.

essential Jewishness of our people. As Jews we want to save our Judaism. As Jews we bring these girls in here that they may find shelter and help and find, too, the God of their fathers.”⁵² The YWHA included a synagogue that held weekly services and Bible Study as well as classes in Hebrew and Jewish history.⁵³

The YWHA offered more than just religious services and Hebrew classes. After its eight story facility on 110th street was completed, the New York YWHA was described as “the only large institution of its kind in America.... Besides being a most comfortable home for one hundred and seventy girls, the building is also a true center for the communal interests of the neighborhood” which offered job and language skill training as well as a “completely equipped modern gymnasium and swimming pool.”⁵⁴ Athletic classes in sports such as swimming, tennis, fencing, and a variety of popular dance classes were offered in the city facility. The YWHA additionally sponsored summer camping trips which included hiking, canoeing, and all other types of sports and recreation activities. The roof of the center was used during the summer for a day care program for “anemic and cardiac children, and the children of poor families.”⁵⁵ The YWHA provided employment services for young women in need of jobs,

⁵² “For the Young Women’s Hebrew Association of New York,” *Jewish Advocate* 16:2 (March 15, 1912), 1.

⁵³ I.E. Goldwasser, “The Work of Young Men’s Hebrew and Kindred Associations in New York City,” *Jewish Communal Register* (1917), 479.

⁵⁴ “Hows and Whys of Big Burg’s Y’s: 110th Street Y.W.H.A. Has Most Comprehensive Physical Education System of Type in Entire Country,” *New York Post*, January 17, 1936.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

and cooperated with many war relief efforts during World War I.⁵⁶

The Council of Young Men's and Kindred Associations (CYMHKA) was organized as YWHA activity spread across the country, resulting in the merging of YWHAs and YMHA counterparts. In 1921, the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) absorbed the CYMHKA, with the ultimate goal of forming "all-inclusive Jewish community centers."⁵⁷ Independent chapters of the YWHA were pressured to merge with their brother associations to form YM-YWHAs from 1921 to 1923.⁵⁸ The original New York chapter of the YWHA resisted and maintained their independence until 1942, when the building on 110th Street was leased to be used as army barracks. They moved their activities to the YMHA building on 92nd Street, where they officially merged with the YMHA three years later, and were subsequently reincorporated as the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association.⁵⁹

The experience Jewish women gained from their social work, whether they were nurses, volunteers, or administrators within social groups gave them legitimacy in larger associations exploring how to improve general public health. Lillian Wald participated in many campaigns to improve public health and expand the practices conceived at Henry Street. Wald's visiting nurse program was so successful in reducing casualties that it was expanded around the U.S. as more public health organizations

⁵⁶ Goldwasser, 475.

⁵⁷ Kaufman, 198.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

and settlement houses relied on “visiting nurses” as a significant method of providing health care to those who could not afford it. Wald also conceived of the Federal Children's Bureau in 1905 which she campaigned for constantly. After it was established in 1912, she commented that it was “a great step forward in social welfare.”⁶⁰ The bureau served an additional purpose in providing a political voice for the coalition of female reformers who served on the board and, as women, concurrently held no official right to vote or otherwise exercise any political power, and for Wald, it was “a symbol of the most hopeful aspect of America...its existence is enormously significant.”⁶¹ Her work on the Federal Children's Bureau was just one of her many roles on committees dedicated to social reform, as well as developing standards for the training and practice of public health nursing, including the Committee for the Study of Nursing Education and the National Organization of Public Health Nurses.⁶²

Many other Jewish women served important roles in health organizations outside the Jewish community. Naomi Deutsch worked with numerous other organizations, including the American Association of Social Workers, the American Nurses Association and the National Conference of Social Workers. She also served on the board for the California State Nurses Association and the National Organization of Public Health Nursing for various periods and was president of the California State Organization for Public Health

⁶⁰ Wald, *The American City*. June 1912, p 847.

⁶¹ Wald, *The House on Henry Street*, 167.

⁶² Benson, 51.

Nursing. Her most prominent position came about in 1935 when Deutsch was appointed director of public health nursing for the U.S Children's Bureau, a job that carried much responsibility yet also allowed Deutsch to play a major role in the development of nursing as part of the Social Security Act of 1935.⁶³

Regina Kaplan was also involved in the American Nurses Association as well as the Arkansas and Colorado State Nurses Associations. From 1945-46, Kaplan served as vice- president of the American Hospital Association and sat on the board of trustees for Arkansas Blue Cross after urging Levi Hospital to participate with them. Kaplan's work with hospitals as a means to promote public health led to her participation in many professional organizations that held influence over how American hospitals were operated.⁶⁴

The influence of social clubs often reached beyond the meetings of singular communities. Accomplished club members translated their experience to respected positions within the movement, working with esteemed organizations to further the movement. Dr. Goldsmith and Constance Sporborg represented the NCJW at the annual meeting of the American Health Association, which provided literature to local chapters interested in matters related to health. Goldsmith was also appointed to the International Conference of Women Physicians and Convention of Delegates from National Women's Organizations, which she described as "one of the most important and far-reaching steps in the

⁶³ Benson, 66.

⁶⁴ Mayer, 101.

consideration of Social Hygiene Problems.”⁶⁵

Public health reform adopted many forms throughout the United States in the early twentieth century, and the Jewish women who took part in this movement represented the full spectrum of activities and goals of the Progressives. Lillian Wald, Regina Kaplan, and Naomi Deutsch embraced the ideals that allowed them to pursue a career in nursing, which for them and many other women became a lifelong quest to improve the health care and health education their clients received. Though many more young Jewish women would move on to raise families and to participate in alternative roles, women like Wald, Kaplan, and Deutsch represent those who gained enough prominence to directly influence policy decisions through their placements on institutional and government committees and organizations.

Social clubs created by Jewish women played an important role in providing both young single women and married wives and mothers an opportunity to contribute their time, skills, and financial resources to providing services they saw a need for. These included not only support for existing settlement houses, but also programs run entirely by the clubs themselves, like day nurseries and wellness camps for children and educational programs for families. Their efforts to improve the quality of life for lower-class citizens was reminiscent of other Progressive reforms which focused on the leaders telling their clients what they thought was best for them. Records of these programs indicate that thousands of children and adults participated in these programs across the country. The

⁶⁵ Goldsmith, 155.

women running the organizations were motivated by both secular and religious thought which encouraged women to become involved within the community more frequently and more efficiently by receiving training in social work.

The contributions of Jewish women in the field of public health were influential in not only creating local programs, but also in advancing the push for public health on a broader scale. The work they did to improve their own communities gave them the knowledge and experience that enabled them to participate in committees and professional organizations, where they could implement changes to official policy related to public health and healthcare. As many had hoped, these women's efforts would continue generations later in new and evolving forms, as Jewish women contributed through healthcare work and philanthropy towards better welfare in general and in particular in the second half of the twentieth century.

Jessica Talavera-Rauh is a United States history and sociology double major. She is also a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Alpha Kappa Delta. This paper was presented at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Conference. After graduating in June 2013, Jessica plans on pursuing a career in the legal field.

“Need for Alarm”: The *San Francisco Call* and the *Chronicle* Cover the 1900-1904 Bubonic Plague

Guy Marzorati

All the Golden State’s major players were on the train hurtling across the country to Washington. There were executives from the Southern Pacific Railroad (the heads of Frank Norris’ famed “Octopus”), the president of the shipbuilding conglomerate Union Iron Works, and, most conspicuously, the publishers of San Francisco’s leading newspapers. The group had been sent by California Governor Henry Gage to lobby the Treasury Secretary Lyman Gage, Surgeon General Walter Wyman, and President William McKinley to suppress a report by a federal commission confirming the existence of bubonic plague in San Francisco.¹ Plague was bad for business, and it was the business interests of the city which were aboard the train, not those concerned with the deaths that had resulted from the disease thus far. Ten days after the group sped to the nation’s capital, however, news of this secret meeting was leaked by the *Sacramento Bee*, whose headline declared: “Infamous Compact Signed by Wyman: Makes Agreement with Gage Not to Let Facts Become Known Contrary to Federal Law.”² The

¹ Guenter B. Risse, *Plague, Fear, and Politics in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 172.

² “Infamous Compact Signed by Wyman,” *Sacramento Bee*, March 16, 1901.

fact that the *Bee* was the paper to publish their findings was telling, for honest reporting on the political workings of the crisis was not to be found in San Francisco's principal publications.

Exactly one year before the governor's men traveled to Washington, on the afternoon of March 6, 1900, bubonic plague was found on the corpse of Wong Chut King. King was a single lumber salesman who lived in the basement of the Globe Hotel in San Francisco's bustling Chinatown. The news of the pestilence sent tremors through San Francisco's medical community, but it was not entirely unexpected. The year before, the dreaded disease had hit Honolulu's Chinatown. Health officials tried to isolate the plague-infected houses and burn them down, but the fire accidentally spread and burned down all of Chinatown. The fire was given front-page coverage in the *Chronicle*, although most Caucasian San Franciscans doubted that a malady thought to be of tropical origin would land in their city.³ When plague did arrive in San Francisco (the first ever case in the continental United States), the city's health officials reacted quickly, placing a rope around Chinatown to create an effective quarantine. After no further cases were found in the ensuing days, the quarantine was lifted. Joseph Kinyoun, the federal quarantine officer stationed at Angel Island, was ridiculed for his premature announcement of plague, as was the San Francisco Board of Health. A week later, both officials' worst fears were confirmed.

³ Marilyn Chase, *The Barbary Plague* (New York: Random House, 2003), 12; "Honolulu Swept by a Great Fire," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 1st, 1900.

When three more plague deaths were discovered in Chinatown on March 15, 17, and 18, the city had a crisis on its hands. Chinatown was placed back under quarantine, and, in May, federal officials enacted a ban on the travel of Chinese and Japanese unless they had proof of receiving the Haffkine vaccination, a recently developed vaccine for the plague. Legal action taken by the Chinese Six Companies (a protective organization founded to assist Chinese immigrants) ended the travel restrictions, and later, the quarantine, which had weaved around white residences and stores in a clear violation of the 14th amendment assuring equal protection. By the beginning of 1901, twenty-one San Franciscans had died of bubonic plague, nineteen of whom were Chinese. In January, Surgeon General Wyman attempted to break through the medical and political intransigence by appointing three nationally-renowned medical experts to determine whether the deaths of the past nine months were indeed from bubonic plague. Like Kinyoun and the San Francisco Board of Health before him, the officials confirmed the existence of plague and prepared to report back to Wyman. When Governor Gage got word of the findings, he immediately called on his friends in industry and the press to contest the conclusions in Washington, and further enshroud the existence of plague in doubt.

San Francisco's Turn of the Century Press

The beginning of the twentieth century was a thriving period of newspaper journalism in San Francisco. Four major English-language dailies existed: the morning *Chronicle* and *Examiner*, and the

evening *Call* and *Bulletin*. In addition, the city was home to special interest and foreign language papers, including the pro-union *Organized Labor*, and the recently founded *Chung Sai Yat Po*. This study will examine the *San Francisco Call* and *San Francisco Chronicle*'s coverage of the plague. These two papers represented the Republican business interests of the city. The *Chronicle* was owned by M.H. de Young, and brought a strong Republican bias. From the beginning of the outbreak, it declared that the finding of plague was nothing but a scam, on the part of Democratic mayor James Phelan and his health board, to justify more spending. The *Call* was published by sugar baron John D. Spreckles, and it represented the interests of those in Spreckle's class, though with more flash than the *Chronicle*.

Other papers provided a variety of political and cultural perspectives on the plague. The flashiest of all was William Randolph Hearst's *Examiner*. The paper set the standard for yellow journalism, and certainly approached its plague coverage with sensation in mind. However, because it was Democratic-leaning, it did not oppose the early actions of Mayor Phelan and his health board. According to Guenter Risse in his account of the crisis, Fremont Older's *Bulletin* provided more conservative, anti-Chinese coverage, while the *Sacramento Bee* was able to provide less bias in its reporting, perhaps due to its distance from San Francisco political and business interests.⁴ Finally, *Chung Sai Yat Po*, or the Chinese Western Daily, was founded in 1900 by Ng Poon Chew, who sought to establish a reliable Chinese newspaper that would

⁴ Risse, 115.

inform Chinatown residents of happenings both in China and America. During the hysteria, Chew's paper would play an important role in opposing punitive health measures against the residents of Chinatown.

Misleading Coverage

In examining reporting and editorials of the *Chronicle* and *Call*, it can be concluded that the two papers' coverage was not only misleading, but it also ignored an effective medical and political response to the plague. As Republican publications, both papers used crisis as a chance to score political points on the Democratic mayor James Phelan and his appointed health board. The science behind bubonic plague was still not completely clear to everyday journalists in 1900, and newspapers took advantage of that fact to question medical authorities at every turn. Worst of all, the papers failed to report on any actual deaths, saving their column space to deny the existence of the disease, and to make life difficult for the city's medical professionals. By forcing public health officials to prove the existence of the plague when such existence had already been established beyond reasonable doubt, and calling into question the person reputation of the health officials, local newspapers hindered the efforts to end the pestilence. While the race of the mostly-Chinese victims might have played a role in the coverage, a more likely conclusion is that these papers and their editorial boards simply wanted to continue business as usual, and believed that denying the plague was the most effective way to do so.

Historiography

The bubonic disease that ran through San Francisco in the first four years of the twentieth century has been covered by historians from many angles. This is because the crisis falls under medical, racial, and political history. Two books have been written on the subject of the plague. Marilyn Chase's dramatic account, *The Barbary Plague*, looks at the crisis through the experiences of the two federal quarantine officers who were charged with ending the outbreak. Joseph Kinyoun eventually was chased out of town by Governor Gage and the local press, while his successor, Rupert Blue, "would succeed to become the top physician in the land" after overseeing the end of the 1900 plague and its reoccurrence in 1907.⁵ In Guenter B. Risse's *Plague, Fear, and Politics in San Francisco's Chinatown*, the plague is put into the context of the Chinese immigrants who were dying from it. It is from Risse's account that this paper gets its death totals for the plague. Both sources rely heavily on the primary source newspaper accounts that this study will be analyzing.

Other sources have addressed the plague in the course of longer studies, or have written about San Francisco's turn-of-the-century journalism. Yumei Sun's graduate thesis, "From Isolation to Participation," covers the history of *Chung Sai Yat Po* and its influential publisher Ng Poon Chew, but it only

⁵Chase, 4.

briefly mentions the paper’s role during the plague.⁶ Another source providing background on San Francisco’s journalism is Jules Becker’s study of the coverage the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* gave to Asians from 1882-1924.⁷ This study provides no mention of the plague, and instead focuses mainly on editorials relating to various exclusion acts. Discussing the media coverage of the plague can be further informed by simultaneous racial and medical storylines. Charles McClain discusses the legal activism of Chinatown residents during the plague, and Susan Chaddock frames the plague against the backdrop of advancing medicine, as well as San Francisco’s own history of disease.⁸ This study will rely primarily on the archives of the *Call* and *Chronicle*, as well as the aforementioned secondary sources and others detailing the lives of the paper’s publishers, M.H. de Young and John D. Spreckles.

The deYoung Brothers and the *Chronicle*

By the turn of the century, the *Chronicle* held its place as the Republican paper with more conservative tastes. The paper’s early years, however, were far

⁶ Yumei Sun, “From Isolation to Participation, ‘Chung Sai Yat Po’ (China West Daily) and San Francisco’s Chinatown, 1900-1920,” (College Park: University of Maryland, 1999), 1-144.

⁷ Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion, 1882-1924* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991).

⁸ Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 234-276; Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 124-160.

more reminiscent of the Hearst-style journalism employed by the rival *Examiner*. Owned and operated by the de Young family since 1865, at the time of the plague the paper was headed by Michael Henry de Young. M.H. de Young served as business manager under his brother Charles, and the two ran the paper in the late nineteenth century, exemplifying the rowdy nature of San Francisco in those years. The paper, originally known as the *Dramatic Chronicle*, quickly caused a stir in the city, and showed a willingness to publish inflammatory gossip and then take on the ensuing libel cases in court.⁹

When put in the context of the de Young brothers' activities in the 1870's, the jabs taken at the daily papers in the plague crisis seem relatively tame. In 1871, a county commissioner upset with the *Chronicle's* campaign against a municipal judge's reelection, beat M.H. de Young with a cane and a pistol in a billiards hall until Charles came to the rescue. In another case, Benjamin Napthaly, an ex-*Chronicle* reporter, started his own paper and published insults of the de Young's mother and sister. The brothers responded by appearing in the upstart paper's newsroom with loaded guns. When Napthaly was later jailed for an altercation with the youngest de Young brother Gustavus, Charles and M.H. entered the City Prison and opened fire on Napthaly.¹⁰ The confrontational brand of journalism practiced by the de Young family abruptly ended when the son of San Francisco's mayor, Isaac M. Kalloch, responded to the

⁹ Irving McKee, "The Shooting of Charles de Young," *The Pacific Historical Review* 16, (1947): 275-276.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 277-278.

negative attacks the *Chronicle* had made on his father by shooting and killing Charles de Young. After the death of his brother, M.H de Young took over the operation of the *Chronicle*, and tried to avoid any kind of violent scandal, perhaps because he did not have his older brother to protect him from physical attacks. Instead, M.H. de Young relied on his business skill. He remained the publisher of the *Chronicle* for forty-five years and expanded the paper’s circulation and political influence.¹¹ That is not to say he avoided politics altogether. In fact, DeYoung ran for senate in 1892, and served as both a delegate in the Republican National Conventions of 1888 and 1892, and as the vice-chairman of the Republican National Committee for four years.¹² Not only was deYoung willing to use the *Chronicle* to wage political battles, but as the plague crisis revealed, he was able to insert himself into the battle as a key player.

Spreckels and the *Call*

John D. Spreckels, publisher of the *Call*, stayed out of the San Francisco gossip circuit, but, like de Young, he was a major player in California Republican politics. The son of Hawaiian sugar magnate Claus Spreckels, John followed his father and made his riches in sugar refining. In 1887, Spreckels visited San Diego and fell in love with the city. In fact, he would spend most of the rest his life developing the deserted outpost into a commercial metropolis.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹² *Who’s Who in America*, Vol. 13, 1924-1925 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Company, 1924), 958.

Spreckels also spent time on the San Francisco political scene, colluding with local Democratic boss Chris Buckley in a possible attempt to elect Samuel M. Shortridge to the U.S. Senate.¹³ As the years went by, Spreckels' attention became increasingly divided, as he focused on financing the San Diego and Arizona Railway, building up San Diego's downtown and infrastructure, and establishing two papers in San Diego, *The Union* and *The Tribune*, eventually bringing the *Call*'s managing editor down to run *The Union*.¹⁴ Spreckels would manage the *Call* during the plague crisis, much as de Young had done, by putting the business interests of the city first. When the city was put under quarantine for a second time in June of 1900, Spreckels traveled to the Republican Convention, and attempted to convince President McKinley to undo the state-ordered quarantine.¹⁵ So while de Young and Spreckels shared editorial views, their paper's coverage of events must be put into the context of the rivalry the publishers shared.

As two of the most powerful Republicans in San Francisco, M.H. de Young and John D. Spreckels doubtlessly crossed paths on numerous occasions. The most noteworthy event involved Spreckels brother Adolph, who shot M.H. de Young in 1884 in response to negative articles the *Chronicle* had ran about Claus

¹³ William A. Bullough, "The Steam Beer Handicap: Chris Buckley and the San Francisco Municipal Election of 1896," *California Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (Fall, 1975): 247.

¹⁴ Austin Adams, *The Man: John D. Spreckels* (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1924), 206.

¹⁵ "California Up in Arms Against the Kinyoun Quarantine Outrage," *San Francisco Call*, June 18, 1900.

Spreckels’ sugar empire.¹⁶ The two publishers also apparently had gotten uncomfortably close in the political arena. Franklin Hichborn writes that in 1899, both de Young and Spreckels attempted to put their hat in the ring to be California’s senator, at that time chosen by state legislatures. Both had been promised selection by the Republican machine, but to their mutual surprise, the publishers watched the machine formally come out in support of Colonel Daniel M. Burns.¹⁷ The rivalry continued between the two in the streets of downtown San Francisco. After the de Young family had built the first steel-frame skyscraper in the West for the *Chronicle* headquarters, the Spreckels responded with a nineteen-story tower on Market and Third Street.¹⁸ Editorially, however, these two financial giants agreed that the plague threatened the good business name of their city. Moreover, they both agreed that the plague should be denied wholeheartedly, and that the Democratic Phelan administration should become the daily victim in the press. More alarming was the willingness by the two publisher-barons to use their influence to make sure their no-plague narrative was told.

Plague Coverage of the *Chronicle* and *Call*

While the two papers shared editorial motives, their style and presentation was somewhat different. Devoid of colorful illustrations, the *Chronicle* was marketed as

¹⁶ McKee, 283.

¹⁷ Franklin Hichborn, “The Party, the Machine, and the Vote: The Story of Cross-Filing in California Politics,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (Dec, 1959): 354.

¹⁸ Chase, 54.

the upstanding businessman's paper. De Young's paper covered the epidemic with biased articles and harsh editorials, but only once placed a story about bubonic plague on its front page. That space was left for coverage of the ongoing Second Boer War, and the speeches of William Jennings Bryan. Stories about the local pestilence were pushed further back in the paper, perhaps reflecting the wishes of the *Chronicle* to be a publication of national significance.

The bubonic malady was treated with much more fanfare in the *San Francisco Call*. The paper was known for its loud illustrations (and later, photographs) that accompanied stories, and thus it had no problem giving plague stories top billing. Like the *Chronicle*, the *Call* was eager for the disease to go away and for business to continue as normal in the city. But while the *Chronicle* was mostly reactive to developments in the public health saga, the *Call* did everything in its power to end the story. Anytime it seemed that there was hole in the evidence supporting the existence of the bubonic disease, the evening paper ran blaring front-page headlines such as "City Plague Scare Confessed a Sham," "San Francisco Free from Danger of Contagion," or "Plague Fake is Exposed."¹⁹ In addition to these incredibly misleading and journalistically unethical headlines, the *Call* went further during the crisis. At a time when the State Health Board and the Federal Quarantine Officials were having great difficulty convincing the public of the bacterial science behind the plague, the *Call* sent in their own hired doctor to give the city a clean bill of

¹⁹ *San Francisco Call*, March 27, 1900; June 2, 1900; December 12, 1902.

health. Later, when evidence mounted against the paper’s anti-plague stance, a front page article invented a story claiming a federal health official had denied the existence of the disease.²⁰

The Trip to Washington

The report that the federally appointed health experts were prepared to release in the first months of 1901 was potentially crippling to the argument of those who had denied the plague for a year. In less than a week in Chinatown, the group of scientists had confirmed six plague cases, while in all of 1900 local authorities had discovered only twenty-two cases.²¹ It is no surprise, then, that the men sent by Governor Gage to Washington had the required clout to negotiate with Surgeon General Wyman. Beside such corporate powers as Southern Pacific’s chief council William Herrin sat members of San Francisco’s journalistic elite: *Bulletin* publisher Fremont Older, *Examiner* representative Thomas T. Williams, and *Chronicle* editor John P. Young.²² Their deal with Wyman was simple. As Guenter Risse writes, “the federal authorities agreed not to reveal the commission’s findings concerning the presence of plague in San Francisco; in exchange, the California quintet verbally pledged to conduct a sanitary campaign in Chinatown.”²³ Wyman agreed to the deal and the group headed back to California, where the

²⁰ “Plague Fake is Exposed,” *San Francisco Call*, December 12, 1902.

²¹ Risse, 171.

²² *Ibid.*, 172.

²³ *Ibid.*, 172.

Bee had leaked news of the report and the secret meeting.

To readers in San Francisco, the daily papers told a different story. For the first and last time in the crisis, the *Chronicle* put a story about the plague on its front page. The March 12 headline read “No Government Action on Bubonic Plague,” and the accompanying article detailed the arrival of the “delegation of prominent citizens of San Francisco,” and mentioned that the expert report was still confidential, although the *Bee* had leaked its results six days earlier.²⁴ The *Call* completely ignored the meetings, as well as the leaked report. The paper was far too busy chasing out Federal Quarantine Officer Kinyoun and, like the *Chronicle*, giving credence to the health report produced by the governor’s traveling allies denying the plague.²⁵ Thus, like in many other cases during San Francisco’s public health calamity, it was just as important to note what the *Chronicle* and *Call* were *not* reporting, as much as what they were.

Politics and Plague

The tactics the *Call* and *Chronicle* used in their daily coverage of the plague epidemic were very similar. As already stated, their goal was to deny the plague until the story simply faded away, and the city could return to business as usual. At the onset of plague, the Republican papers aimed a political attack

²⁴ “No Government Action on Alleged Bubonic Plague,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 1901.

²⁵ “The Bubonic Plague Fake,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 20, 1901.

at the Democratic mayor and his health board. The second front of the two newspaper’s fight against any plague acknowledgement was directed towards the medical community and their conclusions. These attacks were based on the limited medical knowledge that existed of the plague among everyday people. Finally, and most egregiously, the two Republican publications chose to ignore the deaths that were occurring in the city.

In their efforts to deny the existence of any epidemic in San Francisco, the *Chronicle* and the *Call* both initially targeted Mayor James Phelan and his Board of Health. Phelan was a progressive-minded Democrat, who sought to use the increased powers granted to him by the city’s new 1898 charter to reform city government and beautify the metropolis.²⁶ One of the powers granted was the ability to appoint the city’s health board, previously done by the governor. The new Health Board that Phelan brought in faced a thankless task. Their budget had been reduced by more than half by the Board of Supervisors, and the last Health Board (nicknamed the “Burns gang” because they were recommended to the governor by political boss Daniel M. Burns) was woefully inept.²⁷ Thus, the new board entered with little money and even less public support, making them an easy target for the daily Republican papers.

The *Call*’s first published article on the reported bubonic plague was published on March 8, 1900, two days after Wong Chut King’s death. The third-page headline declared “Plague Fake Part of Plot to

²⁶ Risse, 87.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

Plunder,” as the report blamed the city Health Board for creating the malady in an attempt to gain more appropriations.²⁸ It was a claim that put the Board in an untenable situation: publicly ask for more money, and the papers’ reports would be confirmed, or try and fight the lethal disease on a tiny budget and almost certainly fail. The *Chronicle* followed suit in their first piece of plague coverage. Along with an article detailing the quarantine of Chinatown, the paper’s editorial page claimed that: “What the Board of Health wants is that its political gang may make money out of cleaning Chinatown, and to effect this it is willing to ruin the business of the city and terrify innocent families.”²⁹

It is clear from the editorials of the two papers in the first few months of the crisis that they were far more concerned with the “business of the city” than with the “innocent families” caught up in the crisis. Reflecting the views of their corporate clientele, another *Chronicle* editorial suggested that the mayor replace his current health board with medical businessmen, who could save “their profession from the disgrace with which it has been overwhelmed.”³⁰ If Mayor Phelan was going to stand behind his Board of Health (as he did in a letter written to the *Chronicle* as a response to their attacks) then he too would face the wrath of the Republican media. As members of the Board of Health joined with local doctors and federal

²⁸ “Plague Fake Part of a Plot to Plunder,” *San Francisco Call*, March 8, 1900.

