

---

# THE ALEXANDRIAN

Troy University Department of History  
& Phi Alpha Theta-Iota Mu

---

*In Remembrance of Professor Nathan Alexander*

## **Editors**

Lauren Post

Karen Ross

## **Student Assistant Editors**

Sinclair Portis

Draven Jackson

## **Faculty Associate Editors**

Margaret Gnoinska

Marty Olliff

Dan Puckett

Kathryn Tucker

Jay Valentine

## **Selection Board**

Scout Blum

Timothy Buckner

David Carlson

Margaret Gnoinska

Aaron Hagler

Adam Hoose

Robert Kruckeberg

Joungbin Lim

Scott Merriman

Marty Olliff

Robin O'Sullivan

Luke Ritter

Jay Valentine

## *Alexandrian* Submission Guidelines

---

*The Alexandrian* accepts manuscripts pertaining to the subjects of history and philosophy. Accepted forms include book reviews, historiographic essays, and full-length articles.

**Format:** All submissions should be in Microsoft Word. They should adhere to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please include footnotes instead of endnotes and refrain from using headers.

**Abstract:** Any article submission must include an abstract of no more than 200 words. This is not necessary for submissions of book reviews or essays.

**Author biography:** A short biography of any relevant information should be included for the contributors' page of the journal. Such information includes your major and class designation, graduation date, research interests, plans after college, hometown, any academic honors or affiliations you deem relevant, etc. Author biographies should be no more than 100 words. Please be sure your name is written as you would like it to appear in the journal.

Please send all submissions to Dr. Karen Ross at [kdross@troy.edu](mailto:kdross@troy.edu).

**Cover Art:** Our cover art, Portrait of Linda Brown, was created by Taylor Metcalf, a graphic design major at Troy University. Taylor is a junior from Panama City Beach, Florida. Linda Brown (1943-2018) was the Kansas schoolchild at the heart of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that signaled the end of racial segregation in public schools.

# THE ALEXANDRIAN

---

## Table of Contents

Contributors' Biographies.....	4
Articles	
The Conflict between Medical Science, Public Health, and the Antivaccination Movement in Nineteenth Century England, Abena Adaboh.....	7
Black Educators after <i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> , Christopher E. Anderson.....	26
The Atlanta Jewish Committee: Collaboration in the Face of Difference, Leilani Harris.....	42
Navigating Intellectual and Traditional Crossroads: Plotinus, Sethian Gnostics, and Early Trinitarians, Benjamin Hatfield.....	70
Not Fake News: <i>The New York Times</i> and Senator Joseph McCarthy, Ansley Markwell.....	83
An Organized Inequity, Lauren Post.....	96
The Nuclear Bomb and American Culture: A Historiographical Essay, Nicholas Prenzler.....	109
Among the Steppes: A Societal Study of the Soviet Past in Kyrgyzstan, Whitney Spake .....	121
Division News .....	153
Gratitude .....	155
Professor Nathan Alexander Remembered .....	156
Phi Alpha Theta Inductees .....	157

## **Contributors' Biographies**

---

### **Abena Adaboh**

Abena Adaboh is a senior Troy University with a major in Biomedical Science and a minor in Philosophy. She is from Ghana but completed her high school education in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Abena is a member of Alpha Epsilon Delta, former Vice President of Beta Beta Beta, former President of the Troy University Women's Initiative, and former treasurer of the Troy African Students Association. She hopes to attend medical school sometime after graduating.

### **Christopher E. Anderson**

Christopher E. Anderson is a senior at Troy University graduating in the fall of 2018. He is from Dothan, Alabama where he attended Dothan High School. He also graduated summa cum laude from Wallace Community College. At Troy University, Christopher is majoring in American History with a minor in Political Science. He is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, Student Government Association, NAACP, and Troy University's Pendulum Performing Arts Society. Upon graduation, Chris plans to take a year off from school and teach history before pursuing a Master's Degree in History with a concentration in intellectual history and historical consciousness through literature.

### **Leilani Harris**

Leilani Harris graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Troy University in 2008. Upon graduation, she received her commission in the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant. Leilani is a 14-year veteran now working on her master's degree in European History. Upon graduation, she intends to work towards her doctorate with a concentration on World War II and Holocaust history. She is currently a member of the Alabama Association of Historians, the Alabama Historical Association, and the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Leilani would like to be a professor when she has completed all of her schooling.

## **Benjamin Hatfield**

Benjamin Hatfield is pursuing a major in Anthropology with a minor in Philosophy and Religions. He is from Lacey's Spring, Alabama, and attended A.P. Brewer High School. He is a member of Troy University's Archaeology Club and has participated in cultural resource management projects with the Troy University Archaeological Research Center. After graduation, Benjamin plans on pursuing a graduate degree in anthropology, focusing on archaeology of the Old World.

## **Ansley Markwell**

Ansley Markwell is a 2017 magna cum laude graduate of Troy University earning a double bachelor's in History and Human Services with a minor in English. She is a former editor of *The Alexandrian* and was previously published in the Phi Alpha Theta special issue (no. 2) in 2017. Ansley served Troy's history department as the vice president of the History Club (2016-2017) and as the vice president of Troy's Phi Alpha Theta chapter (2016-2017). Ansley currently works at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama, as the Residence Director of Ligon Hall and the Student Affairs Program Assistant. In the next year, Ansley plans to begin earning a Master's degree in history as she furthers her education in pursuit of her goal of becoming a history professor.

## **Lauren Post**

Lauren Post is a junior at Troy University in English Literature with a minor in History. She is from Troy, Alabama, where she graduated from Charles Henderson High School with honors. At Troy, she holds memberships in Phi Alpha Theta, Sigma Tau Delta, and Troy's History Club, is a staff writer for the *Tropolitan* newspaper, and is co-editor of *The Alexandrian*. During her sophomore and junior years, she worked under Nancy Dupree at The Alabama Department of Archives and History. After graduating, she plans on continuing her studies in English, obtaining master's degrees in both English and Library Science.

### **Nicholas Prenzler**

Nicholas Prenzler is a graduate student at Troy University majoring in American History and minoring in European History. He graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Government in 2016. He also completed the Business Foundations Program at the McCombs School of Business at UT-Austin. Nicholas interned in both the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives, where he conducted research for a member of the House Public Health Committee. After graduation, Nicholas plans to teach history at the college level.

### **Whitney Spake**

Whitney Spake graduated from Troy University in December 2017 with her degree in History and a minor in Classics. While at Troy University, Whitney was a member of Phi Alpha Theta, Scholarship Chair of Alpha Delta Pi, and Vice President of Eta Sigma Phi. During her time at Troy, Whitney also presented at the Phi Alpha Theta National Conference (2018), the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference (2017), and the Troy University Student Research Conference (2017). She is currently taking an Armenian language course and will move to Armenia as a Peace Corps TEFL volunteer in March 2018.

---

## The Conflict Between Medical Science, Public Health, and the Antivaccination Movement in Nineteenth Century England

Abena Adaboh

**Abstract:** “The Conflict between Medical Science, Public Health and the Antivaccination Movement in Nineteenth Century England” examines the evolution of medical opposition to vaccination from the discovery of the vaccine in the late 18th century until the end of the 19th century. It analyzes how the nature of the vaccine debate was influenced by laws that mandated the vaccination of infants. This paper argues that many of the anti-vaccine claims were engendered by the lack of understanding of disease causality and immunity and a misinterpretation of statistical data. Some antivaccinationists arguments were groundless while others were legitimate concerns based on sound observations. It was only after several improvements to the system of vaccination and the development of the germ theory that anti-vaccine claims could be completely refuted.

In 1840, the British Parliament passed the first of a series of Acts that made smallpox vaccination mandatory and led to the rise of an anti-vaccination movement. Leicester was a strong hold of anti-vaccinationists during the Victorian era. In 1883, only 1,732 out of 4,819 infants had been vaccinated in the city.<sup>1</sup> This willful neglect by the parents of the unvaccinated infants caused the local courts to issue more than 6,000 summons, sixty-four imprisonments and about £2,500 in fines and led to the loss of 200 homes (sold to cover arrears).<sup>2</sup> On March 23, 1885, anti-vaccinationists held a large demonstration in Leicester that attracted thousands of people from across the country.<sup>3</sup> They protested the compulsion of the Acts, which they felt invaded their personal liberties and the stringency of the punishments incurred by violators.<sup>4</sup> Both young and old repeated slogans and held banners that included phrases such as “entire repeal not compromise,”

---

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Biggs, *Leicester: sanitation versus vaccination: its vital statistics compared with those of other towns, the army, navy, Japan and England and Wales* (London: The National Anti-Vaccination League, 1912), 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

“better a felon’s cell than a poisoned babe” and “sanitation not vaccination.”<sup>5</sup> In excerpts from the periodical, *Vaccination Inquirer*, the following description was given of the scene:

From half the counties of England, from scores of towns and cities, men of all professions, of all trades, bound in close bonds of sympathy not by tens and twenties, but by hundreds and thousands met...A procession...of ‘law-breakers,’ without a single policeman in ranks to keep order; and at the end of the day not the rumour of a child knocked down or a pocket-handkerchief lost!<sup>6</sup>

Guardians, enforcers of the parliamentary Acts, elected in Leicester following the protests in 1886 were overwhelmingly against compulsory vaccination.<sup>7</sup> The guardians struggled with the local government without progress until 1889, when mounting pressure from anti-vaccinationists all over the country led to the formation of a royal commission to evaluate the vaccination Acts.<sup>8</sup> The smallpox anti-vaccination movement exemplified by the Leicester demonstration was a struggle against a radical paradigm shift in scientific thought that changed the practice of medicine and revolutionized public health. As the movement would reveal, it took more than just facts to bend the human will or change centuries-old convictions.

### Overview of Smallpox

Two strains of the variola virus cause smallpox in humans: variola major and variola minor. Both are highly contagious, but variola minor has a mortality rate of less than one percent while the more prevalent variola major has a mortality rate of thirty percent.<sup>9</sup> The disease has an incubation period of ten to twelve days and is transmitted between people via airborne droplets.<sup>10</sup> Smallpox causes flu like symptoms in the first two to three days

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 111

<sup>7</sup> Dale L. Ross, "Leicester and The Anti-Vaccination Movement 1853 – 1889," *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 43 (1968): 35-44.

<sup>8</sup> Ross, 41.

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization, "Smallpox," September 21, 2007,

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/smallpox/en/> (accessed November 19, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Institute of Medicine (US) Board on Health Promotion and Disease, *Scientific Background on Smallpox and Smallpox Vaccination*, In *Scientific and Policy Considerations in Developing*

of illness, followed by a red rash, papules, vesicles and then finally pustules.<sup>11</sup>

Inoculation was one of the earliest effective methods of combating smallpox. The practice can be traced back some 1,000 years to China. As part of their normal practice, Chinese healers blew powdered smallpox scabs into the nostrils of the healthy to activate immunity.<sup>12</sup> By the 1700s, variants of the practice of inoculation (also known as variolation) had spread or developed independently throughout Eurasia. Smallpox survivor, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, formally introduced the British people to inoculation after learning of it in Turkey.<sup>13</sup> The practice eventually gained widespread repute when the two daughters of the Princess of Wales were variolated, and it was officially endorsed by the Royal Society in 1727.<sup>14</sup>

### Edward Jenner and the Cowpox Vaccine

Despite the growing popularity of smallpox inoculation in Europe, the disease was still highly prevalent in many areas. By the late eighteenth century, smallpox killed an average of 400,000 Europeans annually out of a population of less than 200 million.<sup>15</sup> The disease was also responsible for a third of all cases of blindness in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe.<sup>16</sup> Much needed relief came with the introduction of the vaccine.

Edward Jenner, a country physician from Gloucestershire, is credited with the discovery of the smallpox vaccine.<sup>17</sup> It was well known that milkmaids who suffered from cowpox (very closely related to smallpox), a mild

---

*Smallpox Vaccination Options: A Workshop Report* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Science Museum: Brought to Life, "Exploring the History of Medicine, Smallpox: inoculation and vaccination," <http://broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/themes/diseases/smallpox> (accessed November 19, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Stefan Riedel, "Edward Jenner and the history of smallpox and vaccination." *Proceedings* (Baylor University Medical Center) 18, no. 1 (2005): 21-25.

<sup>14</sup> Abbas M. Behbehani, "The Smallpox Story: Life and Death of an Old Disease," *Microbiological Review* 47, no. 4 (December 1983): 455-509.

<sup>15</sup> J. N. Hays, *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (ABC-CLIO, 2005), 151.

<sup>16</sup> World Health Organization, "Smallpox", September 21, 2007

<sup>17</sup> There is some evidence of cowpox inoculations prior to Jenner's discovery. See: Behbehani, 468

disease that affected the teats of cows did not contract smallpox. On May 14, 1796, Jenner tested this observation by inoculating eight-year-old James Phipps with matter from cowpox lesions from the hands of a dairy maid. After James recovered, Jenner tried and failed repeatedly to infect him with smallpox. Jenner concluded that the *Variolae vaccinae* (cowpox) imparted permanent immunity to the boy. Unlike inoculation, which involved using actual smallpox virus (attenuated to varying degrees) and still held a risk (1 to 2%) of transmitting smallpox, vaccination using cowpox held no risk of causing smallpox.<sup>18</sup> In 1798, Jenner published his first book describing his study of cowpox: *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae, a Disease Discovered in Some of the Western Counties of England Particularly Gloucestershire, and Known by the Name of "Cowpox."*<sup>19</sup> Subsequent tests by noted members of the medical community including the surgeon and lecturer Henry Cline (1750-1827) provided the positive publicity that led to the increase in vaccination throughout England and the rest of Europe.<sup>20</sup> For his work, the British Parliament compensated Edward Jenner twice—£10,000 in 1802 and £20,000 in 1807.<sup>21</sup>

With the support of many well-established physicians and the patronage of the royal family, the Royal Jennerian Society was established in 1803 to promote smallpox eradication.<sup>22</sup> The Society's first publication, in addition to detailing the instructions for properly administering the cowpox vaccine, distinguished between the formation and progression of a healthy vesicle—the sign of vaccine inoculation success—and a "spurious vesicle."<sup>23</sup> The publication directed vaccinators to transfer matter from a cowpox vesicle, taken prior to the complete development of the areola of one patient (inflamed or reddened region surrounding vesicle), into a superficial puncture in the arm of the second patient using

---

<sup>18</sup> Riedel, 21-25.

<sup>19</sup> Behbehani, 471.

<sup>20</sup> Riedel, 21-25. Cline was later elected as the head of the Royal College of Surgeons.

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

<sup>22</sup> Royal Jennerian Society, *Address of the Royal Jennerian Society, for the extermination of the small-pox. With the plan, regulations, and instructions for vaccine inoculation. To which is added, a list of the subscribers*, (London: W. Phillips, George Yard, 1803), 26.

<sup>23</sup> Royal Jennerian Society, 39-41.

a lancet (or thread or any reasonable tool) to confer immunity.<sup>24</sup> If practitioners allowed the vaccine matter to lose potency through exposure to harsh environmental conditions or were inept at administering the material to a patient, spurious vesicles would form which would not provide immunity.<sup>25</sup> Despite the official support of the cowpox vaccine, some practitioners remained unconvinced of its benefits.

### Opposition to Jenner's Vaccine

The earliest opponents of vaccination were overwhelmingly comprised of Jenner's own medical colleagues, and they promulgated arguments that ranged from the scientifically complex and somewhat logical to very base personal attacks on Dr. Jenner. These men were legitimate practitioners who became well-known within the public sphere for writing extensively against vaccination. Most notorious of Jenner's early challengers were Drs. Benjamin Moseley, John Birch, and John Stuart. Dr. Benjamin Moseley (1742-1819), a member of the Royal College of Physicians, argued that cowpox inoculation was an unjustifiable attempt to displace the superior system of smallpox inoculation and would cause a person to develop bovine traits.<sup>26</sup> He summarized some of his wild unsubstantiated speculations:

The subject, respecting the distempers of the brute creation, of which we know but little has not been overlooked by the learned and curious; nor is history destitute of many influences of their fatal effects to the human race. Can any person say what may be the consequences of introducing the Lues Bovilla, a bestial humour—into the human frame, after a long lapse of years? Who knows, besides, what ideas may rise, in the course of time, from a brutal fever having excited its incongruous impressions on the brain? Who knows, also, but that the human character may undergo strange mutations from quadrupedan sympathy; and that some modern Pasiphæe may rival the fables of old?<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Royal Jennerian Society, 41.

<sup>25</sup> Royal Jennerian Society, 42.

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin Moseley, *A treatise on sugar: with miscellaneous medical observations* (London: John Nichols, 1800) 182-183.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

Mosely fueled existing fears of the “transformative effects” of contaminating the body with animal diseases. Another opponent, Dr. John Birch (1745-1815) was the “surgeon extraordinary to the Prince of Wales and Surgeon to St. Thomas Hospital,” and he published many tracts, books, letters and pamphlets (often anonymously) that undermined the practice of vaccination in favor of smallpox inoculation.<sup>28</sup> His endeavor to “pursue truth”—or as many countered, to protect his profitable smallpox inoculation practice—led him to “uncover” many purported vaccination failures, particularly in the town of Ringwood. He claimed many things: that sixty-two people died from smallpox in Ringwood, that there were at least 150 confessed failures, that fewer than three people had died of smallpox inoculation in over fifty years, that Jacobine instructions were being communicated under the guise of vaccination instructions, that the vaccine was dangerous and caused ulcers, and that cowpox was unrelated to smallpox and caused novel eruptions.<sup>29</sup> In response to these alleged failures, a medical deputation from the Jennerian society went to Ringwood to investigate the issue.<sup>30</sup> They found no instances where smallpox took place after vaccination had been rightly completed.<sup>31</sup>

Dr. Stuart (1745-1814) entitled his magnum opus *£30,000 for the Cow-pox!!! An Address (to Ld. H.P., and) to the British Parliament, on Vaccination; (of the Greatest Importance to Mankind) Wherein the Report of the College of Physicians is Completely Confuted*. His book was a rebuttal to the many arguments offered by pro-vaccinationists and a grievance of the loss of £30,000 to Jenner, a person he believed to be a charlatan.<sup>32</sup> He claimed his own son was a cowpox martyr. According to the doctor who vaccinated Stuart’s 22-day-old infant, Stuart oversaw his child’s health after he was vaccinated and “employed mercury to the child,

---

<sup>28</sup> John Birch, *Serious reasons for uniformly objecting to the practice of vaccination: in answer to the report of the Jennerian Society* (London: J. Smeeton, 1806).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; The Jacobin Club or Jacobins was a militant political group that formed during the French Revolution.

<sup>30</sup> William Blair, *Hints for the Consideration of Parliament* (London: J. Callow, 1808), 200.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>32</sup> Smyth Ferdinand Stuart, *£30,000 for the cow-pox!!! An address (to Ld. H.P., and) to the British Parliament, on vaccination; (of the greatest importance to mankind) wherein the report of the College of Physicians is completely confuted*, (London: Hatchard, 1807).

both inwardly and outwardly.”<sup>33</sup> It was highly unlikely that the child died from cowpox, but, nonetheless, Stuart publicized his death as a smallpox casualty. He also offered this tragic example:

Two healthy children of Mr. Sparks, a shoe-maker, in Billericay, Essex, were inoculated with Cow-Pox, by one of the most distinguished and skillful practitioners in that town, in the year 1804: they both broke out in shocking eruptions, with blotches, ulcers, &c. which resisted every remedy; and after nearly twelve months of dreadful suffering, both died, wretched and miserable victims to the Cow-Pox, about eighteen months ago.—This fact is well known in Billericay, and I pledge myself for the truth of it. These were the only children of Mr. and Mrs. Sparks, both the parents young and healthy, who, as well as their children, are dead, and the whole family thus become extinct.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Thomas Brown (1778-1820), an Edinburgh surgeon, tried to dismantle the practice of vaccination and diminish its public support by offering more sophisticated arguments than some of his colleagues. He asserted that there was no consensus among scientists concerning the standards of vaccination, the nature of cowpox and its effects on smallpox, the appearance of the healthy vesicle or even the transferability of diseases between humans and animals.<sup>35</sup> According to Brown, the number of cowpox inoculation successes did not exceed the number of failures and were greatly exaggerated. Also, there were “so few well-authenticated instances of permanent security being afforded, as not perhaps to exceed a hundred.” He was particularly offended by the fact that vaccination was practiced by lay people “even into the hand of clergymen and females”.<sup>36</sup>

The reasons for rejecting the practice of vaccination postulated by Birch, Stuart, and Brown, all prominent smallpox inoculationists, are simply a cursory overview of the arguments that circulated after Jenner’s discovery.

---

<sup>33</sup> Stuart, 15.

<sup>34</sup> Stuart, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Brown, *An inquiry into the antivariolous power of vaccination: in which, from the state of the phenomena, and the occurrence of a great variety of cases, the most serious doubts are suggested of the efficacy of the whole practice, and its powers at best proved* (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Co., 1807).

<sup>36</sup> Brown, 74.

While a few opponents like Brown pointed out some legitimate problems that needed to be addressed within the system of vaccination, most, like Birch and Stuart who profited from smallpox inoculations, employed pseudoscience and misconstrued statistics to foment mass hysteria, fear of the Variolae vaccinae and public distrust of the medical profession. Caught in this battle between doctors and not knowing what to believe, the public balked and vaccination rates decreased.

To settle the debate and restore confidence in vaccination, the Royal Jennerian Society and the House of Commons launched investigations of their own. In 1805, a committee consisting of twenty-five members of the Royal Jennerian Society was assembled to look into the cases involving alleged vaccine failures.<sup>37</sup> The committee affirmed the efficacy of vaccination after scrupulously investigating every opinion and assertion against the Variolae vaccinae. To further allay any remaining doubts and accusations of biased reporting, the House of Commons commissioned a neutral body, the Royal College of Physicians, to inquire into the state of cowpox inoculation in 1806.<sup>38</sup> After a nine-month probe, the College of Physicians released its report: the cowpox vaccine was safe and was guaranteed to work if the correct vaccination procedure was carefully followed by a skilled individual.<sup>39</sup> This report temporarily quelled the debate and brought nearly unanimous support for vaccination within the medical community. Unprecedented developments in public health in the following decades, principally with the introduction of legislation mandating vaccination and broad sanitation reforms, would reignite the vaccine debate once more.

### Smallpox Acts and Public Health

Compulsory vaccination Acts were passed in response to smallpox outbreaks and increases in smallpox mortality. Between 1837 and 1840, a smallpox epidemic killed 41,253 people in England, making it one of the

---

<sup>37</sup> John Simon, *Papers relating to the history and practice of vaccination*, (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1857), 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

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

worst episodes of the disease in British history.<sup>40</sup> Around this period, physicians still practiced smallpox variolation alongside vaccination at great risk to the public. To prevent future attacks of smallpox, Parliament passed an Act in 1840 that made all forms of variolation illegal and allowed for free vaccination of the poor at public expense.<sup>41</sup> Also in 1837, the General Register Office began civil registrations and took over recording such things as births, deaths and marriages—a task formerly performed by the parish registers.<sup>42</sup> The advent of civil registrations was vital in the advancement of infectious disease epidemiology because statistical data on mortality rates for different diseases could be accurately recorded and compared. In the case of smallpox, the annual death rate in England and Wales was revealed to have decreased from 770 out of a million from 1838 to 1840 to 304 out of a million from 1841 to 1853; however, infants were still disproportionately killed by the disease due to low vaccination rates.<sup>43</sup> From 1848 to 1852, only thirty-five percent of newborns were vaccinated annually.<sup>44</sup> Parliament intervened again and passed a new more efficacious Act in 1853 that made it mandatory for all infants to be vaccinated within their first three months of life; violating parents were fined.<sup>45</sup> The Act soon lost its impact and vaccination rates quickly plummeted because it required nothing more than a single fine or a short prison sentence from the parents.

In 1848, John Simon (1816-1904), a renowned surgeon and member of the Royal College of Physicians, was made Medical Officer of Health for London, and he began the behemoth task of mending the broken system

---

<sup>40</sup> Charles Creighton, *A History of Epidemics in Britain, Volume 2*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1894).

<sup>41</sup> George Grieson, Grieson, *An Act of Parliament to Extend the Practice of Vaccination*, (Dublin, July 23, 1840).

