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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

On behalf of the James Blair Historical Review's Editorial Board, it is my honor to present to you the latest issue of our journal.

As beautifully said by French novelist Amantine Dupin, better known by her pen name, George Sand, "Every historian discloses a new horizon." Original works of history are immeasurably valuable to humanity as they provide us with the crucial ability to better examine the significance of our past. The articles published in this issue are stellar additions to the scholarship, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to first introduce these magnificent new horizons.

Greyson Hoye's "Classroom Walls: State Education and the Nazi Past in the German Democratic Republic" impressively details how the East German education system dealt with questions of German-ness and antifascism in the wake of Nazism and the Holocaust. Rachel Horowitz's "Peasantry or Proletariat?: Bolivia's Cocalero Movement of the 1980s" insightfully describes both the peasant and working-class elements of Bolivia's coca growers resistance movement. Claudia Caplan Wolff's "'Being Sick in Body, But of Good and Perfect Memory' Jewish Wills of Early New York: Meaning, Connection and Legacy" effectively utilizes wills from 1704-1740 to understand the increase in and lives of the Jewish population of the city of New York. Winslow MacDonald's "Assassination of an Island: An Environmental History of the Eugenics Movement in Mid-Coast Maine" provides an enlightening account of the eugenics movement's impact on the diverse Malaga Island in Maine. I truly hope that you, dear reader, enjoy reading these works as much as I have.

This issue would never have been able to come to fruition without the diligence of all involved. I would like to extend my congratulations to our wonderful authors and thank you all for the privilege of publishing your works and new horizons. To our Editorial Board: Italia, Gracie, Grace, Sophia, Riley, and Cecilia, I owe the success of the journal. I cannot thank and appreciate you all enough for supporting the journal with me throughout this entire process. I admire all of your drive and hard work, and it has truly been an honor to call you my team. Additionally, the work of our peer reviewers is vital for the academic standards of our journal, and my gratitude toward you all is without bounds. I would also like to thank Professor Christopher Grasso for his valuable leadership and advice. Finally, a special thanks to William and Mary's Harrison Ruffin Tyler Department of History as well as the College's Media Council for their organizational and financial support which is indispensable to the success of the journal.

I am exceedingly grateful to have the opportunity to be at the helm of the JBHR. Having been on the journal for two years now, it is truly a highlight of my life, and I will forever cherish my contribution in bringing new, important history to the eyes of the world. With that, I present to you the James Blair Historical Review's Fall 2021 edition.

Many thanks,

Xavier Storey, JBHR Editor-in-Chief 2021-2022

About the Author

Greyson Hoye is a recent graduate of Pacific Lutheran University, where he completed majors in Global Studies, History, and German, with a minor in French. His research has focused primarily on topics related to the Second World War and the Holocaust, as well as post-communist European integration, and his work has been featured in the Yale Review of International Studies and the University of Alabama's Crimson Historical Review. In the fall of 2021, he began graduate studies in Data Analytics at Boston University, through which he intends to develop additional skills in computer programming and data analysis that will enhance his future work in international affairs.

Rachel Horowitz is a senior in the College at Georgetown University, double majoring in History and Government and minoring in Spanish. Rachel is interested in the investigation of human rights abuses and the roots of democratic backsliding, and she aspires to pursue these interests in the government or nonprofit sector. Rachel is currently a team member on a research project examining the impact of institutions of electoral governance on presidential elections across Latin America. She would like to thank Professor Langer for the guidance and encouragement that he provided to the following paper.

After a long and successful career in advertising as a copywriter and creative director, Claudia Caplan Wolff is currently a senior at Columbia University with a double major in History and American Studies. Her primary research interests include mid-20 th century literature and culture, and the history of racial integration in the United States, particularly as it relates to sports in general and baseball in particular. After graduation, she plans to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing, Non-Fiction and use that focus to write books and essays on subjects that take advantage of her undergraduate focus on 20 th century history.

Originally from Virginia and raised visiting local battlefields and digging up minie balls in his grandparents' backyard, Winslow's passion for history was inculcated by proximity to the American Civil War. Now a senior at Columbia University in New York, he has sought to analyze potent and relevant American social, political, and economic dynamics by reimagining the authentic individual conscience and through more abstract and inclusive academic historicization. The coalescence of Winslow's approach to history and his desire to discover and contextualize the nuances of the past has resulted in multiple past research projects connecting American nativism, imperialism, and racism with understudied or misunderstood stories. He has written extensively on anti-Catholicism in the U.S., Irish Nationalism, and how the particular economic legacy of the Civil War determined the course of American expansionism.

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"The Castello Plan. New Amsterdam in 1660."
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Introduction

There are few examples of political, economic, and cultural division in modern history as dramatic or memorable as that which existed between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, also known as West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR or *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, otherwise known as East Germany). During the forty-year existence of the *innerdeutsche Grenze*—the inner German border—the two "Germanys" sought to build their own robust, successful, forward-looking societies from the ruins of the Second World War—with outside assistance, of course. The Western powers, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, supported West Germany, whereas the Soviet-led Eastern bloc backed East Germany. Yet for the FRG and the GDR, this "cold war" of propaganda and political brinkmanship became a distinctly German one, as each state was forced to address the nature of German-ness and the legacy of National Socialism and the Holocaust within their borders. This was particularly the case for East Germany, which had adopted an entirely different political and socioeconomic philosophy than the West. Furthermore, the territory of the GDR contained three of the largest former concentration camp sites in Germany, namely Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück.

The GDR necessarily relied on its relationship to West Germany and on their mutual history under Nazism in order to forge its own distinct antifascist national identity. East German elementary and high-school history curricula and teaching plans clearly demonstrate the extent to which the educational system in the GDR actively participated in this process. Therefore, this paper seeks to supplement current scholarship by bringing attention to the intersection of nation-building, international

relations, and historiography in East German education, with the intent of underscoring the importance of post-Holocaust narratives and their uses in divided Germany.

Following the conferences at Yalta and Potsdam in early and mid-1945, the Allies partitioned a defeated Germany into four occupation zones, each of which would be overseen by one of the Allied governments (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union). The Allies similarly divided up the city of Berlin. From these zones emerged what were *de facto* two halves of Germany, one controlled by the West and the other by the East. On May 23, 1949, the West German Parliamentary Council (*Parlamentarischer Rat*) formally declared the Federal Republic of Germany as a sovereign and independent state. Likewise, that same month, the German People's Congress (*Deutscher Volkskongress*) in the Soviet zone approved the constitution for a new socialist government, which took effect in October 1949, thereby creating the German Democratic Republic.

As the spearhead of the communist bloc in Europe, the GDR followed the Soviet standard for the organization of government and society. The national legislature, called the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber), was chosen by democratic elections, but the true executive functions belonged to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED), chaired by the General Secretary.[2] Only two individuals held this position for any significant length of time during the forty-year span of the GDR: Walter Ulbricht (1950-1971), a key figure in the rise of communism in Germany before and during World War II, and Erich Honecker (1971-1989), who had also been part of the communist resistance movement during the war and supervised the construction of the Berlin Wall in the 1960's.[3] Economic policy took form along the lines of centralized planning and collectivization, which, as with much of the administration in the GDR, were overseen by a plethora of ministers and committees. State-manufactured *Trabant*

automobiles (nicknamed "*Trabis*") filled the streets, and children spent their days in youth organizations such as the *Jungpioniere* (Young Pioneers) and *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth). As the gatekeeper of East German society, the infamous *Staatssicherheitsdienst* (State Security Service, commonly known as the *Stasi*) handled government intelligence and internal security, employing elaborate networks of informants to monitor allegedly seditious or anti-communist activity among East German citizens. Virtually every aspect of life fell under the control of the state.

Previous Research and Discussion

Although academic research on East German historiography has existed since well before the unification (*Vereinigung*) in 1990, one can safely assume that the general lack of open access to information about life in the GDR precluded more in-depth study. Since the union of the two Germanys, scholars have explored how East German narratives regarding the war and the Holocaust were created and represented in various elements of society and culture, including concentration camp memorials, the media, and education.

Within only a few years of unification, historians turned their attention to concentration camps, as the sites were undoubtedly the most conspicuous reminders of the Nazi past in the GDR. In 1993, James Young published *The Texture of Memory* as a study of Holocaust memorials in Germany, Poland, Israel, and the United States. On the subject of Buchenwald, Young writes that because communist political prisoners comprised the largest portion of the camp population, the survivors—and later the SED—could control the legacy of the camp, ensuring that it "would remain a site of exclusively political martyrdom" through official monuments and educational materials.[4] According to Sarah Farmer, the East German government accordingly placed concentration camps "at the heart of East German commemorative and

and political culture," serving as memorials to antifascist resistance. However, this heroic narrative was complicated by the fact that the Soviet military continued to operate Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen as prison facilities in the postwar period.[5]

In his book *Stated Memory: East Germany and the Holocaust*, Thomas Fox similarly argues that "East German antifascist concentration camp memorials functioned . . . as the 'churches of socialism,'" complete with ritualized ceremonies and iconography to educate East Germans on the martyred saints of the antifascist cause as well as on the ongoing sins of the West. If still unconvinced of the glory of antifascism, visitors needed only to observe the thousands of Soviet troops garrisoned at Ravensbrück, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen. These soldiers had summarily stamped out National Socialism, and they were equally well prepared to crush any dissent from the East German population, should they attempt to revive the popular uprising that occurred in 1953 or import similar revolts that arose in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the years that followed.[6] Robin Ostow echoes these views in her study of Ravensbrück, where various monuments and inscriptions—such as the Soviet SU-100 self-propelled artillery gun positioned outside the camp entrance—revealed "the rather complicated relations of GDR citizens to their Soviet liberators."[7]

More recently, other scholars have researched how Holocaust narratives appeared in the East German media. Mark Wolfgram, for example, argues that while GDR state television largely maintained a Marxist, class-based interpretation of World War II and the Holocaust, some productions did highlight Jewish suffering and resistance. Although viewership was limited, official television viewer surveys show that East Germans were interested in the Jewish experience of the Holocaust and even felt discomfort about the atrocities after watching programs such as the 1972 series *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann (The Pictures of the Witness Shattmann)*, a fictionalized account of a Holocaust survivor who

testifies at the trial of a former Nazi official.[8] Sean Eedy explains that East German state-produced comics, however—intended to be read by members of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend*—retained a staunch antifascist perspective on the war years, depicting socialist heroes as the primary targets of the Nazi regime. In doing so, according to Eedy, comic book writers rejected the truth of the Holocaust and instead chose to indoctrinate East German children on the virtues of socialism, thereby preparing them to take their place in socialist society and participate in the clash of ideologies and propaganda that was the Cold War.[9]

As Eedy's work suggests, state education served as a vital outlet through which the government could communicate its policies and narratives, and consequently many scholars have analyzed the role and content of East German textbooks. In *Textbook Reds: Schoolbooks, Ideology, and Eastern German Identity*, John Rodden expounds on the all-encompassing nature of the East German educational system and the centrality of history education, through which the GDR could build a sense of national identity.[10] In his aforementioned book Stated Memory, Thomas Fox devotes considerable space to the discussion of education in the GDR. He contends that textbooks reflected the larger historiographical trends among official East German historians, who denied anti-Semitism and instead focused on the murder of Russians and Poles.[11] Stefan Küchler concurs, in that school textbooks effectively treated the Holocaust as parenthetical in comparison to the persecution of Eastern peoples; instead of the genocide of millions of Jews, the "attack on the Soviet Union" was depicted as "the most outrageous of all crimes."[12]

Other commentators have examined East German textbooks in relation to those published in other "perpetrator" countries after the war. German historian Bodo von Borries compares presentations of the Nazis and the war in West and East German learning materials, illustrating that while West German books ultimately presented much more information on the

Holocaust, they were slow to do so, speaking very little to even the persecution of Jews before the late 1960's.[13] In his own study, Julian Dierkes explains how textbooks and teaching plans from the two Germanys and Japan employed very different approaches to teaching about the war, the atrocities committed before and during the conflict, and that particular nation's historical identity. Because each country's governmental and educational structures varied, Dierkes writes that "constructions of national identity are not easily malleable on the basis of moral and political concerns only, but . . . they are subject to institutional constraints and opportunities."[14] Tim Kucharzewski and Silvia-Lucretia Nicola present similar findings with regard to East German and Romanian textbooks, as does Daniela Weiner concerning German and Italian materials.[15]

In short, there currently exists a considerable pool of academic research on historical narratives in the GDR, and the use of those narratives appears most clearly in the East German educational system. However, scholars have not addressed how these portrayals of World War II and the Holocaust impacted nation-building in the GDR, particularly its reference to West Germany as a political and moral foil. Moreover, the authors mentioned here have largely ignored the content of East German teaching plans, which, as will be discussed below, provided teachers with specific instructions—down to the number of hours devoted to a particular subject—on how to teach history, including that of the war and the Holocaust. Dierkes sheds light on the GDR's efforts to define German nationhood and effectively utilizes these sources to do so, but he does not devote attention to the role of the war and the Holocaust in this process. Therefore, this paper will explore not only the representation of the Second World War and the Holocaust in East German teaching guides, but also their role in the construction of a postwar national identity in the GDR.

