

# *Past Tense*

## *Graduate Review of History*



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2019

AUTHORS WHO PUBLISH WITH PAST TENSE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

*Authors retain copyright and grant the journal right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License that allows others to share the work with an acknowledgement of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal.*

*Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication in this journal.*

*Authors are permitted and encouraged to share their work online (e.g., in institutional repositories or on their own website) prior to and during the submission process, as it can lead to productive exchanges, as well as earlier and greater citation of published work.*

*Past Tense Graduate Review of History* is published online by the Graduate History Society at the University of Toronto at [www.pasttensejournal.com](http://www.pasttensejournal.com).

Copyright © 2019 by the Authors

All rights reserved

First Published April 2019

Typeface Herr Von Muellerhoff and Minion Pro

Cover design by Katie Davis

Layout design by Eriks Bredovskis



# *Past Tense*

*Graduate Review of History*



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1  
SPRING 2019

# Editorial Board

## EDITORS

Hannah Roth Cooley  
Spirit Waite

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Siddharth Sridhar  
Cal Stewart

## LAYOUT EDITOR

Cathleen Clark

## SPECIAL THANKS

Katie Davis, Former Editor

The Editorial Board would like to thank the following  
**FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS** to the production of this issue of  
*Past Tense Graduate Review of History*:

Camila Collins Araiza  
Nikola Asambelevski  
Thomas Blampied  
Emily Brown  
Shawna Collins  
Hannah Lloyd

Kimberly Main  
Kari North  
Éric Pecile  
Nastasha Sartore  
Erica Toffoli

# Table of Contents

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS.....	vi
The Jim Crow North: Segregation and Agency in New Jersey Beaches and Swimming Pools.....	8
JASON ROMISHER	
<i>Winner of the 14th Annual Graduate History Symposium Best Paper Prize, University of Toronto, 2018</i>	
“Я Тоже:” The Rape of Katerina Stepanova and John Paul Jones’ Russian Legacy .....	36
JACOB BELL	
Mutuality: Nicaragua and the Deportation of German Nationals During World War II.....	57
VLADIMIR PENALOZA	
REVIEW OF Roger Griffin, <i>Fascism: An Introduction to Comparative Fascist Studies</i> .....	77
BENSON CHEUNG	

# Dear Readers,

We are excited to share the seventh volume of *Past Tense Graduate Review of History*. This year we welcomed a new editor and continued to work to improve the publication and production process. We are glad to share an issue this year whose submissions speak to issues that are present in the minds of contemporary readers.

Volume 7 features three articles that offer innovative, thought-provoking discussions of the past. Jason Romisher's award-winning article details the ways that segregation was enacted in New Jersey. Focusing on swimming pools and beaches, Romisher explores the ways that white citizens sought to perpetuate segregation through informal practices, and how African Americans responded to Jim Crow practices through protest and acts of agency.

Jacob Bell's article brings attention to an eighteenth-century sexual assault case, examining the international significance of this case at the time. Bell explores questions of gender and sexual violence in the past, as well as demonstrating how these historical experiences can help us understand in current discussions of consent and sexualized violence.

Vladimir Penaloza's article examines the role of Latin America in the Second World War, encouraging readers to reconsider conventional narratives about Nicaraguan participation in international wartime diplomacy. Penazola explores the relationship between Nicaraguan and American governments in this period, showing that Nicaragua's president actively engaged in American internment efforts to improve his own political and social position.

Drawing from diverse time periods and geographies, the articles in this issue all speak to the way activity and passivity have been understood in specific historical contexts. All three articles offer examples of individuals, groups, and governments demonstrating agency, and ask us to re-think commonly held beliefs about authority, control, resistance, and action in the past in light of more nuanced understandings about reciprocal but unequal power relationships. These articles offer insightful looks at issues that continue to hold significance, and prove especially timely in the current global political climate.

# From the Editors

The themes of these articles are complimented by Benson Cheung's timely book review, which speaks to how considerations of facism have changed since the mid-twentieth century.

In producing this issue, we are greatly indebted to the work of former Editor Katie Davis. Her work on *Past Tense*, and continued assistance with the production process, have been invaluable to ensuring the high-quality production of the journal. We are excited to announce Hannah Cooley as the new Co-Editor, and are looking forward to her continued involvement with the journal. We would also like to thank Associate Editors Siddharth Sridhar and Cal Stewart, as well as Layout Editor Cathleen Clark. The editorial team would also like to thank all the volunteer peer reviewers, faculty reviewers, proofreaders, and copy editors from both the University of Toronto and abroad for their contributions. Without their work, we could not produce *Past Tense*.

We hope that the research featured in this issue encourages consideration of history's pertinence in contextualizing the issues that remain at the forefront of modern debates. Thank you for supporting *Past Tense Graduate Review of History* and the engaged scholarship of all of this issue's contributors.

Sincerely,



Hannah Roth Cooley



Spirit Waite

Editors, *Past Tense Graduate Review of History*  
Toronto, Canada

# Research Article

*Winner of the 14th Annual Graduate History Symposium  
Best Paper Prize, University of Toronto, 2018*

## The Jim Crow North: Segregation and Agency in New Jersey Beaches and Swimming Pools

Jason Romisher  
*Simon Fraser University*

---

A common misconception is that Jim Crow practices in the United States were primarily a southern phenomenon. One theme that has emerged in recent scholarship is that public facilities were operated on an exclusionary basis in many northern areas until concerted campaigns in the mid-twentieth century finally gained legal equality for African Americans. New Jersey is a particularly interesting northern state to examine Jim Crow practices because of the complex history of race-relations in the state that have made it one of the most segregated places in modern America. A look at access to swimming facilities in New Jersey brings this reality into focus. For example, African Americans in Atlantic City were confined to one unmaintained section of the beach dubbed 'Chicken Bone Beach' and some lakes also had racially separate beach areas. Despite the achievement in 1949 of a constitutional amendment banning discrimination in New Jersey's public spaces, African Americans continued to be effectively barred by whites from some activities through informal practices. One strategy that whites used to continue segregationist practices was the creation of private swimming clubs, which also fostered class-based discrimination. This paper makes extensive use of primary source accounts and unpublished oral interviews to explore the acts of agency demonstrated by both individual whites and African Americans over the contentious spaces of beaches and swimming pools.



## Introduction

ON A BEAUTIFUL NEW JERSEY summer day in the mid-1960s, an African American family drove to the resort community of Egg Harbor for a day at the beach. The family parked their car at the lake's parking lot and proceeded to carry their belongings to the other side of the lake, well past the main beach area that was exclusively designated for whites.<sup>1</sup> This was not an isolated example as segregation in pools and beaches throughout the state was commonplace. The United States was and continues to be a nation divided along racial lines. Following Reconstruction (1865-1876), white Americans systematically re-imposed a system of apartheid upon African Americans that became known as Jim Crow. Much of the United States was effectively a separated society where African Americans were socially divided from whites in schools, businesses, public accommodations, and in public transportation. Jim Crow practices became entrenched in American society with the landmark 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that upheld segregation in public facilities provided that said facilities were offered on a separate but equal basis. A common misconception is that Jim Crow practices were primarily a southern phenomenon. The South was the focal point of much of the civil rights struggle and saw the most pervasive Jim Crow regimes. However, the North and West also experienced Jim Crow practices well into the twentieth century. Recent scholarship has revealed that public facilities were operated on an

exclusionary basis in many northern areas until concerted campaigns finally gained legal equality for African Americans. Whites then developed strategies to maintain the colour line in some social spaces. New Jersey is a particularly interesting place to examine Jim Crow practices because of the complex history of race-relations in the state. New Jersey's 566 independent municipalities have tremendous political power and developed a political culture that created one of the most racially segregated states in America.<sup>2</sup> A look at access to swimming facilities in New Jersey brings this reality into focus. This paper reviews New Jersey's history of race-relations, the state laws concerning civil rights, and Jim Crow practices in the state. I use oral history interviews, memoirs, newspaper articles, and government documents to argue that a focus on one issue, swimming facilities, reveals that both whites and African Americans engaged in legal and extralegal acts of agency to either maintain or dismantle New Jersey's version of Jim Crow.

## Historiography

THERE HAS BEEN A RECENT EFFORT by historians to combat the myth of southern exceptionalism regarding Jim Crow practices and shift the attention of the civil rights narrative north. Most of this work has been done in major cities and often focusses on the mid-1960s ideological turn to black power.<sup>3</sup> There have been some key works that explore the course of the black freedom struggle in New Jersey.<sup>4</sup> Lizabeth Cohen's *A Consumer's Republic* examines racial politics and segregation in New Jersey

and Thomas Sugrue's, *Sweet Land of Liberty* is an important macro-analysis of the civil rights movement in the North that includes several New Jersey vignettes. Walter David Greason's *Suburban Erasure* explores how the processes of suburbanization in New Jersey negatively impacted the black freedom struggle, and Howard Gillette's *Camden After the Fall* examines issues such as deindustrialization, white flight, and the impact of black power politics.<sup>5</sup>

The concerted effort by historians to bring the civil rights narrative north should also not elide the key differences between the deep South, the North, and the West. Historian Clarence Lang has argued that the deep South and border states have different regional characteristics that shaped how the civil rights movement developed and proceeded. He writes, "Regional differences in black-white relations were stark and fundamental, and the regional differences between southern and northern black freedom struggles were equally as decisive."<sup>6</sup> Sundiata Chajua and Lang add that the "the fallacy of arguing for North-South continuity is that it ignores regional variations in political economy, frequency and modes of racial violence, levels of political incorporation, and the stark differences in wages and wealth between African Americans in the South and the North."<sup>7</sup> Thus, the civil rights/black power era should be viewed as a mosaic of local struggles that all have their own sets of causes, challenges, struggles, and outcomes.

While many historians have brought attention to the civil rights struggles in the northern states, some continue to identify the South alone as the key site

of racial violence, hatred, and exclusion. For example, in a 2010 anthology about 1970s radical movements, historian Scott Rutherford cited a newspaper report which "described the world of First Nations people in Kenora [Ontario] as reminiscent of the injustices endured by African American men and women in the southern United States."<sup>8</sup> Historian Mary Louise Roberts also used the trope of the egalitarian North, writing in a 2013 book, "Black soldiers, especially those who hailed from the North, were often traumatized by [white southern] officers."<sup>9</sup> This simplistic north-south binary can serve to exonerate and excuse northern racist practices that have been revealed by Sugrue, Cohen, Beryl Satter, Matthew Countryman, Patrick D. Jones, and others in their explorations of African American activism and northern white racism. These narratives, coupled with the enthusiastic support in many areas of the North for Alabama Governor and segregationist George C. Wallace in his 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns, demonstrates the pervasiveness of racism and inequality in America regardless of region.<sup>10</sup>

Several historians have reconceptualised the traditional timelines associated with the civil rights movement that typically see activism begin with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and end with the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965. Scholars such as Sugrue, Peniel Joseph, Robert O. Self, Doug McAdam, and Jacqueline Dowd Hall argue that African American activism both predates and outlasts the traditional timelines.<sup>11</sup> The experience of African American activism in New Jersey affirms this scholarly critique as

seen through the numerous examples of legal challenges and direct-action initiatives against segregation and inequality that took place both before 1954 and after 1965.

### New Jersey's Nineteenth-Century Racial Laws and Jim Crow Foundations

NEW JERSEY HAS A PROBLEMATIC history of race-relations dating back to its foundation as a colony and later a state with legal slavery. In 1804, the state passed a gradual emancipation law regarding slavery, resulting in the continued enslavement of people right up to the Civil War.<sup>12</sup> New Jersey's revised 1844 State Constitution upheld the rights of the state's remaining slaveholders and limited the franchise to white men.<sup>13</sup> Dr. John S. Rock of Salem, New Jersey, expressed his dissatisfaction with the state in 1849. He commented, "The state has never treated us as men.... She has always been an ardent supporter of the 'peculiar institution' [slavery] – the watchdog for the Southern plantations; and unless she shows her faith by her works, we will not believe in her."<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with historian Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor's research that has documented the pervasiveness of Jim Crow practices in the North prior to the Civil War.<sup>15</sup> During the war, President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation prompted numerous New Jersey citizens to write formal petitions seeking a prohibition against the migration of African Americans into the state. Its legislators nearly enacted a bill that was passed by the state assembly that stated, "[Any] Negro... [that] shall come into this state... and remain for ten days or more ... shall

be deemed guilty of misdemeanor, and on conviction shall be transported ... to Liberia, or some island in the West Indies."<sup>16</sup> Some members of the state Democratic party even suggested that New Jersey formally secede from the Union and join the Confederacy.<sup>17</sup> New Jersey also voted against Lincoln in both 1860 and 1864, only legally abolished slavery in 1866 after the thirteenth amendment was formally incorporated into the U.S. Constitution, and did not grant voting rights to African Americans until 1870.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to the Civil War, slave resisters who entered New Jersey along the established routes of the Underground Railroad often chose to stay in the state's African American population centers rather than travelling further north.<sup>18</sup> Both Maryland and Delaware were slave states that were directly adjacent to South Jersey across Delaware Bay. Virginia had a large population of enslaved people, is located just west of these small states, and has sections more north in latitude than southern New Jersey. *Courier Post* reporter Joseph Busler claims that, "Nowhere was the Underground Railroad more active than in old West Jersey, where geography and a heavy anti-slavery Quaker presence made this area the major corridor for slaves escaping from the Southeastern slave states."<sup>20</sup> These migrants, alongside freed slaves and their descendants, gave New Jersey a diverse mosaic of African American habitation. For example, New Jersey historian Paul Schopp has identified ninety-five antebellum African American communities in the West/South Jersey area alone.<sup>21</sup> New Jersey was also a popular migration destination for African Americans

during the various twentieth century waves of the Great Migration because the state had a great deal of industrial employment opportunities. This is reflected in the rapid expansion of African American industrial workers in New Jersey from a total of 8,345 in

**Figure 1** Regional Map of New Jersey demonstrating its close proximity to the South. Delaware and Maryland were both states with full constitutional rights for slaveholders throughout the civil war. Virginia was the location of Richmond, the capital city of the Confederacy.



1910 to 31,871 by 1930, an increase of over 280 percent.<sup>22</sup> In 1890, African Americans made up 3.3 per cent of New Jersey’s population. The great northern and western exodus of African Americans from the South caused these figures to rise to 5.2 per cent in 1930 and 8.5 per cent by 1960.<sup>23</sup>

Major sections of New Jersey have been described as more southern than northern in culture. Historian Giles Wright supports this view and comments that, “considering the difficulties blacks have faced in New Jersey, the state’s role as a major place of settlement for southern blacks is a

paradox.”<sup>24</sup> Greason has described the state as a curious place where the culture and customs of the rural south, rural north, and urban north all intersect.<sup>24</sup> 5Sugrue summarizes New Jersey as follows:

*Scattered throughout the Garden State, particularly in its southern half – which appeared to observers to be Dixie’s northern outpost, complete with scrubby truck farms and tumbledown shacks – were rural and small-town settlements, populated by the descendants of slaves and agricultural laborers. There New Jersey more closely resembled North Carolina than New York.*<sup>26</sup>

Thus, New Jersey demonstrates the importance of Lang’s contention that location and region matter when analyzing and assessing the black freedom struggle.

### **New Jersey’s Twentieth Century Political Culture and Continued Jim Crow Practices**

**N**EW JERSEY’S LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN the nineteenth century, and widespread sympathy for the Confederate war effort, extended into the twentieth century with pervasive Jim Crow practices. For example, the state elected and advanced the career of Governor and then-President Woodrow Wilson whose ideology and worldview defended white supremacy as the natural order.<sup>27</sup> A key advisor to President Eisenhower named E. Frederick Morrow wrote a memoir about the racist and segregationist practices in his hometown of Hackensack, New Jersey

during the 1920s. He experienced caste exclusion from schools, swimming pools, movie theatres, and restaurants. For example, Morrow explained:

*During most of my youth, the Y board was adamant against the admission of Negroes and around my senior year in high school (1925) a token evening on a very segregated basis was given to Negroes. They made the basketball court and the pool tables available to us, but not the other facilities – including the swimming pool.*

Morrow also described the pain and frustration that African Americans experienced as a result of this way of life and how hope could only come from outside the community. He wrote:

*I have never recovered from the surprise of escaping the devastating futility of life in a community that offered neither opportunity nor hope to a child born black. Day in and day out, such a child is witness to the wasted adult lives about him, and if he is to receive inspiration to push onward and upward toward a consequential goal, it often must come from an outside source or stimuli.*<sup>28</sup>

Morrow’s experiences were not an aberration as New Jersey, like much of the United States, was a bastion of inequality and intolerance in the 1920s.

New Jersey was a hotbed of Ku Klux Klan activity in the 1920s. There is evidence that Haddon Heights, New Jersey was the site of a large Klan rally in 1921, and that the Klan also rode in to terrorize a Catholic school picnic in the community during this time.<sup>29</sup>



Lawnside, New Jersey, a near neighbour to Haddon Heights and one of at least ten self-governing African American communities in the United States was also targeted.<sup>30</sup> Isaac Rutledge (I.R.) Bryant, a long-time civic leader in Lawnside recalled, “I was just a little boy, but I remember being scared as hell watching them [the KKK] burn a cross on a lawn, right where the barbershop is now on Warwick Road.”<sup>31</sup> When Lawnside became incorporated as a borough in 1926, a white neighbourhood known as Woodcrest was included within its territory. These homeowners unsuccessfully tried to secede from Lawnside before moving out of the community. It is alleged that the Woodcrest residents on several occasions burned crosses in Lawnside.<sup>32</sup> The presence of the Klan in these Camden County communities was not an aberration as New Jersey was the third strongest Klan supportive state in the northeast with 60,000 members at its apex in the 1920s. An example of the Klan’s popularity is the numerous festivities held in Long Branch, New Jersey that attracted national Klan leaders, participants from all over the state, and thousands of spectators and participants.<sup>33</sup> The Federal government reflected this nativist agenda by passing the *National Origins Act* of 1924, which severely curtailed immigration from Asian countries and put significant restrictions on ethnic whites from Eastern and Southern Europe.

Wright argues that South Jersey, with its Quaker presence, was less hostile toward African American habitation and migration until the late nineteenth century. He contends that the Quaker influence waned at this time

and the region began to more resemble the attitudes prevalent in Philadelphia, Maryland, and Delaware.<sup>34</sup> While New Jersey is nominally in the North, I assert that the state, especially its southern region, must be viewed as a border state that has its own unique set of local conditions.

New Jersey’s 566 independent municipalities have tremendous political power. Each New Jersey municipality has its own police force, town government, fire department, and school board.<sup>35</sup> The state decreed in 1894, “that each city, borough and incorporated town shall be a school district, separate and distinct from the township school district.” It is this law that explains why there are several school districts in the state with less than 1000 students and in some cases only one elementary school. Thus, alongside residential segregation came educational segregation. The key exclusionary weapon that municipalities were also given in New Jersey was unquestioned control over zoning, a power that was defended by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1926 and sanctioned by the New Jersey State Supreme Court in 1927.<sup>36</sup> This political structure is what contributed to New Jersey’s pervasive pattern of residential segregation.

Municipalities throughout New Jersey enacted restrictive zoning laws that prevented the construction of multi-unit dwellings such as duplexes and apartment buildings.<sup>37</sup> Lot size minimums were also designed to price out ‘undesirable’ migrants.<sup>38</sup> Sugrue demonstrates that restrictive and discriminatory zoning was commonplace in other areas of the North.<sup>39</sup> Cohen documented numerous

North Jersey communities that practiced discriminatory zoning.<sup>40</sup> In the South Jersey community of Haddon Heights, over 150 residents attended a borough council meeting to object to a proposed apartment building on Prospect Ridge Boulevard. A petition to oppose the building's construction collected 128 signatures and stated that "the proposed apartments would result in the influx of transient residents and would decrease the value of properties."<sup>41</sup> The *Courier Post* also has numerous articles about various South Jersey communities that enacted restrictive zoning ordinances.<sup>42</sup> The most egregious example I located was in Medford, New Jersey, where a section of the town was zoned for ten-acre lots.<sup>43</sup>

New Jersey's peculiar political culture of home rule and strong municipalities fostered the conditions for pervasive segregation. Greason explains that states with small cities and expansive farming areas such as New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut saw their rural hinterland rapidly transformed into residential suburbs between 1950 and 2000.<sup>44</sup> Many of New Jersey's small African American communities that were established in the nineteenth century became absorbed into white dominated municipalities because they did not gain political autonomy. For example, Timbuctoo was an established African American settlement in the early nineteenth century supported in part by an adjacent Quaker community (Mount Holly). After succumbing to suburban sprawl and experiencing out-migration in the twentieth century, the only remaining above-ground evidence of African American habitation is a cemetery.<sup>45</sup> In other cases, such as

in Mount Laurel, African American neighbourhoods were purposefully eradicated due to power imbalances with white municipal officials who sought to redevelop rural lands for suburban development.<sup>46</sup> The suburbanization of New Jersey is illustrated by the stark decrease in its number of farms from 23,838 in 1950 to just 8,400 in 1971. Farmland acreage also decreased from half of the total state land in 1950 to one-fifth of the total in 1971.<sup>47</sup>

New Jersey slowly transformed into one of the more legally progressive states on racial matters despite its conservative political culture and widespread support for slavery in the nineteenth century. The *New Jersey School Law of 1881* prohibited the exclusion of any child on the basis of religion, nationality, or colour.<sup>48</sup> In 1883, this law was upheld in a state Supreme Court case wherein the Reverend Jeremiah H. Pierce won the right to enroll his children in a whites-only school in Burlington City. In 1884, New Jersey continued along the track of the Pierce decision, passing *An Act to Protect all Citizens in Their Civil and Legal Rights*. The state's 1884 civil rights act was a watershed piece of legislation that barred segregation in public schools and public accommodations and carried substantial penalties with restitution payable to the aggrieved party of up to \$500, fines payable to the state up to \$1000, and a maximum one-year jail term.<sup>49</sup> The Act was applied in *Miller v. Stampul* (1912) when the State Supreme Court ordered Christopher Stampul, a Paterson, New Jersey theatre owner to pay \$500 in restitution for increasing the admission price from five to twenty-five cents for an African American patron named Minerva

Miller for the purposes of excluding her from the theatre.<sup>50</sup> This was one of the few times the 1884 *Civil Rights Act* was successfully applied, pointing to the continuation of widespread civil rights abuses and violations for several decades to follow.<sup>51</sup> As the battle for civil rights and integration gathered pace in the ensuing decades of the twentieth century, swimming pools and beaches would become a hotly contested space.