<sup>42</sup> Simon, 44-45; No general death registrations existed outside of London before 1838. Even in London, The Bill of Mortality supplied by the parish registrar only took account of the burials with the parochial Church of England not the total deaths.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>45</sup> John Lithiby, *Shaws' manual of the vaccination law: containing the Vaccination Acts, 1867, 1871, 1874, 1898 & 1907; the Vaccination Orders, 1898, 1899, 1905 & 1907 and the instructional circulars and memoranda issued by the Local Government Board with introduction*, (London: Shaw & Sons, 1908), 4.

of vaccination.<sup>46</sup> He started by extensively and honestly evaluating its structure and operations. He found that vaccination procedures and the quality of the inoculated lymph were inadequately supervised under the existing system controlled by the Poor Law Board.<sup>47</sup> The practitioners—“clergy, amateurs, druggists, old women, midwives,” basically anyone with a lancet—were often incompetent.<sup>48</sup> He had the following recommendations enacted: (1) “the special qualification of public vaccinators [set up training stations in medical schools and hospitals],” (2) “systematic medical supervision of the results of public vaccination,” (3) “thorough medical inquiry whenever cause of complaint is alleged or suspected,” (4) “the regulation of details of the service on a uniform plan under the advice of members of the medical profession specially skilled in the subject,” and (5) more regulation on the lymph supply.<sup>49</sup> Legislators rewrote the 1853 Act in 1867 to include compulsory vaccination for all children fourteen and younger and allowed the Board of Guardians to appoint special officers to oversee the vaccinations.<sup>50</sup> Under this new law, defaulters could be continuously fined and convicted and jailed.<sup>51</sup> The Act also provided practitioners with financial incentives per child vaccinated.<sup>52</sup> Following the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871) three years later, a massive influx of French refugees into England and Wales led to another smallpox epidemic that caused the deaths of 42,084 people.<sup>53</sup> After the epidemic, punishments that were formerly laxly administered were strictly carried out.

Recognizing that the system of vaccination was not functioning properly, John Simon introduced new revisions that would address the concerns of the public and the medical community. Despite his efforts, die-hard antivaccinationists still refused to vaccinate their children. Stronger

---

<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, “The Politics of Prevention: Anti-Vaccinationism and Public Health in Nineteenth-Century England.” *Medical History* 32, no. 3 (1988): 231-252.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Simon, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Simon, 76; Porter and Porter, 231-252.

<sup>50</sup> Lithiby, 6. The Board of Guardians: administrators of the poor law from 1835 – 1930. The Poor Law Act was passed by Parliament in 1834 to lessen the financial burden of the poor on the state.

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

<sup>52</sup> Porter and Porter, 231-252.

<sup>53</sup> Creighton, 615.

parliamentary laws were necessary to force these parents to conform, and the vaccination Acts were rewritten to have more teeth—summary convictions and continuous fines. With each epidemic, it became clear that there could be no exemptions where public safety was concerned; the unvaccinated children would host and perpetuate the spread of smallpox. The stricter laws unfortunately strengthened antagonism toward vaccination. People continued to believe that science refuted the legitimacy of the immunity provided by the *Variolae vaccinae*, so they refused to obey the Acts.

### Anti-Vaccination Movement vs. Public Health

The introduction of the mandatory smallpox Acts evoked an eruption of opposition that rivalled the Cambrian explosion in terms of the heterogeneity of ideas. While before, the strongest dissent came from a sect of medical professionals who were essentially driven by the same underlying motives, the outcry after the first of the Acts was issued was from intellectuals from a wide variety of fields as well as from working class citizens. The attacks were no longer just directed at Edward Jenner or any one scientist, but also at Parliament and other governmental institutions.

Dissenters formed anti-vaccination organizations and societies to give the front of strength, foster ideas, share support and resources, as well as proselytize and lobby for the repeal of compulsory vaccination. In 1896, the National Anti-Vaccination League (NAVL) was formed from the combination of the Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League founded by Richard Gibbs in 1867, the National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League founded in 1874 by Reverend and Madam Hume-Hume Rothery, the London Society for the Abolition of Compulsory Vaccination founded in 1880 by William Tebb, and many other provincial organizations.<sup>54</sup> Tracts and pamphlets abounded that allowed messages to be disseminated far and wide at unprecedented rates. William Tebb (1830–1917), a British

---

<sup>54</sup> Porter and Porter, 231-252.

merchant and social activist began the *Vaccination Inquirer* in 1879, which eventually became the official publication of the NAVL.<sup>55</sup>

The opposition arguments after the formal organization of the anti-vaccination movement could be categorized into two main groups: scientific or statistical and ethical or moral. The delineation between the two categories was often blurred. Those who rejected vaccination on ethical grounds often used medical science and epidemiological data to back their positions. As the movement developed, parallel advances in microbiology based on the works of men like John Snow, Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch led to the establishment of the causal relation between germs and disease. This discovery explained how humans contracted smallpox and gave a little insight into immunity. However, the germ theory was rejected by the majority of anti-vaccine physicians in favor of alternate ideas such as the filth theory, the miasmatic theory or the zymotic theory of disease. Many anti-vaccine scientists made sound observations about the issues with the practice of vaccination, but because their theories of disease were false or inadequate, they were forced to reject the entire system rather make corrections that would make vaccinations safer.

The main arguments pushed by anti-vaccine medical scientists were that the vaccine was either useless, injurious or both. Charles Creighton (1847-1927), physician and pioneering epidemiologist, was a man of great renown in the NAVL. His work was often cited by anti-vaccinationists to add scientific clout to their writings.<sup>56</sup> Charles Creighton advanced the theory that the cowpox was not well understood and could convey syphilis.<sup>57</sup> He echoed the confusion that existed about the nature of the cowpox since Jenner's time. It was unclear to medical scientists if it was an equine disease (horsepox) that infected cows or just a form of the human smallpox in cows. Its effect on the human immune system was also not well understood. In some people, the immunity conferred by the vaccine seemed to get impaired after twelve to fourteen years, when

---

<sup>55</sup> Porter and porter, 231-252.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Charles Creighton, *The natural history of cow-pox and vaccinal syphilis*. (London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1887).

according to Jenner, the cowpox was supposed to impart the same lifelong immunity that inoculation or a natural infection with the smallpox afforded.<sup>58</sup> Since the immune response occasionally deviated from the norm, anti-vaccinationists were able to argue that the viruses were unrelated.<sup>59</sup> While physicians who supported vaccination encouraged revaccination, opponents decried the entire practice as worthless.

The idea of the lymph transmitting syphilis and other infectious diseases (including smallpox) was also not unfounded. In 1859, a British medical officer in Manchester, Dr. James Whitehead, published a report that revealed that in one year, a taint was communicated in 34 out of 1,435 vaccinations.<sup>60</sup> All thirty-four cases exhibited evidence of constitutional syphilis or a disease of syphilitic character.<sup>61</sup> Dr. Charles T. Pearce (1815-1883), a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a prominent homeopath also presented evidence that linked vaccination to a higher risk of contracting and dying from chest diseases such as tuberculosis, convulsions and measles.<sup>62</sup> To deal with such problems of cross infections, an 1898 smallpox Act replaced arm-to-arm vaccination, which had the potential of transmitting infectious diseases from person to person, with glycerinated calf lymph.<sup>63</sup>

Even when the vaccine was effective, there was fear among some vaccine oppositionists that it would stymie the natural process of putrefaction brought on by the smallpox fever that riddled the body of poisons. Furthermore, it would not really decrease general mortality, rather it would interfere with a natural equilibrium that would lead to an increase in deaths from other diseases.<sup>64</sup> This radical view promoted by physicians like Pearce saw diseases as having “certain periods, according to the occult and

---

<sup>58</sup> Charles T. Pearce, *Vaccination: its tested effects on health, mortality, and population* (London: Bailliere Brothers, 1868), 37.

<sup>59</sup> Pearce, 44.

<sup>60</sup> James Whitehead, “Third report of the Clinical Hospital, Manchester: containing results on physical development, whooping cough, and transmitted diseases.” (London: John Churchill, 1859).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>62</sup> Pearce, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Lithiby, 45.

<sup>64</sup> Pearce, 98.

unaccountable alterations which happen in the bowels of the earth.”<sup>65</sup> Smallpox from this perspective was an unavoidable, necessary evil.

Both vaccinationists and anti-vaccinationists used statistical analysis to bolster their arguments. Anti-vaccine physicians claimed that other side hyperbolized both the impact of smallpox—especially during periods when diseases like Scarlet fever or tuberculosis claimed more lives—and the rates of death among the unvaccinated.<sup>66</sup> Data on mortality rate was crucial in mounting credible attacks against the efficacy of the vaccine (Table 1).

Decades.	Estimated Mean Population	Small-pox Deaths.
1851-60	2,570,489	7,150
1861-70	3,018,193	8,34.7
1871-80	3,486,486	15,551

Table 1. Smallpox mortality in London. Adapted from Tebb (1881)

Based on the data above, for instance, prominent anti-vaccinationists like Sir Alfred Russell Wallace and William Tebb assumed that the 1867 Act (with its cumulative punishments) had increased vaccination rates, and they correlated an increase in vaccination coverage with an increase in deaths from smallpox.<sup>67</sup> However, statistical evidence was rarely conclusive without context. The eighty percent increase in the smallpox mortality rate could likely be attributed to the 1870-1871 epidemic, which caused a spike in smallpox deaths and skewed the data.

Opponents presented sanitation as a cheaper, less harmful, more efficacious alternative to preventing smallpox and other infectious

<sup>65</sup> Pearce, 98.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>67</sup> William Tebb, "Sanitation not Vaccination the True Protection Against Smallpox." (International Congress of Anti-Vaccinators. Cologne, October 12, 1881), 12.; Thomas P. Weber, "Alfred Russel Wallace and the Antivaccination Movement in Victorian England," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (2010), [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434_article).

diseases. The sanitary movement was based on the common belief among antivaccinationists that diseases were caused by filth. A combination of sanitation, prompt reporting, isolation and quarantine of smallpox cases known as the “Leicester Method” won many converts to the sanitation camp. It was put into practice by the Leicester’s Assistant Medical Officer, Dr. Johnston in 1877, and it was effective in suppressing smallpox epidemics before they could spread. An 1892-1894 outbreak of smallpox in Leicester revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the “Leicester Method.” In 1892, a case of smallpox was misdiagnosed as chickenpox and led to an outbreak that infected 366 people with 21 deaths.<sup>68</sup> The “Leicester Method” unlike vaccination could not prevent smallpox—it could only limit its spread. Many NAVL members of the sanitation movement did not believe in the germ theory of disease, or even in the idea of the contagion, but they still heralded the practice of isolation and containment. This behavior was self-contradictory because implicit in the philosophy of isolation and containment was the idea that a contagion or virus could be transmitted from one person to another and therefore had to be kept away from the public.

Medical, religious and ethical opposition arguments birthed the conscientious objection movement. The phrase “conscience objection” was first introduced into the English language due to the anti-vaccination crusade.<sup>69</sup> In 1898, anti-vaccinators made a legislative gain when a new Act was issued that allowed parents to apply for certificates of “conscientious objection”.<sup>70</sup> The certificates allowed parents to choose not to vaccinate their children if doing so would violate their conscience. The number of these exemptions grew from 200,000 in 1898 to “25 percent of all births” by 1907.<sup>71</sup> Dissenters simply wanted their civil liberties protected—especially, the right to control what happened to their bodies and those of their children. Mary Hume-Rothery, co-founder of the National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League described compulsory

---

<sup>68</sup> Biggs, 411-419.

<sup>69</sup> Porter and Porter.

<sup>70</sup> Nadja Durbach, “Class, Gender, and the Conscientious Objector to Vaccination, 1898-1907,” *Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 58-83.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

vaccination as “legalizing bodily assault and possible murder on the bodies of fellow-citizen’s children.”<sup>72</sup> Conscientious objection was linked to morality, religion, independent thought and citizenship; for this reason, it was a very convincing argument against vaccination.

## Conclusion

Smallpox was one of the few diseases that could be credited with restructuring societies, changing demographics, collapsing some empires and building others up. Many died, and survivors lived with permanent reminders of their ordeal on their bodies. No cure was ever found for it, and up until the discovery of inoculation there was no defense against it. For this reason, its ravages were often seen as providential. Immunity was not a foreign concept. It was well understood that one only had to suffer from certain illnesses once and would forever be protected from them. Jenner’s vaccination was revolutionary because it was based on many truths that had not yet been solidified within the scientific community or the public such as the fact that smallpox was spread by a contagion (the germ theory), or that diseases could be transferred from animals to humans (both had the same biological building blocks). The reason why scientific opposition to vaccination lasted so long, especially in the face repeated experimentation and trials that proved that the vaccine was safe, was because the dominant paradigm for the most of the nineteenth century taught that diseases had environmental or inanimate causes. The massive shift in thought that replaced the existing ideas of disease causation with the germ theory, revolutionized the practice of medicine and helped scientists understand the mechanism of action of vaccinations.

Scientists and members of the public who continued to reject the vaccine based on false ideas of disease transmission were given the leeway to exercise their opinions through the conscientious objection movement. Conscientious objection disregarded the efficacy of the vaccine and focused only on the principle autonomy. Today it is through the legal

---

<sup>72</sup> Nadja Durbach “Class, Gender, and the Conscientious Objector to Vaccination.”

exemptions offered by conscientious objection that parents without medical excuses can refuse having their children vaccinated.

## Bibliography

- Behbehani, Abbas M. "The Smallpox Story: Life and Death of an Old Disease." *Microbiological Review* 47, no. 4 (1983): 455-509.
- Biggs, J. T. *Leicester: Sanitation versus Vaccination: Its Vital Statistics Compared with Those of Other Towns, the Army, Navy, Japan and England and Wales*. London: The National Anti-Vaccination League, 1912.
- Birch, John. *Serious reasons for uniformly objecting to the practice of vaccination : in answer to the report of the Jennerian Society*. London: J. Smeeton, 1806.
- Blair, William. Hints for the consideration of Parliament, in a letter to Dr. Jenner, on the supposed failures of vaccination at Ringwood : including a report of the Royal Jennerian Society on that subject, after a careful public investigation upon the spot; also contain. London: J. Callow, 1808.
- Brown, Thomas. *An inquiry into the antivariolous power of vaccination : in which, from the state of the phenomena, and the occurrence of a great variety of cases, the most serious doubts are suggested of the efficacy of the whole practice, and its powers at best proved* . Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Co., 1809.
- Buchan, William. *Buchan's Domestic medicine modernized; or, a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases by regimen and simple medicine : containing, ... observations on the comparative advantages of vaccine inoculation, ... an essay, enabling ruptured persons to man*. London: Printed for the Proprietors, 1809.
- Creighton, Charles. *A History of Epidemics in Britain*, Volume 2. Cambridge: The University Press, 1894. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.68/chapterId/1649/Containing-smallpox-in-Victorian-London.html>.
- . *The natural history of cow-pox and vaccinal syphilis*. London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1887.
- Durbach, Nadja. "Class, Gender, and the Conscientious Objector to Vaccination, 1898-1907." *Journal of British Studies* 41 (January 2002): 58-83.
- Fenner, Frank. "Smallpox: Emergence, Global Spread, and Eradication." *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 15, no. 3 (1993): 397-420.
- Gibbs, John. *Compulsory Vaccination Briefly Considered, In its Scientific, Religious, and Political Aspects*. London: Sotheran and Willis, 1856.

- Great Britain; Royal College of Surgeons of England. "An act to further extend and make compulsory the practice of vaccination: passed 20th August 1853." London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1853.
- Grieson, George, and John Grieson. "An Act of Parliament to Extend the Practice of Vaccination." Dublin, July 23, 1840.
- Hays, J. N. *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History*. ABC-CLIO, 2005.
- Institute of Medicine (US) Board on Health Promotion and Disease. 2002. "Scientific Background on Smallpox and Smallpox Vaccination." In *Scientific and Policy Considerations in Developing Smallpox Vaccination Options: A Workshop Report* (2002). Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US).
- Lithiby, John. *Shaws' manual of the vaccination law : containing the Vaccination Acts, 1867, 1871, 1874, 1898 & 1907; the Vaccination Orders, 1898, 1899, 1905 & 1907 and the instructional circulars and memoranda issued by the Local Government Board with introduction*. London: Shaw & Sons, 1908.
- Moseley, Benjamin. *A treatise on sugar : with miscellaneous medical observations*. London: John Nichols, 1800.
- Niederhuber, Matthew. "The Fight Over Inoculation During the 1721 Boston Smallpox Epidemic." *Science in the News: Special Edition on Infectious Disease*, December 31, 2014. URL <http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/special-edition-on-infectious-disease/2014/the-fight-over-inoculation-during-the-1721-boston-smallpox-epidemic/>
- Pearce, Charles T. *Vaccination: its tested effects on health, morality, and the population*. London: Bailliere Brothers, 1868.
- Porter, Dorothy and Roy Porter. "The Politics of Prevention: Anti-Vaccinationism and Public Health in Nineteenth-Century England." *Medical History* 32 (1988): 231-252.
- Riedel, Stefan. "Edward Jenner and the History of Smallpox and Vaccination." *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings* 18 (2005): 21-25.
- Ross, Dale L. "Leicester and the Anti-Vaccination Movement 1853 - 1889." *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 43 (1968): 35-44.
- Royal Jennerian Society. *Address of the Royal Jennerian Society, for the extermination of the small-pox. With the plan, regulations, and instructions for vaccine inoculation. To which is added, a list of the subscribers*. London: W. Phillips, George Yard, 1803.
- Science Museum: Brought to Life, Exploring the History of Medicine. 2017. Smallpox: inoculation and vaccination. Accessed November 19, 2017. <http://broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/themes/diseases/smallpox>.
- Simkin, John. 2017. Spartacus Educational: Edwin Chadwick. February. Accessed December 3, 2017. <http://spartacus-educational.com/PHchadwick.htm>.

- Simon, John. *Papers relating to the history and practice of vaccination*. London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1857.
- Stuart, Ferdinand Smyth. *£30,000 for the cow-pox!!! An address (to Ld. H.P., and) to the British Parliament, on vaccination; (of the greatest importance to mankind) wherein the report of the College of Physicians is completely confuted*. London: Hatchard, 1807.
- Tebb, William. "Sanitation not Vaccination the True Protection Against Smallpox." International Congress of Anti-Vaccinators. Cologne, 1881.
- The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. 2017. The History of Vaccines: Government Regulation. Accessed November 20, 2017. <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/government-regulation>.
- The Health Foundation. Policy Navigator: Public health. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://navigator.health.org.uk/theme/210/timeline?page=0>.
- Wallace, Alfred Russel. "Alfred Russel Wallace and the Antivaccination Movement in Victorian England." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. April. Accessed May 4, 2018. [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434_article).
- Weber, Thomas P. "Alfred Russel Wallace and the Antivaccination Movement in Victorian England." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. April. Accessed May 6, 2018. [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/16/4/09-0434_article).
- Whitehead, James. *Third report of the Clinical Hospital, Manchester : containing results on physical development, hooping cough, and transmitted diseases*. London: John Churchill, 1859.
- Williamson, S. "Anti-vaccination Leagues." *British Medical Journal* 59 (1984): 1195-1196.
- World Health Organization. "Smallpox." World Health Organization. September 21. Accessed November 19, 2017. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/smallpox/en/>.

## Black Educators after *Brown v. Board of Education*

Christopher E. Anderson

Abstract: With its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court mandated the desegregation of public schools. However, the *Brown* decision had an unintended negative effect on black educational institutions, not just black students but also black teachers, often the graduates of the rigorous educational process of HBCUs. Leaders had developed the intellectual foundations of early black colleges with a focus on attaining maximum academic superiority from their black students. The *Brown* decision, however, unintentionally had an adverse consequence on black education and community by disregarding these foundations, their rigor, and their success. Black educators, many of whom had been graduates from these HBCUs, were largely ignored and cut off from the integration process after the *Brown* decision. Ultimately, then, the *Brown* decision opened the door for the devaluing of black education, leading to the loss of black educators and their knowledge and experience.

“Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the *colored* children ... for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the *negro* group ... Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of *negro children* and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system.”<sup>1</sup>

May 17, 1954, in the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court argued that “the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the *negro* group.”<sup>2</sup> While the bundle of cases which made up *Brown v. Board of Education* dealt with the tangible effects of segregated public schooling, the rhetoric the courts used did not sufficiently challenge the negative stereotypes nor the generalizations of incompetence that plagued the black schools. This in

---

<sup>1</sup> “*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954),” JUSTIA US Supreme Court, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/347/483/case.html#F10>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

turn negatively shaped the public's views on black education as a whole. The Court's argument left room for the assumption that black schools and the black educational process were an inferior institution in need of the "well-established" white schools. This notion of inferiority not only tainted views of black children's general education, but also permeated the public's perception of black teachers. As a result of this de-valuing of black education and educators after *Brown*, the institutions that produced these teachers, historically black colleges, were also subliminally scrutinized and disregarded.

If only a lack of resources had plagued black schools, then when integration began to occur, the black teachers would not have been fired, as many were after *Brown*.<sup>3</sup> Instead, however, widespread racism led to ongoing negative rhetoric and beliefs regarding the institutions that produced these teachers, and in turn their graduate's abilities to succeed as educators. Despite this negative stereotyping that contributed to the loss of black teachers during integration, the intellectual foundations of early black colleges actually demonstrate just how successful black education could be with the proper resources, thus effectively dismantling the belief of innate cognitive deficiencies amongst the black race.

W.E.B. DuBois, a prominent African-American intellectual, illustrated the extensive and ambitious goals of the early black education that produced many teachers of the *Brown* era during a speech at Hampton Institute in 1906. DuBois argued that, "The aim of the higher training of the college is the development of power, the training of a self whose balanced assertion will mean as much as possible for the great ends of civilization."<sup>4</sup> Instead of the more limited scope of industrial training that some black leaders supported, DuBois pushed for a more enlightened and empowering avenue of education which could only come through traditional liberal

---

<sup>3</sup> Deidre Oakley, Jacob Stowell, John R. Logan, "The impact of desegregation on black teachers in the metropolis, 1970–2000" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Oct. 14, 2009. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3769798/>

The results of the study undertaken by the Department of Sociology at Georgia State University show that the effects of mandated desegregation of public schools led to a decrease of black teachers, especially in the southern regions of the United States.

<sup>4</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Hampton Idea," in *The Education of Black People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 13.

higher learning. In particular, DuBois believed higher learning at the college level had the ability to refine and then definitively place the black race in a position of validation. These beliefs and theories connected most of the early black colleges in a common mission and approach, and DuBois's position at Atlanta University and his connections to other black intellectuals at universities throughout the nation helped propel this creed to the forefront of black education.

In keeping with this mission, the success of HBCU's challenged the myth of implied inferiority that *Brown* later perpetuated not only about black children but also black teachers. The graduates from those successful black colleges became the teachers filling black schools for the next decades, including during and after *Brown*. While outright racism constituted the chief reason for post-*Brown* firings of black teachers, *Brown* did not help to combat those negative racist stereotypes about the black educational process, despite its successes. The racist ideas subconsciously entrenched within *Brown* distorted and denied the crucial role of these colleges. Therefore, genuine progress in the integration process following *Brown* was stagnated because notions of inferiority about black students and their black education taught by their black teachers followed them into integrated schools.

### Black-Led Education

According to black intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century, education provided the essential element to progressing the race towards credibility.<sup>5</sup> With that credibility came new opportunities for success in the economic and political arenas. But many of those intellectuals not only wanted education but also wanted blacks to control that education. They argued that black-led education could prove that the race was able to maintain its own state of affairs without constant input from the white race, disproving the slavery-era myth that blacks were unable to effectively organize.<sup>6</sup> Black-led education also provided and perpetuated a healthy

---

<sup>5</sup> Henry N. Drewry and Humphrey Doermann, *Stand and Prosper: Private Black Colleges and Their Students*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 92.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

pride for community as black teachers became figures of hope and opportunity for their young pupils. Most importantly, black-led education fought the social stigma of racial inferiority as blacks looked to the power of their own intellect. As a result, black education became professionally cultured and tailored to specifically meet the needs and growing demands of the community.