²⁹ “An Assault on San Francisco,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 8, 1900.

³⁰ “Remove the Board of Health,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 1900.

quarantine officials to search Chinatown for signs of the pestilence, the *Call* published a large cartoon with the caption, “Beware The ‘Phelonic’ Plague That Has Infested The City.”³¹ In the cartoon a giant Phelan, reduced to skin and bones because of his illness, raps his bony limbs around City Hall, as if holding onto it for dear life. Below him, the people of the city scream and flee. When political attacks such as this were not enough to sway their readership, the *Chronicle* and *Call* questioned the scientific validity of the plague.

Bubonic Science in its Infancy

The bubonic plague broke out in San Francisco just as scientific knowledge of the illness was coming into clarity. In the 1870’s, Robert Koch developed methods to recognize diseases by examining a person’s bacteria. A decade later, French doctor Louis Pasteur, and a group of scientists, discovered how to produce vaccines and serums for cholera, typhoid, and yellow fever.³² These findings led to the race between Swiss bacteriologist Alexander Yersin, and Japanese bacteriologist Shibasurburo Kitasato, to locate the plague bacterium. The United States Public Health Service was a little late entering the race for bacterial knowledge, but it caught up quickly under the leadership of Walter Wyman, who led the department from 1891 to 1911 as surgeon general. The budget of the service more than doubled in those 20 years, and

³¹ “Beware the ‘Phelonic’ Plague That Has Infested The City,” *San Francisco Call*, March 16, 1900.

³² Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 126.

with the help of Joseph Kinyoun, the first bacteriological lab in U.S. history was built on Staten Island.³³ This growth in knowledge, however, occurred among the elite scientists of the world, not among local San Francisco clinicians. There was still room for debate concerning the disease, and both the *Chronicle* and the *Call* took advantage of that medical doubt in their coverage.

Throughout the epidemic, the editorials of the *Chronicle* and the *Call* questioned the scientific conclusions and methods of respected local and federal officials who diagnosed plague. At the root of the misleading coverage was a gap in the medical knowledge of the disease between health experts and journalists. To determine what caused the death of Wong Chut King, Kinyoun ran a standard viral test, inoculating a number of animals with the isolated plague bacteria. When those animals eventually died, Kinyoun again isolated the germ and declared that Chinatown was infected. The editors of the *Chronicle* could not (or would not) wrap their heads around this concept, they wrote that the result “proves absolutely nothing unless the bacillus which caused the death can be identified with the bacillus of the plague, which has not been done.”³⁴ Of course, it *had* been done, by Yersin less than a decade earlier, a finding Kinyoun was surely aware of due to his studies in Europe and connections to top bacteriologists like Pasteur and Koch.³⁵ But the writers at these papers had not spent

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “The Plague Bacillus,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 29, 1900.

³⁵ Chase, 24.

years studying bacterial cultures under microscopes like Kinyoun, and their theories reflected that disparity in knowledge. One theory floated by the *Chronicle* editorial writers was that the bubonic illness was caused by a protein-deficient diet and a tropical climate, which explained its prevalence in India and China. Chinese in San Francisco, on the other hand, had protein-rich diets and lived in a cool climate, and thus could not catch the disease.³⁶ As Nayan Shah describes, the opposing theories about plague “exposed the stark cleavages in scientific knowledge about epidemics and unease with government strategies for its suppression.”³⁷ As the saga went on, the *Chronicle* and the *Call* would rely on a variety of other theories to claim scientific superiority.

Three days after Wong Chut King’s body was found in the Globe Hotel, the *Chronicle* reported on the progress of the Chinatown quarantine and criticized the Board of Health. It also introduced an argument against the plague’s existence that would continue to appear for the next three years. Why, the paper asked, would there not be many more people dead in Chinatown if the plague was real? Wouldn’t the “black death” of medieval times leave dead bodies scattered down Dupont Street?³⁸ The *Call* followed suit many times over the next couple of years, opining in February of 1901 “where its germs lodge, speedy notice of its presence is served, and the fact of its existence is not left to be determined by a microscope in a secret

³⁶ “Experience vs. Experiment,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 1, 1900.

³⁷ Shah, 123.

³⁸ “Plague Fake is Exploded,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 9, 1900.

laboratory.”³⁹

We know today that the answer most certainly lies in the species of flea that housed the disease in the dark crevices of Chinatown. According to a Center for Disease Control expert interviewed in the epilogue of Marilyn Chase’s book on the plague, the 1894 plague which left millions dead in Asia was the product of the Oriental rat flea. This flea, known as the *Pulex cheopis*, grows a basket of spines in its stomach that temporarily blocks the exit of the plague blood, and the entrance of any new blood the flea searches for. Eventually, the starving flea dislodges this deadly cocoon of germ that has been breeding in its stomach. The flea present in San Francisco (*Ceratophyllus fasciatus*) had no mechanism that blocked digestion, leading to a less lethal transmission.⁴⁰ This small difference probably saved scores of lives in San Francisco, and accounts for the controlled, though still serious, breakout that occurred there.

In attempting to scientifically disprove the existence of the plague, the *Call*, the less traditional of the two Republican papers, went to lengths the *Chronicle* would find too far for its readers’ tastes. On May 29, a day after Judge William W. Morrow overturned Kinyoun’s travel ban on Asians, and the state had enacted its own quarantine, Dr. George F. Shradly arrived in San Francisco to determine once and for all if the pestilence existed in the city. Disproving the disease “once and for all” would become a repeated phrase on the part of the plague disbelievers, but the claim rang hollow as dead bodies with swollen glands

³⁹ “Another Plague,” *San Francisco Call*, February 3, 1901.

⁴⁰ Chase, 191.

continued to be found for another three years. Shradly had been hired by the *New York Journal* and the *Call*, which announced his arrival with an illustrated front-page spread. The pictures conveyed a sense of drama regarding the health proceedings; on one side of the page Judge Morrow thoughtfully reads his decision, on the other side worried city merchants confer with the State health officials. And in the middle, triumphantly posed with his right fist clenched, his left arm extended as if emphasizing an important point, is Dr. Shradly, the city’s medical savior. Unfortunately, the doctor’s visit led to nothing but more confusion. The article contained a statement from Dr. Shradly declaring, “As far as I can learn from a conversation held this morning with the President of the Health Board there is at present no case of bubonic plague in San Francisco.”⁴¹ The announcement left many questions unanswered (had there even been bubonic cases?), and it did not shut the door on the possibility of deaths in the future.

The next day, authorities took Dr. Shradly to examine the corpse of Dang Hong, a forty-year-old worker, who had lived in Chinatown for ten years.⁴² Shradly confirmed that Hong had indeed died of plague, and, in doing so, forced the hand of the *Call*. The newspaper had no choice but to take to the front page with the following headline: “Sporadic Case of Bubonic Plague Discovered, But There is Absolutely No Need for Alarm.”⁴³ While the front page admonished

⁴¹ “Board of Health Confesses to a Famous Expert,” *San Francisco Call*, May 29, 1900.

⁴² Risse, 279.

⁴³ “Sporadic Case of Bubonic Plague Discovered,” *San Francisco Call*, May 31, 1900.

citizens to remain calm and simply take sanitary care, the editorial of the same day turned nasty, declaring that if the disease really did exist, then Chinatown should be burned to the ground.⁴⁴ The paper had paid the price for its attempt to control the scientific narrative of the epidemic.

Silent Journalism

In the bubonic plague crisis that lasted from 1900 to 1904, 119 San Franciscans lost their lives. This number can be disputed due to the difficulty of actually locating dead bodies in Chinatown. In the first place, poor lines of communication existed between the San Francisco medical establishment and Chinese doctors. The residents of Chinatown also began hiding dead bodies with plague, understandably trying to avoid another quarantine.⁴⁵ Only the first, Wong Chut King, received any type of press from the *Chronicle* or the *Call*. The vast majority of the plague victims were Chinese, and this could have been a contributing factor to the lack of coverage. An illness afflicting the wealthy residents of Pacific Heights would have certainly received a different reaction from the media. But the refusal of the two editorial boards to see the calamity as anything other than a political ruse was the single biggest factor suppressing honest coverage.

As the deaths continued (three more Chinese laborers followed Wong Chut King to the grave in March), the editorials of the *Chronicle* and *Call* became

⁴⁴ "Clean Out Chinatown," *San Francisco Call*, May 31, 1900.

⁴⁵ Risse, 184. 277.

more transparent. More than anything, the two papers simply wanted the plague story to go away and for business to continue as usual by the Bay. On March 25, a *Call* editorial exposed these desires in shocking fashion. After a routine criticism of Phelan and the rival *Examiner*, the editorial declared “It will be remembered that the *Call* and *Chronicle* agreed to omit publication of the sensational doings of the Board of Health and the Chief of Police.”⁴⁶ This collusion, which evidenced an abandonment of journalistic standards, was meant as a rebuttal to a “plague special” published by the *Examiner* and its Hearst-owned affiliates. A month later, it was the *Chronicle* applauding the *Call* for its efforts in “defending the city against the hurtful story that bubonic plague existed here.”⁴⁷

Throughout the summer and fall, the shots continued at the *Examiner* and at Kinyoun, specials ran detailing horror stories of whites trapped in the Chinatown quarantine, and plague cases in England and India were reported. But of the fourteen deaths that occurred between May and October, not one was written about. Even the death of the first white victim, teamster William Murphy, drew no coverage from either paper. A reason could simply be that the editorial boards of the *Chronicle* and the *Call* had gone too far to turn back. Despite mounting death totals and scientific evidence, jettisoning their original no-plague position would have resulted in a loss of face. It was a game of “Chicken,” and with neither side

⁴⁶ “Yellow Plague,” *San Francisco Call*, March 25, 1900.

⁴⁷ “Deprecate Plague Fake,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 17, 1900.

willing to risk embarrassment, their journalistic standing was left to slip off the cliff.

The Racial Motives of the *Call* and *Chronicle*

Another theory is that the deaths were not covered because those affected by the plague were mostly Chinese immigrants living in San Francisco's Chinatown. Of the 119 plague deaths, only twelve were not Asian.⁴⁸ Many were single men with few connections in this country, the kind of people who easily escaped the public's attention. Furthermore, both papers had a history of not providing Chinese-Americans with favorable coverage. The *Chronicle* had long been an important local player in promoting Chinese and Japanese exclusion.⁴⁹ The *Call*, meanwhile, constantly portrayed Asians in their cartoons as monkeys, and stereotyped their behavior as animals inside the quarantine. It made sense that these conservative, business-friendly papers would seek to demean the Chinese. Chinatown itself sat on a valuable area of land not far from downtown, and editorials from the time show that much thought already went into ways to relocate Chinese to another part of the city.⁵⁰ This being said, remaining silent on the plague issue does not seem like the best way to have promoted Chinese removal. The *Examiner*, for example, with its strong Democrat and union ties, sought to expose the plague, and, in the process,

⁴⁸ Risse, 277.

⁴⁹ Becker, 1.

⁵⁰ "The Chinatown Nuisance," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 29, 1900. Explains how Chinese could possibly be priced out of current location through a city charter loophole.

expose the Chinese as a filthy, sick population that was bad. The silence of the *Chronicle* and *Call*, then, was less of a purposeful turning of a blind eye to the plight of the Chinese, and more likely an attempt to completely ignore any plague story. After all, with Chinatown’s proximity to San Francisco’s commercial center, plague would be bad for business. And the business interests of the city were above all what interested the two Republican papers.

The End of the Plague

The efforts of the business community in San Francisco to suppress the knowledge of the plague had allowed the illness to drag on through 1902. The city’s death total rose to ninety-three on December 11 with the passing of Deong Yuen Yum.⁵¹ The plague would only come to an end when the city’s commercial interests decided that there was no use in further denying what had become known nationally, and that business stood to lose if Chinatown was not cleaned up. Rupert Blue, the federal quarantine officer who took over in the spring of 1901, had been pursuing a plan of rat catching and construction to eradicate the plague. This process called for knocking down hastily built porches and wooden additions, and filling in basements with concrete.⁵² The plan seemed to be the answer to the plague, but to carry it out Blue needed the support of the powerful business leaders and the newspapers that represented the business interests.

The commercial powers of San Francisco had their

⁵¹ Risse, 293.

⁵² Chase, 126.

own reasons to begin support of plague eradication. The city's standing as the home of the Pacific Fleet, and the West's greatest shipping hub, was being challenged by Seattle and the Northern Pacific Railway. As Guenter Risse writes in his account of the plague, the image of the city as host to such a contagion gave great credence to those who advocated the transferring of maritime business to Seattle.⁵³ In January of 1903, Surgeon General Wyman organized a meeting of the nation's state health boards. It declared once and for all that plague existed in San Francisco. What came of this was a meeting of the top business interests of the city, including M.H. de Young, who decided to form the Joint Mercantile Committee. While the *Call* and *Chronicle* both reported the purpose of the meeting was to suppress Wyman's declaration, the Joint Mercantile Committee would prove to be a valuable ally to Blue in eradicating the plague.⁵⁴

Whether de Young truly believed that plague was present in San Francisco, or whether the risks in not taking action simply became too great for the city's business, the publisher and his influential associates teamed with Blue to end the epidemic. Blue, unlike quarantine officer Joseph Kinyoun, understood the importance of playing to the influential newspapers, and, according to Marilyn Chase's account of the crisis, he asked for their backing of the rat eradication campaign and the cleaning of Chinatown, missions that could be pursued without admitting the existence

⁵³ Risse, 219-220.

⁵⁴ "Business Men Take Action," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 27, 1903, and "Lies are Still Hurting State," *San Francisco Call*, January 27, 1903.

of plague.⁵⁵ Whether a direct response to Blue’s pleas or simply a case of journalistic exhaustion, stories about the plague in the *Call* and *Chronicle* became scarce in 1903 and 1904, and all but disappeared from the paper’s editorials. As Joint Mercantile Committee increased their efforts throughout 1903, Blue began meeting regularly with the Committee’s president, and other state and local health officials, to discuss the joint efforts.⁵⁶ Blue’s plan for plague eradication was ultimately successful, and the last death of the plague occurred in February of 1904. The meetings Blue held ultimately laid the groundwork for future public-private collaboration, and when the bubonic plague resurfaced following the 1906 earthquake, the blueprint for eradication was in place. Only when the media hysteria had died down, and the city’s rich and powerful had accepted the truth about the plague, was meaningful prevention able to prevail.

Conclusion and Lasting Impact

The bubonic plague that killed nearly 120 San Franciscans from 1900 to 1904 was wiped out fairly quickly once the plague’s presence was undisputed, and a clear agenda for Chinatown’s cleanup was carried out. For the first two years of the crisis, however, the lack of any substantial action was delayed by the debate over whether the plague actually existed. Opposition to the plague’s existence, though scientifically baseless, was led by the city’s two Republican newspapers, the *Call* and the *Chronicle*.

⁵⁵ Chase, 130.

⁵⁶ Risse, 250.

The two newspapers acted as beacons of misinformation at a perilous time when the public deserved to know why San Franciscans were dying. The leaders of these two journals were Republican barons who wanted to see business as usual continue in San Francisco.

The paper's strong Republican positions led to criticism of the Democratic mayor and his health board for inventing the plague to gain more funds. Though great advances had been made in scientific circles that correctly identified the bubonic plague strain, the *Call* and *Chronicle* played to the medical ignorance of the common man in their attempt to repudiate pronouncements from local and federal health officials. Finally, the papers abdicated their journalistic integrity in not reporting on the sick and dying in their own city. In pretending to be a voice for the citizens of San Francisco against higher political and medical interests, the papers instead left the public unaware of the harmful disease around them.

The lasting impact of the 1900 bubonic plague and its media coverage, can be related to a medical calamity that occurred some eighty years later when another virus emerged among a minority population in San Francisco. The AIDS crisis of the 1980s first emerged in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, particularly in the gay hub of Castro Street, which quickly became "ground zero" for the epidemic in that city. Like the bubonic plague of 1900, AIDS was initially limited to an isolated minority population, and its presence was downplayed by business interests (in the case of AIDS, these interests were the bathhouse and sex club owners who were positioned to lose business if an outbreak was acknowledged.) But as

Randy Shilts writes in his seminal account of the crisis, *And the Band Played On*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* acted quite differently than its turn of the century predecessor, and was far ahead of the national media in both reporting the tragic deaths, and pushing the local government for more action. Subsequently, San Francisco's AIDS prevention and treatment programs were far ahead of other cities such as New York.⁵⁷

Perhaps then, if the *Call* and *Chronicle* in 1900-1904 had been out in front of the local health inspectors, reporting in detail the early gruesome deaths in Chinatown, local and federal officials would have responded with a unified effort, unburdened with having to prove that a disease actually existed. Ironically, the scientific knowledge of the bubonic plague in the early twentieth century was actually more advanced than the knowledge of AIDS when its outbreak took place in San Francisco. But so much effort on the part of Joseph Kinyoun and the early health officials involved with the plague was spent on fighting a daily press war with the Republican news conglomerates, that two years went by with little substantive progress. The plague of 1900 will forever illustrate the coercive power of the press to muddle scientific knowledge and delay impactful action.

Guy Marzorati is a senior History major and Political Science minor at Santa Clara University. He hopes to pursue a career in broadcast media.

⁵⁷ Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

Environmental Disaster in Japan

Kathryn Karasek

Japan modernized more rapidly than any other country in the modern era. This rapid modernization dictated the government's responses to environmental issues throughout the twentieth century. In this essay, I examine the Minamata disaster and how it epitomized the ideology that grounded the government's response to environmental disaster. I argue that, although the climax occurred in the mid-twentieth century, the roots were planted in the beginning of the century, with the Ashio Copper Mine pollution incident. I further examine how the Minamata case affected the government's approach to the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis.

The Ashio Copper Mine

Intensive environmental destruction in Japan, coupled with a combative public response to that destruction, can be traced to just before the turn of the twentieth century, when the pollution from the Ashio Copper Mine wreaked havoc on the surrounding countryside and farmers rose up against their government to save their lands. The Ashio Copper Mine had been active since the seventeenth century, but was losing money by the Bakumatsu period (1853-1868). It took the mentality of the Meiji era, one focused on modernization and productivity, to bring the mine back to life. Little did Furukawa Ichibe, the new owner and operator of the mine who took control in 1877, know that he had awakened a monster.

Furukawa Ichibe was one of the great entrepreneurial minds of the Meiji era.¹ He set out to make the Ashio copper production competitive on the world stage.² Progress was slow when he first began production in 1877. But, ten years later, global forces pulled Ashio into the world market. In the late 1880s, the French Copper Syndicate sought to eliminate copper price fluctuation by creating a French-controlled monopoly on the world copper supply. The syndicate approached Furukawa to purchase his mine's output. However, because Furukawa acknowledged his ignorance of "the world beyond Yokohama," he refused to sign with the French Copper Syndicate itself, and instead signed with its representative firm, Jardine Matheson & Company.³ A British company, Jardine Matheson had a long and substantial history of mercantile activities in East Asia.⁴ The French Copper Syndicate failed to manipulate the global copper market successfully and went bankrupt by 1889. However, Furukawa held Jardine Matheson to the contract. As a result, Ashio owed the British company the incredibly large amount of copper it had promised: the contract called for "19,000 tons of copper to be delivered over 29 months starting in August 1888 at the fixed price of Y20.75 per 100 kin (pounds)."⁵

¹ F.G. Notehelfer, "Between Tradition and Modernity: Labor and the Ashio Copper Mine," *Monumenta Nipponica*, 39:1 (1984), 12

² Jun Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, (Tokyo: UN University Press, 1992) - Ch. 1, Sec. I

³ F.G. Notehelfer, "Japan's First Pollution Incident," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 1:2 (1975), 358

⁴ Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, Ch. 1, Sec. I

⁵ Notehelfer, "Japan's First Pollution Incident," 358

This was the true turning point in the Ashio environmental history. In his attempt to join the global system, Furukawa “had contracted far in excess of his means;” in fact, he promised almost 1.5 times the current production at his three mine locations, two of which were already operating at maximum capacity. The Ashio mine had to make up the difference. Furukawa thus began a program of “crash modernization,” and initiated construction of a hydro-electric plant (Japan’s first), to provide electricity for the mine which greatly increased its production capacity.⁶ Electric motors and pumps increased production, while electric lights in the shafts allowed workers to work more efficiently. Through these changes, Furukawa was able to meet the demands of his Jardine Matheson contract, a success heralded as a “great victory for Japan” and perhaps an even greater victory for Furukawa himself, whose company by 1891 produced 47.8% of Japan’s copper (40% coming from Ashio itself).⁷

Although it cannot be denied that this rapid modernization was an important step in proving to the world that Japan was a competitor in the marketplace, at what cost were these victories achieved? The answer to this question may not have been obvious to Furukawa, but it was painfully so to both the laborers at Ashio and to the farmers and fishermen who lived downstream from the mine. The intense emphasis that Furukawa put in capital investment in the late 1800s and early 1900s pushed the original means of production, the miners, to a secondary position.

⁶ Ibid, 359

⁷ Ibid, 360-61

Furukawa thus turned his focus away from modernizing the labor force and towards modernizing the technology used in the mine. This allowed the perpetuation of a hierarchical social structure within the mine, a structure that would prevent effective labor organization or unionization until well into the twentieth century, exacerbating the frustration of the laborers.⁸

By the time of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905-1906, it became clear to the miners that Furukawa prioritized his new technology over the wellbeing of his workers. This dangerous combination of polarization and pauperization culminated in 1907 with “the greatest outbreak of violence in modern Japanese labor history.”⁹ The Ashio riot of 1907 resulted from neglect on the part of the mine officials, corruption within the management structure, and the lack of an established outlet for the frustrations of Ashio laborers. The riot set miners against their supervisors in a conflict that lasted until the labor disputes of 1919, when the management was restructured.¹⁰ On a smaller scale, the 1907 riot was representative of the societal tensions of the era, especially the pitting of big business and management against the laborers of whom dramatic sacrifices were demanded for the sake of national economic development. Eventually, the tensions built to a breaking point. This formed a parallel with the case of the farmers dealing with the destruction caused by the Ashio mine as well as those

⁸ Notehelfer, “Between Tradition and Modernity,” 23

⁹ Ibid, 24

¹⁰ Kazuo Nimura, *The Ashio Riot of 1907: A Social History of Mining in Japan*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 153

who suffered from Minamata Disease in the mid-twentieth century.

The group that suffered even more than the mine laborers were the farmers who lived downstream from the mine. By the late 1880s, “almost all marine life in both rivers (the Watarase and the Tone) was dead,” eliminating the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen.¹¹ In addition, farmers who lived along the riverside suffered. Because of the deforestation undertaken by Ashio to get enough wood to keep the mine running at maximum capacity, the watershed at the head of the Watarase was destroyed. With the watershed gone, flooding became a serious issue. The water that overran the fields was not replenishing as “poisonous silt from the mine rendered once-rich agricultural lands a moonscape.”¹² Not only was almost all vegetation killed, but farmers who came in contact with the water developed sores upon contact. The river of their livelihoods had become the “River of Death.”¹³

When faced with the disaster and destruction caused by the mine runoff, the citizens appealed to their government. These appeals were indicative of the new political system in Japan around the turn of the century. Appealing to the Diet, the representative and legislative branch of government, a coalition of village leaders submitted a formal petition in 1891 asking for the “removal of the pollution and a temporary closure of the Ashio Copper Mine.”¹⁴ In line with a pattern that

¹¹ Notehelfer, “Japan’s First Pollution Incident,” 361-62

¹² Brett L. Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*, (University of Washington: Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books, 2009), 71

¹³ Notehelfer, “Japan’s First Pollution Incident,” 363

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 363

would become painfully repetitive over the next century, their petition was dismissed, and the government denied that the mine had caused any harm. One of the most frustrating aspects of this dismissal was the fact that there was a specific law in place, the Japanese Mining Law of 1892, which was meant to protect the public interest against potential harm caused by mines such as Ashio. It appears that public interest was considered secondary to the more powerful interests of profit and economic development.

With their government ignoring their requests, the villagers were forced to deal with Furukawa and Ashio on a private level, undertaking a system of local settlements. These settlements were effectively indemnity payments to keep the villagers silent for four years, or until 1896. The agreement also included a clause that said Furukawa would, by June of 1893, install new equipment to prevent future pollution from Ashio. It became apparent, however, that conditions in the affected regions were deteriorating, not improving; "Furukawa's promised technological improvements were all a hoax, or, if not a hoax, then a dismal failure."¹⁵

One of the key variables in this conflict came to light in 1895, when Japanese soldiers returned home from the Sino-Japanese War. Having just fought for their country, these soldiers were horrified to learn that their families and communities had been treated so unjustly while they were away at war. They came home to increasingly high infant mortality rates and fertility problems due to poisoning from the mine. The livelihoods of their families had been destroyed, and

¹⁵ Ibid, 368

the government as a whole refused to acknowledge their pain. The return of these soldiers brought a “new militancy” and a renewed resolve to the region. After a devastating flood in 1896, villagers from four affected prefectures sent a new petition to the government calling for the closing of the mine, and for the reduction of taxes in the affected regions while they recovered.¹⁶

The government’s reaction to such activities set an important precedent for how they would deal with environmental issues in the future. While the public response grew, the majority of members of government continued to downplay the significance of the issue. The government issued an ambiguous order that called on the Furukawa Company to undertake preventative construction, but it did not give specific guidelines, nor did it establish a timeline for implementation.

The exception to this governmental refusal to accept responsibility for the health and safety of its citizens was the Diet representative from Tochigi Prefecture, Tanaka Shozo. Early on, he accused the government of avoiding the pollution question and of putting the mine and its profits ahead of the wellbeing of the citizens. The government was committed “to the type of industrialization that Ashio represented.”¹⁷ They were unable to find a balance between rapid modernization (the desire to catch up technologically to the major trading powers of the day), and the remedying of collateral damage from such activities.

When their appeals to the governmental failed, the citizens once again turned to private coercion, albeit

¹⁶ Ibid, 368-69

¹⁷ Ibid, 368

with a new target. They persuaded leading politicians to visit the affected region, and these men were “deeply disturbed” by what they saw. Their discoveries, coupled with the rising tide of militant activism from the villagers, led to a governmental decision to act. In 1897, after apologizing for their prior inaction, the government issued a new set of specific orders with actions required by the Furukawa Company.¹⁸ Just as Furukawa had undertaken crash modernization in the previous decade, he was now forced to undertake a crash program to implement the necessary changes, changes that should have been put into affect ten years earlier. The violence of the anti-pollution movement slowly died down, the farms downstream began to recover, and the problem was eclipsed by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

Within the context of Ashio, modernity served to both attack and then to mend the damage in the countryside. Although rapid technological modernization was responsible for the pollution, farmers were also able to use modern political institutions—petitions, extensive research and appeals, the court system—to remedy the situation. This demonstrates the powerful change in mentality at the time: not all modern institutions were out to attack the people. Instead, citizens figured out how to fight fire with fire. However, Ashio remains a scar on the landscape of Japan to this day, serving as a painful reminder of what happens when a powerful government prioritizes profit over people, and gives the state ultimate power over its citizens.