The Role of Education in the GDR

Just as with other sectors of East German society, state education took its cue from the Soviet model, beginning in June 1945 under the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (*Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland,* SMAD) and then, following the formation of the GDR in 1949, under the leadership of the Ministry of National Education (*Ministerium für Volksbildung*). Exiled socialists—including Walter Ulbricht, the first General Secretary of the SED—returned from Russia to fill key positions in the new postwar bureaucracy, and the Soviets dictated the educational guidelines and materials to be used in schools. A new brand of teacher was trained to deliver this content, since many previous educators had been members of the Nazi Party during the war. Known as *Neulehrer* (new teachers), these instructors modeled the new proletarian societal paradigm, having come from working-class or farming backgrounds, and they quickly dominated the pedagogical ranks, totaling some 25,000 new employees in 1946 alone. Even though a considerable number of *Neulehrer* had not even finished their own elementary schooling, their political convictions remained the primary qualification, and indeed this generation of pioneers in socialist education would remain steadfastly loyal to the GDR throughout its existence.[16]

After its establishment in 1949, the GDR retained the Soviets' top-down approach with respect to the administration of education. As Kucharzewski and Nicola point out, "the GDR school system was as centralized as the economic system of *Planwirtschaft* [planned economy]," in which all major decisions regarding the creation of policy and allocation of resources lay with the Party.[17] Officials in the Ministry of National Education, as well as the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (*Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften*), were directly appointed and overseen by the Politburo, which performed the executive functions of the SED Central Committee. After a series of interim officeholders, Margot Honecker—wife of Erich Honecker, a member of

the Politburo at the time, and later the General Secretary beginning in 1971—became the Minister of National Education in 1963 and held the position until November 1989, only months before the GDR officially disbanded.[18]

Education policy in the GDR was drafted by subordinate groups, yet the Politburo ultimately made the decisions on what would or would not be taught in East German schools. Such judgements determined the content of textbooks (*Lehrbücher*) and teaching plans (*Lehrpläne*), both of which were written by the same authors and, on the whole, differed mainly in purpose. Whereas the *Lehrbücher* were, of course, meant to be read by students, the *Lehrpläne* dictated how teachers presented specific material and how many hours per week they would do so.[19] Rodden argues that "it was through these materials that the Party controlled the teachers themselves. Since individual teachers, especially non-Party members, could not be trusted to support (or even grasp) subtle changes in the Party line, every teacher was told to 'teach the textbook to the letter'; the textbook and syllabus [*Lehrplan]* thus functioned like military orders issued from a rigidly centralized, hierarchical command structure."[20] Indeed, the East German intelligentsia remembered the fervor that ordinary people had developed relatively quickly during the days of the Third Reich—particularly among what propagandists extolled as the righteous proletariat—and so the GDR instituted what Fox calls an "educational dictatorship" to reinforce its grasp on what information its citizens received and which beliefs they held.[21] In other words, *Lehrpläne* became the vehicle through which the SED communicated its official policy to educators, who in turn trained future generations of East Germans to continue the struggle against capitalism and usher the GDR into the future socialist utopia.

The layout of a typical *Lehrplan* was fairly straightforward. Until roughly the late 1950's, teaching plans grouped several grades together—for example, Civics (*Staatsbürgerkunde*) for the fifth through eighth

grades—and totaled anywhere between eighty and one hundred twenty pages. From the 1960's onward, each grade received its own *Lehrplan* for a given subject (e.g., German for the ninth grade), and these normally numbered fifty to eighty pages in length.[22] There were still larger publications that outlined teaching goals and strategies for several grades, but they were somewhat broader in scope than the earlier multi-grade *Lehrpläne.* Nevertheless, every *Lehrplan* followed a standard structure: The plan opened with a few pages covering the general objectives of instruction in the specified subject, as well as the nature and purpose of education as a whole in the GDR. Then, it provided an outline of the content covered in the class and the distribution of hours per week for each unit. In a high school history class, for example, a teacher could be expected to devote twenty-one hours to the subject of ancient Greece, including one hour on the Peloponnesian War and three hours on the rise of Alexander the Great, and spend two hours in review. In the pages following the timetable, the rest of the *Lehrplan* consisted of unit descriptions, ordered chronologically by time period, with information and instructions, usually in the form of short outlines and bullet points that listed key concepts and vocabulary. Some editions included two to three ruled pages for teachers to write additional notes at the end of the document, after an index of required texts.

Lehrpläne held particular importance for history education, specifically in the *Grundschule* (elementary school) and *Oberschule* (high school) classes, as the GDR worked to solidify its postwar identity. One educational publication from the early 1950's declares that "[the] historian is in the first line of the class conflict, at the head of the cultural front."[23] History teachers shared in this mission, as described in the official guidelines for elementary and high-school history curricula published by the SMAD in 1946:

> History education should familiarize the youth with the most important facts from historical development,

> particularly of the German people, awaken in them an understanding of the internal connection of historical life and thus teach them to understand the present based on the past; history education . . . should awaken in them the desire to participate joyously in the democratic renewal of our national society based on the realization of their responsibility. History education should instill a genuine democratic national consciousness in youth that is founded in the pride of our people's achievements that served the progress of humanity.[24]

These principles set the standard for future history education in the GDR. One high-school *Lehrplan* from 1951 states that history instruction "has a decisive contribution to make in the education of a genuine and true patriotism and a fierce humanism."[25] Another *Lehrplan*, written in 1953 for sixth- to eighth-grade teachers, includes as learning outcomes for history classes the "education in patriotism, in the readiness to defend to the utmost the achievements of the working people," the "love for the peace-loving democratic German fatherland," and the "clear willingness to actively participate in socialist structure."[26] As such, history education became the cornerstone upon which the new East German state, and the new East German identity, were constructed.

The Holocaust and East German Identity

Any discussions of nation or identity in the GDR were firmly couched in Marxist historical materialism. In essence, this theory puts forth the idea that societies and the institutions that develop therein are based on economic ("material") factors. Drawing from early nineteenth-century philosopher Georg Friedrich Hegel's dialectic, Marx believed that each major economic system in history advances human progress, but these structures simultaneously posess internal contradictions that will eventually undo the current system and make way for the next, until

society reaches the final stage of communism. That is, historical materialism views history in terms of class struggle and material motivations, rather than being driven by ideologies.[27]

This interpretation of history shaped the presentation of all past events in GDR schools, not the least of which being the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP). A high-school *Lehrplan* from 1950 describes National Socialism as "the most blatant form of fascism," and another from 1953 defines fascism as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist parts of finance capital."[28] Thus, capitalists emerged as the true villains in the GDR's historical narrative, having supposedly begun to "create the economic basis for the preparation of a new war" in the 1920's. According to this line of thought, such profiteers financed and orchestrated the Nazi takeover of the German government: "Taking advantage of the pseudo-democratic character of the Weimar constitution, the imperialists succeed in bringing the Nazi Party to power."[29] The resulting war "was planned and unleashed" by capitalists who intended the conflict to be "a repetition and exaggeration of the imperialist pan-German program of conquest from the First World War."[30] Clearly, these early *Lehrpläne* reduce the Nazis to mere henchmen of capitalists, whose lust for power and wealth dated much further back than 1933, when the NSDAP officially took power.

The Second World War therefore takes on another shade of meaning in GDR educational texts. A set of guidelines for history education distributed by the SMAD just over a year after the defeat of the *Wehrmacht* designates the war as "the greatest catastrophe in German history," a brutal attempt by monopoly capitalists to achieve economic hegemony in Europe.[31] The *Lehrpläne* argue that capitalists sought to "destroy Soviet power and to restore the undivided rule of world imperialism," which itself was "under the domination of German imperialism," according to a high-school *Lehrplan* from 1968.[32] In this

way, the war became "an antifascist war of liberation," an opportunity to defeat fascism in Germany once and for all.[33] GDR curricula praise antifascist resistance, and especially the efforts of Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunist Partei Deutschlands*, KPD), "a common front of all democratic and peace-loving forces to overthrow the Hitler government and to establish an antifascist democratic Germany." The German people valiantly sought to liberate themselves, and yet "despite a struggle full of sacrifices . . . [they] did not succeed in shaking off the tyranny of fascist German imperialism; only the world-historical victory of the Soviet Union and the other peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition freed the German people from the Nazi yoke."[34] While the curricula celebrate the heroism of antifascist resistance, they nevertheless affirm here the immense obligation that the young GDR believed it bore to the Soviet Union.

Material regarding the Holocaust adopted a similarly class-based perspective. As with concentration camp memorials, the curricula designate communist political prisoners as the main victims of Nazi atrocities—chief among them being Ernst Thälmann, the chairman of the KPD who was arrested in 1933 and murdered at Buchenwald in 1944. The tenth-grade Lehrplan in 1956 commemorates him thus: "In this night, in which Hitler's fascism subverted the German people, the heroic resistance of German antifascists, headed by Ernst Thälmann, shines like a beacon." The section continues to instruct that,

> [the] fascist dictatorship must be shown to the students in all its brutality, bestiality, unscrupulousness and mendacity. They [the students] should gain the knowledge that Hitler's fascism was nothing other than the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary circles of German imperialism, with the task of eliminating the last democratic rights and freedoms of the German people, to destroy the freedom-loving and

> and progressive forces and their organizations, to prepare a fascist predatory war to plunder foreign peoples and achieve world domination[,] and to wage it without regard to international and human rights.[35]

As a result, the *Lehrpläne* highlight the "deportation of workers from many European countries to . . . concentration and extermination camps," as well as "political mass murder" and the "systematic destruction of industry and agriculture of cities and villages in the Soviet Union."[36] By using such stark language, East German curricula sought to ensure that students knew without any doubt who their enemy truly was.

However, it is painfully obvious that Jews do not appear in this portrait of victimization. Granted, terms such as "anti-Semitism" and "persecution of the Jews" are used in descriptions of the fascist Nazi regime, and the texts periodically mention "human extermination camps" like Majdanek and Auschwitz.[37] A few *Lehrpläne* include Jews among the "[more] than eleven million people of all European nations" murdered in the camps.[38] Nevertheless, Jews comprise at best one group in long lists of the persecuted and very rarely are they among the first.

The very timelines of historical events in the *Lehrpläne* reveal the GDR's political agenda. It is telling that, for example, rather than commenting on the construction in 1933 of the first concentration camp at Dachau—which was actually intended to hold political prisoners—descriptions of that year refer only to the burning of the German Parliament building (*Reichstag*), which created the conditions for Hitler to assume emergency powers and imprison communists. (This is not to say that the Reichstag fire should not have been included in the teaching plans, but at the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that major concentration camps, especially ones for political prisoners, are not mentioned.) Furthermore, in the sections about the "fascist dictatorship," the year 1938 refers to the annexation of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, a fact that is then used to criticize the West for its

"noninterference policy" (*Nichteinmischungspolitik*) that encouraged further Nazi aggression.[39] Only one *Lehrplan*—for tenth-grade classes, published in 1951—makes any mention of the pogroms in November of that year (known as *Kristallnacht,* or "Night of Broken Glass"); and even there it is treated as a mere step in the "culmination of the situation," placed alongside the annexation of a region in East Prussia and the Italian occupation of Albania.[40] One does not find another mention of the event until it appears in a document from 1990.[41] It was not until the late 1980's that the *Lehrpläne* made reference to the euphemistic term "Final Solution" (*Endlösung*, the title for the overarching Nazi strategy to annihilate all European Jews) and the event at which this phrase was first used, the Wannsee Conference in 1942.[42]

Throughout the existence of the GDR, communists and other antifascists took center stage in educational materials as the targets of fascist oppression and as the resisters of evil. The *Lehrpläne* repeatedly speak of the "inhuman treatment of Soviet prisoners of war," but remain silent on the extermination of Jewish populations across Europe. Wolfgram argues that the Communist International's definition of fascism as the epitome of "finance capital" in the 1930's automatically excluded victims that were not part of the *Klassenkampf* (class struggle), and in fact, some communists drew upon the historic stereotype of Jewish moneylenders in order to characterize Jews as members of the bourgeoisie who had ignored or even contributed to the suffering of socialists.[43] Indeed, Jeffrey Herf writes, "As in the entire history of German Communism, anti-Semitism and the Jewish catastrophe remained marginal to the master narrative of class struggle, resistance, and redemption."[44] By focusing instead on the stories of victims like Ernst Thälmann at Buchenwald—as well as the "self-liberation" (*Selbstbefreiung*) of the survivors there and, to a certain extent, of the greater antifascist struggle in Germany—the GDR positioned itself as the

rightful inheritor of the "fight for freedom" (Befreiungskampf) and as "the German peace-state."[45]

East and West in the Classroom

Time did not stop after 1945, however, and the East German government was acutely aware of the geopolitical situation that it shared with West Germany. The GDR's weapon of choice in this struggle could be found not on training fields or in aircraft hangars, but rather in the school classroom: The East deployed history to combat the West.

One of the first themes to emerge in Eastern *Lehrpläne* was the subservience of the Federal Republic to the "Western powers" (*Westmächte*). In the history curricula for Berlin schools in 1950, students were required to study "the development of the western occupation zones into an imperialistic colony."[46] This language is not dissimilar to that used in other content pertaining to the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, although Eastern historians would likely argue that, contrary to the Poles, West Germans welcomed the occupation.[47] Another *Lehrplan* published in 1954 alleges that the FRG serves "as a strategic deployment area, as an armory, as a reservoir for mercenaries."[48] To a certain degree, this statement is true, in that troops from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other capitalist countries were regularly stationed in West Berlin and in the FRG, especially once West Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1955. Then again, as a member of the Warsaw Pact—the Eastern bloc equivalent of NATO—the GDR maintained close ties with the Soviet Union, a relationship perhaps best symbolized by the famous "fraternal kiss" between Honecker and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in 1979. The GDR also hosted various Soviet military units that were spread throughout the country. After all, as the official narrative dictated, the East Germans owed their freedom to the Red Army for liberating them from the forces of fascism.

The *Lehrpläne* subsequently begin to portray West Germany as a successor to the Nazi regime. A tenth-grade *Lehrplan* from 1956 exhorts teachers to "instruct the students to draw from the time of the fascist dictatorship and the Second World War that the struggle for peace today must be waged primarily against the resurgence of militarism and fascism in West Germany."[49] A different high-school teaching guide, from 1968, accuses the FRG of seeking "to correct the results of the Second World War by force," an effort spearheaded by "former Hitler generals," according to a Lehrplan from 1970.[50] Yet another calls on teachers to make direct connections between the Third Reich and West Germany: "In order to develop historical thinking, the pupils are above all to make . . . historical comparisons between the foreign policy goals of fascist German imperialism and the imperialism ruling in West Germany." The document argues elsewhere that the FRG continues to engage in some of the same types of criminal activity and oppression that the Nazis had perpetrated during the war.[51] Clearly, the GDR did not consign Nazism to the past, but rather saw it as a resurgent and ongoing threat to the mission of antifascist resistance.

This rhetoric takes inspiration from the international circumstances of the day. The capture and trial in 1961 of Adolf Eichmann, one of the architects of the Holocaust, returned the topic of Nazi war crimes to the international spotlight. In 1962, East German prosecutors staged two trials *in absentia* of Hans Globke and Theodor Oberländer. A jurist by profession, Globke had helped author the 1935 Nuremberg Laws (*Nürnberger Gesetze*)—which established official racial standards and justified persecution of the Jews—and organized the "Germanization" of occupied territories during the war. In 1953, he was appointed to serve as State Secretary of the Chancellery and the Chief of Staff under West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.[52] Oberländer was said to have led special anti-partisan units that committed massacres and other war crimes during World War II, and he became the Federal Minister for

Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Victims of War, also under Adenauer.[53] In 1965, the East German government published the notorious "Brown Book" (*Braunbuch: Kriegs- und Naziverbrecher in der Bundesrepublik*) that listed Globke, Oberländer, and many other government and military officials in the FRG—including Adolf Heusinger who, having served as the head of operations of the *Wehrmacht* High Command from 1937 to 1944, became the first Inspector General of the new West German *Bundeswehr* and later the chairman of the NATO Military Committee.[54] It is worth noting that the FRG had published its own version of the *Braunbuch* in 1958, containing information about seventy-five former Nazi Party members who now occupied prominent positions in the East German government, even though the GDR had declared its denazification (*Entnazifizierung*) efforts complete in 1948.[55]

With these assertions, the GDR sought to plainly identify the flaws and failures of West Germany. Educational authorities describe the growing "imperialist" and "militaristic" forces in the Federal Republic as "mortal enemies of the people."[56] Indeed, even as early as 1953, *Lehrpläne* contended that the ideology of West Germany would "trigger a third world war."[57] And, according to a *Lehrplan* from 1968, this same imperialism—which reveals "the particularly aggressive, anti-people, and anti-national character" of the Federal Republic—signified "the true misfortune of the German people in our time."[58] In other words, the GDR declared that, if left unchecked, West Germany would plunge Europe and the German people into greater calamity than even the Nazis had brought about.