### Segregationist Practices Involving Swimming Facilities in Other American Regions

BY THE 1930S, INTERRACIAL swimming at pools and beaches became a major social issue in American society. Historian Jeff Wiltse explains that interracial swimming was not an issue when public pools were operated as homosocial places where the sexes were divided. In the 1920s and 1930s, pools and beaches were more widely integrated along gender lines and became a key social space where flirting, touching, physical viewing, the demonstration of male masculinity, and the arrangement of dates were commonplace. The water thus became a place of major anxiety for many Americans because of the potential for interracial sexual contact. The presence of African American men also posed a challenge to some white Americans' perceived sense of their own masculinity.<sup>52</sup> Many white Americans also ignorantly feared African Americans as vectors of communicable diseases. For example, as late as 1963, an Atlanta segregationist presented municipal pool-goers with handouts stating, "The negro race is a reservoir of

venereal infection."<sup>53</sup> White Americans would fight against the integration of pools and beaches with both violence and cunning acts of legal subterfuge.

Communities throughout the United States discriminated against African Americans and other people of colour by operating segregated or exclusionary beaches and swimming pools. A 1960 *New York Times* article chronicled the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) plan to confront the specter of thousands of miles of segregated American coastline from Cape May, New Jersey to Brownsville, Texas.<sup>54</sup> In the South, not only beaches, but also municipal pools and private swim clubs, were operated on a segregated basis until the courts finally intervened. For example, in Atlanta, desegregation of municipal pools in the summers of 1962 and 1963 happened without violence as many whites retreated to private clubs or built backyard pools. This led to widespread discontent amongst the city's working-class whites who could not afford these alternatives. Many of these disenchanted citizens funneled their anger into a tax revolt movement and later contributed to the gubernatorial election of Lester Maddux, a local Atlanta business owner and staunch segregationist.<sup>55</sup>

In northern cities, tensions over access to swimming facilities were a powder keg that often led to physical confrontation. For example, integration of Pittsburgh's municipal pools was a violent and turbulent process that began in 1931 and did not abate until the 1960s.<sup>56</sup> Most of the violent confrontations in Pittsburgh over pools were launched by whites who



attacked African Americans who tried to integrate the city's pools. In Chicago, African Americans were also attacked when they tried to use pools that traditionally had been the domain of whites. The lack of swimming facilities available for use by African Americans in Chicago contributed to what became known as "the fire hydrant riot." In 1966, three days of violence and upheaval followed after a police clash with African Americans who had opened up a city fire hydrant for relief on a particularly hot day. At the urging of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., city officials hastily constructed new swimming pools, many of which were in neighbourhoods with a large African American demographic. The Federal government also heeded the warning and earmarked funds for the construction of swimming pools in inner city areas in the hopes of stemming the violence associated with the hundreds of urban rebellions in cities throughout the country during the mid-to-late 1960s.<sup>57</sup>

### **New Jersey Interwar Swimming Pool Case Studies**

A 1932 SOCIOLOGICAL REPORT issued by the government of New Jersey demonstrated the near-universal segregation of swimming facilities and beaches in the state. The report explained that the prevailing attitude in most New Jersey communities and private agencies, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), was one of "consistent opposition" to the integrated use of swimming pools. This included the city of Camden fully banning African

Americans from its public pools and the shore communities of Asbury Park, Cape May, and Atlantic City only permitting African Americans the use of the beach in special sections. Asbury Park city officials went so far as to restrict African Americans from using the boardwalk outside of their delineated beach space. The report found that segregation was increasing despite the state's civil rights laws and lamented that "the Negro group has noted tendencies toward an increasing social separation in housing, theatres, restaurants, hotels, swimming pools, beaches and other public accommodations."<sup>58</sup> Two incidents in Elizabeth and Trenton further demonstrate the segregated nature of the state's pools at this time.

Elizabeth, New Jersey immediately had racial issues when it opened its first city pool in 1930. A few days after the pool opened, an African American teen was arrested on bogus charges, and two more were forcibly denied entry to the pool by white patrons in an action overstatedly reported as a 1000 person "riot" by Bridgewater, New Jersey's *Courier-News*.<sup>59</sup> These actions deterred the city's African American inhabitants from using the pool until 1938 when several courageous individuals began actively integrating the pool. The result once again was white backlash in the form of renewed physical attacks, a vitriolic letter writing campaign, and a removal of pool patronage. The subsequent drop in attendance led the city to temporarily close the pool in the hopes that racial tensions would abate after a cooling off period. After reopening three weeks later, violence reached new levels as whites and African Americans clashed for thirteen

straight days before the pool was closed again.<sup>60</sup> The violence included a rock fight and a barrage of tomatoes thrown at African American patrons.<sup>61</sup> City officials decided to absolve themselves of legal culpability by allowing African Americans entry to the pool while avoiding recrimination from white inhabitants in exchange for allowing free reign to their vigilante reprisals. The 1939 swimming season saw African Americans avoid the pool and regular attendance numbers returned because of renewed white patronage.<sup>62</sup>

In 1933, an African American man named Chester W. Patterson filed suit against Trenton High School because of the segregated nature of his son's school swimming classes. Backed by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* separate but equal clause, school administrators argued that the child's rights were not being infringed because African American children were given equal use of the swimming pool during separated classes. The court's legal address stated, "to say to a lad 'you may study with your classmates; you may attend gymnasium with them, but you may not have swimming with them because of your color' is unlawful discrimination."<sup>63</sup> The legal rationale used in this case advanced the same logic as, and can be viewed as a forerunner to, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 that overruled segregation in education and was a key step in reversing the social dislocation caused by *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The significance of the Patterson suit is also demonstrated by Wiltse's assertion that "racial exclusion at municipal pools went almost unchallenged in the courts prior to the 1940s."<sup>64</sup> *Brown v. Board of*

*Education* also distinguished between *de facto* (non-intentional) and *de jure* (legal) segregation. Many Americans falsely attributed *de jure* segregationist practices to the South and excused northern segregation as an accidental happenstance based on residential housing patterns and other economic and social vagaries. The Patterson case is an example of intentional and unabashed *de jure* segregation wherein the school defended its policies on legal grounds.

### New Jersey Post-Second World War Civil Rights Challenges

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR AFRICAN American equality and civil rights was achieved by the 1950s due to the concerted efforts of African American activists in conjunction with New Jersey lawmakers and enforcement officers.<sup>65</sup> Wright credits African American agency and the efforts of white allies for the progressive turn in New Jersey politics.<sup>66</sup> New Jersey, however, was still beholden to the 1866 and 1964 federal *Civil Rights Acts* that only forbade discrimination in public accommodations and had no effect on discrimination in private clubs.<sup>67</sup> With this legal power, resistance to integration continued despite the achievement of legal equality for African Americans in New Jersey.<sup>68</sup>

In 1950, a young Martin Luther King Jr. experienced discrimination first hand in the South Jersey area when his party was refused service at a restaurant in Maple Shade, New Jersey. King and some fellow African American students, who were living in New Jersey while studying at Pennsylvania's

Crozier Theological Seminary, refused to leave the restaurant, citing New Jersey's antidiscrimination laws. They were finally chased away by the owner who brandished a gun and fired a warning shot in the parking lot.<sup>69</sup> New Jersey continued to experience notable instances of racist practices directed against African Americans in the post-Second World War period.

On Friday, June 11, 1948, a cross was burned on the lawn of a residence in Wall Township, New Jersey. LeRoy Hutson, a thirty-year-old African American man and his family moved into the home on June 10. The day of the cross burning, Hutson received several anonymous phone calls asking him how long he intended to stay in the heretofore all-white neighbourhood. A woman who was interviewed regarding the cross burning explained, "The Klan was formed to protect white southern womanhood from rape. Besides, when Negroes move in property values deteriorate."<sup>70</sup> The officer investigating the cross burning stated that the motive behind the burning was related to property value concerns with one man indicating that he planned to sell his home as soon as possible. There was also a cross burning in Wall Township in 1946, furthering the community's legacy of intolerance after serving as the headquarters of the state Ku Klux Klan in 1928. Hutson immediately sought assistance from other African American men at the nearby Asbury Park Serviceman's Club. Hutson and members of the club armed themselves and were ready to deter any aggressive action directed at the home. He was adamant that he would not be intimidated stating, "I don't see any

reason why I should move. I mind my own business and want to be left alone like anyone else. I haven't broken no laws." Members of the Serviceman's Club remarked, "The Klan could scare people 20 years ago but this is 1948. We've been to war and we're not afraid to fight for our rights."<sup>71</sup> Wiltse asserts that many African American veterans were emboldened by their experiences fighting against tyranny in the war to resist efforts to circumscribe their rights and freedoms once they returned home.<sup>72</sup> Cross burnings and Klan-related activities reveal extralegal methods that some whites employed to maintain segregation in New Jersey.<sup>73</sup>

Activists sought to raise awareness of continued post-Second World War violations of New Jersey's civil rights legislation. In 1948, a group submitted a report to the state government entitled *Civil Liberties in New Jersey* that argued: "There are still frequent violations.... Negroes, for example, can never be sure when they leave the vicinity of their homes what conditions they will encounter in unfamiliar areas."<sup>74</sup> In Montclair, New Jersey, interracial members of an organization named American Youth for Democracy took the Montclair Skating Club to court for discriminatory practices. The Club was fined \$200 for refusing admission to two African American women.<sup>75</sup> In the field of education, concerted efforts by African American community organizers and interracial allies removed the last vestiges of school segregation in the state by the 1960s.<sup>76</sup>

## Segregation and Agency in New Jersey Pools and Beaches

IN THE 1950S AND 1960S, MILLIONS of white Americans left inner cities and migrated to newly built homes in sprawling segregated suburbs. The maintenance of segregation in these places could also be protected by the establishment of private clubs for leisure and entertainment. In a 1958 article, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* extolled the virtues of joining a swim club in a newly formed suburban community, describing the clubs as:

*A means of becoming acquainted with neighbors, forming friendships among children and uniting a community in a common purpose. The community swim pool is an investment not only in money but in neighborhood co-operation, enjoyment and friendliness.*<sup>77</sup>

A 1964 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* about private swim clubs in the area explained that while few clubs specifically have bylaws and policies excluding African Americans, most were not integrated.<sup>78</sup> In New Jersey, the proliferation of private clubs with segregationist policies was also rampant.

A New Jersey State Civil Rights Commission acknowledged in 1958 that public swimming pools regularly converted into private clubs to avoid integration. A statistical survey was conducted that found that African Americans were being excluded through various devices from at least one-third of the inland swimming facilities in the state. The Commission also found that only 19 per cent of swimming facilities surveyed were in fact legitimate private

clubs and 36 per cent of swimming facilities were masquerading with signage as private clubs. Three swim club managers audaciously stated to Commission officials that their pool was operated as a public accommodation unless “the public skin is colored.”<sup>79</sup> By 1964, the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights saw fit to distribute educational and awareness pamphlets to 300 country clubs and swimming clubs in the hopes of deterring segregationist practices. The pamphlets included information on what constituted a private club and urged the clubs not to embarrass the state by denying use of their facilities to international travelers who may be in the area to attend the 1964 World’s Fair in New York City or New Jersey’s tercentenary celebrations.<sup>80</sup> Thus, white businessmen and civic leaders in New Jersey commonly declared pools, as well as barbershops, beauty parlours, and other spaces, to be private clubs to avoid integration.

Some public swimming pool managers in New Jersey avoided the legal responsibility to integrate by transforming their pools into private clubs. The Sun & Splash swimming pool in New Brunswick, New Jersey was ordered by New Jersey’s Education Commission and Division Against Discrimination to desegregate. Edgar L. Reed, the General Manager of Sun & Splash, signed a consent order requiring the club to cease barring African Americans. He then dissolved the club and reincorporated as the Suburbia Swim Club, Inc. Reed became the new President of Suburbia Swim Club with his wife Lois L. Reed serving as the ‘new’ club treasurer.<sup>81</sup> Judge Dubois S. Thompson denied the state’s

application for an injunction forcing Suburbia to drop its membership requirement pending a full hearing. Thompson stated, “Members have paid their dues on the theory that they could swim with whom they liked, to wit their fellow members.”<sup>82</sup> In a Letter to the Editor written four years later, Mr. Jack Wysoker confirmed the ongoing segregationist practices at the club and stated, “Aren’t Negro Americans entitled to a little democracy — that is a nearby pool to swim in when it’s hot, just as any other human being?”<sup>83</sup> The segregationist tactic of privatization was finally struck down in 1973 by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Tillman v. Wheaton Haven Recreation Association* where the Court unanimously ruled against a private Maryland swim club for discrimination against African American applicants.<sup>84</sup> A look at the Haddon Glen Swim Club in Haddon Heights reveals how private swim clubs also discriminated upon class as well as racial lines.

Haddon Heights has been white and middle class for much of its history. In 1961, the community’s powerbrokers built a swimming pool that was immediately operated as a private club with no public access. Several members of the club in the 1960s and 1970s related to me how there were no African American members or guests of the club during that period. One recalled a special weekend where exchange students from the American Field Service including youth from Turkey and Panama were welcomed at the club.<sup>85</sup> Thus, people of colour who were not of African ancestry did swim at Haddon Glen. In a 2016 interview, one member who grew up and still resides in

Haddon Heights explained that Haddon Glen officials conducted interviews at the homes of prospective members. He shared that a prominent civic leader in the community came to his home and interviewed his parents to evaluate their membership application.<sup>86</sup> I also interviewed a former club official’s son who related that a classmate of theirs could not join him at the club because his friend’s family was not approved for membership because they were from the nearby community of Barrington and deemed “blue collar” and “low class.”<sup>87</sup> This same interviewee participated in the club’s competitive swim team and cannot recall ever seeing an African American at any of the other private pools in other communities where he competed. Thus, some individual whites were able to circumvent state laws and engage in both racist and classist discrimination. As Wiltse explains, the suburban United States was transformed into a space where culture, class, and race became monotonized and cleansed of elements deemed undesirable by elitist middle-class whites.<sup>88</sup>

Atlantic City had a segregated beach that became known as ‘Chicken Bone Beach.’ Most of the resort city’s beaches were reserved for whites except one unmaintained section between Kentucky and Missouri Avenues. Despite its segregated status, the beach became a prime destination for African Americans to visit. Celebrities such as musicians Lena Horne, Sara Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, and Sammy Davis Jr. and athletes such as Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Larry Doby, and Jackie Robinson were known to frequent the beach. In 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. was even photographed enjoying a



relaxing afternoon at ‘Chicken Bone.’ Thus, this beach acquired the reputation as a location to see famous African Americans and a key spot for fun and entertainment. Musicians were known to play their instruments at the beach alongside family picnics and individuals tanning and playing in the sun and surf.<sup>89</sup>

While ‘Chicken Bone Beach’ was a well-known destination for African Americans, it did not receive much attention in the mainstream media until decades after Atlantic City’s beaches were desegregated.<sup>90</sup> This points to the pervasiveness of segregation in New Jersey and how un-newsworthy the existence of a delineated space for African Americans in Atlantic City was



**Figure 2** Martin Luther King Jr. (left) at ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach in a rare photograph where he is casually dressed. John W. Mosley, “Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach, 1956,” Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X0319560000002.

at the time. Regardless, ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach reveals that African Americans were able to create a vibrant social and cultural space despite segregationist restrictions.



**Figure 3** Joe Louis (seated centre on left) at 'Chicken Bone' Beach.

John W. Mosley, "Joe Louis on Chicken Bone Beach in Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1952," Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X0319520000003.



**Figure 4** Sammy Davis Jr. at 'Chicken Bone' Beach. "John W. Mosley, Sammy Davis, Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach, 1954," Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X0319540800005.

The predominately African American community of Lawnside was surrounded by many historically white communities, making access to swimming facilities an issue for residents of the community. At least two African Americans who grew up in Lawnside fondly remember trips to 'Chicken Bone' Beach. This further demonstrates the importance of the site for African Americans in the South Jersey area. Just steps across the municipal borderline, between Lawnside and the wealthy and aristocratic community of Haddonfield, lies the Tavistock Hills Swim Club.<sup>91</sup> This private club restricted African Americans from membership well into the 1970s and perhaps beyond. However, African Americans did frequent this club's pool quite often. In a conversation at the 2016 Ralph G. Jordan Memorial Fundraiser in Lawnside, a long-time resident of the community related how he and several friends would often hop the fence at night to go for a summer swim. When the police were called, the children were fortunately sent home without incident. Another issue is a belief held by some African Americans in Lawnside that the historically white community of Haddon Heights operated a segregated swimming pool inside Haddon Heights High School. African American students have attended the school as a significant minority of the student body since at least 1916 because Lawnside was too small of a community to support its own high school. I studied the architectural plans and looked through decades of yearbooks and found that there was never a pool in the building. The significance of this rumour is not its falsehood, but the deep feelings of

distrust and historic oppression that some African Americans in Lawnside feel toward the historical legacy of Haddon Heights High School.<sup>92</sup>

Residents from Lawnside also frequented a large public pool in the nearby community of Haddonfield called the Mountwell Pool. This pool

small African American population. Wiltse explains that the process of public pool closure and private pool rebirth was symptomatic of a common segregationist pattern throughout the United States.<sup>96</sup>



attracted African Americans from as far away as Philadelphia before it was closed in 1973.<sup>93</sup> The pool became primarily the domain of African Americans as many white residents of the area chose to stay away.<sup>94</sup> Many white families in Haddonfield began sending their children to the private Wedgewood Swim Club which was opened in 1964.<sup>95</sup> The official reason for the closure of the pool was structural defects. However, some Lawnside residents have expressed to me that the pool was closed because of its popularity amongst African Americans in a community with a very

**Figure 5** Children from Lawnside at Mountwell Pool in the 1960s. Photo Courtesy of Linda Shockley, Lawnside Historical Society President

Interracial civil rights organizations and African American organizational leaders worked to overturn segregation in New Jersey swimming facilities and beaches. The first key post-Second World War attempt to integrate a New Jersey swimming facility took place at Fort Lee's Palisades Amusement Park. This sprawling resort-type park actively discriminated against African



Americans, an action that gained the attention of a New York chapter of the interracial Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). CORE members began picketing and handing out informational pamphlets at both the park entrance and the 125th Street ferry terminal in New York City.<sup>97</sup> Park authorities, in conjunction with local police forces, responded to the actions with a series of arrests in both 1947 and 1948.<sup>98</sup> Two African American protestors, Melba Valle and Harold O. Cox, both alleged

onto a bus.<sup>100</sup> The result was a series of trials, retrials, and appeals that finally concluded in 1953 when a Federal jury sided with pool authorities and refused to award damages to Ms. Valle and Mr. Cox.<sup>101</sup> During the trials, the Pool attorneys also attempted to discredit Mr. Scott as a witness by accusing him of being a communist, a common tactic during the early Cold War hysteria and a major impediment at this time to activism of any kind including the drive for civil rights.<sup>102</sup>



they were refused entry by park staff because of their colour and filed suit against the park.<sup>99</sup> Another African American protester, Samuel Scott, claimed that he was beaten with a blackjack club by Park staff and thrown

**Figure 6** CORE protest in the summer of 1947 outside the entrance of the Palisades Amusement Park. Photo courtesy of the Fort Lee Historical Society, Fort Lee, New Jersey

The Bergen County chapter of CORE and members of several chapters of the NAACP were active in integrating pools and resorts in the North Jersey area in 1963. Shirley Lacy, the Bergen County Chairman for CORE, was one of the most active leaders and frequently was a spokesperson to the press. CORE's tactic was private negotiations followed by public demonstrations in the form of pickets at the entrances of clubs and resorts which refused full integration. The most recalcitrant of the clubs selected by CORE for integration was the May Woods Swim Club. This club, with land in both Old Tappan, New Jersey, and Tappan, New York, was owned by a woman named May Furth. Furth resisted integration after over a year of negotiations and two weeks of CORE pickets. She allegedly threatened the protestors with arrest for trespass, phoned the police, and tried to order picketers off club property. Furth only relented to full integration on a first come, first served basis after Lacy declared that CORE would stage a wade-in demonstration.<sup>103</sup> The first African American member of May Woods was William Scott, the President of the Rock Valley, New York NAACP.<sup>104</sup> In a public statement issued during picketing at New Jersey's Fair Lawn Beach Club, Lacy declared:

*After repeated evidence of discrimination at the Fair Lawn Club for two seasons, and futile attempts to end this situation by quiet negotiation, we are no longer patient.... We want an end to this now.... We are asking those who oppose discrimination, students as well as adults, to join*

*our demonstrations.... This is a serious problem in Bergen County. The majority of public swimming places are closed to Negroes. Many Negro families travel as far as Bear Mountain for a place to swim. Something must be done to open swimming facilities to all regardless of color.*<sup>105</sup>

In 1963, CORE and NAACP activists integrated at least eleven pools and swimming clubs in Bergen County, New Jersey.<sup>106</sup>

African American religious leaders were also at the forefront of some of the key battles in swimming pool integration in New Jersey. In 1948, the YMCA Board of Directors in New Brunswick, New Jersey came under fire for refusing to allow African American students to use the swimming pool during a partnership with a city high school. The protest was officially filed by Rev. Solomon Hill.<sup>107</sup> Plainfield, New Jersey, a mixed-race suburb outside of New York City also restricted African Americans from its public swimming facilities.<sup>108</sup> In 1968, Richard L. Byrnes, representing the Plainfield Area Christian Layman's Association, wrote a Letter to the Editor arguing for a centralized location for a new community pool. He declared: "We believe all citizens of Plainfield must be given the opportunity to share in only the best recreation facilities. Segregation of these facilities for any reason cannot be tolerated."<sup>109</sup> Hill's and Byrnes' leadership demonstrates the importance of African American religious figures to community activism. There were thus a range of African American actors who fought against discrimination in New Jersey's swimming facilities.