¹⁸ Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, Ch. 1, Sec. III

Minamata Mercury Poisoning

The second major pollution incident of the twentieth century, the case of Minamata mercury poisoning, occurred almost half a century after the Aisho mine tragedy. Many of the themes that defined the Ashio Copper Mine incident also pervaded the Minamata situation: government unresponsiveness, the prioritization of profit over popular wellbeing, and the ensuing protest on behalf of those harmed by such decisions.

Minamata was a small fishing and farming village in southern Kyushu which also produced salt. When that product, which was critical to Minamata's economic security, came under government monopoly, village leaders decided to pursue other forms of industrialization. In 1909, chemist Noguchi Jun was looking for a site to construct a "carbide production plant that would use surplus electricity from a hydro-electric power plant."¹⁹ Minamata leaders offered the use of the land that had previously been used for salt production, as well as use of the bay, and infrastructural support from the local officials. At first, working with Noguchi's enterprise seemed to be going well for the tiny village. It had done its part to usher in a new era of industrialization and modernization.

Unfortunately, the product did not sell well. Carbide was a specialized product, and "its main use was as a light source in night fishing." Adapting to the circumstances, Noguchi's Chisso Company began using carbide to make fertilizer. World War I gave the company a monopoly on the chemical fertilizer

¹⁹ Ibid, Ch. 4, Sec. I

industry and kept the company alive. However, it was evident that Chisso still needed to advance and adapt if it was to maintain this competitiveness. Noguchi traveled to Europe to explore new methods for ammonia synthesis for fertilizer production. He was impressed with the Haber-Bosch process, which was a new technology even in Europe, and “was for Japan the first experience of ammonia synthesis and the first introduction of high-pressure gas technology.”²⁰ The company introduced plants in Japan and Korea and continued to increase their competitive edge in the marketplace. Selecting only students from the top of their respective classes, both management and labor were held to the highest standards. As explained by Ui Jun, “the employment of high-quality low-paid workers was the basis upon which Japan's industrial strength was built.”²¹

With the rise of militarism in the 1930s, Chisso was in a prime position to capitalize on their governmental connections. By this time, Noguchi had established himself as a military sympathizer and imperialist.²² Chisso formed its own financial conglomerate by 1933, and remained successful by providing the military with acetaldehyde, a key material for the petroleum chemical industry.²³ Mercury was a byproduct of this production and was dumped, untreated, into

²⁰ Ibid, Ch. 4, Sec. I

²¹ Ibid, Ch. 4, Sec. II

²² Barbara Molony, *Technology and Investment: The Prewar Japanese Chemical Industry*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 156

²³ Ibid, 186

Minamata Bay.²⁴

As early as 1926, fishermen in Minamata Bay began to notice the side effects of the untreated waste products being dumped in the water. However, complaints were pushed aside, just as they had been at Ashio almost thirty years earlier. In a manner similar to the “local settlements” offered to affected farmers at Ashio, fishermen received compensation with the condition that they stop complaining.²⁵ Efforts to increase production were prioritized above the human environment, and the government supported company over citizen. Pollutants continued to be dumped in Minamata Bay for the next three decades.

Although its munitions division was shut down during the American Occupation of Japan (1945-1952), Minamata managed to avoid the most dire stagnation and depression following World War II by continuing to produce fertilizer, which helped to reestablish Japan’s agricultural production.²⁶ Through a strategic selection of the optimal goods to produce, and through creativity and innovation, Chisso “experienced a second golden era during the 1950s,” and quickly regained its position as a monopoly power.²⁷

The people of Minamata managed to avoid the post-war economic devastation that gripped most of Japan

²⁴ Paul Almeida and Linda Brewster Stearns, “Political Opportunities and Local Grassroots Environmental Movements: The Case of Minamata,” *Social Problems*, 45:1 (1998), 42

²⁵ Timothy S. George, *Minamata: Pollution and the Struggle for Democracy in Postwar Japan*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2001), 74

²⁶ George, *Minamata*, 40

²⁷ Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, Ch. 4, Sec. III

until the mid-1950s, and thus felt indebted to the Chisso plant. The majority of the village's tax revenue came from the company and directly related income sources.²⁸ The mayor of Minamata—which had grown to become a city in 1949—and the city council members also consisted primarily of former Chisso managers and union members. Chisso and Minamata had become so fully intertwined that they had effectively become a single system. But this system was not based on democracy, or even the wellbeing of all of its components. Rather, it was effectively a return to the feudal system of medieval Japan, where one party had complete financial and political control over the other. This internal “hierarchical social stratification,” coupled with the external support of Chisso by both the local and national governments, made it structurally very difficult for the people to assert themselves and their rights regarding their environment.²⁹ This pattern replicated that of the labor force at Ashio at the turn of the century. As at Ashio, this system led to civil unrest and a movement against those at the top of the hierarchy. By 1955, the situation became dire and those who ate the fish from Minamata Bay developed a sickness that was mysterious, debilitating, and fatal.

The Minamata anti-pollution movement can be broken down into distinct time periods which differed in public action and in government response. Paul Almeida and Linda Stearns break the struggle into four

²⁸ Almeida and Stearns, “The Case of Minamata,” 42

²⁹ Barbara Molony, review of *Minamata: Pollution and the Struggle for Democracy in Postwar Japan* by Timothy S. George, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 77:2 (2003), 460

stages, beginning in the mid-1950s with “early efforts to understand what was happening in Minamata.”³⁰

Municipal health authorities Hosokawa Hajime and Ito Hasuo headed the initial investigation. Forming a Strange Disease Countermeasures Committee, they completed a house-to-house survey that revealed more and more victims of the mysterious disease. After a period of door-to-door surveying, the investigation retreated to the laboratory at Kumamoto University Medical School. When the local community realized that heavy metal poisoning was the source of the problem, and that this heavy metal waste likely came from the factory, they became uncooperative. As frightening as the disease may have been, it occurred infrequently enough that the people were more willing to risk a small chance of contracting the disease, than they were willing to compromise their city’s economic success. The company itself was even less willing to cooperate. From providing faulty and fabricated samples, to a disastrous human experiment in 1958 that involved “switching the discharge of the acetaldehyde plant’s wastewater from Hyakken Harbour to the mouth of the Minamata River,”³¹ it was evident that the company suspected it was at fault but refused to risk its profit. In fact, “testimony given in court at a later date proved that, at the time of the *mimaikin* (sympathy payment) signing, Chisso already knew, from its own research scientists, that it was responsible for the mercury poisoning.”³²

Social action heightened in 1959 when the

³⁰ Timothy S. George, *Minamata*, 47

³¹ George, *Minamata*, 54

³² Almeida and Stearns, “The Case of Minamata,” 43

Minamata Fishermen's Association, and the Fushimi Sea Fishermen's Association, demanded compensation from the company for damage perpetrated by the chemical complex.³³ The company decided to pay a small amount of sympathy money, a *mimaikin*, to the affected parties, but refused to admit culpability or change their waste disposal system.³⁴ In response to their inaction, fishermen held a rally demanding that the Diet act on their behalf. In fact, "on the way home from this rally, [the fishermen] broke into the grounds of the chemical complex and destroyed office equipment."³⁵ For their actions, many fishermen were arrested by the prefectural police, and were condemned by the government and the labor unions associated with the plant.³⁶ There was a distinct divide between the fishermen affected by the Minamata pollution and the laborers who depended upon it for their livelihood. This divide reflected the pervasive tension between profit and public interest. The fishermen, like the farmers from Ashio, were no match for a "powerful, cohesive elite" made up of wealthy factory and government officials.³⁷

The company was able to get away with superficial fixes, similar to those improvements promised early on at Ashio. For example, the company installed a device with the improbable name of "Cyclator," that would supposedly clean toxic waste before it was dumped into the bay. This was a powerful public relations tool more than it was a solution to the pollution problem,

³³ Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, Ch. 4, Sec. V

³⁴ Almeida and Stearns, "The Case of Minamata," 43

³⁵ Ui, *Industrial Pollution in Japan*, Ch. 4, Sec. V

³⁶ George, *Minamata*, 93

³⁷ Almeida and Stearns, "The Case of Minamata," 44

especially when the company president, Yoshioka Kiichi, pretended to drink “a glass of water from the Cyclator in front of... assembled dignitaries, including Governor Teramoto.”³⁸ However, just as Furukawa did not follow through on his promises to decrease the pollution from Ashio, the Minamata officials were obstinately unwilling to change their behavior. The company lawyer later admitted that the machine was never intended to remove organic mercury, which is why Yoshioka did not actually drink the real waste water from the plant. Again, it was evident that the company knew the danger of the waste products, they just did not care enough to clean them up.

The second period of Minamata action was one of “expanding political opportunities.”³⁹ Between 1964-68, external allies began to prove integral to the cause. A pollution case similar to that in Minamata developed in Niigata Prefecture. The main difference was that local officials in Niigata sided, not with the plant, but with the victims. Unlike the Minamata case, the Niigata plant was not integral to the local economy, and, therefore, there was little political risk to demanding that it cease its dangerous activities. The Niigata officials demanded this through a lawsuit, a tactic that Minamata victims would later adapt and utilize in the subsequent decade. In 1971, however, the action of the Niigata victims was radical and unprecedented within Japan.⁴⁰ It flew directly in the face of the traditional hierarchical structures of Japanese society. This was the last straw, and anti-

³⁸ George, *Minamata*, 115

³⁹ Almeida and Stearns, “The Case of Minamata,” 44

⁴⁰ George, *Minamata*, 174-76

pollution activity soon rapidly increased. Workers at Chisso noted this development and adapted, breaking into two factions within the company labor union. One faction, the “old” union, issued a “Shame Declaration,” apologizing for siding with the company, instead of with the victims of Minamata Disease.⁴¹

The third period of action continued the advancements made during the second period and encompassed both external and internal action. There were three levels of activity in this period. The first level were the popular movements by parties external to the Minamata destruction, such as the student movement. The years between 1969-74 were already a time of heightened political unrest, especially among young people. The Vietnam War protests and disillusionment with big government on a global level trickled down to the environmental movement. Students in Tokyo and students at Kumamoto University united with locals in protesting the actions of Chisso.

The second level was the action taken by the pollution victims themselves, most notably their court victory in 1973 in conjunction with the other Big Four pollution cases. “With the Big Four pollution cases occurring during a widespread national anti-pollution social movement, there was public pressure for favorable verdicts.” Chisso was forced to publicly acknowledge the destruction they had caused and to pay the largest court settlement paid to citizens in Japanese history, “a total of ¥930 million (\$3.6 million).”⁴²

⁴¹ Almeida and Stearns, “The Case of Minamata,” 45-46

⁴² Ibid, 50

The third and final level of action was the government response to the popular movement. After passing a Basic Law for Pollution Control in 1967, the government continued to grant limited concessions to Minamata victims, including the 1970 “Law Concerning Relief of Pollution-related Health Damage” and the “Compensation Law.”⁴³ This is akin to the stage at Ashio in which the government forced Furukawa to clean up or shut down. The difference, however, is that the government followed through on their enforcement of such demands at Ashio, and continued to support the farmers for the benefit of agricultural stability. Sadly, in Minamata, this was not the case.

In the fourth stage of the larger movement, the government diverted from its path of gradually granting more concessions to the disease victims, and returned to its hard-line policies of the 1950s and early 1960s. The national anti-pollution movement lost steam with the stagnation of the economy after 1974. Citizens no longer had the luxury of dedicating free time to social movements, and did not press the government to maintain their dedication to addressing the victims’ problems. In the same way that government officials put public wellbeing on hold to modernize the mining industry at Ashio in order to compete on the world market, the government responded to the financial crisis by allying with big business. Although the Japanese government took a few small steps forward in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it took a big step back in terms of civil rights

⁴³ “Minamata Disease: The History and Measures,” The Ministry of the Environment, (2002), Section 2

following the oil crisis of 1973-74.

Settlements made following this economic and political stagnation were more akin to the *mimaikin* of the 1950s, as the state receded into a refusal to accept responsibility for its failure to regulate Chisso, and for its failure to recognize the rights of the victims of the Minamata mercury poisoning. Lawsuits became tied up in courts for decades, and fewer victim certifications were granted, preventing many victims from receiving their indemnity, and any sense of closure that may have come with it.

Conclusion

Overall, the legacy of Minamata was one of incomplete victories. “Minamata does not offer a simple answer to questions about the nature of postwar democracy,” and the government’s responsibility to both protect its people from public health hazards and to ensure economic growth.⁴⁴ The impacts of this legacy began with the Ashio Copper Mine, continued in Minamata, and extended into the twenty-first century with the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis.

It remains to be seen how the government will ultimately handle the Fukushima earthquake-crisis, but many parallels with Minamata emerged immediately following the disaster. In the same way that Minamata officials persuaded Noguchi to construct his plant in their village, many rural villages, prior to the Fukushima crisis, sought to “solve their

⁴⁴ George, *Minamata*, 284

problems by attracting nuclear power plants.”⁴⁵ The “local settlements” and *mimaikin* of Ashio and Minamata were also duplicated with the offering of payments, following the crisis, to residents and towns near the Fukushima power plant. In addition, just as farmers near Ashio, and fishermen near Minamata, were among those most harmed by the pollution, farmers in the affected area surrounding Fukushima have seen the carelessness of technological innovators put the health of the town at risk.⁴⁶ Finally, and perhaps most disturbingly, the governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro, repeated the Chisso president’s infamous publicity stunt of 1959 by drinking “a glass of tap water on national television to prove that it was safe from radioactive contamination.”⁴⁷

Despite these parallels, there is still time for the government’s reaction to Fukushima to turn in a more positive direction. There is still time to learn from both the mistakes and successes of the past. In the same way that victims of Ashio and Minamata used modern institutions to fight social and environmental injustice, with an active popular response, it may be that the pain of past disasters can be avoided with respect to Fukushima. In conclusion, the ultimate similarity of the Ashio, Minamata, and Fukushima cases goes beyond environmental issues, and breaches the problem of citizenship, democracy, social control and

⁴⁵ Timothy S. George, “Fukushima in Light of Minamata,” *The Asia Pacific Journal*, 10:11, 5 (2012), online: http://japanfocus.org/-Timothy_S_-George/3715

⁴⁶ Christine Marran, “Contamination: From Minamata to Fukushima,” *The Asia Pacific Journal*, 9:1 (2011), online: <http://japanfocus.org/-Christine-Marran/3526>

⁴⁷ George, “Fukushima in Light of Minamata,” online

governmental power, and the value of humanity in a world that seemingly values technology and progress above all. It also demonstrates the continual tension between the government's quest and constant push for modernity, and the forced adaptation of the citizenry to use the government's own weapons against them.

Kathryn Karasek is a a double major in History and Economics. Originally from Cary, North Carolina, she chose to branch out and study East Asian History at SCU. Her paper, "Environmental Destruction in Japan", was inspired by her participation in the Solar Decathlon project and won the 2013 Redwood Prize for the best essay on a historical subject.

“These Navies and Armies and Kings and Things”: Anglo American Cooperation in Anti-Submarine Warfare in World War I

Sean Naumes

The United States entered World War I, one of the most destructive conflicts in human history, on April 6, 1917. The nation was almost completely unprepared for armed conflict, and this was especially true of the United States Navy which could not even fully man the craft that it had available. America's entry into the war also coincided with a major allied crisis caused by the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare by the Germans which saw, at that time, German submarines sinking one in every four ships that left Britain's harbors.¹ However, within a short period of time, the U.S. Navy was working closely with Britain's Royal Navy to protect convoys and maintain the blockade of Germany that eventually help to bring about the armistice of 1918. Cooperation between the United States Navy and its Royal counterpart was extremely effective because it allowed the two powers to maintain the lines of communication between the Allies and the United States through the preservation of shipping tonnage which fueled the Allied economies and war effort. This begs the question why the cooperation between the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy anti-submarine

¹ Michael Simpson, ed., *Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Published by Scholar Press for the Navy Records Society, 1991), 23.

activities was so successful during the relatively brief period of U.S. belligerency during the First World War. The answer, like any historical analysis, is quite complicated and involves the investigation of the relationships of the commanders and cabinet members and an examination of the material crisis facing the allies at the beginning of 1917. Despite the complicated nature of the eventual harmonious interactions exhibited by the British and Americans, it seems that the high levels of cooperation seen in the U.S. and British anti-submarine forces were primarily the product of diplomatic relations, severe allied losses, and a distinct lack of viable non-convoy related strategic options. This analysis of Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare ends in December of 1917 with the establishment of full Anglo-American naval cooperation.

This paper investigates the underlying causes of the harmonious relationship that existed among the joint Anglo-American anti-submarine forces during the last years of the Great War. Therefore, it includes an examination of Anglo-American naval relations, before WWI, during American neutrality with the bulk of analysis concentrated on cooperation during hostilities.

U.S. -U.K. Relations Up to 1914

Pre-war relations between the United States and Great Britain would not necessarily have indicated that the two nations would cooperate well as allies or even become allies in the event of a continental war. The United States and Britain had relatively cordial diplomatic and naval relations during the latter part of

the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, but residual tensions over past conflicts such as the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the American Civil War lingered, especially among certain segments of the American public. The War of 1812 and the American Civil War were especially important in terms of naval and diplomatic relations during periods of U.S. neutrality. That is, because the war of 1812 was fought, officially, over the rights of neutral shipping and the Civil War almost saw Britain declare war on the Union over the Trent incident, negative feelings continued. With the opening of Japan in 1854, the United States joined other European nations, such as Britain, in imperial activities.² By the turn of the twentieth century the United States had major territorial holdings in both the Caribbean and the Pacific, such as Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Naval policy makers, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan, actually began to see the British Royal Navy as a buffer against the relatively new and rising naval power of Germany in the Atlantic and Japan in the Pacific.³ The years immediately before the Great War saw a relative calm between the United States and Britain and 1914 marked the centennial of peace between the two nations.⁴ Meanwhile, the diplomatic dance that began in 1913 introduced some of the main

² Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From the Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 50.

³ Richard W. Truk, *The Ambiguous Relationship: Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 2.

⁴ Burton J. Hendrick 1924, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*. Vol. 1. (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company), 274.

players that would shape Anglo-American relations and the two countries' harmonious cooperation of the anti-submarine campaign.

Walter Hines Page became the ambassador to the Court of St. James in March, 1913 and was immediately thrown into the whirlwind of European diplomacy and politics. Page would prove to be a key player in U.S. - Great Britain relations both before the U.S. entered the war and during the war. Page's experiences in Britain are a good example of how the two nations perceived each other before the war began. In his collected works, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Burton J. Hendrick includes Page's correspondence from 1913 and one letter to the President noted that the British, "Do not think of our people as foreigners."⁵ However he also notes that the British, "think of our Government as foreign, and as a frontier sort of thing without good manners or good faith."⁶ The British aristocracy did not seem to have a very high opinion of the Government of the U.S., and the war seemed to exacerbate this negative opinion. On the other side of the Atlantic, Americans' perception of Britain differed substantially depending on what group was queried. Page himself was an anglophile and believed that "Only the British lands and the United States have secure liberty. They also have the most treasure, the best fighters, the most land, the most ships- the future in fact."⁷ Given his Anglo-centric leanings, Page wanted to create the best possible relationship between the United States and

⁵ Ibid., 145.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 283.

Britain. Other segments of the population, most notably a large number of Irish-Americans, were suspicious of or outright hostile toward the British and Page went as far as to blame the Irish vote for the U.S. failure to establish a permanent embassy location in London.⁸

The most pressing issues that affected Anglo-American relations in the years leading up to the war were the two nations' interests in Central American and Mexico. The United States intensified its enforcement of the Monroe doctrine, which was the U.S. policy of preventing European intervention in the Americas, around the turn of the century, and many European nations were actively participating in South and Central American politics and trade.⁹ Page mentions in a November 26, 1913 letter that he told a British aristocrat that "the only thing that had kept South America from being parceled out as Africa has been is the Monroe Doctrine and the United States behind it."¹⁰ This concept of the British and Europeans in general did not bode well for cooperation on the part of the United States with any European nation, Great Britain included.

For their part, the British had been attempting to improve their foreign relations around the turn of the century. This was especially important for Anglo-American relations since, at that time, the United States was a growing power and the only English speaking nation outside of the British dominion.

⁸ Burton J. Hendrick 1925, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*. Vol. 3. (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company), 72-73.

⁹ Truck, 50.

¹⁰ Hendrick, vol. 1, 217.

Appeasing the United States was an important British diplomatic goal. This involved favors such as giving concessions to the U.S. when it came to Canadian border disputes.¹¹ Page recognized the British keenness to maintain good relations during the Mexican revolution dispute of 1913: he stated “they will not risk losing our good-will.”¹² Page was beginning to believe that power would eventually shift toward the United States and that Britain would soon rank second to the U.S. This enhanced Page’s campaign to gain Britain’s cooperation and mutual support.

Aside from official diplomatic relations, there was little in the way of political or military cooperation between the United States and Great Britain leading up to the war, or even during neutrality (1914-1917). One example of unofficial naval relations can be seen in the acquaintance of certain naval officers in both services due to common postings and in port visits. In his book, *Anglo-America Naval Relations 1917-1918*, Michael Simpson mentions the acquaintance of American Admiral William S. Sims and British Admiral, and later First Sea Lord, Sir John Jellicoe as a good example of unofficial Anglo-American relations. Both men knew each other due to friendly interactions while they were both stationed in the Far East.¹³ These ties would prove important in 1917 when Sims became the main U.S. flag officer in Britain. Official ties between the British and American navies were slim to

¹¹ A. E. Campbell, *Great Britain and the United States, 1895-1903* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974), 123.

¹² Hendrick, vol. 1, 185.

¹³ Simpson, 8.

none in 1913 but there was a simmer of possible naval cooperation that existed right before the volatile European continent exploded.

Anglo-American naval cooperation was never closer in the period before the war than in late 1913 and early 1914 when a British-American-German pact was being considered in order to vent pressure on the continent and redirect the arms race. Page noted in an August 28, 1913 letter to Edward M. House, Woodrow Wilson's trusted advisor, that, "If we could find some friendly use for these navies and armies and king and things- in the service of humanity – they'd follow us."¹⁴ Winston Churchill, Sea Lord at the time, made a formal suggestion that the Germans and British engage in a "Naval Holiday" that would freeze capital ship building and foster cooperation between the two nations.¹⁵ After some meetings, this was rejected by the Germans whose ship building program was dictated by law. Nevertheless, Page and Wilson believed in the "Naval Holiday" plan and "[b]y January 4, 1914, the House-Wilson plan had thus grown into an Anglo-American-German 'pact', to deal not only with "disarmament, but other matters of equal importance to themselves and the world at large."¹⁶ All of this came to naught, however, with the beginning of the Great War, eight months later, on August 4, 1914.

The pre-war diplomatic stint of Walter H. Page proved to be very eventful in that it saw the development of a greater understanding between the United States and Britain and it almost resulted in a

¹⁴ Hendrick, vol.1, 278.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 280-281.

triple alliance of the United States, Britain and Germany by the beginning of 1914. However, 1913 also showed that the United States still viewed Britain with suspicion and that many influential persons in Britain did not completely understand the United States. Finally, this period saw the development of relationships between Page and important British leaders such as Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, and Admiral Sir John Jellicoe which would help Page steer Anglo-American relations through the minefield of neutrality and later cooperation.

The Problem with Neutrality, 1914-1917

Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the United States entered one of their rockiest periods since the American Civil War with the outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent British long-range blockade of Germany, a strategy that involved British interference with neutral shipping. Page summed up the position of the United States well in an August second letter to his family which stated that "The United States is the only great power wholly out of it. The United States most likely, therefore, will be able to play a helpful and historic part at its end."¹⁷ This remark obviously shows that the United States under Wilson was more interested in being a neutral peace broker than belligerent. The letter may also reveal that Page realized early on that the U.S. could benefit from early neutrality in the Great War if it then joined toward the end of the conflict. Hendrick makes an important note after this section and that was the fact

¹⁷ Ibid., 302.

that, "By this time Page and the Foreign Secretary had established not only cordial official relations but a warm friendship."¹⁸ This is an important development because Page's friendship with Grey gave him a better grasp of the British situation and British perceptions.

The Allied blockade of the Central Powers, which began in August of 1914 and lasted until the end of the war, caused a great deal of tension between the United States and Great Britain.¹⁹ The blockade was seen as an infringement on the rights of neutral shipping by the Americans, whereas the British considered the blockade their main weapon against Germany and the means by which they would either win or lose the war. Advancements in naval technology, such as the mine, submarine and torpedo, rendered the old doctrines of close-in blockades untenable so the Royal Navy embarked on a long-range blockade which involved stopping ships before they came anywhere near neutral or belligerent ports along the North Sea.²⁰ In his book, *The End of Neutrality*, John W. Coogan explains that British administration faced a great dilemma because they "could see no way to intercept such shipments without blatant violations of international law."²¹ In his article in the *North*

¹⁸ Ibid., 311.

¹⁹ The major Allies from 1914 to 1917 consisted of Britain, France, Russia, Japan and Italy. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "World War I," accessed March 20, 2013, <http://0-www.britannica.com.sculib.scu.edu/EBchecked/topic/648646/World-War-I>.

²⁰ John C. Coogan, *The End of Neutrality: The United States, Britain, and Maritime Right, 1899-1915* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 156.

²¹ Ibid.

American Review, “Sea Rights and Sea Power: The British Embargo”, Edward S. Corwin, a contemporary lawyer, explained that an actual blockade required control of the waters around an enemy port and the equal treatment of all neutral nations. Neutrality was violated by the British because they neither had control of the waters immediately around German ports nor did they treat all neutrals equally, given the fact that they were unable to do anything about the Baltic trade.²² The British government tried to avoid this issue by never actually declaring an effective blockade and by using the continuous voyage doctrine.

The main dispute revolved around the classification of different cargoes. The Hague Conference in 1907 and the Declaration of London in 1909, which was a codification of the Conference’s guidelines, defined the materials that could be considered contraband and those items which could not be seized.²³ The declaration separated cargoes into absolute contraband, which was condemned by its military utility, conditional contraband, which could only be condemned based on its final destination, and free list items, which could not be prevented from entering any territory.²⁴ The Declaration of London was eventually signed by Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, the United States and the Netherlands.²⁵ Due to pressure from the United States, Great Britain accepted some tenets of

²² Edward S. Corwin, “Sea Rights and Sea Power: The British Embargo,” *The North American Review* 204 (Oct. 1916): 519.

²³ Hendrick, vol. 1, 375.

²⁴ Marion C. Siney, *The Allied Blockade of Germany, 1914-1916* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973), 9.

²⁵ Coogan, 8.

the Declaration of London to maintain good relations with neutral trading partners who feared trade disruption. But, this acceptance came with modifications that would eventually lead to a complete abandonment of the Declaration.²⁶ The British managed to avoid a potentially catastrophic run-in with the U.S. over trade by paying for all blockaded cargoes.²⁷ Hendrick states that “Great Britain now proposed to purchase cargoes of conditional contraband discovered on seized ships and return the ships themselves to their owners and this soon became established practice.”²⁸ Eventually everything not in the absolute contraband category was declared conditional contraband by Great Britain. In her book, *The Allied Blockade of Germany, 1914-1916*, Marion Siney contends that “No particular attempt was now made to determine whether a consignment of conditional contraband was destined to the armed forces or governmental department of the enemy: designation to hostile territory was enough to secure its condemnation.”²⁹ The Wilson administration took issue with this position at first, but the U.S. eventually let the issue fade away, on the advice of Page, and because of issues concerning submarine warfare such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915 and the torpedoing of the *S.S. Sussex* on March 24, 1916.³⁰ These events created a great deal of tension between

²⁶ Hendrick, vol. 1, 384.