Leaders also understood that with instances of widespread racism increasing and the implementation of convict leasing and Jim Crow laws, in the early twentieth century, black education allowed African Americans to internalize equality even if outward proof never fully materialized. DuBois wrote in, *The College-bred Community*, that, “What the Negro needs, therefore, of the world and civilization, he must teach himself; what he learns of social organization and efficiency, he must learn from his own people. His conceptions of social uplift and philanthropy must come from within his own ranks, and he must above all make and set and follow his own ideals of life and character . . . this race is not stopping to await justice in this matter.”<sup>7</sup> DuBois thus expressed blacks’ desperate need for education, but in so doing, he also emphasized that the process could be exclusively black and still prosperous. According to this philosophy, black education would allow for traditions and culture, and most importantly leaders specific to the black community to gradually develop without being vulnerable to physical and psychological violence. This desire for black-led education became the foundation and purpose for the black institutions such as Atlanta University, Fisk, and Howard, who agreed to meet the call of developing refined intellectual individuals capable of leading the charge in the fight for equality. This is the same foundation that *Brown* was later indifferent towards.

In 1900, the *Atlanta University Publications*, a collaborative effort between several different colleges all-throughout the South and spear-headed by Atlanta University, detailed the whereabouts of college-educated blacks after graduation. Similar to DuBois, the *Publications* envisioned the advent of education as having loftier goals that went

---

<sup>7</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, “The College-bred Community,” in *The Education of Black People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 37.

beyond the education itself and would compel its graduates to establish themselves in society as cultural leaders. Within the *Publications*, Atlanta University also defined its mission as a college in coherent and concise terms, giving readers insight into the philosophy behind the school and its expectations of itself in saying that, “Atlanta University is an institution for the higher education of Negro youth. It seeks, by maintaining a high standard of scholarship and deportment, to sift out and train thoroughly talented members of this race to be leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among the masses. Furthermore, Atlanta University recognizes that it is its duty as a seat of learning to throw as much light as possible upon the intricate social problems affecting these masses, for the enlightenment of its graduates and of the general public.”<sup>8</sup> The *Publications* provide insight into the rigors of the curriculums established by these HBCU’s and how influential higher education was on the black community following their students graduation.

#### The Talented Tenth - Teachers of the Masses

Even as HBCU’s developed and began to thrive, racist notions about the limited capabilities of blacks ran rampant. With Jim Crow in place, discriminatory legal and social practices cornered blacks into submissive behavior. This constant enforced subservient nature in turn only strengthened ideas of inferiority. Black colleges took a leading role in challenging these stereotypes, in part by developing highly educated leaders for the larger community. DuBois widely publicized the name ‘The Talented Tenth’ to define this important class, which he argued should lead the rest of the race to equality, although critics often accused DuBois of promoting elitism within the black community. DuBois later clarified that, “We did not regard ourselves as separate and superior to the masses, but rather as a part of the mass which was being equipped and armed for leadership and that leadership was of course for the benefit of the masses.”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> “The College-bred Negro: Report of A Social Study Made under the Direction of Atlanta University; Together with the Proceedings of the Fifth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University, May 29-30, 1900,” in *Atlanta University Publication (Numbers 1-6 --- 1896-1901)*, ed. W.E.B. DuBois (New York: Octagon Books Inc.: 1968), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Juan Battle and Earl Wright II, “W.E.B. DuBois Talented Tenth: A Quantitative Assessment,” *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 6 (July 2002): 657, JSTOR

However critics felt about DuBois' terminology, most agreed that education transformed the lives of black students who stepped through its threshold with explicit tangible results. The Talented Tenth would play the crucial vanguard position in the mass exodus from communal dilapidation towards economic, political, and social autonomy and no other social institution grappled with this toiling agenda like the black college. The fruits of the college's labor were an affluent black middle class that dispersed out among the community, often as teachers in segregated schools. These teachers could identify as part of the Talented Tenth. They were using their education to give back to their communities in a manner that would achieve social uplift. The effects of *Brown* hurt this process by substantially reducing the number of black teachers in schools.

### Early Black Curriculum

In addition to their lofty goals, the rigorous academic curriculum and admission standards of black higher learning directly challenged the parameters of the allegedly inferior mental capacity of blacks by matching or nearly matching the rigor or curriculum of elite white schools of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The curriculums black colleges used represented the apex of black academia producing high levels of prosperity and success despite standing separate from white academia. The *Atlanta University Publications* showed that Howard University, a Freedman's Bureau school founded in 1867 and located in Washington, D.C. had the most stringent entrance requirements of the black colleges, almost equal to the smaller New England colleges.<sup>10</sup> Thereby, implying that the students entering Howard University could very well have, without the barriers of race, been admitted to top white colleges in the New England region. Other top black schools including Atlanta University, Fisk, Wilberforce, Leland College and Paul Quinn, fell only one to two years behind those New England schools in entrance requirements.<sup>11</sup> Black colleges maintained not only rigorous admission standards, but also intensive curriculums. The *Publications* revealed that similar to elite white

---

<sup>10</sup> "The College-bred Negro: Report of a Social Study Made under the Direction of Atlanta University," 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

institutions, a student at Fisk for example would have been introduced to Latin Prose Composition, Trigonometry, and Cicero's *De Senectute et De Amicitia* during his freshman year. By his senior year he would have been delving into English Literature, the Elements of Logic and advanced courses in Political Economy. Almost seven hundred miles away in the nation's capital at Howard University students first familiarized themselves with Greek, Latin, Mathematics and Bible Study. By senior year they would be deep in study in Mental and Moral Philosophy, the Constitution an International Law, and Advanced Chemistry or Physics.<sup>12</sup> These types of courses demonstrate the quality and also equality of education that these black students and future teachers received, and despite their later rejection from the educational system with the firing of black educators after *Brown*.

The *Atlanta University Publications* also found that over fifty percent of the black graduates from these colleges went on to become educators, including nineteen presidents and deans and six hundred and seventy-five as professors, principals, and teachers.<sup>13</sup> These students, having transformed their lives, began to take up one of the most influential roles in society, the teacher. They now occupied positions of chief influence that would help provide social and economic mobility and set the pace and agenda for the next generations to follow. Black teachers' role in their respective communities gave them significant influence in that they had the opportunity to expose their black students to a level of success that went beyond the context of the black students' daily lives. At the same time however, coming from a more similar cultural background, they could also connect to black students' perspective in a much more authentic manner than the white teachers could, after *Brown*. In addition to being fit for the task of education, they could also set the cultural and community standard of black excellence for generations.

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 18-25.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

## The Educators

James Weldon Johnson provides an example of this direct link between HBCU's and their missions and role in segregated black schools. A contemporary of DuBois, Johnson graduated from Atlanta University in 1894 and that background and experience with the Atlanta University curriculum greatly influenced his philosophy behind education and in turn molded his personal goals and beliefs. While at Atlanta, for example, he became acutely aware of the racial strife facing African-Americans and began to sense what his role and purpose in life would be as a leader and educator. He immediately put this into action as he quickly became a leader for his community back home in Jacksonville, Florida as he began his career as a teacher and administrator at the local elementary school.<sup>14</sup> By 1895, he had started *The Daily American*, a black newspaper used to facilitate news and commentary relatable to the black experience, and in 1917 he became a field secretary for the NAACP.<sup>15</sup> During the 1920s he became acclaimed for his role in the Harlem Renaissance as a poet and author on black topics.<sup>16</sup> Through his work he helped to lay the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement to come. His intellectual fervor and commitment to the black community provides a clear example of the HBCU-educated black who did not allow racist notions to prevent him from standing for justice.

Johnson was not alone in his endeavors as one of his closest friends at Atlanta University, George Alexander Towns, also demonstrated the achievements of the college-educated black. Towns entered Atlanta before his college years as a student in the highest primary grade at the age of fifteen. He quickly mastered his grammar, reading, and composition courses and also learned the trade woodworking. By 1890 Towns entered the college as one of only twenty students.<sup>17</sup> The concentrated student number not only reflected the financial and academic burdens of attending

---

<sup>14</sup> Lynn Adelman, "A Study of James Wheldon Johnson", *Journal of Negro History* 52, no. 2 (Apr. 1967), 128-145.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 141.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>17</sup> Dean Rowley, "George Alexander Towns: A profile of his Atlanta University Experience, 1885-1929," (1975), ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, Paper 2183, 19.

college, but also provided a testament that these college students represented the select few chosen with an opportunity to lead the masses. After enrolling at and graduating from Harvard in 1900, Towns immediately joined the Atlanta University staff as a teacher instructing high school age and college-age students in the Mechanical Arts department and the Sciences department.<sup>18</sup> Towns also helped to establish a public-school system back in his hometown of Albany, Georgia.<sup>19</sup> The educational efforts of Towns show the effectiveness of HBCU's, which the *Brown* decision later disregarded, arguing that this type of segregated education was not working for its students. Towns and Johnson were well-known figures at prominent schools, but they in many ways represent the large and less well-known numbers of students from HBCU's who went on to teach at local inner city and rural schools.<sup>20</sup> These students-turned-teachers taught at segregated schools and fought to uphold rigorous standards in their schools and represent the black educators that the *Brown* decision hurt.

These teachers represent hundreds of college-educated blacks who decided that using their education to teach the next generation provided a powerful opportunity to push for equal footing in the fight for equality. As the decades progressed, their alma maters increasingly agreed with this goal, identifying more and more strongly with this agenda of training their students to educate the minds of young black children. With the onset of the forties and fifties, as civil rights efforts began to increase, these teachers took up the duty of explaining to their students the immense history of the social context influencing their daily lives.

### *Brown vs. Board of Education*

As black teachers worked to educate and empower their students, other activists took a different, more legalistic approach to fighting inequality

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 25-26.

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

<sup>20</sup> The number of black students who graduated from HBCUs and began their careers teaching in segregated black schools creates a rather exhaustive list, including the following small selection: Fannie C. Williams and Lucille Levy Hutton both attended Straight University, now Dillard University in New Orleans; Edna Meade Colson graduated from Fisk University; and Dr. C.A. Johnson graduated from Howard University.

and oppression. Most notably, the NAACP took the lead in the fight for equality by arguing several cases throughout the thirties and forties that dealt specifically with school segregation. These cases culminated in 1952, when the NAACP presented the landmark case of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* to the Supreme Court directly challenging the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision that provided the platform for legal segregation following Reconstruction. In *Brown*, the NAACP argued that ‘separate but equal’ in the schools was not working because separate but equal was inherently unequal. Because of this inherent inequality, black schools lacked the resources necessary to properly function. Furthermore, the NAACP argued, if black children wanted to attend white schools they should be able to. In 1954, the Court agreed, ruling that “separate but equal” violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and also that race-based segregation had a negative effect on the development of black children.<sup>21</sup>

While *Brown* represented a huge milestone in the fight against inequality, it left the door open for some negative unintended consequences, particularly the devaluing of black education and the firing of black teachers. The year following the *Brown* decision, for example, several black teachers in Topeka, Kansas were not renewed in contract to teach again. Similarly, fifty- nine percent of the black teachers in the Kansas City region also lost their jobs.<sup>22</sup> Another district, Moberly, Kansas employed over one hundred teachers spread out over eight schools, including Lincoln school, which was black and entirely staffed by eleven black teachers.<sup>23</sup> After *Brown* however, the school board decided to close Lincoln and integrate the schools, cutting fifteen teacher positions and, in the process, firing all eleven of the black teachers.<sup>24</sup> These black teachers sued claiming that they were fired for unjust reasons, particularly because they displayed superior academic knowledge in comparison with the white teachers who were kept. In an oral history, Ms. Barbara Ross, a teacher at

---

<sup>21</sup> “*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954),” JUSTIA US Supreme Court, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/347/483/case.html#F10>.

<sup>22</sup> Jessica McCulley, “Black Resistance to School Desegregation in St. Louis during the *Brown* Era,” *The Confluence*, (Fall/Winter 2010): 35.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

Washington School, explained that most of the black teachers had master's degrees and were very qualified to teach.<sup>25</sup> Despite these qualifications, they lost their case at the trial court and with the court of appeals.<sup>26</sup> Yet this type of action by school boards became very common not just in Kansas but throughout all the states, demonstrating the detrimental effects of *Brown* on black children and their opportunities to form valuable relationships with black teachers.

### The *Brown* Decision

The actions many school boards, influenced by racism, took after *Brown* ran directly counter to many blacks' educational goals and desires both before and during the court case. The arguments of Leola Brown, the mother of the plaintiff Linda Brown, from this case foreshadow its eventual negative impact on black teachers and education and echo the goals of DuBois and earlier leaders to establish viable black education. Leola and her husband Oliver argued not for the dismantling of black education, but simply that their daughter Linda should have the opportunity to attend any school they wanted to send her to and if the law wanted to restrict that opportunity, it was unjust to restrict it on the basis of race. In a later interview with the Kansas Historical Society, Leola recounted candid memories of her own time at Monroe, the local black school in Topeka. She said that she had no problem with the school and, in fact, the education was great, and the teachers were credible and qualified. However, her daughter having to walk seven blocks to Monroe instead of being able to attend the white school, Sumner, simply because she was black was unfair. Many blacks, like Leola, took pride in their education and the quality of their teachers, and felt that black schools played a major role in their communities.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> "African American Teachers in Kansas," Kansas Historical Society, last modified December 2017, <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/african-american-teachers-in-kansas/11995>

<sup>26</sup> Brian J. Daugherty and Charles C. Bolton, ed., *With All Deliberate Speed: Implementing Brown v. Board of Education*, (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 180.

<sup>27</sup> "Kansas State Historical Society. State Archives and Library, *Brown v. Board of Education* oral history collection," The Library of Congress: The American Folklife Center, <https://www.loc.gov/folklike/index.html>.

However, the language in the Court's argument present a contrast to the Brown's views. The NAACP argued, and the Supreme Court agreed, that segregation hurt the psychological development of black children by retarding their self-esteem. Contrary to Leola Brown then, the Court implied that Monroe, because it was a separate segregated institution of education, deteriorated the self-esteem of its black students. Thus, while the Court did not explicitly attack black education, its assessment that a long history of racial prejudice in America with separate schools led to psychological harm in turn allowed for the devaluing of black education simply because it was separate from white education, rather than because of the lack of resources in black education.

The NAACP LDF lawyers used the famous Kenneth and Mamie Clark "doll studies" as sociological evidence to solidify their points. In the doll studies, students from Clarendon County, South Carolina were shown four dolls, identical except for race, two black and two white, and were asked a series of questions to interpret their thoughts on the dolls. The results showed that the children chose the white dolls over the black dolls when asked which ones were nicer and smarter and which ones they preferred overall. For the Court this proved that segregation hurt black children's sense of self-esteem. Chief Justice Warren concluded that, "To separate them [children in grade and high schools] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone."<sup>28</sup>

As a result of this finding, the Supreme Court's approach to explaining and justifying integration of the schools, while undermining legal segregation, also had an unintended adverse effect on the black community by opening the door for the dismantling of black education and the loss of black educators. Although the Court did not explicitly state that the black educational process was inferior, a large majority of the public, influenced by long standing racism, took this message from the ruling and subsequent

---

<sup>28</sup> "Key Excerpts from the Majority Opinion, Brown I (1954)," Landmark Cases of the US Supreme Court, [http://landmarkcases.org/en/Page/519/Key\\_Excerpts\\_from\\_the\\_Majority\\_Opinion\\_Brown\\_I\\_1954](http://landmarkcases.org/en/Page/519/Key_Excerpts_from_the_Majority_Opinion_Brown_I_1954).

school board actions. As integration proceeded in the decades after *Brown*, then, black students often faced busing to white schools as school boards closed many black schools and fired black teachers.

While black schools had included black teachers from an array of backgrounds, many had graduated from those prestigious black colleges, which held the same elite status if not for the barriers of race as the white colleges. Yet the closing of black schools and the firing of uncharted numbers of black teachers, forced the black teachers to endure negative effects of *Brown* because of the powerfully influential rhetoric of the Court's decision. Celestine Porter, a former teacher from Matthews County Virginia, offered a simple yet profoundly revolutionary counter-approach to integration in her interview with the Duke University: Behind the Veil project. She argued that teachers should have integrated rather than students. White teachers could have been sent to the black schools just as black children were sent to the white schools.<sup>29</sup> Instead, the entire task was placed on students and black teachers were forgotten about.

## Conclusion

Even years before the *Brown* decision, black leaders envisioned a different possibility for education. George Alexander Towns, the teacher at Atlanta University wrote that, "For notwithstanding all that the Negro may do, the disabilities of caste will yet continue to hover around him, unless the whites are so changed that they are willing to and do actually accord to him those civil and political rights which they receive for themselves and their children."<sup>30</sup> Towns hoped that when educational integration occurred black teachers and black schools would not be rejected but accepted beside the white teachers and the white schools to construct a cohesive unit that

---

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Celestine Diggs Porter, interviewed by Kisha Turner, Norfolk (Va.), August 2, 1995, Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Digital Collection, John Hope Franklin Research Center, Duke University Libraries. <https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/media/pdf/behindtheveil/btvct08070.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Dean Rowley, "George Alexander Towns: A profile of his Atlanta University Experience, 1885-1929" (1975), ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, Paper 2183, 17.

propelled the entire community forward.<sup>31</sup> Integration only justified by political correctness or a distortion of social science, as some argue happened after *Brown*, fails to accomplish this goal of a truly harmonious society. Education that accounts for all the members of the collective society is the education necessary to provide growth and prevent backward thinking concerning blacks and their educational institutions.

*Brown v. Board of Education* represented a crucial step in ushering the nation towards racial equality, however, it did not prevent ongoing negative racial stereotyping, particularly of black education, which opened the door to its dismantling during the later integration process. Black education largely lacked only in resources, and the segregationist agenda that forced it to be exclusively black made it unjust. Black education standing separate from white education could be prosperous, as seen in the success of HBCUs, but this separation being solely based on race was unfair. The intellectual foundations of these HBCUs, inspired by leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois helped to create an atmosphere of academic superiority for its students. And graduates then carried this atmosphere into the classrooms they would reign over for the next decades until *Brown*. Yet, *Brown* unintentionally distorted the mark of excellence those teachers set. This distortion followed black students into the “integrated” schools and followed black teachers right out of their jobs. The role of black colleges preparing those black teachers dissipated. As Towns suggested, true education would allow both races to exist together, rather than eliminating black education. Only with this true integration would the same equality afforded whites, their children, and their institutions, also be given to blacks and theirs.

### Bibliography

Adelman, Lynn. “A Study of James Wheldon Johnson.” *The Journal of Negro History* 52, no. 2 (Apr. 1967), 128-145.

---

<sup>31</sup> Deidre Oakley, Jacob Stowell, John R. Logan “The Impact of Desegregation on Black Teachers in the Metropolis, 1970–2000,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Oct. 14, 2009, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3769798/>.

- “African American Teachers in Kansas,” Kansas Historical Society, last modified December 2017, [https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/african-american-teachers-in-kansas/11995\\_](https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/african-american-teachers-in-kansas/11995_).
- Battle, Juan, and Earl Wright II. “W.E.B. DuBois’ Talented Tenth: A Quantitative Assessment.” *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 6 (July 2002): 654-672.
- “Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954),” JUSTIA US Supreme Court, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/347/483/case.html>.
- Daugherty, Brian J., and Charles C. Bolton. ed. *With All Deliberate Speed: Implementing Brown v. Board of Education*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2008.
- Drewry, Henry N., and Humphrey Doermann. *Stand and Prosper: Private Black Colleges and their Students*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- DuBois, W.E.B. “The College-bred Community,” in *The Education of Black People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 31-40. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973.
- DuBois, W.E.B. “The Hampton Idea,” in *The Education of Black People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 5-16. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973.
- DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1903.
- DuBois, W.E.B. “The Talented Tenth.” in *The Negro Problem*, 31-76. New York: AMS Press, 1903.
- Interview with Celestine Diggs Porter. Interviewed by Kisha Turner, Norfolk (Va.), August 2, 1995, Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Digital Collection, John Hope Franklin Research Center, Duke University Libraries. [https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/media/pdf/behindtheveil/btvct08070.pdf\\_](https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/media/pdf/behindtheveil/btvct08070.pdf_).
- “Kansas State Historical Society. State Archives and Library, Brown v. Board of Education oral history collection,” The Library of Congress: The American Folklife Center, <https://www.loc.gov/folklife/index.html>.

“Key Excerpts from the Majority Opinion, Brown I (1954).” Landmark Cases of the US Supreme Court.

[http://landmarkcases.org/en/Page/519/Key\\_Excerpts\\_from\\_the\\_Majority\\_Opinion\\_Brown\\_I\\_1954](http://landmarkcases.org/en/Page/519/Key_Excerpts_from_the_Majority_Opinion_Brown_I_1954).

Martin Jr., Waldo E. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998.

McCulley, Jessica. “Black Resistance to School Desegregation in St. Louis During the Brown Era.” *The Confluence*, (Fall/Winter 2010), 28-37.

Oakley, Deidre, Jacob Stowell, and John R. Logan. “The Impact of Desegregation on Black Teachers in the Metropolis, 1970–2000.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Oct. 14, 2009. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3769798/>.

Rowley, Dean. "George Alexander Towns: a profile of his Atlanta University experience, 1885-1929" (1975). ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library. Paper 2183.

“The College-bred Negro: Report of A Social Study Made under the Direction of Atlanta University; Together with the Proceedings of the Fifth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University, May 29-30, 1900,” in *Atlanta University Publication (Numbers 1-6 --- 1896-1901)*, ed. W.E.B. DuBois. New York: Octagon Books Inc.: 1968.

## The Atlanta Jewish Community: Collaboration in the Face of Difference

Leilani K. Harris

**Abstract:** In the years before World War II began, antisemitic ideology hung in the air of Europe like a virus. Feeding off the viral tendrils, the Nazi regime went to great lengths to spread the plague of persecution. Across the Atlantic, the Jewish community became aware of the increasingly hostile atmosphere that pervaded the European mindset. Well before the world faced another global war, American Jews began to work in earnest to coordinate relief efforts for those living under the oppression of the Third Reich. The leadership of the American Jewish community did what they could through the restraints of the Great Depression, devoting their lives to saving those abroad from the devastation that would later occur.

Through countless hours of combing through the archived newspapers of the *Southern Israelite* and digging through the archives of the William Breman Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Museum, the actions of Harold Hirsch, David Marx, Harry H. Epstein, and Tobias Geffen showed how men of differing ideologies could make a stand to save unknown souls in the name of religious tolerance and human decency. Their actions serve as a lesson to current and future generations that hope, dedication, and perseverance can and will prevail. Though the Holocaust continued and the actions of Hirsch, Marx, Epstein, and Geffen may have seemed small and inconsequential in the face of millions of lives lost, their dedication still mattered. To those who lived due to the deeds of the Atlanta few, their actions would mean everything.

In the face of the horrific events that struck the Jewish population of Europe prior to and during World War II, American Jews sought to aid their Judaic brethren both abroad and at home during a time of tremendous economic and political upheaval. The Jews of Atlanta were no different, in fact, they excelled. With the creation of the Jewish Welfare Fund, the Atlanta Jewish community was launched into the spotlight and hailed as a paragon of a united front. Cities like Nashville sought to emulate their success. Following the fruitful fundraising efforts in Atlanta in 1936, Nashville sought the expertise of nationally respected Atlantean, Harold Hirsch, the brain behind the Jewish Welfare Fund. The leadership of the Atlanta Jewish community was respected across the United States. Their collaboration with one another, despite differences, led Atlanta to become one of the most successful fundraising cities in the South for the betterment of Jews worldwide.

The Jewish community had existed in Atlanta since the city's birth in 1845, albeit only constituting roughly one percent of the population, totaling just 25 people.<sup>1</sup> Historian Mark K. Bauman, who wrote on the history of Jewish Atlanta noted that, "the first subcommunity to arrive migrated from north central Europe, particularly the Germanic states and Poland, during the late antebellum period."<sup>2</sup> Due to increased persecution within Russia in the late nineteenth century, Eastern European Jews began arriving in Atlanta, followed by a smaller contingent of Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire in the first decade of the twentieth century. Despite their commonality in the Jewish faith, the divisions caused by their origins and Jewish observations resulted in a growing rift rather than forming a unifying base.<sup>3</sup>

By the time the Eastern European and Sephardic Jews began arriving in Atlanta, most German Jews had migrated to Reform Judaism, becoming members of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation in 1867.<sup>4</sup> Reform Judaism, which began in Germany in the early nineteenth century, sought to modernize itself in conjunction with the evolving times. Most Eastern European Jews remained Orthodox and due to discontent with the continued move towards Reform ideology, they broke away from the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation in 1887 to form Ahavath Achim, a conservative Orthodox synagogue. However, many within Ahavath Achim felt that their religious observations had strayed from the Orthodox path yet again, thus another break occurred in 1902, resulting in the formation of Shearith Israel, an ultra-Orthodox community.