## Conclusion

NEW JERSEY WAS A NORTHERN state with entrenched Jim Crow practices that continued in many areas until the 1970s. The state experienced a flourishing Ku Klux Klan revival in the 1920s, periodic cross burnings throughout the twentieth century, and had widespread discrimination in public businesses such as motels, beauty parlours, bowling alleys, restaurants, and swimming facilities. After the Second World War, New Jersey became a leader in civil rights legislation and reform. Nevertheless, laws were frequently circumvented to maintain the colour line. For example, pools and beaches became contentious spaces where some whites fought to continue segregationist practices. One method was to operate pre-existing or newly constructed swimming pools as private clubs that were immune to State laws banning discrimination in public spaces. Another technique involved the simple

closure of municipal swimming pools. Privatization also afforded middle-class whites a tool to exclude working class whites from social spaces. African American individuals, religious leaders, and civil rights organizations fought for access to swimming facilities in various areas of the state, using the courts and direct-action techniques. In the face of segregation, African Americans created a thriving place of culture and identity at Atlantic City's segregated beach area known as 'Chicken Bone' Beach. On an individual level, African Americans frequented the few public pools that were open to their patronage and also used extralegal means to access segregated swim clubs at night. An analysis of segregation and inequality in New Jersey demonstrates that Jim Crow practices occurred throughout the United States and should not be viewed as part of a pattern of southern exceptionalism. ♦

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, August 2, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Both historians Thomas Sugrue and Lizabeth Cohen have indicated that New Jersey's schools are in the top five in the nation in the degree of segregation. Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xix; Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 248; and Barbara G. Salmore & Stephen A. Salmore, *New Jersey Politics and Government: Suburban Politics Comes of Age* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 201.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Sugrue explores racial issues and segregation in Detroit during deindustrialization and the black freedom struggle. Several historians including J. Anthony Lukas and Jeanne Theoharis have examined the racial issues that arose over court-ordered busing to desegregate Boston's public schools in the 1970s. Matthew Countryman looked at African American activism and white retrenchment in Philadelphia during the 1960s and 1970s. Other key works by Todd M. Michney (Cleveland), Patrick D. Jones (Milwaukee),

Beryl Satter (Chicago), and others have explored issues of inequality and activism in the North during the black freedom struggle. Robert O. Self (Oakland), Anne Valk (Washington D.C.), Komozi Woodard, Peniel Joseph, and others have examined the impact of black power on the direction of the civil rights movement. Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996); J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Jeanne Theoharis, “They Told Us Our Kids Were Stupid: Ruth Batson and the Educational Movement in Boston,” in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, eds. Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard, and Charles M. Payne (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Todd M. Michney, *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Anne M. Valk, *Radical Sisters: Second-Wave Feminism and Black Liberation in Washington, D.C.* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Peniel E. Joseph, ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil-Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> In 1986, Clayborne Carson proposed a new title, “black freedom struggle,” to define the African American movement for racial equality. Carson’s term has been accepted and used by many scholars to the present. Clayborne Carson, “Civil Rights Reform and the Black Freedom Struggle,” in *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, ed. Charles W. Eagles. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Walter David Greason, *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013); and Howard Gillette, Jr. *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Clarence Lang, “Locating the Civil Rights Movement: An Essay on the Deep South, Midwest, and Border South in Black Freedom Studies,” *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 2 (2013): 373.

<sup>7</sup> Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, “The “Long Movement” as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies,” *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 281.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Rutherford, “Canada’s Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization,” in: *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 78.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II and France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 200.

<sup>10</sup> For information about Wallace’s support in the North during his 1968 Presidential campaign see: Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, *An American Melodrama*:

*The Presidential Campaign of 1968* (New York: The Viking Press, 1969); Samuel Lubell, *The Hidden Crisis in American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1970); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President: 1968* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969); Steven V. Roberts, "Wallace Backers Say Why They Are: At Rally, They Give Voice to Their Dissatisfactions," *The New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1968, 32; and Sydney H. Schamberg, "For Most of the Policemen in Syracuse, Wallace Will Be the Man," *The New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1968, 78.

<sup>11</sup> Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Robert O. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, eds. Jama Lazerow and Yohura Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Doug McAdam, *Political Processes and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Peniel E. Joseph, "Community Organizing, Grassroots Politics, and Neighborhood Rebels: Local Struggles for Black Power in America," in *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level*, ed. Peniel E. Joseph (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, 91, no. 4 (Mar. 2005): 1234.

<sup>12</sup> Clement Alexander Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), 77. Price stated that there were still eighteen slaves in New Jersey in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>14</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State, 1988), 13.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship Before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Margo Downing and Martine Robinson, "Blacks: A Long, Hard Row to Achievement and Pride," *Courier Post*, Apr. 27, 1976, C11.

<sup>17</sup> Marian Thompson Wright, "New Jersey Laws and the Negro," *The Journal of Negro History* 28, no. 2 (April 1943), 188.

<sup>18</sup> Wynetta Devore, "The Education of Blacks in New Jersey, 1900-1930: An Exploration in Oral History" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1980), 33; Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 77; and Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 84.

<sup>19</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Busler, "N.J. Vital Stop on Path of Slave Escape Routes," *Courier Post*, Feb. 7, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Paul W. Schopp, "Black Communities in West/South Jersey," unpublished manuscript, Apr. 2014, PDF file.

<sup>22</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 128.

<sup>23</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 16..

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 63.

<sup>26</sup> Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 176.

<sup>27</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> E. Frederic Morrow, *Way Down South Up North* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1973), 5, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Roger Hutchinson, a man who grew up in Haddon Heights, wrote, "The year before I entered first grade, probably 1921, perhaps the biggest Ku Klux Klan meeting ever to take



place in South Jersey was held in Haddon Heights.” Hutchinson’s claim that it was the largest Klan rally in the southern portion of the state is a highly dubious proposition due to the absence of a Haddon Heights rally in other histories written about New Jersey Ku Klux Klan activity that highlight large rallies elsewhere. Haddon Heights Historical Society, “Minutes,” Mar. 27, 2000, *Haddon Heights Public Library Archives*.

<sup>30</sup> Harold M. Rose, “The All Negro Town: Its Evolution and Function,” in *Black America: Geographic Perspectives*, eds. Robert T. Ernst and Lawrence Hugg (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976), 354. For more on Lawnside see: Jason Romisher, “Youth Activism and the Black Freedom Struggle in Lawnside, New Jersey” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> Steven Levy, “South Jersey’s Oasis of Soul,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jul. 17, 1977, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Kristin Hunter, “Soul City North,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, May 1973; “Decision Reserved on Plea to Split Lawnside Borough,” Mar. 7, 1939, in “Lawnside the Way it Was,” (unpublished manuscript, Feb. 19, 1990), community brochure: Camden County Historical Society, Lawnside Collection.

<sup>33</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 95-98.

<sup>34</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> I was amazed how many small independent communities exist in the Haddon Heights area. For instance, driving along the Black Horse Pike I passed through Runnemede, Haddon Heights, Bellmawr, Mount Ephraim, Audubon, Oaklyn, and Woodlynne within five minutes. I also saw police cars from several of these borough’s independent forces.

<sup>36</sup> Alan J. Karcher, *New Jersey’s Multiple Municipal Madness* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1998), 10, 82.

<sup>37</sup> John Standing, “Stratford Residents Protest Plans for Apartments Over Offices,” *Courier Post*, Jan. 28, 1972, 16.

<sup>38</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 231.

<sup>39</sup> Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 237.

<sup>40</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 231-232.

<sup>41</sup> “Citizens Protest New Building,” *Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia), Apr. 2, 1947.

<sup>42</sup> The most contentious meetings observed through an analysis of the *Courier Post* during 1971 and 1972 were held in Pennsauken which directly borders Camden and has now undergone considerable racial demographic transition. “Suits Attack Pennsauken Zoning Law,” *Courier Post*, Feb. 11, 1972, 24.

<sup>43</sup> “Medford Okays New Zone Law,” *Courier Post*, May 10, 1972.

<sup>44</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Christopher P. Barton and Patricia G. Markert, “Collaborative Archaeology, Oral History, and Memory at Timbuctoo, New Jersey,” *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 1, no. 1 (2012): 82-83.

<sup>46</sup> David L. Kirp, John. P. Dwyer, and Larry A. Rosenthal, *Our Town: Race, Housing, and the Soul of Suburbia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995). One African American community, Lawnside, was able to survive obliteration because its residents were able to successfully lobby the state for borough status in 1926. This power enabled African Americans to municipally self-govern the community.

<sup>47</sup> Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 163.

<sup>48</sup> Marian Thompson Wright, "Racial Integration in the Public Schools in New Jersey," *The Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3, (Summer, 1954): 282.

<sup>49</sup> Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 142-143.

<sup>50</sup> "Decision Favors Excluded Negress: Theatre Owner Loses Appeal from \$500 Verdict of Lower Court," *Trenton Evening News* (Trenton, New Jersey), Jul. 22, 1912, 11; and Michael H. Ebner, "Mrs. Miller and "The Paterson Show": a 1911 Defeat for Racial Discrimination," *New Jersey History* LXXXVI, no. 2, (Summer, 1968): 88.

<sup>51</sup> *The Negro in New Jersey*, Report of a Survey by The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work in Cooperation with the State Department of Institutions and Agencies, December 1932, 65. *The New Jersey Civil Rights Act* was weakened in 1917 when damages for offenses were awarded to charities chosen by the state. Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 54.

<sup>52</sup> Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 124, 132.

<sup>53</sup> Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 123.

<sup>54</sup> "N.A.A.C.P. to Fight Curbs at Beaches: Plans 'Wade-In' Campaign at Tax-Maintained Resorts from Jersey to Texas," *The New York Times*, May 8, 1960, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Kruse, *White Flight*, 123-124.

<sup>56</sup> Jeff Wiltse, "Swimming Against Segregation: The Struggle to Desegregate," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 10, no. 2 (November, 2010): 16.

<sup>57</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 184-187.

<sup>58</sup> *The Negro in New Jersey*, 50, 65.

<sup>59</sup> "Race Riot Ensues in Elizabeth Pool," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Aug. 11, 1930, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 136-138.

<sup>61</sup> "Whites Hurl Tomato Barrage at Race Bathers in City Pool: Dowd Natatorium, Jersey Trouble Center, Is Reopened After Recent Riots," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Aug. 27, 1938, 6; and Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 138.

<sup>62</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 139.

<sup>63</sup> "Favors Negroes: Segregation in Pool Must Stop, Supreme Court Rules," *Asbury Park Press*, Mar. 4, 1933, 9.

<sup>64</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 145.

<sup>65</sup> After the Second World War, New Jersey passed the following civil rights related acts: a Fair Employment Practices Law (1945), a regulatory body named The Division Against Discrimination (DAD) (1945), a new Constitution (1947), which included an anti-discrimination provision that applied to education and militia service, and constitutional amendments banning discrimination in public accommodations (1949), the Armed Forces (1953), and public housing (1954). Price, 258; and Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 115-116.

<sup>66</sup> Giles R Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 70.

<sup>67</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 197.

<sup>68</sup> New Jersey continued to have a reformist State Supreme Court that was attentive to civil rights issues in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Court ruled against restrictive municipal zoning practices in multiple trials known as the Mount Laurel decisions, and

against unequal municipal funding for education in *Robinson v. Cahill* (1973) and the multiple rulings in *Abbott v. Burke*.

<sup>69</sup> Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 130.

<sup>70</sup> *Report on Cross Burning in Wall Township N.J.*, Urban Colored Population Commission Records, 1944-1946, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, N.J., Series # SZURC001, Box One.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 158.

<sup>73</sup> Cross burnings continued to be used in New Jersey as a means of intimidation and violence into the 1990s. For example, in Bridgewater, New Jersey leaders of the Somerset Community Action Program and the NAACP had crosses burned on their lawns in 1979. In 1990, a cross was also burned on the lawn of an African American homeowner in Camden. Marilyn Ostermiller, "Clergymen, Labor Unions Deplore SCAP Cross Burnings," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Nov. 8, 1979, B-3; and Carol Comegno, "Cross Burning Costs \$75 ... 3 Charged," *Courier Post*, Oct. 19, 1990, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 182-184.

<sup>75</sup> "Club to Appeal Fine for Negro Ban," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Feb. 4, 1948, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Woodbury, New Jersey was one of the most recalcitrant municipalities in the transition toward integrated schools. The 1963 Camden County Civil Rights Commission chose to investigate the situation in Woodbury despite the town being in Gloucester County because of the urgent need for government intervention. The Commission described Woodbury as a city "which has long resisted attempts at integration." By 1963, most New Jersey school district officials understood that segregation in its schools was no longer tenable and moved to halt the practice without the prodding of the state. Woodbury was an exception and twice saw the state intervene prior to 1963 to correct segregationist practices. The Carpenter Street Elementary School in Woodbury was a *de jure* segregated facility prior to 1947. African American children who lived too far away to walk to Carpenter were sent at the town's expense to other districts rather than accommodate them at the Woodbury schools reserved for whites. In 1948, school officials gerrymandered school district lines to ensure continued segregation in its schools. In 1954, district lines were squared off after numerous protests, but this resulted in only a token number of white children attending the school. The Carpenter Street School was finally closed in 1964 to facilitate integration. Many areas of the state also had segregated schools prior to the Second World War with some school districts continuing to segregate children into the 1960s.

*Camden and Environs, Civil Rights U.S.A., Public Schools, Cities in the North and West*, a staff report submitted in 1963 by Albert P. Blaustein to The United States Commission on Civil Rights, 38-39. Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture; "Council Pleads School Cause in Woodbury: Board is Silent After 2nd Defeat on Expansion," *The Philadelphia Inquirer New Jersey Section*, Jan. 9, 1966, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 194.

<sup>78</sup> "Boom in Public Pools Lags Behind Rise in Swimmer Population," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jul. 30, 1964, 17.

<sup>79</sup> William A. Caldwell, "Jim Crow Says It's a Club," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey),



Jun. 7, 1960, 42.

<sup>80</sup> “State Agency Defines Codes on Public Bias: Circulates Pamphlets to 300 Swim Clubs Explaining Law,” *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 2, 1964, 5.

<sup>81</sup> “Complaint of Discrimination Filed Against Swim Club: State Charges Negroes Are Illegally Barred from Admission to Suburbia Swim Club,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jul. 23, 1958, 1.

<sup>82</sup> “State’s Plea for Injunction Against Swimming Pool Denied,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jul. 30, 1958, 5.

<sup>83</sup> Jack Wysoker, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jun. 5, 1962, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 198.

<sup>85</sup> Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, May 8, 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, Jul. 28, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, Aug. 8, 2016.

<sup>88</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 183.

<sup>89</sup> Brendan Schurr, “In Honor of ‘Chicken Bone Beach,’” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 16, 1997, 2.

<sup>90</sup> Newspapers.com has numerous New Jersey and Philadelphia newspapers and the only articles about ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach were written in the last twenty years and are essentially nostalgia pieces. I could not locate any articles written in the mainstream press about the beach during the era of segregation at Atlantic City’s beaches.

<sup>91</sup> Haddonfield is a very wealthy and predominately white community that produced New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll who served from 1947-1954. The community has many large and spectacular homes that were built in the nineteenth century. Quakers from Haddonfield parcelled out land in what is now Lawnside, for use by African Americans. This provided Haddonfield with a source of inexpensive manual and domestic labour. Up until the 1950s, it was still a common sight to see African American women in uniforms riding public transportation to work in Haddonfield. There even was a small public bus that had two runs in the morning and two in the afternoon to facilitate these workers. Haddonfield segregated its elementary education and operated a small African American school which was closed in 1948. The school’s teacher had tenure with the board and could not be dismissed. She never received another classroom assignment and worked until 1962 as an itinerant remedial reading teacher.

<sup>92</sup> Scholars Dori Laub and Alessandro Portelli both believe that it is unimportant whether or not testimonials match objective facts. Portelli explains, “the credibility of oral sources is a different credibility.” He expounds on this point stating: “The importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in. Therefore there are no ‘false’ oral sources... The diversity of oral history consists in the fact that ‘untrue’ statements are still psychologically ‘true’, and these previous ‘errors’ sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts.” Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Learning,” in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. S. Felman and D. Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), 27; and Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History,” *History*

*Workshop* 12 (Autumn 1981), 100. For more on inequality at Haddon Heights High School see, Romisher, *Youth Activism and the Black Freedom Struggle*.

<sup>93</sup> "Closed-Down Pool," *Courier Post*, May 17, 1955, 10.

<sup>94</sup> "County to Study Future of Pool Beset by Leaks," *Courier-Post*, Feb. 28, 1973, 45.

<sup>95</sup> James Reuter, "Swimming Hole a Distant Memory," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 20, 2002, L10.

<sup>96</sup> Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 184.

<sup>97</sup> "28 Seized for Picketing: Groups Charge Discrimination Against Negroes at Pool," *New York Times*, Sep. 1, 1947.

<sup>98</sup> "28 Seized in Picketing;" "11 Seized in Jersey Race Equality Row," *New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1947, 15; "Appeal Planned for 7 Convicted in Row at Pool," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Sep. 5, 1947, 1; and "Fined for Bias Disorder: New York Woman Found Guilty in Palisades Park Incident," *New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1947, 19.

<sup>99</sup> "Bias Case Retrial Case," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Dec. 8, 1948, 11.

<sup>100</sup> "Not a Red, Complainant Tells Court," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Feb. 21, 1952, 1.

<sup>101</sup> "Bias Damages Denied by Jury: Plaintiff Charged Discrimination at Pool," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Mar. 1, 1952, 1.

<sup>102</sup> "Not a Red," 1.

<sup>103</sup> "Talks Secret on Pool Peace: Proprietors, C.O.R.E. Meet with Calissi," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 12, 1963, 1, 10.

<sup>104</sup> "Maywoods Swim Club Agrees to Integrate: President of Spring Valley N.A.A.C.P. Becomes First Negro Member," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 13, 1963, 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> "C.O.R.E. Sets Sight on Fair Lawn Pool: Weekend Protest Planned After Club Refuses to Admits Negroes," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jun. 13, 1963, 2.

<sup>106</sup> "Maywoods Swim Club Agrees to Integrate," 1-2.

<sup>107</sup> "School Board Drops 'Y' Swimming Project: Board of Education Votes to Discontinue After-School Activity as Result of Protests on Negro Ban; Explains Discrimination Not Tolerated," *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, N.J.), Apr. 7, 1948.

<sup>108</sup> Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 155.

<sup>109</sup> Richard L. Byrnes, "Letter to the Editor," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, N.J.), Mar. 18, 1968, 18.

**JASON ROMISHER** is an Americanist whose MA thesis entitled *Youth Activism and the Black Freedom Struggle in Lawnside, New Jersey* explores the topics of African American high school student activism and black power in a self-governing African American community. He is currently working on a research project about Helen Hiatt, an American scholar, journalist, and second world war correspondent.

