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'It is Time to Be Leaders Ourselves': New Orleans Black Radicals in American Political Culture, 1863-1868

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During Reconstruction in New Orleans, as they witnessed the burgeoning political advocacy of blacks, white conservatives raised the specter of "AFRICANIZATION."[1] Louisiana Governor Henry C. Warmouth believed that "the radical Republican movement was a plot by Creole extremists 'to establish an *African State Government.*'"[2] Historians have discussed the successful, although brief, incorporation of New Orleans blacks into the body politic—the "Americanization" of Afro-Creoles during Reconstruction.[3] Most assume that there was something essentially "American" about antebellum white political culture that arose in isolation from black influences, and that when blacks gained the franchise, they adapted to the existing order. However, as Steven Hahn observes, black activists in New Orleans "set out to do

1 For example, see William H. Holcombe, "The Alternative: A Separate Nationality, or the Africanization of the South," *Southern Literary Messenger* 32 (Feb 1861): 81–8. My use of the term "black" encompasses all people who were categorized as "Africans" or "Negroes" at the time. In New Orleans, this includes light-skinned people of mixed European, Caribbean, and African ancestry, who were accorded the social standing of "black" because of the so-called One Drop Rule. Within this category, I will discuss two populations: the African American ex-slaves, who were generally darker in complexion, and the freeborn population of Afro-Creoles, many of whom had European citizenship or parents that grew up in Louisiana under French and Spanish rule.

2 Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997): 271.

3 Caryn Cossé Bell and Joseph Logson, "The Americanization of Black New Orleans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, eds. Joseph Logson and Arnold R. Hirsch (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992): 201.

something that no other society in the world, let alone state in the South or the Union, had so much attempted. They would inscribe into fundamental law the enfranchisement and full civil standing of [blacks]... thereby reconstructing the body politic of the South and potentially reordering the politics and society of the nation."[4] In this paper, I want to explore Hahn's claim that blacks in Reconstruction New Orleans "envisioned a nation that did not yet exist." I will argue that in the early years of Reconstruction (1863-1868), blacks in New Orleans did not merely claim inclusion into the existing polity; they sought to remake American law and political culture according to their own principles—to "African-Americanize" the nation. As the editors of the black radical newspaper the New Orleans *Tribune* wrote, "It is not the time to follow in the path of white leaders; it is the time to be leaders ourselves."[5] New Orleans blacks forged a new political culture from their diverse backgrounds, fusing the anti-caste natural rights theory of the revolutionary Atlantic world with the self-reliance and communal solidarity developed under slavery.

Lying at the juncture of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, New Orleans was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the Old South. Its location connected it to both the inland domestic trade and the Atlantic world, which resulted in an unusually diverse population. The city was home to a significant number of European immigrants and Northern transplants; it also had the largest community of free blacks in the South. Many of these were freeborn Afro-Creoles of mixed European ancestry who were wealthy, worldly, and educated at elite institutions. Although these lighter-skinned blacks were still stigmatized and denied civil rights, they "enjoyed a status probably unequaled in any other part of the South." They rubbed elbows with whites in some social settings, including the Catholic Church.[6] The class structure of New Orleans also set it apart. While elsewhere in the South there were two classes – the aristocratic landowners and the laboring poor – New Orleans had a genuine middle class of skilled black craftsmen.[7]

The boundaries between black and white, free and enslaved, were more fluid in New Orleans than elsewhere. Many mixed-race blacks were reported to have "passed" to gain admission to white-only spaces such as theaters, restaurants and dining cabins on steamboats.[8] It was on these vessels that some bondsmen escaped to the North by passing as white or as hired laborers. However, New Orleans was also a place where many unwillingly made the transition from freedom to slavery. For example, some free Afro-Creoles with French citizenship arrived in the city as refugees from the Haitian Revolution and found themselves re-enslaved when fellow passengers claimed them as property.[9]

Historians have pointed to these and other peculiarities to claim that New Orleans is a regional anomaly: "an appendage of the middle-class North."[10] According to this view, a case study of the Crescent City would not shed light on race relations in the Reconstruction South. But while the city's Afro-Creoles were influential, in 1860 the majority of blacks in New Orleans were still enslaved. Between 1860 and 1870, as freedpeople from the surrounding parishes came to New Orleans, the city's black population more than doubled.[11] Although they left little documentary evidence, the rural migrants did not share all the needs and values of the Afro-Creoles. Thus, New Orleans served as a meeting ground for blacks from diverse cultures and social classes. Conservative whites also had a strong presence in the city. The Reconstruction conventions brought white supremacists head-to-head with radicals in a formal setting, where they aired their differences over issues as profound as the origin of racial difference. For example, during the 1864 Free State convention, which excluded blacks, white delegates from across the political spectrum contemplated the fate of the freedmen. Some openly declared the inherent "barbarism" of the "African race," which could not survive without the benevolent rule of "the superior race."[12] In 1865, the Democratic Party returned to power under Presidential Reconstruction. Their official platform declared that "people of African descent cannot be considered as citizens of the United States, and that there can, in no event, nor under any circumstances, be any equality between the white and other races." Just five years later, on the floor of the state legislature, an African American representative named Robert H. Isabelle announced his support for school integration in radical terms: "I want the children of the

4 Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*: *Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003): 207.

5 New Orleans *Tribune* February 1, 1865.

6 Louis R. Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans public schools during Reconstruction," *American Historical Review* 67, no. 3 (April 1962): 674; John Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973): 16.

7 Ted Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana, 1862-1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984): 19.

8 For one such anecdote, see Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard Unviersity Press, 2013): 137.

9 Although there was an 1808 federal ban on importation of slaves to the United States, New Orleans officials often turned a blind eye to it. See Rebecca Scott, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012): 60; for another instance of slave-claiming on a steamboat see Johnson 2013, 139.

10 Tunnell 1984, 20.

11 Blassingame 1973, 1-2; Appendix Table 1. The total black population of New Orleans increased from 24,074 in 1860 to 50,495 in 1870.

12 For example, Delegate Edmund Abell addressed the floor: "I say that of all systems of labor, slavery is the most perfect, humane and satisfactory that has ever been devised...Look at the free negro in his native jungles, sir, what do you find? A mere bug-eater; a fruit eater; a mere naked, destitute wretch, as incapable of social enjoyment as a brute." Albert P. Bennett, "Debates in the Convention for the revision and amendment of the constitution of the state of Louisiana. Assembled at Liberty hall, New Orleans, April 6, 1864" (New Orleans: W. R. Fish, printer to the Convention, 1864): 156.

State educated together. I want to see them play together; to be amalgamated...I want them to play together, to study together; and when they grow up to be men they will love each other..."[13] Before the war, New Orleans was home to the country's most successful black community and the largest slave market. During Reconstruction, it was a meeting ground for race radicals and diehard white supremacists—a cross-section of all the conflicting ideologies in the postwar South. As such, it was the forum for a far-reaching debate over the meaning and scope of emancipation.

Historians of Reconstruction have shown the importance of looking beyond partisan designations by highlighting intra-party divisions, especially among Republicans. Likewise, it is crucial not to think of the "black community" as a monolith. The case of New Orleans is instructive, as the city's Afro-Creoles and freedmen were culturally, economically, and linguistically distinct. Some scholars have argued that the Afro-Creoles only worked to secure their own interests, which were at odds with those of the newly emancipated.[14] There is some evidence that during and after the Civil War, the "colored aristocrats" sought to distinguish themselves from the freedpeople. For example, they resented the broad sweep of vagrancy laws designed to control the labor of freedmen but that likewise restricted their mobility.[15] In 1862, the elite French-born Paul Trévigne founded *L'Union*, the first black newspaper in New Orleans. Published exclusively in French, the paper was intended for well-to-do, educated Afro-Creoles. By some accounts, it was "a caste journal which accepted many of the social and economic distinctions between the free-born men of color and the former slaves."[16] When they were concerned with the freedpeople, it was in the paternalistic sense of *noblesse oblige*: they intended to "organize labor-colonies, and elevate our emancipated brethren." Accoridng to Tunnell, this meant "the former bondsmen ought to remain passive...trusting in their more enlightened brethren" to determine their interests.[17] Scholars who emphasize the conflict of interests between these two groups often overstate the extent to which Afro-Creoles did not identify with the freedmen. Most of their evidence is taken from earlier writings, and they assume that the relationship between Afro-Creoles and freed blacks was static over the course of Reconstruction.[18] But as Afro-Creole leaders encountered freedmen in political conventions and segregated streetcars, they began to understand the full social and economic empowerment of the freedmen as inseparable from their own quest for equal rights.

Given the gulf between the world of the plantation slave and that of the free-born urbanite, it is not surprising that the Afro-Creoles felt themselves qualified to guide the freedmen's transition to life in New Orleans. "When the freedmen arrived in New Orleans," Blassingame writes, "they were generally uneducated, disease-wracked, slovenly, hardened to cruelty and deprivation, and had little understanding of [Creole Catholic] religion [or] politics[.]"[19] It is likely that most Afro-Creoles harbored class and race prejudice against their darker brethren. What is remarkable, then, is how quickly the Afro-Creole leaders took up the cause of the freedmen after emancipation. Their first campaign was for suffrage, and initially they only requested the vote for a few "men of quality." They reasoned that their political consciousness and economic independence "qualified" them to vote. They appealed to the republican idea that the franchise could only safely be exercised by citizens free from economic or social coercion. They also cited their military service as an earned basis for suffrage. For example, at a November 1863 rally, Afro-Creole François Boisdoré announced, "When our father fought in 1815 they were told that they should be compensated...If the United States has the right to arm us, it certainly has the right to allow us the rights of suffrage." At the same rally, white Unionist Thomas Durant argued that while emancipated slaves should not "immediately possess all of the rights and privileges of American citizens" due to the handicaps of slavery, the free Afro-Creoles had "the same claims as any other class to the enjoyment of all the civil, political and religious rights of American citizens" – and "the audience burst into applause."[20] As the wartime government prepared for the 1864 constitutional convention by which Louisiana would re-enter the Union, Afro-Creoles' calls for suffrage gained intensity. They insisted that blacks comprise a proportionate share of the electorate and delegates. But as state officials ignored their claims and moved forward with an all-white convention, Afro-Creoles organized a rival election, drew up a petition, and sent two emissaries to deliver their suffrage claims to President Lincoln. This petition called for the enfranchisement of free-born blacks only.

Historians have seized on this petition as evidence that the Afro-Creole elite had little interest in supporting the freedmen. But by 1864, the basis of their civil rights claims was already changing from merit qualifications to a theory of natural rights. An April 1864 interview with the New York *Anglo-African* reveals that the petition's authors initially wished to call for universal suffrage. They were discouraged from this path by white radicals such as Durant, who knew that an appeal for limited suffrage was more likely to be taken seriously by Lincoln and Congress. In a meeting with Senator Charles Sumner and Congressman William D. Kelley, the petitioners added a provision that called for suffrage for all men – free and formerly enslaved – throughout the South. It was this revised version that was presented to the President.[21] Shortly thereafter, in his first recorded endorsement of black suffrage, Lincoln privately urged the Free State Governor Michael Hahn to extend the suffrage to Afro-Creoles: "I barely suggest for your

13 Robert H. Isabelle quoted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune,* February 9, 1970.

14 E.g. David Rankin, "The Origins of Black Leadership in New Orleans During Reconstruction." *Journal of Southern History* 40 (August 1974): 435; Tunnell 1984 *passim.*

15 William P. Connor, "Reconstruction Rebels: The New Orleans Tribune in Post-War Louisiana" *Louisiana History* (1980): 163.

16 Connor 1980, 162.

17 New Orleans *Tribune* Nov. 30, 1864; Tunnell 1984, 87.

18 For example, Tunnell's quotes are primarily from late 1864, before the Friends of Universal Suffrage convened.

19 Blassingame 1973, 2.

20 Cited in Bell 1997, 248, 249.

21 *Ibid.* 252.

private consideration," he wrote, "whether some of the colored people may not be let in [granted suffrage]—as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."[22] Historians often leave out this evidence of the Afro-Creoles' emerging concern for the freedmen. Their fixation on the divide between freeborn and freedpeople shows the enduring legacy of anti-black propaganda. White supremacist newspapers often charged the Afro-Creoles of elitism, claiming that their calls for integration were not intended to benefit the freedpeople but would in fact excite popular reaction against them. Fearing the collective power of blacks, white conservatives sought to antagonize the two populations.

When the newly elected (all-white) legislature convened in the fall of 1864, Representative Charles Smith introduced a bill that would have granted suffrage to "every person having not more than one-fourth negro blood."[23] Known as the Quadroon Bill, the proposal would not have disrupted the principle of a white-only suffrage, but would have "considered and recognized as white" people of mixed ancestry; this would have enfranchised many of the city's prominent Afro-Creoles. Republicans such as B. Rush Plumly and famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison urged blacks to accept this compromise.[24] In an argument that would recur in later debates over legislating equality, Garrison chided, "when was it ever known that liberation from bondage was accompanied by a recognition of political equality?"[25] Several prominent blacks also supported the bill: they argued that although universal male suffrage was the ultimate goal, it was best not to demand it "too soon or too harshly." John Willis Menard, a black man who came to New Orleans from Illinois, recommended they compromise by asking for "suffrage on the basis of intelligence" to court "the friendship of the dominant class."[26] But the majority of Afro-Creoles, including the *Tribune*'s editors, roundly rejected the Quadroon Bill. Denouncing the notion of limited black suffrage, they lashed out against both Durant's Republican state government and Lincoln's cowardly national policies. The *Tribune* editors wrote, "We defend a principle...we cannot compromise with principles. Assured of the sound basis of our rights, we proclaim them, we uphold them fully and completely, and we will hear nothing of sacrificing them[.]"[27] This shows that since emancipation, New Orleans leaders had developed a more universalistic concept of citizenship and rights – one with a "sound basis" not in merit or social custom, but in the innate equality of all men. This conception would eventually be voiced in U.S. Congressional debates over the Civil Rights Acts and Reconstruction Amendments, but in 1864 it had yet to reach the national stage.

On October 4, 1864, 150 black leaders from across the nation convened in Syracuse, New York to found the National Equal Rights League, a group whose purpose was to campaign for black suffrage. Louisiana sent several delegates to the convention, including the Union war hero and outspoken radical James H. Ingraham. Bringing the momentum of the Equal Rights League back to New Orleans, Captain Ingraham and others called a mass meeting on December 27 with plans to establish a statewide organization, the Equal Rights League of Louisiana. "The quadroon bill was a firebrand thrown out to divide us," he declared. To obtain civil rights, he contended, "we have to set aside all differences and unite in one spirit."[28] In January, almost one hundred black leaders gathered in New Orleans for the first Convention of Colored Men of Louisiana. Although free-born blacks predominated, Ingraham's call for interclass solidarity was borne out in the diversity of the delegates. The *Tribune* observed,

> It was the first political move ever made by the colored people of the state acting in a body...[and] the first time that delegates of the country parishes...came to this city to act upon political matters, in community with the delegates of the Crescent City...There were seated side by side the rich and the poor, the literate and educated man and the country laborer hardly released from bondage, distinguished only by the natural gifts of mind...all classes were represented and united in a common thought: the actual liberation from social and political bondage.[29]

At this convention, Ingraham put forth three proposals: setting up a permanent branch of the Equal Rights League in Louisiana, establishing a board to deal with the concerns of all blacks, and creating a program to address the particular needs of the freedmen. This was a far cry from the paternalism that Tunnell and others have charged the Afro-Creoles with. In fact, Ingraham proposed "a board of freedmen, whose members would be taken from among the emancipated slaves," and who would bring the freedpeople's own wishes to the floor.[30]

The 1865 convention, although not officially recognized by the state or national government, marked a turning point in the course of Louisiana Reconstruction. The Unionist legislators had abolished slavery, but they proved unwilling to extend meaningful rights to blacks. General Banks' "free labor" system was designed to keep freedpeople on plantations and, some believed, to preserve the antebellum social order.[31] The most radical concession

22 Bell 1997, 252; Eric Foner, "Rights and the Constitution in Black Life during the Civil War and Reconstruction." *The Journal of American History* (1987): 868.
23 Tunnell 1984, 80.
24 *Ibid.* 82.
25 Cited in Bell 1997, 253.
26 Quoted in Joseph Logson and Caryl Cossé Bell, "The Americanization of Black New Orleans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logson (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State Unviersity Press, 1992): 241.
27 Bell 1997, 255.
28 Charles Vincent, "'Of Such Historical Importance...': The African American Experience in Louisiana (*Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 2009): 31.
29 Quote reproduced in Leon Litwack, *Been in the storm so long: The aftermath of slavery* (Random House LLC, 1980): 509.
30 Vincent 2009, 32.
31 Roger A. Fischer, *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana 1862-77* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974).

proposed by white Republicans – the Quadroon Bill – aimed to deepen the divide between the Afro-Creoles and the freedpeople, thus neutralizing the threat of a unified black political body.[32] By the 1865 convention, two things had become clear to the black leaders. First, the Afro-Creoles' claims for citizenship and more symbolic forms of equality were inextricable from the fate of the freedmen. They realized that the abolition of slavery would not be a guarantee of genuine freedom unless it was accompanied by legal protection against white exploitation: without these measures, blacks could continue to be kicked off streetcars, just as they could be coerced into unjust labor contracts.[33] The economic needs of poor freedpeople could not be met without the public recognition of their citizenship: "public rights" bolstered and maintained more basic freedoms.