In case there remained any doubt in the minds of teachers or students as to the veracity of the East German historical narrative, the *Lehrpläne* launched repeated attacks on West German historiography. As explained in one example from 1970,

> [an] essential task of the history lesson at this level is to enable the students to deal with the essential goals, means, and methods of today's imperialist historiography and with right-wing social democratic conceptions; the pupils should be led to the increasingly independent and competent refutation of falsifications and wrong views. They should recognize that the official historiography in West Germany shall serve to maintain and expand the reactionary state monopoly system, to suggest to the population that this system is the legitimate and organic continuation of German history and thus to make them ripe for the revanchist and anti-people politics of the ruling circles. The students should recognize that for this purpose history is falsified without hesitation by civil ideologues.[59]

Refuting West German historiography was thus one of the primary learning objectives for history courses, and it was assuredly an essential skill, lest such falsehoods succeeded in "defaming the politics of the communists in the antifascist resistance struggle." [60] The GDR could not afford to lose the credibility of the historical narrative that lay at the heart of its essence as a nation.

One may believe that these accusations were hyperbolic at best. Nevertheless, the GDR required such severe rhetoric in order to establish its own national identity. According to the history texts, the "formation of the FRG" was "an open rejection of a unified, democratic, and peace-loving German state," whereas the "founding of the German Democratic Republic [was] a success of national importance."[61] Unlike the FRG, which actively perpetuated fascism, "[in] the GDR, true to the national interests of the German people and their international obligations, militarism and Nazism were rooted out."[62] The GDR presented itself as the standard-bearer of "the peace-loving, anti-imperialist-democratic

forces of the German people [*Volk*]" in the fight against the "aggressive forces of German imperialism and militarism" embodied by the FRG.[63] Ironically, the GDR developed the same archetype of the blameless *Volk* with which the Nazis had been obsessed in their conception of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community), differentiating the German people from the malevolent German state.[64] However, the East German narrative depended on this dichotomy just as Marx admonished the bourgeoisie in order to elevate the proletariat. Without a fascist, militaristic West, there could be no antifascist, nonviolent East. And if West Germans were not the heirs of the Nazi past, then East Germans could not "move towards a happy future in a peace-loving, democratic and socialist Germany."[65]

Conclusion

On August 13, 1961, workers began construction of the *Antifaschistischer Schutzwall* (Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier) around West Berlin.[66] Although the Berlin Wall would become arguably the most recognizable icon of the Cold War era, the East German government had erected much stronger walls long before any concrete blocks or barbed wire lined the streets of Germany's most populous city. Throughout its forty-year existence, the German Democratic Republic created a framework of narratives that penetrated every facet of public life. East German citizens were provided with an identity and a history that were reinforced by a variety of media, from historical memorials to television shows and textbooks. After the unification of the East and West, these walls took much more time and effort to deconstruct than any physical barrier required.

As a socialist state, East Germany also cast itself as a champion of antifascism. In fact, Fox contends that "it was ultimately more through antifascism than through socialism that the GDR attempted to legitimate itself as a civic culture and an independent state."[67] Its history curricula

proclaimed: "The sacrificial struggle of the German communists and all antifascists made . . . a decisive contribution to the fact that in Germany now the path to a new, democratic life can be pursued," marking "a turning point in the history of Germany and Europe."[68] The same Lehrplan that labeled the Nazi era as the "greatest catastrophe in German history" also states that teachers must "destroy all legends about National Socialism" and instill in their students the belief that antifascism alone "can secure Germany's future."[69]

Admittedly, educational materials such as *Lehrbücher* and *Lehrpläne* did not ensure that history instructors taught exactly what the government dictated, or that students necessarily believed what they heard.[70] In the "educational dictatorship" of the GDR, many teachers likely did present the content that they were given, and whether or not their students regarded what they learned as true, the fact remains that generations of East Germans received little to no information about the history of the Holocaust. This omission undoubtedly posed challenges to the unification of educational systems after 1990, and the disparity in historical understanding between East and West may very well continue to reverberate in the current political and cultural discourse. Further academic study should be devoted to exploring such questions, since the reception and influence of post-Holocaust narratives are of equal or greater importance than the narratives themselves. In any case, in order to assert that it embodied resistance to fascism, East Germany could not avoid confronting the crimes of the Nazis. The government denied the existence of the Holocaust and at the same time passed legislation that protected concentration camps in which thousands of Jews had been murdered. By claiming that it represented the future of Germany, the GDR was forced to keep alive the past that it so strenuously attempted to hide. Just as with the Berlin Wall, there were cracks—internal contradictions—in the historiographical narrative of East German

education that only grew larger and more inescapable until the system of German communism ultimately collapsed.

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In the 1980s, cultivation of the coca leaf became Bolivia's most lucrative crop and economic activity. As the economy collapsed and coca prices soared, hosts of Bolivians flocked to coca-growing regions; the Chapare region of the Cochabamba department, which produced 65 percent of Bolivian coca in the 1980s, absorbed most of these newcomers. [1] Between 1977 and 1987, coca production ballooned from 1.63 million kilograms of coca leaves grown across 4,100 acres to 45 million kilograms of coca leaves grown across 48,000 acres, and the number of coca growers shot up from 7,600 to around 40,000.[2] With the urging of the United States, which sought a supply-side solution to cocaine trafficking and consumption, the Bolivian government began to crack down on coca cultivation in 1983, prompting anger and resistance among the cocaleros whose livelihoods depended on coca. In his works *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* and "Hegemony and the Peasantry," political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott posits that the peasantry is the group most well-suited to revolution. Scott's theory is helpful in understanding the peasant coca growers' ability to resist the Bolivian government in the 1980s, but it does not provide the full picture. As per Scott's prediction, the characteristics of the peasant class in Bolivia proved crucial to resistance efforts; however, it is unlikely that Bolivia's *cocaleros* would have been able to achieve the support or political sway that they did without the working class elements of the movement. An influx of laid-off tin miners into Bolivia's coca-growing regions provided the movement with a contingent of growers with union experience and organizational expertise. In this way, Scott's theory rings true, but is incomplete, as an explanation of the coca growers' movement. The combined peasant and proletarian character of the Bolivian *cocalero*

movement of the 1980s was vital to the coca growers' ability to mount resistance against the state's efforts at coca reduction.

The class and ethnic identity that the *cocalero* movement worked to associate with the coca leaf and its cultivators strengthened the potential for mobilization and solidarity with other groups. In their resistance to state policies and programs targeting coca production, the peasant *sindicatos*, or networks of unions, constructed a narrative that framed coca leaf eradication as an economic and cultural threat. Within this narrative, the average coca leaf cultivator was a poor peasant for whom coca production was both their livelihood and cultural heritage. This framing worked to the advantage of the coca growers' cause. As Scott explains in "Hegemony and the Peasantry," "When cultural distinctiveness coincides with class identity, as it does for a portion of the working class and for much of the peasantry, it serves to reinforce both class identity and potential for mobilization."[3] In other words, the combined cultural and class identity of the peasantry makes it especially ripe for mobilization. Applied to the Bolivian coca growers of the 1980s, their identification with the peasantry and Indigenous culture was crucial in winning support among other sectors of the Bolivian population. This class and cultural solidarity allowed them to mount a resistance movement that the government did not have the option to ignore.

The Bolivian government's efforts to halt expansion of coca cultivation and eradicate many existing coca leaf fields violated the coca-growing peasantry's conception of a moral economy and thus provoked fierce resistance. As Scott claims in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, the assumption among the peasantry is that "the village and its inhabitants have a right to the resources they have traditionally used and that claims on local resources are only admissible after the customary subsistence needs of villagers have been met."[4] The Bolivian state's plans to eliminate hectares of coca leaf fields directly threatened the livelihoods of coca-growing peasants who depended on coca given the lack of

alternative crops and the ongoing economic crisis. Scott's focus is on the revolutionary potential of subsistence farmers, which at first glance appears to contradict the application of his theory to the commercial farming of peasant coca growers. However, Scott does allow for the possibility of circumstances in which commercial rather than subsistence agriculture becomes attractive for peasants to pursue. Under such circumstances, "there is virtually no other course open to [the peasant] in the context of the village economy."[5] For peasant coca growers in Bolivia, there was virtually no other course available to them in the 1980s given the absence of realistic alternative sources of income and the failures of the Bolivian government to implement crop substitution programs. In 1988, the Spanish newspaper *El País* estimated that the forced destruction of coca plantations proposed by the then-bill Law 1008 would leave more than 100,000 peasant families without means of subsistence.[6] In this way, even though peasant *cocaleros* were not subsistence farmers in the traditional sense, their cultivation and sale of coca was inextricably linked to their ability to survive.

Given that Bolivian coca producers were dependent on the sale of coca in a similar manner as the Southeast Asian peasantries that Scott studied were dependent on the success of their crops, Scott's moral economy of the peasantry can also be applied to Bolivia's coca leaf producing peasantry. Scott explains, "[T]he peasant community embodies a set of communal and *local* class interests—a moral economy—that forms the basis of violent confrontations with elites...The rights being defended represent the irreducible material basis of class interest...[T]hese interests...are so critical to subsistence that they are defended with great ferocity."[7] The peasant *cocaleros* were determined to resist the state's programs aimed at coca reduction in large part because such actions threatened their local economies and personal livelihoods. In 1984, tens of thousands of Bolivian peasants relied on coca crops for their existence. The Bolivian government also relied on coca, given the economy's

dependence on the crop and its related product: cocaine.[8] In 1985, peasants and union leaders expressed their exasperation at the government's simultaneous desire to drastically reduce coca production to combat drug trafficking and its inability to provide any real incentive for peasants to abandon their livelihoods. A Quechua farmer seemed bewildered with the government's actions and the connection drawn between coca and cocaine: "If they make us stop growing it, how would we live? We are just poor people. What has this traffic got to do with us?"[9] Commenting on the government's failed strategy of persuading coca growers to switch to other crops, a young peasant union leader insisted, "What they offered bore no relation to peasant needs—palm trees which take years to produce, pineapples and tea, which other countries already have the market for. The fact is, there is no substitute for coca and the income it produces."[10] Although President Victor Paz Estenssoro was under pressure from the United States to implement coca eradication programs, some members of the Bolivian Congress acknowledged the injustice of the Estenssoro government's treatment of the coca-growing peasantry. Freddy Vargas, the chairman of the Justice Committee in the Chamber of Deputies, described coca cultivators as "those on the margin," maintaining that, "People migrated to the coca areas for such reasons as a lack of water where they were or because they were growing crops that could be harvested just once a year."[11] Because coca ensured survival for marginalized people, the United States would have to support job creation and economic development in Bolivia if it really wanted to combat drug trafficking.

Statements made by peasant *cocalero* leaders in the 1980s demonstrate the ferocity with which coca growers defended themselves and their crop. In May 1988, Roberto Siberia, a farm leader in Cochabamba, vowed, "We will defend our crops to the bitter end. If necessary, we will resort to force of arms. We will not allow the government to take away our livelihood. We will not accept this new

law."[12] The law in question, Law 1008, was approved just a few months later on July 19, 1988. Speaking the next year, in April 1989, Evo Morales, then the Secretary General of the coca growers' federation, threatened, "If the government wants to resort to forceful eradication, there will be violence."[13] The policies being pursued by the government were so fundamentally opposed to the communal, local, and class interests of the peasant coca producers that the coca growers had little choice but to offer fierce resistance.

The *cocalero* movement's capacity to frame their resistance to coca eradication as a defense of their cultural heritage and national sovereignty engendered broad and passionate support. According to James Scott, the peasantry's revolutionary potential is partially based on their claim to culture and tradition: "[T]he peasantry falls heir to a rich and nearly ageless set of values it has historically defended."[14] These values are useful in that, "[T]he struggle to restore or defend customary rights may evoke a more passionate commitment than the struggle to create a new order."[15] The coca growers' movement framed eradication efforts as a struggle to defend customary rights. The right to grow coca leaf became synonymous with protecting rich cultural traditions, Indigenous heritage and populations, and Bolivian national sovereignty from the bureaucratic Bolivian government and the imperialist U.S. government. Coca producers pointed out that people had been chewing coca leaves "since the time of the Incas" to alleviate hunger and relieve the effects of living at high altitudes.[16] Traditional uses of coca, especially chewing coca leaves, were especially prevalent among Bolivia's Indigenous population, creating a strong association between the defense of coca production and the defense of Indigenous ways of life. In 1988, Juan de la Cruz Villca, the head of Bolivia's federation of campesinos, claimed, "They want to make us forget coca, and in making us forget that, they want us to forget our culture."[17] These appeals to coca's Indigenous connections were in many ways rooted in reality. The coca-growing region of the Yungas in

the La Paz department contained a sizable Indigenous population that had been growing coca leaves for tea or chewing for centuries. The Chapare region in the Cochabamba department, though less Indigenous and traditional, had attracted a number of Aymara and Quechua people from all over Bolivia in the first half of the 1980s.