The division within the Jewish community did not remain limited to forms of worship, it also extended to Jewish social life. Although they aided Eastern European Jews settle into their new surroundings, Central

---

<sup>1</sup> History. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.the-temple.org/history>.

<sup>2-3</sup> Mark K. Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: The German Jews from the Civil War Through the Progressive Era," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Fall 1998), 533-558.

<sup>4</sup> History. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.the-temple.org/history>.

European Jews considered their Eastern European neighbors to be “social inferiors”.<sup>5</sup> For example, Central European Jews created the Concordia Association, due to most private clubs prohibiting Jews from becoming members. By 1904, the name had changed to the Standard Club and it represented a prestigious private Jewish social community. However, just as most Gentile clubs did not allow Jewish members, the Standard Club was also restricted, denying Eastern European Jews membership. This resulted in the creation of the Progressive Club in 1913.<sup>6</sup> Within the community, yet choosing to remain outside, were the Sephardim. While they lived among the Central and Eastern European Jews, they kept to their own ways, both in a religious and social context.<sup>7</sup>

In 1906, Jewish pogroms in Russia prompted several American Jewish businessmen to create the American Jewish Committee (AJC), which “aimed ‘to prevent the infraction of the civil and religious rights of Jews, in any part of the world’ and ‘to render all lawful assistance’ to those Jews whose rights were threatened”.<sup>8</sup> With the start of World War I in 1914, the AJC then created the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) expanding its role in providing Jewish relief, not yet aware of the depth of need that would assail them in the coming years. The rise of Hitler and the Nazi regime led several Jewish communities throughout the United States to come together to form a plethora of organizations, most falling under the leadership of the JDC.

### Community Leadership

Working on an individual basis, or in conjunction with the multitude of relief programs, Atlanta Jewish community leaders sought to aid their Jewish brethren in Germany and Russia, most notably, Coca-Cola attorney Harold Hirsch, Rabbi David Marx, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein, and Rabbi

---

<sup>5</sup> Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta 1845-1915*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Jewish Publication Society, 1978), 117.

<sup>6</sup> Mark K. Bauman and Arnold Shankman, “The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker: The Case of David Marx,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2 (Spring, 1983): 82.

<sup>7</sup> Arnold Shankman, “Atlanta Jewry 1900-1930,” *American Jewish Archives* 25 (November 1973): 134.

<sup>8</sup> Staff, MJL. “The American Jewish Committee.” My Jewish Learning. Accessed February 18, 2018. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-american-jewish-committee/>.

Tobias Geffen. These men used their elevated positions and esteemed persona within the Atlanta Jewish community to gain the attention of the both Jews and Gentiles alike to the crisis occurring in Europe. The degree of influence and interaction with relief efforts varied among the leaders. Both Hirsch and Marx gained visibility on a national level, working with men such as the prominent and well-known Rabbi Jonah B. Wise in New York. As such, their names appeared with a greater degree of frequency than that of Epstein and Geffen.

In 1881, German immigrant Henry Hirsch and Virginia native Lola Hutzler gave birth to their son, Harold Hirsch, who rose to prominence within both the Atlanta Jewish community and among the Gentiles as both a renowned lawyer as well as an advocate for European Jewish relief.<sup>9</sup> He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1901, and earned a Columbia University law degree in 1904.<sup>10</sup> Upon his return to Atlanta, Hirsch worked for a law firm for a few years before establishing his own practice. Due to the insistent and dedicated nature of Hirsch, Coca-Cola sought his firm's services to protect their future interests, leading to Hirsch gaining notoriety for his work with trademarking.<sup>11</sup> Hirsch also worked on a wide number of corporation committees throughout Atlanta further cementing his place among respectable leaders outside of the Jewish community.

In addition to his corporate and legal work, Hirsch maintained active involvement with his alma mater, University of Georgia, dedicating numerous resources for the benefit of future students. Due to his philanthropic work, "University of Georgia awarded him a Doctor of Laws

---

<sup>9-14</sup> David Marx, "Harold Hirsch," *American Jewish Yearbook*. 5701 ed. Vol. 42. 1940-1941 (Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee, 1940): 165-166.

degree honoris cause in 1927.”<sup>12</sup> In 1933, the city of Atlanta gave further praise to Hirsch through the dedication of a law building at University of Georgia in his honor, aptly named Harold Hirsch Hall.<sup>13</sup> *The Southern Israelite* quoted Marion Smith, president of the Georgia Bar Association, who declared, “whenever men speak of the service that the alumni of this university have rendered it, by common consent the name of Harold Hirsch leads all the rest.”<sup>14</sup> Hirsch had become one of the most prominent and successful Jews with the ability to cross the Jewish-Gentile divide. As the Jewish Telegraphic Agency noted, “the honor which Mr. Hirsch received when this building was given his name is indicative that a new era is dawning in Georgia, both from an educational viewpoint and from the standpoint of racial and religious tolerance.”<sup>15</sup>

Hirsch’s involvement with the vast array of Jewish organizations in America began well before the Nazi regime came to power. The earliest correspondence between Hirsch and the JDC dated from January 1919, in which the secretary of the JDC had apologized that though Hirsch had shown his dedication through his work for the organization, they could not legally send monetary relief to his relatives in Germany due to restricting war time conditions.<sup>16</sup> Near the end of the 1920s, Hirsch began to take a much more active role in Jewish relief agencies. Hirsch served as chairman for the Atlanta chapter of the United Jewish Campaign, which began in 1925 to assist European Jews suffering under persecution.

Created in 1930, the Allied Jewish Campaign worked to consolidate the fundraising efforts of the JDC and the United Palestine Appeal, the latter

---

<sup>12</sup> Mark K. Bauman, “Role Theory and History: The Illustration of Ethnic Brokerage in the Atlanta Jewish Community in the Era of Transition and Conflict.” *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 79.

<sup>13</sup> “Victory for Religious Tolerance in Georgia.” Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 08, 1933. Accessed July 10, 2017. <http://www.jta.org/1933/01/08/archive/victory-for-religious-tolerance-in-georgia>.

<sup>14</sup> T.J. Tobias, Jr. “Harold Hirsch: ‘Georgia’s Most Glorious Alumnus,’” *Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 1933. Accessed July 8, 2017. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1933/asi1933-0041.mets.xml#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>15</sup> “Victory for Religious Tolerance in Georgia.” Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 08, 1933. Accessed March 1, 2017. <http://www.jta.org/1933/01/08/archive/victory-for-religious-tolerance-in-georgia>.

<sup>16</sup> Secretary of the JDC to Harold Hirsch. January 14, 1919. Atlanta, Georgia.

of which had been formed to build up Palestine as a nation for the Jewish people. Whereas the United Jewish Campaign looked to aid those in Eastern Europe, the Allied Jewish Campaign had closer ties to Palestine, a factor that hindered its fundraising efforts. David M. Bressler, who served as national chairman, explained that “the Allied Jewish Campaign aims, in the last analysis, to weld the Jews of America, Orthodox, Reform, Socialist, Capitalist, Zionists, Anti-Zionists, whatever they may be in a common bond of service.”<sup>17</sup> The consolidation helped in forming a single monetary fund pool rather than having a multitude of organizations asking for assistance with relief efforts. Hirsch worked with the campaign as one of several honorary vice-chairmen, being the primary point of contact between Atlanta and the Allied Jewish Campaign headquarters in New York City.

In the wake of the Great Depression and the dawn of the rise of the Nazis in Germany, Hirsch worked even more assiduously to assist in any fashion possible his Jewish brethren. Among notable Jews in America during the 1930s, Hirsch became the epitome of a dedicated Jewish man, gaining recognition on a national level for his service in the name of Judaism. Smith remarked on Hirsch’s devotion to the Jewish faith, declaring that it had become such a fundamental part of Hirsch’s life that he derived happiness from providing help to those who so desperately needed it.<sup>18</sup> Despite the internal divisions among Atlanta Jews, Hirsch believed in the Jewish faith to such an extent that he considered all Jews brothers and sisters, regardless of their sect. Hirsch spent the remainder of his life putting the plight of others before himself and worked diligently to save his Jewish brethren from anti-Semitic persecution.

Hirsch’s dedication to the relief of the European Jews did not go unnoticed among the national Jewish agencies. On February 13, 1933, chairman Paul

---

<sup>17</sup> “Bressler Outlines Plans of Allied Jewish Campaign, in Broadcast over Weaf.” Jewish Telegraphic Agency. March 03, 1930. Accessed March 02, 2018.

<https://www.jta.org/1930/03/03/archive/bressler-outlines-plans-of-allied-jewish-campaign-in-broadcast-over-weaf>.

<sup>18</sup> T.J. Tobias, Jr. “Harold Hirsch: ‘Georgia’s Most Glorious Alumnus,” *Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 1933. Accessed July 8, 2017.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1933/asi1933-0041.mets.xml#page/1/mode/1up>.

Baerwald of the JDC sent a letter to Hirsch informing him that “The Committee on Nominations has unanimously submitted your name for membership. . .we do feel that the interest and continued close association of men like yourself will help the Joint Distribution Committee in its general program as well as in its fund-raising effort.”<sup>19</sup> In 1935, Hirsch received a letter from Joseph C. Hyman, honorary secretary with the UJA, informing Hirsch that he had been nominated as an honorary vice-chairman, a position they granted based off his dedication to the cause.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, he kept his position on the executive committee with the American Jewish Committee with his reelection.

In addition to his vast contributions to Jewish relief, Hirsch took an active role in Reform Judaism, serving as president at The Temple under the rabbinic leadership of Marx as well chairman for the Southern Conference of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.<sup>21</sup> Hirsch’s relationship with Marx spanned over the course of many years and crossed the boundaries of several Jewish organizations. Just as Hirsch would work to unite the Jewish community, so would Marx dedicate his skills to bridging the gap between the Atlanta Jews and Gentiles.

Born in the year of 1872 in New Orleans from German parents, David Marx took up the pulpit in Atlanta as lead Rabbi for The Temple at the young age of twenty-three, serving for a span of fifty years.<sup>22</sup> Most notably, his work to create a bond between Jews and Gentiles led to his gaining the respect of non-Jews and Jews alike during a period embroiled in chaos. Historians Bauman and Arnold Shankman explained that “Rabbi David Marx (1872-1962) assumed the multifaceted role of ethnic broker for Atlanta’s Jews,” where an “ethnic broker is a communicator who is

---

<sup>19</sup> “The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.” Paul Baerwald to Harold Hirsch. February 13, 1933. New York, New York.

<sup>20</sup> “United Jewish Appeal.” Joseph C. Hyman to Harold Hirsch. March 7, 1934. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>21</sup> “Victory for Religious Tolerance in Georgia.” Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 08, 1933. Accessed March 1, 2018. <http://www.jta.org/1933/01/08/archive/victory-for-religious-tolerance-in-georgia>.

<sup>22</sup> The Temple. Rabbi David Marx. Accessed July 01, 2017.

<http://thetemple.org/AboutUs/History/RabbiDavidMarx.aspx>. Southern Jewish History, page 36.

respected by his group and acts as a spokesman in intergroup relations.<sup>23</sup> With the differing cultures within the Atlanta Jewish community, Marx sought to find a common ground in order to bring the assemblies together as well as building a bridge between Jews and Gentiles, which remained paramount and constituted a large portion of his outreach.

Although not fully accepted or integrated within Atlanta, the Jewish community had become well established. However, the murder of a young girl stripped away all that had been accomplished. Not only did the case bring nationwide attention and reinvigorate dormant antisemitic rhetoric, but due to her white skin color it also fostered racial concerns. Primarily on the testimony of Jim Conley, an African American, Jewish businessman Leo M. Frank was convicted of the slaying of thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan in 1915. According to historian Jeffrey Melnick, the public desired a suitable assailant, “one who would be a more satisfying target than an African American with limited social power.”<sup>24</sup> This act of accusation was intended to put the eye of the public directly on a prominent white Jewish figure as the guilty party of a murder. As such, a reinvigoration of skepticism towards the Jewish population occurred, grouping the Jewish community with the African Americans as inferior to white Southerners. Antisemitic and racial smear campaigns arose on all sides. Despite this, Eugene Levy explained that Jewish articles tried to refrain from using derogatory name-calling against African Americans, only quoting what other sources had said. He further explained that anti-Semitism among blacks had been relatively low and that several prominent African Americans even looked to the Jews in Atlanta as a model to where they could be.<sup>25</sup> The lack of outright hostility between the Jewish and black communities would form another link in the chain that bonded them. Further aggravating the race issue, Atlanta Jews had been among the first

---

<sup>23-27</sup> Bauman and Arnold Shankman, “The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker,” 52. Bauman, “Role Theory and History: The Illustration of Ethnic Brokerage in the Atlanta Jewish Community in the Era of Transition and Conflict,” 78, 57.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey Melnick. “‘The Night Witch Did It’: Villainy and Narrative in the Leo Frank Case,” *American Literature History* 12 (Spring-Summer, 2000): 114.

to offer African Americans jobs as well as allow integration.<sup>26</sup> As Bauman explains, “In this case it is highly probable that Jewish interaction with African Americans contributed to anti-Semitism.”<sup>27</sup>

The case of Leo Frank caused a setback in Marx’s attempt to pave a relationship between Atlanta Jews and Gentiles. Bauman and Shankman reported that though many claimed Marx had been troubled by the case, little evidence showed how he reacted.<sup>28</sup> However, Marx took pen to paper to argue on behalf of Frank. In a letter to John M. Slaton, Marx referred to Franks overall good character and his innocence, while also noting that the absence of Frank’s wife did not constitute a belief in guilt.<sup>29</sup> A month later, Judge Slaton would commute Franks sentence from death to a life term, though his decision did not show any indication of Rabbi Marx’s letter having played a role. Franks life sentence ended abruptly in the late summer of 1913. Believing that justice was denied, the Knights of Mary Phagan kidnapped Frank from his prison cell and hung him from an oak tree. Using the circumstances of the case as justification, William J. Simmons and the Knights of Mary Phagan combined efforts to revive the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>30</sup>

With the Frank case reinvigorating antisemitism in America, the need for an organization to counter such negative ideology became paramount. Created by Illinois lawyer Sigmund Livingston in 1913, the Anti-Defamation League sought to counter anti-Semitism throughout the United States. They argued against plays and writings that showed the Jewish people in a derogatory fashion, in some cases successfully banning such programs from being broadcast. The Anti-Defamation League later

---

<sup>26</sup> "Encyclopedia Judaica: Atlanta, Georgia." Atlanta. Accessed February 17, 2018. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/atlanta>.

<sup>27</sup> Bauman, “Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta,” 555.

<sup>28-29</sup> David Marx to John M.Slaton. May 27, 1915. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>30</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case*, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 141-150.

worked against organized antisemitism, most notably the Silver Shirts of America under William Dudley Pelley and the German-American Bund.<sup>31</sup> Groups such as these spread highly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi propaganda during the 1930's, although the government shut down both associations when the United States declared war on Germany in 1941.

Despite the rise in anti-Semitism brought on by the Frank case, Marx did not deter in his mission to forge positive interfaith relationships. Involvement in clubs and organizations outside of the Jewish community provided Marx with the chance to show the Gentiles the worthiness of Atlanta Jews and to curb anti-Semitic ideology. Marx took an active role in the Red Cross, Georgia Peace Society, the Boy's Club, as well as using his oratory skills in numerous speaking opportunities in non-Jewish churches throughout the city.<sup>32</sup> His outreach would lead to him becoming "Atlanta's best known and most respected Jew, and as such effectively represented his people before the gentile community."<sup>33</sup> The Lions Club in Atlanta recognized both Hirsch and Marx in 1934 for their continued dedication to the people of the city as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

Like Hirsch, Marx became involved in several Jewish relief organizations in Atlanta from the onset of his time as rabbi. He played a crucial role in the opening of the Atlanta chapter of the Council of Jewish Women, which had started in the late nineteenth century in Chicago. He also worked with the Hebrew Orphan's Home, which looked after children who could not be properly cared for in their home. The number of agencies with Atlanta vying for funds began to cause issues due to donation requests becoming too frequent. As such, Marx played an integral part in the formation of the Atlanta Federation of Jewish Charities in 1906, which acted as a parent agency to several of the organizations that Marx volunteered with. Both

---

<sup>32</sup> Bauman and Arnold Shankman, "The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker," 54.

<sup>33</sup> Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the City*, 71.

<sup>34</sup> "Coca-Cola Executive Praised at Lions Club." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 01, 1934. Accessed March 02, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/1934/01/01/archive/coca-cala-executive-praised-at-lions-club>.

Epstein and Hirsch later served on the board of directors with Marx for the Atlanta Federation of Jewish Charities.

Though Marx had become an esteemed citizen of Atlanta, he could not escape moments of controversy. According to Epstein, Marx “had set up a barrier between East European Jews and West European Jews. He did not like East European Jews.”<sup>35</sup> Bauman traced this line of thought to comments made by Marx in 1914 in the wake of the Frank case. He explained that during this speech, Marx made remarks that hinted at the Eastern European Jews being the root of the rise of anti-Semitic feeling in the South.<sup>36</sup> The problem did not end there, however. Leon Eplan, of Eastern European descent, made rebuttal remarks in kind and received punishment whereas Marx went away unscathed.<sup>37</sup> The divide between the two communities remained a thorn in the side to the path to a sense of unity during troubled times.

Marx’s opposing stance on Zionism also proved to be a sensitive subject between the Reform rabbi and his Orthodox counterparts who fully supported Zionism and Jewish statehood. The Zionist movement began in 1896 with the publication of *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl.<sup>38</sup> In short, Herzl believed that neither “assimilation or emigration” would rid the world of anti-Semitism and that the only logical conclusion would be to create a “Jewish statehood.”<sup>39</sup> However, Marx adamantly disagreed. He believed that “American Jews were American by nationality and Jewish in terms of religion. They would support Jews in time of need, but not in

---

<sup>35</sup> Harry H. Epstein Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/Oral-Histories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-Harry-H.>

<sup>36-35</sup> Bauman, “Role Theory and History,” 91-2.

<sup>38-37</sup> Aaron Berman, *Nazism The Jews and American Zionism*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1990) 15.

nationhood.”<sup>40</sup> In the years before the war, many of Marx’s congregants stood against Zionism, such as Armand May, who worked predominantly with the Hebrew Orphan’s Home. Hirsch, who had invited May to a luncheon for the Allied Jewish Campaign, received a reply in which May explained that he would not be inclined to lend a hand due to his “strictly anti-Zionist” disposition, and closed by stating that, “I do not anticipate taking any interest in the forthcoming campaign.”<sup>41</sup> As a result of Marx’s opposition to Zionism, he aided in the formation of the American Council for Judaism, which took place in 1942 after World War II had started.<sup>42</sup> Though the relationship between Marx and Epstein did not evolve into one of unwavering friendship, they still maintained civility and cooperation, putting aside their differences for the common good of Jews in America and Europe.

Harry Epstein, born in 1903 in the small village of Plunge, Lithuania to Hannah Israelovitch and Rabbi Ephraim Epstein, came into the world with rabbinic calling in his blood .<sup>43</sup> Epstein came to the United States while still a toddler, relocating with his family in Chicago. His father, also a rabbi, took part in the founding of the Hebrew Theological College in 1922, where Epstein would later attend.<sup>44</sup> In 1928, Epstein accepted the position of Rabbi at Ahavath Achim, where he would remain for the next fifty years.

---

<sup>40-39</sup> Bauman and Arnold Shankman, “The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker,” 57-8.

<sup>41</sup> “American Mills Company.” Armand May to Harold Hirsch. March 22, 1930. Atlanta Mills Company, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>43</sup> Harry H. Epstein Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/Oral-Histories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-Harry-H>.

<sup>44</sup> Orin Borsten. "Modernizing Traditional Judaism." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 1936, 17-18. Accessed March 01, 2018. Borsten, Orin. "Modernizing Traditional Judaism." *The Southern Israelite*. Accessed March 02, 2018. [http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0369.mets.xml;query=Modernizing Traditional Judaism;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up](http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0369.mets.xml;query=Modernizing+Traditional+Judaism;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up).

A mere twenty-five years old when he assumed the role of rabbi, Epstein brought a more modern view of Orthodox Judaism, though not so radical as that of the Reform congregation under Marx. While he had been raised in an Orthodox setting, he believed in the need to modernize, to an extent, to appeal to the younger generation. In conjunction with his rabbinical duties, Epstein worked on his own graduating in 1932 with dual degrees in philosophy and theology from Emory.<sup>45</sup> Three years later, he gained recognition for authoring his first book, *Judaism and Progress*, which included a number of his own sermons, received praise from Orthodox rabbis throughout the nation.<sup>46</sup> Epstein maintained a very active presence within organizations in the synagogue as well. To his credit, the United Hebrew School, a bible school founded by members of Ahavath Achim before his arrival, flourished under his guidance. Similarly, Epstein would frequently support the women of Ahavath Achim, who created a Sisterhood in 1920. Epstein did not restrict his support to Jewish activities however. In 1936, following the destruction in Gainesville, Georgia by a tornado, Epstein approached his congregation to provide assistance, collecting over \$200 for those affected.<sup>47</sup> He committed time and resources to a number of local charities and organizations in times of need such as the Atlanta Federation of Jewish Charities alongside Marx and the Atlanta Community Chest.

A fierce supporter of Zionism, Epstein participated in several organizations with the objective to create a homeland for Jews in Palestine. With growing anti-Semitism at home and abroad, Zionist organizations began to see an influx of members. Among those stood the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), created in 1897 by Rabbi Abba Silver. Epstein worked with the Atlanta chapter that had been established in the 1930s. In 1935 and 1938, Epstein represented Georgia in conventions for

---

<sup>45</sup> Willie Goldwasser. "Harry Epstein's Obituary on Atlanta Journal-Constitution." Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Accessed March 7, 2018.  
<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/atlanta/obituary.aspx?n=harry-epstein&pid=983502>.

<sup>46</sup> Harry Epstein, *Judaism and Progress*, (New York, New York: Bloch Publishing, 1935).

<sup>47</sup> "Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, Edwar Kaufman to Open Welfare Fund Drive Here." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 10, 1936. Accessed February 18, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0097.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.

ZOA as a delegate.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, he spoke on numerous occasions at meetings for the Young Judaea, a youth Zionist organization, in Atlanta. In recognition of his efforts on the behalf of Zionism, the Atlanta Zionist District inscribed the name of Epstein and his wife in the Roosevelt Golden Book.<sup>49</sup> While Epstein and Marx would take opposing stances in Zionism, Epstein would find a likeminded position in Geffen.

Born in Kovno, Lithuania in 1870, Tobias Geffen had a keen intellect. He, along with his wife and children, immigrated to the United States in 1903 as a result of the Kishinev pogrom and the increasing levels of anti-Semitism.<sup>50</sup> For the next seven years, Geffen worked in a variety of positions in conjunction with his rabbinical duties in both New York and Ohio. In 1910, he accepted an offer to become the rabbi of Shearith Israel, an ultra-Orthodox synagogue in Atlanta, where he remained for the next 60 years.

Geffen set straight away to make improvements throughout the community, as it pertained to the observance of Orthodox Judaism. Finding the availability of kosher foods inadequate within Atlanta, Geffen strove to rectify the situation. His largest contribution to kosher related food and drinks came from his work with Coca-Cola. Combining his efforts with Harold Hirsch, Geffen recommended changes to the ingredients that would make it kosher without altering the flavor.<sup>51</sup> Like Marx, he also worked with the Hebrew Orphans Home before its closure.

---

<sup>48</sup> "Delegates to Convention Elected by Local Zionists." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 28, 1935. Accessed March 01, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1935/asi1935-0246.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>. <http://newspapers-pdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0240.pdf>. "Zionists Here Name Delegates." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 10, 1938.

Accessed March 01, 2018. <http://newspapers-pdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0240.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> "Atlantans Will Attend Three National Conventions." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), January 13, 1939. Accessed February 28, 2018. "Zionists Here Name Delegates." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 10, 1938. Accessed March 01, 2018. <http://newspapers-pdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0240.pdf>.

<sup>50-48</sup> Nathan M. Kaganoff, "An Orthodox Rabbinate in the South: Tobias Geffen, 1870-1970," *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 58-68.