---

## Research Article

# “Я Тоже:” The Rape of Katerina Stepanova and John Paul Jones’ Russian Legacy<sup>1</sup>

Jacob Bell

*University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*

---

On March 31, 1789, a young Russian girl named Katerina Stepanova accused John Paul Jones, an ex-American revolutionary serving Catherine II of Russia, of raping her. The allegation blossomed into an international scandal, drawing hardened battle lines between Catherine’s Russia and the Anglo-American/French world. Despite the international significance of the case among its contemporary audiences, it fell out of later historiography, especially among those who write about Jones. Heretofore, his biographers labeled Stepanova’s allegation as fabrication, intrigue, or slander. Drawing on the John L. Senior Moscow papers, which compile the records and documents concerning the allegation, this paper aims to present the case as recorded in police reports and statements presented to Catherine’s government. It contends that the Stepanova case deserves to be heard because it reveals competing ideas of gender and sexual violence between Russia and Western Europe, opening further avenues of exploration for scholars of gender and sexuality in the eighteenth century. Additionally, the specifics of the case and the debate surrounding it offers reflections on the contextualization of sexual assault and consent with particular relevance to our contemporary dialogues.

ON MARCH 31, 1789, TEN-YEAR-old Katerina Stepanova, the daughter of German immigrants living in St. Petersburg, accused Rear Admiral John Paul Jones, a hero of the American Revolution now serving in the Russian Imperial Navy, of raping her. The girl, supported by her mother, Sophia Fyodorovna Golzvalt, brought her case “Against the forcible violation of her chastity” before the St. Petersburg Chief of Police, Major General-Cavalier Nikita Ivanovich Ryleyev, who ordered an inquiry by Captain Dmitriev, Ward Inspector of the First Admiralty District, where the alleged assault occurred.<sup>2</sup> Dmitriev undertook an investigation of the matter, interviewing the girl and her mother, as well as several members of Jones’ household: Pavel Dmitrevski, Jones’ Russian interpreter; Johann Bahl, a secretary to the Rear Admiral; Michailo Yakovlev, a first-seaman from the *Vladimir*, Jones’ ship during the Crimean campaign; and Ivan Vasilyev, Jones’ peasant coachman. Dmitriev also ordered Katerina Stepanova examined by both a regimental surgeon, Christopher Nilus, and a midwife, Christina Lutkerov, and accepted a written declaration from Jones himself.<sup>3</sup> Dmitriev then reported his findings to Ryleyev on April 5, 1789. On the following day, Ryleyev, recognizing Jones’ status as Rear Admiral, decided he had no jurisdiction over the matter and relayed the case to the State Admiralty College, which dealt with allegations against high ranking naval officers.<sup>4</sup> Through the Admiralty College, the case garnered the attention of Petersburg society and, ultimately, its sovereign, the Empress Catherine II (r. 1762-96).

The allegation of rape against Jones

effectively ended his service in the Russian Imperial Navy and forced him into European exile. Furthermore, it grew into something of an international scandal, with the Empress Catherine, French newspapers, multi-national ambassadors in Paris, St. Petersburg, and Copenhagen, and the American Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, engaging in an extended dialogue about the guilt or innocence of the ex-admiral. The rape allegation became a microcosm of attitudes towards gender and sexual violence in an international context. Yet, despite the scandal of the case, it has remained undiscussed in contemporary works on both John Paul Jones and Catherine the Great. This paper aims to tell Katerina Stepanova’s story, heretofore the victim of a cult of silence. I draw primarily on the John L. Senior Moscow papers, a collection of documents collected by Senior, an American ambassador to the USSR and direct descendent of Jones, and deposited in the Naval Academy Museum Archives in Annapolis, MD. Senior consolidated all the documents concerning Jones’ service in Russia, including Katerina Stepanova’s rape, copied the originals, and translated most to English. To augment the stories provided by Senior, I turn to collections of Jones’ personal papers housed in the Peter Force collection at the Library of Congress, as well as several published collections of memoirs and letters. The revelations of the Stepanova case reveal striking differences between Russian and Anglo/Franco-American readings of the case and speak much to our contemporary experience with sexual violence, assault, and the dynamics of power and justice.

### An American Admiral in St Petersburg: Jones' Russian Service in Memory

A QUICK WALK AROUND THE CRYPT of John Paul Jones in the chapel of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis immediately indicates the lack of conversation on Jones' Russian service. The Navy etched the names of the vessels he commanded in a ring around his final resting place. The names include the *Ranger*, the *Serapis*, the *Providence*, the *Alfred*, the *Alliance*, and the *Bonhomme Richard*. Noticeably missing is the name of the ship Jones commanded in the Imperial Russian Navy, the *Vladimir*. An obscure plaque in the corner of the crypt, detailing honors Jones received in life lists the Order of St. Anne granted to him by Catherine II of Russia. One enduring legacy of Jones' time in Russia is the allegation of rape, which might explain the lack of scholarly interest in this period of his life. In fact, the apparent refusal to address Jones' service in Russia and his private actions while there persists throughout the historiography of the life of the Scots-American.

John Paul Jones was born in 1747, the son of a gardener from Kirkbean in southwest Scotland. His naval career began at thirteen, when he joined as an apprentice to a captain bound for Virginia. He served on a number of slave and merchant ships around the British North American colonies and the West

Indies, having a brother who lived in Virginia. Jones survived a few scandals, most stemming from allegations of excess cruelty in his handling of sailors under his command, before eventually electing to join the American revolutionary struggle shortly after its outbreak in 1775. His service in the Continental Navy culminated in the battle that earned him his immortality, the naval duel between Jones' vessel *Bonhomme Richard* (named for Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*) and the HMS *Serapis* off the coast of England on September 23, 1779. Jones triumphed over the British vessel, giving rise to the possibly apocryphal legend that he shouted, "I have not yet begun to fight!" in response to a call to surrender and strike his colors. France's Louis XVI (r. 1774-92) knighted him for his victory, and Jones preferred to be referred to as "Chevalier" for the remainder of his life.<sup>5</sup>

After the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Jones served the new United States as an agent to various courts in Europe. Working as an American envoy to the King of Denmark, Jones caught the attention of Catherine II, who required naval talent amidst her preparations for a renewed war with the Ottoman Empire in the Black Sea, and sought foreign officers to bolster her ranks.<sup>6</sup> On Catherine's orders, the Baron de Krudener, the Russian ambassador to Denmark, approached Jones in Copenhagen and offered him a command in the Russian

*The rape allegation became a microcosm  
of attitudes towards gender and sexual  
violence in an international context.*

Imperial Navy.<sup>7</sup> The idea of Russian service appealed to Jones. Since the end of the American Revolution, he was a rebel without a cause and an admiral without a commission. He undertook a number of diplomatic missions on behalf of his adopted nation, culminating in his Danish appointment, yet he longed to return to active naval service.<sup>8</sup>

Catherine, in express order to the Admiralty, named Jones a major general of the captains in the Black Sea Fleet on February 15, 1788.<sup>9</sup> The appointment caused some consternation for the ex-American revolutionary. Writing to Thomas Jefferson, then the American ambassador to the court at Versailles, Jones asserted “I can never renounce the glorious title of a Citizen of the United States,” yet he still felt compelled to better his monetary prospects by accepting the Russian offer.<sup>10</sup> Despite these reservations, Jones nonetheless traveled to St. Petersburg to assume his new command. In a dramatic gesture, he compelled Swedish peasants to row him “4 to 500 miles” across the near-frozen Gulf of Finland to Reva, then part of the Russian Empire’s Baltic possessions.<sup>11</sup> Upon arrival in St. Petersburg, Jones received the honor of an audience with the Empress herself. Writing to the Marquis de Lafayette in June 1788, Jones recorded his encounter with Catherine, saying, “The Empress received me with a distinction the most flattering that perhaps any stranger can boast of on entering the Russian service.”<sup>12</sup> During his audience, Jones gave Catherine a copy of the newly ratified American Constitution, to which the Empress expressed her belief, “That the American Revolution cannot fail to bring about others, and to influence every form of

government.” Catherine immediately named Jones Rear Admiral of the Black Sea fleet and he spent a fortnight as the toast of the Imperial court.<sup>13</sup> Following this sabbatical, Catherine placed Jones under the command of Potemkin and sent him south to the ongoing conflict in the Crimea.

John Paul Jones’ memory continues to enjoy popular respect in the American national consciousness. He benefits from the reverence, if not deference, afforded to most members of the American revolutionary cohort. The myth of Jones originally centered on his Revolutionary naval victories, and this is the image of the man which persists. When France returned Jones’ body to the United States for reintering in 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt commemorated the event by declaring, “Every officer in our Navy should know by heart the deeds of John Paul Jones,” and, “Every officer in our Navy should feel in each fiber of his being an eager desire to emulate the energy, the professional capacity, the indomitable determination and dauntless scorn of death which marked John Paul Jones above all his fellows.”<sup>14</sup> Roosevelt’s assessment demonstrated the national focus on Jones’ military career and the absence of a conversation on his private life and his time in Russia.

Only one published monograph has ever fully addressed Jones’ service in the Russian Imperial Navy: Lincoln Lorenz’s *The Admiral and the Empress: John Paul Jones and Catherine the Great*, published in 1954. Lorenz, one of Jones’ most dedicated biographers, took up a defense of the Rear Admiral that became the accepted version of events of Jones’ life in Russia. Lorenz, writing in the 1950s, used his account of Jones



as an indictment of the Stalinist system in Eastern Europe, claiming, “In the tragedy of John Paul Jones in Russia, history is prophecy of the Iron Curtain as revealing as the sun.”<sup>15</sup> His clear mistrust of Russia materialized in his description of the country as a product of the “Military aggression of its Germanic founders from Scandinavia, the ruthless cruelty of its assimilated invaders the Asiatic Tartars, the superstitions of its adopted Greek Orthodox Church, and the typical Eastern treachery.”<sup>16</sup> Lorenz’s assessment of Catherine was not much kinder. He labeled her a tyrant whose “Inordinate feminine vanity went hand in hand with her absolutism,” and asked, “What raiment of royal splendor, what jewels of Eastern brilliance, what allurements of Oriental feminine graces, what domination of autocratic power were not on parade” at her court.<sup>17</sup>

Lorenz’s main contribution to the historiography was the establishment of the accepted story of Jones’ involvement in Katerina Stepanova’s rape. Lorenz is one of the only Jones biographers to read the John L. Senior Moscow papers.<sup>18</sup> Lorenz read the papers and included copies of them in his text, yet concluded that he did not trust them, instead choosing to accept the version of events promulgated by Jones and the Comte de Ségur, the French ambassador to Russia during these events. Lorenz declared that Katerina Stepanova was “the girl decoy” in a licentious plot rooted in “The treachery of the Empress Catherine and her favorites in plotting war and love together so as to serve their despotic ambitions even at the price of trying ruthlessly to destroy the professional and private good name of Jones.”<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent Jones biographers,

accepting the version of events established by Lorenz, have ignored the Senior papers and the story they tell of the rape of Katerina Stepanova. Samuel Eliot Morris, author of *John Paul Jones: A Sailor’s Biography*, wrote an extensive chapter on Jones’ Russian service yet still accepted Lorenz’s conclusion that Jones likely kept Katerina Stepanova as a prostitute and she was used to shame him.<sup>20</sup> Morris earned himself the ire of Lorenz, who chided Morris for not going far enough to indict Catherine for the role he believed she exercised in the affair.<sup>21</sup> Another prominent example is the relatively new Joseph Callo biography *John Paul Jones: America’s First Sea Warrior*, sponsored by the Naval Institute. Despite presenting his work as a “Fresh look at America’s first sea warrior,” which “Avoids the hero worship of past biographies and provides a more complete understanding of his accomplishments,” Callo based his conclusions on Jones’ and the Comte de Ségur’s letters and concluded, “The girl was, in all probability, a prostitute whose services Jones had employed. Jones already had a reputation as a womanizer, and his detractors very effectively used that as the weak point at which to attack his character.”<sup>22</sup> Further, he mirrored Lorenz’s argument that Catherine planned the entire affair, noting, “The empress continued to *act* as if she had been deeply offended by his alleged behavior [emphasis added].”<sup>23</sup> In contrast to these readings, this paper attempts to take Katerina Stepanova’s allegation at face value by discussing in full the evidence provided by Stepanova in her denunciation of Jones.



## The Allegation of Rape

**K**ATERINA STEPANOVA'S VERSION of events placed her in the vicinity of Pokhodyashina house in the First Admiralty District, the residence of John Paul Jones in St Petersburg, on March 30, 1789. In her deposition to Dmitriev, Katerina Stepanova swore she was ten years old and that her mother sent her to sell butter near the house.<sup>24</sup> Katerina Stepanova stated that a man-servant summoned her into the apartment on the second floor of the house to sell butter to his master, whom she reported wore "A white uniform, the front of which was embroidered in gold and decorated with a crimson ribbon and gold star."<sup>25</sup> The man locked the door behind her, paid her 25 kopeks for a 15 kopeks allotment of butter, and then grabbed her around the waist when she tried to leave and hit her on the chin with enough force to bust her lip, stuffing a white handkerchief in her mouth to stop her from screaming. Katerina Stepanova swore that he took her into a bedroom, "Took a mattress off the couch...put it on the floor, threw her down on it and with violence had assaulted her."<sup>26</sup> The translation from the German by John Senior uses the milder term "assaulted," though the report leaves little doubt the man forcibly had sex with her.<sup>27</sup> Katerina Stepanova reported that the man spoke Russian very badly, but told her that he would kill her should she tell her mother or anyone else about him, though he let her leave the flat.<sup>28</sup>

Two medical examinations corroborated Katerina Stepanova's account. Christopher Nilus, the regimental surgeon who inspected Katerina Stepanova at the order of Captain Dmitriev, testified that Katerina

Stepanova's "Child-bearing parts were swollen and she received a left blow on her jaw, her lower lip having been cut by teeth," indicating both the physical and sexual assaults that Katerina Stepanova alleged were true.<sup>29</sup> A second examination, conducted by Christina Lutkerov, a registered midwife in the Second Admiralty District where Katerina Stepanova and her mother lived, confirmed that Katerina Stepanova came to her "covered in blood" and "clearly assaulted," with swollen genitalia and a cut lip. Lutkerov assured the Chief of Police, "Having examined the girl, I found that she was truly raped."<sup>30</sup>

Sophia Fyodorovna supported her daughter's claim of rape and extended the charge that Jones was the perpetrator. Sophia testified that her daughter returned home weeping and relayed to her mother everything that transpired and that they sought the advice of a Lutheran pastor in their district, who sent them to Christina Lutkerov.<sup>31</sup> Leaving her daughter in Lutkerov's care, Sophia returned to the Pokhodyashina house to ascertain the identity of her daughter's attacker. She attested that a secretary to Jones informed her that his master lived in the house and he would show her the perpetrator if she returned the next day, as "Were a thing like that to happen in the German land, the culprit would be hanged."<sup>32</sup> Based on this information, Sophia decided Jones was the man who assaulted her daughter and took her case to the Chief of Police.

The testimony of members of Jones' household alleged further that Jones was indeed with Katerina Stepanova Golzvalt on March 30, 1789. Pavel Dmitrevski, Jones' Russian interpreter, affirmed that he saw Katerina Stepanova

in Pokhodyashina house and relayed her to Jones' chambers on March 30; as he explained her presence, “The admiral liked to select his own butter.”<sup>33</sup> He added further that Katerina Stepanova was with Jones for around a half hour before she came back out the entrance he brought her through. He swore he saw no change in the girl, who returned for her gloves and jug.<sup>34</sup> Ivan Vasilyev, a coachman, attested that Katerina Stepanova visited Jones before, at the London Inn and the Pokhodyashina house, to sell butter, and that he saw her arrive and leave the house over an hour later on the day of the alleged assault.<sup>35</sup> A seaman from the *Vladimir*, Michailo Yakovlev, who was mending boots in the servants' quarters on March 30, saw the girl enter for her gloves and jug, noticing she was weeping and her face swollen, but also said he had seen her before at the Pokhodyashina house.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Johann Gottfried Bahl, a lackey to Jones, testified to several details of Katerina Stepanova's account: that Bahl asked her the price of butter, that he showed Jones three fingers, and that Jones was in his dress uniform when the girl went into his chamber.<sup>37</sup> Bahl asserted he looked through the keyhole of Jones' door and saw his master in a nightgown and later saw the girl leaving, her lips covered in blood and face swollen from weeping. He further told the police that he entered his master's chamber to make the bed that night and discovered drops of blood on the floor.<sup>38</sup>

Jones based his defense of his actions on the supposed moral degradation of his accusers. Evidence points to the fact that Jones engaged in sexual activity with the child Katerina Stepanova on March 30, 1789, yet Jones himself painted a much different account of the encounter. After

receiving a folio of the affidavits signed by the Golzvarts, the medical examiners, and his retinue, Jones responded early to the allegations against him in a letter to Nikita Ivanovich Ryleyev, the Chief of Police in St. Petersburg, on April 2, 1789. In this letter, Jones admitted that he did indeed have sex with Katerina Stepanova, though he calls her “A fallen girl who visited my home several times, and with whom I often frolicked, but for which I have always paid her cash.”<sup>39</sup> He argued that he “Did not despoil her of her virginity” and that she was much older than ten years of age, as the magistrate claimed.<sup>40</sup> He offered his chivalrous nature and sense of honor as safe-guards of his defense. He claimed to be incapable of doing harm “To this girl, or to any person of her sex.” He further claimed a long affair with the girl, in which “She submitted most willingly to do everything that a man could desire of her.”<sup>41</sup>

At this point, Jones changed his story. Disavowing his admittance to Ryleyev about having sex with Katerina Stepanova, Jones crafted a new version of events which placed him as the victim of a set-up by the girl and her mother. The Comte de Ségur recorded this version in his memoirs of his tenure as ambassador to Russia. Ségur claimed he called upon Jones at his apartment and found the Rear Admiral attempting suicide.<sup>42</sup> Having prevented the Rear Admiral from taking his life, Ségur received the following testimony: that Katerina Stepanova came to Jones' chamber and “Asked if he could give her some linen or lace to mend.” Jones claimed that Katerina Stepanova then “Performed indecent gestures,” to which he “Advised her not to enter upon so vile a career; gave her some money,

and dismissed her.” Jones then told Ségur that Katerina Stepanova, upon leaving his chamber, “Tore her clothes, screamed that Jones had raped her, and fell into the arms of her mother,” conveniently waiting outside his door.<sup>43</sup> Through this version of events, Jones molded himself into the victim, rather than perpetrator of sexual violence.

Jones saw the root of the accusation as the cupidity of Sophia Fyodorovna, Katerina Stepanova’s mother, who sought to exploit a powerful man for money.<sup>44</sup> After sending the letter to Ryleyev, Jones gathered evidence for his defense to present to the Admiralty College. Stephan Holtzwarthen, the biological father of Katerina Stepanova who lived separately from the girl and her mother, presented himself in court to sign an affidavit saying his daughter was truly twelve years of age, not ten as she asserted. He further alleged that his wife, Sophia Fyodorovna, left him for a younger man, resided in a brothel, and was herself quite licentious.<sup>45</sup> A Lutheran pastor also came to court to swear that Sophia rarely attended church services, as further proof of her supposed fall from grace.<sup>46</sup>

Despite Jones’ best efforts, the allegations did not disappear from the eye of Petersburg society or the palace,

and in a final plea, Jones appealed to his former commander in the Crimea, Prince Grigori Potemkin, to intercede on his behalf with the Empress.<sup>47</sup> In a letter dated April 13, 1789, Jones reminded the Prince of their mutual bond from the Crimean campaign and begged him to remember a previous promise of patronage.<sup>48</sup> Jones decried what he saw as police intimidation of his household to acquire testimony and wrote that he was entirely ignorant of the Russian language and therefore could have said nothing to the girl, as she claimed. He again accused Sophia Fyodorovna of being a “Miserable, adulterous, debauched woman” and a “Strumpet... without religion and without manners.”<sup>49</sup> He questioned Katerina Stepanova’s state after she visited him and alleged she not only frequently slept with him, but also with his servants. Jones admonished Potemkin by adding:

*Will it be said that it is in Russia that a miserable, adulterous, debauched woman, who has abandoned her husband, who has kidnapped her daughter, who live in a house where other strumpets have established their shameful retreat, has succeeded by a bald accusation lacking proof, in attacking the honor and wounding the sensibilities of an officer who has*

***Jones based his defense of his actions  
on the supposed moral degradation of  
his accusers.***

*distinguished, and who has merited the orders of France, of America, and of this Empire!*<sup>50</sup>

Finally, Jones admitted he enjoyed sex with women, but that “Pleasures that have to be torn away from them by force cause me horror.” He swore this all on his “Word as a soldier and a gentleman.”<sup>51</sup> From all these collected accounts, two distinct versions of Stepanova’s rape emerged—one which blamed Jones, one which blamed Stepanova. Their reception in both Russia and abroad would become the flashpoint of debate and international scandal.

### The Russian Reaction

IN RUSSIA, THE DEBATE OVER THE allegations against Jones centered primarily on the Rear Admiral and his conduct. Catherine, Potemkin, and St. Petersburg society based their conclusions on the facts of the case itself. Catherine took the side of Katerina Stepanova over her officer, the side of a destitute girl over a decorated man. Based on her actions, it seems that, to Catherine, Jones’ past services and military accomplishments held no bearing on the allegations against him. The rape itself was what mattered.