The growers' unions and peasant federations made these associations with Bolivian and Indigenous culture central to their advocacy. Toward the end of the 1980s, the Chapare producers organized an annual event, the *Día de Acullico*, or chew-in, to celebrate traditional uses of the coca leaf associated with peasants and Indigenous Bolivians.[18] The first annual *Día de Acullico* attracted thousands of participants and included a rally and parade, replete with coca-leaf costumes, coca-leaf chewing, colorful textiles, and anti-US chants. The Chapare federation's strategy of equating the protection of coca with the protection of Bolivian culture won them support from traditional coca-chewing regions, including Chuquisaca, Potosí, and Oruro.[19] When the Chapare federation employed this strategy at the biennial national congresses of the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos (CSUTCB), union leaders from other regions carried the message of threats to the "sacred leaf" home with them. In this way, the coca growers of the Chapare were able to lay claim to a rich cultural and Indigenous heritage through their cultivation of the coca leaf. Successful mobilization around the coca leaf was possible precisely because the crop had been a "centerpiece of Andean society from time immemorial" and part of the value system that Indigenous Bolivians had historically defended from colonial powers and their own government.[20] Consequently, it is unlikely that other crops associated with the drug trade and targeted by the U.S., such as marijuana, could have provoked the same widespread support and forceful resistance.[21]

Framing the fight against coca eradication as a defense of Bolivia's national sovereignty allowed coca growers to gain favor within Bolivia's

network of unions and federations. The role of the United States government in crafting unfair policies that placed responsibility on poor, coca-growing peasants rather than on traffickers and American consumers intensified the ferocity of peasant opposition and won the movement more allies. A 1984 article in The New York Times detailing the occupation of the Chapare by the Bolivian army as part of the government's drug enforcement initiative insisted that "the soldiers here are Bolivian, but actually it is the United States that has occupied the Chapare. Much of the money and nearly all the will are American."[22] Vice President Jaime Paz Zamora admitted to as much at the time, suggesting that the Bolivian army would not have been sent to the Chapare were it not for pressure from the U.S. embassy and economic incentives from the U.S. State Department. In 1986, 17,000 coca-leaf farmers encircled a camp at Ivirgarzama that was housing the Leopards, an elite Bolivian narcotics unit financed by the United States.[23] The farmers claimed that two drunk officers had raped a local woman. Carlos Naya, the permanent secretary of the Special Federation of Peasants in the Tropics, accused U.S. soldiers, DEA agents, and Leopards of trespassing on farm plots, performing unjustified personal searches on roadways, and treating peasants roughly. The DEA chief dismissed these claims and the rape accusation as rumors and insinuated that peasant leaders were in league with cocaine traffickers.[24] Such incidents made clear that the United States was a threat to Bolivia's sovereignty as well as its peasantry and culture. The Bolivian government, rather than defend its people from the abuses of forces sent or funded by the United States, had allowed such forces to act with impunity against the local population.

The involvement of the United States mobilized coca growers and their allies and fostered widespread and intense anti-American sentiment. On May 30, 1988, around one thousand coca growers staged a march to protest the bill that would become Law 1008. As reported by *The Seattle Times*, participants chanted, "Death to the United States" and "Up with

coca," likely in Quechua and Spanish.[25] These phrases, more commonly translated as "Long live coca, death to Yankees" have remained a rallying cry of the *cocalero* movement for decades since.[26] Framing their side of the issue as pro-Indigenous, pro-Bolivian, and anti-imperialist created a set of stances that was popular among the broader population and within the country's network of trade unions. Throughout the 1980s, Chapare federations representing the interests of Chapare coca growers became increasingly involved and influential in the Central Obrero Boliviano (COB), Bolivia's national confederation of trade unions. One important factor in the Chapare federations and by extension the *cocaleros* gaining power through this body was the coca growers' movement's framing of the eradication of coca leaf as an imperialist attack on culture. This style of anti-U.S. rhetoric was already familiar to the COB given its own allegiance to radical *sindicato* politics and the alliances that its leaders had made in the past with the Latin American Left. Because the peasant growers were in many ways borrowing from the COB's playbook, they were able to win the support and reinforcement of the COB in their cause.

Such anti-imperialist rhetoric also won the support of leftist parties in Bolivia. In 1989, the Eje de Convergencia, a coalition of leftist parties that included the Communists, the Bloque Popular Patriótico, Alianza Patriótica, and MIR-Masis, a splinter group of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revoluciona, issued a statement designating the coca-leaf growers as the vanguard of the Bolivian labor movement on the grounds that their interests were most directly in conflict with the interests of the United States.[27] The same year, the Izquierda Unida, a party coalition of the Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL), the Communists, and MIR-Masis, released a statement claiming that the United States not only wanted to eliminate coca as a means of eliminating cocaine but also as a means of "extinguish[ing] the Andean culture for, to the extent that this culture exists, there will always be coca."[28] Whether the United States

was really invested in eliminating Andean culture is beside the point. In the struggle for coca and against the Bolivian government and its collaboration with the United States, coca had become tied up with Bolivian culture, Indigenous heritage, and national sovereignty. The *cocaleros* both took advantage of and actively fostered these associations with the effect of gaining broad support for their cause. Deploying the traditional peasant coca grower as the avatar of their movement, the coca producers were able to present their cause as a defense of long-held values and of the livelihoods of poor Bolivians. This framing of the coca issue would likely have been impossible were it not for the campesino elements of the coca growers' movement, which lent legitimacy to these claims.

Despite the advantages that the *cocaleros* enjoyed from their association with the peasantry, their movement would not have had the organizational capacity to resist the state without its proletarian characteristics and union activism. This idea of the proletariat as integral to successful resistance does not align seamlessly with James Scott's hypothesis that the peasantry is the group best suited for revolution. However, the Bolivian proletariat's involvement in the organization of the peasant coca growers makes sense within Scott's theory. For one, Scott agrees with Lenin on the necessity of a vanguard party, arguing that the peasantry is "very much in need of the coordination and tactical vision that only nonpeasant allies can provide."[29] At the same time, Scott believes that it was precisely the absence of organization among the peasantry that made them "volatile social dynamite" and gave them a distinct revolutionary advantage.[30] The peasant coca growers and the movement constructed around them was highly organized, and that organization gave them visibility and political power. Scott predicted that the organization and hierarchy produced by outside leadership of a peasant movement was likely to lead to "trade unionism" and to "become the vehicle for an orderly, nonviolent contest for power within existing

structures."[31] Engaging in a largely nonviolent contest for power within existing structures was essentially what the coca growers' movement did in the 1980s, taking advantage of Bolivia's network of unions and federations to accrue influence and exert pressure on the government. In this way, the argument that the Bolivian coca growers' movement possessed both campesino and proletarian elements and that this combination was crucial in capacity for resistance may not conform with Scott's specific predictions, but it does fit within his overall line of thinking.

Much of the organizational prowess of the coca growers' movement was thanks to the expertise of laid-off tin miners that migrated to the Chapare in the mid-1980s. As global tin prices plummeted by 35 percent and Bolivia fell from second to fifth in the world among tin producers, the state laid off over around 26,000 miners, forcing them to relocate to other regions and occupations.[32] Given the lucrative nature of coca cultivation at the time, the coca-growing regions of the Chapare and the Yungas attracted many of these former miners. By 1989, U.S. Ambassador Robert Gelbard estimated that as many as one out of every five coca growers in the Chapare were laid-off tin miners.[33] These ex-miners represented the most militant, ideologically-cohesive, class-conscious, and revolutionary segment of Bolivian workers, due in large part to their union experience.[34] Before the closures of state-owned mines and the mass lay-offs, the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (FSTMB) was the most active and radical labor organization in the country.[35] When these masses of working class Bolivians settled in the Chapare, they brought their union experience and organizational know-how to the Chapare *sindicatos*. Their expertise came to play an important role in boosting the salience of the coca growers' cause within the Bolivian labor movement.

The Chapare sindicatos were key to the achievement of political power for the cocaleros. Though Bolivian peasant *sindicatos* first came

into existence in 1953 with the national agrarian reform program, it was not until the 1980s, as they mobilized against attacks on the coca leaf, that they expanded their reach beyond local political conflicts and into national politics. The peasants represented by the Chapare *sindicatos* became "some of the most conscientious, dues-paying members of Bolivia's rural *sindicatos*."[36] In the mid-to-late 1980s, the Chapare sindicatos mobilized hundreds of local *sindicatos*, staging roadblocks, hunger strikes, mass marches, protest rallies, sit-ins, and occupations of local government offices.[37] These demonstrations paid off, resulting in multiple negotiated settlements with the Bolivian government. In June of 1987, after facing mounting pressure from the cocaleros, the government reached an agreement with Bolivia's main labor federations. Among other things, the agreement stipulated that any coca eradication and crop substitution must be voluntary and that the government must compensate coca cultivators for destroying their own coca bushes.[38] The agreement also called for a committee of government and labor representatives to ensure that these demands would be incorporated into the government's three-year plan to combat the cocaine trade and the pending Law 1008.

At the start of the decade, the Federación Especial de Chapare had little visibility or significance beyond the local level, but by the end of the decade, the Chapare federations had become a dominant force in Bolivia's network of peasant organizations and trade unions. The Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB) held biennial national congresses attended by *sindicato* delegates hailing from every region of the country. In 1987, the Chapare federations made the case for the defense of coca cultivation as a major peasant concern and convinced the CSUTCB to establish a Comisión de Coca as one of the congress's permanent working committees.[39] In this way, the Chapare federations were able to elevate coca to a priority among Bolivian farmers as a group, even those who had nothing to do with coca cultivation.

The newfound influence of the coca leaf growers in the CSUTCB translated into decision-making power in the Central Obrero Boliviano (COB), Bolivia's national trade union confederation. The COB represented a wide range of labor groups, including miners, factory workers, and school teachers. Though the Chapare federations had only four delegates in the COB as of 1991, they exerted influence beyond their numbers, drawing COB leaders to their cause and involving them in negotiations with the government. The power of the Chapare federations was evident in their capacity for mobilization and imposing pressure on the Bolivian government.[40] In 1986, after holding an assembly of one thousand delegates from across fourteen provinces, the Chapare peasant federations issued a resolution denouncing President Paz Estenssoro's decision to allow U.S. troops with "the right to kill" into Bolivia without the approval of the Bolivian Congress.[41] The Central Obrero Boliviano and Bolivia's left-wing political parties voiced their support. In June 1987, the Chapare federations issued an ultimatum that if U.S. forces did not leave the Chapare within forty-eight hours, the peasant masses would lay siege to the Leopards' base at Chimore.[42] In 1988, following the Villa Tunari massacre, the Chapare and Yungas federations, along with the COB, the Confederación de Colonizadores, and other peasant organizations, called for protest.[43] In April 1989, union delegates declared that coca growers would not abide by the voluntary crop substitution program pushed by the United States, or at least not until the government fulfilled its earlier promise to develop other crops and provide electricity, roads, education, and health facilities in rural areas.[44] Working class elements—former miners, *sindicatos* and federations, and trade unions—were crucial in promoting the issues of the coca growers to the national level and making organizations with no reason to be invested in the coca leaf champion the issue. While the campesino aspects of the *cocalero* movement may have provided the material to rally behind, the proletarian aspects of the movement disseminated that

material and elevated the movement to such a level of importance that the government was forced to pay attention to its demands.

It is worth acknowledging that although the *cocalero* movement invoked the image of the peasant and the Indigenous Bolivian threatened by the government's coca eradication policies, not all coca producers were peasants or Indigenous peoples. While the Chapare coca producers that settled in the coca-growing regions during Bolivia's economic crisis in the 1980s used cultural defenses to justify their cultivation of the coca leaf, not all of these peasants identified themselves as Indigenous. The Chapare region is considered less traditional than the Yungas valleys of La Paz and Cochabamba in that coca growers in the Yungas can trace their coca cultivation back one thousand years to Aymara civilizations. The Chapare cannot claim the same heritage, and the farming practices employed in the Chapare are far less ceremonial and rooted in Indigenous traditions than the practices employed in the Yungas valleys. The Bolivian government even recognized this distinction in its infamous Law 1008, or Ley del Régimen de la Coca y Sustancias Controladas. The law allowed for legal coca cultivation in the "traditional growing zones" of the Yungas of Vandiola in the Cochabamba department and the Yungas in the La Paz department; coca cultivation in the Chapare did not fall under this exception.[45]

Though Chapare settlers did not have access to the same cultural heritage as the Yungas cultivators, the Chapare coca unions averted this inconvenience by equating the coca leaf itself with a traditional, Indigenous identity, an association which rubbed off on its growers. In other words, the Chapare *cocaleros* were able to "project a more flexible 'Indigenous lite' version of identity" and "support an ethno-nationalist project without actually having to be all that Indigenous themselves."[46] Furthermore, though many peasant growers balked at the association between coca and cocaine, the majority of coca produced in the Chapare became cocaine and some of the peasantry was even involved in the first

stage of cocaine processing: coca paste production.[47] Meanwhile, the bulk of the coca produced in the Yungas valleys went into licit uses like coca-chewing or coca tea. Given these realities, one could argue that the cocalero movement, whose organization was strongest in the Chapare, manipulated popular support for preserving Bolivia's cultural heritage to protect coca-growing regions that did not have much to do with the coca leaf's original uses or traditional cultivators.

The economic and cultural arguments that the *cocaleros* employed in defense of the coca leaf should not be discounted, however. Even if coca growers did not always fit the image that the movement had constructed, these arguments still represent the movement's stated reasons for resisting the state's policies and reflect the genuine experiences of many coca cultivators. Certainly, the image of the traditional peasant coca producer drew in support and political allies, but the construction of such an image could also be understood as constituting a counter-hegemonic act. In this interpretation, the attachment of cultural significance to the coca leaf should not be interpreted as merely "endowing poor people with some sort of undeserved Indigenous added value," but as endowing modernity with some degree of indigeneity.[48]

The work of other scholars on this subject affirms the dual importance of the peasantry and proletariat in the coca growers' resistance efforts. Kevin Healy, a professor at American University's School of International Service, proposes a mutually beneficial relationship between Bolivia's peasant *sindicatos* and leftist labor unions. According to Healy, the coca growers' movement benefited from a decline in the Bolivian labor movement at the time; the Chapare federations were able to gain a foothold in the CSUTCB and COB not only due to the strength of the movement's messaging, but also due to these bodies' desire to reinvigorate labor organizing.[49] Healy also points out a factor unexplored in this paper that almost certainly facilitated the coca growers' successful activism: the return of democratic rule and civil liberties to

Bolivia.[49] Susan Brewer-Osorio, a professor in the School of Government & Public Policy at the University of Arizona, simultaneously recognizes the movement's appeals to cultural and economic rights and anti-imperialism and the centrality of the Chapare Federations, the CSUTCB, and the COB to *cocalero* activism.[50]

The coca growers' characteristics as a traditional peasant class and the coca leaf's connection to Bolivian heritage fostered broad and passionate support among other sectors of the Bolivian population. However, the coca growers' movement of the 1980s could not have achieved the same visibility and began its rise in the political ranks without the organizational capacity of the Chapare federations, many of the leaders of which hailed from mining unions. James Scott's prediction that an organized and hierarchical peasant movement would become woven into the existing tapestry of power ultimately rang true as the *cocaleros* gained power, gave rise to the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), and eventually elevated one of their own, Evo Morales, to the presidency.