²⁷ Siney, 129.

²⁸ Burton J. Hendrick 1925, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*. Vol. 2. (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company), 63.

²⁹ Siney, 132.

³⁰ P.K. Kemp, ed., *History of the Royal Navy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), 204.

the United States and Germany and led to the German claim that it would abandon unlimited submarine warfare until February 1, 1917, under the “Sussex Pledge”.³¹

One result of the early long range blockade of Germany was the “*Dacia* incident” which was probably the most dangerous incident for Anglo-American naval relations during American neutrality in World War I. This crisis, brought on by an attempted breach of the Allied blockade by a ship under a United States registry, was the type of event that could have brought the United States and Great Britain closest to war. In January, 1915, the British long-range blockade was threatened by a group of German-American investors who decided to take advantage of U.S. regulations regarding registry and asylum-seeking ships in order to purchase a former German merchant ship, the *Dacia*, and send the vessel to Germany loaded with cotton.³² This was clearly an attempt by U.S. nationals to push the Wilson administration to refuse to recognize Britain’s long-range blockading activities. Hendrick notes that “Above all the *Dacia* involved the great question of the use of British sea power.”³³ And, Simpson notes that for the United States problems with the blockade revolved around neutral rights and freedom of the seas.³⁴ These two positions almost collided in the first months of the war and could have made cooperation in any area extremely difficult.

The solution to this momentous issue came in the

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hendrick, vol. 3, 222.

³³ Ibid., 223.

³⁴ Simpson, 26.

form of the American Ambassador himself. Page worked tirelessly to maintain the good relations that had existed between the United States and Britain right before the war. Due to his relationship with Grey, Page was able to suggest that the French Navy pick up the ship when it entered the English Channel since the United States still entertained strong sympathies for the French.³⁵ This was a stroke of genius since it partially diffused the tension that had built up between the United States and Britain and the Allies were able to prevent the blockade from being breached. However, the whole incident brought up many considerations about sea power and international law. This was especially true when it came to the letter of the law and enforcement. Britain agreed to follow the tenets of the Declaration of London with modification but it very quickly began to violate this agreement. No neutral government actively challenged this besides the odd call for its cancelation.

This incident also reveals that the possibility of an Anglo-American conflict or war in the early years of WWI was very real and made all the more probable by the fact that the U.S. was both the most powerful neutral nation and heavily committed to freedom of the seas.³⁶ The lack of major conflict may have been due to the fact that Britain paid for most cargoes that were detained, and the submarine campaign represented a new and legally challenging development in naval relations and law. The dispute over the blockade and freedom of the seas would have an important impact on the early strategic cooperation between the British

³⁵ Hendrick, vol. 3, 236.

³⁶ Simpson, xii.

and the United States once the latter joined the war.

In 1916 Wilson led a campaign to bring about peace in an exhausted Europe. After the Sussex Pledge of May 4, 1916, he tried to secure some sort of peace on the continent. Hendrick notes that “Mr. Wilson was bent on keeping the United States out of the war; he knew that there was only one certain way of preserving peace in this country, and that was to bring the war itself to an end.”³⁷ However, he also knew that “the pledge was a temporary measure and that it would be violated as soon as it became clear that the talks would achieve results.”³⁸ This perception proved true, and the German Government, convinced that it could bring the war to a swift conclusion, announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917.³⁹ This ended the peace drive that Wilson had pursued during Germany’s adherence to the Sussex Pledge. Despite the threat of German attack on merchant vessels after the first of February, the Wilson Administration moved slowly toward belligerency. Sir Cecil Spring Rice, the British Ambassador in Washington, suspected that this was a tactic to get the country, which was still grappling with isolationism, on board with the idea of war when he wrote in a January 1917 cable that “ ‘It is the evident desire of the President to avoid any appearance of a war conducted in cooperation with the Allies.’ ”⁴⁰ United States diplomatic relations with Germany were broken

³⁷ Hendrick, vol. 2, 148.

³⁸ Ibid., 149.

³⁹ David F. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations 1917-1918* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1979), 30.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 40.

on February 3, 1917, “but he [Wilson] spent a number of weeks exploring the possibility of armed neutrality. It was a step beyond strict neutrality but short of full belligerency.”⁴¹ As a last step before a declaration of war, Wilson signed an executive order on March 9, 1917 to arm all merchantmen to see if armed neutrality would be possible.

The Navy Department slowly began preparing for a possible conflict with the Central Powers. The British desperately sought to establish cooperation with the U.S. Navy. On March 23, 1917, Ambassador Page wrote to the Secretary of State Robert Lansing to convince the U.S. government of Britain’s willingness to cooperate in both wartime strategy and the crafting of peace. Page mentioned the British willingness to cooperate when he stated that “The British Government will heartily fall in with any plan we propose as soon as the cooperation can be formally established.”⁴² Page also stated the need for an American naval representative in London when he wrote that “Knowing their spirit and their methods, I cannot too strongly recommend that our Government send here immediately an Admiral of our Navy who will bring our Navy’s plans and inquiries.”⁴³ The Ambassador also enticed the Secretary of State with one item the United States wanted from Britain, which was information, when he stated that “he [the representative] would have all doors opened to him and a sort of special staff appointed to give him the results and methods of the whole British Naval work

⁴¹ Ibid., 44.

⁴² Simpson, 15.

⁴³ Ibid., 16.

since the War began.”⁴⁴ This communication to Washington showed how willing the British were to gain the confidence and cooperation of the United States. By this time the British were desperate for naval reinforcement since their ships were spread thin and their trading lifeline was threatened.

A day after the Page letter, Wilson seemed to have made up his mind to enter belligerency against Germany and her Allies. On March 18, 1917 three U.S. ships were sunk without warning, and it seems that this major violation of contemporary naval codes and laws was one of the main factors that pushed the United States toward war.⁴⁵ The President was apparently looking to the future when, on March 24, he wrote to the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, and stated, “The main thing is no doubt to get into immediate communication with the Admiralty on the other side through confidential channels until the congress has acted and work out a scheme for cooperation.”⁴⁶ The Admiralty seemed to have sensed the change in attitude in Washington, and on March 29, 1917 informed the British Commander-in-Chief North America and West Indies, Admiral Sir Montague Browning, that the U.S. would be provided with facilities to operate against submarines on the Irish coast.⁴⁷ On the same day the naval attaché that Page and the Admiralty had suggested be sent to Great Britain departed for London. He was Admiral William Sowden Sims, who would play a major role in

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 18.

organizing and executing the anti-submarine war in Europe. In a March 29 communication one of the British officials in the United States reported that, "Sims who is detailed for London in strictest secrecy and sails incognito 31 March is I think a very good man."⁴⁸ This was an extremely important moment because one of the most important players in Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare had just been dispatched and his reputation preceded him.

The United States declaration of war on Germany came on April 6, 1917 and the nation was immediately hurled into the heart of a world conflict that it neither understood nor was prepared for. Secretary of State Robert Lansing's argument for belligerency may have been the most persuasive for the President since he suggested that "continued neutrality would mean a loss of future influence in world affairs."⁴⁹ Throughout the conflict in Europe the U.S. administration and even members of the U.S. naval command, such as Admiral Benson, had dreamed of the United States being the arbitrator that would bring an end to the madness. By March of 1917 they had come to realize that the only way to gain a spot at the negotiation of the peace was to bring about the end of the war.⁵⁰ When it declared war, the administration devoted itself completely to the prosecution of the conflict.

⁴⁸ Simpson, 19.

⁴⁹ Trask, 50.

⁵⁰ Simpson, 9.

Establishing Cooperation in Anti-Submarine Warfare, April 1917-December 1917

The beginning stage of U.S. belligerency, which lasted from April to July 1917, saw the entrance of the United States into the war and a massive push to shore up the Allies after the military hardships of 1916 and against the possibly fatal threat of the German submarine campaign to the war effort in Europe. The Allies, and the British especially, were in rough shape due to the heavy shipping losses caused primarily by German submarines. Allied shipping had lost 500,000 tons in February, 500,000 tons in March and 200,000 tons in the first ten days of April.⁵¹ This meant that the U-boats were sinking roughly a quarter of all ships leaving Britain.⁵² The most disturbing fact for the Allies, however, was that only ten per cent of the tonnage was being replaced by production.⁵³ The United States' preparedness was also a major concern for its British ally. The British expected massive reinforcements from the United States, but the U.S. fleet was in no position for full mobilization. Near the eve of the U.S. entry into the war the Navy was unprepared, with "only 10 per cent of its ships fully manned and only one-third were ready for service."⁵⁴ The fleet contained an impressive 74 destroyers which could have been used for anti-submarine work, but only 54 of them were actually modern and capable of anti-submarine activities.⁵⁵ Also, it was not until

⁵¹ Trask, 65.

⁵² Simpson, 23.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

March 23 that Daniels was ordered to “add 87,000 men to the Navy.”⁵⁶ The fact that President Wilson was still hopeful for a peaceful solution to the conflict with Germany and his insistence on armed neutrality prevented the Navy from preparing until very close to the actual declaration of war. However, the United States Department of the Navy had begun cooperation with the Royal Navy on March 20, 1917, and by March 24 a general plan of integration was drawn up which emphasized the establishment of U.S. anti-submarine forces in Southern Ireland.⁵⁷ It should be acknowledged, however, that “no mature plans were concentered nor consolation had taken place with the European Allies before April 6.”⁵⁸ The Germans were doing well in this period, and they continued to grow their submarine fleet to put pressure on the Allies. There were around 120 submarines in service with the German Fleet and this number was rising by about nine a month, given construction and casualties.⁵⁹ This meant that submarine threat would only be growing in the critical months ahead. Everything the British tried failed to have an impact on the rising toll of shipping.⁶⁰

When Sims arrived in London on April 7, 1917, the Admiralty, under First Sea Lord Jellicoe, immediately began bringing their American naval representative up to speed on the situation in Europe. The British were very eager to establish contacts with the U.S. Navy and make it aware of the danger in the western approaches

⁵⁶ Trask, 51.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁹ Simpson, 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

to the British Isles. In his first cable to Sims, Jellicoe reveals how glad he was to be working with an officer whom he knew; he stated that "I feel sure that we shall be able to establish close co-operation between the two countries so far as naval matters are concerned."⁶¹ This first encounter boded well for Anglo-American cooperation against submarines in Europe. Two days after receiving Sims, Jellicoe sent out a memorandum to the April 10 Hampton Roads conference in the United States which enumerated the necessary steps for defeating the submarines, including protecting merchant vessels, sending anti-submarine reinforcements, and bringing captured German merchant vessels unto the service of the Allies.⁶² The Hampton Roads conference was considered a success, and the United States agreed to send 6 destroyers to the Irish coast, although it would take time for the U.S. Navy to get going.⁶³ The early diplomatic mission that Britain sent to the United States proved to be a key part in getting that nation on a war footing, but later it would take U.S. missions to Europe to bring the two nations into complete cooperation in anti-submarine activities.

Sims was quickly integrated into the Admiralty's headquarters in order to give the U.S. the best possible feel for the dire shipping situation. Sims's unprecedented access to British information is reflected in his cable to Daniels on April 19, 1917. Sims told the Admiralty that he needed complete access to all the information pertaining to the naval

⁶¹ Ibid., 29.

⁶² Ibid., 30-31.

⁶³ Trask, 63.

situation, and this was granted.⁶⁴ Sims notes his exclusive status in the Admiralty when he states that “I have daily conferences with the First Sea Lord, both at his office and residence, and also have been given entire freedom of the Admiralty and access to all Government Officials.”⁶⁵ The fact that Sims was provided so much access and attention seems to indicate that the British may have been feeling somewhat desperate and were willing to do whatever was necessary to obtain the reinforcements needed in their anti-submarine operations. This is a great example of how necessity, created by severe shipping losses, was a major driving factor in the establishment and growth of Anglo-American cooperation. Sims also emphasizes what would come to be one of the most important concepts of the cooperation: “the critical area in which the war’s decision will be made is in the eastern Atlantic at the focus of all lines of communication.”⁶⁶ At this point Sims knew that everything would hinge on keeping the sea lanes safe and preventing the Allies from being cut off by the submarines. Much of the coming months would be spent trying to convince the Navy Department in Washington of this vital requirement. This important cable was preceded by others which raised the alarm in the United States, such as his April 14 cable which stated that “To accelerate and insure defeat of the submarine campaign, immediate active cooperation absolutely necessary” and that this required “Maximum number of destroyers be sent, accompanied

⁶⁴ Simpson, 38.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

by small anti-submarine craft.”⁶⁷ This cable also reveals how desperate the British were to bring the United States into the war which made them extremely accommodating and spurred cooperation.

In early May 1917, Admiral Sims was placed in command of the contingent of Destroyers that had arrived in Queenstown, Ireland on May 4.⁶⁸ The relationship that developed between the commander of the Queenstown base, Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, and Sims would prove to be one of the most unique and constructive of the naval war. Sims’ initial encounter with Bayly did not bode well for their time together in Southern Ireland and Sims remembered in an August letter to Captain Pratt, the Naval Department’s Chief of Staff, that “when Bayly came to the Admiralty I was invited of course to meet him in Admiral Jellicoe’s office. On that occasion he was as rude to me as one man can well be to another.”⁶⁹ Sims described how Admiral Jellicoe had been horrified by Bayly’s behavior and even noted that “when he had gone Admiral Jellicoe apologized to me, and said that he would remove the Admiral if I thought it was necessary.”⁷⁰ Sims said that it would not be necessary but this episode reveals just how willing the British were to ensure that the U.S. presence in the western approaches was established. This is a perfect example of necessity facilitating close cooperation.

On May 4, 1917 the first flotilla of U.S. destroyers arrived in Queenstown and Sims soon followed to take

⁶⁷ Ibid., 207.

⁶⁸ Trask, 77.

⁶⁹ Simpson, 251.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

command of the U.S. contingent. This trip proved extremely important because both the U.S. commander and the flotilla made a fine first impression. Sims reported on the arrival of the U.S. contingent in a May 11 cable to Daniels, when he stated that “speaking generally, the impression made by our officers and our ships has caused very favorable comment both at their base and in the Admiralty.”⁷¹ The warm reception that the Destroyer crews received and the state of their ships and fighting spirit did a lot to foster positive relations between Anglo-American forces in the most important sector of naval war. Sims made sure that the flotilla under his command conducted itself properly when he sent out orders on April 29 that read, “Require all officers not only to refrain from all criticism of British methods, manners and customs, and ask them to refrain from mentioning them in their letters. Also give attention to bringing about friendly relations between our enlisted men and the British.”⁷² Sims’ relationship with Bayly improved very quickly. A little more than a week after the previous cable to Daniels, May 26, 1917, he reported that “Vice-Admiral commanding at Queenstown, Sir Lewis Bayly, is one of the wisest, ablest men of my acquaintance, as well as one of the most admirable characters, and it is a positive pleasure to serve under him.”⁷³ And, more importantly, Sims also noted that “I am aware that I have his complete confidence.”⁷⁴ The interaction between Bayly, Sims and the U.S. and

⁷¹ Ibid., 221.

⁷² Ibid., 214.

⁷³ Ibid., 224.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

British crews formed the foundation of Anglo-American operational cooperation for the rest of the conflict. Sims and Bayly eventually created a strange but effective joint command system that Sims notes he was unwilling to change in August 1917 due to the effectiveness of the relationship. The diplomatic moves promoted by Sims and the officers under his command created an atmosphere of brotherhood between the anti-submarine forces in Southern Ireland that would serve the Allies well when the convoy system was eventually implemented. Even before Sims' May 11 cable was sent the anti-submarine forces had an advanced base established in Berehaven and were beginning to utilize the newest anti-sub weapon, the depth charge.⁷⁵

Not long after the United States joined the war against Germany, the Admiralty began to realize that it would have to employ a new anti-submarine strategy. This led to the creation of the convoy system which would prove key to defeating the submarine and was the U.S. Navy's largest contribution to the war effort. The push for a convoy system began on April 26, 1917 when Admiral Sir Alexander L. Duff, Admiral Bayly's superior, recommended convoys as a counter measure to unrestricted submarine warfare.⁷⁶ All in the Admiralty agreed that this would require the assistance of the United States since Britain's fleet was already stretched to the limit. Both Bayly and Sims were proponents of the convoy system, and in a April 30 cable to Daniels, Sims stated that the convoy system was being examined by the Admiralty and that

⁷⁵ Ibid., 221-222.

⁷⁶ Trask, 26.

it would involve one escort to protect merchant vessels in the open ocean crossing and then a destroyer escort when the vessels entered the danger zone around Southern Ireland.⁷⁷ The most important point that Sims made in this cable his statement stated that “This plan would require us to furnish some escort vessels and additional vessels on this side and would necessitate abandonment of present patrol against raiders.”⁷⁸ Basically, this meant that the U.S. would have to put an end to its East Coast patrols which were supposed to protect against possible, and highly unlikely, U-boat attacks in the western hemisphere. The estimated need for this operation was put forward in a May 1 Admiralty memorandum which noted that the experimental convoy would require 14 escort vessels and 18 destroyers.⁷⁹

June proved to be a rocky month for the anti-submarine forces in European waters since the submarine campaign continued, but the convoy trial proved effective. By June 1 the United States had sent 24 destroyers to Queenstown.⁸⁰ The success of the convoy experiment program laid the foundation for greater implementation in the months to come.⁸¹ On June 14 Sims suggested that all Allied traffic move toward being convoyed.⁸² In a June 14 cable he noted that the “British are in process of changing from previous methods of handling shipping to the convoy system” and that “Every indication points to the

⁷⁷ Simpson, 215.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 216.

⁸⁰ Trask, 77.

⁸¹ Ibid., 78.

⁸² Ibid.

desirability of adopting the convoy system for all traffic and particularly from our North Atlantic ports.”⁸³ To this he added “... I cannot lay too much stress upon the urgent necessity of increasing the destroyer and other patrol forces here with utmost dispatch.”⁸⁴ Sims emphasized the offensive potential of the convoy during the month of June due to the fact that many in Washington either did not believe in the system or wanted to try bolder actions such as attacking well defended submarine bases. Sims defended the convoy well in a June 16 cable to Daniels when he stated that “This convoy system is looked upon as an offensive measure.”⁸⁵ He also explained the advantages of the convoy by explaining that “If shipping were grouped in convoys the enemy would be forced to seek us, thereby imposing upon him the necessity of dispersing his forces, [so] as to locate us, while on the other hand, we obtain the benefit of the principle of counter attack on his dispersed line.”⁸⁶ Even after these explanations, Daniels and Admiral William S. Benson, Chief of Naval Operations, still viewed arming merchant vessels as a viable solution to the submarine. The presence of U.S. vessels and introduction of the convoy system seem to have had some effect on the submarine campaign since sinking statistics began a downward trend. In May 600,000 tons were lost and in June 700,000 tons of shipping were lost.⁸⁷ This was down from the highest month of losses of April which had over 900,000 tons lost. The trend seemed to be reversing to

⁸³ Simpson, 228.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 229.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Trask, 81.

a certain degree but it would be some time before losses would fall below the monthly Allied production of new tonnage.

The months of July through September would prove to be some of the most important months in the whole naval conflict due to the fact that the Allies began an implementation of the convoy system and the submarine campaign came to its climax with the long days and good weather of late summer. By the end of July there were 37 U.S. destroyers in the European theatre.⁸⁸ However, the U.S. Department of the Navy and British Admiralty continued to disagree on what constituted the best anti-submarine strategy, and Sims constantly complained that better communications needed to be established. The main problem in the summer was getting the Navy Department in Washington on board with the Admiralty's plan for a complete convoy system in and out of the warzone around Great Britain. In a June 29 cable, Jellicoe stated that "I am convinced convoy system is a necessity and only method left to us."⁸⁹ He also noted that full implementation of the system would require 50 cruisers and 80 destroyers which meant that the United States would have to pitch in.⁹⁰ However, Admiral Benson, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, was still not sold on the convoy system. In a July 1 cable, Commodore Sir Guy Gaunt, the British Naval liaison officer in Washington, informed Jellicoe that he "Just discussed your and Sims' cable of the last three days with Admiral Benson. He is still

⁸⁸ Simpson, 201.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 233.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

opposed to convoys and strongly in favor of armed merchant vessels.”⁹¹ The divide between the Navy Department and the naval forces in Europe was primarily the result of distance and communications problems but it also stemmed from the fact that many in Washington were still suspicious of British intentions in the naval arena.⁹² Much of this stemmed from anger over the blockade during U.S. neutrality where it was perceived that Britain was using the war to gain trade advantages.⁹³

From the Allied vantage point in Europe the war effort was in a very dangerous place due to the fact that continued heavy losses from the submarines would eventually take them below the tonnage needed to supply the fronts and their economies. Sims understood this situation well and endlessly prodded the Navy Department for a more rapid response. In a July 3 cable to the sympathetic Captain Pratt at the Navy Department Sims noted that the Allies required 32,000,000 tons of shipping per year to supply their needs and that “when it falls below [that], it will be wholly impossible to maintain this population and to maintain the armies in the front.”⁹⁴ In plain language Sims confided that “The truth of the matter is that the enemy is winning the war.”⁹⁵ One of the main reasons that the Navy Department was not acting quickly on these concerns was the conviction that Sims and Page were pawns of the British and not to be taken seriously. Sims tried to remedy the situation by asking

⁹¹ Ibid., 234.

⁹² Hendrick, vol. 2, 284.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Simpson, 37.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 238.

in a September cable for a naval officer from Washington to come and assess the situation.⁹⁶ In his book, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relation 1917-1918*, David Trask notes that “The British Government shared Sims’ desire to enhance Washington’s grasp of the European situation, every day realizing more clearly that before that the outcome of the war would probably depend upon the effectiveness of the American reinforcement.”⁹⁷

After practically a whole month of Sims, Page, and Jellicoe calling for greater cooperation, the Wilson administration decided to send Admiral Henry T. Mayo, Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet, to a conference with the Allies.⁹⁸ The conversation between the British and Americans focused around the anti-submarine campaign and different operations that were being considered such as the North Sea barrage, attacks on sub bases, and a possible close-in blockade. Meeting with Admiral Sir Eric Geddes, who was now the First Sea Lord, convinced Mayo of the impracticality of attacks on sub bases and close-in blockading action and, more importantly, it convinced the Admiral of the need to use patrol craft in the convoys. The meeting was not a complete game changer, but Trask makes a keen observation that it “was a useful step toward fuller coordination of the inter-Allied naval effort, and stimulated more activity in the United States.”⁹⁹ The meeting really moved the Navy Department and Admiralty toward complete

⁹⁶ Trask, 138.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 149.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 153.

cooperation, “as far as the undersea war, the Admiralty was committed to the convoy system.”¹⁰⁰ The Mayo Mission and its conclusions is a great example of how a lack of other viable strategic options allowed the British and American forces to focus their attention on the most important aspect of their joint operations which was protecting the lifelines of the allies by expanding and reinforcing the convoy system. The Allied losses during these months were quite high, but they were also always lower than April, which was remarkable given that the days were so much longer and sailing conditions were better. The losses at that time were 558,000 tons in July, 812,000 tons in August and 352,000 tons in September.¹⁰¹ One important note about these casualties was that most of this tonnage was replaced by production now that the U.S. economy was moving into full mobilization.¹⁰²

Full Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare should probably not be considered complete before the last three months of 1917. From October through December 1917, the process of building cooperation between the two navies reached a level where it would remain for the rest of the conflict. The final organization of cooperation was a diplomatic dance that resulted in the foundation of the Supreme Allied War Council and, more importantly for anti-submarine warfare, the Allied Naval Council. An October 28 memorandum summed up the situation well when it implied that the “will to cooperate was present, but not the way” between the Navy

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 156.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Department and the Admiralty.¹⁰³ By October the Admiralty and the Navy Department were still having trouble understanding one another. The situation was improved by the establishment of the Planning Section in London in November which “would allow American officers to improve communication with the Admiralty.”¹⁰⁴ This council was a joint U.S. and British undertaking where officers would critically examine current strategies and policies to insure effectiveness. Trask notes that the group “did exactly as desired, working in tandem with Admiralty planners, and made significant contributions to the Anglo-American effort during the decisive stages of the war.”¹⁰⁵ However, back in Washington, members of the administration and Department of the Navy still harbored suspicions of British activities.¹⁰⁶

Page probably said it best when he stated that he “believed that ‘misunderstanding had arisen because personal acquaintance and contact are lacking between naval authorities in Washington and London.’”¹⁰⁷ This led Sims to request senior administration and Naval Department officials to make a visit in an October 15 cable. The result was that Wilson sent Colonel House and Admiral Benson, both of whom arrived on November 7, 1917. The Allied conference that House and Benson had arrived to participate in was postponed until the end of November due to the Bolshevik revolution and serious

¹⁰³ Ibid., 165.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 166.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 166-168.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 168.

Italian defeats at Caporetto.¹⁰⁸ This lull allowed the Commander of Naval Operations, Benson, to observe the situation from the European point of view, and “Three days after the mission reached Britain, Admiral Benson took the first step toward general acceptance of the naval viewpoint expressed by the British Admiralty and Admiral Sims.”¹⁰⁹ Benson’s visit to Europe may have been one of the most important developments of the House mission because his understanding and assistance was required for the U.S. forces in Europe gain the full support of the Department of the Navy. The real clearing up of misunderstandings came about with the establishment of the Supreme Allied War Council in late November. The Council consisted of the heads of government and secondary representatives from Britain, France, Italy, and the United States.¹¹⁰ This move went a long way toward clearing up the disconnection between many political leaders and the militaries that served them. More importantly, however, was the creation of the Allied Naval Council which required all naval staffs to report their general policies. The Allied Naval Council helped to get all the Allies on the same page in terms of naval operations and facilitated the extension of the convoy system which would eventually defeat the submarine campaign. The Allied Naval Council was officially announced on December 14, 1917, and Sims was appointed as the U.S. representative on January 8, 1918.¹¹¹ The House Mission which culminated in the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 175.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 176.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 180.

creation of the Allied Naval Council was really the last step taken into full cooperation. With the creation of the Allied Naval Council, all naval staffs began coordinating policies and moved to a common strategy of anti-submarine convoys that would stave off defeat and ensure victory in the coming year.

Conclusion

The full cooperation and coordination that characterized Anglo-American operations in anti-submarine warfare at the beginning of 1918 was not immediately established with the entrance of the United States into World War I, but was developed over time. The high level of cooperation was primarily the result of diplomatic relations, severe Allied shipping losses, and the lack of viable strategic alternatives to the convoy system. Diplomatic movements had helped to facilitate the cooperation as early as 1913, when Walter Hines Page became the U.S. ambassador to Britain. Page helped the British government steer through the dangers of the blockade of Germany and American neutrality. After the U.S. entered the war, Page continued to support the British and Admiral Sims in their campaign to convince the U.S. Navy Department of the need for a fully functional convoy system. Admiral Sims' arrival in April, 1917, and his diplomatic efforts with the Admiralty and the Queenstown anti-submarine forces, created a close working relationship between the British and American anti-submarine forces. This relationship allowed the two to call for the adoption of the convoy system. Cooperation was finally completed in September and November of 1917 when the Mayo and

House missions established both military and, to a certain degree, political cohesion in the whole Allied naval war effort. The resulting Supreme Allied War Council and Allied Naval Council garnered Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare the full support it required from Washington. The loss of millions of tons of shipping between February and December, 1917, pushed the commanders in Europe to demand cooperation in the face of losing the war. Finally, the lack of immediately viable strategies besides the convoy system, which was revealed during the Mayo mission of September, 1917, enabled naval leaders to focus on the essential maintenance of the Allies' lines of communication to the United States and the rest of the world. Anglo-American cooperation in anti-submarine warfare in World War I, which was unprecedented at the European operations level from early on, took almost nine months of diplomacy, severe shipping losses, and the exhaustion of most non-convoy related strategies to become the clearly essential naval policy. In the end, once Anglo-American strategies were set, they maintained the vital communications lines around the western approaches of Ireland and assured eventual victory for the Allies.