Second, the men at the 1865 convention knew they could not secure full emancipation simply by adopting the principles of white liberals, nor could they depend on whites to grant them their rights. The Jeffersonian brand of republicanism that prevailed before the war was based on the assumption that only those truly independent – that is, property-owning, debtless white males – could be entrusted with political rights. Freeborn and freed blacks, "equally rejected and deprived of their rights[,] cannot well be estranged from one another," the *Tribune* reasoned.[34] If they allowed that the right to vote was only due to those of proper economic or intellectual standing – or even "earned" through military service – the Afro-Creoles would retrench on their new commitment to egalitarian principles. Historians often distinguish between the freedmen's need for protection from labor exploitation and white violence, and the Afro-Creoles' claims for the franchise and desegregation in streetcars.[35] By placing these diverse needs under the rubric of "rights" they were "equally" denied, the *Tribune* writers posited a notion of citizenship that incorporated guarantees of economic, social and personal freedom. Thus, Louisiana attempted to revise American republicanism to better reflect the dictates of the Declaration of Independence. "We must come out of the Revolution not only as emancipationists," the *Tribune* declared, "but as true republicans."[36] Their desire to challenge the tenets of antebellum republicanism became even more urgent as Presidential Reconstruction tightened its grip on black freedom.

Through the summer and fall of 1865, as Johnson's policies became increasingly hostile to Southern blacks, free and freedmen gathered in conventions across the country to claim full citizenship. New Orleans blacks protested their disfranchisement in the 1864 constitution and denounced Governor J. Madison Wells, a Confederate sympathizer. The interracial advocacy group Friends of Universal Suffrage staged their own congressional and gubernatorial election in November 1865. In a "Freedom Summer" not to be repeated for almost a century, the F.U.S. conducted a voter registration drive in New Orleans and in the rural parishes. Networks of communication spanning multiple plantations had been developed as political tools under slavery. F.U.S. organizers relied on these to spread word of the election to thousands of illiterate black workers.[37] Ultimately, nearly 20,000 freedmen voted in the mock election, more than a quarter of whom were working on plantations.[38] After the elections, they sent the results directly to Congress, denying the legitimacy of a state government that restricted the franchise. The 1865 mock election showed that Louisiana blacks took matters into their own hands when they realized that white politicians – even Unionist ones – would not respect their rights. Their efforts to enfranchise rural freedpeople affirmed their belief that all blacks, rich and poor, bore collective responsibility for attaining equality. A provost marshal reported that on election day, workers "left the plantations en masse...to vote." Indeed, Steven Hahn has shown that collective action on plantations was not new to freedpeople; it was a strategy of resistance they had developed under slavery.[39] By sending the results directly to the federal Congress, they boycotted the local systems of governance that they deemed illegitimate. Meanwhile, ex-slaves on "free labor" plantations resisted when new employers did not respect their customary labor arrangements.[40] Thus, the F.U.S. were not just claiming inclusion in white institutions; they were seeking to remake these institutions with their own tools of collective action and their own vision of universal rights. When seeking a delegate to send to the national convention for Equal Rights, the *Tribune* suggested that he "should be a fair representative not only of intelligence and education...[but] also a representative of the physical type of the great mass of the people of African descent. We want him to be a black man. We want him to be thoroughly identified with the working of slavery."[41] In other words, they sought someone who embodied both the revolutionary egalitarianism of the Afro-Creoles and the hard-working, collective-minded masses. Blacks in post-emancipation New Orleans forged a political culture out of the diverse experiences of all blacks, both free and freed.

The high water mark of black politics during Reconstruction in New Orleans was the constitutional convention of 1867-68. Radical Reconstruction had finally enfranchised blacks, and men of color made up about half of the delegates. This convention produced the most radical constitution the country had yet seen: it enfranchised all adult men, required all officeholders to take an oath supporting racial equality, and mandated integration in pub-

32 Logson and Bell.

33 Edouard Tinchant, a delegate at the 1867-68 convention, was galvanized by an incident in which he was pushed off a streetcar in New Orleans. Scott 2012, 116.

34 New Orleans *Tribune* December 29, 1864.

35 See, for example, Ronald Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

36 Cited in Hahn 2003, 110.

37 Hahn 2003, 119.

38 *Ibid.* 125, see also Vincent 2009, 39-40. Their white radical supporters boycotted the official election to vote in this one.

39 *Ibid*. 125; 33.

40 *Ibid.* 77.

41 New Orleans *Tribune* May 26, 1865; cited in Bell 1997, 256.

lic accommodations, transportation and schools. Indeed, the radicals were so committed to the principle of universal suffrage that many opposed motions to disenfranchise former Confederates. Ironically, the too-hasty re-enfranchisement of white supremacists in the 1870s would undo most of the gains of Reconstruction.[42] One of the most innovative aspects of the constitution was Article 13's guarantee to all citizens of "civil, political, and public rights." Rebecca Scott traces this concept of innate, universal rights to revolutionary France, by way of French-educated Afro-Creoles such as Edouard Tinchant.[43] The notion of public rights, Scott writes, "captur[ed] something they knew but perhaps had not previously named: that individual dignity was nourished by formal respect in public space and public culture."[44] New Orleans radicals recognized that blacks could not obtain equality unless the law put its weight behind the respect for human dignity in public places. As long as blacks were denied access to streetcars and steamboat cabins, they would be branded with a stigma of racial subjugation. The "public rights" demand was not an exclusive interest of elite Afro-Creoles, as some scholars have claimed. The protection of equality in public spaces was seen as a prerequisite to other forms of empowerment, including political officeholding and black self-advocacy.[45]

White conservatives recognized the link between public respect and full legal protections for freedpeople. They were so opposed to the public rights clause at the 1867-68 convention that they requested the secretary to include their objections in the minutes.[46] One common refrain in both the debates and the Democratic press was that Article 13 was attempting the absurd: to legislate social equality. The implication was that the constitution was trying to challenge racial difference – in other words, to overturn the white supremacist social hierarchy. Although few would admit it openly, this was exactly what the radicals were attempting to do. In opposing Article 13, the conservative delegate Judge Cooley argued that "the Negroes in the convention wanted more rights than the law now accorded to white people."[47] There is a grain of truth in Judge Cooley's claim. The law did not accord "public rights" to whites, but they enjoyed them nonetheless, by virtue of the Old South's racial hierarchy. In encoding this principle in the constitution, Louisiana radicals hoped to expand the capacity of the law to guarantee equal rights for people of color. Later, the universalist language of the Louisiana constitution would make its way into debates over the Civil Rights Acts in federal Congress, and "public rights" would appear in the Republican Party's 1872 and 1876 national platforms.[48] Black leaders in New Orleans developed rights claims that would soon reverberate across the nation.

Once again, the *Tribune* captures the determination of New Orleans radicals to reconstruct American political culture:

> Whoever stops in revolutionary times is soon distanced. All attempts to veneering the old system have thus far been impotent, and have entailed the fall of those who tried to shape new ideas into old forms. We want soldiers of progress and no compromise...We want to remodel anew the institutions of the State.[49]

In a mere five years, these "soldiers of progress" introduced distinctively African-American principles to the national discourse. Atlantic Afro-Creoles drew on their revolutionary heritage to claim citizenship on the basis of natural rights rather than the merit qualifications of old republicanism.[50] Freedpeople saw republican government as a collective endeavor that was only legitimate if it respected the community's rights, and they drew on their experience under slavery as they led a grassroots voter registration drive. Both groups developed a deep sense of racial solidarity and communal responsibility, which enabled them to resist the efforts of whites to divide them. Their constitution's public rights clause was a claim for respect, not only for Afro-Creoles' social standing, but for the innate dignity and equality of every human. If the law could secure this respect, African Americans could make emancipation economically and socially meaningful.

42 Scott 2012, 131.

43 Scott 2012, 129-131 She suggests that Afro-Creoles may have encountered the work of constitutional theorist Pellegrino Rossi. David Rankin also shows that one delegate at the 1867-68 convention was the grandson of a Haitian revolutionary leader. Rankin 426.

44 Rebecca Scott, "The Atlantic World and the Road to Plessy v. Ferguson." *The journal of American History* 94.3 (2007): 730.

45 See, for example, Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's unfinished revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988): 369.

46 Scott 2012, 132.

47 Tunnell 1984, 123-24.

48 Scott 2012, 134.

49 *Tribune* April 11, 1867.

50 The logical extension of this reasoning was brought forward at the 1867-68 convention by Edouard Tinchant: he proposed that "this Convention shall provide, either by special enactment or by amendment to the Constitution, for the legal protection in this State of all women without distinction of race or color, or without reference to their previous condition, in their civil rights." Sumner would make a similar move in the federal Congress. However, this proposal was unpopular among radicals and conservatives alike and it was quickly shelved. See Scott 2012, 128.

Courtesy of University of Illinois at Chicago

The Modern Campus, Chicago Style: Education, Community, and Democracy at the University of Illinois at Chicago

By Jake Hamburger, Columbia University

In 1965, when the University of Illinois completed the construction of its campus in Chicago, its student newspaper proclaimed a victory for "radical idealists" and "rugged individualists." The founding of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC[1]), according to the *Chicago Illini*, was the triumph of "a student body that had to stay in Chicago for economic reasons and who couldn't afford the luxury of living away from home."[2] UICC was a permanent campus for those who lacked the means to study at the flagship state university in Champaign-Urbana; before 1965, the only public institution in Chicago was a temporary commuter campus located on Navy Pier, which offered only two-year programs. The Chicago Circle campus, designed by architect Walter Netsch of the modernist firm Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), was an aesthetic tribute to a new vision of the public land-grant university. Its brutalist architecture, which emphasized functional efficiency and flexibility (especially its imposing central forum), spoke for a new kind of public spirit for a radical commuter institution. Netsch's campus boldly proclaimed the University's conviction that there need be no conflict between catering to the specific needs of low-income students and providing the kind of liberal education that democratic citizens deserve. UICC's founding was an attempt to further democratize the American public university by extending it to previously marginalized populations without sacrificing its essential educational mission.

In the same issue of the *Illini*, however, another edito-

1 Today, after a merger with the nearby medical campus in 1982, it is known simply as the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). I will use each name as is appropriate to the dates in question.

2 "A Dream Comes True," *Chicago Illini* 4, no. 14 (1 February 1965): 8.

rial hinted at a less optimistic future for the new campus. It warned that the Chicago Circle campus, like so many other large public research universities across the country, risked instilling a new kind of alienation, "the dehumanization of the student," and transforming its commuter population into "Circle Robots."[3] For some, Netsch's imposing brutalist design was not so much the symbol of a new democratic public spirit, but rather, a shallow replacement for a holistic educational community. From the first days of the new campus's construction, it was by no means certain that its novel conception of the public university would succeed; nor, if it did, at what cost. Throughout its history, UIC has indeed helped to expand access to higher education to a largely working-class and immigrant student population. However, in so doing, it has been unable to meet the bold demands of its founding symbolism. UIC's later decision to remove the signature features of Netsch's design — which coincided roughly with its efforts to attract more affluent, non-commuting students — revealed the limits of the university's conception of democracy. Rather than extend a liberal education to those who otherwise could not afford it, UIC's project produced the opposite effect, alienating these students from the essential formative process of higher learning. UIC's democratic experiment revealed that tensions indeed exist between the needs imposed on economically disadvantaged students and the essential educational purpose of the university.

The founding aims of UICC sought to overcome the tensions between the ideals of liberal education and democratic equality that have existed throughout the history of American higher education. As Andrew Delbanco argues in his polemical history of America's colleges and universities, their "distinctive contribution" to the centuries-old tradition of liberal education in the West "has been the attempt to democratize it, to deploy it on behalf of the cardinal American principle that all persons, regardless of origin, have the right to pursue happiness."[4] The ideal of liberal education — that through the study of religion, philosophy, history, arts, and natural sciences in the company of others devoted to this same end, one can approach a knowledge of oneself and one's world that is conducive to a good human life — was no American invention, and has arguably changed little in principle since antiquity. In the United States, however, the early colleges suggested for perhaps the first time that liberal education could be made available to everybody (or, at the very least, to *anybody*). Since the beginning of higher education in this country, it has remained an open question whether or not these two ideals can be reconciled, whether or not the mass expansion of college education must come at the expense of its liberal character.

The first American colleges, including many of today's Ivy League schools such as Harvard and Yale, offered not only holistic curricula (almost exclusively based on a theological program) aimed at guiding students towards ethical and intellectual self-development, but also served as communities dedicated to a shared purpose of higher learning.[5] These colleges – at least, according to their ideals – were places where students could, for a brief period of their lives, inhabit an environment exclusively dedicated to the study of what is essential to human life, and live among their fellow students working towards a common moral and intellectual purpose. Although these institutions at first served only a wealthy few, they came of age when the dominant ideology was equality between persons and an opposition to hereditary privilege. It was not, as the American exceptionalist might have it, that by virtue of being American, these institutions were necessarily egalitarian either in spirit or in fact. Rather, in the context of the founding of the United States, it was that few principled arguments could be made to keep liberal education a class-exclusive good. Even if only a handful of Americans in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had access to liberal education, even the elite colleges had to justify themselves as *in principle* open to everyone.

As higher education began its rapid expansion towards the end of the nineteenth century, despite new demands placed on colleges and universities, the ideal of liberal education remained an integral component of the American conception of what higher education should be. A driving impulse behind the 1862 Morrill Act — which laid the foundation for a national system of higher education — was the need to expand agricultural and vocational training. Additionally, many of the university reforms of the late nineteenth century often aimed to reject the old college ideal in favor of a scientific utilitarianism; reformers challenged the paternalism, elitism, and intellectual hierarchy of the older institutions, seeking to broaden the range of curricular choice and adapt higher education to the demands of the "real world."[6] Broadly speaking, the notion of the college as an isolated environment dedicated primarily to students' spiritual, intellectual, and moral development came into conflict with various notions of social utility. Colleges – an increasing number of which during this time reincorporated themselves into universities – came to be seen as having a social responsibility, both in terms of providing career training to individuals seeking economic advancement and to promote through research the general stock of scientific

3 "No Circle Robots," *Chicago Illini* 4, no. 14 (1 February 1965): 8.

4 Andrew Delbanco, *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 33.

5 ibid. 40, 54.

6 Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 58-67. See also Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern American University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 63-74.

knowledge.

Despite changing notions of the purpose of higher education, the late-nineteenth-century reforms did not accomplish a break from the traditional standard of liberal education. Instead they gave education a new form. As Julie Reuben argues, by the 1920s the initial spirit of scientism and utilitarianism of the 1890s had reached a sort of compromise with the older conception of liberal education. Universities began to realize that while they had a responsibility to serve the changing needs of society, they could not completely abandon the task of "educating the whole man," of guiding their students' moral and philosophical formation.[7] This traditional aim of liberal education became incorporated into a notion of "social utility": what was seen as "useful" to society was not only expanding the general stock of technical and scientific knowledge and preparing students to participate in civil society, but producing well-rounded citizens who could engage as free citizens of a democratic society. Crucially, according to Laurence Veysey, many of the institutions created or strengthened under the Morrill Act were initially conceived on the model of the traditional college, particularly in terms of the way their campuses were designed.[8] The campus was still generally taken to be a *community* devoted to a common scholarly purpose; the difference was that this purpose had come to include not only moral and philosophical development, but also economic and scientific training and research. By the middle of the twentieth century, despite some concessions to scientific method and social utility theory, a version of the mission of liberal education survived (at least in the elite private universities and the older public ones). Even for the student who chose not to pursue the traditional model of learning, the campus environment itself retained the sense of common aims that was essential to liberal education. If students' moral and intellectual development was no longer the primary aim of American higher education, such development was nonetheless made available on an unprecedentedly large scale.

This period of compromise in American higher education reached its zenith in the mid-twentieth century as the G.I. Bill dramatically expanded access to higher education. In Chicago, it was the shortcomings of this arrangement that made apparent the need for a new kind of public university. Wherever possible, the veterans returning from Europe used their federal assistance to attend institutions that best approximated the old college ideal: namely, the elite private universities and liberal arts colleges, as well as the older public universities.[9] Among these early public universities was the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the flagship state institution that attracted students with both the grades and means to attend from across Illinois. Even despite the federal financial assistance under the G.I. Bill, however, many veterans (along with a great deal of other students) in Chicago were nonetheless unable to afford the expense of moving downstate. As there was no public undergraduate institution in the city, the University of Illinois opened a temporary campus in 1946 in response to the rapid increase in the student population. Built on makeshift facilities on Chicago's Navy Pier, and offering only two years of undergraduate education, the campus was never meant to be a permanent institution, but it nonetheless remained the only publicly funded option for commuter students throughout the 1940s and '50s.[10]

It became clear towards the end of the '50s that a permanent four-year undergraduate campus was necessary that would cater to the needs of students living at home. By the middle of the twentieth century, American colleges and universities had (with mild success) extended a version of liberal education, combined with vocational and technical training, to a fairly large population of students. The standard of a college education, despite decades of debate and reform, still included a community of students living together and devoting their energies to intellectual and moral self-betterment. The need in Chicago for a permanent commuter campus, however, revealed that past attempts at "democratization," including the Morrill Act and the G.I. Bill, had left large numbers of working-class students behind, and that a new kind of campus life was required in order to make the university work for them.

Once it was decided that a permanent public undergraduate campus in Chicago was necessary, a 1959 report compiled by Norman Parker — vice president of the Chicago Undergraduate Division, the institution that had run the temporary Navy Pier campus — outlined some of its key features. The campus that would become UICC was intended almost exclusively for undergraduate instruction, with graduate programs and faculty research to be kept to a minimum. No student housing was included in any of the initial plans, as nearly all of the student population was projected to commute from home. Also absent were an athletic stadium, a campus museum, and many other social and symbolic fixtures of the traditional campus. Instead, a prominent student union was to serve as the center of student life. The union was intended as a centrally located space where students could gather in between classes before

7 Reuben, *Making*, 238.

8 Veysey, *Emergence,* 112.

9 Keith W. Olson, "The G.I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," *American Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 5 (December 1973), 606.