Catherine did not write specifically about the allegations against Jones, so much must be inferred from her actions and the accounts of those close to the throne. For instance, Jones had legal counsel after his case came before the Admiralty College, yet his lawyer suddenly dropped the case, supposedly on orders of the Empress, relayed through the Governor-General of St. Petersburg.<sup>52</sup> While this remains

speculation, Catherine’s known reaction was just as swift. She forbade Jones access to court and proceeded with plans to bring him to trial.<sup>53</sup>

The Russian military code was quite clear on how to handle accusations of rape. Jones, as Rear Admiral, fell under the jurisdiction of Peter the Great’s *Military Statutes*, drafted for the Imperial Army in 1716 and adapted into *Naval Statutes* in 1720.<sup>54</sup> The *Statutes* reflect a simultaneous effort to severely punish any offenders, but they also offer a plethora of hurdles to accusers. The Articles also strictly refer to women as victims, though Articles 165 and 166 of the code specifically address male-on-male, nonconsensual sex, reflecting the all-masculine sphere of the military.<sup>55</sup> To determine guilt or innocence, a judge must weigh several factors, such as whether the woman called for help, the state of the victim’s and the accused’s clothing, the testimony of witnesses, if any, and the timeliness a victim came forward.<sup>56</sup> Yet, despite their strictness, the *Statutes* laid great importance on the notion that “Rape is rape, whether the victim be a fornicatress or an honest woman” and that a judge must take special care to pay attention to “The act itself and the circumstances,” regardless of the people involved.<sup>57</sup> The punishment for officers found guilty of rape domestically or abroad was straightforward: decapitation or penal labor on the galleys for the rest of their lives.<sup>58</sup>

The military statutes invoke a tradition in Russia in which the victim’s word carried great weight in cases of rape and sexual violence. American historian Daniel Kaiser argued that “Muscovite courts, creations of the same men who

dominated the rest of the patriarchal political and social order, frequently credited women's testimony" in cases of rape. Drawing on case studies, Kaiser concluded that early modern Russian "Women seem to have captured that judicial high ground, and they were therefore able to fend off the rape myths employed by the men they accused."<sup>59</sup> Eve Levin suggested that this understanding held deeper roots within a proclivity to believe women in rape cases among the Orthodox Slavs of Russia, Bulgaria, and Serbia, a point extrapolated by other scholars, including Laura Engelstein in her exploration of sex and legalism in Russia.<sup>60</sup> Katherine Antonova and Sergei Antonov concurred with this assessment of women's power in rape cases, though focused on the upper classes, asserting "Early modern elite women in Russia were generally believed when they made accusations of rape and defended their interests in court."<sup>61</sup>

An initial glance at the statutory codes and an understanding of Russian traditions concerning sexual assault may imply that custom, not Catherine's direct intervention, was the driving force behind the legal proceedings against Jones. However, the articles clearly dictated that any delay in reporting a rape, even one day, implied consensual intercourse.<sup>62</sup> One of Jones' main defenses of his actions was just this scenario—Katerina Stepanova and her mother reported to the chief of police slightly over a day after the assault.<sup>63</sup> According to the codes, and in Jones' argument, this delay equaled consent. However, the Empress chose to override this condition of the military statutes and proceed with legal action against Jones.<sup>64</sup> The fact that Catherine, known

*From all these  
collected accounts,  
two distinct  
versions of  
Stepanova's rape  
emerged—one  
which blamed  
Jones, one which  
blamed Stepanova.*

to favor legalistic autocracy and to send items referred to her back to the Imperial Senate if she felt could be settled under the existing law and without the verdict of the sovereign, overruled the statutes in the Jones case implied that the facts of this particular charge mattered greatly to her.<sup>65</sup>

Imperial intervention was not unheard of in cases where women faced insurmountable odds. Catherine II was also to intercede in cases of extreme marital strife to protect women, though nominally the Imperial government ceded most of its authority over family law to the Russian Orthodox Church in the years following Peter the Great's abolition of the patriarchate.<sup>66</sup> One notorious case involved Duke Friedrich William Karl I of Württemberg and his wife, who appeared at the Imperial court in the mid-1780s while the Duke was in Russian service. In December of 1786, the Duchess threw herself at Catherine's feet and begged for imperial intervention, as the Duke often beat her.

## ***Catherine took the side of Katerina Stepanova over her officer, the side of a destitute girl over a decorated man.***

Catherine took the Duchess under her personal protection, offering her first rooms in the Winter Palace then an estate and pension, while stripping her husband of his rank and giving him three days to withdraw from Russia entirely, remarking that his actions warranted corporal punishment.<sup>67</sup> In another 1791 incident, Catherine convinced a court actress, Elizaveta Uranova, who sought respite from the unwanted sexual advances of the powerful foreign minister Count Bezborodko to make her case public and “force” the empress to intercede on her behalf. Uranova followed the advice and leapt from the stage during a performance to fall at Catherine’s feet, crying “*matushka-tsarina spasi menia!*” (“little mother-empress, save me!”); following the incident, Catherine stepped in and gave the actress an imperial dispensation to marry her beloved.<sup>68</sup>

Catherine also occasionally used her power to the benefit of women in divorce proceedings. In the case of Count Alexander Stroganov and his wife, Countess Anna Stroganova, Catherine used her authority to benefit Anna Stroganova by refusing to intervene when Stroganov asked for her help in obtaining

a divorce. The Stroganovs had a rocky marriage, fraught with infidelity, abuse, and constant bickering, leading the British ambassador George Macartney to attest that divorce remained “the only thing in which, it is said, they ever agreed in.”<sup>69</sup> Frustrated by official channels, Stroganov directly petitioned Catherine in November of 1764 on the grounds that his union with Anna Stroganova was invalid because it was a forced union, which directly contradicted Peter I’s edict barring parents from forcing their children into marriage.<sup>70</sup> Anna Stroganova, despite clearly wanting a divorce, disputed the charge of forced marriage, instead claiming she entered into the union of her own accord. On December 2, Catherine responded to Stroganov and refused his petition, claiming “A divorce does not depend on me, but is specifically church business, in which I cannot and will not intervene,” but adding that she also refused because Anna Stroganova was not present nor petitioning for a divorce.<sup>71</sup> She told the couple that they may live apart if they wished, and granted Anna Stroganova the right to use her maiden name. Catherine’s actions in this case highlight the importance she placed on a woman’s voice. Anna Stroganova was not part of the petition, so Catherine felt she could not intervene without hearing what the wife had to say.<sup>72</sup>

Catherine again interceded on behalf of Katerina Stepanova against Jones. Faced with the realities of the sentence against him, Jones actively sought to re-ingratiate himself to the Empress. His appeals to Potemkin fell on deaf ears, leaving Jones without Russian support against the judgment of the Russian sovereign.<sup>73</sup> With Catherine’s



intransigence on the issue proved by Potemkin's silence, Jones turned towards his pre-existing connections with the United States and France to influence the Empress. An international campaign by Jones' allies at court, spearheaded by Louis XVI's ambassador to Russia, the Comte de Ségur, altered Catherine's judicial proceedings. The Empress granted Jones a chilling audience, in which the Rear Admiral kissed her hand. She granted him two years leave abroad to pursue "private business."<sup>74</sup> Jones was to keep his title and rank, yet Catherine effectively banished him from Russia during the height of the Turkish war.<sup>75</sup> The Empress' actions here proved her priorities. She dismissed a tried naval commander, especially sought out by her agents abroad, during wartime, showing that she merited the allegations against Jones higher than his potential marital service.

Jones spent his exile engaging in a propaganda war across Europe and the new United States. He actively sought to defend his conduct during the Crimean campaign and his private conduct in St. Petersburg. With the aid of Ségur, Jones promoted a version of events in which the offense to his honor in Russia necessitated his departure for two years; yet, his actions showed a man desperate to return to the Russian service. Two attempts to join the Danish and Swedish navies failed when Catherine used her influence to block his appointments.<sup>76</sup> While abroad, Jones again wrote to Potemkin, congratulating the field marshal on his recent victory over the Turks and begging the Prince's intercession with the Empress to allow Jones to return to Russia. The appeal received no reply.<sup>77</sup> Faced with silence

from the Russian court, Jones sought out Catherine's erstwhile correspondent, the Baron von Grimm, and persuaded him to forward letters from Jones directly to the Empress. In one of these letters, Jones admitted "I was afflicted and even offended at having received a parole for two years in time of war...a parole which it has never entered my head to wish for, and still less to ask."<sup>78</sup> He again entreated the Empress to remember his service and allow him to return to court.

Catherine refused to reply directly to Jones, but wrote to Grimm about him, picking apart Jones' claims of his exceptional service. She added that his two-year sabbatical, which caused him such consternation, resulted from "A suit brought against him for rape, which did little to honor his excellence, his humanity, his justice, or his generosity," and resulted in Russian seamen refusing to serve under him.<sup>79</sup> Catherine's address to Grimm proved the continuation of her belief that the rape allegation colored Jones' entire Russian service—no battlefield glory, real or imagined, nor his desire to serve Russia outweighed the fact that he raped a girl. The refusal of Russian sailors to serve with Jones suggests that other Russians shared Catherine's opinions on rape and those guilty of it. Catherine succinctly summed up her lingering opinion of Jones in another letter to Grimm. Following Jones' death in 1792, Catherine wrote "This Paul Jones was a horrible person, much dignified among despicable persons."<sup>80</sup>

### The International Reaction

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY almost unanimously endorsed

Jones' version of events surrounding the allegations. In Great Britain, France, and the United States, Jones enjoyed the confidence of statesmen and diplomats. The emerging campaign in favor of Jones and against Catherine mobilized popular support behind the Rear Admiral across western Europe. Notably, this campaign simultaneously highlighted Jones' virtuous nature and Catherine's licentious personality, molding the debate into one of the merits of Catherine's rule and reaction to the allegations against Jones, rather than the purported rape itself.

French public opinion swung behind Jones early in the debate, focusing on his past heroics over his contemporary scandal. The Comte de Ségur proved an erstwhile ally of Jones and a significant force in the shaping of French opinion to ignore the accusations against the Rear Admiral. He promoted the theory of a court conspiracy with a vigor second only to Jones himself. In a letter to the Comte d'Ésternes, French minister to Prussia, dated August 26, 1789, Ségur expounded his belief that Jones angered the Prince Potemkin and others close to the Empress, leading to their feeding of false information to the Empress about the severity of the accusations against Jones.<sup>81</sup>

Ségur believed that carnal sex was at the root of the accusation, but that the fault lay in Catherine's sexual partners, not the sex between Jones and Katerina Stepanova. Ségur argued two theories: either Jones offended men who shared the Empress's bed, or Jones himself refused the advances of the Empress, earning her ire either way. Using connections in Paris and Versailles, Ségur arranged lodging for Jones in France and published articles in the *Gazette de France* and other

newspapers lauding Jones' decorated service in the Crimea and stressing he left Russia having received permission “To kiss the hand of Her Imperial Majesty.”<sup>82</sup> In an accompanying letter to the Comte Montmorin, one of Louis XVI's press officers, Ségur insisted his article must be printed to emphasize Jones' merits over the accusations and to assert that the Empress did not truly send Jones away in scandal.<sup>83</sup> The printing succeeded when the article found its way into many foreign gazettes and Jones received letters of confidence from French diplomats abroad.<sup>84</sup> Ségur and the press drew on a French tradition of depicting Catherine as a harlot and usurper: the earliest international account of her coming to power was Claude-Carloman de Rulhière's unpublished manuscript entitled *Histoire, ou Anecdotes sur la révolution de Russie en l'année 1762*, which accused Catherine of soliciting her lovers to murder her husband and make her empress. This pamphlet began a popular, and largely misogynistic, discourse around her sex life which permeates discussions of Catherine's legacy into the present day.<sup>85</sup> The fact that Jones was a French citizen and France condemned Catherine's war with the Ottoman Empire further influenced the shift of blame away from Jones.<sup>86</sup> Popular sentiment featured prominently in the funeral oration, following Jones' death in 1792, which concentrated on his merits as an admiral and resistance to the despotism of the “Seramis of the North,” rather than the scandal in which he left Russian service.<sup>87</sup> The manner in which the French fixed the blame on Catherine, rather than Jones, suggested that geopolitical, and to an extent, misogynistic ideas about the Empress herself, mattered

more than the details of the case against Jones.

British and American press and politicians joined the Jones camp against the Russian Empress. Thomas Jefferson, then serving as Secretary of State in the Washington administration, wrote to Jones that “No proof was necessary to satisfy us here of your good conduct everywhere,” and that Jones held not only the trust of Jefferson, but George Washington and the rest of his cabinet as well.<sup>88</sup> An American agent in Paris, a Mr. L. Littlepage, echoed the sentiment in a letter to Jefferson in which he blamed the British for undertaking a campaign against Jones to “Ruin him in the opinion of the Empress,” something he claimed they succeeded in by concocting allegations “too ridiculous.”<sup>89</sup> The British, for their part, bearing little love for either Jones or the Russians, branded Jones’ dismissal from court as a prime example of Catherine leaving a lover, reducing the dismissal as “just sex,” rather than rape. One circulating print depicted Catherine replacing a bust of Jones with another lover in her “hall of fame,” a print laden with phallic images and insinuations of bestiality surrounding the wide-hipped Empress, implying sexual undertones to the relationship between the Empress and her former admiral.<sup>90</sup> This particular print mirrored a tradition in British satirical depictions of Catherine; in other instances, she became an Amazon fighting the phallic thrusts of the Ottoman sultan or a wayward Katerina, from William Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, who needed to kneel to a Petruchio, always in the guise of an oversexed woman who should be put back in her place.<sup>91</sup> The British and American reactions to the Jones case

proved their priorities. Their perceived opinions of the character of Catherine and Jones mattered far more than the details of the case itself.

## Conclusions

ONE FUNDAMENTAL PIECE OF Jones’ Russian experience and the accusations leveled against him by Katerina Stepanova was that his reputation, not the young girl’s rape, was the key issue. In Jones’ view, whether or not he engaged in sexual activity with Katerina Stepanova was secondary to what their interaction reflected on his personal character. His attacks on the morality of the young girl and her mother were means through which he tried to defend his own moral standing in the eyes of the Russian and pan-European courts. He consistently appealed to Enlightened ideas of justice and fair trial in his complaints to Potemkin and his friends abroad, yet refused to offer the same courtesy to Katerina Stepanova. Jones blamed Russians for allowing preconceived views of his character to influence the worth of his testimony while he simultaneously used his perception of Katerina Stepanova and her mother’s characters as the basis for his own dismissal of their accusations. In Jones’ view, these women with compromised morality held compromised reliability.

The differences in perception between Russia and western Europe became readily apparent when comparing reactions to the Jones case. Catherine took the side of Katerina Stepanova, taking the girl at her word and responding to Jones as a criminal. In a reflection of their cultural tradition to believe accusers, Russians seemed

to agree with their Empress, as Jones faced ridicule from Petersburg society, silence from his former friends while on campaign, and a refusal from Russian sailors to serve under his command. In contrast, Jones’ Western connections rallied to his defense. British press, American statesmen, and French public opinion found a series of excuses and scapegoats to explain away the facts of the case. Katerina Stepanova’s allegations became a conspiracy, the revenge of a spurned lover, or slander, and ceased to be what it was—a rape. One consistent theme in the international reaction remained the absence of a voice for Katerina Stepanova. Her testimony paled in comparison to the interpretations of the Euro-American community.

The Katerina Stepanova case remains important because it offers insight into the issue of power dynamics of sexual violence. The recent *#MeToo* campaign, the popular unveiling of the sexual abuses of the entertainment industry, and the dialogues about sexual violence on U.S. college campuses may imply that these issues are a fairly modern phenomenon. Yet, we must strive to differentiate popular attention from existence. Dynamics of power and status tend to populate the narrative of any act of sexual violence, a fact Jones proved in his interaction with Stepanova.

The facts of the case are not unfamiliar—a man with connections and power took advantage of a woman lacking both. Jones was a man in a powerful position, a war hero decorated by three nations and a Rear Admiral of the Russian Imperial Navy, close to both Potemkin and, by his own account, the Empress.<sup>92</sup> In terms of social and economic status, Katerina Stepanova

lacked agency. Jones held all the power in their relationship. Katerina Stepanova was poor and needed money; Jones had capital, evidenced by his overpaying for the butter he purchased.<sup>93</sup> Ultimately, Jones used his position to exploit the young girl. He took her into his chambers on the pretext of buying butter and raped her, reminding her of his power over her by threatening to kill her should she talk.<sup>94</sup> Had the cast of characters changed to a U.S. Congressman and aide, or a Hollywood producer and actress, the power dynamic would remain static. The threat of violence and reprisal remain a key instrument of ensuring silence: “Nearly all of the people TIME interviewed,” for their cover article on the Silence Breakers as the 2017 Person of the Year, “Expressed a crushing fear of what would happen to them personally... if they spoke up.”<sup>95</sup>

Further examination of the Jones case reveals a troubling trend. Compared to the twenty-first century, his words still invoke the same defenses used by those accused of sexual assault. Two letters in particular highlight this trend, Jones’ letter to Nikita Ivanovich Ryleyev on April 2, 1789 and his first letter to Potemkin on April 13, 1789. In his letter to Ryleyev, Jones first asserted that Katerina and her mother were lying, then proceeded to accuse Katerina of being a whore and frequent visitor to his bedchamber, remarking he always paid her well.<sup>96</sup> His defense expanded to remark on other occasions where she consented to sex with him, when he claimed “She submitted most willingly to do everything that a man could desire of her.”<sup>97</sup> In the account given by Ségur in his memoirs, Katerina tried to initiate sexual relations with Jones, then

screamed rape when he heroically refused her advances.<sup>98</sup> Jones' letter to Potemkin mirrored these assertions, though expanded the charge to say Katerina also had sex with his servants. Yet, Jones also appealed to Potemkin as a fellow soldier and man. He told the Prince that he was guilty of loving women, but only respectfully, callously implying a connection with Potemkin through a shared love of women: a "men-will-be-men" argument.<sup>99</sup> In conjunction with the Ryleyev letter, Jones' defense mirrored those offered by twenty-first century defendants accused of sexual violence. The documentary *The Hunting Ground*, which assessed sexual violence on American college campuses, claimed that previous consent, "boys-will-be-boys" attitudes, and the sexual reputation of a woman are chief excuses for those accused of sexual assault.<sup>100</sup> When placed

in comparison, Jones' actions and his defense of his conduct imply that the dialogue and conversations about sexual violence have undergone little change in two centuries.

Catherinian Russia provided Katerina Stepanova a means of redress against Jones. The preexisting structures surrounding sexual crimes, strengthened by the autocrat's reading of the case gave Katerina Stepanova an opportunity to speak up and hope to bring her rapist to justice. Western proclivity to assume the superiority of the expressions of its institutions and causes often casts Russia as a negative "other," a backwards nation caught in the confines of misogyny and repression. Yet, Catherine's Russia may have represented a tangible, eighteenth-century space where women could exercise an ability to be heard. ♦

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Russian "я тоже" (*ya tozhe*) closely translates as "I also" or "me too," used here to evoke the #MeToo movement.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Djaner and Nikolai Gagin, Police Office of the City of St. Petersburg, "Report to State Admiralty College," April 6, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #66, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives. Translations from the Russian and French are my own.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Count Tchernyshov, letter to Count Ya. A. Briius, April 21, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #62, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Eliot Morris, *John Paul Jones: A Sailor's Biography* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 1-52, 480-510.

<sup>6</sup> The Russo-Turkish War of 1787-92.

<sup>7</sup> Baron de Krudener, letter to John Paul Jones, March 22, 1788, in Peter Force Collection, Series 8D, Microfilm Reel 1672, Washington, DC, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Baron de Krudener, March 23, 1788, in Peter Force Collection, Series 8D, Microfilm Reel 1673, Washington, DC, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

<sup>9</sup> Catherine II, "Order to Admiralty College," in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #64, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>10</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Thomas Jefferson, April 8, 1788, in Peter Force Collection, Series

8D, Microfilm Reel 1682, Washington, DC, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

<sup>11</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, June 15, 1788, in Peter Force Collection, Series 8D, Microfilm Reel 1724, Washington, DC, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “Reinternment of John Paul Jones” (speech, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, April 24, 1906).

<sup>15</sup> Lincoln Lorenz, *The Admiral and the Empress: John Paul Jones and Catherine the Great* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1954), 184.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 35, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>19</sup> Lorenz, *The Admiral and the Empress*, 17, 123.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Eliot Morris, *John Paul Jones: A Sailor’s Biography*, 407-98.

<sup>21</sup> Lincoln Lorenz, “Reviewed Work: John Paul Jones: A Sailor’s Biography by Samuel Eliot Morison,” in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1960), 115-17.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Callo, *John Paul Jones: America’s First Sea Warrior* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 167.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Katerina Stepanova Golzart, “Statement of Katerina Stepanova,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #68, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives. The affidavits of Katerina and Sophia Fyodorovna bear the signature of Johann Christian Kayzer, Sophia’s stepdaughter as neither the mother nor daughter were literate.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Djaner and Gagin, “Report to State Admiralty College.”