Sean Naumes graduated from Santa Clara University in the spring of 2013 with a Bachelors of Arts in History and a Bachelors of Science in Commerce in Economics. He is also a Leavey Scholar and member of Phi Alpha Theta and Eta Sigma Phi. This essay is a condensed version of his senior thesis, which was awarded the Mehl Prize for best senior thesis of 2013 in the History Department. He has been interested in naval history for quite some time and this analysis

developed out of research conducted on the British blockade of Germany during World War I for his HIST 101 paper.

Facial Disfigurement in Post World War I Britain: Representation, Politics and Masculinity, 1918-1922

Jacob Benjamin Newton

Throughout World War I, thousands of British soldiers suffered facial disfigurement and amputation. Advanced weapons like the machine gun, mustard gas, and high-explosive artillery shells, combined with the outdated battle tactics of trench warfare to produce an unprecedented number of severe, disfiguring injuries. At the same time, doctors had begun to grasp the basic tenets behind germ theory¹ and battlefield infection control.² Wounds that would have been fatal in a previous era were now survivable. With a rise in survival rates came a corresponding rise in the number of severely disabled and disfigured. Over 60,000 men were injured in the face or eyes, while another 41,000 underwent amputation of one or more limbs.³ In addition, the pioneering efforts of plastic surgeons, including Dr. Harold Gillies and the facial

¹ Katherine Feo, "Invisibility: Memory, Masks and Masculinities in the Great War", *Journal of Design History*, 20 (2007): 19, <http://jdh.oxfordjournals.org/content/20/1/17.short> (accessed January 6, 2013).

² Nick Bosanquet, "Health Systems in Khaki: The British and American Medical Experience," in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War experience*, eds H. Cecil and P.H. Liddle, (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 451.

³ Joanna Bourke, 1996, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996), 33.

prosthetic sculptor Francis Derwent Wood, attempted to address the aesthetic and psychological recovery of disfigured veterans after the war.⁴ This paper discusses the divergent reactions that the disfigured and amputees faced from the British public upon their return home to England.

Facially wounded men faced an overwhelming stigmatization by British society, and found their mangled faces unwanted in the public eye.⁵ Amputees, by contrast, were revered and honored in the public sphere. Their absence of limbs stood as a symbol of their service to country. They had access to vocational training schemes and seemed to face a much easier path to reintegration than the facially wounded in the inter-war era. However, amputees faced profound barriers when Britain attempted to suppress public memory of the war. In this context, missing limbs proved a stark reminder of national trauma to a war-weary population. Amputees who were acknowledged and venerated as heroes during the war instead faced mounting stigma in their search for workplace and societal acceptance in the post-war years; they were subject to a cultural emasculation, as women kept or took their previously held jobs, and were pushed away to live among the lower classes of society.⁶

⁴ Feo, 25.

⁵ Suzannah Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain," *Social History of Medicine*, 24 (2011): 670, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3223959/> (accessed January 6, 2013).

⁶ Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers, and the Great War in Great Britain," *The American Historical Review*, 99 (October 1994): 1201,

While much is known about the fate of amputees in the 1920s and 1930s, there has been no historical research on the outcomes of the facially disfigured. Research has been hindered by the loss of archival material from the rehabilitative hospitals, only recovered in the 1980's, when follow up interviews would have been impossible.⁷ In the absence of direct evidence, my research has aimed to examine the structural and social barriers to reintegration facing the facially disfigured. The British public was visually and socially averse to disfigured veterans, representing an "improvised response to a crisis of representation."⁸ I argue that the disfigured faced a bleak postwar environment, far harsher than that of amputees, bereft of any vocational, psychological, or public support.

To support this, I will examine the extent and permanence of their injuries, the ineffectiveness of early-twentieth-century tin facial prosthetics, the emotional effects of their injuries, and the total erasure of the disfigured from media portrayals of the war-wounded. Comparing this to the negative outcomes for amputees, who despite seemingly excellent prospects for reintegration in 1918, ended up stigmatized and relegated to the social margin, I argue that the facially disfigured would have been even more ostracized to the fringes of British society.

This study draws on the historical debate surrounding amputated and facially injured British

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2168773> (accessed February 10, 2013).

⁷ Dr. Andrew Bamji, Personal Correspondence, 25 February 2013.

⁸ Biernoff, 670.

soldiers returning to civilian life in England. Wounded men returning from the front were at odds with the prescribed Victorian ideals of masculinity and honor and confronted with challenges to their masculinity by their fellow Brits. Joanna Bourke has produced well-researched works on the social effects of injured British soldiers, specifically the attack on their masculinity and manhood at home. Her book, *Dismembering the Male*, examines the experiences and reactions to war-battered young soldiers by the public.⁹

Bourke posits that amputees' visible status of their service to country initially rendered them heroes. The absence of their limbs "came to exert a special patriotic power."¹⁰ In this sense, their injuries, although still reminders of the terrors of war, branded them as acceptable, honorable men who fulfilled their duty to the nation. Amputees received vocational training for reentering the industrial and private sectors, while the disfigured received training in menial jobs like toy making.¹¹ This occurred in the context of the defining of masculinity in Great Britain before, during, and after the war.

The Victorian ideals of female domesticity and patriarchal bread-winning had been prevalent in England into the early twentieth century, as a generation of men and women were educated through

⁹ Bourke.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sandy Callister, "Broken Gargoyles: The Photographic Representation of Severely Wounded New Zealand Soldiers", *Social History of Medicine* 20, (March 2007): 95.
<http://english.siu.edu/Resources/HaroldGilles.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2013).

rigid frameworks of feminine and masculine life. Women's work consisted of caring for children and the home, while men took on the responsibilities of working for wages and providing for his family. Britain had been an imperialist nation for decades, and with that a generation of boys were groomed to be patriotic and militaristic. The public schools that many attended did not necessarily believe the schools' strengths lay in academic subjects. Instead, "they specialized in ... manliness, or making men out of boys..."¹² The boys were to be independent, hard working, and capable of standing up for themselves. This idea continued into the war years, as British propaganda presented "Tommy Atkins," the ideal British soldier to the public. As Nicoletta Gullace points out, "Within the wartime vocabulary of gender definitions, men were those who protected; women those who required protection."¹³ Upon return home, many soldiers faced scrutiny for their inability to uphold this male ideal: "Only a khaki uniform or a missing limb could protect a young man on the home front from the ignominious brand of 'coward' and the shrill taunts of strangers, friends, families, and texts."¹⁴ An amputee's "absence would be more powerful than presence," Bourke asserts.¹⁵ While amputees were to be re-made into men, given custom

¹² John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays On Gender, Family, and Empire* (New York: Longman, 2005), 197.

¹³ Nicoletta Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁵ Bourke, 59.

prosthetic limbs and chances at returning to their roles as the head of the household, the facially wounded were unable to regain this identity, for they faced a society unwilling to accept their visual presence in the social sphere.

Susannah Biernoff takes this foundation and builds upon Bourke's work in her analysis of British visual anxiety and avoidance of disfigured soldiers in the public discourse. Her goal is to answer the question of why facial disfigurement was not visually represented within the public sphere except in the medical establishment in Britain. Contrasting the facially wounded to amputees and the press coverage that came with them, she argues that the worst loss one could endure was the loss of the face, for along with it went a person's sense of self and masculinity.¹⁶ Often isolated from their families and friends, the disfigured were subject to what Biernoff suggests is a social "anxiety that was specifically visual."¹⁷ Surgery was their main option, and upon healing, many were still shocking to look at, at which point they went to Francis Derwent Wood for a tin prosthetic mask fitting. Biernoff notes, however, that the usefulness of these masks was overestimated in press reports.¹⁸

Katherine Feo also examines the success of prosthetic tin masks like the ones made by Wood.¹⁹ She claims the tin prosthetics were incapable of working to limit the visibility of war violence in the civilian community."²⁰ The inherent function of masks

¹⁶ Biernoff, 666.

¹⁷ Ibid., 668.

¹⁸ Ibid., 679.

¹⁹ Feo, 17.

²⁰ Ibid., 25.

is to hide, and therefore, she concludes, that instead of helping to restore the veteran's identity and sense of self, the masks lack human emotion and remind the viewer of the horrors of war. These masks simply could not restore a pre-war life to the post-war period.²¹

This study also utilizes research covering the history of plastic and aesthetic surgery. In particular, Sander Gilman's *Making the Body Beautiful* offers insight into the effects and consequences of aesthetic surgery.²² For Gilman, aesthetic surgery was so appealing because it allowed people to 'pass'; they could blend in and be seen as a member of a group they wished to identify with. His investigation into war-ravaged faces highlights the loss of masculinity as well as sexual attraction. In addition, beauty culture had been steadily growing in Britain since the end of the nineteenth century, and an emphasis on appearance gripped the British populace.²³ With more social importance given to vanity, the disfigured suffered the wrong injury at the wrong time, as more unkempt appearances drew the ire of Britons.

This study will highlight the often temporary positive effects of plastic surgery and prosthetic tin masks for the facially wounded, examining in detail their limited usability. Furthermore, it will explore the post-war outcomes for amputees, as they offer in essence a precursor of the stigma and difficulties that

²¹ Ibid., 25.

²² Sander Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

²³ Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 25.

disfigured men were to face in England. My research is based primarily on materials generated in the public sphere, including newspapers and medical journals, to get a sense of public opinion during the intra- and post-war years. In addition, first-hand letters and accounts shed light on the experience of the facially injured while under treatment.

The Disfigured

For the first time in the 20th century, significant numbers of horribly wounded soldiers, whether dealing with amputation or facial injury, survived in spite of their wounds. Those unlucky enough to suffer injury to the face suffered through arguably the most difficult and psychologically damaging injury a man could experience. Outdated tactics of war as well as advanced weaponry, including artillery and machine guns, combined to produce devastation, leaving thousands of young men with unimaginable facial injuries. Soft caps worn in the early years of the war provided little to no protection of the head. In 1915 the British military switched to steel helmets, yet these posed the problem of dangerous metal shrapnel if a soldier were struck in the head.²⁴ A soldier named John Glubb recounted his experience of being hit by a shell: "I heard for a second a distant shell whine, then felt a tremendous explosion almost on top of me. For an instant I appeared to rise slowly into the air and then slowly fall again. ... I began to run towards Hénin, when the floodgates in my neck seemed to burst, and

²⁴ Ibid., 29.

the blood poured out in torrents.”²⁵ Like many soldiers facing similar circumstances, Glubb was transported back to England to await surgery and treatment for his injuries. Upon return home, however, disfigured veterans like Glubb faced a populace at that point incapable of accepting these “broken gargoyles” into a society wishing to forget the atrocities of war, while their amputee counterparts returned to fanfare and the respect of the public.²⁶

The first waves of facially wounded soldiers returning home were sent to various ill-equipped hospitals scattered throughout England, where many of them waited weeks and months for treatment. Dr. Harold Gillies, a New Zealander who volunteered with the Red Cross, remedied the issue of decentralized treatment by persuading the Army Surgeon General to concentrate facial treatment in one place, after which point wards at the Cambridge Military Hospital in Aldershot were obtained.²⁷ By 1917, the Queen’s Hospital at Froggnal House was constructed in Sidcup as the premier plastic and reconstructive surgery center in England, with Gillies at the helm. The hospital grew quickly to house the thousands of

²⁵ John Glubb, *Into Battle: A Soldier’s Diary of the Great War* (Cassell: London, 1978): 185.

²⁶ Ward Muir, *The Happy Hospital* (Simpkin: Kent, 1918): 152.
<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89079715389;num=7;seq=7;view=1up> (accessed February 10, 2013).

²⁷ Andrew Bamji, “Sir Harold Gillies: Surgical Pioneer”, *Trauma* 8 (2006): 144,
<http://english.siu.edu/Resources/HaroldGilles.pdf> (accessed February 9, 2013).

disfigured veterans needing medical care, and by 1918 over 1,000 beds were available.²⁸ Queen's Hospital proved popular with the wounded, many of whom waited for months in ill-suited hospitals to be transferred. Sergeant John Glubb recounted:

I lay for three months in my bed in Wandsworth during which my wound remained septic, and received no medical attention. ...No doctor ever looked at our wounds or removed the bandages. Presumably there were not enough doctors. My mother used to visit me at Wandsworth. Through her I sent applications to all and sundry, for a transfer to another hospital. At last, in November 1917, three months after I had been hit, I was transferred to a new hospital for face injuries at Frognal, Sidcup, Kent. Here things were very different. My broken and septic teeth were extracted and my wound cleaned.²⁹

At Sidcup, disfigured soldiers waited to receive surgeries in the hope of restoring the original function and appearance of their faces. As lead surgeon, Dr. Gillies pioneered numerous surgical techniques in facial reconstruction, revolutionizing the work of reconstructive surgery. Working in what he deemed a "strange, new art", Gillies required the precision of a skilled surgeon with the attention to aesthetic detail of

²⁸ Andrew Bamji, "Facial Surgery: The patient's experience", in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War experience*, eds H. Cecil and P.H. Liddle, (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 495.

²⁹ Glubb, 193.

an artist. He and his team developed various new techniques in 1917, like the tube pedicle, which allowed for the grafting of skin from one part of the body to another by keeping blood circulating at the reattached area.³⁰ In addition, he created the temporalis transfer, arterial flaps, and a variation of an epithelial inlay for the reconstruction of eyelids.³¹ Gillies was a meticulous surgeon, notable for taking his time, and said “never do today what can honourably be put off till tomorrow.”³² He made sure a man’s wounds were completely healed before continuing to the next stage of treatment. This process often lasted months, even years, due to the numbers of surgeries required in extreme cases. He also befriended his patients, even keeping some photographs as mementos.³³ At Queen’s Hospital, Gillies and his team wrote extensive case notes for each patient, including photographs and drawings. He commissioned Henry Tonks, a doctor turned medical artist, to draw before and after images of his patients, as well as make diagrams of the surgical procedures themselves.³⁴

Within the rehabilitative framework of Queen’s Hospital, soldiers had to come to terms with their new appearance, undergo numerous surgeries and hope to cope with their mutilated faces. At Sidcup, mirrors

³⁰ Feo, 19.

³¹ Bamji, *Sir Harold Gillies: Surgical Pioneer*, 144.

³² Bamji, *Facial Surgery: The patient’s experience*, 498.

³³ Bamji, *Sir Harold Gillies: Surgical Pioneer*, 145.

³⁴ Suzannah Biernoff, “Flesh Poems: Henry Tonks and the Art of Surgery,” *Visual Culture in Britain* 11 (February 2010): 27. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3158130/> (accessed January 11, 2013).

were not allowed in any rooms, arguably in an attempt to spare the men any more emotional trauma.³⁵ In *The Happy Hospital*, considered the best contemporary piece detailing a visit by a commoner to a facial wound ward, Ward Muir recounts an unnerving encounter with a patient in the halls: “When the wound was healed, however, and the patient was going about with his wrecked face uncovered, I was ... sensible of the embarrassment to which allusion had made. I feared, when talking to him, to meet his eye. I feared that inadvertently I might let the poor victim perceive what I perceived: namely, that he was hideous.”³⁶ There are two notable conclusions that can be drawn from this work. The descriptive language of the wounded, namely that he is ‘hideous’ and like a ‘gargoyle’, is representative of the negative sentiment Britons held towards these men. Muir’s word choice suggests a lack of identity and humanity within this soldier, as if the exposure of his wounds serves to dehumanize him.

Depression was common amongst disfigured soldiers, as would be expected given the importance of one’s face and appearance to their identity and self.³⁷ Dr. Gillies himself commented “only the blind kept their spirits up through thick and thin.”³⁸ Catherine Black, a nurse who worked with Gillies at Cambridge Hospital, wrote: “Hardest of all was the task of trying to rekindle the desire to live in men condemned to lie week after week smothered in bandages, unable to

³⁵ Bamji, *Facial Surgery: The patient’s experience*, 497.

³⁶ Muir, 143.

³⁷ Reginald Pound, *Gillies: Surgeon Extraordinary: A Biography*, (M. Joseph: London, 1964): 35.

³⁸ Pound, 35.

talk, unable to taste, unable even to sleep, and all the while knowing themselves to be appallingly disfigured.”³⁹ These men were not only saddened and horrified by their own appearance, but they carried with them a consciousness of how others were affected by the sight of their faces. Horace Sewell, a Brigadier-General during the war, recounted one such experience: “The people of that place requested the matron to keep us indoors, as it gave them ‘the shivers’ to see us out walking. The Prince of Wales was not immune. He emerged from a tour of the wards reserved for the worst cases ‘looking white and shaken.’”⁴⁰ Interactions of this sort can only be viewed as detrimental to the well-being of those rejected by their fellow Britons, and highlight the immense significance of the face within Western cultures, as acknowledged by Ward Muir: “I had not known before how usual and necessary a thing it is ... to gaze straight at anybody to whom one is speaking, and to gaze with no embarrassment.”⁴¹ Facial expressions and body language are quite useful in obtaining a sense for a person’s emotional state. One can imagine that routinely witnessing one’s visitors shy away from making eye contact, even showing disgust at the sight of oneself would not be emotionally uplifting. The *Daily Mail* featured an article in 1918 describing a visit by a young woman to see Sergeant Bates, a soldier wounded in 1916:

‘He told you of his wound.’

³⁹ Bamji, *Facial Surgery: The patient’s experience*, 497.

⁴⁰ Callister, 99.

⁴¹ Muir, 143.

'He said he was hit by shrapnel, ma'am, but not bad.'

Matron motioned her to sit down, and then, with an infinite pity in her face ... told the little woman before her in a few words what Sergeant Bates in his agony of mind could not write.

'So you see, Mrs. Bates,' she ended gently 'you must be brave when you see him, because—he dreads this meeting – for your sake.

...Sister came into the small ward rather hurriedly and, drawing the screen round the Sergeant's bed, told him very gently that his wife was waiting to see him.

'Sister,' the man turned abruptly, as he groped for the kindly hand she held out 'I'm a bloomin' coward, that's what I am.'⁴²

Disfigured soldiers awaiting or undergoing treatment had a truly difficult task in coping and adjusting to their new appearance. Like Sergeant Bates, many men expressed feelings of guilt about interacting uncovered with people. The unsupportive reactions by the general public strengthened in many the feelings of shame felt for having subjected normal people to such a gruesome, shocking sight as their destroyed faces. Ward Muir's reaction is indicative of the typical public reaction: "Could any woman come near that gargoyle without repugnance? His children ... Why, a child would run screaming from such a sight. To be fled from by children! That must be a heavy cross for some souls to bear."⁴³

⁴² Daily Mail, in Bamji, Experience, 498.

⁴³ Muir, 145.

Visual Aversion

British society found accepting these men who had fulfilled their duty to their nation difficult because they presented a visual reminder of war undesired by a war-torn populace. As a result, outside the confines of the medical establishment the visual presence of the facially wounded was suppressed and limited. At Sidcup the wounded were able to recuperate by taking walks in the local parks. Some of the benches in the park were painted blue, as a “code that warned townspeople that any man sitting on one would be distressful to view.”⁴⁴ The public was given warning to spare themselves any grief from a possible glance at a ghastly, broken face. This culture of aversion was pervasive throughout England, and the treatment of the disfigured by the press underscores this sentiment.

Contemporary representations of the disfigured in the public sphere, through pamphlets, newspapers and journals, rarely featured photographs, for “no more horrible result of war could be represented in the public sphere than the mutilation of the face.”⁴⁵ If public reports and pamphlets did run photographs, they focused on visits to Queen’s Hospital by British royalty, or only showed the soldiers with their wounds covered in bandages.⁴⁶ When art was substituted for photographs, like the British Red Cross Society’s “Help the Wounded” poster, the images depicted the

⁴⁴ Caroline Alexander, “Faces of War,” *Smithsonian*, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/mask.html> (accessed February 10, 2013).

⁴⁵ Gilman, 159.

⁴⁶ Callister, 95.

masculine ideal of Tommie Atkins, bandaged yet unwounded in the face. Most public reports on the disfigured were extremely propagandistic and fanciful in nature, often in the quest for charity or to quell the public's fears.⁴⁷ A December, 1919 edition of *The Times* ran a text-only piece about the rehabilitative work being done at Sidcup that indicates the manipulation of news for public consumption:

The Queen, Princess Mary, and Princess Helena Victoria paid a visit on Sunday to Chelsea House, Cadogan-place, and inspected there an exhibition of children's toys and beadwork and woodwork articles made by the soldier patients of the Queen's Hospital, Frognaal, Sidcup ... The makers of the toys ... were nearly all men who had suffered facial disfigurement through wounds, and in some extreme cases, where sufferers had become depressed to the point of contemplating, and even attempting, suicide, the work had brought a powerful counteracting interest.⁴⁸

Other articles made announcements about advances in medicine and the opening of new hospitals to treat facial wounds. In the *Liverpool Echo*, an informational piece covering a new facial hospital in Liverpool discussed disfigured veterans as if fixing their injuries was an easy, simple process: "Many of the wounded soldiers brought back to this country have crooked faces, and numbers of them are now

⁴⁷ Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement", 677.

⁴⁸ "Soldier Craftsmen", *The Times*, 9 December 1919.

coming to Liverpool to have them straightened.”⁴⁹ Describing their faces as “crooked” and needing to be “straightened”, the author’s simplification and softening of the language surrounding facial injury is representative of British desire to reduce negative and alarming exposure to the destructive nature of wartime injuries. At the same time, some of the wounded receiving treatment at Sidcup expressed positive feelings about their circumstances – an unexpected reaction that appears at odds with the societal aversion they were met with in person and within the press.

Many of the facially wounded recuperated at Queen’s Hospital for long periods of time, necessitated by the number of surgeries and healing time required to properly treat their injuries. With much time on their hands, the men were urged to participate in activities to lift their moods as well as provide them training for their eventual re-entry into the world.⁵⁰ Some activities, expressed in the press, included clock repairing, operating cinemas, hair-dressing and dentistry, as well as toy-making.⁵¹

Literacy instruction was another available option, and in 1922 a Lady Gough assigned soldiers an assignment to write on their experiences from the war. Titled “My Personal Experiences and Reminiscences of the Great War”, these essays describe the young men’s enlistment, deployment and their experience during

⁴⁹ “What Surgeons and Dentists are doing for Tommies in Liverpool,” *Liverpool Echo*, 18 July 1916.

⁵⁰ Biernoff, “The Rhetoric of Disfigurement”, 670.

⁵¹ *Bexley Health Observer*, November 1921, in Biernoff, *The Rhetoric of Disfigurement*, 670.

the war.⁵² They explain the feelings of being wounded in battle and their course of treatment, which in all cases led to Queen's Hospital. Interestingly, most of the soldiers expressed pride for having done their duty and served the nation. Private Best, injured at Ypres, wrote, "I cannot say I am sorry I joined the army, as it has broadened by outlook on life."⁵³ An unnamed soldier reminiscing on his military service wrote of having similar feelings. "When I look back and think things over which has happened during my service I feel proud, I also feel proud to think that I was wounded fighting in such a famous regiment as 'The Black Watch.'"⁵⁴

While under the care of hardworking nurses and doctors in a rehabilitation hospital, it seems to have been easier for these soldiers to feel positively about their service, almost as if they were unaware of how the world outside the hospital felt about them. Private Wordsworth described his immense appreciation and thankfulness for the work of the staff caring for him, "I would now pay homage to the Nursing Staff of that hospital who so carefully nursed me back to health in a preparation ward."⁵⁵ Another soldier also discussed the nursing staff, who although "...very much

⁵² Liddle Collection, University of Leeds. The essays are cataloged as Wounds, Item 34:6 and titled "Narratives by Badly Wounded Soldiers, 'My Personal Experiences and Reminiscences of the Great War', Collected by Lady Gough at Sidcup Hospital, 1922. Written for an education class."

⁵³ Private Best, 1922. "My Personal Experiences and Reminiscences of the Great War", Liddle Collection, University of Leeds, item 34:6.

⁵⁴ Essay #1 by an unnamed soldier injured at the Battle of Cambrai, 1918.

⁵⁵ Essay by Private Wordsworth.

overworked were always cheerful, and did their utmost to make the patients comfortable.”⁵⁶ In their concluding sentences, most of the men summarized their experience until that point as an overall positive experience, and some conveyed a desire to gain acceptance in society. For example, Private Murray wrote, “I like my country, and if I can be allowed to earn a respectful living in it shall never have anything to say against it.”⁵⁷ Private Best even went so far as to say “So, after all, I lost little, and gained much, through the Great War.”⁵⁸ These responses exhibit a specific consciousness on the part of their authors that can arguably exist only in the context of their rehabilitative program. Influenced by the actions and good treatment of their caregivers, these men were optimistic about the future and happy with their service. In this light, the men’s remarks represent in some ways an attempt to justify and accept their wounds as a minor blemish on an otherwise honorable life. In effect, their time in the hospital was their time of most happiness. Recuperation and rehabilitation within the hospital boosted their spirits, leaving many feeling “indebted to them [nurses and doctors] as much as anything else for the peace we now enjoy.”⁵⁹ It is exactly these feelings within the rehabilitative framework that provide a false sense of the outcomes for disfigured men returning to civilian life. Yet in examining the post-war experiences and popular

⁵⁶ Essay #4 by an unnamed soldier injured during the Somme Offensive, 1918.

⁵⁷ Essay by Private Murray.

⁵⁸ Essay by Private Best.

⁵⁹ Essay #4 by unnamed soldier injured during the Somme Offensive, 1918.

reactions to amputees, for whom successful reintegration was expected to occur in the years immediately following their injuries, the plausibility of negative life outcomes for the disfigured is reinforced.

Amputees

British soldiers injured in their extremities resulting in loss of limb experienced a different kind of reaction upon return home to England. Unlike the facially wounded, whose faces were hidden from public view, returning amputees were received honorably, their absence of limb a visual mark of their service to the nation. These men represented the cream of the crop of British youth, having risked their lives for their country.⁶⁰ The Ministry of Pensions was created in response to demands that "...the wartime mutilated were regarded as the responsibility of the nation."⁶¹ Interestingly, the Ministry's allocated funds for the wounded were based not so much on the degree to which their injuries reduced their physical capabilities, but "on the degree to which [they] incapacitated a man from 'being' a man, rather than 'acting' as one".⁶² A pensions leaflet from 1920 showed that those who were extremely disfigured received a full pension, an amount received only by those who lost an eye and a limb, two limbs, or were fully paralyzed.⁶³ These pension categorizations were justified as compensating a "loss of amenity" over a "loss of working capacity,"

⁶⁰ Bourke, 45.