10 George Rosen, *Decision-Making Chicago: The Genesis of a University of Illinois Campus* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1980), 20-1.

leaving campus in the evening.[11] The campus was no longer a space in which students lived amongst each other, but rather, a gathering place in the midst of a large, modern city.

For the planners in the Undergraduate Division, however, this break from the traditional campus model would nonetheless preserve a sentiment of collective purpose. According to its initial plans, the new campus was to differ only in terms of these living and recreational arrangements. The Parker Report, along with most of the other early projections for the UICC campus, envisioned a student population of approximately 20,000 by the late 1960s, not unusual for the time. Despite the primarily working-class character of its students, who might have been expected to favor engineering or vocational training, the Undergraduate Division's assumed academic program predicted a relatively balanced distribution of academic departments typical of its contemporary public institutions. The humanities, particularly English, remained the largest area of study.[12] As initially conceived, then, UICC aimed to make a humanistic liberal education, alongside career-based training, as available to its students as public universities had been since the nineteenth century. The administrators who envisioned the aims of the new campus saw no tension between providing education on the model of the public land-grant institutions and its new conception of student life. UICC's experiment in democratization sought to demonstrate that the traditional setup of the college campus was not a necessary condition for the continuation of liberal education within American higher education.

Aware that its aims for UICC implied a novel conception of the modern campus, the University made no small effort to ensure that the campus's architectural design engender a new educational ethos. In 1961 the administration hired Walter Netsch of SOM — both man and firm widely respected in the world of modernist architecture — as its chief architect, whose task was to translate the educational vision of the new campus into its aesthetic and spatial features. According to the University's 1961 press release, the distinguishing features of the Netsch campus design were to serve two purposes: both "to meet the needs of today or tomorrow," and to "embod[y] a modern conception of efficient space utilization."[13] Netsch, rather unconventionally, organized the campus buildings according to general academic and administrative functions rather than particular departments. Instead of, for example, separate buildings for each department's classrooms, Netsch envisioned a "lecture center" where all undergraduate classrooms were located regardless of academic specialty. Each building, and each specialized space within the buildings, were ordered as a single system designed to maximize flexibility. Any particular space could be used for a variety of purposes, depending on the situation (with the exception of necessarily specialized spaces such as chemistry laboratories). Netsch took explicit measures to make the campus as functionally adaptable as possible, in order to anticipate the changing demands that an advanced capitalist society might place on its universities.

This function-based distribution of space made possible the most striking feature of the Chicago Circle design: the elevated, open-air "Forum" (also known as the "Great Court") in the center of the campus and the system of second-story walkways that connected it to the surrounding buildings. Both the Forum and the walkways were intended to achieve a maximally efficient circulation of pedestrians around the campus: the buildings forming the perimeter of the Forum were those designed for the most intensive use, and the walkways provided a "pedestrian expressway" that would allow users to move from one to another without the inconvenience of dealing with street-level traffic.[14] Netsch intended his optimization of pedestrian space not only to make campus life more convenient, but also to instill it with a novel form of public spirit. The Forum, as the name suggests, evoked the public spaces of classical antiquity. Its bare, concrete expanse was punctuated by four seating areas and a circular staircase designed to resemble the Greek amphitheater (they were, in fact, used on at least one occasion for a student production of Sophocles' *Antigone*). Buildings and walkways were arranged in such a way as to maximize what Netsch called "social communication."[15] Despite the fact that each student, as a commuter, was drawn away from the campus by a variety of particular commitments outside of university life, the design of the campus was to provide them with new kinds of social interaction, funneling them into a Brutalist agora designed for informal gatherings and artistic display.

According to Netsch, Chicago Circle was "the last 19th century campus we ever have to design."[16] His use of stark, Brutalist aesthetics to evoke the classical forum was a declaration of UICC's role in reshaping the American university, while simultaneously preserving its essential purpose. UICC was to continue in late modernity the intellectual tradition of liberal education that dates back to antiquity; one was

11 "A Ten-Year Building Space and Land Estimate for Development of a General Campus Plan," University of Illinois Chicago Undergraduate Division, August 1959, UIC Archives, Record Group 003-01-02, 1, 4, B-15-6.

12 ibid. 1, 14.

13 "For Immediate Release: U. of I. Campus at Congress Circle, Chicago --- Design Concept," Office of Public Information, University of Illinois, September 14, 1961, UIC Archives, Record Group 064-01-02, 2.

14 ibid. 3. See also John Morris Dixon, "Campus City, Chicago," *Architectural Forum* 123, September 1965.

15 Dixon, "Campus City."

16 ibid.

meant to picture Socrates questioning the youth in the Forum before they made their way home for the evening. This campus, designed to maximize its adaptability to the changing demands of the modern city, rigorously calculated to maximize efficiency, claimed nonetheless to be an educational environment that prepared its students as both independent individuals and democratic citizens. Netsch's design was a bold attempt to reimagine an intellectual life and public spirit for a body of students who, living apart from one another, would not otherwise have anything in common but the name on their degree. Netsch, and the University administration who hired him, understood that if UICC was to carry on the legacy of the American land-grant university, it had to discover a way to make a campus feel like a home for its students even though, in a literal sense, it wasn't. American higher education, which had reached a delicate compromise between the traditional model of liberal education and the nineteenth century conception of social utility, risked abandoning the former if the university were to become merely a place to earn one's degree and go about one's business. Netsch's design was an attempt to preserve this balance by making utility and efficiency serve the interests of intellectual community.

After the Forum and the elevated walkways had served as the defining physical features of the Chicago Circle campus for over two decades, the University began to reconsider their success in accomplishing their symbolic mission. By the late 1980s, it had become apparent that the Forum had failed to engender a robust sense of community among the students. According to a study conducted by the architects at Johnson, Johnson, and Roy for UIC in 1990, not only was the elevated campus difficult to maintain – and, for much of the year, impossible to use because of Chicago's erratic weather – but students had come to experience it as cold and alienating.[17] The upper campus's maintenance problems only reinforced its alienating effect on campus life, since as it became more difficult to make use of the walkways, over time, fewer activities and functions were located along it, and students increasingly came to feel it as a place that did not accord with their own aims. As an early architectural critic of Netsch's design put it, the campus "offer[ed] little to allay the sense of alienation that is an inherent danger in a large university. The buildings belong to everyone, and therefore to no one. The environment is hard, unyielding, vast in scale."[18] The massive scale and Brutalist material of the Forum, intended as a new aesthetics for the modern campus, hindered its aim to bring students together into rationalized public gathering spaces. Students simply avoided the elevated central campus, inconvenient and uncomfortable, and went about their business.

If the conceptual and structural features of Netsch's central campus design were symbolic of UICC's founding ideals, the campus's redesign in the early 1990s coincided with a reconsideration of the University's initial conception of democratization. Starting in the mid-1980s, UIC began to consider both the renovation of the original Forum and walkway system and the transition away from the model of a purely commuter campus. Despite its founders' conviction that UICC should be devoted solely to students living at home, the UIC administration began to worry that the campus's lack of student housing was a hindrance to the University's admissions and research priorities. The administration found in a 1984 report that UIC's lack of residential facilities put it at a disadvantage in the competition with other universities for both the brightest undergraduate students and the ablest research faculty and graduate students.[19] Having discovered that housing options played significant role in both undergraduate and graduate students' decisions on where to matriculate, and that many prospective faculty members considered a residential student population to be conducive to a proper academic environment, the University decided that if it was to increase the quality of its student body and expand its graduate programs, it could no longer remain an exclusively commuter campus.[20] Part of this drive towards "quality" may have been motivated by an impulse to increase UIC's prestige among other research universities by attracting more competitive applicants,[21] but it reflects at the same time a realization the existing campus concept was a hindrance to the establishment of a communal sentiment.

The 1965 *Chicago Illini* editorialist who warned of "Circle Robots" seemed to have been proven correct some three decades later. UICC's attempt to create a modernized educational environment specifically for a commuter student population proved instead to alienate the student from the university and his or her fellows within it, rather than serve as a common meeting space for a collective intellectual and social end. By 1994, UIC had demolished the entire elevat-

17 "Elevated Walkway: Issues and Options – University of Illinois at Chicago," Johnson, Johnson, and Roy, April 1990, UIC Archives, Record Group 003-18-02.

18 Dixon, "Campus City."

19 "Summary Report on Student Residential Facilities," Master Plan Committee, University of Illinois at Chicago, September 20, 1984, UIC Archives, Record Group 003-01-02, 1-2.

20 Ibid. 2.

21 UIC's archives (Record Group 003-01-02) contain no small number of letters to high school principals of some of the more affluent Chicago suburban districts seeking information on college enrollment decisions. It is likely, then, that part of the administration's standard for determining how "quality" undergraduate students make their decisions was based on the preferences of well-off students.

ed Forum and walkway system, replacing it with a much more modest ground-level thoroughfare, and constructed several on-campus dormitories for non-commuter students. Netsch's bold statement of the modern campus's ability to create a new form of social interaction for commuter students was to some degree retracted. UICC's experiment in democratization revealed that togetherness cannot be achieved through rational calculation; if the goal is to make the campus a home for its students, there seems to be little substitute for actually making it their home. This sense of community, being at home amidst one's fellow students, is a necessary component of an authentic liberal education. If the campus is no more than a place one goes to earn one's degree, then the tradition of intellectual and moral development which has survived in American higher education may be in danger of ceasing to do so. If the university loses the acknowledgment of a shared purpose, it risks being governed solely by a notion of utility that has little regard for either non-quantifiable benefits to the individual or a common social good.

UIC's experience suggests several important limitations of a certain conception of how to "democratize" higher education. It is hardly "democratic" to merely mold the university to the needs of low-income student populations if this transformation corrodes the element of the university that is most essential to it. As Andrew Delbanco has suggested, there is almost inevitably a conflict between the demands of economic necessity and those of a serious college education.[22] Throughout its history, UIC has extended a certain kind of education to student populations who otherwise might not have been able to attain it – e.g., working-class students, immigrant or second-generation students, and students of other disadvantaged demographics – and this is certainly an accomplishment. However, if it is the case that in order to expand access to higher education, it is necessary to sacrifice the ideal of a community devoted to the common end of the search for truth which forms individual characters in relation to such a common aim, such an achievement, whatever its merits, is not a democratic one. Rather than reshape higher education so as to accord with the demands imposed on certain students by economic necessity, the university must find a way to offer a satisfactory educational environment despite those demands, or better yet, put its resources towards the aim of overcoming them altogether. Without a sense of common purpose, the university cannot satisfy the intellectual and moral needs of its students, and in turn, without a population of well-educated individuals, a democratic society has little hope of realizing a public good.

22 Delbanco, *College*, 33.

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From 'Beiping' to 'Beijing': Continuity and Change from Republican to Communist Beijing Through Tourist Guidebooks

By Dake Jungmo Kang, University of Chicago

The year 1949 is often depicted as a radically revolutionary moment in Beijing's history. Marking the destruction of the old Republican regime and the ascendancy of the new Communist regime – a change that heralded the return of Beijing's status as the national capital – 1949 was in many ways a pivotal moment in the city's history. As such, much of the historiography of modern Beijing treats 1949 as a historic rupture, focusing either on the pre-49 *or* the post-49 years. Examples include David Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing*, Madeleine Yue Dong's *Republican Beijing*, and the many books written about Beijing after China's normalization of relations with the United States in 1972. Works that do straddle this temporal boundary, such as *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City*, often emphasize the discontinuities between Republican and Communist Beijing: "For the city of Beijing as for the rest of China, the year 1949 was a momentous turning point… Beijing under Mao experienced many physical [and]… social transformations."[1] Symbolic of this discontinuity was the vast transformation in Beijing's architecture, which saw the "creation of new public spaces and buildings" and "the destruction of major gates and walls."[2] The Communist era is often depicted as a time of great destruction, a time that saw the disappearance of "Old Beijing," with its endless rows of *hutongs*, and the creation of a modern "Socialist Beijing," with endless rows of smokestacks.

However, though acknowledging the monumental shift in Beijing's trajectory that occurred with the takeover of the Communist Party, in this paper I propose an alternative

1 Lillian M. Li, Alison J. Dray-Novey, and Haili Kong. *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 172.

2 Li, et al. *Beijing*. 172.

narrative: instead of thinking of 1949 as a radical *break* in Beijing's trajectory, the transformations occurring in Beijing post-1949 were, in many ways, fundamental *continuations* of changes that were already occurring in Republican Beiping. In contrast to the standard narrative of the Communist destruction of "Old Beijing," I instead argue for a subtler story: the selective historicization, preservation, and nationalization of particular imperial "historical" sites on one hand, and the self-conscious modernization of quotidian architecture and the creation of new "modern" monumental architecture on the other.

In this narrative, these forces that shaped early Communist Beijing – this selective historicization and self-conscious modernization – were the very forces that shaped Republican Beiping, as Madeline Yue Dong demonstrates in her excellent book *Republican Beijing*. I use Dong's argument as a guiding conceptual framework upon which I base my comparison between Republican and Communist Beijing.

Guidebooks as Sources: Similarities and Differences in Rhetorical Purposes

I turn to Beijing tourist guidebooks in order to make my argument, tracing and tracking changes in the guidebooks' depictions of Beijing and Beijing's "places of interest," as one guidebook puts it.[3] Naturally, before proceeding, it is important to explore the usage and consequences of viewing transformation in Beijing through the lens of guidebooks. As works written for an express function – generally, to inform readers of "what to see"[4] on their trip to Beijing – as we examine the portrayal of place in Beijing tourist guidebooks, we must keep this basic function in mind. Naturally, the content of guidebooks will tend towards discussion of monumental sites and their histories, places and information about sites which visitors to Beijing would find most interesting. At the same time, we must also remember that despite sharing this common function, such a function can be appropriated and used by historical actors acting in different interests for various purposes – commercial, political, cultural, intellectual.

Perhaps the easiest categorization of guidebooks is a temporal one: guidebooks written in the Republican Period, and those written in the Communist Period. Guidebooks written in the Republican Period included in this paper are *Baedeker's Russia with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking* (1914), *Peiping and North China* (1928 – 1934, most likely 1933), *In Search of Old Peking* (1935), and *Beiping Luxing Zhinan* (北平旅行指南) (1935). Guidebooks written in the Communist Period included in this paper are *Beijing Youlan Shouce* (北京游览手册) (1957), *Peking: A Tourist Guide* (1960), and *Places of Interest in Beijing* (1984). There is a natural temporal break in the publication of English and Chinese language guidebooks between 1937 and 1949, as during these years Beijing was first taken over by the Japanese military, then wracked by civil war between the Kuomingtang and the Communist Party. Interestingly, a number of Japanese language guidebooks to Beijing were published during this time period; however, due to language limitations, these guidebooks were excluded in this project.

However, beyond this categorization are a number of other categories. The authors of these guidebooks, for example, potentially have different motivations and purposes behind writing their books – some guidebooks were written by government writers, others by economic associations, still others by foreigner expatriates living in Beijing. Another categorization is language – Chinese versus English – as different language books obviously target different audiences: Chinese domestic audiences, for example, versus Western ones. Interestingly enough, some of the English language Communist era guidebooks were in fact nearly direct translations of Chinese language guidebooks, albeit with minor changes, suggesting that the Communist government wanted to convey the same message to both its Chinese and foreign audiences.

With that, let us take a closer look at historical trends transforming the face of Republican Beijing, and see how they continued into the Communist era.

The Historicization of Imperial Places

Republican Beijing: "Neglected" Imperial Grandeur and "Ugly" Modernity

With the 1911 Revolution and the collapse of millennia of dynastic rule, a newly Republican Beijing inherited the vast, splendid, yet decaying imperial architecture of the late Qing. With the change in regime, Beijing went through some fundamental transformations. As Madeline Dong demonstrates, Beijing was for the first time unified under a single municipal government (a development that Strand also shows in *Rickshaw Beijing*), and "the new Republican state envisioned… commercial and industrial development" and a "modern" city, which required a new, open "spatial order conducive to increased mobility of people and goods."[5] As such, from such a perspective, "the physical evidences of Beijing's imperial past were obstacles to modernization and had to be removed."[6]

In other words, for much of the Republican era, Beijing's majestic imperial architecture was quite neglected

3 Zhaohua Yan and Qixin Zhu. *Places of Interest in Beijing* (Beijing: China Travel and Tourism, 1984).

4 L. C. Arlington, and William Lewisohn. *In Search of Old Peking* (Peking: Henri Vetch, 1935), vii.

5 Madeleine Yue Dong. *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 23.

6 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 24.

by the municipal government, who instead chose to focus on modernization projects such as road-building, school establishment, and the construction of the streetcar system – actions that we tend to read into the Communist government, but not so much the Republican one. We can see these dual forces at work in the guidebooks. Foreign guidebooks to Republican Beijing all talk about the poor state of the various sights of Beijing; *Peiping and North China*, for example, observes how it was once "possible to walk completely around the city on [the city] wall… but most of the inclines leading to it are now closed and weeds and brambles grow luxuriously on it."[7] *In Search of Old Peking* mentions repeatedly the deplorable state of historical sites, such as how "The Halls of Examinations… fell into disuse and were razed in 1913, the first intention being to erect parliament buildings… this was never carried out and it is now used as a rubbish dump,"[8] or how the Temple of Heaven's "numerous buildings… have been left to the wear and tear of the elements," with "the hall for musicians and the stables for sacrificial animals [being] turned into a wireless station and a medical experimental station, since the establishment of the Republic."[9]

In these sections we see the emergence of a curious theme threaded throughout *In Search of Old Peking* – that of a blatant modernizing impulse that destroyed (in the Western author's view) much of the city's old imperial charm and heritage. The appropriation of these historical buildings for modern uses such as a "wireless station" and a "medical experimental station" display the extent to which the Temple of Heaven had lost its practical utility in a modernizing Beijing. The complete destruction of the Halls of Examination in favor of building parliament building or rubbish site again demonstrates in a shocking manner the casual disregard with which the new authorities treated the old imperial sites in favor of constructing new, modern sites.