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Nilus, “Report on Examination of Katerina Stepanova,” April 1, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #70, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives. The translation comes from John L. Senior, though the word “assaulted” seems a more modern term.

<sup>30</sup> Christina Lutkerov, “Midwife Statement,” 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #71, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>31</sup> Sophia Fyodorovna Golzart, “Statement of Sophia Fyodorovna,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #69, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>32</sup> Sophia Golzart, “Statement.” Bahl, the man Sophia referenced, was German.

<sup>33</sup> Pavel Dmitrevski “Statement Pavel Dmitrievski, April 3, 1789,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #72, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>34</sup> Djaner and Gagin, “Report to State Admiralty College.”

<sup>35</sup> Ivan Vasilyev “Statement of Ivan Vasilyev” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #75, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>36</sup> Michailo Yakovlev, “Statement of First-Degree Seaman Michailo Yakovlev, taken by Ivan Dmitriev,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #67, Annapolis, MD, United States



Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Johann Gottfried Bahl “Statement of Johann Gottfried Bahl, April 3, 1789,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #74, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Nikita Ivanovich Ryleyev, April 2, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 1, #57, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Comte de Ségur, *Mémoires: ou Souvenirs et anecdotes par M. Le Comte de Ségur*, Vol. 3, (Paris: Colburn, 1825), 427-8.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 429.

<sup>44</sup> Jones to Ryleyev, April 2 1789.

<sup>45</sup> Stephan Holtzwarthen, “Declarations du nommé Stephan Holtzwarthen,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 1, #59, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>46</sup> L. Lampe “Statement,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 1, #60, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Prince Grigori Potemkin was a powerful man in the Russian court by virtue of being one of the Empress’ “фавориты,” which most directly translates as “favorites.” Like the empresses Anna Ioannovna (r. 1730-40) and Elizabeth Petrovna (r. 1742-62) before her, Catherine took men as lovers. The relationships between the favorites and the empresses should not be misconstrued as purely platonic or entirely romantic. While the empresses almost certainly loved their favorites, they had no intentions of granting them autocratic power. The favorites held prominent ministerial positions while in favor, and courtiers used them to gain the ears of the empresses, though true power still rested with the tsarinas. Potemkin was an exception, whom Catherine loved dearly and with whom she had a three-decade long affair. Unlike the tenuous positions of other favorites, Potemkin and the Empress ruled together for nearly seventeen years. Catherine granted him vast sums of money, estates, offices, and made him a Prince of the Russian and Holy Roman Empire. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between Catherine and Potemkin and an anthology of the volume of letters exchanged between them, see Douglas Smith, ed. *Love and Conquest: Personal Correspondence of Catherine the Great and Prince Grigory Potemkin* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Prince Grigori Potemkin, April 13, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 1, #58, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives. Jones served under Potemkin in the Liman campaign around the Crimean Peninsula during the Russo-Turkish War of 1787-92.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Comte de Ségur, letter to Comte d’Esternes, August 26, 1789, in John Henry Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones, a Captain in the Navy of the United States*

during their Revolutionary War (Washington DC: United States Navy, 1825), 319-20. The US Navy gathered this collection of Jones' letters from the originals in possession of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the Marquis de Lafayette in 1825.

<sup>54</sup> Art. 167, *Voinskie Artikuli pri tom zhe i kratika primechaniya 1714 g.* in N. L. Rubinshayna, *Voinniye Ustavi Petra Velikogo* (Moscow: 1946), 77-8.

<sup>55</sup> Art. 165-166, *Voinskie Artikuli*, 78.

<sup>56</sup> Peter I, “Chapter of Martial Law 20 Article 167 Section,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #85, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel H. Kaiser, “‘He Said, She Said.’ Rape and Gender Discourse in Early Modern Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2002), 215-16.

<sup>60</sup> Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 212-246; Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 75-80.

<sup>61</sup> Katherine Pickering Antonova and Sergei Antonov, “The Maiden and the Wolf: Law, Gender, and Sexual Violence in Imperial Russia,” *Slavic Review* 77, no. 1 (Spring 2018), 105.

<sup>62</sup> Art. 167, *Voinskie Artikuli*, 77-8. For more on the code, see Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia*.

<sup>63</sup> John Paul Jones to Prince Grigori Potemkin, April 13, 1789.

<sup>64</sup> Comte de Ségur, letter to Comte d'Ésternes, August 26, 1789.

<sup>65</sup> Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981), 581-7.

<sup>66</sup> Barbara Alpine Engel, “Women, the Family, and Public Life,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, edited by Dominic Lieven, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), vol. 2, 309-10. Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Rus (in Russian, Патриарх Московский и всея Руси) in 1700 by refusing to name a successor after the death of the Patriarch Adrian. He established the Holy Synod to govern the church in 1721, vesting ecclesiastical authority in a government body headed by a lay member. See James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1971).

<sup>67</sup> Ivan Mikhailovich Dolgorukov, *Povest' o rozhdenii moem, proiskhozhdenii i vsei zhizni, pisannaia mnoi samim i nachataia v Moskve 1788-ogo goda v avguste mesiatse, na 25-om godu ot rozhdeniia moego*, vol. I, (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2004), 138-139; G.I. Gennadi, ed., *Pamiatnie zapiski A.V. Khrapovitskago, stats-sekretaria imperatritsy Ekateriny Vtoroi* (Moscow: v universitetskoi tipografii, 1862), 18. Catherine could not have truly exercised corporate punishment against the Duke of Wurttemberg, due to his status as a noble. Catherine outlawed corporal punishment against nobles in her 1785 Charter to the Nobility.

<sup>68</sup> Andrey Zorin, “Redkaia veshch: ‘sandunovskii skandal’ i russkii dvor vremen Frantsuzkoi revoliutsii,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 80 (2006), 91-110.

<sup>69</sup> A.N., ed., *Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II na osnovanii podlinnykh rukopisei i s ob'iasnitel'nymi primechaniami*, 12 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1907), XII: 404; “Sir George Macartney to His Grace the Duke of Grafton,” *Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva* 12 (1873), 256-257, 328.

<sup>70</sup> *Arkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, v. 34. *Bumagi raznykh sodержaniia* (Moscow: Universitetskaia

tipografia, 1888), 341. Alexander Stroganov was a friend of Catherine's—she granted him the right to live in her former apartments in the Winter Palace. Despite their relationship, she still decided against his petition.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 341, 349-50.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 350.

<sup>73</sup> John Paul Jones to Prince Grigori Potemkin, April 13, 1789.

<sup>74</sup> Comte de Ségur, letter to Comte d'Ésternes, August 26, 1789.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Catherine II, March 8, 1791, in Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 325-27.

<sup>77</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Prince Grigori Potemkin, July 24, 1790, in Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 322-25.

<sup>78</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Catherine II, March 8, 1791.

<sup>79</sup> Catherine II, letter to Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm, May 14, 1791 in *Lettres de Catherine II à Grimm*, ed. by Imperial Russian Historical Society (St. Petersburg: A.A. Polostov, 1876).

<sup>80</sup> Catherine II, letter to Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm, August 15, 1792, in *Lettres de Catherine II à Grimm*.

<sup>81</sup> Comte de Ségur, letter to Comte d'Ésternes, August 26, 1789.

<sup>82</sup> Comte de Ségur, "Article to be inserted in the public prints, and especially in the Gazette of France," July 21, 1789, in Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 320-21.

<sup>83</sup> Comte de Ségur, letter to Comte Montmorin, July 21, 1789, in Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 320.

<sup>84</sup> Baron de la Houze, letter to John Paul Jones, February 9, 1790, in Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 321-22.

<sup>85</sup> Claude-Carloman de Rulhière, *Histoire, ou Anecdotes sur la révolution de Russie en l'année 1762* (Paris: Chez Desenne, 1797). The text was circulated in manuscript form among the Parisian salons decades before its 1797 publication, though Catherine tried her best to suppress it; Charles François Philibert Masson, *Mémoires secrets sur la Russie: et particulièrement sur la fin du règne de Catherine II et le commencement de celui de Paul I. Formant un tableau des mœurs de St. Pétersbourg à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: C. Pougens, 1800), 83; For more on the ever-present issue of sexism in relation to depictions and studies of Catherine, see James Cracraft, "Great Catherine," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 1 (1993): 107-15.

<sup>86</sup> "L'enjambée Imperiale," 1792, LC-USZC2-3547, PC 5 - 1792, no. 6 (B size), Washington, D.C. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Henri Marron, "Funeral Elegy for John Paul Jones," quoted in John Paul Jones and Mass. Bibliophile Society, *Letters of John Paul Jones : Printed from the Unpublished Originals in Mr. W.K. Bixby's Collection* (Boston, William K Bixby, Horace Porter, and F Sanborn, 1905), 69-70.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Paul Jones, August 31, 1791, in the Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress, Series 1, Reel 014, Washington, DC, Library of Congress.

<sup>89</sup> L. Littlepage, letter to Thomas Jefferson, March 23, 1791, Sherburne, *Life and Character of Chevalier John Paul Jones*, 330.

<sup>90</sup> “Catherine II Replaces Jones by Fox in Her Hall of Fame,” Cambridge, MA, Harvard College Library, reproduced in Morris, *John Paul Jones: A Sailor’s Biography*, 379.

<sup>91</sup> “The Christian Amazon with her Invincible Target,” 1868,0808.5663, AN281829001, London, The British Museum; James Gillray “The Taming of the Shrew: Katharine and Petruchio; The Modern Quixote, or what you will,” April 20, 1791, LC-USZ62-123029, PC 1 - 7845 (B size), Washington, D.C., Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

<sup>92</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, June 15, 1788.

<sup>93</sup> Katerina Stepanova Golzart, “Statement of Katerina Stepanova,” in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #68, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Staphanie Zacharek, Eliana Dockterman, and Haley Sweetland Edwards, “The Silence Breakers,” *TIME Magazine*, December 2017.

<sup>96</sup> John Paul Jones, letter to Nikita Ivanovich Ryleyev, April 2, 1789, in John L. Senior Moscow Papers, Vol. 2, #65, Annapolis, MD, United States Naval Academy Museum Archives.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Comte de Ségur, *Mémoires: ou Souvenirs et anecdotes par M. Le Comte de Ségur*, 427-8.

<sup>99</sup> John Paul Jones to Prince Grigori Potemkin, April 13, 1789.

<sup>100</sup> Amy Ziering, *The Hunting Ground*, documentary, directed by Kirby Dick (CNN: Los Angeles, 2015).

**JACOB BELL** is a first-year Ph.D. student in the Department of History at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. His research primarily focuses on gender, sexuality, and global empire in the eighteenth century, predominantly centered on the Russian and Qing empires. Bell received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2018. Bell's other publication, “‘To Make My Happiness and His Own’: Male Homosexuality in Catherinian Russia,” analyzes the dynamics of public and private spaces in expressions of homosexual desire in late eighteenth-century Russia.

---

# *Research Article*

## **Mutuality: Nicaragua and the Deportation of German Nationals During World War II**

Vladimir Penaloza  
*New York University*

---

Right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States implemented an international campaign against enemy aliens. Using hemispheric security as justification, the United States, sometimes at the request from Latin American nations, began interning allegedly dangerous enemy aliens living in the region. Individuals of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry, along with some of their families, were detained and deported from their country of residence to the United States without receiving any sort of legal hearing or specific reasons for deportation. Often these individuals were deported based on hearsay or for non-related political reasons.

This paper focuses primarily on Nicaragua, and its systematic oppression of German nationals living in the country during the war. By analyzing archival sources, such as newspaper articles and diplomatic correspondence, this paper aims to shed light on a campaign of US interference in Latin American policies towards Ger-

mans during World War II, for which there is a dearth of existing research. It is evident Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza Garcia supported the deportation campaign against German nationals living in Nicaragua as a means of obtaining economic assistance from the U.S. In turn, creating favorable political circumstances that helped him solidify his grasp of power, and in the course helped him amass a large personal wealth. An aspect that is difficult to corroborate is the degree to which the interpersonal relationship between Somoza and Roosevelt influenced the Nicaraguan state's willingness to implement the deportation program.

**A**ROUND SIX O'CLOCK IN THE morning an officer and two soldiers knocked on the door of a house in Leon, Nicaragua. When the door was answered, one soldier said, "Good morning, is Mr. Fischer in?" Mr. Fischer appeared and said, "I'm coming out of the bathroom, what can I do for you?" They responded, "Join us. Because the war has broken out and you are a German subject, you have to come with us." After seventeen days of being held in jail, he was released on December 24, 1941, and held on house arrest. Julio Fischer told his son this story years later as an example of the campaign against German nationals in Nicaragua during World War II. The son, Róger Fischer Sánchez, an advisor of cultural goods for the Central Bank of Nicaragua, shared his knowledge about the detainment of his father. His father, a German, came to Nicaragua to mine an auriferous deposit that belonged to his grandmother, Aurora Cortes, originally from Leon, in the area of northern Chinandega. Róger believed that this was an example of President Somoza's greed – Somoza knew his father was a miner, and had knowledge of the sugar making business, and wanted to get this knowledge for "free", that's why Somoza gave him Montelimar (personal property) for jail and made him work

at his sugar mill for free. The arrest and detainment of Julio Fischer was a way to ensure that Mr. Fischer's knowledge was put to use for the state, for Somoza's benefit.<sup>1</sup>

The above story is an example of how the Nicaraguan government became a willing participant in the United States' campaign to detain and deport enemy aliens and the benefits that President Somoza reaped through this participation. During World War II (1939-1945), Latin America became a staging ground for one of the United States' most overlooked international campaigns: the rounding up, deportation, and internment of enemy aliens in neighboring states. During the war 4,058 Germans were deported from Latin America and interned in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

When analyzing the relationship between the United States and Latin American nations during World War II, scholars have emphasized imperialism in several forms, mainly economic, cultural, and political. In its most elementary definition, imperialism is "[...] a system in which A dominates, controls, or coerces B, preventing B from acting in its own interest or compelling it to act in the interest of A."<sup>3</sup> Within this framework, the economic relations between the U.S. and Latin America have



traditionally been comprehended in terms of dependency. By 1939, the U.S. was the dominant market for most of Latin America, not just the main source of supply, substantiating the economic dependency of Latin American nations on the United States.<sup>4</sup> U.S. concentration of capital and outsourcing of production to Latin America can best be characterized as, “the monopoly stage of capitalism” to use Lenin’s words.<sup>5</sup> In his seminal work on Anastasio Somoza Garcia, Knut Walter echoes the relevance of this conception of imperialism by noting how important exogenous forces were to Nicaragua: “[...] the Nicaraguan political system was determined to one extent or another by the actions of foreign states; that is, the Nicaraguan state was the product in important respects of the political and military decisions of stronger states.”<sup>6</sup> The deportation of German nationals from Latin America is just another example of U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua.

This article revises the standard narrative of the way the history of Latin America during WWII is told using the concept of mutuality and mutual benefit. Latin America during World War II has been viewed as a bystander to the conflict and a subservient region to countries like the United States and those in Europe. However, this article argues that Latin America was a key player. The goal of this investigation is to discuss Nicaragua, and the Somoza regime’s systematic oppression and deportation of German nationals residing in the country; to view the deportation program not from an American, but from a Latin American perspective in order to uncover the reasons for Somoza’s decision to participate in a

program that stripped people of dignity and freedom. Somoza supported the deportation campaign against German nationals living in Nicaragua as a means of obtaining economic assistance from the U.S., creating favorable political circumstances that helped him to solidify his grasp of power, and in the course allowed him to enrich himself. Another contributing factor to the Nicaraguan state’s willingness to implement the deportation program was the perceived interpersonal relationship between Somoza and Roosevelt.

The role the U.S. played in Latin America during World War II is something that is not to be understated, but it is important to challenge current scholarship by placing the Nicaraguan state not as a passive or solely reactive actor but as a significant player. By looking at imperialism not through a U.S.-centric lens but as imperialism from below, we can better understand U.S.-Latin American relations during World War II.

### **Imperialism and Deportation Program**

WORKS WRITTEN ABOUT LATIN America during World War II have focused primarily on the ABC countries (Argentina, Brazil and Chile), likely because they have the largest economies of the region.<sup>7</sup> Other works touch on the Andean region (Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador) with their natural resources of international value, which were vital to the war effort, such as copper, tin, and silver. These works have helped to build the foundation for the study of U.S.-Latin American relations during World War II. As a result of placing so much focus on the ABC countries and the Andean

region there has been little written on Nicaragua during World War II. When Nicaragua is mentioned, it is typically folded into a greater conversation about Central America. Yet more than any other country in Central America, Nicaragua has been the site of the most persistent U.S. political, economic and military interventions (1909-1933) due to the U.S.' interest in building an isthmus canal. Thus, Nicaragua's long experience with U.S. imperialism provides a relevant case study from which to analyze the deportation program of German nationals during World War II.

The U.S. has repeatedly intervened during periods of political instability in Nicaragua, as was the case seven times between 1909 and 1933. U.S. presence was so prevalent that one observer commented that "Washington had ruled the country more completely than the American Federal Government rules any state in the Union."<sup>8</sup> As previously stated, this meddling in Nicaraguan political conflicts can be attributed to American interest in building an isthmus canal through Nicaragua. The construction of the canal is a point of contention throughout most of Nicaragua's history, even after the building of the Panama Canal. In 1927, the revolutionary leader opposing U.S. intervention, Augusto Cesar Sandino, would acknowledge the importance of the canal in his Manifesto, stating that, "Civilization requires that a Nicaraguan canal be built, but that it be done with capital from the whole world, and not exclusively from the United States."<sup>9</sup> Because the canal was crucial to the United States, and embraced by Nicaraguan elites who sought "a cosmopolitan nation-state project", it solidified "Nicaragua's embrace of the

'American way of life.'<sup>10</sup>

Given the United States' history of intervention in Nicaragua, and in Latin America more broadly, the World War II deportation policy is unsurprising. Nicaragua was more than willing to participate in American policies for Latin America – including their program of deportation of German nationals out of Latin America to prevent what the U.S. feared: A Nazi Fifth Column<sup>11</sup> in the Americas. In the opinion of Friedman, "[a]lthough it has somehow escaped notice, the deportation program should be at the center of any history of the war and Latin America, and especially of U.S.-Latin American relations in this era."<sup>12</sup>

Although the U.S. initiated and drove the deportation policy, it required the collaboration of Latin American countries. Assistance was instrumental in the implementation of the campaign. This cooperation manifested itself in U.S. economic assistance that led to political stability for Somoza. Yet, it was essential that the U.S. not appear as either the instigator or driver of the arrest of residents in Latin American nations. The appearance of cooperation was essential due to the long history of U.S. intervention in Nicaraguan history. In a memo from the U.S. State Department on November 24, 1943 to Assistant Chief of the State Department Division of the American Republics, John Moors Cabot stated the importance of having the deporting government request assistance from the U.S. The memo specified that "it would be highly desirable if the written record in each deportation case should show that the deporting Government had requested our collaboration" and that the need for discretion was paramount.<sup>13</sup>

Even though there was a need by the U.S. to not be perceived as carrying out this campaign unilaterally, the comments made by John Moors Cabot made it seem as though they were. On December 16, 1941, Cabot wrote, "While I do not think we should *urge* any government to deport Axis nationals, I see no harm in discreetly pushing the matter when an opening is given," which conflicted with the notion of collaboration.<sup>14</sup>

Until recently the literature on the deportation program of thousands of Germans from Latin America was scant. It was not until Max Paul Friedman's 2003 book *Nazis & Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* that this campaign came out of obscurity. Friedman's work highlights the role the U.S. played in spearheading the program, and how "a belief in Latin American inferiority, and economic opportunism" drove the implementation of this program.<sup>15</sup> Friedman, like Walter, shows that the relationship between the United States and Nicaragua can be understood through an imperialistic lens: "[...] an essential aspect of U.S.-Latin American relations that went back to the Monroe Doctrine and forward to the present day: many in the United States thought Latin American countries could not manage their own affairs without paternal guidance from Washington."<sup>16</sup> It is important to acknowledge that although the U.S. was the dominant partner in the international relationship, the campaign against the Germans of Latin America was not explicitly controlled by the U.S., but was carried out by and mutually beneficial for Latin American regimes.

It is crucial to understand how

Germans arrived in Nicaragua. Germans came to Nicaragua on their way to the California Gold rush in the late 1840s. Seeking a safer passage through the American continent than the typical time-consuming and dangerous land crossing through the U.S., many Germans turned to the Central American isthmus, specifically Nicaragua, as it offered the best route possible at the time, prior to the construction of the Panama Canal. Nicaragua, with its San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, offered a way to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. For some Germans, settling in Nicaragua seemed like a better idea; as von Houwald put it, "En estos días muchos alemanes creían que en el 'Nuevo Mundo' podrían encontrar un mejor hogar (In these days many Germans believed that in the 'New World' they could find a better home)."<sup>17</sup>

For Germans in Nicaragua, it became home. They created families and opened businesses. Many maintained ties to their heritage through the foundation of various *Vereine* (clubs or associations) for the purpose of providing recreational, educational, and cultural assistance to German immigrants. In Nicaragua, some Germans tried to keep their German-ness even as they intermarried. As Friedman notes, "German polite society would sometimes accept intermarriages if the non-German spouse, usually the wife, kept a German household, and the children received a German education."<sup>18</sup> Nicaragua was not the only Latin American nation where Germans were not-fully-assimilated, as Friedman put it: "Most German immigrants occupied an in-between space, loyal but apart, welcomed but unincorporated, in Latin America but not of it."<sup>19</sup> The lack of full assimilation never rose as a significant

issue until World War II.