For the most part, Geffen spent a majority of his effort within his own congregation, though according to academic Nathan M. Kaganoff, he diverted from typical Orthodoxy in his relationship with Marx and The Temple.<sup>52</sup> In 1937, representing Orthodox rabbis of the Southeast, he attended the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of America.<sup>53</sup>

Geffen, like Epstein, promoted Zionism and the making of a Palestinian nationhood for Jews. Throughout his career he served with Zionist organizations such as the Atlanta Zionist Organization, Keren Hayesod, the Jewish National Fund with Epstein, and as president of Mizrachi for three years.<sup>54</sup> Like Epstein, Geffen also spoke on numerous occasions for Young Judaea. Praising the Zionist efforts of Atlanta, Geffen's devotion to the cause became obvious when he exclaimed that "I feel that every Jew should deem it a privilege to do his share towards the rebuilding of a homeland in Palestine, the eternal home of our nation."<sup>55</sup>

Though Epstein and Geffen worked alongside one another in a variety of common interests, the relationship had initially been one of coolness. Epstein explained that Geffen treated him with veiled contempt in the early years, though later apologizing and a mutual respect came to fruition.<sup>56</sup> Regardless of the vast differences between Atlanta's Jewish leaders, they worked together in a variety of organizations, providing relief for American and European Jews alike. On numerous occasions, they came together to celebrate events within one another's congregation or mourn mutual associates. One such example occurred with the death of New York philanthropist Nathan Straus, who passed in 1931. Hirsch, Marx, Epstein,

---

<sup>53</sup> "Rabbi Geffen Attends the Convention." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), Mar 14, 1937. Accessed March 9, 2016. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi1937-0185.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>

<sup>54</sup> Kaganoff, "An Orthodox Rabbinate in the South: Tobias Geffen, 1870-1970," 68.

<sup>55</sup> "Local Leaders Acclaim Zionist District's Efforts." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 22, 1939. Accessed March 9, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1939/asi1939-0335.mets.xml;query=geffen+zionist;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>.

<sup>56</sup> Harry H. Epstein Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018.

<https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/Oral-Histories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-Harry-H.>

and Geffen took part in a commemorative service at Ahavath Achim, honoring Straus's achievements.<sup>57</sup> In the same year, Hirsch, Marx, and Epstein joined forces with other Jewish Atlanta leaders in celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Atlanta chapter of Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA). The AZA claimed to "strengthen Jewish affiliations, abate race prejudice, and stimulate interest in humanitarian, educational, and philanthropic endeavors as its sponsoring order, the B'nai B'rith."<sup>58</sup>

## Teamwork

Due to the anti-Semitic preaching of Hitler taking hold within Germany in the years before his ascension to the Chancellorship, many organizations began to combine forces to eliminate confusion. In 1932, Epstein took part in the creation of the Atlanta United Jewish Appeal (UJA), with the intent to raise funds for the combined efforts of the JDC, B'nai B'rith, and the Jewish Agency for Palestine.<sup>59</sup> Putting differences aside, Hirsch, Marx, and Geffen would serve with Epstein on the committee for the UJA. The three leading rabbis all commended the formation of the organization, despite initial skepticism. Morris Rothenberg, New Yorker with the American Palestine Campaign, praised Atlanta for its dedication and noted that "in hundreds of American communities Zionists and non-Zionists alike are rallying to this sacred cause. The United Jewish Appeal of Atlanta dominantly important in the national structure, may well sound the clarion note for 1932, and provide new inspiration for the Southland."<sup>60</sup> Many

---

<sup>57</sup> "Southern Notes." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 28, 1931. Accessed February 38, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1931/asi1931-0024.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.

<sup>58</sup> "A Review of the A.Z.A." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 11, 1931. Accessed February 27, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1931/asi1931-0246.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.

<sup>59-57</sup> "Atlanta's United Jewish Appeal," *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 1931. Accessed February 27, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1932/asi1932-0004.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>. Epstein, Harry H. Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/Oral-Histories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-Harry-H>.

Reform Jews, like Armand May, avoided donating to organizations that included Palestine. However, with the onset of World War II and in the years following, Zionism gained support among Reform congregations. Marx, on the other hand, remained steadfast in his opposition.

Due to his involvement with Jewish agencies on a national level, most letters through 1939 had been addressed to Hirsch as the contact in Atlanta for Jewish relief efforts. Throughout 1930, Hirsch received a multitude of correspondence from Bressler, pleading with Atlanta to help raise funds for the worsening crisis in Eastern Europe. However, due to both the Great Depression and the building of a new synagogue, spare funds proved to be difficult to come by. Bressler wrote to Hirsch to express his gratitude for Hirsch's assistance in getting the Atlanta community together to discuss raising relief funds, stating that Hirsch's concern "indicates, if indeed any further evidence of it were necessary, that you are heart and soul with us and that your sympathetic interest and cooperation are enlisted in behalf of the great cause we both have the privilege to serve."<sup>61</sup> Though not immune or insensitive to the plight of their European brethren, Atlanta Jews focused on internal situations, a factor that would change in a few short years.

The situation in Europe took a drastic turn for the worse when Hitler ascended to a position of power in January of 1933. Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, national chairman of the JDC in New York, wrote to Hirsch in February of 1933 explaining the worsening circumstances and informed Hirsch that the theoretical noose around the necks of the Jews in Europe continued to tighten. He explained that "their right to engage in any type of employment is being narrowed constantly with unconcealed discrimination. Thousands of Jewish homes are without food or heat, in an atmosphere haunted by disturbance and riot."<sup>62</sup> Whereas relief efforts had initially been raised to benefit the Jews of Europe regardless of their location, the rise of Hitler to

---

<sup>61</sup> "Allied Jewish Campaign," David M. Bressler to Harold Hirsch. April 15, 1930. New York, New York.

<sup>62</sup> "The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee." Jonah B. Wise to Harold Hirsch. February 3, 1933. New York, New York.

Chancellor led to a more focused drive, centering on those in Germany under the Nazi regime.

In response to a request for assistance with relief from Wise, Hirsch expressed his sorrow at the news of the treatment of the Jews in Europe and concluded by informing Wise that he would be “taking steps today to form a committee here in Atlanta in order to give aid to the situation through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.”<sup>63</sup> The men of this meeting, to include Hirsch and Marx, created the Atlanta Committee for German Jewish Relief, adding another organization to an already long list, where a united front had not yet been established.

In April of 1933, the Nazi regime attempted to enforce a boycott of Jewish owned businesses to kick start their era of prejudice. Professor Doris L. Bergen explained that using political policy and mass propaganda, the Nazi regime had the ability to instill a sense of hate among non-Jews, generating an atmosphere of anger and chaos.<sup>64</sup> The efforts of the Jewish communities within the United States attempted to bring the news of this travesty to the American people. Angered over the boycotts in Germany, prominent Atlanta philanthropist Victor Kriegshaber, sent a memo to Hirsch asking that he attend a meeting in New York with the intent to confirm Atlanta’s agreement to boycott German owned businesses within the United States.<sup>65</sup> However, reception and action to this news fell on nearly deaf ears and had a limited effect. In *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*, Saul Friedlander explained that, “most of the Jewish organizations in the United States were opposed to mass demonstrations and economic action, mainly for fear of embarrassing President Roosevelt and the State Department.”<sup>66</sup> While a good number of people did regard the idea as unethical, as well as

---

<sup>63</sup> Harold Hirsch to Jonah B. Wise. May 20, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>64</sup> Doris L. Bergen, *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 76.

<sup>65</sup> “Atlanta Committee for German-Jewish Relief.” Victor Kriegshaber to Harold Hirsch. August 21, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>66</sup> Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution and the Years of Extermination, 1933-1945*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 9.

exacerbating an already sensitive situation, many agreed that they had no other recourse.

Hitler's rise to power also caused the focus of most relief agencies in a direction towards the suffering of Jews within Germany. Those with concerns on other fronts soon found that donations slowed, yet they persisted in their requests. In the years leading up to World War II and the Holocaust, most Reform Jews stood against Zionism. In response, Louis Lipsky of the American Palestine Campaign sent out correspondence to the leaders of Atlanta questioning their decision. Lipsky expressed his irritation with Atlanta for their lack of contribution and exclaimed that, "I cannot believe that the Jews of Atlanta are so unmoved by the present situation in Europe that they will refuse to make an effort to participate in a solution of their problem."<sup>67</sup> In light of this, prominent Atlanta philanthropist Victor Kriegshaber sent a missive to Hirsch in June of 1933 noting that he did not believe funds should be allocated to anything but German Jewish relief, yet he wanted to verify if that stance should be taken, to which Hirsch wholeheartedly agreed.<sup>68</sup> However, the pleas from Lipsky continued to arrive seeking funds to go towards the resettlement of Jews in Palestine. Attempts at combining relief effort forces were surrounded with inner conflict, with differing groups arguing the importance over another for the cause they supported, an issue that persisted for several years. However, Atlanta humanitarian efforts limited their scope from the global scale to a centralized point of getting as many Jews out of Germany as possible.

Despite worldwide attention now focused on Germany and the Hitler regime, raising funds remained a major hurdle for Atlanta to overcome. Kriegshaber sent correspondence to Hirsch in June of 1933 to bring forth ideas to garner additional attention to the problems overseas. Kriegshaber recommended that they take their plight public to bring more focus to the problems at hand, and though they would refrain from asking for

---

<sup>67</sup> "American Palestine Campaign of the Jewish Agency for Palestine." Louis Lipsky to Harold Hirsch. April 26, 1933. New York, New York.

<sup>68</sup> Victor Kriegshaber to Harold Hirsch. June 7, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia. Harold Hirsch to Victor Kriegshaber. June 7, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

assistance outside of the Jewish community, active and public appeal could stir the movement of more Atlanta Jews.<sup>69</sup> Kriegshaber went to immediate work to get more publicity for their campaign to raise money for the German Jews. Toward the end of June of 1933, he sent a letter to William Cole James of the *Atlanta Journal*. Kriegshaber expressed his concerns over what Jews of Germany had to face and that though the American Jews had been doing what they could to assist, publication of the persecution might aid in garnering assistance from outside the Jewish community.<sup>70</sup> However, the problem of anti-Semitism and support for Hitler within the United States made this debate hard to answer. Despite this, assistance from outside of the Jewish community did seek out Hirsch in the summer of 1934. Robert A. Ashworth, who presided as secretary for The American Committee for German Refugees sent Hirsch a letter asking what they could do to assist while also being apologetic to the lack of aid from Christians across the nation.<sup>71</sup>

Continued persecution of German Jews, which showed no indication of lessening, made the idea of a haven for the Jewish people more paramount among Zionists. In 1935, Atlanta participated in the Jewish National Fund (JNF) that had been created in 1901 to procure land within Palestine. Both Epstein and Geffen worked on the committee to ensure the program's success. Though not involved with JNF in its first days in Atlanta, Hirsch eventually began to attend meetings and events. Marx, as well as The Temple, remained unaffiliated with the campaign drive, which spanned over the course of a few months.

The formation of the Jewish Welfare Fund (JWF) in 1936 would be one of the most monumental contributions during the life of Hirsch. In an interview with Bauman, Epstein praised Hirsch for both his personality and his contribution to the JWF, remarking that "Harold Hirsch was a person that you couldn't help but respect... If it weren't for Harold Hirsch, we wouldn't have the Jewish Welfare Federation [Jewish Welfare fund]"

---

<sup>69</sup> "Atlanta Committee for German-Jewish Relief." Victor Kriegshaber to Harold Hirsch. June 20, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>70</sup> Victor Kriegshaber to William Cole Jones. June 20, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>71</sup> "The American Christian Committee for German Refugees." Robert A. Ashworth to Harold Hirsch. June 8, 1934. Atlanta, Georgia.

that we have now.”<sup>72</sup> In a case of exceptionalism, the JWF under the leadership of Hirsch became a model for the nation, with states following in its footsteps to form similar organizations. Following the success of Atlanta’s drive, Hirsch stepped in to assist Nashville, cementing his place as true leader. For his assistance, Nashville awarded him the Flowers-to-the-Living award.<sup>73</sup> The creation of the JFW allowed citizens to donate to a single entity, omitting the need to shuffle through the increasing number of requests, and uniting the efforts of the Atlanta Jewish Community.

The JWF became one of several organizations that saw cooperation between the Orthodox and Reform congregations, with Rabbis Marx, Epstein, and Geffen working together under the guidance of Hirsch. In his quest to see to the success of the fund, Hirsch appealed to all Jews of Atlanta, regardless of their sect, giving speeches at Ahavath Achim and Shearith Israel. In addressing the congregation of Ahavath Achim, Hirsch exclaimed that “we are calling upon you to enjoy our united heritage... You will respond. You will cooperate with your fellow Jews. You will see to it that our brother will thank God that he is living as the sun rises each morning.”<sup>74</sup> As the divisions within the Jewish community continued to wage, Hirsch’s success in the drive aided in decreasing the level of tension. In discussing the skill of Hirsch, *The Southern Israelite* noted that “into a community that is divided by shades of difference, he has brought together a sense of order and coordination.”<sup>75</sup>

With the Nazi regime maintaining a solid hold in Germany, the position of those who had stood against Zionism only a few years before began to find their stances changing. Now a year old, the JWF commenced to

---

<sup>72</sup> Epstein, Harry H. Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018.

<https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/Oral-Histories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-Harry-H>.

<sup>73</sup> “Repeats Success.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 26, 1936. Accessed March 4, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0205.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>74</sup> “Nation Watches Progress of Atlanta Welfare Fund.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 17, 1936. Accessed March 5, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0109.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>75</sup> “Divided or United?” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 10, 1936. Access March 4, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi1936-0102.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.

mingle with Zionism. Hosted at the Standard Club in January of 1937, the JWF listened to a speech given by Zionist Ben Mossinsohn.<sup>76</sup> Zionism marked a rare case where Marx and Hirsch did not walk down the same path. While Marx never faltered in his admonishment of Zionism, Hirsch took a more moderate view, serving on non-Zionist committees as early as 1931.<sup>77</sup> By 1937, however, the opinion of Hirsch seemed to have altered to more Zionist approach as he stood alongside Epstein for the United Palestine Appeal, in which both had been named to the board.<sup>78</sup> Throughout the year, the barriers between the groups began to disintegrate as the Jewish community of Atlanta worked towards union. The success of the Jewish Welfare Fund proved to many that even when divided, the Jews of Atlanta could overcome and achieve a semblance of a unified front.

National recognition for Hirsch, Marx, and Epstein came in 1938, with all three being named to the “Who’s Who in American Jewry.”<sup>79</sup> Geffen, noticeably absent from the list, devoted his time and energy on the local level, rather than the national. Due to the success of the previous three years with the JWF, the 1939 campaign looked to increase its contributions. The creation of the JFW and its subsequent spread across the nation remained a testament to the drive of the Jewish leaders of Atlanta.

Atlanta felt the blow of devastation in the fall of 1939 when Hirsch, who had been battling ill health, succumbed to his afflictions. The loss of Hirsch struck the community profoundly, as he had dedicated his adult life

---

<sup>76</sup> “Welfare Fund Hears Noted Zionist.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), January 29, 1937. Access March 10, 2018.

[http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi1937-0021.mets.xml;query=jewish welfare fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up](http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi1937-0021.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up).

<sup>77</sup> “Dr. Adler Heads 43 American Non-Zionist Agency Members.” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), July 1, 1931. Accessed March 09, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/1931/07/01/archive/dr-adler-heads-43-american-non-zionist-agency-members>.

<sup>78</sup> “Georgians on Palestine Board.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 12, 1937. Accessed March 8, 2018. [http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi1937-0033.mets.xml;query=jewish welfare fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up](http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi1937-0033.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up).

<sup>79</sup> “Twenty-Eight Atlantans Selected for ‘Who’s Who.’” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 4, 1938. Accessed March 5, 2018.

<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0057.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.

to aiding others, despite his own failing well-being. The *Southern Israelite* eloquently wrote that “his latest and greatest achievements in the field of Jewish cooperation was the organization of the Jewish Welfare Fund...with the directness in approach, energy, and enthusiasm that characterized all his efforts, he plunged into the task of creating order out of chaos in the raising of funds for the Jewish causes.”<sup>80</sup> Marx, in a moving written eulogy to Hirsch’s life, explained that Hirsch “was ever mindful of his Jewish heritage. He was unflinching in his devotion to his religion and his people. Neither his place in his profession nor his established security in the educational and civic life of his state and community lured him from his attachments to Judaism and its place in the American scene.”<sup>81</sup>

The leaders of Atlanta gave the Jewish community the best of themselves. They set the standard of selflessness, dedicating their lives to the betterment of others. Millions of Jews lost their lives during the Holocaust, making those that had been saved by brave individuals that much more important and precious to humanity. Remembering and studying what made such people rise to the occasion should be one of the greatest privileges in which a person can participate. The Jewish Welfare Fund stands today as the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, serving Jews both at home and abroad. The actions of Hirsch, Marx, Epstein, and Geffen in the years preceding one of the darkest moments in history made a significant difference for those seeking shelter from the vile prejudices of Nazi Germany. In a time of desperate need, the Jewish leaders of Atlanta set aside their differences to form an alliance that not only needed to last through the war, but the following generations to come.

---

<sup>80</sup> “Death of Harold Hirsch Closes Brilliant Career.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), October 6, 1939, 1-2. Accessed July 09, 2017. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1939/asi1939-0402.mets.xml#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>81</sup> Marx, “Harold Hirsch,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, 171.

## Bibliography

## Primary Sources:

- "A Review of the A.Z.A." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 11, 1931.  
 Accessed February 27, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1931/asi19310246.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- "Allied Jewish Campaign," David M. Bressler to Harold Hirsch. April 15, 1930. New York, New York.
- "American Palestine Campaign of the Jewish Agency for Palestine." Louis Lipsky to Harold Hirsch. April 26, 1933. New York, New York.
- "The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee." Jonah B. Wise to Harold Hirsch. February 3, 1933. New York, New York.
- "Atlanta Committee for German-Jewish Relief." Victor Kriegshaber to Harold Hirsch. August 21, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.
- "The American Christian Committee for German Refugees." Robert A. Ashworth to Harold Hirsch. June 8, 1934. Atlanta, Georgia.
- "Atlantans Will Attend Three National Conventions." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), January 13, 1939. Accessed February 28, 2018. "Zionists Here Name Delegates." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 10, 1938. Accessed March 01, 2018. <http://newspapers.pdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0240.pdf>.
- "Atlanta's United Jewish Appeal," *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 1931.  
 Accessed February 27, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1932/asi19320004.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- Borsten, Orin. "Modernizing Traditional Judaism." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 1936, 17-18. Accessed March 01, 2018.  
[http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360369.mets.xml;query=Modernizing Traditional Judaism;brand=Israelitebrand#page/n0/mode/1up](http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360369.mets.xml;query=Modernizing+Traditional+Judaism;brand=Israelitebrand#page/n0/mode/1up).
- "The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee." Paul Baerwald to Harold Hirsch. February 13, 1933. New York, New York.
- "Bressler Outlines Plans of Allied Jewish Campaign, in Broadcast over Weaf." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. March 03, 1930. Accessed March 02, 2018.  
<https://www.jta.org/1930/03/03/archive/bressler-outlines-plans-ofallied-jewishcampaign-in-broadcast-over-weaf>.

- "Coca-Cala Executive Praised at Lions Club." *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. January 01, 1934. Accessed March 02, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/1934/01/01/archive/coca-cala-executive-praised-at-lions-club>.
- David Marx to John M. Slaton. May 27, 1915. Atlanta, Georgia.
- "Death of Harold Hirsch Closes Brilliant Career." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), October 6, 1939, 1-2. Accessed July 09, 2017. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1939/asi19390402.mets.xml#page/1/mode/1up>.
- "Delegates to Convention Elected by Local Zionists." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 28, 1935. Accessed March 01, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1935/asi19350246.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>. <http://newspaperspdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi19380240.pdf>
- "Divided or United?" *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 10, 1936. Access March 4, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360102.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- "Dr. Adler Heads 43 American Non-Zionist Agency Members." *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), July 1, 1931. Accessed March 09, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/1931/07/01/archive/dr-adler-heads-43-american-non-zionist-agency-members>.
- Epstein, Harry H. Interview by Mark K. Bauman. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Cuba-Family-Archives/OralHistories/ID/794/Epstein-Rabbi-HarryH>.
- "Georgians on Palestine Board." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 12, 1937. Accessed March 8, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi19370033.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- Harold Hirsch to Jonah B. Wise. May 20, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.
- "Local Leaders Acclaim Zionist District's Efforts." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), September 22, 1939. Accessed March 9, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1939/asi19390335.mets.xml;query=geffen+zionist;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- Marx, David. "Harold Hirsch," *American Jewish Year Book*. 5701 ed. Vol. 42. 1940-1941. Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee, 1940.

- “Nation Watches Progress of Atlanta Welfare Fund.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 17, 1936. Accessed March 5, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360109.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- “Rabbi Geffen Attends the Convention.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), Mar 14, 1937. Accessed March 9, 2016.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi19370185.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- "Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, Edwar Kaufman to Open Welfare Fund Drive Here." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 10, 1936. Accessed February 18, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360097.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- “Repeats Success.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 26, 1936. Accessed March 4, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1936/asi19360205.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- Secretary of the JDC to Harold Hirsch. January 14, 1919. Atlanta, Georgia.
- “Southern Notes.” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 28, 1931. Accessed February 38, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1931/asi19310024.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.
- T.J. Tobias, Jr. “Harold Hirsch: ‘Georgia’s Most Glorious Alumnus,” *Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), April 1933. Accessed July 8, 2017.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1933/asi19330041.mets.xml#page/1/mode/1up>.
- “Twenty-Eight Atlantans Selected for ‘Who’s Who.’” *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), February 4, 1938. Accessed March 5, 2018.  
<http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1938/asi19380057.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- “United Jewish Appeal.” Joseph C. Hyman to Harold Hirsch. March 7, 1934. Atlanta, Georgia.
- Victor Kriegshaber to Harold Hirsch. June 7, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia. Harold Hirsch to Victor Kriegshaber. June 7, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.
- Victor Kriegshaber to William Cole Jones. June 20, 1933. Atlanta, Georgia.

- "Victory for Religious Tolerance in Georgia." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 08, 1933. Accessed July 10, 2017. <http://www.jta.org/1933/01/08/archive/victory-for-religioustolerance-in-georgia>.
- "Welfare Fund Hears Noted Zionist." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), January 29, 1937. Access March 10, 2018. <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1937/asi19370021.mets.xml;query=jewish+welfare+fund;brand=israelite-brand#page/1/mode/1up>.
- "Zionists Here Name Delegates." *The Southern Israelite* (Atlanta), June 10, 1938. Accessed March 01, 2018. <http://newspapers-pdf.galileo.usg.edu/asi/asi1938/asi1938-0240.pdf>.

Secondary Sources:

- Bauman, Mark K. "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: The German Jews from the Civil War through the Progressive Era," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Fall, 1998): 533-558.
- Bauman, Mark K. and Arnold Shankman. "The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker: The Case of David Marx." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2 (Spring, 1983): 51-68.
- Bauman, Mark K. "Role Theory and History: The Illustration of Ethnic Brokerage in the Atlanta Jewish Community in the Era of Transition and Conflict." *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 71-95.
- Bergen, Doris L. *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).
- Berman, Aaron. *Nazism the Jews and American Zionism*. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University, 1990).
- Dinnerstein, Leonard. *The Leo Frank Case*. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008).
- Epstein, Harry H. *Judaism and Progress*. (New York, New York: Bloch Publishing, 1935).
- Friedlander, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution and the Years of Extermination, 1933-1945*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009).
- Hertzberg, Steven. *Strangers Within the City Gates: The Jews of Atlanta 1845-1915*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Jewish Publication Society, 1978).
- Kaganoff, Nathan M. "An Orthodox Rabbinate in the South: Tobias Geffen, 1870-1970." *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 56-70.

- Levy, Eugene. "'Is the Jew a White Man?': Press Reaction to the Leo Frank Case, 1913-1915." *Phylon* 35 (1974): 212-22.
- Melnick, Jeffrey. "'The Night Witch Did It': Villainy and Narrative in the Leo Frank Case." *American Literary History* 12, (Spring-Summer, 2000): 113-129.
- Shankman, Arnold. "Atlanta Jewry 1900-1930." *American Jewish Archives* 25 (November 1973): 131-55.