The guidebook makes it clear this neglect was intentional. The guidebook's introduction reads:

> As [this book] is about "Old Peking," it describes not only buildings that are to be seen to-day, but also those that have disappeared completely… Readers may be led to believe that the authors have sometimes mixed up the two, when during their rambles round Peking they are unable to find monuments or buildings that are mentioned in the book as still existing. This, unfortunately, is not the fault of the authors – they would be only too glad if it was – but is due to the indifference of the Chinese themselves, more especially of their authorities, towards the historical monuments in which Peking is so rich. The loss by vandalism and utter neglect has been proceeding at such a rate that, on repeated occasions, buildings and historical monuments have actually disappeared while the authors were still writing about them.[10]

Some of the acts of "vandalism" and "utter neglect" include "converting historic palaces into modern restaurants and tea-houses; famous temples into barracks and police stations," "defacing age-old walls and tablets with political slogans," and most damningly, the destruction of "historical buildings and monuments" by "official orders."[11]

However, while acknowledging the very real neglect of these 'historical' sites, we must also remember that these foreign authors are imposing their orientalist framework of understanding upon the city of Beijing. The authors wax romantic about the grandeur and incredible beauty of old "historical sites" while contrasting them with what they call "ugly," "uninteresting," and "modern" buildings, such as the Ministry of Communications or the Parliament Building.[12] These categorizations of *modern* and *historical* were to a certain extent the product of Western orientalism, the exoticization and creation of an "ancient," "unique," "timeless" Beijing of "creaking bamboo poles and wooden carts, the distinctive cries of various street merchants, and the beat of the night watchman's stick… all unchanged for centuries."[13]

This simplistic Western view of juxtaposing the beautiful "traditional" with the ugly "modern" ignores the perspective of many Chinese intellectuals. As Dong points out, intellectuals such as Hu Shi and Chen Xujing advocated "wholesale westernization" – Chen, for example, notes that "it is the Westerner's business if they want to advocate Eastern culture; but it is the responsibility of people of the East to westernize."[14] What the authors of *In Search of Old Peking* may have sniffed at as signs of hideous modernity, many Chinese saw as symbols of national progress. At the same time these authors fawned over the beauties of the old buildings of Beijing, many Chinese cringed at signs of what they saw to be their backwardness.

In summary, in the early years of the Republic, Beijing's imperial architecture was frequently neglected by local elites, contradicting the standard narrative of a dichotomy between a romanticized "Old Beijing" in the Republican period and a blindly modernizing, historically destructive government in the Communist period. Republican Beijing was just as susceptible to this historically destructive modernizing trend as Communist Beijing. However, Beijing elites soon discovered foreign fascination with

7 Peter Gum and Bertha Gum. *Peiping and North China, Information and Illustrations of the Important Places to See* (Peiping: (Grand Hotel Des Wagons Lits, n.d), 6.
8 Arlington and Lewisohn, *Old Peking*, 155.
9 Ibid., 105.
10 Ibid., 1.
11 Arlington and Lewisohn, *Old Peking,* 1.
12 Ibid., 162.
13 Gum, *Peiping and North China*, 4.
14 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 98.

Beijing's imperial buildings, such as that of the authors of *In Search of Old Peking*, could be exploited for profitable and nationalist purposes, as we will explore next.

Ambitious Plans: Yuan Liang and the Beginnings of Historic Preservation in Beijing

In 1928, Beijing lost its status as the capital of Republican China, and its name was changed to "Beiping." Such a change had a profound effect on the city; without the status and government functions that came with being the capital, Beiping's economy was crippled and Beiping lost many of its wealthy residents.[15] Some 32.7 percent of labor union members were unemployed in wake of the change in status.[16]

As a result, Beiping had to find a new way of recasting itself and making itself vibrant again. One way was tourism. Beiping appears to have been immensely popular with foreigners, with its historical sites drawing particular attention. *Peiping and North China* said in its introduction, "in all the Orient Peiping is the one city which may be said to offer everything to the tourist… in many ways the heart of the country, representative of all that is oldest and richest in it its life,"[17] while *In Search of Old Peking* explained Beiping's appeal in the following manner:

> The magic of Peking, the world-wide fame and charm of this city of enchantment, spring from an enduring source. For nearly three centuries it was the capital of a mighty empire, the seat of some of the ablest, most cultured, and most artistic monarchs who have ever sat on a throne. On its embellishment they lavished continual care and attention and expended vast sums of money… There is scarcely a building of any age in this great city that cannot make its contribution towards the history of the country… she remains the city of romantic legend, the Mecca of lovers of art from all over the world, and to tourists the chief attraction in China, if not in the whole of the East.[18]

Considering Beiping's appeal to foreign tourists, it thus seems quite logical that in 1929, the Beijing municipal council issued a "Proposal for Beiping's Development" that emphasized the development of Beiping's "national tradition," "scholarship and arts," and the "expression of Oriental culture" in order to position Beiping as China's premier center of culture and tourism.[19]

Continuing on this trend, in 1933, Yuan Liang was appointed mayor of Beiping. Yuan was notable for his desire to preserve imperial places and create a new "Beiping Tourist District" as a way of revitalizing the city. Under his guidance, and noting that "people from Europe and America are all amazed by the beauty of Oriental culture" in Beiping, in 1935 the municipal government proposed a project to "renovate palaces, gardens, temples, and other famous sites," preserving them in order "to develop international tourism" and "inspire morale."[20] Much of the motive was profit based; city planners calculated that if China – and Beiping in particular – could capture a fraction of American travel spending, valued at over sixty million dollars, Beiping could stand to profit enormously.

For the first time Beiping's government began to consider preserving historical imperial space instead of demolishing, ignoring, or appropriating them for modern functions, as we saw in the previous section. Though preservation was mainly directed towards foreign tourists and motivated by economic gain, it was also partially driven by an elite Chinese desire for the preservation and strengthening of "Chinese culture," as reflected in *In Search of Old Peking*:

> "That the Chinese people, formerly so attached to their own culture and customs, should have acquiesced in this wanton destruction of their ancient works of art, derived from a civilization going back for thousands of years, is not only surprising, but is of serious ill-omen for the artistic and cultural future of the country as a whole. This is not written in a carping spirit or the narrow view of a foreigner: *many Chinese think the same*, and say so quite freely."[21]

Thus, the guidebook suggests certain elements of Chinese society, disturbed by the Republican neglect of Beiping's rich historical sites, began caring for the preservation of Beiping's historical heritage. This is corroborated by Dong, who cites Qinghua professor Zhang Xiruo as an example of such a preservationist. Zhang, suffering from a national inferiority complex compared to Western nations, found that such feelings of inferiority disappeared and were replaced by genuine national pride by the magnificent palace and imperial architecture of Beiping, saying "the vulgarity of London, clumsiness of Berlin, repetition of Paris and Versailles, tediousness of Rome, what can be a match for Beiping?"[22]

It is thus in the mid-1930s, in the years of the Republic, amid a nascent growing Chinese nationalism, that we can

15 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 80.

16 Nankai Weekly Statistics Survey, January 19, 1931, cited in Madeline Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 80.

17 Gum, *Peiping and North China*, 4.

18 Arlington and Lewisohn, *Old Peking,* 1.

19 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 81.

20 Shizheng pinglun (Review of city administration) 3, February 16, 1935, cited in Madeline Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 91.

21 Arlington and Lewisohn, *Old Peking,* vi. Emphasis added.

22 Zhang Xiruo, "Quanpan xihua yu Zhongguo benwei" (Wholesale Westernization and China-centeredness), in Luo Rongqu, Cong "xihua" dao "xiandaihua" (from "Westernization" to "Modernization"), page 452, cited in Madeline Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 99.

locate the birth of historic site preservation in Beijing – not only as a pragmatic, profit motivated measure, but also as the creation of a new national space and history inscribed into the old imperial sites. This is what I mean by "historicization" of space; imperial sites, which previously had no meaning attached to them other than their imperial functions which were lost after the 1911 Revolution, became places where new nationalist symbolic meanings were formed and inscribed into their architecture. Chinese elites, looking for symbols of national pride, found them in the awe-inducing architecture of China's imperial past. Though this new trend in Beijing's development was cut short by the Japanese occupation in 1937, when we skip ahead to the Communist takeover of Beijing in 1949, we find that this process of historicization picks up right where it was left off.

Preserved Historical Sites as National Symbols in Socialist Beijing

When the Communist Party marched triumphantly into Beijing in 1949, the leadership of the Communist Party was confronted with the question of the future of Beijing. Designated once again as the capital of China, Communist leaders envisioned Beijing as the symbol of a bright new socialist future. But what did a socialist Beijing look like? In order to determine the future of the city, the Capital City Planning Commission was founded in May 1949, commencing the famous debates between total preservationists, most prominently architectural scholars Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhangxiang, who wanted to construct an entirely new administrative center outside of the city walls, and advocates of industrialization and appropriation of imperial Beijing, who wanted to place the administration in the center of the imperial city and demolish the city walls.[23] The latter won out.

In the standard narrative, the preservationists' defeat and the demolition of the old city walls reflected the Communist disregard of history. Li, Dray-Noven, and Kong note in *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City;* "to the victorious Communist revolutionaries, [the city walls] symbolized the rotten old society and the authority of the privileged ruling class whom they just defeated." As evidence, they cite transportation minister Zhang Bojun, who said that they did not "have yesterday, so there was no need to preserve yesterday. Therefore, many great things that remained from yesterday, such as the city wall and archways on the streets, of course were worthless."[24]

However, when we examine guidebooks published in the early Communist period from 1957 to 1960, we find that to the contrary, instead of a Communist disdain for history and the old imperial sites, the Communist government boasted of Beijing's "history of more than three thousand years" and "its magnificent edifices."[25] Indeed, the guidebook repeatedly and proudly points out the Communist government's efforts to preserve and renovate historical sites. For example, the guidebook's section on the Yi He Yuan says, "this resort continued to suffer under either the rule of the Japanese and their puppets, or the Kuomintang reaction government… its further deterioration during these 30-odd years was tremendous, and only through the great efforts that were made after liberation was it restored to its old splendor."[26] On a section on Xiang Shan, the Fragrant Hills, the guidebook says, "this fine garden was practically deserted before liberation, and ruins lay everywhere. Many exquisite buildings, such as the Chien Hsin Chai (Unbosoming Chamber) were completely dilapidated, the ancient Hsiang Shan Temple was only a pile of rubble… after liberation, Fragrance Hill was developed anew."[27] Such passages surface countless numbers of times in these guidebooks, following a formulaic pattern of depicting a historical treasured site neglected and in ruins before "liberation," then rejuvenation and restoration to former grandeur under the Communist authorities.

At first glance, it is difficult to reconcile these passages and the emphasis on historical restoration and preservation with the Communist Party's demonizing of China's imperial past. The Communist government obviously did not renovate these old imperial sites for the sake of the monarchy. Nor would it seem that they, as the Republican government did, renovate these sites for the sake of capitalist profit. So then, why did they go through the trouble of preserving these imperial sites? In one revealing passage, the guidebook shows both the Communist's ideological hatred of the imperial monarchy, and the reasons why they preserved vestiges of imperial times despite this hatred:

> …all these edifices of Peking were built for the enjoyment of the feudal ruling class and to make possible the display of the wealth and power of the feudal emperors. No consideration was ever given to the needs of the working people or to those of production… [with liberation,] for the first time in its history, age-old Peking, with its history of more than three thousand years and its magnificent edifices built by the working people during the centuries, belonged to the people and got a new lease of life.[28]

23 Li, Dray-Novey, and Kong, 176.

24 Zhang Yihe, Wangshi bingbu ru yan. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2004, 111, cited in Li, Dray-Novey, and Kong, in *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City,* 177.

25 *Peking; a Tourist Guide*. Peking: Foreign Languages, 1960, 12.

26 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 105.

27 Ibid., 112.

28 Ibid., 12.

On the left is a map of Beijing's streetcar system in 1957. Note how the city walls are represented as an obstacle pierced by the streetcar lines, just as in Republican Beijing. On the right is a picture of Peking Airport displayed in a 1960 guidebook, showing how transportation in Communist Beijing was as much a mark of pride as it was in the Republic.[36]

The Communist government thus subsumed the imperial architecture left in Beijing into their own historical narrative: though the imperial architecture was built by "feudal emperors" for their own enjoyment, the "magnificent" imperial "edifices" were built by the *working people* of China, and thus, despite being the remnants of a much-hated imperial past, also represented the achievements of the Chinese people and nation.

This point is hammered home in the guidebook's section on the Forbidden City: "The symmetry and well-planned arrangement of the buildings show that the *Chinese working people* have since ancient times been most resourceful in architectural creation. The present Palaces have a history of over 500 years and are a precious object of historical interest."[29] Again, the Communist government recasts these historical sites as symbols of the achievements of the Chinese working class. In this way the Communist government, just like their Republican predecessors, inscribed their own history and nationalist meanings into Beijing's imperial spaces, continuing and deepening the process of 'historicization' which, as we saw earlier, had its start in 1930s Republican Beiping.

Of course, the kind of historicization that took place in Republican Beiping was of a different character than that of Socialist Beijing, as it was more oriented towards Chinese elites and foreigners, whereas the Communist's appropriation of historical sites as national symbols was clearly geared towards what the Communist Party considered ordinary or working class Chinese. But underlying these different rationales for preservation of imperial place was the same fundamental driving force: the recreation of historic places as national symbols. Imperial Chinese architecture, so beautiful yet strikingly different from modern foreign architecture, was, despite its inconvenient imperial past, a convenient symbol that allowed the Chinese to celebrate their own nation.

However, there still appears to remain a paradox in the Communist preservation of space – for of course, we cannot ignore that despite doing more preservation work

29 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 46. Emphasis added.

than they get credit for, the Communist government did in fact destroy much of Beijing's old architecture, most notably the city walls. The destruction of the city walls appears to be a salient counterargument to the continuity between Republican Beiping and Communist Beijing. However, this destruction was in fact part of a self-conscious modernization effort that actually had its origins in *Republican* Beijing, which I will elaborate upon in the next section.

The Creation of "Modern" Place in Beijing

While this process of historicizing imperial sites was taking hold in Republican Beijing, a different, yet related process was unfolding: the impulse for self-conscious modernization; the drive to pull Beijing out of its "backwardness" and give it a modern character and identity. Though the kind of modern identity that the Communist and Republican governments wished to give Beijing may appear to be radically different on the surface – the Communist government, for one, differentiated themselves from the Republican period by categorizing the latter as "semi-feudal and semi-colonial"[30] – there were many more similarities than differences between the modernizing impulses inherent in both movements. To show the continuities between Republican and Communist modernization, I examine the creation of three kinds of explicitly modern places in Beijing during this time period: transportation infrastructure, stadiums and parks, and modern political monumentality.

Transportation Infrastructure and the Compromise and Destruction of the City Walls

As we saw in *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City*, one of the biggest differences cited between Republican and Communist Beijing's physical construction is the tearing down of the old city walls under the Communist government. However, this seemingly radical break between the two eras is actually far more understandable when we think of the complete destruction of the city walls as the culmination of decades of transportation modernization, which first surfaced under the Republic. Though Strand argues in *Rickshaw Beijing* that modern transportation projects such as streetcar track "did not replace the city walls," but rather that Beijing "preserved the past [and] accommodated the present,"[31] in fact, transport projects set forth in motion the marginalization and eventual destruction of the city walls by recasting the walls as an obstacle to modernization.

The beginning of modernization of Beijing's transportation infrastructure in the Republican era, such as the construction of railroads, the streetcar system, and the pavement of roads, has been well documented in the secondary literature, especially in David Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing* and Madeline Dong's *Republican Beijing*. The construction of such infrastructure was done explicitly for modernizing purposes; reformers like Kang Youwei expressed the need for new roads, commenting that "streets are higher than people's houses; dust fills up streets; and filthy air streams,"[32] and Li Dazhao, another prominent intellectual, demanded in his manifesto "The New Life Beijing Residents Ought to Demand," a "municipally managed streetcar system at once."[33]

The construction of these transportation systems began to significantly compromise the integrity of the walls. The new railroads pierced the city walls in many different places, causing the opening of seven doorways, the dismantling of the walls of all Inner city gates, and the destruction of Chongwen Gate.[34] The walls were left to rot; as one guidebook mentions, it had once been possible "to walk completely around the city on this wall," but neglect and disrepair made it unwalkable by the 1930s.[35] Though the walls survived, their old function of protecting the city and controlling the flow of people in and out of the city had been rendered obsolete, and now became a direct obstacle to modern transportation.

On the left is a map of Beijing's streetcar system in 1957. Note how the city walls are represented as an obstacle pierced by the streetcar lines, just as in Republican Beijing. On the right is a picture of Peking Airport displayed in a 1960 guidebook, showing how transportation in Communist Beijing was as much a mark of pride as it was in the Republic.[36]

Both Republican and Communist governments took pride in the construction of modern transport under their authority. *Beiping Luxing Zhinan*, published in 1935, boasted how "as all the countries of the world can see, Beiping's transportation is extremely convenient,"[37] and advertised how Beiping was easily accessible by train, bus, plane, and streetcar from major cities across the country. *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, published 25 years later, proudly informed readers that "since liberation, there was been tremendous development in public transport in Peking," saying how under Communism, the number of buses went from 5 to 900, the number of trams from 49 to 290,

30 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 11.