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[50] Healy, "Political Ascent of Bolivia's Peasant Coca Leaf Producers," 111.
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The city of New York is home to more Jews than any other city in the world—more, in fact, than Jerusalem and Tel Aviv combined. Today, fully eighteen percent of New York City's population identifies as Jewish. That was not always the case. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the Jewish population of New York never exceeded 250 individuals—less than one percent of the inhabitants at that time.[1] Most were merchants and traders, and they had neither the time nor the inclination to document their thoughts.[2] They did however leave legal and commercial records such as wills and inventories. This codification of final wishes and enumeration of property provides a rich source for understanding their lives and what they deemed important.[3]

Using these wills and inventories, this paper will seek to answer why Jews came to New Amsterdam and subsequently New York, what their lives were like once they arrived, how they were able to thrive in an overwhelmingly Christian society, and how their personal and commercial interactions created the conditions that would allow subsequent waves of Jewish immigrants to succeed in New York City. I hope to expand on an impressive body of research done from the mid-20th century to the present including the compilation of these wills and inventories by Dr. Leo Hershkowitz, Dr. Doris Groshen Daniels's work on understanding the lives of Jewish women in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and more recently, scholars like Dr. Noah Gelfand and his delineation of the lives of Jews in the Dutch Atlantic. My goal is to add to this scholarship by providing a close reading of these wills and inventories in order to see how they illuminate one another and create a picture of the lives of these first Jews in New York.

The primary source material for understanding the lives of these New York Jews is twelve wills written between 1704 and 1740. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on six of those wills for which there are also supporting inventories. Combining these wills with their inventories, I hope to illuminate

the personal and public relationships and religious and commercial obligations of the earliest Jews in New York. Using this detailed examination, my goal is to add to the scholarship on diasporic Jews in the Atlantic world and how they formed the foundation for future generations.

The First Jews in New York

Some of the first Jews in New Amsterdam were Sephardim (Jews originally from Spain and Portugal) who arrived from Brazil in September of 1654. There is some controversy among historians as to whether this group remained in New York or continued on. We do know that they were escaping from Recife in Dutch Brazil which had fallen to the Portuguese earlier that year. The Sephardic Jews in Recife understood that rule by a Catholic power like Portugal meant, at best, forced conversion and practicing one's religion in secret—becoming a converso, or what was then referred to as a "New Christian." At worst, it meant seizure of all property and torture or death under the still-active Inquisition. It is probable that religious oppression and the Spanish expulsion of all Jews in 1492 had forced these families to travel the world. Many had ended up in the Netherlands, some in England and as the New World opened up to Europeans, some found themselves in the West Indies and the Dutch Atlantic.[4] Throughout this Diaspora, they had practiced their religion, frequently in secret, and used their familial connections and facility with languages to become successful traders and merchants. As Laura A. Leibman wrote "Their knowledge of multiple languages made them important cultural intermediaries."[5] The unintended consequence of their frequent expulsions and forced relocations was the possession of highly valuable linguistic and cultural skills well-suited to the New World.

These twenty-three Jews created a problem for then-governor of New Netherland, Peter Stuyvesant. He was not happy about their arrival and he

made his views known. In a letter to his superiors in Amsterdam, he referred to the Jews as a "deceitful race…[that should] be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony."[6] He was not the only one dismayed at their arrival. In 1655, the Rev. Johannes Megapolensis wrote from New Amsterdam to the Classis (Dutch Reformed Church authorities) of Amsterdam that, "These people have no other God than the unrighteous Mammon, and no other aim than to get possession of Christian property, and to win all other merchants by drawing all trade towards themselves."[7] He went on to refer to the Jews as "obstinate and immovable." Megapolensis and Stuyvesant didn't count on the fact that Jews were well-connected with the West India Company in the Netherlands. Jews represented little more than 1% of the population of the Netherlands, but they were over-represented as stockholders of the Dutch West India Company.[8] Consequently, the Company made it clear to Stuyvesant and the leaders of New Amsterdam that these twenty-three Jews should be allowed to stay. For at least some of them, their stay was brief and the timing and means of their departure is unknown.[9]

Two weeks earlier, on another ship, a different sort of Jew had arrived in New Netherlands. Asser (or Asher) Levy was an Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jew from Vilnius. Most probably, he was escaping from the massacres of Jews known as pogroms which began in 1648 and swept through what is now Poland and Lithuania. He was one of three Jews on the ship Peereboom and had come to make New Amsterdam his home and to ply his trade there. Levy was a butcher—in fact he was a *shochet* or kosher butcher—an occupation necessary to a future Jewish community. He was also a clever businessman who became a key figure in New Amsterdam and New York's commercial life. "In 1657, he fought for and gained citizenship rights for the Jews of New Amsterdam."[11] Prior to that, Levy was the first Jew to become a permanent denizen of New Amsterdam.[12] Denization, citizenship and becoming a freeman were methods whereby immigrants could participate more fully in the

commercial life of the colony. Denization was similar to the current .concept of "resident alien" and allowed these merchants to participate in commercial and legal transactions. Full citizenship, with its additional rights and privileges, was a longer and more involved process that required a seven year stay and the payment of fees.[13] To be a freeman of the city "granted the right to carry on retail trade in the city, to serve in public office, and to become part of the electorate."[14]

From the late 17th to the early 18th century, the Jewish population of New Amsterdam grew, primarily as a result of a number of Sephardic families moving there from the Netherlands and the Caribbean. These families were closely related to one another by both intermarriage and trade. Their relationships were emblematic of the mixture of the personal and professional that characterized this close-knit community. Scholar Bernard Bailyn writes, "so elaborate was the architecture of the family organization…that it was at times difficult to know where the family left off and the greater society began."[15] Many of these families were already trading throughout the Caribbean and the Dutch Atlantic—in Curaçao, Jamaica, Barbados and Surinam. They came to New Amsterdam/New York as it grew to become a major trading port for reasons similar to those Jews settling in Charleston, Philadelphia and Newport.

Jews were also interested in the intellectual life of their new home.

> Sephardic education valued mastering both religious works and so-called 'secular subjects' like poetry and philosophy. Thus, for all their interest in things Iberian, early American Jews also adopted local ways….Early American Jews both participated in the wider culture and embraced their particularity without seeing a conflict between the two.[16]

This gave them a clear advantage when it came to participating in the life of the city compared to followers of more parochial and insular religions.

As will become clear through a thorough examination of these wills and inventories, this small population of Jews was extraordinarily successful if one measures success in possessions, evidence of thriving business interests, the ability to create community institutions like the Shearith Israel (Remnant of Israel) synagogue and through the synagogue, provide for those less fortunate in their community.

The Wills

The twelve wills represent the following individuals:

1. Joseph Nunes, a merchant who came to New York City from London.
2. Joseph Brown, a naturalized citizen of New York.
3. Isaac Rodriguez Marques, who came to New York from Denmark and was a freeman of the city, an importer, and shipowner.
4. Esther Brown, wife of Saul Pardo Brown, one of the earliest *hazzans* or cantors of Congregation Shearith Israel.
5. Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, whose family was well-connected in the Caribbean.
6. Isaac Pinheiro, who came from Nevis and was a freeman of New York City.
7. Samuel Levy, who was a merchant, and an elected constable.
8. Abraham de Lucena, a prominent merchant, "minister" of Shearith Israel, and supplier to the American expedition in Queen Anne's War.
9. Moses Levy, a freeman, constable, merchant, distiller, real estate investor, and ship owner.
10. Rachel Luis, a merchant who died without family or children.
11. Uriah Hyam, a ship's chandler.
12. Simja de Torres, benefactor of the Mill St. Synagogue. [17]

The vast majority were from Sephardic families as evidenced by their Spanish and Portuguese surnames. The only exceptions are Moses Levy and Samuel Levy, descendants of Asser Levy. In the case of the English-sounding Browns, that name had been translated from "Pardo" meaning

gray or brown in Spanish.[18] The witnesses and executors for these wills were frequently non-Jews, bespeaking a level of friendship and trust between individuals of different faiths. Some of these Jewish wills were witnessed by the most prominent members of New York society like the .Van Cortlandts and Viscount Lord Cornbury. Compared to Europe, where association between Christians and Jews was far more proscribed, this represented a level of freedom and social mobility heretofore unheard of. The fact that women wrote wills and were also executors and beneficiaries makes it clear that they were able to own and dispose of property as well as engage in business transactions. By contrast, it was not until the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 that women in England were able to be legal owners of the money they earned and to inherit property.[19]

Another common factor in these wills is their connection to the West Indies and Europe. Many of these early New Yorkers had plantations and homes in places like Nevis and Jamaica. They sent their children to manage their affairs there and in London. Professor Leo Hershkowitz is quoted as saying of these New Yorkers that "…many people 'were transients equally at home in London, Amsterdam, Jamaica, Curaçao and other places in the Caribbean area.'"[20] Not surprisingly, travel was one of the inspirations for writing a will. Both storms at sea and pirates added to the uncertainty of return. Considering the difficulties of travel at that time, it's remarkable that these families were able to be so peripatetic. Nevertheless, these overseas commercial and personal connections provided significant benefits. It afforded these Jews the ability to spread their wealth geographically as a check against possible seizure of property as had happened so many times in the past.[21] It gave them powerful connections with colonial powers like the West India Company and as merchants, it gave them end-to-end control over raw materials, finished production, shipping and payment.

This paper will concentrate on the six wills which have associated inventories in order to better understand the concerns and daily lives of the testators. The possessions bequeathed range from the strictly quotidian like kitchen pots to the more decorative and opulent like silverware. Large portions of the inventories are concerned with trade .goods of various kinds reflecting commercial interactions with Europe, the West Indies, and the native populations of the New World. The wills also demonstrate that in many cases, these Jews owned real estate and that they also enslaved people.

Because "the synagogue supplied the ritual foods like kosher meat and matzo for Passover, provided for the education of the poor, gave loans to those in need, helped the aged, poor and ill, and gave dowries to girls whose families could not afford them…'"[22] later wills make specific bequests in support of the synagogue. For example, in Rachel Luis's will of 1727, she provides funds to purchase a Torah Scroll for Shearith Israel and in Simja de Torres's will of 1746, she directs that funds be given to the "Treasurer of the Sinegoge for the use of the sinegoge." Clearly, these wills offered an opportunity to instruct beneficiaries on issues such as the future welfare of family members and the wider Jewish community. There was also an element of distinction in being seen as a philanthropic member of the community.

A Closer Analysis of Six Wills and Their Inventories

A Bachelor Merchant - Blissful or Lacking Options?

The Will and Inventory of Joseph Nunes – 1704

Joseph Nunes was a merchant and trader. He died in 1705 at the age of 30, possibly of smallpox. His tombstone in the Shearith Israel burial ground refers to him as a "blissful unmarried man."[24] This reference to his unmarried state brings up another issue for the Jewish population of New York. The small population of Jews and even smaller number of families meant that there were few eligible marriage partners at any one

time. Jews were not able to marry their Christian neighbors and still be considered a member of the faith. There was no rabbi in New York able to perform the lengthy and arduous steps necessary for conversion from Christianity to Judaism. Despite that, Sephardic Jews were reluctant to marry those of Ashkenazi descent. "The number of available Jews in New York was so small that intermarriage (between Sephardim and Ashkenazim) was inevitable. But differences and resentments between the two groups never completely disappeared."[25] All of these factors may have resulted in Nunes' "blissful" bachelorhood.

The will of Joseph Nunes is brief. He left all of his possessions to his brother, Samuel Nunes, but one of the executors of his will is a non-Jew, his "Well beloved Friend" Paul Droillet, a freeman of New York and an assistant alderman of the Dock Ward where most of the Jews of New York lived at that time.[26] Even as early as 1704 there were relationships of trust between Jews and non-Jews of New York.

Much of Nunes' inventory is taken up with various types of fabric from the coarse "Oznabrigs" to the finest "East Indian Silk." Nunes' fabrics are both familiar—muslin and calico for example, and archaic—Kentings and Garlix. He also has items which go with the textile trade such as "Pewter Buttons" and "Threed Stockins for Children."[27] In addition, his inventory lists what appear to be trade goods for Native Americans, for example forty-two dozen Jews Harps and six dozen "sissers."[28]

Nunes's personal possessions were rather modest, including three porringers (small bowls), one pair of small andirons and one pair of plush breeches. He had six "Equinoctial Dials"—an item similar to an armillary. These may have been meant for sale to sea captains as navigation devices, but as they appear in the household part of the inventory, they may have been part of a personal collection. Among Nunes's possessions are some of special significance. He had a "Spanish Bible," presumably a Jewish one. He had "2 old Candlesticks" which, one

imagines, may have been used to usher in Shabbat as Nunes was religiously observant and was one of the "successful petitioners for a Jewish burial ground" according to Hershkowitz's footnote to Nunes's will.[29]

Nunes also had a pound of rare and precious cinnamon. At that time, cinnamon came only from Ceylon. The Dutch, having overthrown the . Portuguese there in 1638, had a 150 year monopoly on the global trade of cinnamon.[30] While it is certainly possible that his cinnamon was for trading purposes—a pound is a significant quantity of cinnamon—he might have also been using it and sharing it for the Jewish ritual of *havdalah* which ends Shabbat and involves smelling sweet spices to presage a good week. Nunes's will, written fifty years after the arrival of the first Jews in New Amsterdam, suggests that by then, even a relatively young man had the opportunity to be active in the Jewish community as a successful merchant supported by family and influential friends, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Commercial Success at Home and Abroad

The Will and Inventory of Isaac Rodriguez Marques – October 17, 1707

Isaac Rodriguez Marques wrote his will because he was "bound on a Voyage to Jaimca in the west Indies" and "Considering the certainty of death and the uncertaine Time of the Coming of the same."[31] It's believed that he never actually made the trip to Jamaica and the appraisal of his goods was done in January 1708, suggesting he did not live very long after making his will. In his will Marques seemed particularly solicitous of his wife and daughter providing, for example, fifty pounds to buy his daughter "a Jewell at her age of Eighteen years or marriage."[32] When one considers that the enslaved people in his will are valued between 20 and 35 pounds, a 50 pound jewel would have been a significant sum. Marques was also concerned about the welfare of his children and placed their inheritance under the supervision of Aaron La

Megoa of Jamaica, further proof of the fluid nature of relationships between New York and the Caribbean. He asked that Lewis Gomas and Abraham de Lucena (whose will is also a part of this paper) "assist [his] wife in the management of all her affaires."[33] Interestingly, although financial management for his family is vouchsafed to fellow Jewish merchants, his will is witnessed by a who's who of New York Christian society—William Peartree, who was Mayor of New York from 1703 to 1707; Ebenezer Wilson, who was Sheriff of New York; Rip van Dam, a prominent merchant and politician; and Edward, Viscount Cornbury listed in the will as "Captain Generall and Governor in Chiefe of the Provinces of New Yorke, New Jersey and Territorries..."[34] This speaks to Marques's status at the time of his death as well as his connections in New York's exclusively Christian political world.