⁶¹ Bourke, 49.

⁶² Ibid., 33.

⁶³ Feo, 20.

adds Katherine Feo.⁶⁴ In other words, pensions were given out based on how much a person's quality of life, and even manhood was impacted, or reduced. As the evidence points out, facially disfiguring injuries were justifiably considered a worse affliction than losing an arm. A married man who lost a leg would have faced much better odds at retaining his marriage, or meeting a woman and starting a family in comparison to a man missing parts of his face.

Loss of limb no doubt must have been painful and difficult to accept, but amputees were, as a group not as emotionally traumatized as the disfigured. Their identity and humanity were still intact; it was simply their body that was broken. An article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* juxtaposes the emotional state of the disfigured to those of amputees at Queen Mary Auxiliary Hospital in Roehampton. "'There is none of that depression [at Roehampton] which, however well diverted, attends in a more or less degree [sic] the fear of permanent facial disfigurement.'"⁶⁵ Concurrently amputees received positive and supportive press coverage in the immediate years of the war, yet this sentiment was short-lived, as amputees were relegated to the bottom rung of society along with beggars and thieves.

British amputees as a whole received a largely positive reception in the public sphere during the war. Many articles commented on the rehabilitative progress made by amputees, including their fittings for prosthetics and training for new jobs.⁶⁶ In addition,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁶⁵ *Pall Mall Gazette*, undated, In Biernoff, 674.

⁶⁶ Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement", 674.

stories about amputees usually included pictures. There was little concealment as was the case for the disfigured. News clippings discussed amputees training to become engineers, carpenters, and chauffeurs, among other vocations.⁶⁷ Propaganda from the Ministry of Pensions argued that curative workshops would train disabled veterans with advanced skills for a modernizing world.⁶⁸ At the same time, prosthetics were highly visible in the press. News clippings carried showed amputees being fitted with new arms and legs, among others.

Due to the numbers of amputees, the demand for prosthetic legs and arms increased, and advances in materials and design dramatically improved their functionality.⁶⁹ Prosthetic arms and legs allowed these broken men to become whole again, remade through a linkage of man and machine. "Physical agility and manliness were re-inscribed into the prosthetically remade body."⁷⁰ In this sense, defining "masculinity as mobility," amputees were able to reestablish physical proficiency through prosthetics.⁷¹ The facial prosthetics received by the disfigured, though, failed in their attempt to restore wholeness and reinstate masculinity.

⁶⁷ *Evening News* and *Lloyds Weekly News*, September 1916, in Biernoff, *The Rhetoric of Disfigurement* 674.

⁶⁸ Koven, 1191.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1195.

⁷⁰ Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement", 674.

⁷¹ Erin O'Conner, "Fractions of Men: Engendering Amputation in Victorian Culture," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 4 (1997): 763, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/179368> (accessed January 7, 2013).

Many soldiers suffered facial wounds that were irreparable by plastic surgery at the time. As Feo states, it “seemed that as people tried to heal from emotional wounds, resentment grew against men who embodied war memories in their disfigurements.”⁷² Thus, those left with gaping holes or missing jaws were sent to “the Tin Noses Shop” to be fitted with a prosthetic tin mask by Francis Derwent Wood and his team.⁷³ The masks were made from tin, constructed after taking a mold of the part of the face to be covered.⁷⁴ If covering an empty eye socket, for example, the mask was constructed around a pair of glasses that, while worn, held the mask in place. A moustache made from thinly cut, painted metal strips instead of real hair could cover a wounded mouth. For eyes, Wood insisted that they be painted on, matching the soldier’s other eye, or in the case of a blinded man, a picture to produce the desired effect. These masks, although intended to cover-up and restore, lacked animation, making them inadequate as a form of social rehabilitation, as their lack of animate realism reminded the viewer of what was missing, instead of covering it up.⁷⁵ The masks were subject to wear and fading of the paint, and since faces change over the years, these masks would have only been useful for a short period of time, at best. While they certainly allowed the disfigured some ability to walk the streets unnoticed, the inherent flaws in their construction and

⁷² Feo, 24.

⁷³ Alexander.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Feo, 23.

conceptualization rendered them useless in the long term.

Conclusion

Although there is no information available about the outcomes for the facially disfigured after leaving the hospital, much research has been done looking at amputees after the war. The possibilities for amputees after the armistice seemed endless, but amputees' hopes for the future were short-lived. "The war constructed two competing categories of disabled persons: "peace" and "war" cripples," argues Seth Koven.⁷⁶ These men now had to fight for jobs next to the lowest classes of society because Britons could not re-conceptualize their attitudes towards the war after 1918, which represented a public desire to repress the memories of the war. Women were also an impediment to receiving employment, as they fulfilled many male jobs during a drought of masculine, physically whole workers. Amputees felt angry and disheartened, waiting in line for unemployment benefits and insurance next to those who were receiving the same, yet who hadn't been to war or sacrificed his life for his nation.⁷⁷ This sentiment is expressed in *Reveille*, an orthopedic journal edited by playwright and novelist John Galsworthy after the war.⁷⁸ Galsworthy changed the name of the journal originally called *Recalled to Life*, to "awaken the nation to its obligations to the war

⁷⁶ Koven, 1200.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1201.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1167.

wounded.”⁷⁹ Articles discuss issues facing the war wounded and emphasize a consciousness that society *should* be doing more, but simply is not. In a piece called “Converting Public Attitude Toward the Disabled Man”, the author posits “...the attitude of the public has become a greater handicap to the cripple than his physical disability. People have assumed him to be helpless, and have, only too often, persuaded him to become so.”⁸⁰ Feelings like these perpetuate the unaccepting nature of Britons toward the war-wounded.

World War I brought physical destruction and devastation unseen in any other war before it. Advanced weapons combined with outmoded tactics of trench warfare produced tens of thousands disfiguring and dismembering injuries to the face and body. Coinciding advances in plastic surgery allowed more men to survive these injuries than ever before, yet the British populace found itself struggling to contemplate the honor of veterans’ physical signs of service with the physical reminders of tragic memories. To conclude, this paper has been an examination of the structural and social barriers to reintegration facing disfigured soldiers in the years after The Great War. Without records for the disfigured in the post-war years, we will simply never know how the lives of these men turned out. Yet by looking at the emotional and physical effects of their injuries both in rehabilitative hospitals

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1167.

⁸⁰ Douglas McMurtie, “Converting Public Attitude To The Disabled Man,” in *Reveille*, ed. John Galsworthy (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1918), 1: 444, <http://archive.org/details/1a3reveille00galsuoft> (accessed February 6, 2013).

and the outside world, the failure of facial prosthetics, and the outcomes for veteran amputees, this research gives credence to the plausibility of negative life outcomes for the disfigured.

Jacob Benjamin Newton is a senior History major.

A Hyphenated Campaign: Prejudice and Identity in the Experiences of Italian Americans Serving in Italy during World War II

Dominic Rios

Introduction

The Second World War was a momentous event of the twentieth century. While public memory recalls noteworthy generals and battles, this recollection often lacks an analysis of the influence of racial and ethnic prejudice during the war.¹ Especially in the United States, these factors greatly impacted the lives of many ethnic minorities. While the historical narrative focused on race and World War II includes a discussion of Japanese internment camps, curiously the experience of Italian Americans is often overlooked. With this in mind, this paper will examine the ways in which issues of ethnic prejudice and questions of identity factored into the Italian American experience during World War II.

Historiographical Background

The subject of race and the Second World War has elicited a significant amount of historical research. Although characterized by a variety of approaches, this

¹Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 4.

focus primarily falls under the field of ethnic history. This ethnic approach characterizes the work of the late Ronald Takaki—an esteemed historian who specialized in the interplay of race and the Second World War. In his work *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II*, Takaki utilizes a multidisciplinary and multi-ethnic approach to the issue of race and the Second World War—exploring the social and cultural impact of race for particular ethnic groups in each chapter. While Takaki discusses a variety of minority groups, he focuses heavily on the experiences of Japanese Americans. For these Americans, there was no escaping connections to Japanese ancestry—for even naturalized Japanese who attempted to fully integrate into American society found themselves in the grim reality of internment.² Moreover, racial tension provided one of, if not the most, influential factors behind the decision to drop the atomic bomb. Indeed, in *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb*, Takaki argues that President Truman's decision to bomb Hiroshima was ultimately motivated by racial prejudice towards the Japanese, and a desire to avenge Pearl Harbor.³

Takaki similarly analyzes the experience of Italian Americans during the war. However, this analysis differs from that of Japanese Americans in both length and content. While Takaki poses that Italian American communities experienced similar xenophobia and racial tensions in the years leading up to war, it unquestionably affected them differently. For example,

² Ibid, 153-154.

³ Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 99-100.

like Japanese Americans, Italian Americans faced racial slurs, violent stereotypes, and employment discrimination.⁴ In addition, many civil restrictions were placed on groups of Italian Americans following Italy's official declaration of war against the U.S. in 1941. In response, the federal government enacted curfews, displaced some families, and even labeled many Italian immigrants as enemies of the state.⁵ In his brief analysis, however, Takaki makes it clear that the Italian American situation differed from that of Japanese Americans in both scale and motive. He shows that federal and state governments detained far fewer Italian nationals, and completely abandoned a proposed full-scale deportation of all Italians believed to be "enemy aliens".⁶

For Takaki, American understandings of race during the period constituted the principle factor in this difference of treatment. Takaki argues that the fact Italian Americans were considered white, protected them from the large scale harassment—as their skin-color blended them into the American population.⁷ Thus, while racist attitudes about ethnic minorities undoubtedly forced some into a marginalized position, Takaki poses that the experience of Italian Americans varied greatly from that of other minority groups.

Other scholars agree with this understanding. For historian Rose D. Scherini, a combination of race and political ideology created a hostile domestic

⁴ Ibid, 132-133.

⁵ Ibid, 133.

⁶ Ibid, 134.

⁷ Takaki, *Double Victory*, 134-135.

environment for Italian Americans during the war. According to her analysis, the suspected fascist leanings within the Italian American community created an initial wave of suspicion from the United States government.⁸ For Scherini, however, ethnic prejudice primarily fueled the anxiety towards Italian Americans. She contends that even those with no connections to fascism were still targeted as potential enemies of the state—a belief propagated by extreme racial stereotypes which characterized all Italian Americans as deviant, corrupt, and untrustworthy.⁹

Other historians speak of an extremely complex tension between Italian and American identities. Stefano Luconi's *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia*, emphasizes this tension. Luconi shows that the pre-war representations of Italian Americans as potential threats to domestic security actually fostered a stronger Italian identity in Italian Americans—an identification that generally supported fascist political ideology.¹⁰ Yet, this ethno-cultural identification quickly shifted back to an American-oriented identity following Italy's declaration of war against the U.S. in 1943—a fact made evident by the huge Italian American support found in war-bond drives, armed-services recruitment campaigns, and other forms of

⁸ Rose D. Scherini, "When Italian Americans Were 'Enemy Aliens,'" in *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 282.

⁹ Ibid, 280, 282, 287.

¹⁰ Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 96-97.

civil service.¹¹ Thus, Italian American ethnic identities were in constant flux given shifting American attitudes towards Italians.

In *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans During World War II*, historian Stephen Fox reiterates the conclusions of this complex ethnic identity. For Fox, the inner conflict between Italian and American identities stemmed from a variety of factors—the most important being, once again, a constant pull and push between Italian and American allegiances.¹² Unique to Fox's work, however, is the analysis of how race factored into questions of internment and civil restrictions. Fox asserts that many government officials believed that the white skin of the Italian American actually made them *more* dangerous than their Japanese counterparts. Indeed Fox shows that a significant portion of American governmental officials concluded that because white Americans and Italians shared similar physical characteristics like skin color, it actually made the Italian American easier to blend in, and thus easier to commit treasonous activities without suspicion.¹³ While the government eventually rejected this notion, Fox's analysis nonetheless shows the complex role that racial issues played in the domestic life of Italian Americans during the Second World War.

¹¹ Ibid, 102.

¹² Stephen Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1990), 7-9.

¹³ Ibid, 116-117.

Thematic Context: Problematizing “Race” and “Racial Identity” as Units of Analysis

Before continuing, it is important to present a semantic clarification—especially with regards to the use of the terms “race” and “racial identity” as means of describing a person’s ethnic/cultural background and affiliation. Traditionally, the term “race” has been used to identify certain groups of people—groups that are distinguished by assumed differences in their biology and physiology.¹⁴ For Western European and white intellectuals who pioneered this terminology in the mid nineteenth century, these differences were assumed to deviate from an exclusively Anglo norm. With this in mind, many contemporary historians, including David Hollinger, argue that the terminology of race is better used when describing the feelings or treatment between two groups of people rather than describing any sense of ethnic origin—especially when considering that the biological and social facets of the term were clearly defined by a third-party for the ulterior motive of unequal treatment.¹⁵

To solve these issues Hollinger offers a new method of approach—a method he terms the “post-ethnic perspective”. Departing from the rigid universalistic approach that places individuals in distinct categories based on ethnic differences, Hollinger’s post-ethnic perspective highlights the fusion that many feel between differing groups—therefore focusing on a flexible collection of identities used by individuals in

¹⁴ David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), 35.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 39.

forming their social and cultural position.¹⁶ In this analysis, Hollinger eliminates “race” as viable unit of analysis, and instead focuses on what he terms ethno-racial identities. For him, this term more accurately describes the vague continuum that he posits between “racial” and “ethnic” categories, in which individuals are traditionally placed, and also renounces the prejudicial treatment of groups based on the non-existent characteristics of “race.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the term more accurately emphasizes the amount of liberty that individuals have in choosing which identity and/or identities to emphasize above others.¹⁸

It is clear then that Hollinger’s ethno-racial identity thesis offers a more appropriate analytical framework when looking at the Italian American experience in the Second World War. Combined with Hollinger’s post-ethnic perspective, the ethno-racial identity best describes the Italian American experience as highlighted by Scherini, Luconi, and other historians focusing on these issues. With this in mind, Italian American identities as discussed in this paper will be examined through this perspective.

Central Arguments of Thesis

While the historical research focusing on the impact of race in the domestic life of Italian Americans during World War II is both broad and insightful, an understanding of how this factor impacted their experience in the military is not as detailed. Therefore,

¹⁶ Ibid, 108-109, 106.

¹⁷ Ibid, 39.

¹⁸ Ibid.

this paper will analyze the relationship between racial and ethnic factors and Italian American military service, and focus specifically on those soldiers who served in the Italian Campaign. Similar to the research carried out by Takaki and others, this paper will analyze whether or not factors of race, culture, and identity played any role in the motivation for military service. This question becomes especially fascinating when considering that, beginning in 1943, many Italian Americans served in the Italian Campaign—a fact that almost certainly furthered the shifting identities already experienced by Italian Americans. In the years before the war, ethnic prejudice dictated the representation of Italian Americans—prejudice that evolved into suspicions of dual-allegiance with Italy’s expanding role in World War II. In examining personal accounts of Italian American soldiers, it is clear that this ethnic bias impacted the formation of their identities as Americans—a construction that impacted their involvement in the war. While strongly committed to an American identity and cause, those Italian American soldiers serving in Italy found that their Italian background significantly influenced their feelings about Italy’s role in the war, their military responsibilities, and their interactions with the Italian people.

Historical Context: Changing Attitudes towards Italian Americans, 1850-World War II

In the years before World War II, American perceptions of Italian American immigrants and communities evolved considerably. In the early years of immigration that occurred in the latter half of the

nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, media depictions of Italian immigrants varied. An 1857 article from *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art*, describes the precarious nature of the Italian population in America through his interactions with Italians in his small town. Although he characterized a small portion of this group as experts in the “art of being happy,”¹⁹ his portrayal of the larger Italian population in America was less flattering. Describing them as “refugees without resources or education,” the author went on to note that:

There is no class of emigrants, who, from their want of adaptation, strong home attachments, and inability to cope with a new climate and foreign habits, claim such ready sympathy...this natural inaptitude, sensitiveness, and ignorance of the world, produce some ludicrous contrasts of character and circumstances, they often prove the most difficult people to help, the most amiable marplots...²⁰

While the article in no way implied that these immigrants were a danger to American society, its description was clearly intended to treat the Italian immigrants in an extremely paternalistic manner.

Other early representations of Italians living in America focused on a different image—one that characterized the perception of a hard-working and

¹⁹ “Italians In America,” *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature Science, and Art* 9, no. 49 (January 1857), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

industrious laborer journeying to America in order to find prosperity. For example, a 1906 volume of *Outlook*—a monthly periodical from New York City—John Foster Carr clearly underscored this image. In “The Coming of the Italian”, Carr emphasized the impoverished nature of the Italian immigrant—stating that their motivations for migration were rooted in a “definite economic cause,” and that Italians arrived “from a land of starvation to a land of plenty”.²¹ Additionally, Carr pointed to the laborious, yet inexperienced, proclivity of the Italian newcomers: “He [The Italian] comes because the country [The United States] has the most urgent need of unskilled labor. This need largely shaped the character of our Italian immigration, and offers immediate work to most newcomers.”²² While Carr’s analysis characterized these immigrants as “ignorant” individuals, whose only talents were found in manual labor, he nevertheless emphasized that the Italian population in America was “quickly absorbed without disturbing either the public peace or the labor market.”²³ While Carr’s image contains residues of paternalism, it nonetheless speaks volumes about the perceived value of Italian American communities to the United States.

As the twentieth century progressed, however, depictions of Italian immigrants, and immigrants in general, shifted. Although caused by a variety of factors, this shift primarily resulted from economic tensions. As early as 1902, the founding-president of

²¹ John Foster Carr, “The Coming of the Italian,” *Outlook* 82, no.8 (February 1906), 420, 428.

²² *Ibid*, 420-421.

²³ *Ibid*, 421.

the American Federation of Labor (AFL), Samuel Gompers, protested the influx of immigration into America, and argued that “the intelligence and the prosperity of our [American] working people are endangered...Cheap labor, ignorant labor, takes [American] jobs and cuts [American] wages”.²⁴ Similar arguments found their way into many American periodicals, newspapers, and journals. For example, *Overland Monthly* and *Out West Magazine* recommended that the United States be “very cautious” in opening “the gates to another swarm,” and further rejected the notion that the United States should be considered a destination for the world’s troubled refugees.²⁵

Many directed these nativist concerns specifically at Italian immigration and the Italian American population in the United States. Even Department of Labor Secretary James J. Davis commented on the need for potential restrictions on immigration, especially from Italy. Davis’ extreme nativist stance became clear in the multitude of opinion pieces he wrote during the 1920s, including one for the *Los Angeles Times* in which he argued for “selective immigration,” which meant the rejection of “every individual who is physically, mentally, or morally unsound or whose political or economic views

²⁴ Samuel Gompers, “Demand of American Labor for Restriction of Immigration and an Illiteracy Test for Immigrants: Letter of the President of the American Federation of Labor,” *Publications of the Immigration Restriction League*, no. 35 (May 1902), 1.

²⁵ John Chetwood, “Immigration—Asset or Liability?,” *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 81, no. 4 (August 1923), 1.

constitute a menace to free institutions.”²⁶ In other articles written during the same period, Davis aligned Italians with these “unsound” groups. In 1924, he wrote that Italian Americans boasted an extremely high crime rate among immigrant groups—the third highest, according to him, behind only the Turks and the Balkans.²⁷

In addition to these socio-economic fears, political tensions formed in the early years of the Second World War. As Mussolini’s imperial conquests expanded to North Africa, a fear of fascism’s expansion into American borders grew within the American government and public. These anxieties gained strength especially after Italy’s assistance in the German war effort—an action that prompted American media outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Herald* to spread stories about the possibility of Italians in America acting as agents of Mussolini in order to bring the fascist political machine to the states.²⁸ These fears of a fifth column were reiterated by Martin Dies Jr., a Texas Congressional Representative, and Chairman of the House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities. In his 1940 book, *The Trojan Horse in*

²⁶ James J. Davis, “Nation Faces Menace of Immigrant Inundation,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1924, 7.

²⁷ James J. Davis, in *Evening Bulletin*, June 3, 1924; referenced in Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics*, 45.

²⁸ *The New York Times*, June 13, 1940, *The New York Post*, March 20, 1941, and *The Washington Herald Tribune*, March 22, 1941; referenced in Matteo Pretelli, “The Useless Fifth Column of Mussolini in America,” in *The Impact of World War II on Italian Americans: Selected Essays from the 35th Annual Conference of the American Italian Historical Association*, ed. Gary R. Morimo (New York: American Italian Historical Institute, 2007), 69.

America, Dies dedicated a chapter to “Mussolini’s Trojan Horse” that had penetrated American soil. According to Dies, the committee’s investigations revealed that Italian Americans displayed strong support for Mussolini’s activities abroad, and even made financial donations to Mussolini’s government.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been sent to Italy by Italians residing in the United States; and during the Ethiopian Campaign, there was an organized effort in the United States to raise funds for the conquest of Ethiopia. The support of this group alone has been an important factor in the Italian economy. The facts show that many Italian-Americans have assisted the Fascist regime.²⁹

Suspensions towards Italian Americans, therefore, were broadcasted through American print-media and government.

As the war progressed, these concerns heavily influenced the federal government’s action towards many Italian Americans. Following the Italian-German military alliance and Italy’s declaration of war against the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation compiled lists of organizations and individuals considered pro-fascist in nature—even going so far as interning many undocumented aliens, and relocating naturalized citizens from sensitive military zones.³⁰ While the majority of Italian Americans were fortunate

²⁹ Martin Dies Jr. *The Trojan Horse in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1940), 332-333.

³⁰ Scherini, 282, 290.

to evade this direct government intrusion of liberty, others faced hostility from local municipal governments afterwards—especially in terms of police profiling. By June of 1942, an estimated fifteen hundred Italian Americans had been arrested and detained for small petty crimes in states with significant populations of Italian Americans such as New York, California, and Louisiana.³¹ Thus, it is clear that Italy's involvement in the Second World War served as another catalyst for suspicion towards the Italian community in America.

The prevailing characterization of Italian Americans, therefore, considerably evolved in the years leading up to the Second World War. In the early years of immigration, the Italian American was characterized in a paternalistic tone—helpless immigrants attempting to economically better themselves through American benevolence. Yet, as the years progressed, and the United States faced the domestic struggles of the Great Depression and Second World War, images of Italian Americans progressed towards fears of economic and political deviance—depictions furthered by Italy's involvement in the early years of World War II.

Forming an Identity: The Influence of Ethnic Prejudice n the Experiences of Italian American Soldiers in the Years Leading Up to World War II

Clearly, the perceptions of Italian Americans fluctuated greatly in the years leading up to the Second World War. As periods of immigration passed

³¹ Ibid, 287.

and Italy's involvement in the war grew under Mussolini, these representations of Italian Americans changed from simple-minded laborers to economic and political threats. For Italian Americans who later served in the United States military, these representations impacted their experience before, during, and after the war.

First and foremost, many of these Italian American men encountered first-hand the stereotypes of the "ignorant" immigrant and community. For the most part, these experiences dealt specifically with the treatment of Italian Americans in the American education system. For many, being the children of Italian immigrants negatively impacted their scholastic ventures. This was especially the case for future servicemen like Rocco Siciliano and Philip Aquila. In his memoir, Siciliano, who served with the 10th Mountain Division during WWII, described significant educational impediments that existed solely because of his Italian immigrant background. During middle school, for example, Siciliano fell victim to the common practice of holding-back immigrant children in a grade solely because school authorities assumed that the families' "poor English" inhibited academic progress.³² In addition, Siciliano faced the same paternalistic attitudes that accompanied early Italian immigrants. After scoring an extremely low 81 on his scholastic intelligence test (the class average was in the 100s), his teacher announced his score to the entire class.

³² Rocco Siciliano, *Walking On Sand: The Story of an Immigrant Son and the Forgotten Art of Public Service* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press 2004), 11.

This experience was made even more humiliating as the teacher referred to him as “poor Rocco”.³³

Philip Aquila, who served with the Air Force Air Cadets during the war, faced similar educational discrimination in high school, even though he excelled throughout those four years. This success included stellar attendance, nearly perfect grades since elementary school, and even his election as class president in his senior year.³⁴ Despite these outstanding achievements, Aquila’s background proved detrimental to his assigned curriculum during his senior year. During this period, Aquila’s hometown of Buffalo, New York instituted a stringent tracking system for high school seniors—meaning that those designated for vocational or technical jobs were taught separately from those thought to be suited for professional careers. While seemingly a well established plan to track students based on their abilities, this system was often manipulated to separate the social “undesirables” from the “professional” population of students.³⁵ Given Aquila’s success, then, the professional track should have been the obvious placement. Unfortunately for him, however, the fact that Aquila belonged to a poor Italian immigrant family sealed his fate in the vocational track.³⁶ Thus, for both Siciliano and Aquila, the

³³ Ibid, 12.

³⁴ Richard Aquila, *Home Front Soldier: The Story of a GI and His Italian American Family During World War II* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 27.

³⁵ William Graebner, *Coming of Age in Buffalo: Youth and Authority in the Postwar Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 103; referenced in Aquila, 27.

³⁶ Aquila, 27, 30.

stereotype of the ignorant immigrant family greatly factored into their early life.

Concerns surrounding Italian American allegiance to the United States also factored into the experience of Italian American servicemen. For some, these concerns manifested themselves in official evaluations and interviews during combat training. This situation impacted the experience of those like Phil Aquila, who faced direct questions concerning his allegiance to the United States and his abilities (or lack thereof) to fight against the Italian enemy abroad.³⁷ In addition to these racially motivated concerns, Aquila further suspected that his Italian parentage contributed to his domestic assignment during the war. After completing pilot school, he applied for the next phase of pilot training, one that would have readied him for active-duty on the European front. Despite his above average grades in pilot school, the selection committee rejected Aquila's transfer, a decision that solidified his role on the domestic front. While it could never be proven, Aquila strongly suspected that this decision stemmed from his Italian background.³⁸

For others, concerns about allegiance created underlying suspicions that the federal government might take eventual action against Italian Americans. For Al Gagliardi, the son of an Italian living in Gilroy, these fears resulted from the restrictions placed on a significant portion of the Italians in his community, especially for those who were still un-naturalized. While he and his family escaped much of this hostility, he acknowledged that the older generations, many of

³⁷ Ibid, 42.

³⁸ Ibid, 41-42.

whom had been in the country for years but never naturalized, faced strict curfews punishable by jail-time.³⁹ More importantly, however, suspicions of allegiance to Italy caused Gagliardi to draw similarities to the experience of Japanese Americans. Living in Gilroy, Gagliardi formed close relationships with many Japanese Americans at school, relationships that were cut short due to their internment following the attack on Pearl Harbor. While Gagliardi felt a deep sense of regret for this treatment, he also recognized that Italian Americans might face a similar fate:

When they started to take all these Japanese friends of mine, who were born here and went to school with me, to what they called the 'relocation' or 'concentration' camps, I was a little scared because I said: 'Gee Italy is against us [America]...I'm next!...Italians and Germans, we're probably all going to go'. So it was a little scary there for a while.⁴⁰

Thus, it is clear that, for Gagliardi, fears of allegiance affected the Italian community of Gilroy in many ways. While the level of suspicion was minimal compared to other ethnic groups, those like Gagliardi and Aquila clearly believed themselves to be in a precarious situation.