31 David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 7.

32 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 38.

33 Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing,* 124.

34 *Republican Beijing*, 37.

35 Gum, *Peiping and North China*, 6.

36 *Beijing Lanyou Shouce*, 156, and *Peking: A Tourist Guide,* 18-19.

37 Ma, Zhixiang. *Beiping Luxing Zhinan (A Travel Guide to Beijing)*. Beiping: Jingji Xinwen She, 1935. "Transportation," 1.

and the amount of paved road from 2.19 million square meters to 10.81 million square meters. It also bragged that "Peking has become the centre of air and railway transport for the whole country… one can travel by air or train from Peking, the capital, directly to the main cities in China as well as to Moscow," a curious echo of *Beiping Luxing Zhinan*'s boasts about Beiping's accessibility by train and air. All this illustrates the continuity between Beiping and Beijing in their respective government's attitudes towards transportation. Modern transport was a key priority and a point of pride in both governments, symbolizing progress and development. Though the Communist government attempted to portray their modernizing efforts as a major advancement from the past, the underlying impulse towards modern transport was clearly present in both time periods.

Understanding this continuity in transport development makes the complete destruction of the city walls under the Communists much more recognizable as a continuation of trends originating in the Republic, instead of a seismic break from the past as it is commonly portrayed. Though the 1960 guidebook says that "the Peking of today has undergone great changes and is quite different from what it was in the past," as "the wall which formerly enclosed the city is now being demolished,"[38] it is extremely telling that the wall was finally demolished in 1965 to make way for *subway* construction.[39] Though Beijing's leaders may have justified the demolition by dismissing the walls as being relics of the old society, the decision to demolish the walls was clearly not purely motivated by a desire to destroy all remnants of old Beijing; otherwise, the extensive efforts to preserve select historical sites as documented earlier would be completely nonsensical. Instead, the main impetus behind the demolition was ultimately the desire for modern transportation, a desire that first arose during the Republican era.

Stadiums, Sports, and National Parks

Another modernizing impulse of both the Republican and Communist governments was in the area of sports, a distinctly modern pursuit which in labor-intensive, pre-industrial Imperial Beijing would have been seen as ridiculous by most. An entire chapter in *Peking: A Tourist Guide* is devoted to Sports Centres, illustrating the importance of sports to the Communist government, at least symbolically. The guidebook depicts the growing importance of sports as being a Communist phenomenon, emphasizing discontinuity between the present and the Republican period:

> "Before liberation, only a small number of people went in for sports in Peking. The reactionary government did not pay any attention to sports and so sports declined; after liberation, under the Party's guidance and care, sports began to flourish and develop extensively. Mass sports and physical culture became popular in schools, government organizations, army units, and other enterprises."[40]

The guidebook clearly presents the Nationalist government as being apathetic towards sports, in stark contrast to the Communist Party, who devoted significant resources to the construction of sports facilities such as the Peking Worker's Stadium, the Peking Gymnasium, and the Hsien Nung Tan Stadium, among others.

However, this narrative is thrown into question when we examine the actual relations of the Republican government to sports. Especially striking is when we compare the Communist guidebook to *In Search of Old Peking* 25 years earlier; the authors complain in one section that it is "only a matter of time before the [outer enclosure of the Temple of Heaven] will be razed to the ground and converted into a municipal swimming-bath or stadium, or some other equally utilitarian structure."[41] Such a passage demonstrates a trend towards constructing modern sports facilities *before* the arrival of the Communists, indicating that we should rethink the Communist narrative of radical change between the Republican and Communist governments.

Another strong sign of continuity in this movement towards the increasing prominence of sports is the case of Capital Park. Capital Park was actually the former Temple of Earth that was repurposed into a park in 1925, and the southern section of the park had extensive modern sports facilities, including tennis, basketball, and soccer courts, a running track, a swimming pool, and swings. Xue Dubi, the man behind the creation of the park, explained his motives by saying "it is painful to witness the weakening of the people, the invasion of powerful countries, and the decline of our nation. It should be our fundamental principle to promote sports activities and encourage people's morale."[42] Such a rationale clearly show that during the Republican period, many authority figures did in fact pay attention to sports, in contrast to Communist claims, and furthermore paid attention to sports because of a nationalistic motive to strengthen the nation, reflected in the slogans hung around the park: "Promote militancy; encourage national spirit; advocate popular education; reshape national souls."[43]

Thus, despite the Communist government's attempts to use sports to portray their own government as a radical break from the Republican past, we can see that this was obviously not the case. Just as the Communists used

38 *Peking: A Tourist Guide,* 2.

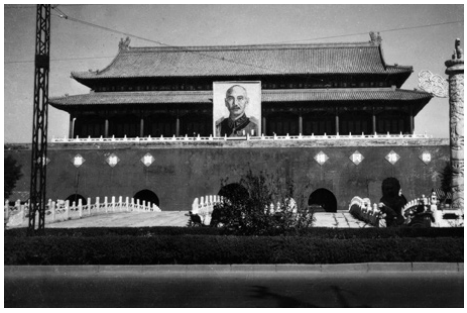
39 Li, Dray-Novey, and Kong, *Beijing*, 176.

40 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 156.

41 Arlington and Lewison, *Old Peking,* 113.

42 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 86.

43 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 86.


Before, before, and after: Imperial Tian'anmen, Chiang Kai Shek's portrait 1945 – 1949, and Mao's portrait, 1949 -

promotion of sports and their sports facilities as points of national pride, many Republican reformers, too, had fervent nationalistic desires to promote sports to improve Chinese morale and national strength. Yet again, just as in the case of transportation infrastructure, we see strong continuities between Republican and Communist Beijing in the promotion of sports. Though the Communists attempted to distance themselves from the Nationalist government, this advocacy of sports clearly had its origins in pre-Communist times.

Revolutionary Monumentality from Republican to Socialist Beijing: The Case of Tian'anmen

One of the biggest changes that occurred after "liberation" in 1949 was the creation of political monumental spaces that represented the greatness of the nascent People's Republic. The 1960 guidebook to Beijing informed visitors that "in the past ten years Peking has experienced a great upsurge in building construction," promptly reeling off a list of new monumental constructions, among them the Great Hall of the People, the Chinese Museum Building, the Peking Railway Station, and the enlargement of Tian'anmen Square from "11 hectares to 40 hectares."[44] With many of these buildings, the guidebook boasted of their massive scale, emphasizing their monumentality – for example, it describes the Great Hall of the People covers "an area of 171,800 square metres, larger than the area covered by all the buildings in the Imperial Palaces."[45] Perhaps most explicitly political and monumental was the Monument to the People's Heroes, which merited its own entire detailed section in the guidebook, and "signifie[d] the Chinese people's respect for and remembrance of their revolutionary martyrs, mark[ed] their heroic struggle in fighting against internal and external enemies, and remind[ed] all who see it of the cause of China's present happiness and prosperity."[46] This passage makes the purpose of this monument clear: the government's claim to legitimacy. By its construction, the government inscribed its political claims into physical space.

But once again, though the guidebook and secondary literature emphasize the newness of this monumental architecture, we can actually locate the origins of this trend of monument construction in the Republican period, although it was less successful. When the Nationalists succeeded in taking Beijing in 1928, the Kuomingtang, much like the Communist party, attempted to assert its own political claims of legitimacy through monument construction, such as one commemorating the martyrs of the 1911 Revolution at the Nankou train station, or another commemorating the Northern expedition build outside the north gate of the Summer Palace.[47] Though meeting with little local support, the construction of these monuments demonstrates the origins of monument construction with the Kuomingtang. Even the events the Nationalist and Communist monuments were commemorating were often the same; one of the events the Communist Monument to the People's Heroes was dedicated to was the 1911 Revolution, the same event the Nationalist Nankou monument was dedicated to as well.[48]

One of the most striking illustrations of this shared trend of political monumentalization was the case of the portraits at Tian'anmen Square. Tian'anmen Square was originally merely an imperial passageway of sorts, whose sole purpose was for the usage of the emperor. It had no special significance, illustrated by the fact that old maps failed to name it explicitly and demarcate it as an individual space.[49] However, with the stirrings of political consciousness and the mass student movements that began with the May 4th 1919 movement, Tian'anmen Square, as a large space conveniently located in the center of Beijing, was transformed into a space of national political significance.[50] As Tian'anmen Square became more and more symbolically important over the course of the 1920s, when the Nationalists took Beijing in 1928, they erected a

44 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 15.
45 Ibid., 15.
46 Ibid., 22.
47 Dong, *Republican Beijing,* 88.
48 *Peking: A Tourist Guide*, 26.
49 Wu Hang, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 18.
50 Wu, *Remaking Beijing,* 15.

portrait of Sun Yat-sen on Tian'anmen, flanked by slogans, which was presumably taken down after the Japanese occupied the city in 1937.[51] In 1945, after the Japanese defeat, Chiang Kai-shek installed another portrait, that of himself. Naturally, this portrait, in turn, was replaced by Mao's portrait after the People's Liberation Army entered the city in 1949.

The case of the portraits at Tian'anmen explicitly demonstrates to us the continuing trend of national monument construction from its origins in the Republic straight into the Maoist era. Though the Communist government used monuments to make claims to legitimacy and signify a break from the Republican past, and though these monuments symbolized a different political entity – the CCP – from the Republican monuments – the Kuomingtang – ultimately, the underlying historical trend was the same. That many of the monuments commemorated the same revolutionary histories, and that political use of portraits at Tian'anmen was preserved by the Communists, show that this modern monument construction under the Communists was not such a major change from the past as the Communist or secondary literature would have us think. Once again, we are presented with the reoccurring theme of continuity in these forces of modernization between the Republican and Communist periods – the only major difference in many cases being the name of the celebrated party or the face of the leader on the portrait.

Conclusion

Though the Communist era was a radical break from the Republican era in many respects, when we peel back some of the socialist veneer and rhetoric of the guidebooks of the early Communist government, we find that in fact many of the same forces that originated in Republican Beijing and shaped the contours of the city continued to do so in the Communist era. Rather than seeing the Communist government as destroying the remnants of "Old" Beijing in its drive towards a utopian socialist future – though that is certainly one valid way of reading it – we can see that the Communist government built upon many of the same modernizing impulses present during the Nationalist period in its creation of modern monuments, architecture, and infrastructure, as well as continuing a trend of historicizing imperial sites and turning them into places of national symbolic meaning. Though on the surface much had changed – new Soviet style buildings were constructed, Mao's portrait replaced Chiang's, the old city wall was torn down – the underlying historical forces remained fundamentally intact, pointing to a continuity between the two times that is often ignored.

Much of the impetus behind the narrative of a Communist break with a Republican past lay in the revolutionary desire that propelled much of the changes and movements in modern Chinese history starting in the late Qing dynasty. Such revolutionary sentiments demanded the legitimization of the "new" as being progressive and nation-advancing, and the dismissal of the "old" as being backwards, no matter how different, backwards, or old the "old" really was, or no matter how new the "new" really was. Even if many of the activities that the Communist government carried out in Beijing built upon the actions of Republican governments past, the Communist government felt compelled to create a narrative that differentiated itself from the past Republican governments, leading to overemphasis on the radical differences between pre and post-1949 Beijing. One wonders how fundamentally different Beijing's architecture and physical spaces would have been if the Republican government had been allowed to continue instead of being replaced by the Communists.

Ultimately, by being able to shift through the physical transformations and rhetorical changes that were taking place in the early 20th century, we can pick out and identify this key modernizing impulse that has defined Beijing's trajectory ever since its origins, a modernizing impulse that I would argue extends even into today. As Beijing entered the 21st century, it continued its modernizing push, building a new airport, upgrading telecommunications infrastructure, constructing new subway lines, and creating new monumental places such as the Beijing Olympic stadiums, all while continuing to historicize and renovate historical places (such as by demolishing some *hutongs* while turning others into tourist districts) and burnish Beijing's image as a historical city, partially explaining the newfound nostalgia for "Old Beijing." As Beijing continues to transform, maintaining its search for a modern Chinese identity, we will undoubtedly see these same forces at work into the foreseeable future.

51 Ibid., 69.

Courtesy of Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-J16133

The Red and the Yellow Star: Soviet-Jewish Memory of the Second World War

By Luisa Von Richthofen, Wellseley College

June 1941 onwards, German troops invaded the territories that had formerly been annexed by the Soviet Union. They rapidly encircled the main East European centers of Jewish population. Jews in those areas were unprepared for the campaign of mass murder that was soon to take place. After the signing of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, Soviet newspapers had kept silent about the National Socialist policy regarding the Jews in the German occupied territories. Despite terrible rumors about atrocities in the west brought by Jewish refugees fleeing to the districts occupied by the Soviet Union between September 17 and the October 22, 1941 (before the borders between Eastern and Western Poland were shut down), many Jews chose to stay in German-occupied territory even after the German–Soviet pact was broken. What motivated so many Jews not to flee eastwards were memories of German occupation of Ukraine in 1917. The Germans were remembered as a "nation of cultured, polite, order loving people"[1] who had put an end to frequent anti-Jewish pogroms. In another ironical twist of history, There was in those occupied territories of Eastern Europe only one significant group of Jews that miraculously just barely escaped the massacres. In fact only those who had been deported to the Russian interior by the Soviets

1 Mordechai Altshuler, « Escape and evacuation of Soviet Jews at the time of the Nazi invasion » in: *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and sources on the destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories of the USSR, 1941- 1945*. Dobroszycki, L., & Gurock, J. S. (ed.) (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 90.

prior to 1941 escaped the massacres.[2] Tens of thousands survived that way.[3] Those who remained, however, were to know a terrible end. Of the 2,650,000 Jews estimated to have stayed in the German occupied territories after the invasion, only around 110,000 survived.[4] In other words, of the total Jewish population, 4% were still alive in 1944. These were generally the handful that had found non-Jewish protectors or who had joined partisan units.

The Holocaust is often understood as the epitome of our destructive modernity, the gas chambers standing for industrialized killing. This image, however, does not adequately describe the Holocaust in the newly conquered areas. In its earlier stages, the *Einsatzgruppen* and their confederates displayed boundless brutality. Mobile killing squads liquidated a large part of Soviet Jewry by gunfire near their homes- a method of killing that was anything but industrial. Other Jews were rounded up in ghettos. They too were later progressively "liquidated". The perpetrators of the Holocaust carried out their gruesome task with macabre yet overwhelming efficiency. Within five months, they had killed about half a million Jews. They were helped in their task by the German Wehrmacht, which, according to Raul Hilberg, "went out of its way to turn over Jews to Einsatzgruppen, to request actions against Jews, to participate in killing actions, and to shoot Jews in reprisal for attacks on occupation forces."[5] It was not uncommon either for the local population to contribute to the slaughter of their Jewish neighbors and fellow-citizens (examples of this were often found in Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland)[6].

When the Red Army liberated the occupied territories in 1943–1944, it found almost no Jews alive. To Vassili Grossman, who would later be an editor of the *Black Book*, this was a subject of bewilderment and anguish. Grossman himself was a Ukrainian Jew, whose mother had perished along with the 35,000 Jews of Berditshev at the hands of the Germans in 1941. Grossman was a reporter with the Red Army as it reconquered Eastern Ukraine. He gradually grasped the extent of the destruction, and eventually wrote that:

> In Ukraine there are no Jews. Nowhere—not in Poltava, Kharkov, Kremenchug, Borispol, not in Iagotin. You will not see the black, tear-filled eyes of a little girl, you will not hear the sorrowful drawling voice of an old woman, you will not glimpse the swarthy face of a hungry child in a single city or a single one of hundreds of thousands of shtetls.[7]

The widely known piece, which was considered too political at the time, was never published.

Despite the the large number of victims, it was only only a little bit more than a decade ago that the study of the Holocaust and East European studies finally met. While acknowledging the significant proportion of victims killed in the East, the subject had remained rather peripheral in Holocaust studies, primarily because hardly anybody survived. Secondly, most Holocaust specialists lacked deep immersion in the local languages and traditions and historical context of the region they were studying. It so turned out that even in his indispensable and pathbreaking *magnum opus*, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hilberg made no single use of sources or scholarship in Eastern European languages and "exhibited superficial acquanitance with East European history"[8] even when over 4,000,000 among the murdered European Jews were born in what has come to be known as "the Bloodlands."[9]

There is, however, more to it than that. In fact, for many survivors testifying was officially discouraged. Testimonies, if collected at all, were also not readily available

2 When the Soviet Union annexed Poland's eastern territories (1939), Western Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states it launched a massive resettlement program. Elites of the various "nationalities" living in the annexed territories were arrested and sentenced to forced labor in Siberia and Central Asia. In Eastern Poland for example, from 1939 to 1941, the Soviets arrested 107,140 persons, of whom 23,590 Jews. Poles of Jewish origin were mainly deported during April and June 1940. In April, those deported were mostly representatives of the former Polish law enforcement authorities, members of the propertied classes and relatives of those already purged. In June 1940, the category targeted was mostly refugees from Western Poland. They were those Jews who had fled from Western Poland when the Germans invaded this region. Afterwards, for fear of not being able to return and join their families, those Jews often refused to take Soviet citizenship and they applied to the Soviet-German population transfer commission to be transported back there. This made them suspicious in the eyes of the soviet authorities and this is why many were deported. *http://museum.gulagmemories.eu/en/media/les-deportations*

3 Escape from German occupied territories, USHMM: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005470

4 Yitzhak Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner: Soviet Jews in the War against Nazi Germany*. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The International Institute for Holocaust Research; Gefen, 2010), 126.