Perhaps most interesting is Marques obvious solicitude for his mother. As the first item in the will, he directs the following: "it is in my will and minde that my deare mother Rachel Marques be maintained out of my Estate and live with my Wife or my Daughter dureing her naturall life."[35] He goes on to suggest that "if she cannot agree with them" she will be given fifty pounds and a "Serviceable Negro Woman" will be purchased for her, presumably as a substitute for his wife and daughter if they are unwilling or unable to care for his mother. He then emphasizes, "I doe give hereby a Strict charge to my wife and children be Dutifull to my said Deare Mother."[36] Hershkowitz notes that shortly after Isaac Rodriguez Marques' death, his wife, also named Rachel Marques, married one Moses Peixotto of Barbados. Whether remarrying and moving to the Caribbean had anything to do with a desire to avoid living with Mother Marques is open to conjecture, but in consideration of Isaac Marques mention of a potential lack of harmony, it is certainly worth considering.

The inventory of Isaac Marques' goods and possessions suggests a level of success and affluence. Marques owned a home on Queens Street

(now Pearl Street) which was valued at six hundred pounds. He had "wrought plate," presumably silver, valued at one hundred pounds. It is also apparent that he was in the provisioning trade for Caribbean sugar plantations as he had sent commodities to Jamaica including flour and very large quantities of butter. At that time, sugar plantations were anything but self-sufficient. Their entire purpose being the growing, harvesting and milling of sugar, all other needs were supplied from outside.

Along with his possessions, Marques had in his household four enslaved people: a woman named Hannah, a maid named Sarah, a man named Peter, and a Native American man named Phillip. There are several interesting points to note here. One, the women have names which might be construed as Jewish with their references to the Old Testament, while the men do not. There is no suggestion that these women converted or were converted to Judaism. Rather, their European names may have had more to do with those who enslaved them initially. Two, the fact that one of the enslaved people was a Native American: Native American slavery was pervasive, particularly in early America.[37] There is no information on how the Marques family came to have this Native American as part of their household or what became of him.

Marques does not appear to have owned any Jewish religious objects or Bibles. It is possible however, that those would have been considered possessions of his wife or mother and thus not included in his inventory.

The inventory goes on to list debts to be collected on behalf of Marques' estate. Many are owed to Marques by non-Jews like Captain Trimmingham of a prominent Bermuda family. Others are debts from wealthy Jewish families like Solomon Levy Meduro of Curaçao. Perhaps the most interesting debt reads as follows: "Due from Tongrelou on accot of prizes."[38] The sum was 70 pounds. The idea of "prizes" suggested a connection to piracy. In fact, Regnier Tongrelow was a privateer preying on Spanish and French ships in the Caribbean from 1704 to 1707, which

would have coincided with the last years of Isaac Marques' life. Though Tongrelow's career in piracy was short, it was productive. According to the Boston Newsletter, September 30, 1706: "On the 19th arrived here a private Ship of War the New York Capt Regnier Tongrelou Commander and brought in a Prize of 170 Tons having on board 460 Hogsheads of Sugar about pound of Indigo some raw Hides and Cotton."[39] Why would he have been indebted to Isaac Marques? In September of 1705, Tongrelow purchased a ship in New York which he named New York Galley and he hired 120 sailors.40] It's possible Marques helped to fund that effort as it was not uncommon for merchants, Jewish and non-Jewish, to profit from the privateers who sailed the Caribbean with British letters of marque.

The will of Isaac Rodriguez Marques demonstrates enduring ties to the Caribbean along with the progress Jews had made in New York by 1708. His powerful witnesses and executors, his ownership of real estate and extensive possessions all speak to Jews' successful adaptation to their new country and assimilation into its social and commercial life.

A Woman of Property

The Will and Inventory of Esther Brown, May 20, 1708

Esther Brown was the widow of Saul Pardo Brown and the *hazan* or cantor of the earliest Jewish congregation in New York, Shearith Israel. Her will itself is proof that women in the early colonial period were able to own and bequeath property and engage in commercial activity. Her husband was also a merchant, and after her husband's death, Esther continued his business. We know this by virtue of a shipping inventory which listed her importation of twenty-five gallons of rum from St. Thomas.[41] Esther Brown's property was left, in its entirety, to her children. Her "executrix" was her daughter, Abigail, further supporting the idea that women could have legal standing and be trusted to manage legal and commercial transactions. Her will was witnessed by some of the

most prominent Jewish businessmen in New York: Joseph Bueno, Abraham de Lucena, Nathan Simson[42] and Mordejay Gomez. Considering the involvement of these men in the founding of Shearith Israel, it's not surprising that she would have known and trusted them.

Another feature of the will is the witnessing section written by Thomas Wenham, Esq. Wenham recorded the oath of de Lucena and Bueno as follows: "Two of the witnesses to the within written will & made oath on the ~~holy evangelists~~ five books of Moses…"[43] As early as 1708, New York's legal authorities were willing to recognize and respect that Jews would wish to swear only on the Old Testament. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that "it was not until November 15, 1727 that Jews were exempt from uttering the words 'upon the true faith of Christians' when taking an oath in court or for holding public office."[44] This recognition of the Jewish faith bespeaks a growing level of legitimacy and respect from non-Jewish New Yorkers.

Esther Brown's belongings are unsurprising for a woman with some means who had taken over her husband's business. Her personal effects include furniture, fabric, ribbon and writing paper. She had two pounds of whale bone, presumably to fashion stays—what we would refer to today as corsets. There is fabric specifically designated for "Second mourning" which one imagines would be somewhat less dour than "first mourning" widow's weeds which proscribed shiny fabric and adornment. In addition, she appears to have various beverages. Five gallons of rum, nine gallons of "Orrange Water," and 20 Gallons "fine Anniseed water."[45]

According to Doris Groshen Daniels, "the Jewish women of New York enjoyed additional advantages compared to those in other colonies…there is much evidence of the independence of Dutch women, who engaged in business and public activities."[46] Esther Brown's will suggests that after her husband's death she carried on his business and that she had every expectation her daughter would do the same. Her will is a clear demonstration of the status of women in colonial New York in the early

18th century. Not only Jewish men but also Jewish women benefited from the less established atmosphere of the colonies compared to Europe.

A Successful Builder of the Jewish Community

The Will and Inventory of Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, October 17, 1708

Based on the evidence of his will and inventory, Joseph Bueno was an extraordinarily successful and wealthy businessman. According to Hershkowitz, Bueno was the wealthiest Jewish merchant of his time with his estate rivaling those of non-Jews like Nicolas Stuyvesant. For example, as only a part of his estate, he bequeathed six hundred pounds in cash to his wife Rachel.[47] Recall that in Isaac Marques' will, that was the value of his house and land—clearly a significant amount. Bueno also makes bequests to various family members including his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law and his godchild, Asher Campanell who grew up to be a sexton of Shearith Israel.[48]

Clearly, Bueno was interested in the Jewish community of New York. In his will, he left twenty pounds to the "Poor of the Jewish Nation of New York." Of particular religious interest is his bequest to his brother Abraham who resided in Nevis, West Indies. To his brother and "his heirs forever," he leaves "my five bookes of the Law of Moses in Parchment together with two Ornaments of plate."[49] The indication of parchment and of decoration makes it clear that this is not just a book. It is a Torah. The Torah—the Five Books of Moses handwritten in Aramaic by a scribe according to ritual strictures—is the centerpiece of any synagogue and its most important religious object. Though this Torah was intended for his brother, there is a notation in the part of the inventory dealing with items sold of the following, "The five Books of Moses with Silver Bells & other Utensells Belonging to the alter was sold by the executors to Isaac Pinheyro."[50] It is certainly possible that, rather than bring the Torah to Nevis, Abraham Bueno chose to sell it. The reference to "the alter" suggests that it may have already been housed at the synagogue making it

logical that its ownership would have been taken over by a synagogue member. In fact, this Torah does show up again in the inventory of Isaac Pinheiro who died in New York in February 1710.[51]

As a result of his longevity (Bueno lived to the astoundingly old age of ninety-seven!), great wealth and extensive business dealings, Bueno's will and inventory are considerably more complex than ones already examined. Among his non-commercial accomplishments, Joseph Bueno purchased land that would become the first Jewish burial ground in New York. It is uncertain exactly where this cemetery was but its importance to the community is obvious. The privilege of being buried in consecrated ground was powerful incentive to demonstrate one's piety and philanthropy, maintain kashruth and marry within the faith. As Doris Groshen Daniels writes, "the denial of burial rights was a threat to all who might be tempted to stray from the community."[52] This would have been the ultimate sanction -- to be separated from family for all eternity.

Bueno's trading encompassed everything from wild animal skins to "powder and supplies [for] the fusiliers at Albany during King William's War."[53] In the inventory itself are large quantities of fabric, which seems to be the case with all of these Jewish merchants. In addition, the inventory of his business shows him to be the possessor of "1 Sloop [Mary]."[54] His home must have been large and well-appointed. Among his personal belongings are twenty-four "Turkey work" chairs, eleven old leather chairs and twenty-five china teacups and saucers.[55]

The listing of those items sold from the estate at his home includes decorative objects like "1 Earthen Wooman Dog" and practical items like "4 pr. Glasses."[56] The purchasers are a who's who of early New York including Beekmans, van Cortlandts and De Peysters. Listed among the items for sale without any distinction as anything but additional property are "1 Negro Man Tom" sold to "Jn. De Peyster."[57] Bueno's wife kept "one Negro Woman called Lucretia with Two Small Boys" and "one Negro Girle named Lola."[58] There is also a listing of Bueno's debts,

and it is of particular interest that he owes fifty pounds to an African-American man named Cooper. That is a considerable sum of money and one wonders who Cooper might have been and what the debt represented. Unlike those on plantations, many of the enslaved people in New York possessed specialized skills—they were blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters. Some were allowed to sell their labor and profit from their work.[59] It's possible that one of these arrangements was the source of the debt.

Joseph Bueno's success as a merchant; his extensive inventory of possessions, both personal and professional; his relationships with the great and powerful in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community and his remarkable longevity made him a singular figure in early New York. With his purchase of a burial ground and ownership of a Torah, he used his wealth to demonstrate his sense of responsibility for the preservation of Judaism in the city.

Connecting New York and Nevis

The Will and Inventory of Isaac Pinheiro, November 12, 1708

Isaac Pinheiro's will[60] is the first of this group in which the testator specifically identifies himself as Jewish. He refers to himself as "of ye Nation of Jews" and goes on to request that he be "Interred in the Buriall place belonging to the Jewish Nation of ye Island of Nevis."[61] After centuries of practicing Judaism in the shadows in Spain and Portugal, it's difficult to fully grasp what a breakthrough this openness represents in the Diaspora.

Pinheiro gave significant sums of money (five hundred pounds) to each of his three daughters upon their marriage. To his two sons, Jacob and Moses, he left 250 pounds each and his own "Negro boy," one named Sharlow and one named Andover. He left an annuity to his ninety-year-old father in Amsterdam and a sum of money to his sister in "Curasoe."[62]

Aside from his property in New York, much of Pinheiro's will was taken up with assigning plantations and enslaved people in South Carolina and Nevis. At one point, he names fourteen enslaved individuals to be given to his sons along with a mill and a distillery. In fact, there appears to be some friction involving his son Jacob and his wife and Executor Esther regarding ownership of a plantation and its enslaved workers. As the will states:

> And whereas by a Certain Deed of Gift (Some years past) I have & bestowed to my sons ABRAHAM PINHEIRO (who is Since Deceased) and the aforesaid JACOB PINHEIRO Seven Negroes three whereof are Dead & Lost by the late French Invasion on this Island & the other four Namely WILL, SHARLOW, DOGGU and FANSHOW are now in my possession. It is my Express Will, that if my said Son JACOB or any other person, by or under him, shall at any time hereafter, Claim, Demand or any wise Disturbe my Executrix hereafter named, her heirs etc. from the Quiet, peaceable possession & enjoyment of the Said Negroes, WILL, SHARLOW, DOGGU and FANSHOW, then in Such Case the Two hundred & Fifty pounds Currant Money, by me hereby Given and Bequeathed unto him my Said Son JACOB, I Give & Bequeath unto Dear and Loving Wife ESTHER PINHEIRO my Executrix hereafter Named to be at her Disposall & he my Said Son to be ever barred of same.[63]

The French invasion of Nevis which Pinheiro references took place in March 1706. A huge French fleet and thousands of soldiers attacked Nevis which surrendered almost immediately. Nevertheless, the French burned most of the buildings and took a little over half of the island's enslaved people.[64]With this significant reduction in labor, one can see

why Pinheiro would have been concerned with holding on to his still-living enslaved workers. However, at the time of the will, his son Jacob Pinheiro was not yet twenty-one years old. What would have led Isaac Pinheiro to believe that his son had some nefarious plan in mind to "disturb" his mother's "enjoyment" of the enslaved people which the family held? Apparently his concerns were serious enough to threaten his son with disinheritance.

Other than the listing of Joseph Bueno's Torah, Isaac Pinheiro's inventory is relatively unremarkable. He appears to have maintained a modest household in New York City and what remained in New York after his death was of little value: food and clothing for personal use, "four Perukes 2 of them very old," a few items of silverware, and some cash.[65] The single most valuable item was the Torah. Despite the request in Pinheiro's will to be buried in Nevis, he was buried in the Shearith Israel cemetery in New York. According to "Some Notes on the Jews of Nevis" written by Malcolm H. Stern, at the time of Isaac Pinheiro's death, his wife was in Nevis and she and his son Jacob appear in the 1712 census there.[66]

Freeman of New York, "Minister of the Jewish Nation"
The Will and Inventory of Abraham de Lucena, February 12, 1716

Like Isaac Rodriguez Marques, Abraham de Lucena wrote his will in anticipation of the risks posed by a voyage to Jamaica.[67] In fact, he lived another nine years after writing it. His will was brief and simple in that he divided his property into six parts to be shared equally among his wife and five children. De Lucena owned his own home and there are records of him appearing in debt cases. In addition, in 1705 he and other merchants including Bueno and Marques as well as prominent non-Jews like Stephen Delancey and Phillip van Cortlandt petitioned the government to stop debasement of the currency, apparently as a result of "bad" currency entering New York from Boston. Before Parliament

passed the Currency Act of 1764 abolishing colonial paper money, individual colonies engaged printers like Benjamin Franklin to produce paper bills which each government supported with specie. This opened the door for widely different valuations colony to colony, as well as widespread counterfeiting. Merchants doing inter-colony business depended on the security of another colony's paper currency in order to guarantee proper payment for goods.[68] This might explain the New York merchants' concerns regarding paper currency from Massachusetts. For De Lucena, Bueno and Marques to petition the government along with the most powerful Christian merchants of the period speaks to the size, range and importance of Jewish commercial interests as well as the willingness of Christian businessmen to make common cause with Jews.