Websites:

- "Encyclopedia Judaica: Atlanta, Georgia." Atlanta. Accessed February 17, 2018. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/atlanta>.
- Goldwasser, Willie. "Harry Epstein's Obituary on Atlanta Journal-Constitution." Atlanta Journal Constitution. Accessed March 7, 2018. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/atlanta/obituary.aspx?n=harry-epstein&pid=983502>.
- "History of JDC." JDC Archives. Accessed July 14, 2017. <http://archives.jdc.org/history-of-jdc/>.
- History. Accessed February 15, 2018. <https://www.the-temple.org/history>.
- Staff, MJL. "The American Jewish Committee." My Jewish Learning. Accessed February 18, 2018. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-american-jewish-committee/>.
- "The Temple." Rabbi David Marx. Accessed July 01, 2017. <http://thetemple.org/AboutUs/History/RabbiDavidMarx.aspx>.

## Navigating Intellectual and Traditional Crossroads: Plotinus, Sethian Gnostics, and Early Trinitarians

Benjamin Hatfield

**Abstract:** “Navigating Intellectual and Traditional Crossroads: Plotinus, Sethian Gnostics, and Early Trinitarians” examines how various intellectual and religious traditions in Late Antiquity accommodated seemingly conflicting ideas. Three traditions—Platonism, Gnosticism, and Trinitarian Christianity—had to respond to general inconsistencies and the opposing worldviews of the wider Greco-Roman world that simply could not go unchallenged. This paper argues that modern religions could take similar steps to reconcile their own traditional worldviews with those of modern society while retaining sacrosanct convictions about the nature of the divine.

Throughout human history, as new ideas are created and spread, individuals inevitably find themselves standing, intellectually speaking, between several opposing worldviews and are then faced with the task of somehow reconciling these various systems of truth. In the twenty-first century, due to globalization as well as new discoveries in science and archaeology, traditional worldviews are regularly challenged. In the American Southeast, for example, religious views regarding human origins are often understood to be contradictory to the scientific theory of evolution. While both the religious and scientific views are valuable, one cannot help but notice the glaring differences between the creationist and evolutionist perspectives. In this paper, we will examine a select group of philosophers and theologians who navigated an equally significant intellectual crossroads in Late Antiquity (3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> c.) with the intention of discovering possible methods that we might use today as we attempt to resolve conflicting foundational conceptions of reality.

As a result of Hellenization following the conquest of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.E.), the intellectual culture of the Near East in Late Antiquity was dominated by the works of seminal Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.), Zeno of Citium (334-262 B.C.E.), and, of course, Plato (429-347 B.C.E.). In this context, various traditions of

Judaism and early Christianity attempted to reconcile aspects of Greek and Jewish theological perspectives, while still others understood them to be fundamentally incompatible. This investigation begins with one such purist of Greek philosophy, Plotinus (3<sup>rd</sup> c.), before exploring the more syncretic developments of the Sethian Gnostics and the early Christian thinkers Victorinus (3<sup>rd</sup> c.) and Saint Augustine of Hippo (4<sup>th</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> c.).

## Plotinus

Plotinus was born in Egypt in 204 C.E. He is widely considered the father of Neoplatonism, though he would have called himself a Platonist. His writings are contained in the *Enneads*, which was edited by his student Porphyry in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E. Plotinus's ideas had a profound impact on subsequent Christian theologians, in their conception of God, yet he himself did not advocate for the Christian or Jewish God. The way that Plotinus conceived of perfection and creation could not be reconciled with the creation narratives found in Genesis. In fact, the most striking aspect of Plotinus's philosophy that truly separates him and Neoplatonism from contemporary and subsequent thinkers was his rejection of the idea that a conscious, divine being planned and directed the creation of the universe. He also had different ideas about how mankind could connect with the perfect entity.

Plotinus's main ideas were based around three primary underlying realities or hypostases: the One, *nous* (Intelligence or Mind), and *psyche* (Soul). The One is not a divinity, not God, in the modern Christian understanding. According to Plotinus, the One is perfectly simple and ineffable, and it transcends activity, mind, and thought. By saying that the One is perfectly simple, it can be used as an Aristotelian First Principle, the one from which all else originated. Therefore, all that exists in the world emanated from the One, and the further something is from the One, the more inferior it becomes. From the One came *nous*, the divine mind or intelligence, and from *nous* came *psyche*, the soul. The last of the emanations, the lowest one which proceeded from the soul, is matter. While the One caused all things to come into existence, it did not create the world. In fact, the One

is not conscious of anything, not even of itself, since self-recognition would presuppose a duality; but the One is pure and undifferentiated.<sup>1</sup>

Plotinus did not support the notion that creation could have been divinely planned or that the One could have had a direct and active hand in creating the universe the way a potter creates pots. The One is perfect, and so it is unchanging. A divinely planned creation would represent a change in the One, in which the One would have to decide to create the world, going from a stage where it is not creating, to creating, and then not creating once again. Such a change would indicate either: 1) an improvement, meaning that the One was not already perfect or 2) a deterioration, meaning that things should have been left the way that they were, so the One is not actually perfect. According to Plotinus, both of these ideas are absurd and untenable. A preconceived plan of creation “would suggest something outside the divine when there was nothing outside it.”<sup>2</sup> If something were outside of the Divine, it would mean that there is a beginning to time, or that at one time the world did not exist, ideas that Plotinus, like most Platonists, rejected.<sup>3</sup> The One exists, it always has, and it always will. In fact, the One is beyond existence. All that exists in the material world emanated out from the ineffable and transcendent One.

Vital to Plotinus’s philosophy is the soteriological goal of achieving the union of the Soul with the One. If we are to use light to represent the One, that which is closest to the light is brighter than that which is farther away. Matter, which is below the Soul, is farthest from the One, and so it is the darkest. The objective is to free the Soul from the darkness of the material world and enter into union with the One. The imperfections of this world stem from its materiality, the lowest of the emanations, not the malice of some malevolent being—Satan in Christianity, Yaldabaoth in the Sethian Gnostic tradition. To come into union with the One, the soul must shake its desire for earthly things, and when it apprehends the light of the One, it becomes like the One. Therefore, as opposed to the Christian God, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Willis Barnstone, ed. *The Other Bible* (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 2005), 725.

<sup>2</sup> E.P. Meijering, “God, Cosmos, History. Christian and Neoplatonic Views on Divine Revelation”, *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol 28, no. 4 (Dec. 1974), 250.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 250.

One does not seek you; you have to seek the One instead. Plotinus compares someone who strives for worldly things, striving for them as if they are reality, to a man who grasps for the beautiful reflection on the water, when he says, "...one that is held by material beauty will not break free and shall be precipitated, not in body but in Soul, down to the dark depths loathed of the Intellective-Being (*nous*)..."<sup>4</sup> It is foolish to want worldly delights, because, hearkening back to Plato's forms, the things of this world, no matter how beautiful, are merely representatives of the forms, not reality itself. By going into union with the One, from which all else emanates out, is to see the actual forms directly, not mere representatives of those forms in the material world. With his emphasis on escaping materiality, Plotinus's philosophy sounds self-centered, concerned only for the individual soul and not for well-being of others. However, after the soul has achieved union with the One, she—the soul is personified as being female—should return to the world in order to describe her experience to others.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, while Plotinus mainly focused on the transcendent reality, the world of forms, he also emphasized the need to act virtuously in the corporeal world, in spite of its imperfections and inferiority to the world above.

Plotinus did not feel the need to try to accommodate the foundational elements of other religious traditions into his philosophy. He did incorporate the ideas of other Greek philosophical traditions, but in a Platonic mold. He probably believed that his ideas—the Three Primary Hypostases, mystical union with the One—were all implied by Plato. Ultimately, Plotinus managed to stay true to the core principles of Platonism, even if his ideas led Platonism down a new path.

### Plotinus and Gnosticism

Plotinus was very critical of the Gnostics, who flourished in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries C.E. While it is not quite clear what Gnostic sect he was targeting, one group that he most certainly knew about was the group today known as the Sethians, and it is well known that a number of Sethian

---

<sup>4</sup> *Enneads* I. 6. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Euree Song, "Ethics of Descent in Plotinus", *Hermathena*, No. 187 (Winter 2009), 33.

manuscripts were circulating among his students.<sup>6</sup> The Sethians saw themselves as the offspring of Seth, the son of Adam and Eve.<sup>7</sup> They also frequently praised a being called Barbelo. The name “Sethian” is a typological category used by modern scholars to describe the authors and followers of up to sixteen treatises, most of which come from the Nag Hammadi library in Egypt. None of the authors of these treatises refers to themselves as “Sethians,” although early Christian church fathers did use the term in their polemics against this heresy.<sup>8</sup>

For the Gnostics, the Father of Light, or Invisible Spirit, was the highest being, and from him came a number of lesser divinities, like Sophia (Wisdom) and Barbelo (Forethought). The Gnostics themselves had a kind of Trinity: The Father (Invisible Spirit), the Mother (Barbelo), and the Child (Allogenes). These three established the Four Luminaries, from whom came many Aeons, one of whom was Sophia.<sup>9</sup> Barbelo was particularly praised, Many Christian polemicists referred to the Sethians as “Barbeloites” or “Barbelognostics” because of their devotion to this divinity.<sup>10</sup> The Gnostics believed that the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Jews, was not the same God who sent Jesus Christ down to save humanity. In fact, it seemed inconceivable to the Gnostics that the One, the Father of Light, would create an imperfect world with so many evils and problems in it. That is why, from the Gnostic perspective, some other vile, abhorrent being, one not associated with the Father of Light, must be responsible for the creation of this world, where we are imprisoned by materiality. So it is that Sophia acted out of her own accord to spawn Yaldabaoth (meaning “child of chaos”), a foolish and arrogant being, and he created and rules over the material world. This Gnostic creation myth is based on the creation story in Genesis, but the story gets turned on its head. For example, “God” (Yaldabaoth) modeled Adam, but

---

<sup>6</sup> John Turner, “Zostrianos”, Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 541-542.

<sup>7</sup> Marvin Meyer “Literature of Gnostic Wisdom: Introduction” Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer ed. *The Gnostic Bible* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2009), 109.

<sup>8</sup> John Turner, “The Sethian School of Gnostic Thought” Marvin Meyer, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 784.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 785.

<sup>10</sup> Marvin Meyer, 109.

he did not become a living soul until the Spirit (Barbelo) came to dwell within him. This same Spirit later came in the form of the Snake to Adam and Eve to instruct them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, freeing them from ignorance. Yaldabaoth, however, declared that he was the one true god out of his arrogance and ignorance, for which he is later reprimanded.<sup>11</sup> In this version of the Garden of Eden myth, the snake is actually benevolent, giving humanity knowledge, similar to the role played by Prometheus, who in Greek mythology gave man fire, which symbolizes knowledge, in spite of Zeus. Rather than introducing sin and death into the world, the serpent is the champion of humanity, and, like Prometheus, is then, in the Biblical narrative, punished by God. The Gnostics valued *gnosis*, or knowledge, so a god who tried to keep his creations ignorant must be detested. In fact, in *The Secret Book of John*, Yaldabaoth defiles Eve to produce Yahweh and Elohim, who are also called Cain and Abel, respectively, giving further reason to loath the creator.<sup>12</sup> This story of the rape of Eve also elevated Seth to a higher level of importance, since he was the first son of both the first man and first woman. Since the Sethians believed themselves to be the spiritual offspring of Seth, this would put them in a more distinguished position.

The Sethian Gnostics and Plotinus described the divine in familiar ways. As has been stated above, Plotinus viewed the world as emanating from the One, with matter, from which earth and our bodies are made, being the last emanation from the One. The Gnostic description of the Father of Light (or, the One) is strikingly similar to Plotinus's One. Take, for example, this description from *The Secret Book of John* that claims that the One is:

illimitable, since there is nothing before it to limit it,  
 unfathomable, since there is nothing before it to fathom it  
 immeasurable, since there was nothing before it to measure it,  
 invisible, since nothing has seen it,  
 eternal, since it exists eternally  
 unutterable, since nothing could comprehend it to utter it,

---

<sup>11</sup> Bentley Layton, trans. "The Hypostasis of the Archons", Willis Barnstone, ed. *The Other Bible*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 2005), 76-80.

<sup>12</sup> Marvin Meyer, trans. "The Secret Book of John", Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, ed. *The Gnostic Bible* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2009), 179-180.

unnamable, since there is nothing before it to give it a name.<sup>13</sup>

Here, the tendency to describe the One in negative terms, explaining the glory of the One by describing what it is not, is on full display. In fact, Plotinus appears to advocate for such in his description of the One, claiming that when describing the One as “oneness”, “goodness”, or “beauty”, such discourse is anagogical, not a literal description of the One.<sup>14</sup> For Plotinus, the One is “beyond all statement: any affirmation is of a thing” and we try “to indicate, in our own feeble way, something concerning it” but the One is beyond all things.<sup>15</sup> The Gnostic description of the One lines up well with Plotinus’s in this respect.

The Gnostics, however, clearly had a very negative view of the *demiurge* (craftsman), the creator of the world. The Sethians interpreted the Hebrew God as an evil god (Yaldabaoth), but he was not the highest god. The highest god, the Father of Light, had no hand in creating Yaldabaoth. Sophia, an Aeon within Eleleth (one of the Four Luminaries) wanted to create “something like herself” but she did not have the approval of the Father.<sup>16</sup> Sophia’s creation, called Yaldabaoth, Sakla, or Samael, created the earth and ruled over it. He tried to keep Adam and Eve ignorant and he also claimed that he was the one and only God, leading, of course, to the confusion of the Jews and Trinitarian Christians, who have fallen for his lies. The Gnostic disdain for the material world stemmed from their idea of this vile creator, who has imprisoned humanity on earth. Gnostic pessimism really upset Plotinus. Plotinus objected to the idea that such an evil entity created the world. Matter, from which the world is made, is evil, not because of some malevolent being, but as a result of its separation from the One, which is perfect. Plotinus was not influenced by, and therefore did not have to explain, the Jewish scriptures like the Sethians did, but to suggest that the source of all things is evil is to deny the intrinsic beauty and perfection of the forms. While Plotinus agreed that the world is

---

<sup>13</sup> Meyer, 160.

<sup>14</sup> Donald L. Ross, “Thomizing Plotinus: A Critique of Professor Gerson”, *Phronesis*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (1996), 200.

<sup>15</sup> *Enneads*, V.3.13.

<sup>16</sup> Marvin Meyer, trans. “The Secret Book of John” Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer ed. *The Gnostic Bible* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2009), 166.

inferior to the intelligible realm, the realm of Forms, this world is the best possible imitation of those forms. Therefore, one should accept the ordering of the world, and should not hate the creator of the world. The material world still exhibits the beauty of the world of forms, even if it is an imperfect copy.<sup>17</sup>

Plotinus also disapproved of confining divine revelation to one man—Jesus Christ—as the Gnostics did.<sup>18</sup> Delegating divine revelation to just one man might suggest that the powers of the One are finite, a criticism that, of course, could have been levelled at the Christians as well. In the Sethian tradition, Barbelo sometimes made appearances in the primordial world, such as in the Garden of Eden, but her final appearance in contemporary times comes in her masculine guise as *Logos* (Word), Seth, or Jesus.<sup>19</sup> She is the one who embodied Jesus Christ and was sent down to reveal secret knowledge to humanity. The Sethian tradition, therefore, identified the serpent in the Garden of Eden with Jesus Christ, as Jesus was just the male guise of Barbelo, who also inhabited the serpent. Both Jesus and the serpent gave humanity knowledge, or *gnosis*, so both deserved to be revered.

The Gnostic creation narrative illustrates how the Gnostics applied Platonic principles to Jewish scriptures and also the creativity involved in reinterpreting the scriptures. The Old Testament God was, in many ways, fickle and wrathful, which ran counter to the idea of the all-benevolent God that Jesus described. By claiming that the gods are different—the one from the Hebrew scriptures and the one who sent down Jesus Christ—the Sethians could demonstrate that the ultimate God of the universe was in fact perfectly good even though the world is not perfect. They tried to strike a balance between the traditional ideas of the Judaism and the core principles of Platonic philosophy. Ironically, in doing so, they ultimately deviated from the mainstream ideas of both.

---

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Katz, “Plotinus and the Gnostics”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April, 1954), 289.

<sup>18</sup> Meijering, 249.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 787.

## Plotinus and Christianity

Early Christians from the fourth and fifth centuries drew heavily from Platonic philosophy to try to understand the nature of God, which should not be surprising given that Christianity was nurtured in the culture of the wider Greco-Roman world. At the very least, Neoplatonic writings lined up enough to give Christian theologians a philosophical basis from which to make an argument for their triune God. The crisis for Christianity during the first few centuries of its existence was, in addition to being highly fragmented, that the traditional Jewish views of the Hebrew Scriptures could not be easily accepted in the wider Greco-Roman world, partly because they could not stand up to the intellectual scrutiny of the time. The church fathers needed to find a way to ensure that their religion was intellectually sound, while also staying true to the message proclaimed by Jesus Christ. Plotinus's ideas about the nature of the divine influenced much of early Christianity and its ideas about the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The texts of Plotinus were translated into Latin by Marius Victorinus (4<sup>th</sup> century C.E). Victorinus was a Neoplatonist philosopher before he converted to Christianity himself, and he came up with his own description of the Holy Trinity. He saw no conflict between Neoplatonism and Christianity, as Albert Haig explains:

Victorinus did not see Neoplatonism as merely providing some useful concepts which may be employed in the service of Trinitarian theology [...] Rather, he believed that Neoplatonism was itself intrinsically truly Trinitarian, and that a careful analysis must demonstrate that the orthodox Christian view merely articulated what was already implicit in Plotinus and Porphyry.<sup>20</sup>

For Victorinus, the three hypostases are called “To Be” (the Father), *logos* (the Son), and *nous* (the Holy Spirit). The triad is not a perfect parallel of Plotinus's three primary hypostases of the One, *nous*, and *psyche*. Victorinus's Trinity shows more influence from Porphyry, Plotinus's

---

<sup>20</sup> Albert Haig, “Neoplatonism as a Framework for Christian Theology: Reconsidering the Trinitarian Ontology of Marius Victorinus”, *Pacifica: Journal of the Melbourne College of Divinity*, vol. 21, no. 2, (June 2008), 126.

student, than from Plotinus himself.<sup>21</sup> At any rate, it does show just how deeply the works of Plotinus and other Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers influenced the early Christian church in its conception of the one true God. The main problem with Victorinus is that his “Trinity” appears far too similar to Neoplatonic metaphysics, and the parts of his trinity can easily be interpreted as separate entities, since he describes the “To Be” as incomprehensible, but the *logos* as not incomprehensible. Later Christian theologians, still heavily influenced by Neoplatonic principles, identified all three persons of the Trinity with the One.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, the Platonists had a strong effect on the religious philosophy of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.), arguably the most influential early Christian thinker. In his *Confessions*, Augustine described the influence of the Platonists on his conception of God:

By having thus read the books of the Platonists, and having been taught by them to search for the incorporeal truth, I saw how your invisible things are understood through the things that are made [...] I was assured that you were, and that you were infinite, though not diffused in a finite space or infinity; that you truly are, who are ever the same, varying neither in part nor motion.<sup>23</sup>

Although his mother was a Christian, Augustine rejected Christianity, favoring instead Manicheanism (another Gnostic religion). However, he was not satisfied with the Manichean conception of the divine, so he eventually rejected it and truly converted to Christianity. Through the Platonists, and by applying their concepts to scripture, Augustine formulated an idea of the divine that satisfied him.

A major area of disagreement between Christianity and Neoplatonism was the Christian rejection of subordination on the part of the persons of the Trinity.<sup>24</sup> With Plotinus, there is an obvious subordination, with the Soul being lower than the Intellect, and the Intellect being lower than the One. Trinitarian Christianity conceived of a Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>23</sup> *Confessions*, 7.20.26.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas A. Wassmer, “The Trinitarian Theology of Augustine and his Debt to Plotinus”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Oct., 1960), 262.

Spirit—that was ultimately One. Such an emphasis on the unity of the Holy Trinity comes in part from Plotinus, who thought that anything other than Absolute Unity “is to be an ordered whole of parts” and for Augustine to stress the Unity “he equally affirms the being and the Trinity of God.”<sup>25</sup> The perfect Absolute Unity to Augustine was the Trinity-in-Unity, the Three-in-One, which still dominates the Christian idea of God to the present day. All three persons are equal to each other, which runs counter to the subordination of the three primary hypostases of Plotinus, and to the various hypostases of the Sethian Gnostics. The texts of Plotinus and other Neoplatonists, such as Porphyry, cannot fully account for Augustine’s trinity, since the doctrine of the Holy Trinity had been confirmed by the church years earlier. Also, as a Manichaean, Augustine had learned to think of three levels in his soul: *psyche*, *pneuma*, and *nous*.<sup>26</sup> However, Neoplatonic philosophy helped to give intellectual credence to the Christian Trinity.

The Christians were very certain that only one God existed. The challenge was to find a way to accommodate the Father, the Son (Christ), and the Holy Spirit in a way that was not polytheistic, pantheistic, or panentheistic. Christianity from the start was a monotheistic religion, and Christian theology reflects that monotheism. Any time that Christian theologians borrowed from the various philosophical schools of thought, they had to find a way to fit it into the monotheistic mold, as is clear with Victorinus and his interpretation of Plotinus and Porphyry. Where Plotinus believed that because the One was perfect it could not have created the world, Christians believed that a perfect triune divinity created a perfect world. The Christian God is not just perfect, but he is also all-powerful, and creating the world is a reflection of the power that he possesses. Problems on earth are associated with sin, which came in to the world when Satan, in the form of a serpent, tricked Adam and Eve into eating the Forbidden Fruit in the Garden of Eden.

The Christian God, the God that Augustine knew, and the one that most Christians know today, in addition to being the creator of the universe, was

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, 262.

<sup>26</sup> Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Confessions to Conversions*, (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 242.

also a personal God, concerned with the livelihoods of those beings whom he made in His image. Throughout *Confessions*, Augustine praises God for leading him in the right direction at the times in his life when he was led astray from the truth, such as when he finally rejected the Manichaeans, writing “For your hands, my god, in the hidden design of your providence did not desert my soul; and out of the blood of my mother’s heart, through the tears that she poured out by day and by night, there was a sacrifice offered to you for me, and by marvelous ways you dealt with me.”<sup>27</sup> According to Augustine, God is working in people’s lives, helping to lead them down the right path to spiritual truth and salvation. The One of Plotinus is not a personal deity like the Christian God is, so it does not work to influence the lives of people to find its truth. Discovering truth is up to individuals. However, Christians still said that the world came from a perfect God, a deified One, and not from some lower, vile being, so Plotinus’s criticism of Christianity would probably not have been as harsh as his criticism of Gnosticism. The Christians still believed that the world came from a perfect source. However, they disagreed with Plotinus and the Neoplatonists about how the world deviated from that perfection. Plotinus saw this deviation as the inevitable result of emanation, not a consequence of mankind’s sin.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

Several techniques were used by philosophers and theologians in Late Antiquity to reconcile their belief systems with the rest of society. Plotinus stayed true to Platonic principles, but incorporated certain elements of other philosophical traditions to better explain those principles. Platonic philosophy was already a widely accepted part of Greco-Roman society at the time, so his reconciliations did not need to be drastic like those of the Sethians and the Trinitarians, who had to incorporate Greek philosophy into the foundational tenets of Jewish religious tradition. The Sethians attempted to find a middle ground between the Jewish texts and Platonism, combining the two traditions into a syncretic mystical religion. Where Plotinus wanted to stay true to Plato, the Trinitarian Christians remained

---

<sup>27</sup> *Confessions* 5.7.13.

<sup>28</sup> Katz, 295.

firmly grounded in the Jewish scriptures and the new writings about Jesus that circulated in the first couple of centuries after his death. The Trinitarians used Greek philosophical ideas and language in order to ground their religion within the intellectual framework of the time and to explain the problems in the religion itself. Surely there are other ways to reconcile one's religion or philosophy with accepted intellectual truths. What is important to note is that Plotinus, the Sethians, and the Trinitarians did not outright reject the intellectual truths. Today, we might call the intellectual truths "science." The people of the past did not reject their science; therefore, perhaps Christians and those of other faiths do not have to reject modern-day science like so many fundamentalists and literalists do. Reconciliations can actually augment religions, giving them greater flexibility and perhaps even ensuring their survival by allowing them to flourish alongside modern-day secular society.