On July 17, 1941, President Roosevelt introduced the “Proclaimed List of Blocked Neutrals”-commonly referred to as the “Black List”- published throughout the region via local newspapers, ostensibly to assist Latin American governments in identifying those deemed a threat. Latin American nations began rounding up German nationals appearing on the list shortly after it was first published. Once the “enemy aliens” were named on the list, they were surveilled, followed, and eventually arrested with U.S. assistance. The FBI, which Roosevelt made responsible for intelligence gathering in the region, was scattered throughout Latin America, often assigned to U.S. embassies, and “designated as ‘legal attachés’ or liaison officers to national police officers.” They were tasked with compiling “lists of suspected Axis nationals and sympathizers.”<sup>20</sup>

Once arrested, accused “enemy aliens” were loaded onto American naval vessels and sent to the U.S. for internment at one of several camps. For those coming from Latin America the most prominent among them was Camp Kenedy in Texas. Also in Texas was Camp Crystal City, the only family internment camp in the U.S. Most of these German nationals were detained without legal representation or access to due process. It was not until the end of the war that the State Department created the Alien Enemy Control Section (AECS) to collect and review evidence from German detainees still residing in internment camps.<sup>21</sup>

An aspect of this campaign that is overlooked is the impact that these arrests had on the detainees and their families. There are two cases in particular that highlight the consequences of these

detentions. First, that of Adolfo Adler, who owned a bakery in Managua, who suffered a fainting spell following his arrest that, due at his advance age, caused permanent damage. Second is that of Señora Soledad Buitrago de Kiesler, who was left alone when her husband was interned. She described her predicament, stating: “Tengo varios hijos suyos y ahora me encuentro completamente desamparada (I have several children of his and now I am completely helpless)”. She had to manage their business, which she had no experience in, “hoy me veo en el caso de ni siquiera saber quienes son sus clientes, para hacer sus cobros, pues el único que conocía el negocio era él. (Today I see myself in the case of not even knowing who his clients are, to make his collections, because the only one who knew the business was him).”<sup>22</sup>

Fear is the common thread that runs through all of the detainee’s stories. Likewise, fear of a different kind was experienced by policymakers in the United States. The deportation program developed from a growing fear of a Nazi takeover of the continent. Freidman argues that the fear of a Fifth Column was based on American officials’ generally prevalent view of Latin American countries as immature in their democracies and therefore susceptible to Nazi manipulation.<sup>23</sup> This view is well articulated in a June 15, 1938 dispatch from the U.S. Consul General in Stuttgart to the U.S. Ambassador in Berlin: “Because the South American Republics are not fully developed socially, culturally, economically, and in tradition, they are regarded as likely to be influenced more by German Propaganda than the old established democracies.”<sup>24</sup>

The fear of a Nazi Fifth Column

flourishing in the “weak” Latin American democracies was perpetuated in Nicaraguan newspapers. For example, on December 11, 1941, four days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, *El Centro Americano* published an article with the headline: “La Quinta columna de Nicaragua. (Fifth Column of Nicaragua)” The article claimed that it was the Nicaraguan people’s duty to repel “el virus que en forma de fascismo, (the virus that in the form of fascism)” that was purportedly threatening Nicaraguan democracy and to fight reactionary forces infiltrating through a Fifth Column.<sup>25</sup> This fear was made palpable in the whole of Latin America and the Nicaraguan press was more than willing to disseminate it throughout the country. Thus, three months later, on February 22, 1942, *La Prensa* published an article with the same theme but focusing on Mexico, declaring the presence of “Quinta columnistas en Mexico (Fifth Columnists in Mexico).”<sup>26</sup> It is evident that the media was fanning the flames by validating them via print media discussing the continental threat that the Nazi Fifth Column posed.

U.S. government officials also aided in spreading fears of a Fifth Column. There was a July 25, 1941 telegram to the Secretary of State from Jefferson Caffery, Ambassador to Brazil (1937-44), in which Caffery highlights the attempts by Germans to make inroads with laborers and farmers. “75 poorly dressed Germans,” he claimed, “have gone there within the last few months and are visiting individual *fazendas* with the message that Hitler is fighting the battles of the poor and economically downtrodden the world over, et cetera.”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, on Saturday October 3, 1942,

*La Prensa* published an article: “La Quinta Columna amenaza en todas las Naciones de América (The Fifth Column threatens all the nations of America),” reporting statements made by Nelson Rockefeller (Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs) after visiting various countries in the continent. Rockefeller reiterated the threat posed by a Fifth Column, urging that all countries maintain vigilance twenty-four hours a day, every day, if need be. It is interesting to note that the article acknowledges that these remarks by Rockefeller were exaggerated, “[...] declaraciones sensacionales hechas por Nelson Rockefeller (sensational statements made by Nelson Rockefeller).”<sup>28</sup>

Wherever this fear of a Nazi Fifth Column originated, historian Thomas M. Leonard argues that, “[a] case can be made that the United States overreacted to the Nazi threat particularly given the fact that the total number of Germans in all Central America was less than 2 percent of the region’s total population.”<sup>29</sup> In the end, only a small portion were able to return to their countries. After the war, “for those Central Americans who were shipped to Europe, their only way home was through Spain at their own expense. For those remaining in the United States, the government in Washington paid their travel costs.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Somoza’s Motives**

#### *Political and Economic Benefits*

IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE THE deeply entwined political and economic benefits that Somoza gained from his compliance with the internment and deportation program. To best

understand his reasons it is necessary to understand his desire to strengthen his position both economically and politically. Economically, Somoza benefited at both ends: he was taking economic assistance from the United States to increase his own coffers while also using the legal expropriation of assets to increase his personal wealth. This personal enrichment was greatly aided by the perceived/real Somoza-Roosevelt relationship. This relationship allowed him to politically legitimize his presidency in the eyes of the population of Nicaragua and, more importantly, in the eyes of his political adversaries.

It was not just Somoza who desired to be in the good graces of the United States – in their need to attain a “cosmopolitan nation-state,” Nicaraguan elites and government officials welcomed U.S. imperialism in the form of military intervention. One of the results of this military intervention was the creation of the *Guardia Nacional*. The *Guardia Nacional* was a constabulary force created by the United States to preserve peace in Nicaragua, consisting of men with no loyalty to any political party. Anastasio Somoza gained notoriety when, in late 1932, he was chosen as *Jefe Director* of the *Guardia Nacional* by President-elect Juan Bautista Sacasa. Somoza was able to harness the power of the *Guardia Nacional* to advance his political ambition.<sup>31</sup>

After attaining the position of *Jefe Director* of the *Guardia Nacional*, Somoza’s rise to the presidency is attributed to Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy. The Policy consisted of non-intervention, condemnation of aggression, non-recognition of territory seized by force, equality of states, and

the respect for treaty obligations.<sup>32</sup> It was the ambivalence towards non-recognition that allowed Somoza to reach the apex of Nicaraguan political power. Non-recognition, together with the non-interference clause which was central to the Good Neighbor Policy, benefited Somoza. Latin American political sentiment was that “[a]ny public comment from Washington could have a direct effect on domestic politics”, while also believing that “the absence of any positive expression of US opinion could be equally influential.”<sup>33</sup> This no-win scenario facilitated the belief that Somoza was colluding with the United States, a belief that Somoza made sure to promote, and one which the United States could not deny because of their fear of intervening in local politics. It is evident that, “[u]ndeniably, Somoza was the first and perhaps greatest beneficiary of the Good Neighbor Policy.”<sup>34</sup> If the Good Neighbor Policy was the initial means by which Somoza solidified his grasp on power, then the campaign against German nationals was the tool that made him a credible power in the eyes of the United States.

Somoza needed the political support of the United States, even if that support was timidly given. In the deportation program Somoza saw a means to attain political recognition and economic assistance. As Friedman stated, “Throughout the war, the United States expected cooperation with its anti-Axis policies in exchange for economic assistance for Latin America, and Latin American governments paid for that assistance with deliveries of raw materials and expelled German nationals.”<sup>35</sup> Somoza was more than willing to arrest and deport enemy aliens,



knowing full well that cooperation with the United States would guarantee economic assistance, which would in turn generate economic growth for the country. The economic upturn in Nicaragua made possible by the U.S. economic assistance created a climate in which Somoza was able to attain “[...] some peace from political adversaries.”<sup>36</sup> The political power that came with having U.S. backing of Nicaragua was crucial for Somoza’s continued political success. Indeed, it was seen that “[o]nly the withdrawal of U.S. support would threaten the dictator’s position.”<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the perceived collusion between Somoza and Arthur Bliss Lane, the U.S. Minister to Nicaragua (1933-1936) in the assassination of Augusto Cesar Sandino in 1934 by the Nicaraguan National Guard, which was under the command of Somoza, and the belief throughout the region that the U.S. played a part, drove this idea that the two governments were tied together. The murder and the subsequent American silence bound Somoza to the Roosevelt administration.”<sup>38</sup> As Crawley puts it, the murder and “silence was a rich source of political capital for Somoza, who used his personal contacts and his own newspaper to spread the word that, as Washington’s man, he had ordered Sandino’s murder under instructions from the State Department.”<sup>39</sup>

The view that Somoza was politically and personally tied to Washington prevented any opposition in Nicaragua to fully commit to an overthrow of his government. As was emphasized by Andrew Crawley, “[f]ear of American reprisals was a significant factor preventing Nicaragua’s dissenting groups from acquiring the unity of purpose

required for concerted action against the government.”<sup>40</sup> Somoza enjoyed the privilege and power that U.S. protection gave him.

This perceived U.S. protection was on full display and was legitimized by Somoza’s visit to Washington, D.C. on May 5, 1939. Unlike most of Roosevelt’s low-key events of state, there was a grand parade down Pennsylvania Avenue, filled with people on the parade route, most of whom were federal employees given the day off by presidential suggestion. The Nicaraguan newspaper *Novedades*, in May 1939, used the whole front page of the paper to cover Somoza’s state visit to Washington, D.C., giving gravitas to the relationship between the U.S. and Nicaragua. As the newspaper stated, using overtly ingratiating language, Somoza “[f]ue invitado a los Estados Unidos por el president Roosevelt. Su patria, la república más grande de Centro América, es una nación estratégica para el desenvolvimiento de nuestra defensa del hemisferio y de la solidaridad Americana (was invited to the United States by president Roosevelt. His homeland, the largest republic in Central America, is a strategic nation for the development of our hemispheric defense and American solidarity).”<sup>41</sup> One benefit of trip and the ensuing media coverage was that people in Nicaragua were given the impression that Somoza and Roosevelt were close friends. In addition, the trip allowed Somoza to negotiate with Roosevelt for the Pan-American Highway project.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly there was a strong link between the U.S. and Nicaragua, and it was not something that occurred overnight. Indeed, “Somoza, it has been said, ‘was a time bomb, planted in Managua by the Hoover administration,

## *Somoza was more than willing to arrest and deport enemy aliens...*

and Franklin Roosevelt allowed it to explode.”<sup>43</sup> There is the chance that Roosevelt did not know that Somoza might have been planted by a previous administration: “That Anastasio Somoza – an apparently amiable 37-year-old with no military training and a fondness for dirty jokes – might have been ‘planted’ by the Hoover administration as part of some long-term US policy objective was a possibility of which the Roosevelt State Department seemed to be blissfully unaware.”<sup>44</sup>

Somoza’s political benefits stem from U.S. economic assistance and the climate World War II had created in Nicaragua and the rest of Latin America. A major impact of World War II was the immediate loss of access to European markets. This, in turn, made the United States the only market available to Latin American countries. Due to the high demand of allied nations for commodities from Latin America, lending to Central American nations increased, which occurred through programs such as Lend-Lease (a program through which the United States sold, leased or lent food, supplies or arms to nations) that allowed nations to pay off external debts. Somoza was a great beneficiary of these lending programs, as it allowed him to “pay off a substantial part of the pre-war external

public debt.”<sup>45</sup> The ability to pay off external debt incentivized Somoza and other leaders in the region to cooperate with the United States war efforts.

In turn, the United States government saw an opportunity and an excuse to limit the economic influence that Germany was having in Latin America by instilling fears of a Nazi Fifth Column. Economic encroachment by Germany was made possible by the unjust Reciprocal Trade Agreement between the U.S. and Latin America, spearheaded by Secretary of State Cordell Hull who pushed for “nondiscrimination in tariffs and in the regulation of foreign exchange.”<sup>46</sup> Latin American countries applauded this plan because it allowed access to U.S. markets, something that had been coveted for some time. In the end, domestic pressures led to the failure of this policy; instead, “not only did most countries in the region not gain access to U.S. markets but they felt insulted as well.” As Bratzel put it, “the reciprocal trade agreement did considerable damage to the standing of the United States in Latin America.”<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, “[b]efore the war, the Germans used bilateral trade agreements to ensure that the balance of payments between themselves and any Latin American nation would be equal. Latin America looked positively towards

*...knowing full well that cooperation with the United States would guarantee economic assistance*

this policy [...].<sup>48</sup> These binational trade agreements allowed Germans to increase their economic penetration in the region based on the belief that “[...] the economic relationship with various Latin American nations would be equal.”<sup>49</sup> Latin American states’ positive reaction to the German trade deals was so menacing to the United States that it catalyzed fears of a Nazi Fifth Column in the region. The United States’ willingness to cooperate with and, in some ways, orchestrate the economic assistance for Latin American countries was driven by fear of a German economic penetration in the region.

This fear was driven by statistics showing that “by 1938, Germany was providing 16 percent of Latin America’s imports (up from 9.5 percent in 1932) and was taking 10.5 percent of the continent’s exports (up from 7.4 percent in 1932).”<sup>50</sup> This economic encroachment by Germany worried the United States, in turn allowing Somoza to utilize this fear to his advantage by recognizing that “[t]he region’s strategic position, so close to the Panama Canal and the shipping routes of the Caribbean, obliged the United States on the outbreak of war to work closely with whatever governments were in power provided they were friendly to the United States. Each *caudillo* (such as Somoza in Nicaragua) in Central America recognized this and [...] bent over backwards to accommodate the U.S. economic and strategic needs.”<sup>51</sup>

The Somoza regime, with United States’ economic assistance, was able to undertake several public projects, such as the construction of the Pan-American Highway. Leonard notes that “[...] The U.S. War Department encouraged the completion of the Pan-American

Highway and increased economic and cultural activities to further cement the existing favorable U.S.-Central American relationship.”<sup>52</sup> It was in the interest of the U.S. and Central America to have the Pan-American Highway completed in a timely fashion, as it connected the continent and allowed for freer passage of trade. Somoza drove home the importance of the Pan-American Highway in a July 17, 1940 letter he wrote to Roosevelt. The letter emphasized the need for public works that are “for continental defense: The Pan American Highway and the Canal through Nicaragua” both of which economically benefited Nicaragua and, as previously noted, also benefited Somoza’s pockets.<sup>53</sup> To this end, “In December 1941 the U.S. Congress voted \$20 million to help Central America and Panama to construct their sections of the road with United States paying two-thirds of the cost and each isthmian government the remaining third.”<sup>54</sup>

The Nicaraguan manifestation of the U.S.’ economic generosity was apparent in myriad ways. For example, there was an increase in employment, especially public jobs. This increase was made clear by the type of budgetary expenditures of the Somoza regime. Government expenditures on public works and development oscillated from 11.5 percent to 44 percent between the years of 1939-1945, when in the years between 1930-1939 development and public works only averaged about 8.8 percent.<sup>55</sup> This influx of economic assistance by the United States allowed Somoza to garner much public support, especially since “the government became an important provider of jobs. In addition, public employment increased the size of the

political clientele,” thus strengthening the Somoza regime.<sup>56</sup> This highlights how mutually beneficial it was for the United States and Somoza to work together.

Other scholars, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, have emphasized this mutuality, writing that “[...] the system of domination reappears as an ‘internal’ force, through the social practices of local groups and classes which try to enforce foreign interest, not precisely because they are foreign, but because they may coincide with values and interest that these groups pretend are their own.”<sup>57</sup> As imperialism has been utilized by historians to analyze U.S.-Nicaraguan relations, it seems to paint the weaker state as reactionary and guileless. However, it is important to acknowledge, as I will show below, that U.S.-Nicaraguan relations have also been mutually agreeable and financially beneficial. Indeed, the U.S. wanted the Germans out of Latin America, and, in the case of Nicaragua, Somoza wanted both the recognition from the U.S. that aiding them would offer as well as the financial gains he could create for himself through this campaign. As an example, MacRenato states that “It is evident that he [Somoza] forced the U.S.’s hand and managed to established a mutually beneficial, long term relationship - a relationship that would eventually take full advantage of U.S. hemispheric concerns.”<sup>58</sup>

#### *Personal Financial Enrichment*

WHEN IT CAME TO advantageous opportunities that cooperation with the United States offered to Somoza personally, it was the deportation program, specifically the expropriation

of assets of enemy aliens, that Somoza found his greatest gains. Victor Bulmer-Thomas, author of *The Political Economy of Central America Since 1920*, wrote that, “Somoza, in particular, was quick to exploit the opportunity provided by the expropriation of German owned assets [...]”<sup>59</sup> The expropriation of assets was facilitated by the legal decrees that the Nicaraguan Assembly instituted, giving the Somoza regime legal means by which to restrict and expropriate the assets of German nationals living in Nicaragua. These legal decrees by the Nicaraguan government were published in *La Gaceta*, the state’s official publication of legal rules. Decree No. 70 published Thursday December 18, 1941, stated that while the state of war persisted, the funds of social firms and citizens of Japanese, German, and Italian descent were to be frozen in banking institutions. The people impacted by this decree were required to appear, by stipulation put forth in the decree.<sup>60</sup>

The deportations and expropriations economically benefitted the Nicaraguan government, specifically, Somoza. Legislative Decree No. 276, which took effect in Nicaragua on August 28, 1943, made it clear from whom, and when, to take expropriations. The decree outlined under what circumstances the Nicaraguan government was allowed to expropriate the assets, companies, and businesses of nationals from countries at war with Nicaragua and the Allies. While the decrees were ambivalent on what would happen to the funds, the Nicaraguan courts were explicit with their reasoning behind the expropriations. The expropriations were to be carried out “Con el objeto de evitar los daños y perjuicios considerables

*When it came to mutuality, Roosevelt was willing to show support for Somoza and incite fear of a Nazi column in Nicaragua to benefit his war policy.*

que a la economía nacional ocasiona la paralización, falta de producción, deterioro o ruina de los bienes, empresas o negocios que existen en el país, pertenecientes a personas naturales o jurídicas sujetas a inmovilización de sus fondos (In order to avoid the considerable damages to the national economy that the paralysis causes, the lack of production, the deterioration or ruin of goods; companies or businesses that exist in the country, belonging to natural or legal persons are subject to immobilization of their money).<sup>61</sup> The Law of Expropriation was also published in *La Prensa* on July 4, 1943, thus making it available to the public. To add salt to the wound, Article 36 of Legislative Decree No. 276 set a scale by which the net capital of Axis citizens in Nicaragua were to be taxed with an annual fee, “Con el objeto de que las ‘personas afectadas’ contribuyan a los gastos extraordinarios que ha hecho y tiene que seguir haciendo el Estado, con motivo de la supervigilancia y custodia de sus personas, y del control, congelación y administración de sus bienes y fondos (In order that the ‘affected persons’

contribute to the extraordinary expenses that the state has made and must continue to do, due to the supervision and custody of their persons, and the control, freezing and administration of their assets and funds).<sup>62</sup> The assessments were in addition to any other taxes that the person (or company) was paying. The fee structure was as follows:

Capital Net	% type of assessment
5,000-25,000	0.50%
50,000-100,000	0.75%
100,000-200,000	1.25%
200,000-500,000	2.25%
500,000-1,000,000	2.75%
1,000,000+	3.25%

One of the challenges to the expropriation law, which was published in *La Prensa* on August 1, 1943, stated “Esta Ley, aunque ha sido bautizada con el nombre de ley de expropiación es en realidad una ley de confiscación, y tiene treths aspectos... un aspecto legal, un aspecto económico y un aspect moral (This law, although it has been baptized with the name of expropriation, is actually a confiscation law, and it has three aspects...a legal, economic, and moral aspect).<sup>63</sup> Dr. Diego Manuel Chamorro, a prominent member of the Nicaraguan deputy chamber, laid out his argument for not supporting this law. Legally, he said, the Nicaraguan constitution did not allow them to create confiscatory laws in a time of war. Dr. Chamorro references the Rio Conference of 1942, which stipulated that governments should adapt modes that abide by international law and the legislation of each country, and to do

everything in their power to disrupt the commercial and financial interchange between the western hemisphere and the axis-powers. A vote was taken in the National Assembly and it went against Dr. Chamorro.