De Lucena is listed in the New York Historical Society Burghers and Freemen as having become a freeman of New York in 1708.[69] As was the case with many New York merchants, de Lucena took advantage of the increased need for provisions during Queen Anne's War and according to Joseph Rosenbloom's *Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews*, he supplied the British troops. As did most wealthy New Yorkers, De Lucena had several enslaved people in his household, "one Negro Woman Called Ruth with a young Child and One Negro Woman called Lucy, One Called Jenny." Leo Hershkowitz points out that it's surprising for someone who was nominally a "minister" of Shearith Israel to have no religious articles in his possession at the time of his death.[70' Abraham de Lucena was remarkable in his ordinariness. His will was written only sixty-two years after the first appearance of Jews in New Netherland yet his life could not have been more different from those twenty-three Jews fleeing persecution less than a century before. De Lucena participated fully in the life of New York City. He bought and sold goods, he initiated court cases, he petitioned the government. He had friends who were rich and powerful gentiles. Abraham de Lucena and his fellow Jews were able to worship freely and openly in their own edifice.

They could swear legal oaths as Jews, have Jewish weddings and bury their dead in consecrated ground. Lucena could be a leader of the Jewish community without fear of torture or expulsion. Jews in the New World only a century before could not have imagined that level of freedom and power.

Conclusion

The Jews of early New York, though small in number, were able to build a thriving community based on familial connections, religious observance and commerce. As evidenced by their wills and inventories, they had extensive dealings with the government and with the wealthy and the powerful of Dutch and British New York society. These few Sephardic Jews established institutions that are at the core of any Jewish community—a synagogue, a burial ground, a ritual bath, a school for boys and girls and a means of caring for their poorest through their religious institutions. Through social sanction, they ensured that their co-religionists kept kosher, performed circumcisions when sons were born, married within the faith, and observed the Sabbath.

As a result of their familial connections in Europe and the Caribbean, their ability to communicate in a number of different languages, and the fact that they were "at home" in all of these places, they functioned as connective tissue for New York in its earliest days as a commercial port. They also laid the groundwork for wave after wave of Jewish immigration, offering social services well before the government did. From the torture and repression of the Catholic Inquisition, a new kind of Jew was born in the New World. These families fought for their rights as citizens, amassed wealth for the future of their community, and even did business with pirates if necessary. They may not have had matzo ball soup or bagels and lox, but they were, in every meaningful way, prototypical New York Jews.

Endnotes

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[2] Holly Snyder "'Under the Shado of Your Wings' Religiosity in the Mental World of an Eighteenth-Century Jewish Merchant." *Early American Studies* Fall 2010, Vol. 8: 587.
[3] In speaking about scholarship in relation to these documents, it's necessary to mention Dr. Leo Hershkowitz, a history professor at Queens College who died in 2017 at the age of 92. Dr. Hershkowitz was the original compiler and commentator on all of the primary sources in this paper. As the New York Times obituary said of him, "Professor Hershkowitz had a reputation as a highly-regarded archival scavenger." He single-handedly saved countless early records of New York City that were on the verge of being discarded and in so doing, made this and many other scholarly works possible.
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[6] "Letters of Petrus Stuyvesant to the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch West India Company, Manhattan, September 22, 1654," in Noah Gelfand, "A Transatlantic Approach to Understanding the Formation of a Jewish Community in New Netherland and New York," *New York History* Vol 89, No. 4 (Fall 2008): p. 377.
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[17] Joseph R. Rosenbloom, *A Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews*, (University Press of Kentucky: 1960), 169.
[18] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 293.
[19] Christine Churches, "Women and Property in Early Modern England: A Case Study," Social History Vol. 23 No. 2 (May 1968).
[20] Daniels "Colonial Jewry," 377.
[21] Hershkowitz, "Some Aspects," 19.

[22] Daniels, "Colonial Jewry," 382.
[23] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 79.
[24] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 438.
[25] Daniels, "Colonial Jewry," 381.
[26] Leo Hershkowitz, *Wills of Early New York Jews (1704-1799)*, (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1967), 4.
[27] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 283.
[28] Hershkowitz "Inventories," 284.
[29] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 4.
[30] Marjolein Overmeer, "The Dutch East India Company in Ceylon," The Chessmen Museum, https://www.schaakstukkenmuseum.nl/?p=1859&lang=en.
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[32] Hershkowitz, *Wills*.
[33] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 9.
[34] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 10.
[35] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 9.
[36] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 9.
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[39] Lyman Horace Weeks and Edwin Monroe Bacon *An Historical Digest of the Provincial Press: Being a Collation of All Items of Personal and Historic Reference Relating to American Affairs Printed in the Newspapers of the Provincial Period Beginning with the Appearance of The Present State of the New-English Affairs, 1689, Publick Occurrences, 1690, and the First Issue of the Boston News-letter, 1704, and Ending with the Close of the Revolution, 1783 ... Massachusetts Series, Volume One.* Boston MA: Society for Americana, Incorporated, 62–473.
[40] Weeks and Bacon, *An Historical Digest*, 62-473.
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[47] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 13.
[48] Rosenbloom, *Biographical Dictionary*, "C."
[49] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 14.
[50] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 309.
[51] Hershkowitz, "Inventories," 320.
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[61] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 16.
[62] Hershkowitz, *Wills*, 17.
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Image courtesy of Maine State Museum

Goodbye, good luck, struck the sun & the moon
To the fisherman lost on the land
He stands alone at the door of his home,
With his long-legged heart in his hand.

-Dylan Thomas, "Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait"

Environmental, Historical, and Social Background:

Forty-two acres severed from the mainland by a few hundred yards of ocean, Malaga Island sits twenty-some miles north of Portland, Maine at the northern tip of Casco Bay. At low tide, a tidal flat attaches Malaga to its neighbor, Bear Island. The island formed in the late Pleistocene Period, as evinced by its mixed glacial till soil. It consists of several north-south ridges rising 40 to 60 feet above sea level and is dotted with red spruce forest, two acres of grasses and shrubs, isolated pocket

beaches, and saltmarsh.[1] Situated at the mouth of the New Meadows River and built on metamorphic bedrock, Malaga is wedged into the 'Mid-Coast,' a craggy coastline webbed together by "narrow estuaries and inlets" and studded with similar small islands.[2]

Humans have occupied Malaga Island for over a millennium. Despite local speculation, the island derives its name not from Andalusia but Abenaki: Malaga means cedar.[3] The Abenaki people occupied much of northern New England before the European invasion, including the Casco Bay region that encompassed Malaga, Bear, and other islands. Giovanni Verrazano was the first European to document the island's existence when he mapped the Maine coastline in 1524. European commercial interest in the region quickly grew.[4] It was not until the seventeenth-century that Europeans attempted to establish permanent settlements. Over the centuries of European invasion, whites removed the Abenaki from the Maine Mid-Coast and its islands. For a time, a mixed-race population of Black and white Americans occupied Malaga. As the state experienced an environmental decline, embodied by the weakened shipbuilding industry and declining groundfish populations, Malaga's subsistence livelihood became increasingly at odds with the burgeoning tourism industry and broader industrial capitalism. Eugenicists further marginalized Malaga's inhabitants, characterizing them as genetic and moral inferiors. Tensions culminated in 1912, when Maine Governor Frederick Plaisted ordered the forced eviction of Malaga's residents, including the institutionalization of eight people at the Maine Home for the Feeble-Minded. For most of the twentieth-century, the island remained unoccupied, passing through the hands of private owners. Today, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust maintains Malaga. Local fishermen still use the island, operating according to Maine's informal maritime codes, restricting access to longstanding (almost entirely white and male) demographics. Malaga's tragic history should stand as a stark

reminder that elite interests cultivated the Mid-Coast, its landscape and people scarred by their efforts to exert their economic and genetic hegemony.

From the ill-fated proprietary European settlement at Popham in 1607 until the conclusion of Grey Lock's War in the 1720s, European colonists waged a campaign of violent removal that was ultimately successful in establishing a permanent European presence in the Mid-Coast.[5] Economic interest motivated the Popham enterprise; Europeans found in Maine "every kind of fish and shellfish," as well as pine, spruce, oak, chestnut, and animal pelts.[6] Without the knowledge to survive, and potentially due to violent contact with Indigenous people, the Popham Colony failed.[7] Returning to England, the colonists constructed the first vessel built by Europeans in the New World.

Later European invaders established forts in the vicinity of Malaga, such as the 1714 erection of nearby Fort Augusta in Small Point Harbor by the 'Pejepscot Proprietors' intended to protect the farming community. On the mainland, the Mid-Coast offered saltmarshes for cattle and ample resources for sheep, corn, fruit, and berry production.[8] At Fort Augusta, Abenaki forces achieved a military triumph that repelled the European invaders and staved off occupation. With Grey Lock's War—a term for the conflict in the Northern New England Theater of Dummer's War—the English established their dominance in the Mid-Coast. Despite the catastrophe of European invasion, Indigenous people remained on the Maine coast, and indeed some Black communities emerged on the mainland before the Civil War.[9] Still, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries entailed violence at the hands of European hegemonization. The context of Indigenous removal premised racialized understandings of land use and ownership and the genesis of Malaga Island as an enigmatic stage of social and environmental transformation.

The first European legal documentation of Malaga is from 1818 when the island was purchased by a man named Eli Perry, who never paid taxes

for his purchase. It was not until the late 1860s that Malaga bore its first permanent inhabitant, a free Black man named Henry Griffin.[10] According to the 1860 Maine Census for Sagadahoc County (the county which contains Malaga Island), only 70 free Black people and one Indigenous American were present.[11] The people that moved to Malaga Island in the period between 1860 and 1900 were mostly Scotch-Irish, free-Black, or of mixed-ancestry.[12] Census records trace Malaga's inhabitants to Benjamin Darling (including Henry Griffin's wife, Fatima Darling Griffin), a free Black man originally from the West Indies.[13] Compounding the dearth of surviving evidence associating the Abenaki and Malaga is the historiographical muddle of lore and fact. One strand of local legend suggests that Darling was awarded his freedom and nearby Horse Island for saving his enslaver, a ship captain, during a wreck.[14] Another poses that "Black Ben" Darling inhabited Malaga's neighbor, Bear Island, which he named after stabbing a black bear who was devouring his corn with a pitchfork.[15] If it is impossible to distinguish truth from fiction in these stories, their contradictions or ambiguities are emblematic of the later historical mythologization of Malaga in an attempt to primitivize its residents. For a time, the free Black residents had children with Maine whites of European extraction, indicated by the 1880 Census example of the 68-year-old "mulatto" Hannah Marks and other elderly residents of mixed ancestry.[16] While Malaga's exact demographics over this period are not conclusive, with a population of 45 in 1912, it is not unreasonable to infer that a large proportion of Sagadahoc's non-white population resided on Malaga Island.[17]

A 1989 archaeological expedition led by the University of Southern Maine on Malaga revealed physical remnants of the relationship between Malaga's residents and their physical environment, indicating the extent to which people relied on the ocean for subsistence, as well as the hardships of their existence. During Malaga's peak inhabitation from 1860 to 1910, the island's residents extracted their living from netting

groundfish and baitfish, lobstering, and clamming in the tidal flat between Bear and Malaga that constitutes "one of several important shellfish harvesting areas in the New Meadows River system."[18] As a consequence of Malaga's poor-quality glacial till soil, agriculture was limited to gathering wild berries or production of vegetables, including potatoes, corns, and beans.[19] The expedition, which yielded over 50,000 artifacts from waste heaps, unearthed bone, ceramics, pipestems, leather, nails, fish hooks, coins, and other artifacts from the island.[20] According to the Maine Coastal Heritage Trust, Malaga's archaeology is especially significant in American and New England history as it "contains specific household sites that can be matched to individual African-Americans for a specific time period;" the remaining trees on the island, red spruce almost a century old, likely originate from a spruce stand selectively-cut by Malaga's nineteenth-century residents.[21] Malaga's reliance on maritime resources for its survival made the island vulnerable to economic and social collapse due to environmental vicissitudes, such as the depletion of groundfish populations. Other local Maine industries such as shipbuilding experienced a precipitous economic decline approaching 1900, laying the groundwork for a vibrant summer tourism industry that survives to this day. As Maine's economy transformed from its heritage shipbuilding and fishing industries to a reliance on tourism, a more sinister national movement emerged alongside it: eugenics.