5 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jewry* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), 301.

6 Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York : Penguin Books, 2002).

7 In: Jewish Quarterly: Ukraine without Jews by Vassily Grossman http://jewishquarterly.org/2011/10/ukraine-without-jews/.

8 John Paul Himka « A Reconfigured Terrain » in *The Holocaust in the East: Local Perpetrators and Soviet responses* edited by Michael David Fox, Peter Holquist and Alexander M. Martin (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2014), 1.

9 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands, Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

to Western researchers. Archival access was consistently blocked. When Yad Vashem requested some documents on the Holocaust in Ukraine in 1965 they were brushed off. The Soviet Union, they were told, did not organize the archives "relating to the crimes of German fascism in World War II…according to the nationality of the victim."[10] In this paper I investigate why this was so.

Let me outline the challenges scholars faced when writing about the Holocaust in the East. Firstly there was the problem of the singularity of available sources. [11] Those who survived the death camps were special; they were exceptions to the rule. Primo Levi described the paradox of the survivor in his book *The Drowned and the Saved*. Survivors were compelled to provide the world with a "universal testimony of what man can inflict on man."[12] At the same time, "all the stories of people who survived concentration camps have no general application", that "[every] survivor is an exception, a miracle, someone with a special destiny."[13] "About the heart of darkness that was also the very essence of their experience, about their last betrayal, about the Calvary of 90 percent of the Prewar Polish Jewry – we will never know,"[14] Jan Gross argues.

When they finally gained access to relevant material after the collapse of the Soviet Union, scholars had to acknowledge yet another challenge to historiography. They realized that the way the Holocaust was perpetrated in the East was different. It was the "Holocaust by bullets". Most Eastern Jews did not perish in the gas chambers. The "West" has tended to commemorate the Holocaust based on the experience of German and West European Jews, a numerically much smaller group of victims. Now that the Iron Curtain has been lifted, the international collective memory of the Holocaust has to include those four to five million Jews who were killed east of Auschwitz and whose experience of the Holocaust was quite different.

The secrecy of Soviet historiography about the Holocaust thus affected Western historiography quite dramatically. For the first time in 2001 Jan Gross in *Neighbors* openly challenged the prevailing locus in historiography in European history that there are "two separate wartime histories – one pertaining to the Jews and the other to all the other citizens of a given European country subjected to Nazi rules."[15] The Western historiography of the Holocaust was influenced by the emergence of a new world order in the post-war years. On the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain the fate of the Eastern Jewish population was drowned into the bigger picture of Eastern European suffering under the Nazi occupation. In the West, people did remember the Holocaust but incompletely. The Shoah had mainly taken place in the newly Soviet dominated and thus inaccessible no man's land beyond the iron curtain. The history of the Holocaust was stripped from its geography.[16] While the suffering of the Jews was acknowledged and increasingly remembered, it was de-contextualized. The Holocaust, precisely because it was deprived of its Jewishness in the East and of its geography in the West thus never was fully included into European history.[17] In general, after the war a ferocious competition over Eastern European victimhood ensued. "In this competition for memory, the Holocaust, the other German mass killing policies and the Stalinist mass murders became three different histories event though in historical fact they shared a place and times"[18], Timothy Snyder writes in *Bloodlands*, where he tries to weigh against the separation of these histories.

Jews were victims and Jews were also heroes. Soviet Jewish wartime fate was not only victimhood, but also resistance. In fact, about half a million Jews fought as soldiers and officers of the Red Army. Approximately 180,000 of them died in battle, and some 70,000 to 80,000 were murdered in prisoner of war camps.[19] If one looks in percentage terms at the awarding of distinctions for valor in the Red Army, Jewish soldiers fought as bravely as the average Soviet military man. At least 147 Jews won the highest military decoration. Only four nationalities (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Tatars) won more Hero titles, although in 1959 Jews were only the eleventh-largest Soviet nationality.[20] David Abramovitch Dragunsky, for instance, was born to a Jewish family and became a Colonel General in the Soviet Army. Twice he was decorated as a Hero of the Soviet Union and he remained a true war legend. Liliana Ruth Feierstein and Liliana Furman discovered that "the [Jewish] Veterans' words do not reflect the impotence and humiliation evident in the testimonies of some who survived the camps. Having actively influenced the outcome of the war and having held a military rank put the veterans in a different

10 Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 224.
11 Gross, *Neighbors*, 94.
12 Primo Levi, *Conversations et entretiens* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 1998), 93.
13 Primo Levi : *The Voice of Memory, Interviews 1961-1987*. Edited by Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon (New York : The New Press, 1991), 67.
14 Gross, *Neighbors*, 94.
15 Gross, Neighbors, xviii.
16 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands, Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 377.
17 Ibidem
18 Ibidem
19 Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner*, 126.
20 Zvi Gitelman « Internationalism, patriotism and disillusion: Soviet Jewish Veterans remember World War II and the Holocaust » in: *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union Symposium Presentations*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Center for Advanced Holocaust studies, 2005.

position."[21] It is also important to note that these soldiers did not fight with such fervor because they were Jewish but rather because they were defending their fatherland. As had been the case with German Jews during the First World War, or as was observed with African-American soldiers, the war was seen by most Soviet Jewish soldiers as means to disprove prejudicial feelings and to give evidence of their patriotism. Their hopes, as it turned out, were bitterly disappointed.

To summarize, at the end of the war there was on the one hand the tale of the most tragic and pure victimhood. On the other hand, there was evidence of the bravery in combat and active role of Jewish soldiers on the front. Despite of the perfect ingredients for a enthralling wartime narrative Soviet memory of the war was consistently marked by a deafening silence on anything pertaining to the Jews during the war.

This paper traces the evolution of Jewish contributions to the Soviet World War II memory and myth. In fact, the Jewish part of the "Soviet memory cake" remained insignificant throughout. This paper examines Jewish memory from the immediate post-war context to the death of Stalin in 1953, then its suppression under Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev. Lastly it will describe the still arduous Holocaust memorialization of Post-Soviet Russia.

The Stalin years (1945–1953)

The Soviet leadership and the Soviet people had been aware of the persecution of the Jews in Germany early on. One of the very first films directly representing Jewish persecution by the Nazis was a Soviet production called *Professor Mamlok*. It was shown in Soviet theaters as early as autumn 1938. That same year, Stalin commented on the Nazis' Jewish policies, stating that fascist anti-Semitism "like any form of racial chauvinism, is the most dangerous vestige of cannibalism."[22] He went on to declare "brotherly feelings for the Jewish people would define our attitudes toward anti-Semites and anti-Semitic atrocities wherever they occur."[23] However, after the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, there were no further criticisms of Nazi Germany (via official channels at least).

Operation Barbarossa, the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, changed everything. The anti-fascist stance was resurrected. The Soviet media started reporting on atrocities committed in the Western territories of the Soviet Union. In this context Vassili Grossman was allowed to travel with the Red Army as a reporter and a representative of the Jewish Antifascist Committee (JAC), an organization created in 1942 at Stalin's special order. Headed by the famous actor and director of the Moscow State Jewish Theater Solomon Mikhoels, the JAC was in charge of promoting pro-Soviet sympathy abroad. It targeted American Jews in particular, whose support of the war effort was highly welcomed by the Soviet leadership. The emphasis on Nazi crimes against Jews in the Soviet Union was central to the campaign. In his capacity as chairman, Mikhoels embarked on tour of the United States, the UK and Canada in 1943. In the U.S., he was welcomed by such prominent Jewish personalities as Albert Einstein, future President of Israel Chaim Weizmann, Charlie Chaplin, Marc Chagall, and novelist Leon Feuchtwanger. Mikhoels' endeavor was immensely successful. He raised as much as $16 million in the United States and $15 million in England.[24] At that same time, on the front, poems written by Jewish poets occasionally appeared alongside journalistic reports on Nazi-committed atrocities in the Soviet press. Ilya Selvinsky's poem "I Saw It" was among the first depictions of the Holocaust in the East.[25] Official censorship, however, choked off Holocaust reporting from the end of 1941 on. Jewish poets were still able depict the specific fate of their people well into the year 1943, but Selvinsky was eventually removed from the front in 1943, to his great dismay. Just as in the case of Vassili Grossman, he and his writing were deemed too political.

Their removal was part of a larger Soviet trend. If the media had initially reported on the events of the Holocaust, they soon stopped doing so. As the war progressed towards a Soviet victory, mentions of Jews began to disappear altogether. The Sovinform bureau had already stopped mentioning "Jews" from late 1941 on. The victory in the battle of Stalingrad in 1943 made the erasure of Jewish memory from the records official. From May 1943 on, Stalin himself began referring to the Jewish victims of extermination by the "Hitlerites" merely as "So-

21 Liliana Ruth Feuerstein and Liliana Furman, „Memory under siege: Jewish Veterans of the Soviet Army in Present Day Germany" In: *Recalling the past, (re)constructing the past : collective and individual memory of World War II in Russia and Germany*, Withold Bonner and Arja Rosenholm (eds) (Helsinki: Aleksanteri Institute, 2008) Aleksanteri-sarja ; 2008/2, pp. 108-109

22 Quoted in Karel Berkhoff, „"Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population": The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941-45", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2009: 61, accessed November 24th 2014.DOI: 10.1353/kri.0.0080.

23 Ibidem.

24 Lukasz Hirszowicz, „The Soviet Union and the Jews during World War II, British Foreign Office Documents" in: *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, Volume 3, Issue 1 (1973). Accessed 24th November 2014, DOI:10.1080/13501677308577154.

25 Maxim Shrayer, *I Saw It, Ilya Selvinsky and the Legacy of Bearing Witness to the Shoah*, (New York: Academic Studies Press, Studies in Russian and Slavic Literatures, Cultures, and History, 2013).

viet citizens."[26] This attitude was immediately adopted by the Soviet media, which now generally avoided any specific reference to the Jews. The Extraordinary State Commission's reports, for instance, omitted the words "Jews" and "Jewish". This policy of silence was not absolutely consistent in the months and years to come, and in 1943 and 1944 Soviet readers could still occasionally read and hear about the massacres of Soviet Jews. But many must have understood that talking about the Jews would have been unwise.

Interestingly enough, at the same time there was much public discourse about the destiny of non-Soviet Jews. In the wake of the Katyń Affair in April 1943, Yitzhak Arad argues, Soviet media attention to the Jews increased, though modestly.[27] In 1943 Nazi Germany launched an investigation into the mass graves of Katyń, where the Soviets had executed about 30,000 members of the Polish elite, mainly members of the officer corps. The German aim was to pit the Western allies against their Soviet partners while simultaneously drowning out alarming British and French reports about the imminent German destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. As Stalin presumed that the other Allies would not tolerate any challenges to their coalition's moral superiority, he encouraged a propagandistic moral counter-offensive. This is why Soviet newspapers started reporting that the Germans were deporting Jews to certain death in Poland, and that in Bulgaria "the organized destruction of the Jews is calling forth indignation among the Bulgarian people."[28] An editorial in *Pravda* on April 19 expressed anger against "Hitler's Polish accomplices" and spoke of atrocities against "the defenseless peaceful population, *especially Jews.*"[29] Zvi Gitelman also mentioned fictional accounts of Red Army men sneaking into the ghetto to help resisting Polish Jews. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising was described as "an important contribution of the Jewish masses to the international struggle of the progressive forces of all peoples, led by the Soviet Union, against fascism and international reaction."[30]

Why, when the common efforts of the Red Army and non-Soviet Jewish fighters were celebrated at home and abroad, did Soviet politics choose to ignore completely, to blot out the Holocaust on Soviet territory? This decision was the product of a precise political calculus. An emphasis on a special Jewish destiny would have thwarted necessary efforts to unite a torn post-war Soviet society.

a) The myth of one people fighting on the same side:

Aside from anything else, emphasizing or even acknowledging the Holocaust would have shed light on a rather inconvenient truth: the extensive collaboration of local non-Jewish populations in the Holocaust.[31] As these people were often newly and precariously integrated into the Soviet Union, the Soviet leadership was reluctant to hold them accountable for their acts. Why disturb the fragile post-war situation? After all, in 1945 very few Jews remained. The Soviet leadership was unwilling to alienate the new people of the USSR in general, and those who had profited from the disappearance of the Jews in particular. There was no one to complain about the perpetrators' impunity. Local collaborators in the genocide of the Jews were thus generally not held accountable for their collaboration with the German occupation. Some of the wrongdoers were, of course, tried. But these were show trials, [32] and most of the perpetrators slipped through the net. Some, as in Poland in the immediate post-war period, were even actively sought out by the Soviet regime and ended up constituting the backbone of the new Stalinist regimes. Jan Tomasz Gross points out that contrary to the well-established cliché,[33] Jews did not assist in the Stalinization of Poland. Rather, it was former collaborators with the Germans who were instrumental in establishing the Communist regime in Poland after the war. [34]

b) The myth of the "Fraternity of Peoples," "Дружба народов":

Importantly, the Soviets believed that highlighting the very particular fate of the Jews would bolster Jewish national consciousness. Prior to the war, the Soviet emphasis had always been set on the assimilation and secularization of the Jewish minority. "Expunging the Holocaust from the record of the past was hardly a simple matter", William Korey writes, "but unless it were done

26 Karel Berkhoff, „Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population", 83.

27 Yitzhak Arad: "The Holocaust as Reflected in the Soviet Russian language Newspapers in the Years 1941–1945" in: *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism during the Holocaust: A Collection of Papers Originally Presented at an International Conference Sponsored by the Elia and Diana Zborowski Professorial Chair in Interdisciplinary Holocaust Studies, Yeshiva University, October 1995*, (Hoboken, NJ: Yeshiva University Press in association with kTAV Publishing House, 2003), 203–4, 211–12.

28 Quoted in: Karel Berkhoff, „Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population", 90.

29 Ibid. Emphasis added.

30 Zvi Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy : Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1997), 25.

31 As an example: John Paul Himka: „The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd" in: *Canadian Slavonic Papers 53* (2011), 209–243 ; or Wendy Lower: „Pogroms, mob violence and genocide in western Ukraine, summer 1941: varied histories, explanations and comparisons" in: *Journal of Genocide Research*, 09/2011, Volume 13, Issue 3, pp. 217–246.

32 Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 212.

33 The unstranslatable Polish word for this is „Żydokomuna"

34 Gross, *Neighbors*, 112.

the profound anguish of the memory was certain to stir a throbbing national consciousness. Martyrdom, after all, is a powerful stimulus to a group's sense of its own identity."[35] Donald Donham, in another context, also observes that "after that part of one's identity suddenly becomes literally a matter of life and death, what was previously lightly worn – 'I am a Zulu', 'I am a Jew' – can become far more determinative."[36]

The creation of Israel in 1948 accentuated the threat of "petit bourgeois nationalism". Overnight, Soviet Jews had become potentially foreign elements. The creation of a Jewish state in a sense transformed the Jews of the Soviet Union into a nation, a people with a territory.

The policy of silencing, however, was counterproductive. It actually accentuated the Soviet Jews' sense of Jewishness. Numerous accounts of Jewish Red Army veterans show this.[37] Initially, the veterans emphasized how much they loved their country and its values. Oral history interviews show that relatively few of those interviewed had prior knowledge of what was happening to Jews in the occupied territories. They often learned about it when they were already at the front. They fought as Soviets above all else. When asked what were his personal reasons for participating in the war, Abram Tulman, a former air force colonel, answered: "My main reason was that I was a Soviet citizen and a patriot. I was a patriot. I had a Motherland and I loved my Motherland. I loved it because I paid a high price for it."[38] The soldiers Zvi Gitelman interviewed in the course of his research believed in the Soviet system, in socialism. They were not always fervent ideologues, he noted, but few of them ever questioned their right to belong to the Soviet polity before the war. They simply assumed that this was their system. After the war, when their heroism was not acknowledged and they were labeled as "Tashkent Jews"[39], many fell into deep despair. Anti-Semitism within the Red Army also increased towards the end of the war. In reaction Jews moved closer together. Anatoly Vodopyano noted: "At a table for four sat four Jews. They didn't spread out. And if one Jew was sitting, a second would definitely come up to him and then there would eventually be four at the table. Jews were trying to get closer to each other and Yiddish words began to slip into the conversation, though no one really knew Yiddish. An interest and an understanding that you were Jewish began to develop."[40] Another veteran then commented: "To tell the truth, before the war I did not feel that I was Jewish. I knew I was Jewish by nationality and that my parents were Jews. But my Jewish self-consciousness had only begun to develop. Especially after the war, during the Stalin regime…I understood."[41]

The Jewish sacrifice during the war was constantly downplayed; this produced precisely the effects that Soviet politicians had been so fearful of. The establishment of the state of Israel became immensely meaningful for many Soviet Jews. It did not help to enhance their already fragile status in the Soviet Union, but at a time when the very notion of Jewish courage was being denied in their home country, the birth of the Jewish state out of a bitter war instantly made it a symbol of Jewish heroism.[42] Soviet Jews were more than willing to embrace that symbol, privately at least.

c) The Soviet Nations were united in suffering:

Lastly, the Soviet leadership did not single out the Jewish war experience for fear of alienating the war's other victims. Twenty seven million Soviets died in the course of the war. The Holocaust was considered regrettable, but merely one small part of the larger phenomenon that, according to the Soviets, resulted in the death of so many of their fellow citizens. The Jews were not given special status. Everyone had suffered, the Jews not more than others. They could not be 'better Soviets'. Ilya Ehrenburg and Vassili Grossman arguably failed to recognize this argument when they promoted the publication of the *Black Book of Soviet Jewry*. The *Black Book*, containing material gathered from all over the country, was meant to document the Holocaust on Soviet soil and the participation of Jews as resistance fighters against the Nazis. Ehrenburg

35 William Korey, *The Soviet Cage: anti-Semitism in Russia* (New York : Viking Press, 1973), 90.

36 Donald L. Donham, "Staring at Suffering: Violence as a Subject," in *States of Violence: Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa*, ed. by Edna G. Bay and Donald L. Donham (Charlottesville: U. of Virginia Press, 2006), 29.