For others, however, prejudice against Italian Americans factored little into their lives before the war. Bruno Ghiringhelli, who would later serve in F-

³⁹ Al Gagliardi, interview by author, Gilroy, CA, November 11, 2012.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Company of the 87th Infantry, recalled that stereotypes, prejudice, and suspicion played little to no role in his early life. This minimal impact of ethnic prejudice resulted from living in large and strong Italian American communities. For Ghiringhelli, the context of a large Italian American community that thrived in Northern California shielded him from any sort of prejudicial harassment or social pressure.⁴¹ Thus, while prejudice created real concerns for many Italian American servicemen growing up, for others, these factors presented little impact.

Personal responses to these experiences also differed. For some, the name-calling they faced at an early age created the impetus to stand up for themselves as equal members of society. Men like Al Gagliardi voiced their grievances from an early age—especially in response to the racial epithet of ‘dago’ that he frequently heard at school. After an initial altercation, Al learned that vocally speaking up for himself helped greatly: “I put the message out fast: say it behind my back but you better be able to run faster than me and nobody could run faster than me...Nobody ever called me ‘dago’ after that and it didn’t bother me anymore because they knew.”⁴² For others, the realities of difference necessitated a complex balance of assimilating to American norms while maintaining their Italian selfhood. Rocco Siciliano best characterized this struggle as a “choice,” a choice between a life stuck in the traditions of the

⁴¹ Bruno Ghiringhelli, interview by author, Rutherford, CA, January 4, 2013.

⁴² Ibid.

old world or a new identity compatible with both environments.⁴³ In his own words:

In Salt Lake City we were a tiny minority mixed in with an overwhelming majority. Our family remained very close, and we adhered to some simple Italian traditions, especially in the habits of food and drink. Yet I often felt I was being watched...I did not suffer from any chronic identity crisis, but I was unwilling to exist on the sidelines, as neither fish nor flesh...I wanted to be accepted. That was a choice. I became determined to make to make it appear that I was part of their [the majority's] group. I wanted to show them that I thought like them, and that I, in every respect, wanted to be like them.⁴⁴

Although Siciliano remained invested in the Italian side of his identity, he clearly understood the potential benefits of assimilation. While these responses are different, they clearly show the agency that these men held in the creation of their social identities. For Gagliardi, racist taunting caused him to stand up against intolerance and assert his equal place in society. While Siciliano's case presents a sensitive balancing act, it nonetheless deepens the notion of individual agency and control between American and Italian identities.

Unsurprisingly, America's entry into World War II strengthened this assertion of a firm American identity. Like in the rest of America, powerful patriotic

⁴³ Siciliano, 10.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 10, 12.

attitudes flourished within the Italian American community in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, an attack that solidified America's involvement in the war. This devotion to the American cause is better understood when one observes Italian American enlistments into the armed services. While no precise figure exists, it is generally believed anywhere from 300,000 to 400,000 Italian Americans served in the armed forces during the war.⁴⁵ Recent personal accounts strengthen these notions of Italian American motivation. For Rocco Siciliano, the attack on Pearl Harbor created an "intensely unifying force" that "crystallized public opinion" on America's war policy, and motivated every American to help their country.⁴⁶ For Al Gagliardi, the desire to serve was so strong he even tried to enlist at the young age of seventeen, only to discover an extremely hesitant mother who would not sign the necessary authorization papers.⁴⁷ Even those of older generations willingly volunteered to serve. For Cornelius "Kio" Granai, a forty-six year old father of two, who also served in the First World War, World War II presented the opportunity to protect the freedoms of the younger generation.⁴⁸ While some fear of Italian American allegiance still continued in much of the country, these Italian American efforts in the war could not be ignored, a fact made clear in an address to Congress by New York Representative Vito Marcantonio. Responding to those who continued to

⁴⁵ Peter Belmonte, *Italian Americans in World War II* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 6.

⁴⁶ Siciliano, 62.

⁴⁷ Gagliardi, interview.

⁴⁸ Cornelius Granai, *Letters from "Somewhere..."* (Burlington, Vermont: Barnes Bay Press, 2000), 3, 7.

harbor prejudice, the Congressman passionately detailed Italian American allegiance:

There should be no need for me to speak to you tonight about the role of Italian-Americans in this war...Italian-Americans share with the rest of their countrymen, the conviction that enemy agents, saboteurs, and spies, whether American born or foreign born, whether citizen or non-citizen, must be ceaselessly guarded against and ruthlessly dealt with...History will record that those who denied opportunities to our Italian-Americans, or to any other group because of their race, color, creed, or national origin, were themselves during the work of enemy agents and saboteurs...So, we too, true sons of Garibaldi...renew our pledge and rededicate our energies and our lives for the victory of our arms, for the victory of our cause.⁴⁹

Through the large numbers of Italian Americans in the armed forces, and their clear passion and desire to serve the country, their commitment and allegiance to the United States cannot be denied.

It is clear, then, that the Second World War strengthened the American identity of these Italian American men. While their experience with the ethnic prejudices and stereotypes before the war varied, the

⁴⁹ Vito Marcantonio, "Loyalty of Italian Americans," in *A Documentary History of Italian Americans*, ed. Wayne Moquin (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 399-400.

war created a unifying force that reinforced their American patriotism.

A Hyphenated Campaign: The Blending of an Italian Identity in Italy

While Italian American servicemen exhibited unquestionable patriotism following the United States' entry into war, Italy's status as an Axis power until 1943 created an interesting element in their experience. The impact of Italy's role in the war is especially considerable for those Italian American men who served in the Italian Campaign. For many Italian Americans, serving in Italy produced sentimental feelings of family and ancestry. Additionally, most found that their Italian American identities led to not only unique responsibilities while abroad, but also to unique interactions with the Italian country and its people.

For some Italian American servicemen, the possibility of fighting in Italy evoked emotions involving familial connections, as many had direct family members still living in Italy. Bruno Ghiringhelli, who served with the Tenth Mountain Division, was nervous about the possibility of coming face to face with Italian cousins. While this thought in no way affected his sense of duty to the American cause abroad, the reality of family in Italy planted some seeds of fear.⁵⁰ Even those without family in Italy expressed similar sentimentality. Daniel J. Petruzzi, who served with the 82nd Airborne Division Military

⁵⁰ Ghiringhelli, interview.

Government team, best described the sentimentality that accompanied the journey to Italy during the war:

Going to war in Italy was bizarre...the prospect of fighting in the land of my grandfather was also, at the very least, unpleasant...My feelings had nothing to do with divided loyalty. We had no relatives in Italy. The family was not sentimental about the 'old country.'...I loved Italy for itself. Its history, its culture, its way of life.⁵¹

While these men remained completely loyal to the American war effort, their comments show the impact that Italian ancestry played in their service in Italy.

Given these ancestral factors, it is not surprising that Italian American servicemen took their assignment in Italy as an opportunity to visit family members still in the country. For some like Cornelius Granai, serving in Italy even revealed forgotten family. While stationed near his father's home town, Granai met townspeople who knew his father, uncle, and cousins, a discovery so exciting that he wrote home requesting family photos to distribute to the local townspeople. In later letters, he expressed a strong desire to travel to his father's hometown himself: "I will get there as soon as I can...I must get there at all costs...to see the home where Dad was born even though it was bombed and is uninhabitable."⁵² Staff Sergeant Joseph Cuoco, A member of the 10th

⁵¹ Daniel J. Petruzzi, *My War Against The Land of My Ancestors* (Irving, Texas: Fusion Press, 2000), 18-19.

⁵² Granai, 49-50, 56.

Mountain Division, expressed similar desires. In a letter home, he relayed these aspirations to his sister—telling her that he would make every attempt to visit their Italian family during his furlough days.⁵³ Rocco Siciliano also felt, and carried out, these desires to visit family in Italy. While assisting with the American occupation after the war, Siciliano took time to visit his family in Southern Italy. It was during this visit that he first met his grandmother, and aunts and uncles, who had moved back to Italy when he was still too young to remember. Additionally, he was able to wander through his mother's childhood house, an experience that provided invaluable insights into his background.⁵⁴ Thus, the war provided many of these Italian American servicemen the opportunity to seek out relatives, and absorb invaluable insights about their Italian lineage.

Serving in Italy not only gave these men the opportunity to connect with their own family, it also allowed them to seek out relatives of Italian friends back home. This middle-man role characterized the experience of Cornelius Granai. Still stationed in Italy after the war, Granai wrote his wife and asked her to notify the local newspaper of his location so as to send messages to any family members still in the country.⁵⁵ Although difficult to imagine, the process worked. One month later he wrote his wife, filling her in on the progress he made tracking down the family

⁵³ J.F. Cuoco, *Echoes from the Mountain: The Wartime Correspondences of Staff Sergeant Joseph Cuoco* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2008), 310-311.

⁵⁴ Siciliano, 93-94.

⁵⁵ Granai, 57.

members of friends from back home.⁵⁶ From these accounts, then, it remains clear that serving in Italy provided these soldiers the opportunity to connect with not only their own families, but the families of their friends back in the United States.

In addition to these family dynamics, many Italian Americans found themselves taking on special responsibilities while in Italy, roles that directly related to their Italian background. For those that spoke Italian, these roles generally dealt with their ability to communicate and coordinate with the Italian resistance. For Phil Carter, the son of Italian Immigrants serving with the 88th Division's Blue Devils, bilingualism led to an assignment of leading a group of Italian soldiers through the mountains of central Italy.⁵⁷ Daniel Petruzzi recalled similar experiences. Serving with part of the Military Government established during the American occupation of Italy, Petruzzi oversaw the Italian *Partigiani*, or resistance fighters, an assignment made easy by his ability to speak Italian.⁵⁸ Similarly, Cornelius Granai's ability to speak Italian positively impacted his duties as the Provincial Legal Officer in charge of both the Italian and Allied Military Governments. In letters, he detailed his interactions with the civilians coming before the court, a situation where the ability to speak Italian greatly helped.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid, 59.

⁵⁷ Phil Carter, "A Highly Decorated Truck Driver," in *Stories of Service: Valley Veterans Remember World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War*, ed. Janice Stevens, vol. 2 (Fresno, California: Craven Street Books, 2011), 61.

⁵⁸ Petruzzi, 7, 11.

⁵⁹ Granai, 37-38, 44-45.

While not all Italian American servicemen spoke the Italian language, those that did undoubtedly found new and added responsibilities, given their ability to interact and communicate with the native population.

The Italian identity not only impacted roles within the military, it also influenced many of these servicemen's interactions with Italian civilians. For Michael Ingrisano, who served with the 37th Troop Carrier Squadron, the ability to speak the Italian language created memorable experiences with those he met. Whether it was with local chefs, barbers, or just the average townspeople, the sight of an American speaking the native language always drew the attention of a curious Italian, a result that made truly memorable experiences with the Italian civilians.⁶⁰ For Ingrisano, these memorable interactions created feelings of sympathy and pity for the Italian people. In a letter penned in 1945, Ingrisano commented on the American plans for rehabilitation of Italy. In his writing, Ingrisano hoped for a benevolent plan of action and expressed sympathy for the Italian people.⁶¹ Cornelius Granai detailed similar sentiments in letters sent home. In one letter written towards the end of the war, Granai detailed the Italian people's amazement in his ability to communicate and understand them.⁶² Like Ingrisano, Granai also shared similar feelings of sympathy and compassion towards those he encountered. In multiple letters, Granai advised his wife to send clothes, shoes, and other supplies to aid

⁶⁰ Michael N. Ingrisano, Jr. *And Nothing is Said: Wartime Letters, August 5, 1943-April 21, 1945* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 2002), 40, 83, 454.

⁶¹ Ibid, 457.

⁶² Granai, 57.

the poverty-stricken populace.⁶³ Granai's sympathies extended so far that he even faced repercussions from superiors. In other letters, Granai spoke of his commanding officers' outrage in his sympathetic treatment of Italians, something that contradicted their desire to treat the Italians as a conquered people.⁶⁴

Rocco Siciliano also noted that his bilingualism created an interesting dynamic in his interactions with Italians. For Rocco, his bilingualism earned the respect and admiration of the local people. Although a seemingly minor detail in the context of their service, Rocco's fellow servicemen benefited greatly from these interactions, especially when locating food during extended travel. In the words of Siciliano, the Italians prepared meals "to give to the *Americanos*, whom they loved"—a fact that the rest of his company greatly appreciated.⁶⁵ For these soldiers, then, their Italian background produced unique and memorable experiences with the Italian population. It was such interactions that created feelings of compassion and concern.

From these accounts, the impact of the Italian Campaign on these Italian American servicemen is clear. Although these men undoubtedly prided themselves in serving America, these accounts show that their Italian identities factored tremendously in their experience abroad. Their Italian background created mixed emotions about fighting in the land of their ancestors and provided the opportunity to seek

⁶³ Ibid, 49-50, 53, 58.

⁶⁴ Granai, 44-45, 52.

⁶⁵ Siciliano, 80.

out unknown family in Italy, an opportunity that many even extended to friends back home. Furthermore, their familiarity with the Italian language provided these servicemen with a foundation with which to interact with the Italian populace. Particularly in the realm of communication, the ability to speak Italian permitted these men to interact on a unique level with the Italian people, creating truly meaningful interactions and admiration. From this examination, it is clear that Italian American soldiers were greatly impacted by their Italian identities during their service in the Italian Campaign of the Second World War.

Conclusions

World War II unquestionably impacted the lives of every American citizen. For Italian Americans, however, this impact was unique and multifaceted. First and foremost, the war allowed Italian Americans to display an undeniable sense of American patriotism, an attitude that directly contradicted images of Italian espionage or treason. For Italian American men, this patriotic identity rooted itself in military service as thousands Italian American men joined the ranks to defend their country. While the war created an environment to harness an American identity, those stationed in Italy found their Italian background playing a meaningful role during their service. For many, Italian ancestry fostered sentimental feelings that compelled them to seek out relatives still in Italy. Additionally, the ability to speak the Italian language allowed for direct and meaningful interactions with the Italian people. Most importantly, this connection

cultivated mutual respect and admiration between the soldiers and natives.

Thus, this analysis provides insights into many of the Italian American accounts involving ethnic prejudice and identity before and during the war, specifically with those Italian American men serving in Italy. Although this analysis provides only a small glimpse into the experiences of Italian Americans during World War II, it nevertheless provides a necessary contribution to the study of race, ethnicity, and identity during this historical period.

Dominic Rios is a senior at Santa Clara University pursuing a degree in History with a Political Science minor. Studying with an American History emphasis, he is particularly interested in the first half of the twentieth century--especially the years surrounding the two World Wars. After graduation, Dominic will begin teaching in San Diego through the Teach For America program.

Retaining the Crown in the Face of Refugee Crises: King Abdullah II

Kevin Laymoun

On the morning of May 14, 2011, hours after the first reported rockets had been fired in Talkalakh, Syria, thousands of Syrians flooded into neighboring countries to escape what would become one of the bloodiest civil wars of the twenty-first century. In the midst of its own political turmoil, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was a target destination for many of those fleeing the conflict in Syria. By early 2013, the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan had climbed to 252,706, with 36,000 entering between January and early February.¹ With Jordan hosting preexisting Palestinian and Iraqi refugee populations, the addition of a third group, the Syrians, highlights the country's continued struggles with its role as a refugee state, as well as the challenges of balancing the needs and expectations of three different groups of displaced people.

Jordan's central location in the Middle East has made it the target destination for those fleeing troubles in neighboring countries. The Israeli occupation, U.S.-led war in Iraq, and Syrian civil war have forced refugees from differing societal, cultural, and economic backgrounds to cohabit the same land.² The complex

¹ "Syrian Regional Refugee Response," *UNHCR*, February 12, 2013.

² Ilan Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (n.p.: Oneworld, 2007). and Joseph Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris), 2009. and

relationships that have arisen out of this unique situation have resulted in a clash of cultures and rights, as each group struggles with its own issues of identity. Amid the myriad issues surrounding the refugees in Jordan lies one important additional issue: the role of the country's ruler, King Abdullah II, who has struggled to maintain a national identity for a country whose citizens are greatly outnumbered by refugee populations. This paper argues that given the recent arrival of the Syrian refugees and the historic nationalist, economic, religious, and political tensions caused by the preexisting Palestinian and Iraqi populations, King Abdullah II's past usage of his tribal power base, parliamentary control, and the *Mukhabarat* — secret police force, are the tactics he will again employ in dealing with the three-part refugee complexity. His main goal, in all of this, is to promote Hashemite rule. To understand King Abdullah's approach to the Syrian refugee crisis, it is essential to first examine the challenges posed to Jordanian nationalism by the arrival of the Palestinian and Iraqi populations, and the King's methods for dealing with these crises.

This paper builds on the work chronicling the experiences of both the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees in Jordan, and applies it to an understanding of the unfolding Syrian refugee situation. Since it assumed responsibility for the West Bank territories at the Arab League conference of 1948, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been home to thousands of Palestinian

"Syria—Uprising and Civil War," *New York Times*, accessed February 13, 2013.

refugees.³ According to Rex Honey and Jim A. Wilson, Palestinian-Jordanian refugees are unique due to their presence in Jordan since its birth as a state, which resulted in their receiving citizenship.⁴ Honey and Wilson explain that the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from Palestine with the creation of the state of Israel led to both the creation of modern Jordan as well as to a short-term solution to the Palestinian refugee crisis.⁵ The denial of the right to return by Israel forced many Palestinians to remain in Jordan permanently despite their desire to return home.⁶ As a result, the Palestinian population in Jordan, despite having Jordanian citizenship, still identifies itself as Palestinian, and desires a return to their original homeland.⁷ The Palestinian case of quasi-permanent refugee status in Jordan will be contrasted with the case of the more recent, and, perhaps less-permanent, Iraqi and Syrian refugees. Historical sources and media accounts discussing the Palestinian experience in Jordan will be used to build an understanding of the issues this refugee group has posed and continue to pose for the King.

The Iraqi example is particularly helpful in analyzing the tactics the King used in dealing with refugees in Jordan. Sassoon provides the most

³ Oroub Al Abed, "Palestinian refugees in Jordan," *FMO*, (2004).

⁴ Rex Honey and Jim A. Wilson, "Planning in Jordan: Coping with Uncertainty," *GeoJournal* 37, no. 1 (September 1995): [134], accessed January 22, 2013, JSTOR.

⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁶ Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 165.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

comprehensive report on the Iraqi experience in Jordan, especially of the negative reactions towards this refugee group by both Palestinians and the native Jordanians, also referred to in this paper as Transjordanians. The difference between these two latter groups will be discussed later. Sassoon identifies differences between Palestinian and Iraqi refugee situations, namely the difficulty in accurately assessing the Iraqi population: "What makes the Iraqi refugee crisis unique is the fact that many of the refugees were urban, educated middle class who fled to large urban areas, making it extremely difficult for humanitarian agencies to provide the right services and to collate accurate information from an 'invisible' refugee population."⁸

In accounting for the lack of self-disclosure by many unregistered Iraqis, Sassoon offers a more accurate context in which to examine the facts and figures reported by Jordanian officials and NGOs.⁹ Sassoon also explains some similarities shared by the Iraqis and Palestinians, namely that the Palestinians' failure to return home has made Jordan wary of what might become of the Iraqis.¹⁰ His resourceful use of barometric tools, such as interviews of Amman's taxi drivers, are employed effectively to gauge political and cultural sentiment, and to explain the tensions existing between Iraqi refugees and their host country.¹¹ Since Sassoon released his book in 2009, the demographic data has changed, but updated

⁸ Joseph Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 5.

⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹ Ibid., 55.

figures regarding refugee registration, average household income, and the number of Iraqi refugees in Jordan are available from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).¹² Along with other scholarly sources and opinion pieces, Sassoon's cultural observations regarding Iraqi refugees in Jordan offers insight into the challenges that Iraqi refugees pose to King Abdullah's nationalist agenda.

Because the introduction of the Syrian refugee population to Jordan is so recent, a comprehensive analysis of the group has yet to emerge. As the Syrian refugee experience unfolds, UNHCR reports, op-ed pieces, and media accounts will provide a varied account of the emerging issues and problems that accompany yet another refugee group to Jordan.

The Monarchy and Refugees

Before examining the issue of refugee arrival in Jordan, it is important to understand the definition of a refugee used in this paper. The term "refugee" is often employed as a blanket-term in reference to all manner of displaced people, but this general application of the term distorts the scope of the discussion. According to the UNHCR, a refugee is a person "who has been forced to leave his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence."¹³

¹² "Jordan: 2013 UNHCR Country Operations Profile," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, last modified 2013, accessed March 19, 2013, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486566&submit=GO>.

¹³ "What is a Refugee?," UNHCR, last modified 2013, accessed March 19, 2013, <http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.4950731/k>.

This definition is useful in understanding the common usage of the term refugee. Moreover, Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees offers a legal definition:

[The term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.¹⁴

While the parties discussed in this paper do not universally accept this definition, to avoid the confusion that accompanies such a debate, the term refugee will be used here to refer to the groups of people who were, for whatever reason, compelled to leave their native country and settle in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Apart from providing a legal definition for the term refugee, the UN Convention of 1951 outlined both the rights and obligations of the host state as part of its agreement. The states that signed the 1951 agreement acknowledged a set of

A894/What_is_a_refugee.htm.

¹⁴ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 2198, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," April 22, 1954, <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

refugee rights that grant, among them, freedom of religion, movement, the right to work, and accessibility to travel documents. Most importantly, signatories agreed to non-refoulement, or the principle of not returning refugees to countries in which they fear persecution.¹⁵ Jordan has refused to sign the document and is not bound by its bylaws; this fact is especially important as it reflects the country's view of its refugee population.

Jordan characterizes any refugees residing in the country as "guests" of the King and thus subject to any treatment deemed suitable by the government.¹⁶ Adding to the terminological confusion, the majority of Iraqis in Jordan reject the label of "refugee," given its connotations of helplessness. Instead, these groups prefer the term "traveler."¹⁷ The debate over terminology dates back to the wave of Palestinian refugees taken in by Jordan in 1948, who were viewed as temporary citizens.¹⁸ However, the Palestinians were never able to return to their native land. The subsequent granting of full citizenship rights to this refugee group transformed the ethnic balance of Jordan. Consequently, it was the goal of King Abdullah's great grandfather to avoid another such occurrence by renouncing any legal obligation towards refugee groups.

Before discussing the history behind the ethnic and national tensions within Jordanian society, it is

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Mohamed Y. Owlán, "The Legal Framework of Forced Migration," *American University in Cairo Egypt*, October 23-25, 2007.

¹⁷ Sassoon, *The Iraq Refugees*, 154.

¹⁸ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 165.

necessary to note first the nature of the country's leadership. Trans-Jordan began as a British mandate, and then became the sovereign state of Jordan in April 1949, at which time King Abdullah I assumed the title of King of Jordan.¹⁹ After his assassination in 1951, Abdullah I's son Talal promulgated a constitution on January 1, 1952 that called for the creation of a parliament and government, with the King acting as a constitutional monarch.²⁰ The constitution of 1952 remains the legal basis of the country, and it speaks to the absolute authority of the King in Article 30: "The King is the Head of State and is immune to any liability and responsibility."²¹ It is important to note the level of control that belongs to the King within this type of system: he selects both the Prime Minister and the entire Senate. While the Senate is half the size of the House of Representatives, while elected, both houses need to have a two-thirds majority to over-rule the King's veto power. Moreover, the House of Representatives, while elected, has been skewed to reflect greater representation amongst the districts with tribal allegiance to the King's Hashemite clan, thus awarding the King almost total control over governmental and legislative affairs.²² The issues of political control will be addressed in greater depth later in this paper. The extent to which the King influences policy and government affairs under the Jordanian

¹⁹ Ibid., 153.

²⁰ Ibid., 178.

²¹ "The Constitution of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan January 1, 1952," The Library, accessed March 19, 2013, http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/constitution_jo.html.

²² Curtis Ryan, "Reform Retreats Amid Jordan's Political Storms," *Middle East Report*, June 10, 2005.

legal system parallels the tactics used to manage the refugee populations as well, and reflects the will of King Abdullah II.

The Palestinian Example

The problems that Palestinian refugees pose to Jordan are based in the history of the relationship between the refugee group and the state. As noted above, the Palestinians arrived in the West Bank in 1948 following the *Al-Nakba*, or catastrophe, in which the Israeli Army occupied villages across what was known as Palestine, forcing roughly 700,000 Palestinians to flee.²³ Once Trans-Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, the Palestinian refugees living in that region gained full citizenship as part of a deal that King Abdullah I made with Palestinian ministers in return for guardianship of East Jerusalem.²⁴ Following the 1967 War, Israel occupied the West Bank, forcing thousands of Palestinians into the East Bank and what is today modern Jordan. With the influx of roughly 400,000 more Palestinians into the East Bank, Palestinians constituted more than half of Jordan's population after 1967.²⁵

One result of the 1967 War was the emergence of the *fedayeen*, a group of Palestinian resistance fighters living in Jordan. The *fedayeen* fought the Israeli

²³ "United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine," United Nations on the Question of Palestine, accessed March 19, 2013, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/EE6BDACAD5A0229385257508007CFEA4>.

²⁴ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 165.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3, 224.

occupying forces from border towns, but were based in Irbid, a town in the north of Jordan.²⁶ While King Hussein, King Abdullah II's father, was pressed by the Arab countries to militarily back the Palestinian resistance fighters, he feared that his involvement might provoke the Israeli Army to invade his country. Several battles took place between the *fedayeen* and the Israeli Army, most notably the Battle of Karameh, in which Israeli forces crossed into Jordan and clashed with Jordanian and *fedayeen* troops. By mid-1970, King Hussein feared he had lost control of his country as the *fedayeen* began operating as "a state within a state." In an effort to reaffirm control of his country, King Hussein ordered an all-out assault on the *fedayeen* in the country. King Hussein and the Jordanian Armed Forces eventually won the civil war known as "Black September," but the bloody events left a deep cultural resentment between "Transjordanians," or native Jordanians, and Palestinian-Jordanians.²⁷ Salibi explains that events like Black September prove that the Palestinians' continued devotion, both perceived and real, to their native Palestine has often put them at odds with the nationalist-minded monarchy and Bedouin tribes that make up the population of indigenous Jordanians.²⁸

The events of Black September highlighted the emergence of two major positions taken by King Hussein. The first was the King's political and military reliance on the rural Bedouin tribes that both

²⁶ Ibid., 186.

²⁷ Ibid., 237.

²⁸ Mudar Zahran, "Jordan Is Palestine," *Middle East Quarterly*, (Winter 2012): 3-12.

supported and fought for his regime against the Palestinian resistance. The second was the enduring skepticism with which the King viewed Palestinians, a view that manifests itself in his political marginalization of the group.

Black September and the policy shifts it produced under King Hussein were passed to King Abdullah II when he inherited the throne in 1999, and are evident in the latter's dealings with the Palestinian population since then. In October 2000, on the heels of the second *Intifada*—the collective uprising of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation—protests broke out in Amman and other parts of Jordan in support of the Palestinian cause. King Abdullah responded by suspending Parliament on June 13, 2001, ahead of the scheduled elections, and implementing 125 “temporary” laws aimed at quelling political dissent.²⁹ One such law made it illegal to criticize “friendly nations,” a law that, as a result of Jordan’s 1994 treaty with Israel, clearly targeted the groups protesting the Jordanian government’s lack of support for the second *Intifada*.³⁰ As his late father had done, King Abdullah treated the largely Palestinian protestors with considerable hostility, and moved quickly to quash any would-be movements that might run counter to Jordanian nationalist interests.