The Emergence of Eugenics & 'Rural Pauperism':

Malaga Island's isolation, mixed racial makeup, and poverty rendered its population especially susceptible to the social and political consequences of the turn-of-the-century eugenics movement. As Anna Stubblefield writes in her "'Beyond the Pale,'" eugenics conceptualized a 'tainted whiteness' that associated moral depravity, evinced by alcoholism, poverty, and more, with the novel theory of Social

Darwinism.[22] By the turn of the century, proponents of eugenics argued that genetic-moral degradation was not endemic to America's cities; studies like F.W. Blackmar's 1897 "The Smoky Pilgrims" argued that areas like Maine were susceptible to "rural pauperism," defined by moral degradation, high birth rates, and squalor.[23] Beginning in 1865 with the passage of a provision that authorized the Governor of Maine to send a "limited number of idiotic" children out of state for care, the state assumed a partial jurisdiction over Maine's eugenic inferiors.[24] As the century progressed, the state documented in its census distinct 'insane,' 'idiot,' and 'imbecile' populations. The writings of New England intellectuals, including the eventual Superintendent of the Maine Hospital for the Insane, Bigelow Sanborn, incorporated the language of eugenics into contemporary medical parlance. The Maine Medical Association mentioned special concern for the 'feeble-minded' beginning in 1904, coincident with rising eugenic fervor. At the same time, Sanborn and others crystallized the association between the genetic failure of a "defective class" and the inherent socio-moral implications of its existence.[25]

The burden imposed on the state by such inferior demographics, in social and economic terms, left Malaga the subject of local concern. The confluence of the Mid-Coast's economic transformation and the national embrace of eugenics engendered a popular desire to 'improve' the island, ultimately impelling the state of Maine to evict the entire population of Malaga. During the economically unproductive winter months, many of the island's residents collected aid from government social support programs. Though measures like the Phippsburg Pauper Relief Fund offered some Malaga inhabitants respite, public disclosure of the Fund's recipients tacitly cataloged hypothetical targets of eugenics.[26] In her "Eugenics & Malaga Island," Melissa Davenport writes that between 1820 and 1911 "town-level administration of poverty law removed the autonomy of the poor."[27] For example, nearby West Bath and

and Brunswick instituted laws to progress from a messy maritime economy to a pristine, romantically-unperturbed environment. One law curtailed tidal clam-digging as "unsightly,"[28] which disproportionately affected Malaga's inhabitants. Studies of individual residents or families emphasizes this increased poverty. In one case, the State's documented cost incurred for supporting the Marks family in 1911 was $185.07; a state inspector of the island suggested in the same year that without state intervention "in five years there would be a large increase over the present population for the State to care for."[29] A chronic ailment of Malaga and a burden on the town and state at large, "persistent poverty," was refracted through the eugenic paradigm as a failure of morality.[30]

As Stubblefield argues, the notion of 'tainted whiteness' led proponents of eugenics to target primarily whites for sterilization.[31] However, in majority-white Maine, Malaga's mixed racial demographics exacerbated elites' concern. Eugenicists prioritized the island because it incarnated associations between miscegenation and alcoholism, as well as poverty and moral failure. In the 1890s, as local concern over Malaga Island fomented, newspaper articles attempted to divorce Malaga's residents from racial, moral, and environmental purity. These papers characterized Malaga's residents of color as out of place in the white North, erroneously identifying them as the tainted offspring of whites and 'non-native' non-white people, like supposedly escaped slaves from the South (despite the Darling documentation) or immigrant Portuguese.[32] Local histories described Benjamin Darling's son, the progenitor of many of Malaga's late-nineteenth-century inhabitants, as a "beggar and a liar."[33] Of particular concern to eugenicists was Malaga's mixed-race population, who they perceived as embodying genetic degradation through miscegenation. Publications described these people in archaic genetic racial terminology; for example, in the description of Jacob Marks as an "octoroon" (a person of ⅛ Black descent).[34] The combined perceptions of Malaga's Black residents as abnormal in white

Maine and the ideas of tainted whiteness through racial mixing made Malaga especially offensive to eugenicists.

Attacks on Malaga Island intensified as eugenicists associated genetic impurity and its consequent moral depravity with public health and environmental purity, thereby coalescing the eugenic aspiration for untainted whiteness with the econo-environmental challenges that threatened the island. The island's poverty and impropriety were equally as symptomatic of genetic and moral failure as they were synonymous with a retrograde disengagement from industrial capitalism and wage labor. In a sensationalized December 22, 1893 article in the *Boston Herald* entitled "STARVATION IN HUTS," "death was staring hundreds of" Malaga's residents (a gross overestimate) "in the face," its "fisherman without food," its women "almost nude."[35] Also offensive to Industrial Era norms was the fact that Malaga's women "no doubt out-earned men,"[36] exacerbating the island's perceived economic backwardness. In addition to the lack of economic productivity associated with Malaga, the concept that they could not independently *make* money was the emergent notion that the island's residents could also not *spend* money with reason. Evidence of such "improvidence" was anecdotal: a Malaga resident earning money only to waste it on "sweets, pickles, jellies, and fancy groceries" or burning for firewood shingles gifted by a white minister to repair the islands' roofs.[37]

The economic burden incurred by the State in ameliorating the poverty of 'depraved' Malaga was of principal concern. The cost of the island's poverty compounded with its supposed susceptibility to alcoholism, mental illness, and contagious disease. When measles broke out in Maine in 1902, newspapers documented Malaga's infection and local towns' alienation of the island, as if its residents were themselves a contagion. An article from Bath entitled "Not Fit For Dogs Life on Malaga" spoke of the island's "Poverty, Immorality, and Disease….Disgusting and Pitiable. A Population of 35, and 26 of Them

Sick with Measles...Ignorance, Shiftlessness, Filth and Heathenism."[38] Ironically, the state's legal harassments included concern for unlicensed canines on Malaga.[39] The article criticized the towns of Harpswell and Phippsburg for refusing jurisdiction over Malaga, writing "A Shameful Disgrace That Should Be Looked After At Once….[the towns disown] These Creatures and They Are Made Outcasts."[40] Other articles wrote of the islanders' "defective eyesight," "doubtless insan[ity]," diseases produced by miscegenation, and other factors.[41] Bigelow Sanborn and others, including the author Holman Day, wrote that geographic isolation and intermarriage "resulted in neuroses," or that "solitariness and the sea breed strange thoughts."[42] Genetic weakness begot a positive feedback loop of isolated poverty, inbreeding, and physical disease, necessitating some sort of state response.

Days later, an article in the *Bath Enterprise* urged the State to recognize "as a legitimate matter of public policy that such communities [as Malaga] are cleaned up and purified... within the province of the State Board of Health and the State Board of Education."[43] The burden of institutionalizing Malaga's 'feeble-minded' paled in comparison to the economic cost of their current poverty and receipt of state poverty benefits as "professional paupers."[44] By 1904, Phippsburg separated Malaga's recipients from other town residents in its Pauper Relief Fund report.[45] Evidence of Malaga's history of tax delinquency (even if it was so the town could shirk its Pauper Fund responsibility) and its literal geographic isolation further delinked the island from local, state, and national economies. Though white Mainers long perceived Malaga Island as apart from civilization, the Governor and others politically divorced the island from the mainland. For example, newspapers claimed that the islands' "Half-breed Blacks and Whites" bowed to a monarch, "His Royal Highness, King McKenney" (in reality, McKenney was the island's sole literate white adult and the only inhabitant of a two-story house) reinforcing the image of Malaga's political and social primitiveness.[46]

The threat that Malaga Island posed to the burgeoning tourism industry in Maine was similarly incorporated into eugenic attacks. Not only did Malaga lack agricultural or industrial production, its presence also tainted the purity of Maine's landscape. Poverty and miscegenation jeopardized the success of an industry that revolved around the tastes and prejudices of the New England elite. A 1902 article in the *Daily Kennebec Journal* suggested that "Malaga would make a beautiful place for a summer colony," if only it received an "everlasting cleaning and fumigation."[47] It wasn't just the island's diseased poverty that affronted elites but also the presence of a unique mixed-race population in majority-white Maine. The *Casco Bay Breeze* called Malaga "the Home of Southern N*gro Blood," its 'uncivilization' causing "Incongruous Scenes on a Spot of Natural Beauty."[48] The confluence of the eugenics with the transformation of the Maine economy led to Malaga's characterization as an economic and racial blight on the state.

The conflict between Harpswell and Phippsburg over which town contained Malaga Island reached a head in 1903 when after several years of disagreement, the State ruled that Malaga belonged to the Town of Phippsburg and Sagadahoc County (Harpswell is in Cumberland County). Phippsburg continued to lobby the State that Malaga was legally separate from Phippsburg, and in 1905 the State declared Malaga's residents wards of the State under the jurisdiction of a Gubernatorial Committee.[49] A state agent, George Collar Pease, oversaw the distribution of food, clothing, and medical supplies to the island.[50] In 1906, a missionary family from Malden, Massachusetts, the Lanes, established a permanent school for the improvement of the island's youth, giving hope to Malaga's inhabitants and outsiders alike that the island's poverty was temporary. Students received lessons in hygiene, domestic science, and 'useful employment' in addition to traditional education in reading, writing, and math.[51] In 1911, Maine Governor Frederick Plaisted visited Malaga and complimented the Lanes' education campaign, though

writing afterward that "the conditions there are not credible to our state, and we ought not to have such things near our front door."[52] Plaisted's ultimate suggestion was to "burn down the shacks with all their filth."[53]

Empty Island: The Process of Eviction

After shirking responsibility for the island's poverty, the State ordered the inspection of the islands' residences and investigations of its inhabitants' ancestries.[54] Employing the Binet I.Q. test and examining family trees that exposed "mentally defective" and "sexually immoral" ancestors, the State designated that seven members of the aforementioned Marks family were 'feeble-minded' (including four "low grade morons"). [55] In June 1911, Governor Plaisted ordered that eight Malaga residents, including seven Marks, be involuntarily relocated to the New Gloucester Home for the Feeble-Minded.[56] The Home for the Feeble-Minded symbolized romantic notions of controlled nature and Victorian gender roles: "large buildings surrounded by wide farmlands and forest groves….men work[ed] in the fields and in the barn while women work[ed] in domestic chores."[57] In Dis Place, Matt Herrick argues that the School exuded an "aspect of institutional control" through its shared-ownership by multiple towns, its protective purpose, and its size.[58] Plaisted illegitimately declared that the descendants of Eli Perry, who had purchased Malaga in 1818 but never occupied the island, legally owned the property. He further ordered the eviction of all Malaga's inhabitants within three-weeks, by July 1, 1912.[59]

When the State's agents arrived in Malaga in July 1912, the island was empty, most of its surviving residents relocating to nearby islands or mainland Sebasco, Phippsburg, Bath, and Harpswell. In exchange for their forced relocation or institutionalization, the state of Maine paid Malaga's inhabitants between $50 and $300 (approximately $1,300 and $8,000 in 2021 U.S.D.) for their homes.[60] The State compensated Perry's descendants, who never lived on Malaga, the sum of $471 to

purchase the island. After the removal of Malaga's inhabitants, the State razed its remaining homes. Only the schoolhouse, a vestige of improvement efforts, survived, and the building moved miles to Muscongus Bay.[61] In a final gesture of cruelty, the State exhumed the island's cemetery, combining the remains of seventeen individuals in five caskets and sending the remains to the cemetery at New Gloucester, a place with which the deceased had no connection.[62] It is notable that the surnames of Malaga's residents survive in Phippsburg to this day, including Darling. Despite the State's efforts to contain and ultimately prevent bequeathing the burden of a genetically 'diseased' population of grotesque poverty to white posterity, Plaisted and the state of Maine never attained their objective of absolute genetic homogeneity.

In 1913, the state of Maine sold Malaga Island to a friend and colleague of the former chair of the State Executive Committee (which had controlled the State's "wards" on Malaga). Meanwhile, Maine's tourism industry continued to blossom in the Mid-Coast region. In 1912, the Rock Gardens Inn was constructed at nearby Sebasco, an area which the period's typical romantic language termed the "Garden of Eden."[63] In 1928, Nathan Cushman of Portland Baking Company built Sebasco Lodge (now known as Sebasco Harbor Resort) on the location. Though the region is still rural and largely undeveloped, Sebasco has hosted white cultural icons from Eleanor Roosevelt to Owen Wilson.[64] In 1989, a commercial real estate developer named T. Ricardo Quesada purchased Malaga, though he never developed the island, using it for "family purposes" and saying "we think the less publicity about [Malaga's history] the better."[65] Since 1912, the island has never been inhabited. The last documented Malaga resident died in 1997, at the age of 103. In 2001, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust purchased Malaga to protect the island from development and allow the continued use of the island by local fishermen for storing fishing and lobstering gear.[66] Today, a restaurant for Sebasco's guests, Anna's Water Edge, sits right across from

unoccupied Malaga Island. There is a sign at Anna's Water Edge that tells a brief history of the empty island a few hundred yards across the water.

Questions of Historiography:

The restaurant signage poses an interesting question about Malaga's historical memory. It was not until 2010, 98 years after the forced eviction of Malaga's residents, that the Maine Legislature and Governor John Baldacci issued a statement of "profound regret."[67] Despite a recent uptick in academic attention paid to the island's past, especially by local Bowdoin and Bates Colleges, and its portrayal in popular fiction such as Gary Schmidt's 2004 *Lizzie Bright & the Buckminster Boy*, the story of the island and its significance remain largely unknown. The State's efforts to remove any trace of Malaga's nineteenth-century inhabitants contribute to the lack of available resources for study. Historical analysis of Malaga Island, such as that in Davenport's "Eugenics & Malaga Island," is premised on state and municipal records, newspaper archives, and eugenic publications. Though prejudiced, local lore has a powerful influence on contemporary understandings of Malaga. Matt Herrick's *Dis Place: A True History of Malaga Island* is not, in fact, a true history, but rather a fictional narrative based on semi-accurate local lore. The fact that any author must infer from the existing facts what truths conform to the empty spaces obscures any examination of the island's history. The remarkable intersection of racial, environmental, and eugenic histories renders Malaga's history so compelling. Any contemporary perspective on Malaga Island is a product of competing historical frameworks drawing conclusions from an intentionally destroyed or politically biased pool of evidence. Wading through this ambiguity, grasping for an island of truth in an ocean of sensation, lore, and propaganda, is an impossible yet endlessly fascinating endeavor.

In weighing the relative influence of the economic-environmental transformation of the Mid-Coast Maine region and the eugenics

movement, it is tempting to divorce the two. Maine never destroyed the 'unsightly' practices, such as clamming in tidal flats, preferring subsistence to surplus, and poverty, that represented economic primitivity and justified the eviction of Malaga's inhabitants. Indeed, the market for lobster never evaporated and only burgeoned. Though the yards no longer spit out six-masted schooners as they used to, shipbuilding remains a significant element of the Maine economy. Bath Iron Works, located the town over from Malaga Island, still employs over 6,000 people, three times the population of Phippsburg.[68] Heritage industries coevolved with tourism. Buoys, lobster boats, and clam diggers knee-deep in the mud have been incorporated into the romantic image of Maine's coast, perpetuating an economic voyeurism that mirrors turn-of-the-century postcards depicting Malaga's poverty. The descendants of Malaga's residents survive to this day. The survival of these industries and people, which eugenicists might deem a failure, does not extricate the economic-environmental transformation of the Mid-Coast from Malaga's clash with eugenics. To question what kinds of labor or subsistence are primitive or what constitutes intelligence and ability is to investigate social reflexes. In the example of Malaga Island, one cannot ignore the dynamic and internecine influences of economic transformation and eugenics. These factors dictated what people and practices would survive: it is futile to parse their independent historical significance.

Today, there are no people living on Malaga Island, Indigenous, mixed-race, or otherwise. Malaga Island was named for cedar, but today only red spruce stand sentinel over the unoccupied island, a peculiar remembrance of the island's haunted past.

Endnotes

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