## Not Fake News: The New York Times and Senator Joseph McCarthy

Ansley Markwell

**Abstract:** In the early 1950s, newspapers contributed significantly to the political and social tension of the Second Red Scare. Brought on by the successful atomic tests of the Soviet Union and the fall of China to Mao Zedong and communism, Americans feared the red specter of communism looming over the globe. Nearly every day, the *New York Times* and other reputable news sources reported on new government roundups of alleged communists and Soviet sympathizers. While communism constituted a significant catalyst for the frenzy that characterizes the Second Red Scare, Joseph McCarthy dominated the political landscape. His actions with the aid of the United States government dramatized the very real fear of communist infiltrations. Although other institutions tended to take an anti-McCarthy stance, *The New York Times*' reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy remained balanced despite the rise and fall of McCarthy's popularity beginning in 1948 until his death in 1957.

Distrust and hatred of communism reached its height in the 1950s with anticommunism becoming synonymous with patriotism. From the Senate, McCarthy led a period of intense political repression against any people labelled "communist." His accusations of communist infiltration escalated into attacks on the Truman administration, the State Department, the United States Army, and homosexuals. As a result of these actions and others, the United States Senate voted to censure McCarthy three years before his death.<sup>1</sup> The use of blacklists and trials enabled McCarthy to conduct his famous witch-hunt for communists from Hollywood to the State Department. The anti-communist hysteria that caused McCarthy's popularity to rise ultimately culminated in his demise. Although other institutions and other historians tended to take an anti-McCarthy stance, *The New York Times*' reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy remained a lynchpin of journalistic integrity despite the rise and fall of McCarthy's popularity beginning in 1948 until his death in 1957.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Censure," *New York Times*, December 3, 1954.

Throughout its tenure, *The New York Times* garnered a reputation of significant repute. At the time of its inception in 1851, the *Times*, then called the *New-York Daily Times*, self-identified itself as a publication with a conservative bent.<sup>2</sup> By 1857, the *Times* shortened its name to the *New-York Times* and later mirrored the abandonment the hyphen with the city of New York in the 1890s.<sup>3</sup> By the 1880s, the *Times* began transitioning from a conservative reporting stance to one that focused more on independent political analysis.<sup>4</sup> By 1897, the *Times* adopted the slogan “All The News That’s Fit To Print” which has appeared on every front page since.<sup>5</sup> Its coverage of the two world wars followed a similar pattern in the twentieth century. In short, *The New York Times* consistently provided unbiased reporting for its subscribers from nearly the very beginning and continued this pattern through the Second Red Scare unlike the majority of the scholarship from many historians.

Scholarship concerning the early 1950s evolved as the Freedom of Information Act and Soviet archives released new and important documents to historians. The Communist Party of America experienced incredibly unconstitutional harassment and prosecution at the hands of the politicians elected to protect the rights of its citizens as a result of the ideological roots of the Cold War. Communism directly challenged and threatened capitalism. Thus, the Stalin-like purges of domestic communists from American society seemed to be justified. However, following the events of the Second Red Scare, most American condemned the actions of McCarthy and the United States government. Americans generally regarded the Soviet Union as enemy number one but no longer trusted characters like McCarthy and their government to bring them to justice. Most either doubted or no longer believed the sensational stories of Reds lurking behind every corner of American society. However, as both American and Russian archives began to declassify pertinent documents, these documents confirmed the veracity of many of

---

<sup>2</sup> “A Word about Ourselves,” *New-York Daily Times*. September 18, 1851.

<sup>3</sup> Fortier, Alison. *A History Lover’s Guide to New York City*. (Dover, New Hampshire: Arcadia Publishing, 2016), 166.

<sup>4</sup> Elmer Holmes Davis (1921). *History of the New York Times, 1851-1921*. New York Times. pp. 215–218.

<sup>5</sup> “New York Times Timeline 1881–1910,” The New York Times Company.

McCarthy's claims and the historiography changed its stance. As the understanding of the Second Red Scare deepened, the historiography shifted positions on Senator Joseph McCarthy's role during that time.

Patrick J. Gilpin examines three particular victims of the Second Red Scare in his article entitled "Charles S. Johnson and the Second Red Scare: An Episode."<sup>6</sup> Gilpin wrote about Charles Johnson, a black man who had devoted his time to improving race relations between white Americans and black Americans.<sup>7</sup> Johnson promoted education among black communities as well as promoting racial integration. As a member of the faculty at Fisk University, Johnson held annual Race Relations Institutes starting in 1944.<sup>8</sup> While at Fisk, Johnson found a new comrade among his coworkers—Lee Lorch, a well-known civil rights activist. However, this friendship did not last long as the House Un-American Activities Committee accused Lorch of being a member of the American Communist Party.<sup>9</sup> This accusation developed mostly from the alleged association between the civil rights movement and communism. As a result of this as well as Johnson's suggested public relations strategy for the university, Fisk dismissed Lorch. While Lorch officially bore the scarlet letter of communism, Fisk and Johnson were forever tainted by association.<sup>10</sup> Gilpin's research highlighted the forgotten ordinary people affected by the communist witch-hunt of the 1940s and 1950s.

Patrick Gilpin wrote his article entitled "Charles S. Johnson and the Second Red Scare: An Episode" in 1978.<sup>11</sup> His focus on the unlucky victims of the anti-communist hysteria mirrored a developing story in New York concerning a toxic waste dump known to modernity as "Love Canal" in 1978. Both the Second Red Scare and Love Canal provided prime examples of government entities not providing for their constituents. The

---

<sup>6</sup> Patrick J. Gilpin. "Charles S. Johnson and the Second Red Scare: An Episode." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1978): 76-88.  
<http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.troy.edu/stable/42625819>.

<sup>7</sup> Gilpin, 79.

<sup>8</sup> Gilpin, 77.

<sup>9</sup> Gilpin, 81.

<sup>10</sup> Gilpin, 83.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick J. Gilpin. "Charles S. Johnson and the Second Red Scare: An Episode." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1978): 76-88.  
<http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.troy.edu/stable/42625819>.

United States government did not protect the civil liberties of those accused of communist affiliations in the same way that it did not protect future generations from the horrible effects of toxic waste at Love Canal. At the time Gilpin wrote his piece of scholarship, the United States attempted to deal with problems in the post-Vietnam War and post-Civil Rights Movement world. These conflicts caused great public unrest and gave way to an entire movement centered on challenging and distrusting the government. Gilpin seemed to be reacting to the general atmosphere of distrust concerning the United States government in his article with his visceral reaction to the persecution of communists. His negative portrayal of McCarthyism and his positive portrayal of its victims, particularly black Americans, reinforced this inference despite the balanced representation of McCarthy by *The New York Times*. While big names like McCarthy and W.E.B Du Bois come to mind in regard to the Second Red Scare, Gilpin cautioned historians to remember the ordinary people scarred by this event.

Historian Robbie Lieberman explored the connection between the CPUSA, the anti-communist movement, and the peace movement in the United States in her book *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963*.<sup>12</sup> While she primarily focused on the role of communists in the peace movement and the effect of anti-communism, Lieberman showcased the danger McCarthyism posed to the civil liberties of all Americans—not just the members of the American Communist Party.<sup>13</sup> An interesting point of her research noted that many Americans still equated the idea of peace as subversive/suspicious as a result of communist involvement during the Cold War. McCarthy's attacks on communism included attacks on the peace movement.<sup>14</sup> Peace activism equaled un-American activity in the eyes of many Americans, especially in the early years of the Cold War.<sup>15</sup> For McCarthy and other anti-communist activists, Soviet sympathies and

---

<sup>12</sup> Robbie Lieberman. *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Lieberman, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Lieberman, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Lieberman, 84.

alliances accompanied opposition to the Cold War. Lieberman maintained that McCarthy played a significant role in the anti-communist movement's attacks on all groups that included communists.<sup>16</sup>

Robbie Lieberman penned her volume *The Strangest Dream* at a time when the public's trust in the United States government had greatly declined.<sup>17</sup> The United States Senate impeached President Bill Clinton for perjury a couple of years earlier. While her emphasis focused on the Peace Movement during and after the Red Scare, Lieberman condemned McCarthy and the U.S. government as virulently anti-democratic and as attacking the civil liberties of those not a part of the mainstream. Her book placed her firmly in the anti-McCarthy camp like most of the scholars that came before her and many that came after.

Don E. Carleton examined the legacy of the Second Red Scare in Texas, particularly Houston, in his book *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas*.<sup>18</sup> His narrative focused on the early 1950s era but noted the significance of the leftist movements of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>19</sup> Carleton described a virtual crusade against the communists of Houston led by several Christian organizations. While their efforts ultimately produced little fruit, this campaign led to the prohibition of certain textbooks as well as the harassment of the staff in the local school system.<sup>20</sup> While it grew in proportion to Senator Joseph McCarthy's claims, their veritable lynch mob ultimately declined when McCarthy did himself. Carleton's scholarship on the Second Red Scare definitively linked the anti-communist events in Washington, DC with the anti-communist events in cities and towns throughout the United States.

Don E. Carleton's narrative *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas* differed from much of the

---

<sup>16</sup> Lieberman, 199.

<sup>17</sup> Robbie Lieberman. *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Don E. Carleton. *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2014), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Carleton, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Carleton, 93.

scholarship written previously.<sup>21</sup> While he still condemned many of the tactics of McCarthy, Carleton preoccupied himself with the influence and legacy of McCarthyism in the one particular city of Houston, Texas. He painted McCarthy in a negative light but did not personally connect with the outright loathing present in much of the historical writings concerning the time period. As time passed, the research of the Second Red Scare and Joseph McCarthy evolved. Carleton's book about the Second Red Scare in Houston demonstrated the progression of the historiographical perception of Senator Joseph McCarthy that fit the objective coverage of *The New York Times*.

While much of the scholarship and history books written before the 1990s painted McCarthy and Hoover as infamous firebrands, newly released information from intelligence agencies on both sides of the Cold War served to justify their claims of extensive Russian infiltration. While McCarthy and Hoover appeared to be far from American heroes, their actions aided the reformation of security of the United States government and ousted many genuine Soviet spies from their government positions. The release of the Venona cables and other pertinent documents enabled historians like Don E. Carleton to gain a more accurate picture of the truth behind the anti-communist movement led by Joseph McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover like the one proved by the cover of *The New York Times*.

*The New York Times'* coverage of Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1948 showed two very different sides of his personal views. In 1948, the *Times* only published eighteen articles with McCarthy in the subject line. Most addressed cursory items like his support of a Republican candidate named Harold Stassen during the primaries preceding the 1948 presidential election.<sup>22</sup> Others included his participation in the affairs of the Senate. However, as time went on, the number of articles multiplied.

The *Times* ramped up their reporting on McCarthy in 1949 as his popularity grew. The *Times* printed forty articles on McCarthy and his

---

<sup>21</sup> Don E. Carleton. *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2014), 7.

<sup>22</sup> Clayton Knowles, "Dewey Goes On Air in Oregon Wind-Up," *New York Times*, May 21, 1948.

senatorial actions during that year. One noteworthy article from 1949 discussed McCarthy's reaction to the allegations of unethical treatment of Nazi prisoners of war.<sup>23</sup> A former member of the press present at the Nazi war trials shared evidence with McCarthy that most of the confessions wrested from the defeated Germans came out of torture and coercion rather than free will. Waggoner wrote McCarthy's recorded reaction to this abuse of human rights saying, "'...it seems,' he said, 'to want to whitewash the Army.'"<sup>24</sup> The *Times* documented McCarthy's indignation over the exploitation of former enemy soldiers well. Yet, later in the year, they refused to shy away from reporting troubling words from McCarthy concerning his views on his soon-to-be nemesis communism. The United Press reported in an article concerning the newly open head of the Atom Project saying, "The senator [McCarthy] told a reporter that 'it would be a relief to Congress to have a man like La Follette on the job...' [because] '...we could trust him and he has no leanings whatsoever toward communism.'"<sup>25</sup> The timing of this article must be taken into account as, by 1949, the Soviet Union developed its own nuclear weapons and the revolution in China resulted in a communist government. However, the seeming desire of McCarthy to exclude communists from government projects and jobs appeared earlier in the *Times* than some associated with the beginning of the Second Red Scare. The coverage of the *Times* in 1948 and 1949 reflected an accurate picture of Senator Joseph McCarthy as he developed into the notorious politician he existed as in the early 1950s.

The volume of the coverage on Senator Joseph McCarthy by *The New York Times* before 1950 paled in comparison to the reporting following his February 9, 1950 speech he gave in Nevada.<sup>26</sup> The *Times*' coverage jumped from forty articles in 1949 to one hundred and fifty-seven in 1950 of which published seven before February 9. Even though his speech and the *Times* article catapulted McCarthy into new heights of political fame, the *Times* continued reporting as they had done previously. The majority of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Walter Waggoner, "'Mock Trials' of Malmedy Nazis By U.S. Army Scored By Senator," *New York Times*, April, 20, 1949.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Waggoner, "'Mock Trials' of Malmedy Nazis By U.S. Army Scored By Senator," *New York Times*, April, 20, 1949.

<sup>25</sup> The United Press, "La Follette Urged Atom Head," *New York Times*, December 7, 1949.

<sup>26</sup> "M'Carthy Insists Truman Oust Reds," *New York Times*, February 12, 1950.

articles published in 1950 addressed his career in the anti-communist witch-hunt but also significantly reported on McCarthy's other senatorial duties and veteran life. In late August of 1950, the Military Order of the Purple Heart awarded McCarthy its first Americanism award.<sup>27</sup> In spite of his status as a decorated veteran, the *Times* reported in December 1950 that the American Veterans Committee (AVC) called for impeachment proceedings to begin against McCarthy in the Senate.<sup>28</sup> As the reporting of *The New York Times* prolifically increased in direct correlation to the rising star of McCarthy, the regular coverage of the *Times* refrained from a bias when reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy.

The reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy by *The New York Times* increased very little in 1951. The *Times* published two hundred and four articles concerning McCarthy that year. However, the focus of its coverage narrowed to consist mainly of his activities involving the hunt for communists in the United States government as the Second Red Scare began to pick up speed. In March, a *Times* reporter named William White reported, "Senate investigators began in private today into charges by Senator R. McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, that a man connected with the State Department was 'the top Russian espionage agent' in the United States."<sup>29</sup> This accusation, and others like it, escalated the hysteria of the Second Red Scare.<sup>30</sup> The *Times* consistently reported on the acceleration of McCarthy's claims throughout 1951. However, it also regularly covered the opposition to his anti-communist campaign. In September 1951, White wrote that Democratic Senator William Benton maintained accusations of his own.<sup>31</sup> White recorded Benton's strong words saying that McCarthy remained "...an amoral man who used the lie as an instrument of policy...a man of corruptibility and mendacity...who had followed a pattern of distortion and deceit."<sup>32</sup> Despite McCarthy's

---

<sup>27</sup> "Veterans Honor McCarthy," *New York Times*, August, 26, 1950.

<sup>28</sup> "AVC Urges Senate to Impeach McCarthy," *New York Times*, December 25, 1950.

<sup>29</sup> "Chief 'Russian Spy' Named by M'Carthy," *New York Times*, March 22, 1951.

<sup>30</sup> "McCarthy Attacks Cheered by V.F.W.," *New York Times*, March 21, 1951.

<sup>31</sup> William White, "Benton Gives Senate 10-Case Brief on McCarthy 'Lies' and 'Deceits,'" *New York Times*, September 29, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> William White, "Benton Gives Senate 10-Case Brief on McCarthy 'Lies' and 'Deceits,'" *New York Times*, September 29, 1951.

seeming popularity with many Americans, *The New York Times* maintained a consistent coverage on both sides of the McCarthy controversy.

The year 1952 heralded a new increase in *The New York Times*' coverage of Senator Joseph McCarthy. The *Times* published three hundred and twenty two articles concerning McCarthy that year. In late January, the *Times* reported that McCarthy had launched a largely supported attack on the reputable news source *Time Magazine*.<sup>33</sup> It continued its reporting on the support McCarthy received from average Americans in an editorial by John B. Oakes in early November. Oakes reported that some Americans considered McCarthy to be "...one of the greatest Americans we've ever had."<sup>34</sup> The anti-communist sentiment that gripped the nation became evident in Oakes' writing as he quoted a Wisconsin farmer saying, "Joe [McCarthy] treats the communist party member as someone to be dealt with via the fist...he's a slugger."<sup>35</sup> However, in the same piece, Oakes, a known liberal on the editorial board of the *Times*, condemned McCarthyism as an attack on the cornerstone of American identity—freedom: "McCarthyism directly endangers that freedom, for, carried to its logical conclusion, it is as incompatible with democracy as communism itself. It equates loyalty with conformity, truth with orthodox. It leads to the same mental prison as communism."<sup>36</sup> Yet, keeping with its consistent pattern of a lack of bias, a month later the *Times* still celebrated McCarthy's six medals received for "extraordinary achievement as a Marine Corps officer in the Pacific during World War II."<sup>37</sup> Despite the apparent objections to McCarthy by an influential editor at the *Times*, *The New York Times* continued its model of unbiased reporting concerning Senator Joseph McCarthy.

In 1953, the number of articles published by *The New York Times* concerning Joseph McCarthy more than doubled from its total in 1952 but

---

<sup>33</sup> "M'Carthy Assails Time Magazine," *New York Times*, January 29, 1952.

<sup>34</sup> John B. Oakes, "Report on McCarthy and McCarthyism," *New York Times*, November 2, 1952.

<sup>35</sup> John B. Oakes, "Report on McCarthy and McCarthyism," *New York Times*, November 2, 1952.

<sup>36</sup> John B. Oakes, "Report on McCarthy and McCarthyism," *New York Times*, November 2, 1952.

<sup>37</sup> The United Press, "McCarthy Gets 6 Medals For Heroism During War," *New York Times*, December 30, 1952.

the *Times* persisted in printing both sides of the controversy. The coverage of the *Times* numbered six hundred and twenty-three pieces. In April, Oakes wrote another editorial condemning McCarthy and his anti-communist witch-hunt as showing disdain for “traditional American concepts of freedom and fair play.”<sup>38</sup> Oakes noted that McCarthy faced dissenters in his own backyard of the Senate. He quoted an anti-McCarthy Democrat, “I think McCarthyism, like communism, is a completely evil thing.”<sup>39</sup> This source asked the *Times* not to name him as he, like many public figures, feared the consequences of open dissent of McCarthy. Although it reported the opposition to him, the *Times* continued to report on the defense of McCarthy. In November, the *Times* reported McCarthy as saying, “This nation must stand as the leading bulwark against communism in the world...”<sup>40</sup> While the number of dissenting opinions began to grow, *The New York Times* faithfully persisted in its unbiased coverage of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Once again, in 1954, the number of articles published by *The New York Times* on Senator Joseph McCarthy plateaued at six hundred and sixty-seven pieces and reflected the escalation of public criticism of McCarthy. In January, the *Times* reported that he received multiple Americanism awards.<sup>41</sup> However, many of the pieces written during 1954 covered the growing dissent against McCarthy. By June, Anthony Leviero wrote for the *Times* that Republican Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders motioned for debate to begin concerning the censure of McCarthy.<sup>42</sup> In December, the *Times* reported that the United States Senate’s censure motion against McCarthy had passed.<sup>43</sup> The *Times* continued its press coverage of the fallout from the censure movement until the end of the year. In spite of a tumultuous ending to 1954 for McCarthy, *The New York Times* persevered

---

<sup>38</sup> John B. Oakes, “Inquiry into McCarthy’s Status,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1953.

<sup>39</sup> John B. Oakes, “Inquiry into McCarthy’s Status,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> “Text of McCarthy Statement,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1953.

<sup>41</sup> William R. Conklin, “M’Carthy Seeking Trial Of A Major; Camp Kilmer Officer Invokes Fifth Amendment Here—Senator Gets Awards” *New York Times*, January 31, 1954.

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Leviero, “Flanders Calls M’Carthy ‘5<sup>th</sup> Amendment Senator’ As Censure Debate Opens; Charges Itemized; Knowland Tells Senate He Will Vote ‘Nay’ – Galleries Packed; Flanders Starts M’Carthy Debate,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1954.

<sup>43</sup> “Censure,” *New York Times*, December 3, 1954.

with its unprejudiced reporting on the now fallen status of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

By 1955, *The New York Times*' reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy decreased dramatically as a result of his very public censure by the United States Senate. The *Times*' coverage dropped to nearly a third of what it written the year before to just two hundred and fifty-eight articles. The majority of these articles consisted of mundane events such as a federal audit clearing McCarthy of all accusations of financial misconduct during his anti-communist campaigns.<sup>44</sup> At the end of 1955, the *Times* reported that McCarthy's influence remained at its lowest point ever in both Wisconsin and nationally.<sup>45</sup> The declining coverage of *The New York Times* concerning Senator Joseph McCarthy reflected his fading from the limelight in 1955.

Despite his continued career as a United States' Senator, *The New York Times*' coverage of Senator Joseph McCarthy declined even further in 1956 and 1957. The *Times* published only one hundred and twenty-nine articles on McCarthy that year. The bulk of these pieces concerned minor roles McCarthy played in Senate debates and the odd cartoon or two mocking him. By the end of the year, the lion's share of the *Times*' pieces focused on his numerous hospital visits due to various ailments. In August, McCarthy received treatment for an old war wound from World War II.<sup>46</sup> In December, McCarthy hit a deer with his car and missed the Republican National Convention as a result.<sup>47</sup> While it sustained its unbiased reporting on him, *The New York Times* continued to drop its numerical coverage on Senator Joseph McCarthy. Even in the event of his death in early 1957, *The New York Times* declined its coverage of Senator Joseph McCarthy. The *Times* reporting plummeted to merely eighty-two articles that year. When McCarthy died May 2, the *Times*' coverage picked up again for a

---

<sup>44</sup> Russell Baker, "M'Carthy Says Audit Clears His Finances; Cleared By U.S., M'Carthy Finds," *New York Times*, April 20, 1955.

<sup>45</sup> Richard J. H. Johnston, "Wiley Confounds Wisconsin Critics; Senator's Fence-Mending Drive Halts; G.O.P. Move to Deny Him Support," *New York Times*, December 27, 1955.

<sup>46</sup> "McCarthy in Naval Hospital," *New York Times*, August, 11, 1956.

<sup>47</sup> "McCarthy May Miss Opening," *New York Times*, December 27, 1956.

short amount of time but quickly declined again by August.<sup>48</sup> It appeared that even the sudden death of the very divisive figure of McCarthy did not warrant a significant increase in coverage by the *Times*. While he did continue on as a United States senator before his death, *The New York Times* no longer covered Senator Joseph McCarthy as extensively as it had for many years previously.

*The New York Times* maintained a position of impartiality throughout Senator McCarthy's time in the spotlight. While its earlier coverage contained more variety in its subject matter, the *Times*' reporting did not encompass incendiary rhetoric or words. The Second Red Scare inflamed the public but the *Times* refused to get caught up in the hysteria. Despite the obvious bias of its editorial board, the *Times* maintained an unbiased point of view in its regular reporting.

The reporting of the *New York Times* played a crucial role in broadcasting the frenzy surrounding the anti-communist movement. Often called a witch-hunt, the *Times*' coverage of McCarthy helped to create his image as the leader of the eradication of communists in American society and government while still reporting the dissent. A historical examination of the *Times* provided an accurate mirror into the opinions of average Americans as it increased and decreased its coverage of McCarthy in a reflection of his infamy. The reporting of *New York Times* effectively embodied the political atmosphere of the years between 1948 and 1957. When American support of McCarthy waned in a matter of years, the *Times*' coverage of McCarthy waned. The *Times*' coverage of Senate investigations led by McCarthy showcased his short-lived status in the minds of regular Americans. Although historians like Patrick Gilpin, Robbie Lieberman, and Don E. Carleton tended to take an anti-McCarthy stance, *The New York Times*' reporting on Senator Joseph McCarthy endured as a beacon of impartiality despite the rise and fall of McCarthy's popularity beginning in 1948 until his death in 1957.

---

<sup>48</sup> W.H. Lawrence, "M'Carthy Is Dead Of Liver Ailment At The Age Of 47," *New York Times*, May 3, 1957.

## Bibliography

"A Word about Ourselves," *New-York Daily Times*. September 18, 1851.

Carleton, Don E. *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2014.

Davis, Elmer Holmes. *History of the New York Times, 1851-1921*. New York: New York Times, 1921.

Fortier, Alison. *A History Lover's Guide to New York City*. Dover, New Hampshire: Arcadia Publishing, 2016.

Gilpin, Patrick J. "Charles S. Johnson and the Second Red Scare: An Episode." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1978): 76-88.