To this day tensions remain high, as Palestinians have increasingly come to resent the measures taken by the King to diminish their impact on Jordanian

²⁹ Jillian Schwedler, “More than a Mob: The Dynamic of Political Demonstrations in Jordan,” *Middle East Research and Information Project* 226 (2003): 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

affairs. Mudar Zahran characterizes the Palestinian population in Jordan as a “ticking bomb” that is resentful of its lack of representation in Parliament despite representing a majority of the population.³¹ In his article on Jordanian political reform, Greenwood argues that electoral laws passed by the crown serve to engender support amongst its most important constituent: “[The] House of Hashim has sought to reward its Transjordanian supporters with public jobs and subsidies [...] these efforts [have] given Transjordanians a greater voice in local and national politics [...] and] have also enabled East Bank tribes and clans to secure more public jobs, spending, and services [...]”³²

The Palestinian refugee population protested their political marginalization under King Hussein even after they gained some representation in Parliament under laws passed by the previous regime. King Abdullah, during the period when he suspended Parliament in 2001, passed an electoral law that, “like the old law, [...] continues to rely on the principle of ‘one person, one vote’ and also over-represents the rural areas heavily populated by Transjordanians.”³³ By granting more representatives to a larger number of rural districts, King Abdullah effectively nullified any Palestinian representation in Parliament. Recent evidence of King Abdullah’s commitment to the

³¹ Mudar Zahran, “Jordan is Palestine,” *The Middle East Quarterly* 19 (Winter 2012): accessed March 19, 2013, <http://www.meforum.org/3121/jordan-is-palestinian>.

³² Scott Greenwood, “Jordan’s ‘New Bargain:’ The Political Economy of Regime Security,” *Middle East Journal* 57 (Spring 2003): 252-259, accessed March 19, 2013, JSTOR.

³³ *Ibid.*, 264.

maintenance of a controlled Palestinian population is that he instructed officials to reject Palestinian refugees at the border who were fleeing the Syrian conflict so as to not add to the current imbalance of Palestinian and Transjordanians in the country, a move that could tip the balance of power.³⁴

In addition to the political tensions, ethnic conflict between Palestinian and Transjordanian groups have been sources of concern for the King. King Abdullah's wife, Queen Rania, is a Palestinian and has recently been the target of insults by Bedouin groups who protest her inclusion in the royal family.³⁵ Largely driven by the lingering effects of Black September, many Transjordanians see her position of authority as a justification of their fears that Palestinians are gaining too much power in the Kingdom.

Serving as an example for the Transjordanian skepticism of Jordan's Palestinian population are the King's exclusionary edicts regarding Palestinian involvement in the Jordanian government, army, and *Mukhabarat*. The government is comprised primarily of Transjordanians, who, for both tribal-lineage and self-serving reasons, are fiercely loyal to the crown. The Transjordanian population, which is largely rural and Bedouin, resents Palestinians for their devotion to the

³⁴ Ruth Eglash, "Jordan rejecting Palestinian refugees from Syria," *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), July 4, 2012, accessed March 19, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=276261>.

³⁵ Ian Black, "Queen Rania Still in Shadows as Jordan Plays Waiting Game," *The Guardian* (Amman, Jordan), May 11, 2012, accessed March 19, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/11/queen-rania-jordan-waiting-game>.

retrieval of their lost state, but also for their dominant position in the private business sector. Laszlo Csicsmann characterizes the King's apprehensions towards the Palestinian population:

The private sector of the Jordanian economy is dominated by Palestinians [...]. The main dilemma for the Hashemite dynasty is to decide whether the Palestinians will support the *status quo*, *vis-à-vis* the regime or will challenge the legitimacy of the current system by using their economic assets.³⁶

The King's distrust of the economically viable Palestinian population, coupled with the Transjordanian need for economic support, has created a symbiotic relationship with the Transjordanian population in which the King receives legitimacy and support in return for granting native Jordanians exclusive privilege to government jobs and political posts. A key element in this relationship is the Jordanian Army, which is completely Transjordanian, since the army's total allegiance to the King is essential to the security of his regime.³⁷ The practice of maintaining a Bedouin army with no Palestinian membership reflects the lingering trepidation left from the events of Black September. However, apart from providing insurance against any would-be Palestinian military coup, the exclusion of Palestinians from the

³⁶ Laszlo Csicsmann, "Responsible Freedom and National Security," *Society and Economy* 29, no. 1 (April 2007): 108, accessed March 20, 2013, JSTOR.

³⁷ Zahran, "Jordan Is Palestine."

army also serves to economically marginalize the refugee population, as some of the country's highest salaries and greatest benefits are reserved for members of the army.³⁸

The Jordanian *Mukhabarat* represent another resource that is invaluable to the King in controlling dissidents in his kingdom. Like the army, the agency's membership is exclusively Transjordanian. The *Mukhabarat* is one of the largest intelligence programs in the world in relation to its country's total population.³⁹ Notoriously brutal, the *Mukhabarat* enforce King Abdullah's rule at the street level by using an intricate and extensive network of informants; it also collaborates with foreign intelligence agencies to squelch any subversive movements.⁴⁰ The influence of the *Mukhabarat* must not be overlooked: besides providing intelligence, the agency plays a key role in elections and public discourse. Mahmoud A. al-Kharabesheh, a former director of the *Mukhabarat*, explains: "Some Parliament members allow the mukhabarat [sic] to intervene in how they vote because they depend on them for help in getting re-elected."⁴¹ The former

³⁸ "Assessment for Palestinians in Jordan," Minorities at Risk, last modified December 31, 2006, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=66302>.

³⁹ Zahran, "Jordan Is Palestine."

⁴⁰ Neil MacFarquhar, "Heavy Hand of Secret Police Impeding Reform in Arab World," *New York Times* (Amman, Jordan), November 14, 2005, accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/14/international/middleeast/14jordan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

⁴¹ Ibid.

director also notes that the agency is involved in “90 percent” of the political affairs of the country. Furthermore, the *Mukhabarat* functions to deter discourse that is critical of the King by imprisoning anyone who makes comments deemed unacceptable to the crown.⁴² The hard line that the *Mukhabarat* take on criticism of the crown or national policies has been enforced thoroughly, as seen in the many instances of Jordanians being whisked away for questioning regarding remarks they have made or areas they have visited.⁴³

With each challenge that the Palestinian refugees have posed to Jordanian nationalism and the authority of the Hashemite crown, King Abdullah, like his late father, has relied on his Transjordanian constituency's roles in the government, army, and *Mukhabarat* to promote allegiance to Jordan, and simultaneously his legitimacy as king.

The Iraqi Example

On the heels of the 2003 United States invasion of Iraq, thousands of Iraqis flooded into Jordan, adding to the complexities of Jordanian society. Though he supported the US “war on terror” in Afghanistan, King Abdullah faced a difficult diplomatic circumstance posed by a US war with Iraq. Torn between his strong dependence on US aid to his country and a large domestic sympathy for Iraq, King Abdullah was once

⁴² "A Sad Day for Freedom of Expression," *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Cairo, Egypt), May 23, 2002, 587th edition, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/587/re7.htm>.

⁴³ MacFarquhar, "Heavy Hand of Secret."

again challenged to maintain control of his country amidst the public's disapproval of his diplomatic stances on regional issues. With the US promising an additional \$150 million on top of the annual \$460 million military and economic aid it already gave to Jordan, in return for support of its invasion of Iraq, King Abdullah pledged his cooperation, and began a campaign to combat public disapproval by emphasizing a focus on domestic issues to draw attention away from his foreign policy.⁴⁴

Like the rest of the world, King Abdullah did not anticipate the fallout of the US invasion of Iraq, particularly the impact caused to Jordan by the mass of refugees fleeing from the war zone. The number of Iraqis and their standard of living are areas of great debate due to the glaring lack of self-disclosure by many Iraqi refugees in Jordan.⁴⁵ Figures have been provided by government-contracted research institutions and international humanitarian agencies, although these figures become less helpful once it is recognized that the sample pool, which will be discussed below, is largely unrepresentative of Jordan's Iraqi refugee population as a whole.

To fully grasp the Iraqi refugee situation in Jordan one must make the distinction between two waves of Iraqi refugees. Despite a number of political dissenters and exiled persons fleeing to Jordan prior to the US invasion, the first wave, which arrived shortly after the

⁴⁴ Anthony Shadid, "Jordan to Allow Limited Stationing of US Troops," *Washington Post* (Amman, Jordan), January 30, 2003, A10. And Jamal Halaby, "Diplomats: Jordan to OK Airspace Use," *Washington Post* (Amman, Jordan), January 30, 2003.

⁴⁵ Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugee*, 37.

2003 invasion, was comprised mostly of upper-class businessmen and government officials who were labeled as “Mercedes refugees” by the diplomatic community, and were able to make a comfortable living for themselves in Jordanian cities.⁴⁶ A second larger wave came in 2005 and was made up of poorer Iraqis fleeing the sectarian violence.⁴⁷

The most comprehensive survey of Iraqi refugees in Jordan was published in 2007 by Fafo, a Norwegian research company, and contains some inconsistencies that reflect a lack of information regarding the disadvantaged majority of Iraqi refugees in Jordan. Sassoon explains the problematic nature of the Fafo figures: “Fafo found that among those Iraqis surveyed, 56 percent had valid permits. If it was a representative sample, this would translate into at least 250,000 Iraqis having legal status in Jordan, and by the time of Fafo’s survey that was definitely not the case.”⁴⁸ Sassoon goes on to explain that the sample group targeted in the survey favors those “less vulnerable and with the right legal status,” as refugees without permits and little to gain from answering survey questions from agencies with no power to help them out. Updated figures provided by UNHCR are available, but it is important to recognize the sample group when

⁴⁶ Congressional Research Service, *Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Deepening Humanitarian Crisis?*, Doc. No. 7-5700, at 7 (2009).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Iraqis in Jordan Their Number and Characteristics* (Amman, Jordan: FAFO, 2007), accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/Analasis_Reports/Iraqis%20in%20Jordan/Iraqis%20in%20Jordan.pdf and Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugee*, 37.

interpreting any figures. According to the UNHCR and Jordanian government figures as of January 2012, 450,500 Iraqi refugees reside in Jordan, and 29,000 of those are assisted by the NHCR.⁴⁹

The arrival of Iraqis has led to a number of tensions within the Hashemite Kingdom. The first wave of rich Iraqis began to entrench themselves in the Jordanian economy by buying homes, thus causing housing prices to rise.⁵⁰ The second wave of very poor Iraqis is regarded as having increased the number of “black market jobs” that have undercut many Jordanians’ wages.⁵¹ Regardless of their culpability for the rise in inflation, which Sassoon discusses as possibly misplaced blame, the Iraqi refugees have been singled out in the press as the cause for the sagging Jordanian economy.⁵²

Additionally, many Jordanians feared that the sectarian violence plaguing Iraq would follow the Iraqi refugees into Jordan. Iraq hosts three clashing groups: Shia, Sunni, and Kurds. The Shia and Sunnis are two Islamic sects that have fought with each other for hundreds of years over ideological differences regarding the Islamic faith. Jordan historically had

⁴⁹ "Jordan: 2013 UNHCR Country," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

⁵⁰ Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugee*, 49.

⁵¹ "IRAQ-JORDAN: Iraqis Cause Black Market for Jobs," IRIN, last modified March 28, 2007, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/71004/IRAQ-JORDAN-Iraqis-cause-black-market-for-jobs>.

⁵² Ibid. and Ibrahim Saif and David M. DeBartolo, *The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan* (Amman, Jordan: University of Jordan Center for Strategic Studies, 2007), accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.carim.org/public/polsoc texts/PS2JOR028_EN.pdf.

very few Shias (about 15.6 percent of the Muslim population), and feared that an influx of them into the country would cause problems with its Sunni majority.⁵³ Seen as a growing threat to his control, King Abdullah warned that the arrival of Shias in Jordan could be part of a larger subversive movement by Iran to gain control in the region.⁵⁴ The *Mukahbarat* eventually began targeting Iraqi Shias for expulsion from the Kingdom.⁵⁵ Chatelard explains that the Jordanian government's encouragement of the public's skepticism of Iraqi Shias affected the entire Iraqi refugee population and helped them become labeled as *guhraba* (strangers).⁵⁶ The branding of the Iraqis as the "other" helped to isolate and so frustrate any political aspirations the refugee group might have.

Another source of animosity felt towards the Iraqi refugees stems from the precedent set by the Palestinian refugee group. Palestinians were universally welcomed into Jordan as they were viewed

⁵³ *Iraqis in Jordan Their*, 6.

⁵⁴ Peter Baker and Robin Wright, "Iraq, Jordan See Threat To Election From Iran," *Washington Post*, December 8, 2004, A01, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43980-2004Dec7.html>.

⁵⁵ *World Refugee Survey 2007* (n.p.: US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007), [Page #], accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.uscerefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_5_Refugee_Warehousing/5_5_4_Archived_World_Refugee_Surveys/5_5_4_5_World_Refugee_Survey_2007/5_5_4_5_4_Country_Updates/5_5_4_5_4_2_Printable_Versions/Iran_Namibia.pdf.

⁵⁶ Geraldine Chatelard, *Iraqi Forced Migrants in Jordan: Conditions, Religious Networks, and the Smuggling Process* (Florence, Italy: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2002), 14-15, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.aina.org/articles/chatelard.pdf>.

as victims of the unprovoked aggression of Israel; but the immovability of the Palestinian refugee population has made Jordanians wary of what might happen with the Iraqi situation.⁵⁷ This fear was confirmed by a UNHCR report in 2009 that revealed that a shocking 92 percent of Iraqi refugees in Jordan have no intention of returning to Iraq.⁵⁸ These figures were especially worrisome given that a large portion of the survey pool, 630 of the 1118 interviewed, may not have been registered with the UNHCR. Given the anonymous nature of the survey, these findings are particularly important given their insight on previously underreported segments of the Iraqi population in Jordan. The report goes on to list the reasons offered by participants for not wanting to return to Iraq. However, most important is the reality that the Iraqi refugee population continues, with each passing year, to become a more permanent aspect of Jordanian society.

King Abdullah's treatment of Iraqi refugees began to resemble the treatment, decades earlier, of the Palestinian population that experienced government-approved alienation, little political involvement, heavy censorship by the *Mukabarat*, and an obscuring of their national heritage. King Abdullah, having learned from both his father's and his own experience with the Palestinians, began to implement policies to manage the arriving Iraqi refugees. By publicly blaming Iraqis for economic and religious subversion, King Abdullah's

⁵⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁸ *Summary: Intention to Return to Iraq Inquiries of 2008 & 2009* (Amman, Jordan: UNHCR, 2009), 1, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.unhcr.org/4acb0e429.html>.

regime tried to mute any sympathy for Iraqi refugees by encouraging–discrimination against Iraqis across economic, racial, and religious grounds.

It is difficult to reconcile Jordan's harsh treatment of its refugee populations with its history of willingness to host displaced peoples. One explanation can be found in the Fafo report. Earlier, the Fafo report was shown to reflect embellished figures regarding the Iraqi refugees in Jordan, but the nature of the report is more problematic because the Jordanian government contracted Fafo and then delayed publication of its findings for six months to negotiate the final figures.⁵⁹ One diplomat indicated that the delay was to adjust the figures with the ultimate goal being to secure greater aid for Jordan.⁶⁰ The financial incentive offered to countries that host refugee populations explains King Abdullah's willingness to accept refugees despite the challenges they present to his Kingdom's stability.

King Abdullah has long relied on Jordan's non-signatory status of the 1951 UN Convention as a means to leverage his power over arriving refugees. Unlike the Palestinian refugees who, under the constitution, at least, are afforded rights of citizenship and political participation, the post-2003 Iraqi refugees enjoy no such benefits due to their lack of citizenship. The likelihood of citizenship being granted to most Iraqis remains fleeting, as the Jordanian government

⁵⁹ Patricia Weiss Fagen, *Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan* (n.p.: Institute for the Study of International Migration Georgetown University, 2009), 7-8, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/qatar/cirs/PatriciaFagenCIRSOccasionalPaper2009.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees*, 38.

continues to deny them rights granted to refugees under the 1951 UN Convention, and characterizes the group as “illegal immigrants.”⁶¹

Having effectively neutralized Iraqi political activity through the denial of citizenship or refugee rights, King Abdullah has recognized the possibility of an Iraqi backlash in the form of protest or violence. As was his solution to the Palestinian problem, King Abdullah has turned to his loyal *Mukhabarat* to monitor the Iraqis and quell any possible Iraqi insurgency. One product of this policy is to deny Iraqis the ability to congregate in mass gatherings, with an exception being made for funerals.⁶² A source of great consternation for many middle class educated Iraqis who arrived in 2005 is the low-level positions they are forced to take despite their professional experience. Sassoon explains that many engineers and doctors who were top specialists in their fields in Iraq are being forced to work below their qualifications and for meager pay.⁶³ The preferential treatment of Jordanians over many highly qualified Iraqis is in line with the King’s assurance to his Transjordanian constituents of financial reward in return for their political support.

Amidst growing turmoil over the 2000 Intifada, the 2001 suspension of Parliament, and the impending US invasion of Iraq, King Abdullah launched the *al-Urdun Awwalan*, or “Jordan First,” campaign. With turmoil in the region at an all-time high, King Abdullah embarked on a campaign to consolidate support for Jordan, and his crown, by emphasizing Jordan’s own

⁶¹ Ibid., 52.

⁶² Ibid., 53.

⁶³ Ibid., 47.

domestic problems over those of the Middle East region. Greenwood explains that the purpose of the Jordan First campaign was to quiet “domestic challenges generated by regional political developments.”⁶⁴ The Jordan First constitution on the Jordanian Royal website makes it clear that allegiance to Jordan must come before religious, ethnic, and other differences.⁶⁵ King Abdullah’s maneuvering can be best understood in terms of his highest priority, which is to preserve his control over the Kingdom. The purpose of the Jordan First campaign was to shift Jordanian consciousness away from the King’s unpopular position regarding Israel and the US, so that he could continue to secure vital aid for domestic socio-economic issues that appealed to the underrepresented and marginalized groups of Jordan. The economic project championed by Jordan First is the Socio-Economic Transformation Plan (SETP). In return for King Abdullah’s pledge of support, and to ensure the success of his domestic campaign, the US pledged a total of \$395.5 million in the first two years of SETP.⁶⁶ Though Greenwood notes that Jordan First failed to truly deliver improvement to the Iraqis or Palestinians, “the vast majority of this new spending was to take place in rural areas where most of the regime’s Transjordanian political base resides.”⁶⁷ In

⁶⁴ Greenwood, “Jordan’s ‘New Bargain:’ The Political,” 265.

⁶⁵ Jordan Armed Forces, last modified 2010, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://jaf.mil.jo/Ar/History.aspx?CategoryID=7>.

⁶⁶ “JORDAN: \$145.5 MILLION OF US GRANT EXTENDED TO SETP,” *Jordan Times* (Amman, Jordan), January 27, 2003, [Page #], accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-96897273.html>.

⁶⁷ Greenwood, “Jordan’s ‘New Bargain:’ The Political,” 266.

2005 a probe into the expenditures of SETP launched a controversy, the result of which the King ultimately ordered the program closed so as to avoid further unrest.⁶⁸ Despite the major questions surrounding its central financial policy, the Jordan First campaign remains a central message of King Abdullah's regime, as he continues to stress devotion to his throne above all else.

Implications for Syrian Refugees

Having discussed King Abdullah's past responses to the challenges posed by the Palestinian and Iraqi refugee populations, the arrival of a third refugee group, namely the Syrians, provides a new, yet familiar, set of problems for the King's regime. The UNHCR reports as of March 13, 2013 state the Syrian population in Jordan as 289,268.⁶⁹ Additionally, according to Jordanian officials, the country spent \$600 million in 2012 supporting Syrian refugees.⁷⁰ Jordan, which is already battling a budget deficit,

⁶⁸ Sufyan Alissa, *Rethinking Economic Reform in Jordan: Confronting Socioeconomic Realities*, report no. 7 (Washington DC, United States: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2007), 14, accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec4_alissa_jordan_final.pdf.

⁶⁹ "Syrian Regional Refugee Response," UNHCR, last modified 2013, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

⁷⁰ "Jordan Reels Over Syrian Refugee Crisis," Al-Jazeera Middle East, last modified January 25, 2013, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/01/201312414346170182.html>.

claims that the refugee influx causes an enormous strain on the country's already meager water, food, and healthcare supplies.⁷¹ Despite its massive size, the Syrian refugees are relatively new to Jordan, and comprehensive studies examining this group's impact on Jordan have yet to be completed. However, as one might imagine, Jordan can expect the Syrian element to pose ethnic, nationalist, and economic challenges much like its Palestinian and Iraqi predecessors.

The arrival of the Syrian masses has prompted King Abdullah to once again rely on his tribal power base, parliamentary control, and the *Mukhabarat*. Yet in dealing with the Syrians, King Abdullah has begun to demonstrate a clear departure from his treatment of previous refugee groups in Jordan. Through Parliament's past legislation of refugee law, along with the usual assistance of the Transjordanian citizenry and the *Mukhabarat*, King Abdullah has isolated the majority of the Syrian refugee population in refugee camps, preventing any interaction that could foment social unrest in the Kingdom. Pelham notes the shift in policy towards the Syrian arrivals: "Initially Jordan followed Lebanon, in allowing refugees to mingle freely with the local population. But as the influx intensified, Jordan adopted Turkey's approach of erecting vast internment camps [...]."⁷² The largest of the Syrian

⁷¹ Ahmad Khatib, "Syrian Refugees Taxing Jordan's Skimpy Water Supply," Mother Nature Network, last modified June 1, 2012, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/syrian-refugees-taxing-jordans-skimpy-water-supply>.

⁷² Nicolas Pelham, "Jordan's Syria Problem," The New York Review of Books, last modified January 10, 2013, accessed March 20, 2013,

refugee camps in Jordan is Zaatri, with a population of 80,000 as of February 20, 2013.⁷³ King Abdullah recognized that the inherent pitfall of both the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees was that, once they moved into cities, it was hard to move them out. Therefore, the King modified his refugee approach to preemptively deny urbanization, and isolate the Syrian population, before they had the opportunity to insert themselves into Jordanian society. King Abdullah has publicly stated that the reason for Syrian internment is to quarantine any arriving Islamists—a group forming the core of the Syrian resistance movement—and to prevent the spread of their ideology to Jordan.⁷⁴ With Islamist movements winning democratic elections throughout the Middle East, including Egypt and Tunisia, King Abdullah is justified in viewing the group as a legitimate threat to his regime.

Playing a large role in the containment of the Syrians are the Transjordanian “tribal forces” which are charged with establishing a “buffer zone” along Jordan’s border with southern Syria, their position meant to “block the passage of Islamist fighters into

<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2013/jan/10/jordans-syria-problem/>.

⁷³ Suleiman Al-Khalidi, “Syrian Refugees Pour South to Jordan in Nightly Exodus,” Reuters, last modified February 20, 2013, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/20/us-syria-crisis-border-idUSBRE91J0WU20130220>.

⁷⁴ Pelham, “Jordan’s Syria Problem,” *The New York Review of Books*. And for more on the Islamist movement see Line Khatib, “Syria’s Islamic Movement and the Current Uprising: Political Acquiescence, Quietism, and Dissent,” *Jadaliyya*, February 21, 2012.

the kingdom.”⁷⁵ Additionally, King Abdullah has relied on the *Mukhbarat* to augment his containment policy towards the Syrian refugees. Syrians that managed to avoid internment in the refugee camps, or were previously in Jordan, live in constant fear of being rounded-up by the *Mukhbarat*. One woman even expressed a fear of taking her children to the park out of concern that the *Mukhbarat* might arrest her and send her to a camp.⁷⁶

The Syrian example demonstrates the essence of King Abdullah’s refugee policy: the use of parliamentary control, the tribal power base, and the *Mukhbarat* to contain and control refugee populations, and to assure continued monarchial rule, while simultaneously allowing Jordan to collect international aid for refugee relief. With Jordan already receiving aid from the West and from the Arab Gulf States for refugee support, President Obama’s FY2013 request for an additional \$663.7 million demonstrates the magnitude of such financial assistance.⁷⁷

The practice of playing host to refugee populations has proven profitable for King Abdullah’s regime. The flow of cash into Jordan, intended to allay the economic and infrastructural impact of the refugees, has most likely been mismanaged along with much of the government funds in Jordan. In 2010, the Finance Minister along with a number of top officials were relieved of their offices amidst an investigation into

⁷⁵ Pelham, "Jordan’s Syria Problem," The New York Review of Books.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Congressional Research Service, Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations, Doc. No. 7-5700, at 19 (2012). Accessed March 20, 2013. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33546.pdf>.

mismanaged funds that involved a petroleum official, Ahmed al-Rifa'i, who was related to then-Prime Minister Samir Rifa'i.⁷⁸ The officials were characterized as, "[...] well-connected people, many from Transjordanian rather than Palestinian origin."⁷⁹ Cases of corruption amongst top Transjordanian government officials, siphoning funds, much of which were intended for Palestinian and Iraqi refugee populations, have only worsened inter-cultural Jordanian relations. Furthermore, the case of Toujan Al-Faisal demonstrates King Abdullah's unwillingness to permit whistleblowers, and indicates his ambivalence, or even participation in corruption.⁸⁰

It is reasonable to infer, given both the corruption of King Abdullah II's regime, and the massive amount of refugee relief aid managed by the Jordanian government, that the acceptance of refugee populations is profitable to the King. The relief aid is essential to economically pacify his Transjordanian constituents. A simplified description of King Abdullah II's refugee approach can be characterized as follows: with the corrupt channeling of international relief aid providing incentive for the acceptance of refugee populations, the King's concern for the challenges and

⁷⁸ Marc Lynch, "Going after Jordan's Al Capone?," *Foreign Policy*, March 10, 2012, accessed March 20, 2013, http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/10/a_rare_crackdown_on_corruption_in_jordan.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ "A Sad Day for Freedom of Expression," *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Cairo, Egypt), May 23, 2002, 587th edition, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/587/re7.htm>.

tensions provided by each refugee group has led him to develop an approach which he has, over time, adapted in order to mitigate the impacts that refugee groups have on the kingdom. The Syrians, as Jordan's newest refugee group, have elicited a newly adapted response from King Abdullah resulting in their rigid segregation from Jordanian society. However, the King's strategy of reliance on his tribal power base, parliamentary control, and the *Mukhabarat* remain unchanged in his struggle to maintain his throne.

Kevin Laymoun gravitated towards the discipline of History because of his interests in the Middle East region. Having a father from the region, Kevin was motivated to learn more about the cultural context of the people and the land. His fascination with his area of study led him to travel abroad to Amman, Jordan. During his semester in Jordan, Kevin began to identify the political structures that would eventually form the basis of his thesis. Kevin hopes to attend law school in the coming years, but one day hopes to return to Jordan to observe its ever-contentious political landscape.