37 The Blavatnik Archive, Oral history project (http://www.blavatnikarchive.org) and Zvi Gitelman « Internationalism, patriotism and disillusion: Soviet Jewish Veterans remember World War II and the Holocaust » in: *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union Symposium Presentations*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Center for Advanced Holocaust studies, 2005.

38 Gitelman, Zvi, „Internationalism, patriotism and disillusion", 117.

39 The myth of the „Tashkent Jew" was widespread after the war. Many non-Jewish Soviets believed that Jews had „fought the war in Tashkent", the Usbek capital. In other words, Soviet assumed that while „their" soldiers and civilians were suffering under German aggression, Soviet Jews had fled to Central Asia and survived without coming near to the front.

40 Gitelman, Zvi, „Internationalism, patriotism and disillusion", 114.

41 Ibid.

42 Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 224.

was sensitive to the political implications of the project. He wrote in 1944: "it is extremely important to show the solidarity of the Soviet population, the rescue of individual Jews by Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Poles. Such stories will help heal terrible wounds and raise the ideal of friendship among nations even higher."[43] Grossman noted that he was struck by the "all too frequent use of the word 'Jew' because it might irritate the reader."[44] But Ehrenburg replied that using "people" instead of Jews went beyond the concessions he was willing to make. The fact that he had to call collaborators "Politsai" instead of "Ukrainians," as was fitting, was already too much. Despite all their precautions, the *Black Book* was never published in the USSR. In 1947 Georgy Aleksandrov, head of the Communist Party's Agitprop department wrote to Head of the Chamber of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and chief propagandist Andrei Zhdanov:

> Reading the book especially the first section concerning Ukraine one gets a false picture of the true nature of fascism… Running through the whole book is the idea that the Germans murdered and plundered Jews only. The reader unwittingly gets the impression that the Germans fought against the USSR for the sole purpose of destroying the Jews...Hitler's ruthless slaughters were carried out equally against Russian, Jews, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Latvians Lithuanians and other people of the Soviet Union. As a result of those considerations, the propaganda department considers the publication of the Black Book in the USSR unadvisable.[45]

Indeed, Grossman had written as an introduction quite correctly pointing out the National Socialist view that:

The German race was declared to form the apex of this pyramid—a master race. They were followed by the Anglo-Saxon races, which were recognized as inferior and then by the Latin races, which were considered still lower. The foundation of the pyramid was formed by Slavs—a race of slaves. [Then] the Fascists placed the Jews in opposition to all people inhabiting the Earth. [46]

The *Black Book*, since it contained "grave political errors," was not published. It committed the double mistake of singling out the Jews on the one hand, and of questioning the myth of a true "Fraternity of Peoples" on the other. Most copies were destroyed in 1948. A few, however, miraculously survived, and so the most comprehensive work ever written on the Soviet Jewry was saved. It was published in 1993 for the first time on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Towards the end of the war there was a dramatic increase in state-sponsored anti-Semitism. Even if this was not the primary reason why Jewish memory was suppressed, it still pervaded many official decisions concerning Jews. Misrepresentation of the Jewish fate during the war became common practice. Intsead of considering them as heroes or victims, public opinion was led to think of Jews as traitors and cowards. In these days it was common to hear insults such as: "The Jews have spent the war in Tashkent" (the capital of Uzbekistan). Undeniably, some 200,000 Jews had been evacuated during the war. It is also understandable why the sudden appearance of many Jews in Central Asia, where there had previously been few, created the impression that "the Jews" had fled the front for safe havens. It was Mordechai Altshuler who first demonstrated in 1990s that if Jews were overrepresented among refugees, it was not because they had been given preference (or, of course, a choice). They just happened to be more urbanized than the average Soviet citizen and overrepresented in the sectors Soviet wanted to protect from the German invaders: governmental agencies, bureaucracies and factories. Additionally, Jews were, in general, more mobile than the rest of the population, and more willing to leave. Though official channels were mute about the German policy regarding Jews, some Soviet Jews soon realized via word of mouth that their fate under the German occupation might be even worse than that of the rest of the Soviets. However, few could have imagined that genocide would have been their lot had they stayed.[47] The stereotype of the "Tashkent Jew" was omnipresent at the time of the so-called "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign in 1952–1953. Over the years, it had come to be a *topos* in popular culture. It was in some ways consecrated in Vsevolod Kochetov's *Zhurbiny*, published in 1952. In this novel, Veniamin Semenovich, a greedy, petulant and treacherous Jew, has done well during the war. Not only did he never get close enough to the front to put his life in danger, but he also left his wife Katia in despair. He leads the life of a "constant wanderer," carrying in his luggage "Agasfer", the novel of the *Wandering Jew*, written by Eugene Sue in 1844. The message Kochetov conveyed was quite clear: the Jew had never belonged and never would. He who succeeded in avoiding combat, in slipping through legal formalities, had forfeited his right to be a Soviet. However, even if the Jew had deceived the officials, he would not "escape basic justice at the hands of the honest Soviet people."[48] This justice comes down on the Jew Semenovitch when the Soviet citizen Skobelev publicly slaps him in the face (to the avowed satisfaction of the Soviet authorities' representatives). "If Kochetov's solution was not the outright sanctioning of pogroms, it

43 Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy*, 19.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Altshuler, „Escape and evacuation of Soviet Jews", 101.
48 Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 235.

was not far removed," Amir Weiner speculates,[49].But Soviet Jews knew perfectly well that they had fought hard and that they had lost much in the war. Therefore they could not bear being exposed and slandered in this way and naturally resented being portrayed as shirkers and exploiters. Many left Russia when this became possible, which in turn meant that fewer and fewer people were left to keep alive the memory of the Eastern Holocaust. Those who stayed often mourned their losses in private. But there was no place for them in the public domain.[50]

Bitter thaw and icy winter: the Khrushchev (1953-1964) and the Brezhnev period

Stalin died before he had a chance to carry out whatever somber designs he had on Soviet Jews. After a period of incendiary anti-Semitism, which culminated in the 1952 with the Doctors' Plot, many Jews felt relieved and hopeful. Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev maneuvered himself into the position of First Secretary of the Communist Party in 1953. A few years later he instigated a campaign of de-Stalinization. It was inaugurated with his speech "On the Personality Cult and its Consequences" in February 1956. In a closed session of the Twentieth Communist Party Congress of the USSR, Khrushchev thrust a stick into the anthill when he violently condemned Stalin's dictatorial style and his cult of personality. He deemed them inconsistent with Party ideology. He castigated the execution of many of the Old Bolsheviks under Stalinist rule and the crimes committed by Stalin's closest associate, Lavrenti Beria. In an audacious move, he advocated the return to Lenin's socialist legalism and principles of Party rule. In the following years, Khrushchev made moves to enhance the living conditions of Gulag prisoners, insofar as the life of a forced-labor convict could be "improved." At least prisoners were now finally allowed to communicate with their loved ones. When the limited reorganization of the Gulag was achieved, Khrushchev launched yet another symbolic purge. References to Stalin were removed from the National Anthem of the Soviet Union, and at the end of October 1961, Stalin's body was removed from the Moscow Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square. On November 11, 1961, the "hero city" Stalingrad was renamed Volgograd. In these years, many Jews were hopeful that, at last, their memory of the war would finally become part of the Soviet World War II myth. How bitterly their hopes were deceived became obvious in the 1963 controversy around the monument of Babi Yar.

At the Babi Yar ravine SS-Einsatzgruppen and German police shot more than 33,000 Kiev Jews in the course of two days in September 1941. In the decades that followed there was no official acknowledgment of the specifically Jewish character of the massacre. In 1959 Soviet Ukrainian authorities decided to construct a soccer stadium and a dam at the site. Soviet author Viktor Nekrasov protested against this undertaking, soon to be followed by the well-known poet Yevgenyi Yevtushenko. The latter published the now world-famous poem "Babi Yar" in the magazine *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.[51] Not only did it denounce the Soviet silence about the Holocaust, but it was also a powerful indictment of a prevailing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union of the early 1960s. That this poem was published at all was due to the fact that censorship in the Ukraine was somewhat less rigid or perhaps less effectively applied during the first years of the Thaw. As it happened, Yevtushenko set in motion a chain of events. The poem caught the world's attention. The controversy grew even more uncomfortable for Soviet officials when world famous composer Dimitrii Shostakovich included the piece in his 13th Symphony. Eventually the Soviet authorities were forced to bow down to the demand of the protesters and critics for a monument. However, their concession soon proved itself to be deeply unsatisfying. When the monument was unveiled in 1966, the inscription read: "Here in 1941–1943, the German Fascist invaders executed more than 100,000 citizens of Kiev and prisoners of war." There was, once again, no reference to Jews. A somewhat ludicrous plaque written in Yiddish was added in the 1980s. But it, too, failed to mention the Jews.[52] The controversy over the Babi Yar monument was one of many instances in which Soviet Jews realized that the so-called Thaw had failed to bring them what they had hoped for.

Quite the opposite, in fact. Jews were still treated as potential or real traitors to the Soviet people, as evidenced in the so-called Kogan affair.[53] In a well-publicized speech, Khrushchev dwelled on the treason by the Jew Kogan. Allegedly, Kogan had served as an interpreter for Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus, commander of the German Sixth Army at the Stalingrad front. In his speech, Nikita Khrushchev distinguished between the "good Jews" – for instance Soviet Jewish General Dragunksy – and the "bad Jews" such as Kogan. At the time the speech was given, Khrushchev must have known that the accusations were false. Benjamin Pinkus has argued that the First Secretary

49 Ibid.

50 Mordechai Altshuler, « Jewish Holocaust Commemoration Activity in the USSR Under Stalin ***» in :*** *Yad Vashem Studies,* XXX, 2002, 271-296.

51 Yevgenii Yevtushenko „Babi Yar", accessible: http://remember.org/witness/babiyar.html, (Accessed October 14th 2014)

52 Zvi Gitelman, „Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union" in: *Bitter Legacy : Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR,* Zvi Gitelman (editor) (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1997), 20.

53 Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1989), 221.

knew he was thus not serving any of the state's interests but rather gratuitously venting anti-Jewish sentiments.[54] The speech was immediately followed by the publication of a "documentary novel," *Storm clouds above the Town*, edited by P. Gavrutto. It portrayed the treason of the Judas Kogan, who in the story also denounced his comrades to the Germans. Even after a detailed investigation led in 1966 by the journalist Ariadna Hormodovna proved the claims wrong,[55] the book was republished and reedited several times. If in the 1963 edition Kogan had been a mere traitor, he rose to the rank of "Judas Kogan" in the edition of 1965. That the author made this change at the time of the 20th anniversary of the "Great Patriotic War" was no mere accident.

Leonid Brezhnev ousted Nikita Khrushchev from power in 1964. Under his rule, a new era of tight governmental control over every sphere of Soviet life began. In her book *The Living and the Dead*, Nina Tumarkin notes that "Bureaucratic dominance and incompetence, corruption as a way of life, the gradual disaffection and alienation for the populace, the emergence if a beleaguered, indeed, tormented dissident movement – all these characterized the 'era of stagnation.'"[56] The efforts of de-Stalinization described above came to a sudden end, but it was already too late. As far as the Communist realm was concerned, Khrushchev's anti-Stalinist stand did much to shatter the Soviet Union's prestige abroad. Many Communists around the world, who had been taught to devote themselves to Stalin unconditionally, were now distrustful of the USSR. This, too, had contributed to 1956 uprisings in Poland and Hungary.[57]

Internally, the situation did not look much brighter. "A new breed of Soviet citizen was taking shape,"[58] Tumarkin writes. The new Soviet citizen had learned to distrust state authorities, where his forefathers had respected or at least feared the regime. In the wake of the Thaw period, the culture of sacrifice for the community and for the Communist cause was no longer attractive. Individualism and pervasive skeptical nihilism replaced them. Most of the children of the Revolution were now gone. They had disappeared during the successive waves of forced collectivization and the purges of the Great Terror. They had been eaten by the regime they fought to establish. Many of those who survived this, went missing in the Second World War. At any rate, the founding myth of the 1917 Revolution had lost its unifying power. No one identified with the dusty heroes. Nobody seriously believed in the omnipresent Communist slogans.

A new myth had to be created. As it turned out, the Second World War really entailed everything that was needed: drama, victimhood, glory, heroism, "a chic global status"[59] and, of course, the overwhelming victory of the Soviet people. 1965 marked the twentieth anniversary of the end of the war. It was celebrated like it had never been before. Until then the war had been a glorious yet traumatizing episode of Soviet history. From 1965 on it became the ultimate proof of the Communist system's overwhelming superiority. Communism, so went the myth, had crushed just another perverse form of the capitalist system, fascism. It was not only the triumph of a country. It marked the eternal triumph of the Communist ideological system. From that time on, the myth of the Great Patriotic War became completely ahistorical. The celebrations were all about the myth, and no longer about the memory. And the enemies and allies were no longer the same: the East Germans had become communist brothers, while the Americans and the British had become the ideological competitors.

A good illustration of the de-historicization of the Second World War can be found in reinterpretations of wartime photographs. Photographer Dimitrii Baltermants was on the Crimean Peninsula during the Red Army reconquest of Eastern Ukraine. He arrived in Kerch right after of the mass murder of the Jews by the Germans. One day he took a picture of one of the city's residents, whose name was P. I. Ivanova and who had just found her husband in a ditch. He had been tortured to death by the Germans. The picture's story was emblematic of the creative process of the Great Patriotic War myth. It was first published during the war and was said to be about the mass murder of Soviet citizens, undivided by ethnicity, at the hands of the Germans. The photograph was thus meant to bear witness to very specific war crimes against the national enemy. Underneath it, Soviet readers could appreciate the caption:

> These photographs were taken after the German occupiers drove [the people] out to this place. 7,500 residents, from the very elderly to breast-feeding babies, were shot from just a single city. They were killed in cold blood in a premeditated fashion. They were killed indiscriminately—Russians and Tatars, Ukrainians and Jews. The Hitlerites have also murdered the Soviet population indiscriminately in many other cities, villages,

54 Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union*, 221.

55 Moisei Kogan had in fact worked under the Germans as a driver, pretending to be Armenian, until he escaped in 1942, (for the article, see: Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews: a documented story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Pp. 218, Doc. 46.

56 Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: the Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic books, 1994), 131.

57 Even if the fact that Stalin's iron grip had loosened and Krushtschev seemed more liberal played the major part.

58 Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead*, 131.

59 Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead*, 131.

and in the countryside. [60]

After having disappeared from the Soviet conscience for twenty years, the photo was reedited in 1965. Baltermant's career suddenly skyrocketed. The picture was renamed "Grief." It tried to convey a wholly different idea. No longer did its description focus explicitly on what the Germans did during the war. It was now a depiction of the abstract notion of "Evil" and not of a specific "evil" group anymore. It fostered the new national Soviet memory of the war and became one of its visual icons.

As Amir Weiner noted, it was also in 1965 that the regime set in motion a transition from living memory to a "determined attempt to develop a commemorative canon and sense of closure."[61] The 1960s were a time when progressively the last socially alien elements (the few remaining Kulaks, for instance) were released and rehabilitated:

Ethnic Germans deported en masse during the war received an official apology from the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, and, most notably, all limitations on foreign leaders and members of nationalist undergrounds, the last category to win rehabilitation (and among whom Ukrainian nationalists were the larger component), were removed.[62]

What did this mean for the Jews? Nothing. "No olive branch was extended to the Jewish community."[63] In fact, Soviet leaders found themselves satisfied with the new state of affairs. The Bolshevik epic, so they thought, ought to get rid of its association with the disliked Jewish minority. If Soviets saw the myth of the October Revolution as "Judaicized" beyond repair, then the new myth, the myth of the Great Patriotic War, decided the Soviet leadership, would not suffer the same fate.

As if the Soviet Jews' situation could not get worse, the Six-Day War began two years later. Anti-Zionism, and by extension anti-Semitism, reached a climax. Outrageous anti-Zionist propaganda circulated widely. It connected Zionism to fascism, anti-communism and racist ideologies. Some even argued that Zionism was but a Jewish variant of fascism. As one publication put it: "Many facts have convincingly demonstrated the fascist of the ideology and policies of Zionism. Fascism is disgusting in any of its guises. Its Zionist version is no better than the Hitlerite one."[64] In the mind of the Soviet reader, Zionism and thus Judaism were thereby linked to the greatest evil the Soviet Union had ever experienced: the fascist invasion. "By associating Zionism with Fascism and Nazism, it is transformed from an esoteric doctrine of a far off people to a hateful ideology tied to the most repugnant people of this century, who caused the loss of 20 million Soviet lives."[65]

This was the point when many Jews decided to leave the Soviet Union. The generational gap played an important role. Promises of the Soviet Union had little appeal to many younger Jews, as little, for that matter, as they had to other Soviet youths. Moreover, those young Jews were the children of veterans and survivors, and the latter had transmitted to them their disillusions. While their parents might have remained true believers and loved their country (right or wrong) against all odds, the children were alienated for good. Born after the war, they had never experienced anything else but hostility towards their ethnic group. This is why many chose to leave. Over the course of the 1970s, well over 1.2 million out of the two million Jews living in the USSR emigrated from the Soviet Union. Most of them went to Israel or to the United States after Congress unanimously passed the Jackson-Vanik amendment providing assistance to Soviet Jews who wished to leave the USSR.