A blatant example of the economic benefits that the expropriation law provided Somoza was the auction of assets of Julio Balkhe. *La Prensa*, on Sunday August 23, 1942, ran a headline stating, “Las propiedades de la Sucesión Balkhe le fueron adjudicadas a Coronel Camilo Gonzáles por la suma de 410.000 córdobas (The properties of the Balkhe succession were awarded to Colonel Camilo Gonzáles for the sum of 410,000 Córdobas).”<sup>64</sup> The article narrates one of the most talked about auctions where the properties of the wealthiest man in Nicaragua, who happened to be of German descent, were auctioned off at a discount and won by Somoza. An article published by *7 Dias* magazine in their May 16-22, 2005 issue, “El Origen de la fortuna de los Somoza (The origin of Somoza’s fortune)” ties the auction of Julio Balkhe to the genesis of Somoza’s wealth.<sup>65</sup>

While some of the popular class of Nicaragua were tolerant of Somoza’s self-enrichment program, were less sanguine. As Crawley notes, “Members of the moneyed class [...] were] alienated by Somoza’s greed. Forced to make contributions to his private fortune and often obliged to sell their properties to him at a fraction of their real value.”<sup>66</sup> It would become these people who would, in turn, create a movement against the Somoza dynasty years later. For the time being, he was blanketed in the goodwill of the United States that the moneyed elites and government officials believed

they shared.

Somoza took advantage of the pro-American sentiment that had taken over Nicaragua during World War II, made evident by the December 10, 1941 headline in *El Centro Americano*, which stated that there was a “Gran manifestación en Chinandega pro Estados Unidos (Great pro United States demonstration in Chinandega).”<sup>67</sup> This was in direct contrast to the typical anti-American sentiments of the general population, due to the various military occupations by the U.S. in Nicaragua. According to *La Prensa*, in their Sunday July 8, 1939 headline, “Ayer los estudiantes decretaron el boicoteo a los Establecimientos Comerciales de los Alemanes Nazis (Yesterday the students decreed the boycott of the commercial establishments of the Nazi Germans).”<sup>68</sup> The article described the clash between students handing out pamphlets calling for the boycott of German businesses and the police who were tasked with protecting the German businesses. A result of the pro-Allies/anti-Axis sentiment that engulfed Nicaragua was the passing of Resolution No. 35 (12/10/1941). The resolution gave him the executive power to declare war on any non-American power that committed acts of aggression against any of the American Republics; it also gave power to the President of Nicaragua to declare war as well as allowing him to dictate “todas aquellas medidas que a su juicio sean necesarias para la propia defensa (all those measures that in his opinion are necessary for their own defense).”<sup>69</sup>



### Somoza and FDR relationship

PART OF SOMOZA'S PRO-AMERICAN interest was his perceived public admiration of Roosevelt, which can be difficult to corroborate as a driver for his willingness to comply with the campaign of deportation. This admiration of Roosevelt by Somoza was made clear to the Roosevelt administration through documents, such as the February 6, 1943 memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Harry L. Hopkins (Roosevelt's chief diplomatic advisor). Hoover wrote that "President Somoza recently expressed again, as he has done so often, his admiration for President Roosevelt."<sup>70</sup>

Somoza's admiration for Roosevelt was well documented and evinced itself in quite overt ways. For example, on May 28, 1943, *La Prensa* wrote about a project proposed by Somoza to raise funds to erect a statue of President Roosevelt, funds which were raised using a popular fundraising campaign.<sup>71</sup> Further, on January 30, 1942, Somoza wrote a letter to Roosevelt detailing the events that were planned in Nicaragua in honor of President Roosevelt's birthday. In this letter Somoza also stated that, "Me place reiterarle lo que le manifesté en carta anterior que mi mayor honor sería imitar a Ud. en laborar por el bien de mi pueblo..., (I am pleased to reiterate what I stated in a previous letter, that my greatest honor would be to imitate you in working for the good of my people...)" reinforcing the admiration that Somoza had for Roosevelt.<sup>72</sup>

The rapport that Somoza so clearly coveted between himself and Roosevelt

was not a figment of his imagination. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt wrote a letter in which he thanked President Somoza for sending a "gracious letter" for his birthday, and to thank Somoza for renaming the principal street in Managua "Roosevelt Avenue" after him.<sup>73</sup> This clearly demonstrates that President Roosevelt was aware of Somoza's ingratiating techniques. What Roosevelt thought of him, however, is not clear, as he was careful not to publicly express his opinion of President Somoza or the Nicaraguan government. When it came to mutuality, Roosevelt was willing to show support for Somoza and incite fear of a Nazi column in Nicaragua to benefit his war policy. Indeed, as Crawley notes, "Roosevelt exploited such public anxieties" because it "enabled him to aid the British war effort."<sup>74</sup> This strategy allowed Roosevelt to bypass the pledge of neutrality and isolationism that he had campaigned on.

It is impossible to know for certain what was behind Somoza's show of support, even filial admiration, for Roosevelt. The scarcity in sources from Somoza himself lead to the difficulty in determining what his real intentions in projecting a public relationship with Roosevelt were. According to the U.S. government's Confidential Biographic Data on President Anastasio Somoza and members of his party, "President Somoza [was] believed to have a sincere affection for the United States." The report goes on to state that "He [Somoza] has consistently displayed a desire to cooperate fully with this government and to cultivate our friendship."<sup>75</sup> The

tone of the letters in which Somoza expressed his admiration for Roosevelt seemed to suggest a sincere interest in President Roosevelt and an honest desire for friendship. A memo written by J. Edgar Hoover to Harry Hopkins, one of Roosevelt's closest advisors, made these sentiments abundantly clear to U.S. officials. In this memo, the admiration that Somoza has expressed for Roosevelt is believed to exist and "in fact could be termed a fanatical point of view."<sup>76</sup> For Andrew Crawley, on the other hand, in his important book on Somoza and Roosevelt, this perceived admiration was a ruse by Somoza who "[...] openly praised Roosevelt to serve his own purposes."<sup>77</sup> It is difficult to ascertain Somoza's intents in fostering a public friendship with Roosevelt.

## Conclusion

THIS ARTICLE HAS EXAMINED the diverse and interconnected factors that drove President Somoza to participate in a deportation program spearheaded by the United States that stripped people of dignity and freedom. The program came into being from an unfounded fear that Germany was encroaching in the region economically, thus threatening the regional hegemony of the United States. This article argues that what drove Somoza to execute the deportation program was the intrinsically tied together economic and political benefits that the deportation of German nationals provided him. It is evident that by complying with the deportation program there were gains

attained by Somoza – primarily economic and political. In addition, it becomes clearer that Somoza complied with the program because of his yearning for the recognition of his presidency from the United States, in part because of what this recognition entailed politically. This mutuality – Somoza's personal, economic and political interest and the U.S. concerns of a Nazi Germany economic encroachment in Latin America – is the backbone of Nicaragua's compliance with the deportation program during World War II.

The campaign against German nationals living in Nicaragua was not explicitly controlled by the U.S., but was carried out by, and mutually beneficial to, the Somoza regime. The U.S. wanted to halt the German economic encroachment in Latin America, something aided by the failure of unfair trade agreements, and to push back on the perceived Nazi Fifth Column in the Western Hemisphere. In turn, Somoza required the economic assistance that complying with the deportation program could produce. The economic upturn in Nicaragua, due to U.S. financial assistance, created a political atmosphere that allowed Somoza to placate his adversaries and solidify his grasp on power.

An aspect that is difficult to corroborate is how influential the relationship between Somoza and Roosevelt, which exists primarily on paper, was in engendering the Nicaraguan state's willingness to implement the deportation program. The lack of primary sources contributed

to the difficulty in determining how the Somoza-Roosevelt 'friendship' was crucial to Somoza's adherence. The documents that do exist show how the perception of a relationship benefitted Somoza politically by limiting the power that his adversaries had. Furthermore, these documents also showed that Roosevelt utilized this relationship to advance his war policy.

As noted previously, there has been a dearth of research into one of the most overlooked international campaigns of U.S. interference in Latin America towards Germans during World War

II, particularly the deportation and expropriation campaigns by Somoza in Nicaragua. Until now, the history has primarily been written from an U.S.-centric viewpoint, framing Latin American governments as merely bystanders to world history and subservient to countries like the United States and those in Europe. By placing the focus on Somoza's reasons for complying with the deportation of German nationals from Nicaragua, this article contributes a new angle to the existing literature. ♦

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Helena Ramos, "Aventuras y desventuras de los alemanes en Nicaragua," *7 Dias Magazine*, May 2005, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Karl de Schweinitz Jr., "What is Economic Imperialism," *Journal of Economic Issues* Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep., 1981): 676.

<sup>4</sup> R.A. Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War: Volume One 1939-1942* (London: The Athlone Press Ltd, 1981), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Shizuta, Hitoshi, "Imperialism as a Concept," *Kyoto University Economic Review* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1961), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza 1936-1956* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), xiv.

<sup>7</sup> Works that emphasize South America when discussing LATAM and WWII: Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*; Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel, eds. *Latin America During World War II*. For further study in Nazi propaganda in Latin America see Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and The American Hemisphere* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt: Good Neighbour Diplomacy in Nicaragua 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Edgar Conrad, *Sandino: The Testimony of A Nicaraguan Patriot 1921-1934*. Ed. Sergio Ramirez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 76.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua Under U.S. Imperial Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 43.

<sup>11</sup> A term that stems from the Spanish Civil War- a group of people that subvert a larger group from within (in this case inside Latin American countries) in favor of an enemy group or nation, such as Nazi Germany.

<sup>12</sup> Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State Division of the American Republics, RG 59, National Archives.

<sup>14</sup> Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors*, 109.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Götz von Houwald, *Los Alemanes en Nicaragua* (Managua: Editorial y Litografía San José, 1975), 12.

<sup>18</sup> Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors*, 15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>22</sup> “Continúan las detenciones de alemanes e italianos,” *La Prensa*, December 14, 1941, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Department of State Division of European Affairs, “German Propaganda and its penetrating influences,” 800.20210/116, RG 59, National Archives.

<sup>25</sup> Gustavo Abaunza H., “La Quinta Columna de Nicaragua,” *El Centro Americano*, December 11, 1941, 3.

<sup>26</sup> “Quintacolumnistas en México,” *La Prensa*, February 12, 1942, 3.

<sup>27</sup> FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY., P.P.F. 5913 Somoza. July 25, 1941.

<sup>28</sup> “La Quinta. Columna amenaza en todas las Naciones de América,” *La Prensa*, October 3, 1942, 1&4.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas M. Leonard, “Central America: On the Periphery,” in *Latin America During World War II*, ed. Thomas M. Leonard et al. (Lenham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 41.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Several Guardia officers “perceived Somoza as a social climber of the worst sort and a man who was using his army position to get ahead politically.” Quoted in Terner MacRenato, *America’s Favorite SOB: Gen. Anastasio Somoza Garcia American Made Nicaraguan Dictator* (San Diego: Montezuma Publishing, 2013), 114.

<sup>32</sup> Edward O. Guerrant, *Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1950), 68-82.

<sup>33</sup> Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, 43.

<sup>34</sup> MacRenato, *America’s Favorite SOB*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbors*, 129.

<sup>36</sup> MacRenato, *America’s Favorite SOB*, 158.

<sup>37</sup> Leonard, “Central America,” 48.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

- <sup>41</sup> “La Capital Recibe al Presidente de Nicaragua Con Toda Pompa,” *Novedades*, May 11, 1939, 1.
- <sup>42</sup> Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza 1936-1956* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 87.
- <sup>43</sup> Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, 23.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.
- <sup>45</sup> Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America Since 1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 95.
- <sup>46</sup> John F. Bratzel, “Introduction,” in *Latin America During World War II*, ed. Thomas M. Leonard et al II (Lenham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 3.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.
- <sup>50</sup> Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, 158.
- <sup>51</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America*, 87.
- <sup>52</sup> Leonard, “Central America,” 36.
- <sup>53</sup> FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY. P.S.F. Box 45. “Office of the President of the Republic Managua, Nicaragua, July 17, 1940.
- <sup>54</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America*, 89.
- <sup>55</sup> Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza*, 87.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, trans., Marjory Mattingly Urguidi (London: University of California Press, 1978), xvi.
- <sup>58</sup> Ternot MacRenato, *America’s Favorite SOB*, 6.
- <sup>59</sup> Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America*, 89.
- <sup>60</sup> Republica de Nicaragua, “Poder Ejecutivo: Hacienda Y Credito Publico,” in *La Gaceta Núm*, December 18, 1941, 2425
- <sup>61</sup> Ministerio de Hacienda, *Leyes de Emergencia* (Managua D.N.:Talleres Nacionales, 1941/43), 110.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.
- <sup>63</sup> “Se discute la Ley sobre las propiedades de Ejeanos,” *La Prensa*, August 1, 1943, 1&4.
- <sup>64</sup> “Las propiedades de la Sucesión Balhcke le fueron adjudicadas al Coronel Camilo González por la suma de 410.000 córdobas,” *La Prensa*, August 23, 1942, 1&4.
- <sup>65</sup> Helena Ramos, “Aventuras y desventuras de los alemanes en Nicaragua,” *7 Dias*, May 16 & 22, 2005, 4.
- <sup>66</sup> Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, 163.
- <sup>67</sup> Ernesto Pereira, “Gran manifestación en Chinandega pro Estados Unidos y Gbno. De Nicaragua,” *El Centro Americano*, December 10, 1941, 1.
- <sup>68</sup> “Ayer los estudiantes decretaron el boicoteo a los Establecimientos Comerciales de los Alemanes Nazis,” *La Prensa*, July 8, 1939, 1.
- <sup>69</sup> Ministerio de Hacienda, *Leyes de Emergencia*, 10-11.
- <sup>70</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Recent Statements of President Somoza-Nicaragua,” February 6, 1943. P.P.F. 5913, FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY.

<sup>71</sup> “Monumento a Roosevelt,” *La Prensa*, May 28, 1943, 1.

<sup>72</sup> República de Nicaragua, P.S.F. Box 45, FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY. January 30, 1942.

<sup>73</sup> The White House Washington, P.S.F. Box 45, FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY. February 19, 1942.

<sup>74</sup> Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, 179.

<sup>75</sup> Department of State, “Confidential Biographic Data on President Anastasio Somoza and Members of his Party,” P.S.F. Box 45, FDR Library, Hyde Park, NY. April 29, 1939.

<sup>76</sup> Edgar Hoover, Memorandum to Harry L. Hopkins, 1943. “Recent Statements of President Somoza-Nicaragua,” February 6.

<sup>77</sup> Leonard, “Central America,” 49.

**VLADIMIR PENALOZA** is focused on the socio-political impacts of World War II in Latin America. He is interested in the rise of authoritarian regimes in Latin America, how they came into being and are maintained. He was raised in Miami, FL and holds MA in Latin American Studies from New York University and BA in History from Florida International University.

---



# Book Review

**ROGER GRIFFIN.** *Fascism: An Introduction to Comparative Fascist Studies.* Medford: Polity Press, 2018.

As a notoriously difficult concept to define, fascism has been viewed by scholars, pundits, politicians, and activists alike as anything from a meaningless pejorative to a coherent political philosophy. Amongst scholars of fascism, Roger Griffin is best known for his famous one-sentence definition of fascism: “A genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism” (pg 46). Or, in plain English, fascism’s distinctive quality is its belief in regenerating or rebirthing the mythical nation through revolutionary means. Joining a slew of new literature re-examining fascism in the age of Trump and the alt-right, Griffin’s most recent book, *Fascism: An Introduction to Comparative Fascist Studies*, aims to update and reintroduce this heuristic ideal type definition to a new generation of fascism scholars. Part of an introductory series on political theory, *Fascism* is less a history monograph, and more a theoretical framework for a nebulous concept

useful not only for historians, but also for social scientists. While much of *Fascism’s* arguments would be nothing new for Griffin’s long-time readers and critics, its compact analysis, incisive emphasis on postwar fascism, and timely publication breathe new life into Griffin’s old theory.

Rearticulating his Weberian ideal type’s self-consciously artificial nature as well as his claim that there is an “emerging consensus” around palingenesis, which he terms as “fascist studies,” Griffin outlines the evolution towards this consensus in the first two chapters of the book. He describes how definitions of fascism by Marxist and liberal opponents that dismissed fascism’s coherence as a political theory gave way to the culturalist methods pioneered by George Mosse that consider fascism as a serious, internally-consistent ideology. Through “methodological empathy” (58-62) — hearing what fascists say are their motivations — one can then begin to understand why fascism is appealing to its followers.

Longstanding supporters and critics of Griffin will likely skim through these chapters since they largely rearticulate

thirty-year-old arguments. However, non-specialist readers should recall the book's purpose as an introduction to Griffin's school of fascist studies. While Griffin convincingly demonstrates that there is a converging shared acknowledgement of giving analytical weight to what fascists say, his quest for scholarly ecumenism unfortunately obscures the nuances between alternative theories and approaches. His teleological narrative downplays historians who reject the concept of generic fascism altogether (e.g. Richard Bosworth) while grouping other contending definitions like Robert Paxton's political behavioural approach under Griffin's "emerging consensus." However, as will be argued later, the differences between Griffin's definition and his contenders are not so trivial.

The fourth chapter foregrounds the "comparative" aspect by examining interwar fascist regimes and movements alike through different themes, such as foundational myths, gender politics, and eventual dissolution. He treats his fascism model like an organism: like polymorphic speciation, different societies produce different manifestations of fascism that attune to their host nations' unique histories and customs. Such an approach, besides justifying the removal of the power as a qualifying criterion, would also break the overreliance on Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany as paradigmatic cases.

Although Griffin has previously conducted close readings of fascist cultural and intellectual productions in *Modernism and Fascism* (2007), primary sources are scarce in this volume. Indeed, Griffin downplays national history's influence on policy decisions (e.g.

whether Imperial German colonialism influenced *Lebensraum*) and historical regimes' exercise of power in practice in order to examine fascist movements in an abstract, theoretical vacuum. Although this social scientific approach may seem foreign to traditional historian's craft, a strength of Griffin's Weberian approach is to demonstrate that similarities between different movements are not merely superficial. Rather, one can distill a set of common ideological denominators across time and space that speaks to what makes fascism as a concept distinctive from other ideologies.

This distinction is crucial for understanding the most innovative part of *Fascism*: the fifth chapter's extensive discussion of neo-fascism. The chapter makes up for the regrettable omission of Griffin's typologies of postwar fascism in his *The Nature of Fascism* (1991) by explaining how and why people hold onto this ideology whose foundational regimes were so decisively defeated in 1945, and how that palingenetic core of fascism evolved into different strains as diverse as extremist parties, intellectual networks, terrorist cells, and, more recently, cyberfascism. While cautioning against excessive concept expansion and pejorative misuse, Griffin argues that the marginalization of fascism has led to significant organizational, tactical, and discursive innovations that move fascism far beyond brownshirt violence and leader cults and instead towards increasingly globalized forms of white nationalism, a development underappreciated by scholars until recently.

Among major historians of fascism, Griffin puts unusually large emphasis on

those various varieties of neo-fascism — territory too often ceded by historians to sociologists, criminologists, and terrorism scholars. By drawing primarily on interwar and wartime fascist regimes as their definitions' bases, many important historians of fascism like Paxton have largely dismissed self-identified neo-fascists (particularly neo-Nazi skinheads) as irrelevant footnotes to fascism's interwar heyday, instead debating whether radical right populist parties are fascist based on interwar examples. Even Griffin would agree they are not necessarily wrong to suggest that these ostensibly fringe ruffians are cosmically overshadowed by the horrors of WWII in strength and capacity for societal harm.

However, in rejecting mass politics as a necessary criterion for fascism, Griffin's threshold for taking far-right extremists seriously does not depend on their ability to hold (or even have an interest in pursuing) public office. The fact that neo-fascists persist in any form or capacity today, be they racist skinheads, unruly parliamentarians, or mystical ideologues, is important enough to merit further scholarly consideration as historically "valid" evolutions of the ideology. The strength of Griffin's ideal type is in allowing scholars to conceptualize fascism past 1945 and make meaningful connections from Hitler to contemporary figures like Richard Spencer and Anders Behring Breivik, both of whom represent the diversity of neo-fascist strategies. A Griffinian scholar would see these as potential candidate species — regardless of structure and success, era and geography — to be taxonomized into the family group fascism.

While Griffin's latest book is more of a recent revision of his earlier ideas than a milestone, it is nevertheless an invaluable handbook. For students becoming acquainted with theoretical scholarship on fascism, *Fascism* is a readable (albeit somewhat partial) introduction to one school of thought on defining fascism. Even scholars familiar with Griffin's past theoretical contributions may find the lengthy discussions on transnational and postwar fascism useful as important reminders that fascism is more than Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes. At minimum, *Fascism* reintroduces one of the most elegant definitions of fascism into the recent spate of literature on fascism that unhelpfully conflates it with characteristics of generic authoritarianism (e.g. Jason Stanley, Timothy Snyder). That said, it is not the final word on fascism — not even of fascist studies. But in a time where the far-right is ascendant, *Fascism* is the much-needed call for fascism scholars to work towards interdisciplinary and comparative synthesis.

**Benson Cheung**  
University of Toronto