Even during the Perestroika period, nothing really changed as far as Soviet-Jewish memory of the Second World War was concerned. Fewer and fewer Jews were left in the Soviet Union. Those who stayed tended to be uncritical of the regime, and desperately willing to melt into the masses and to live there as discretely as possible. It took the collapse of the USSR in 1991 to initiate the next big change in memory politics in Russia. To this day, however, Russian memory of the Holocaust has remained contradictory and still poses disturbing questions.

Conclusion: Holocaust memory in post Soviet Russia

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and in the wake of the 1990s "memory boom," acknowledging and commemorating the Holocaust came eventually to be accepted in Russia. The truth was out and accessible. What Russians made of the Holocaust memory remains, however, difficult to evaluate. Has the Holocaust memory in Russia changed that much?

Arguably, Russia has made remarkable efforts in trying to promote historical transparency about what happened in the occupied territories between 1941 and 1944. The Holocaust now has a place in public memory. To promote historical research and education, the Russian Holocaust Center was established in 1992. Not unlike its counterparts in Israel or the United States, the

60 David Shneer, "Picturing Grief: Soviet Holocaust Photography at the Intersection of History and Memory" in: *The American Historical Review* 115 (1) (2010), 35.

61 Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 233.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Kharkov: Nash otvet klevetnikam, quoted in: Zvi Gitelman, „Soviet Anti-Semitism and ist perception by Soviet Jews" in: *Antisemitism in the contemporary world*, Michael Curtis (editor) (Boulder : Westview Press, 1986), 196.

65 Zvi Gitelman, „Soviet Anti-Semitism and ist perception by Soviet Jews" in: *Antisemitism in the contemporary world*, Michael Curtis (editor) (Boulder : Westview Press, 1986), 196.

Holocaust foundation aims at Preserving the memory of Holocaust victims by creating museums and documentary exhibitions, including the subject in the curricula of schools and institutions of higher education, organizing commemorative events, erecting monuments, and gathering evidence and memoirs.[66]

On the other hand, traditional Soviet ways of regarding the Holocaust are still prevalent. In 2005 the Russian president was present at the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In the speech he gave that very day, however, President Putin did not mention the Jewish identity of the vast majority of Auschwitz-Birkenau victims once. He spoke at length of the tragic destiny of 600,000 Soviet soldiers who were killed while freeing Poland from the Nazis, and more generally of the 27 million Soviet war dead.[67] This was, in fact, an extraordinary feat of the Russian president, given that Auschwitz is nothing if not the epitome of Jewish suffering in World War Two. Putin did include Jews among the 27 million. But then, in very traditional Soviet fashion, he chose not to separate their tragic destinies from the larger Soviet suffering. This was not the only instance of the Soviet perspective on the Holocaust emerging again. Russian media, for instance, systematically subordinated the genocide of the Jews to the "culmination" of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war, that was yet to take place in Moscow in May of the same year.[68]

Even Russian monuments to the Holocaust still are secondary to the Great Patriotic War narrative. At Poklonnaya Gora ("Hill of Veneration"), the memorial "Park of Victory" near Moscow dedicated to the "Great Patriotic War", explicit references to Jewish victims are included in the complex. A synagogue was built there and it was the first Holocaust museum in Russia. The implications are contradictory. If the museum as such means that remembering the Holocaust was now accepted, building it in the park meant, at least symbolically, that this acceptance was only within the framework of the "Great Patriotic War". Jewish destiny was made relative. A Catholic church and a Mosque were constructed there as well. Russian authorities had a sculpture erected at the same site. It was initially named "The Tragedy of the Jewish People" and intended for Israel. It was never delivered. In Russia it was renamed and dedicated to the "Tragedy of Peoples." On the tablet, the Russian inscription "Let the memory of them be sacred, let it remain for centuries" is repeated in the language of each of the Nazi-occupied Eastern European countries. Thus the semantic scope of the sculpture has been expanded beyond remembrance of the Shoah to encompass all Eastern European victims of the War, especially, of course, among the Russian people. And while the above-mentioned scientific-educational center claimed to be "the first organization in the post-Soviet era aimed at preserving the memory of Holocaust victims", one finds that the "first textbook in Russia on the Holocaust" for teachers in 1995 still evinced Soviet tendencies. Collaboration by the local population with the Nazis is mentioned. Yet it does not feature as prominently as does the assistance provided to the Jews by the "Righteous Among The Nations", or the participation of Jews in the Red Army and in the partisan war.[69]

The Soviet victory in the Second World War remains one of the few events of Soviet history- if not the only one- that has retained positive connotations in collective memory of the former Soviet Union. This explains why, even if overall awareness about the Holocaust has increased in Russia, non-Jewish Russians still best remember it as a rather small detail in the bigger picture of the Great Patriotic War. Seventy years after the Liberation of the camp of Auschwitz by the Red Army, the Soviet trope on the (in)significance of the Holocaust is thus alive and well.

66 Website of the Russian Research and Educational center: http://en.holocf.ru (accessed 12.10. 2014)

67 Speech at the Memorial Ceremony Dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau on January 27th 2005 by Russian President Putin: http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/events/details/2005/01/27_83055.shtml (Accessed 15th of October 2014)

68 John Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (eds), *Bringing the dark past to light, The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 2013), 138.

69 Stefan Rohdewald, "Post-Soviet Remembrance of the Holocaust and National Memories of the Second World War in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania" in *: Forum for Modern Language Studies* (2008) 44 (2): pp.173-184.

Courtesy of the MacArthur Foundation

Interview with Tara Zahra

The Chicago Journal of History

Tara Zahra, a Professor of East European History and the College, won a MacArthur Fellowship in fall 2014. *The Chicago Journal of History* spoke with her recently about her work and experiences.

Chicago Journal of History (**CJH**): We wanted to start by asking why you chose to become a historian.

Tara Zahra (**TZ**): I've always liked history—I always liked historical novels and films as a kid—but I really only thought about becoming a professional historian when I was in college at Swarthmore and I had a really amazing professor there…. It's kind of an incredible testimony to how one person can change your life, because basically I'd never been to Europe before, I didn't know any languages, and he sort of convinced me to study the history of a state that doesn't exist anymore, which is the Habsburg Empire, and that's really how I got started. It's one of the reasons I care a lot about teaching, because I had that experience of the difference one person can make in your life. It still feels a little random to me that I work on the history of central and eastern Europe, because I don't have a personal connection to the region—I mean at this point I do, because I've spent many years working there and doing research there, but when I started out at least. I don't have family from Central Europe; I'd never been there. It's something that didn't happen organically in that sense. It was something that was really driven by the intellectual excitement.

CJH: Speaking of intellectual excitement, what does history and the practice of history mean to you?

TZ: It's really about imagination…. It's about empathy, being able to put yourself in another time and place that's foreign, radically different, and [trying] to understand it. I'm definitely motivated by contemporary political issues. The appeal of history from that perspective is that it shows us how things that are often portrayed as essential, biological, natural have in fact changed over time, and once you know that you can argue that things could change again in the future. It's a hopeful perspective. And I also just love looking at primary sources. I love doing research, I love the

craft of history. I find it exciting. Every box you open in an archive is filled with unexpected things, and I find that really interesting.

CJH: Historical research on twentieth-century Europe, at least it seems, has largely directed its focus to the west. What do you think is lost when we disregard Central and Eastern Europe and write it out of the narrative?

TZ: That's an interesting perspective. I think that, first of all, Europe is a huge continent, and too often people talk about Europe and really they're talking about Britain or France; it's really dangerous to create typologies based on single places and pretend they're universal. It [studying Central and Eastern Europe] helps us understand the diversity of experiences in Europe. I think including Eastern Europe in the story also helps us to realize how, especially in terms of twentieth-century history, just how fragile democracy is. It's very easy to imagine Western Europe as the cradle of democratic values, but in fact most of Europe was not a democracy for most of the century—and that includes large parts of Western Europe as well, if you think about Spain and Portugal. But I think writing about Europe from the perceived margins forces us to rethink the big narratives about things like democratization or modernization or politics or society, and that's one of the things I try to do in my work.

CJH: Your first book looked a lot at the experiences of children. How does studying children and the experiences of children bring to light phenomena that otherwise would not be so clearly seen?

TZ: I find the history of childhood and children fascinating as a window onto the history of society, because people in the twentieth century in particular project all of their anxieties about the future onto children. So by studying children, you can understand how a society thinks about the future, what it hopes for, what it fears. Not only that, it's a window onto politics from below…. You could study politics and political leaders and parties, and that's valuable too. But if you want to get at how ordinary people think about politics, childhood is a great way to do that, because almost everybody is engaged somehow, whether it's as a parent or having been a child themselves or a teacher or a community member. You think about the U.S. today, school board politics. It's intensely local and it engages people that might not otherwise appear in the historical record.

CJH: Continuing the theme of attention towards Eastern Europe, obviously this year is the centenary of World War One. It's attracted a lot of attention; there have been new scholarly works by people like Christopher Clark and Margaret MacMillan that are very serious historical works that have also become best-sellers. Do you think these discussions are paying enough attention to Eastern Europe?

TZ: The Clark book in particular—he made a real effort to take seriously the Balkan context in which the war broke out, and that's a general trend in a positive way. It's long been known that the Balkans were the starting point of the war, this place where three empires collided, but it's often not been taken very seriously. There has been more attention both to the East European origins of the war and then to the war on the Eastern Front, which was so radically different from the war on the Western Front: It was a war of movement and occupations rather than a war of stasis and trench warfare. I still think there's a lot more work to be done, and actually one of the projects I'm working on next is going to be a co-written book about Austria-Hungary that I'm going to be writing with my undergraduate adviser at Swarthmore who got me interested in this field. We're really excited about that, and we certainly think that there's more to be said about World War One from the perspective of Eastern and Central Europe. In part because if you take the perspective that the Habsburg Empire in particular wasn't doomed to collapse, which is one of the things that I would argue, World War One becomes even more important as the moment of breakdown, dissolution, and transformation and also as a point of new beginnings for the ideas that shaped the world after the war, so that's what we're interested in thinking about.

CJH: Christopher Clark in particular kind of makes that point too, but it seems like that hasn't gotten a lot of attention. You mentioned we kind of assume these things are fixed.

TZ: You're right. I don't think that's what gotten most attention. I think what's getting a lot of attention is a new focus on the culpability of Russia in starting the war. A lot of these books are still about the blame game. Also, MacMillan and Clark—they're both really interesting and worthwhile, excellent and serious books—but they're very focused on high diplomatic history, and they're both trying to make an argument that war wasn't inevitable by focusing on the decisions of elites who actually made the decision to go to war, which I think is a really valuable perspective. But one thing Pieter Judson and I are hoping to do in our book is bring it back—I mean, I'm really a social and cultural historian—so thinking more about the war from the perspective of everyday life, migration, food, social history, rather than only in terms of the people making the decisions to go to war or not.

CJH: Which historians have had the greatest impact on your work, and if there was one history book you could recommend to someone, what would it be?

TZ: Well, the historians who have had the greatest impact on my work would be my teachers, so Pieter Judson

at Swarthmore College. There's a historian of childhood named Laura Downes who teaches in France now. They're the people I worked with, and those I would say had the most direct influence. But in terms of what book I would most recommend...that's a great question and that's a hard question.

CJH: I wouldn't be able to answer that question.

TZ: It's difficult because there are so many great books and it would just depend on what you were interested in. Can I just recommend a book that I think is great?

CJH: Sure.

TZ: Dagmar Herzog's *Sex After Fascism*. It's a really wonderful book. It's not a recent book that I just read, it's just one I just taught today so it's on my mind. I think it's a book that almost anybody could learn a lot from.

CJH: How does it approach sexuality after fascism?

TZ: It's a book about Nazism and sex, first of all. But it's about how the memory of Nazism...it's about the way in which sex, it's about the real experience and how it's remembered, and how that memory has been shaped by changing politics.... It's so hard to pick, I don't think I have a single book that has most influenced me. But that's a book I've just been recently thinking about. And that I really like.

CJH: What advice would you give to undergrads who are considering graduate school in history?

TZ: Well, the first advice I would give is to be sure it's what you really want to do, because it's not the easiest path. I think it's an incredibly rewarding career, but there are lots of ways to put to use the skills you [have] as a history major in the world. I think it's very hard to make a transition from thinking like a student to thinking like a professional. What I would say is to start thinking about yourself already, as you do with the B.A. essay, as not just a consumer of history but a producer of history. And that's what we do as historians. You have this great opportunity with the B.A. essay to get a taste of what that's like. So I think taking an advantage of the opportunity to do research in archives is a great thing to do. Learn languages—learn as many languages as you can. Try to get a feel for if this is something you really love. You do have to really love it in order to make it worthwhile.

CJH: What do you see as the major struggles of history as an academic discipline today?

TZ: I think there's the question of relevance. This is not a new issue, but I think as historians we have to find new ways to engage the broader public and to demonstrate the relevance of history. Of course it is relevant for its own sake, but I think we live in a very presentist world, so drawing those connections is something I think is a challenge that is worth undertaking.... The humanities and the social sciences—and I would say the humanities in particular—are struggling everywhere for funding and for support because of this issue of, "Well, what's the point? What's the relevance?" That's something I think we as historians have to be conscious of. I think we have lots of good arguments to make and we have to make them.

CJH: Directly speaking to the question of relevance, what contributions do you see your work making to more modern discourses about rising right-wing nationalism in Europe, such as in the cases of Russia and Ukraine?

TZ: I'm not an expert in Russia or Ukraine at all, so I wouldn't want to speak directly to the conflict. What I would say is that to have a sense of how situational these conflicts are, and how situational nationalist politics are in general.... One of the main arguments of my work is that throughout history, people have been indifferent to nationalism. And I don't think anyone is indifferent in Russia and the Ukraine, but I think the point of that is not just to assume these conflicts are timeless, always the same and have always identified with these categories, but rather to think about the concrete circumstances under which those categories become meaningful politically. Why this moment? What's the context that evokes nationalist feeling? To challenge the idea that this is a primordial, eternal, inevitable conflict. Because that's very ahistorical thinking in my view.

CJH: More conceptually from there, obviously your research touches on not only nationalism, but also on human rights, migration, important contemporary issues. What do you think the role of historians in these kinds of debates is?

TZ: On some level it's partly just to remind people that we've been here before. Of course we haven't—every situation is new—but for example, my second book is about unaccompanied refugee children. Suddenly it's in the news today that tens of thousands of children are coming to America from Latin America alone. You would almost think from the way it's treated that this has never happened before. But it has. Not only that, but millions of pages have been produced in resolving this issue. So I think historians can have a role to play in reminding us where we've been before, how these problems have been approached in the past, and also in understanding how we got to where we are today. I think that's sort of banal on some level, but I think it's really true. Fundamentally we study history to understand where we are now. The only way to understand that is to understand where we've been

in the past. With issues like refugees and migration, that's particularly the case.

CJH: When you won the MacArthur Fellowship, you mentioned [in an interview] your goal to elevate the status of dance as an academic discipline at the University. Can you speak more to that, and how your skills as a historian, and a past dancer, might help in that endeavor?

TZ: I have never really had the chance to bring together these two passions of mine, and I've long been aware that the U of C is really behind in terms of dance as an academic discipline...there's this intrinsic distrust of anything that has to do with the body here: "It can't be intellectual, it has to do with the body!" I'm not quite sure what my role will be, but I've been trying to work with people whose research is on dance, and bring some of what I know about dance to the planning stages. I'm hoping to maybe eventually to teach a course on dance history, which I think would be really fun. But it's still a little unclear how that's all going to play out.

CJH: I recently read Jennifer Homans' *Apollo's Angels*; it's of the rare instances you can see an academic treatment of ballet.

TZ: I think it was really helpful that that was written by a dancer, as she had this kinetic knowledge that could describe the movements in a way that made sense to a dancer and also give historical context.

CJH: You're working on twentieth-century immigration now from Eastern Europe to the West...are you trying to build on your earlier work moving forward?

TZ: This new project for me is a departure in many ways. It's not about children, first of all, and also has a huge timespan. I'm starting in the late 1880s and going to the present in this book. I've never written about the socialist period before. The geographic scope of the book is huge. It's a different scale of a book and a very different topic. It does build on my earlier work in a couple of ways. I've long been interested in thinking about the history of Eastern Europe in relationship to Western Europe, and in relationship to the rest of the world. That issue is at the center of this book, which fundamentally argues that debates about immigration in Eastern Europe were essentially about anxieties about Eastern Europe's place in the world in the era of empire and imperial expansion, and so on. So it continues that strand of my research. It also is linked to my long-standing interest in nationalism and national indifference in that I'm trying to write a history of migration that unlike most histories of migration isn't organized around national categories, so it very much is not a history of "Poles in Chicago" or "Czechs in New York." It's a history of movement out of a region and what that means for changing ideas about freedom and mobility. I'm trying to think of new ways to think about migration that don't inherently privilege nationalism and ethnicity as the primary movers or categories.

CJH: So even though you aren't interested in "Poles in Chicago," is your interest in these issues partly driven by being here in Chicago?

TZ: It's been incredibly fun and exciting for me to be able to do research locally. I've used the archives at the Reg, there's the archives of Czechs and Slovaks abroad there, I've used archives at the Chicago History Museum on Poles in Chicago. These archives and resources are incredibly rich, and I feel like I understand something more about the place that I live in, which is really wonderful.