Lieberman, Robbie. *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

*New York Times*. Articles from May 21, 1948 to May 3, 1957.

"New York Times Timeline 1881–1910," New York: The New York Times Company, 1910.

## An Organized Inequity

Lauren Post

Abstract: “An Organized Inequity” counters the accepted narrative of Japanese-Americans assimilating back into American society with ease. Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 allowed for Japanese Relocation, as well as the hardships yet to come for those of Japanese heritage in America. It takes into account personal testimonies from camp inmates, examines education repertoire for children within the camps, as well as graduation statistics from Japanese-American students within the camps in comparison to white students, and other minorities within the States. The essay endeavors to explicate the effect that poor living conditions and ineffective education within the camps, as well as discrimination faced after the war, had on the strive and success rate of Japanese-American children after World War II.

At first, they were gathered quietly, slowly, and then, all at once—a mass incarceration orchestrated within forty-eight hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Paranoia trailed closely behind the hysteria of war, turning rational thought into anxiety riddled with hatred. Those of Japanese heritage living within the United States at the time, found themselves ill-suited to face the hostilities that would soon engulf their world. By the end of 1942, two congressional committees began investigating means of evacuating the Japanese, including Americans of Japanese ancestry. On February 13, a meeting of the Congressional Committees on Defense and on Alien Nationality and Sabotage, passed a resolution, recommending that there be an immediate evacuation of absolutely all people of Japanese lineage, as well as any others whose presence was deemed by the U.S. government as being dangerous. The current, and generally accepted, post-World War II narrative of Japanese immigrants assimilating to become and well-respected citizens in American society, perturbingly disregards the immediate years before and after World War II that scarred an entire generation.<sup>1</sup> Families were torn apart, lives were shattered, homes seized

---

<sup>1</sup> Many Japanese Americans discarded their identity after World War II to avoid any association, shame or embarrassment with being imprisoned. <http://www.asian-nation.org/assimilation.shtml#sthash.9KMBiWqo.dpbs>

from prior ownership—this country that so many sought to belong in denied the Japanese basic human rights, forcing them into cramped living spaces and subjecting them to inhumane living conditions. The make-shift schools strewn up within the camps provided a neglectful and disturbingly poor education. After the war, Japanese-American citizens returned to old neighborhoods where their homes once were, only to find instead warning signs, threatening those of Japanese heritage that they were no longer welcome there. This cruelty was not overcome in one sweeping stride of personal resilience. It had consequences that should not be overlooked. The internment of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans is one of the darkest stains on U.S. history, and subsequently stunted the educational growth of Japanese youth.

Executive Order 9102 was signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on March 18, 1942, creating the War Relocation Authority (W.R.A.). This organization was responsible for the forced relocation and detention of Japanese Americans living in the western exclusion zone during World War II. Within the W.R.A. existed a number of sub-organizations, all of which functioned within an intricate web to ensure that Americans of Japanese descent were being kept closely under watch. This included the W.R.A. Education Program, headed by Lester K. Ade, who, months after relocation, released the *War Relocation Center Education Booklet* for all of the volunteer teachers in the camps to abide by. This booklet provides a substandard outline of school procedures within camps, with the W.R.A. Director of Education himself, noting that, “There has been no attempt to document completely the educational program...”<sup>2</sup> The bulletin, consisting of twenty-three pages, was distributed to direct the instruction of approximately 27,000 school children. The Education Program was very well aware of the cramped quarters that students were being subjected to. The load the volunteer teachers took on was immense. Per teacher, the W.R.A. Education Booklet indicates that he or she would be responsible for upwards of forty students—and this was just per elementary school

---

<sup>2</sup> War Relocation Authority (WRA) Education Program in War Relocation Centers Densho ID: denshopd-p155-00015, 1942, <http://archive.densho.org>

class. During the intermittent time between the publication of the instructional booklet, Japanese children waited in limbo.

The Topaz concentration camp in Utah officially opened on September 11, 1942. At its peak, the camp held 8,100 people after processing 11,000 Issei<sup>3</sup> immigrants and Nisei U.S. born citizens. A hospital, two elementary schools, and one school for all students in junior high through high school, constituted the major structures of the camp to accommodate thousands of recently inducted members of the camp. Although the camp opened in September, classes did not begin until October. Bob Utsumi was a member of the first junior high school class in the Topaz concentration camp. “Most of the classrooms were chairs and just tables, like mess hall tables and chairs,” recalled Utsumi.<sup>4</sup> In particular, Utsumi recalls an old chemistry teacher he studied under in the Topaz camp. “Oh, my feeling is Topaz had a bad set of teachers. ...Most of them were bad. They were not qualified. ...Some of the best teachers I had were camp mates. And then not necessarily college graduates either. ...Our chemistry teacher was terrible. He was an old man. He was dangerous. We didn’t have a lab.”<sup>5</sup> Furthering his explanation of the dangers within science education in the camps, Utsumi notes a particular demonstration that involved the injury of several students in the classroom: “Well, the test tube broke. And this time, couple of, one of the guys in the front row got cut.”<sup>6</sup> Mita Kawachi, a student in the Minidoka concentration camp documented her educational experiences in the camp saying that she “learned only a little,”<sup>7</sup> and that

---

<sup>3</sup> “Issei” is a term used to describe or specify the Japanese people who were first to emigrate from Japan.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Utsumi Interview Segment 13 “The poor quality of education in camp” interviewed by Megan Asana, Topaz Museum Collection, (2008) <http://archive.densho.org>

<sup>5</sup> *Excerpt from Bob Utsumi interview* In the case of Mr. Utsumi, he compares the education that he had in “class” to that of what he learned from other camp mates, ultimately saying that he learned more from the camp mates than those were hired to teach. The interviewer asks where the teachers came from—Utsumi says that he doesn’t know—no one would tell them.

<sup>6</sup> *Excerpt from Bob Utsumi interview* Mr. Utsumi further recalls one of his teachers as being especially dangerous. Another incident of possible permanent physical damage involved a mishap while performing an experiment with hydrogen gas that was left unattended. It eventually turned to sodium hydroxide, almost injuring several students in the class.

<sup>7</sup> Student essay: “My Experiences During the First Year of War” Mita Kawachi denshophd-p156-00053 <http://archive.densho.org>



Yet we're here because we happen  
to be a JAP

In contrast to the written criticism of internment, William Ikada, a student from the Minidoka Concentration Camp, wrote an essay entitled, "What the War Has Done to Us." In it, Ikada detailed his journey from his home to a concentration camp in Idaho. He described the despondency and dejection he felt knowing he must leave one life and begin another elsewhere. "It was a very sad day for us all. I left many a friend behind which makes me very sad to think about it even now,"<sup>9</sup> Ikada wrote. Nevertheless, remaining thankful for what he did have, ending the essay with an expression of gratitude towards the American holiday, Thanksgiving: "The 'Thanksgiving' meant more to me this year than it did to me any other. I felt very sad when I read in the 'Life' magazine that the people of Europe were being starved to death. ...I will always be thankful that I still have a school to go to."

Nearing the end of the war, the *War Relocation Authority Teachers' Handbook on Education for Relocation* was released by the heads of the W.R.A. While failing to outline a specific curriculum of study for the students, it did manage to go into great detail of the psychological effects the war may have imposed on the children.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOCKS (Education 30.3) Lack of self-acceptance. The desire to be American coupled with a fear of non-acceptance by other American groups appears to result in frustration. This shame of ancestry may result in an outward expression of distrust of other American groups—of intolerance toward everything Japanese. Symptomatic of this attitude is the denial by students of any previous association with "Japanese"; denial of any facility in the Japanese language; a rejection of all parental control; imitation of slang, dress, and characteristics thought to be typically American; and an expressed desire to escape racial discrimination.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho, *Student essay: "What The War Has Done To Us"* Densho ID: denshopd-p156-00077(1942) <http://archive.densho.org>

<sup>10</sup> Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho War Relocation Authority Teachers' Handbook on Education for Relocation Densho ID: denshopd-p171-00184 (1944) <http://archive.densho.org>

Japanese children growing up within the internment camps, throughout the West, were made to believe that something was innately wrong with them for being of Japanese heritage. They were systematically taught that their incarceration was justified based on their heritage.

Japanese Americans were forced to abdicate their homes quickly in exchange for a new, more impoverished lifestyle. *The Managed Casualty*, written by Leonard Broom and John Kituse, details ten different families, all of which involve the mix of both Issei and Nisei generations, throughout World War II. Each family is unique in their income, relationships, and immigration story. The following family's name, along with the individual names of those within this Japanese family, have been withheld for privacy. The life they knew was turned completely upside down after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Before the war, the parents of this family had achieved a respected status in the community in which they lived. The Pearl Harbor attack terrified the parents, and left them in fear for the future of their family. The shop that they owned was completely torn apart in a search for contraband by the Justice Department. It soon became understood by Japanese-Americans that the evacuation would certainly take place. In a desperate attempt to scramble together some money to take with them, the family put \$3,500 worth of personal property up for sale. They sold it all for the meager price of \$300. Although certainly not a family of immense wealth, the family was forced by the U.S. government to leave the comfort of their former life in exchange for a much colder and smaller one. The father fell ill at the start of the war, and at their new home,<sup>11</sup> the diet prescribed by his doctor was not available. Coal stoves heated their living areas, although cooking within the residential area was not allowed by camp officials. Their furniture was limited to old army cots, mattresses, and a few blankets. Frostbite became a regular occurrence, the barracks themselves were crudely constructed with tarpaper and sheetrock. Several of the apartments had no windows at all. The winter temperatures hovered near of below zero, and during the summer they could soar as high as ninety degrees or above. Frostbite was

---

<sup>11</sup> Manzanar Concentration Camp (Located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada in California's Owen's Valley)

not the only killer within the camps. On April 11, 1943, James Wasaka of the Topaz concentration camp was shot and killed by a guard for approaching the southwest section of the fence.<sup>12</sup> This led to intense fear and hysteria within the camp.

Aside from the poor living quarters and health hazards, there was also an added element of malevolent psychological damage inflicted upon the residents of the camps. On January 29, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced that volunteers would be accepted in an all-Japanese-American combat unit. Ironically, this call to action fell upon, in some cases, American citizens that were being held behind the fences of internment camps within the United States. The determining factor as to whether or not these few Japanese were granted permission to leave behind the bleak world of internment was a two-question questionnaire. These two questions were supposed to directly determine whether one was loyal to the United States. The first question was, “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?” and the second was, “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attacks by foreign or domestic forces and foreswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, to any other foreign government, power or organization?”<sup>13</sup> This way of questioning was especially harsh on the Issei, or, first-generation Japanese, because they were denied citizenship in the United States. Answering, “yes” to the second question would ultimately leave them without a country. This did not go without protest within the camps. The questions were eventually completely changed and reorganized, but damage had long been done.

---

<sup>12</sup> James Wasaka was killed by a single bullet to the chest by a military sentry who later testified that the shot from the guard tower, some 300 yards away, was a warning. The military took the body away and no inquest was held. Believing that a riot might be imminent, the military put soldiers on emergency alert. The *Topaz Times* and local papers printed the military's claim that Wakasa was killed while going through the fence, but War Relocation Authority investigations established that the body lay several feet inside the fence and a postmortem examination found that the victim was facing the guard when he was shot.

<sup>13</sup> Loyalty questionnaire. (n.d.). Retrieved April 7, 2017, from [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty\\_questionnaire/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty_questionnaire/)

Some Japanese were allowed by the U.S. government to return to their old homes along the West Coast beginning in 1945 after the end of World War II, and the last camp officially closed in 1946. During the last two years of the war, a number of anti-Japanese groups sprouted up all along the West Coast. Two of the most prominent groups were the Remember Pearl Harbor League (RPHL) and the Japanese Exclusion League (JEL). Both groups frequently wrote to newspaper editors to generate publicity. The JEL specifically pushed a political agenda that would not allow any Japanese to return to the West Coast. The JEL shared many of the same views as the RPHL. Art Ritchie, a member of the Japanese Exclusion League, wrote a letter to Senator Magnuson in January 1945, in hopes of getting an amendment to the Constitution to prevent Japanese immigrants from becoming citizens, and invited the senator to join the JEL.<sup>14</sup> There were a number of local representatives who were particularly vocal in their support of internment and opposition to any resettlement. Labor unions began to form between veterans seeking work, farmers, and truck drivers that were racially exclusive, and incredibly threatening towards any Japanese.<sup>15</sup> Racial animosity further fueled hatred and racial bias within the labor force. Before and after the war, a reluctance to accommodate Japanese of both the Issei and Nisei generations existed throughout the United States. In 1945, Charles Doyle, the head of Seattle's Labor Council viciously threatened, "You bring them back, we won't be responsible for how many are hanging from the lamp posts."<sup>16</sup>

The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC)<sup>17</sup> was formed by the American Friends Service during World War II in an attempt to resettle inmates from the government's concentration camps to colleges in the Midwest and the East Coast. This organization worked with young Japanese students and their families, ultimately helping more than

---

<sup>14</sup> Berner, *Seattle Transformed: World War II to the Cold War*, 126.

<sup>15</sup> This was of course before the Civil Rights Movement, so open hostilities and vocalized racial prejudices were quite common during this time.

<sup>16</sup> Droker, *The Seattle Civic Unity Committee*, 50

<sup>17</sup> The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council was formed by the American Friends Service (AFSC). The AFSC organization was originally established by Quakers and promoted pacifism during World War I, and worked towards improving race relations. They continued assisting those affected by war, including the Japanese after World War II. (*Densho Archive Encyclopedia*)

4,000 students resettle and pursue higher education. Despite the encouragement and opportunity that this organization brought to many Japanese students, there was still resistance. Allan W. Austin, an assistant professor of history at College Misericordia in Dallas, Pennsylvania, writes:

...the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council—struggled to overcome bureaucratic opposition and inertia on the one hand and the reluctance of many college officials to stick out their necks accept students who looked like the enemy on the other.<sup>18</sup>

He also wrote of lecturers and academic leaders along the West Coast who were openly hostile towards Japanese students, including Rufus B. von Kleinsmid, the fifth president of the University of Southern California. "...[M]ost of those who had to be persuaded to accept the students were afraid of public, alumni and trustee reactions."<sup>19</sup>

As if seeking a new start on American campuses after a world war was not enough, many Japanese American students felt an incredible amount of pressure to do exceedingly well where they did not feel welcome. In a forward to *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II*, Roger Daniels writes, "They were expected to be models of excellence and propriety and came to feel that they were 'ambassadors of goodwill' on whom the fate of an oppressed people depended."<sup>20</sup> "Many Nisei students increasingly seemed to give up hope for their future and [felt] unwanted in the United States."<sup>21</sup> According to the Russel Sage Foundation, from 1940 to 1950, students of Asian heritage living within the United States had college graduation rates as low as ten percent—noting that only a fraction of that percentage was specifically of Japanese ancestry.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Austin, Allen W. *From Concentration Camp To Campus: A History Of The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1942-1946*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

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

<sup>20</sup> Austin, *From Concentration Camp To Campus: A History Of The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1942-1946*. 2001.

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

<sup>22</sup> "IPUMS-USA." IPUMS USA. Accessed April 01, 2017. <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

Aside from various antagonisms on campus, many students simply did not have the means to attend any institution of higher education. As noted above, the first instances of forced relocation in 1943, many Japanese families rushed to sell their belongings in an attempt to salvage some type of equity to carry with them into the camps. Since they were away from their homes for months, most families had their houses and apartments repossessed by the banks. The health of many of the second-generation Nisei parents began to quickly deteriorate after the war. Medicines that were once offered to them before the war were not available within the internment camps. As mentioned in *The Managed Casualty*, quite often, the Nisei would have to set aside time upon release of internment to care for their aging parents. This was not only costly, but also time-consuming—eliminating time to concentrate on earning degrees.

Much of the Issei that emigrated from Japan came to the United States in hopes of a better future. The life that they had known either from the mainland of Japan, or the islands that surround it was either of unique inopportunities, or monotonous subordinate duties. Either way, it was enough to seek out a new life in a new country. Arguably, one of the darkest blots on the history of the United States during the twentieth century, is the internment of 110,000 Japanese civilians along the West Coast. The act hindered thousands of Nisei children from obtaining a normal, fair education; it also struck fear deep within the hearts of a generation of people. It was nothing short of a war crime and its echoes can still be heard today.

## Bibliography

### Secondary Sources

Austin, Allen W. *From Concentration Camp To Campus: A History Of The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1942-1946*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Austin, Allan W. "Eastward Pioneers: Japanese American Resettlement during World War II and the Contested Meaning of Exile and Incarceration." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 26, no. 2 (January 2007): 58-84.

"Anti-Japanese Organizations." After Internment Japanese American's Right to Return. Accessed April 05, 2017.

[http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/after\\_internment.htm#\\_edn21](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/after_internment.htm#_edn21).

Broom, Leonard, and John I. Kitsuse. *The Managed Casualty: the Japanese-American Family in World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956.

Hays, David M. "No Invisible Minority: Japanese Americans at the University of Colorado, 1910-1945 - Part 3." Discover Nikkei. Accessed April 09, 2017.

<http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2014/5/23/no-invisible-minority-3/>.

Koikari, Mire. "Japanese Eyes, American Heart." *Men & Masculinities* 12, no. 5 (August 2010): 547-564.

"National Japanese American Student Relocation Council." National Japanese American Student Relocation Council | Densho Encyclopedia. Accessed April 09, 2017.

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/National\\_Japanese\\_American\\_Student\\_Relocation\\_Council/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/National_Japanese_American_Student_Relocation_Council/).

Sone, Monica Itoi. *Nisei Daughter*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1979.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. "'I'm American, not Japanese!': The Struggle for Racial Citizenship Among Later-Generation Japanese Americans." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 37, no. 3 (March 2014): 405-424.

Williams, John Kino Yamaguchi, et al. "A Conceptual Model of Cultural Predictors of Anxiety Among Japanese American and Part-Japanese American Adolescents." *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 8, no. 4 (November 2002): 320-333.

Williams, John Kino Yamaguchi, et al. "A Confirmatory Model for Depression Among Japanese American and Part-Japanese American Adolescents." 11, no. 1 (February 2005): 41-56.

### **Primary Sources**

War Relocation Authority (WRA) *Education Program in War Relocation*

*Centers Densho* ID: denshospd-p155-00015, 1942, <http://archive.densho.org>

\*Received in the Tule Lake concentration camp, California *Adult Education Certificate of Completion* Densho ID: denshospd-p164-00135, June 18, 1943 <http://archive.densho.org>

Loyalty questionnaire. (n.d.). Retrieved April 7, 2017, from

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty\\_questionnaire/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty_questionnaire/)

Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho, Student Essay: *My Experiences During the First Year of War* Densho ID: denshospd-p156-00053, <http://archive.densho.org>

Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho, Poem written in camp: *Damned Fence* Densho ID: denshospd-p126-00001, during wartime, <http://archive.densho.org>

Bob Utsumi Interview Segment 13 "The poor quality of education in camp" interviewed by Megan Asaka, *Topaz Museum Collection*, (2008) <http://archive.densho.org>

Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho *War Relocation Authority Teachers' Handbook on Education for Relocation* Densho ID: denshopd-p171-00184 (1944) <http://archive.densho.org>

Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho, *Student essay: "What The War Has Done To Us"* Densho ID: denshopd-p156-00077(1942) <http://archive.densho.org>

## The Nuclear Bomb and American Culture: A Historiographical Essay

Nicholas Prenzler

**Abstract:** “The Nuclear Bomb and American Culture: A Historiographical Essay” is an analysis of the historiographical trends regarding nuclear technology. The essay explains how historians moved from a cultural assessment of nuclear production toward an environmental interpretation. Initially, cultural historians examined the immediate societal impacts of the nuclear bomb. Later, environmental historians began to cover the environmental impacts of nuclear developments. Major environmental incidents during the 1960s and 1970s like the hazardous chemical dumping at Love Canal and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster brought attention to the potential devastation nuclear production could cause. In addition, FOIA requests during the 1980s revealed government attempts to cover up environmental contamination levels. For these reasons, historians extended the study of nuclear technology to include its environmental impacts. Additionally, the study of environmental justice continues to expand as other social sciences like sociology begin to contribute to the topic.

### Introduction

The use of nuclear weapons during World War II shifted the trajectory of American history. These weapons were more powerful and portended destruction on a grander scale than any of their predecessors. Nuclear weapons brought a sense of fear and anxiety for some Americans, while they increased the feeling of safety and security for others. From the conclusion of World War II through the 1980s, the United States engaged in a power struggle with the USSR known as the Cold War. During this era, nuclear weapons proliferated, and production facilities expanded across the American West. The nuclear plants brought economic security as well as unknown environmental hazards to the communities that grew up around them. As Americans learned of the potential environmental effects of nuclear production, they grew more concerned about environmental issues. Due to this changing of attitude, historians changed the scope of their research. Initially, cultural historians examined the immediate societal influences of the nuclear bomb. Later, environmental historians began to cover the environmental impacts of nuclear

developments. Environmental historians did not abandon cultural history in their work, however. In fact, one of the triggers of environmental consciousness regarding nuclear weapons and facilities was the rise of a “culture of dissent” that permeated “mainstream” American culture.

This paper examines how historians moved from a cultural assessment of nuclear production toward an environmental interpretation. Paul Boyer begins by explaining the creation of two cultures in the aftermath of World War II due to the presence of nuclear weapons. The consensus culture represented the majority culture and accepted the security that atomic weaponry provided, while the culture of dissent experienced anxiety and questioned their presence. Margot Henriksen expands upon Boyer’s claims by asserting the dissenting culture grew in popularity throughout the 1960s, while maintaining that the two cultures remained in competition with one another. Following the expansion of the field of environmental history, environmental historians such as Michele Stenehjem Gerber used new evidence to help explain the environmental impacts of nuclear waste and storage. Additionally, sociologist Stephanie Malin examined the direct impact nuclear production had on the communities surrounding the facilities. Malin endorses environmental justice and shows how the study of nuclear technology extends into other social sciences. These four authors reveal a trend in the historiography from cultural examinations towards environmental justice as new information on the environmental impacts of nuclear weapons, power, and production emerged.

### Two Cultures Emerge

Following World War II, Americans adjusted their attitudes in response to the new atomic age. In *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, cultural historian Paul Boyer proposes the idea that two cultures arose and competed, each with a different reaction to the nuclear presence. One adopted a “primal fear of extinction” while the other embraced the safety nuclear weapons created.<sup>1</sup> Boyer draws this conclusion by examining the five years following World

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 15.

War II. In this era, American society faced the threat of total annihilation, which deeply distressed many. The presence of this fear caused a change in everyday behavior as more Americans operated under the strains of increasing anxiety about the future. Whether justified or not, this portion of the population grew concerned and anxious over the expanding presence of American nuclear capabilities.

In contrast, not all Americans viewed the presence of nuclear weapons negatively. Boyer explains how some believed the Bomb acted as a deterrent to nuclear war and disregarded the fear raised by others. They group also pointed to nuclear development as a step forward for science and saw nuclear energy as a potential to provide technological advancements and social transformations, although they did not clearly state what changes nuclear energy would bring.<sup>2</sup> These optimists found the silver lining in the presence of the Bomb – the opportunity for atomic energy. Boyer cites a 1948 Gallup Poll that found a relation between educational level and support for atomic energy.<sup>3</sup> This data shows that educated Americans tried to justify the capabilities of nuclear power, while the less educated feared potential nuclear destruction.

*By the Bomb's Early Light* reflects Boyer's highly religious upbringing as well as his pacifism. Throughout his career as a cultural historian, Boyer examined moral and religious history.<sup>4</sup> He writes critically of the views of those who supported the Bomb's presence in society, labeling their ideas as "imprecise and contradictory."<sup>5</sup> Additionally, he devotes only three chapters to discussing those with positive attitudes. On the other hand, he spends eight chapters outlining the negative psychological effects and fearful reactions of Americans following the introduction of nuclear weapons.

---

<sup>2</sup> Boyer, 133-6.

<sup>3</sup> Boyer, 120-1.

<sup>4</sup> "Paul Samuel Boyer," University of Wisconsin – Madison, accessed July 25, 2017, [https://history.wisc.edu/boyer\\_memorial.htm](https://history.wisc.edu/boyer_memorial.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Boyer, 135.

## The Rise of the Culture of Dissent

In *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, cultural historian Margot A. Henriksen reinterprets Boyer's concept of two cultures by arguing the atomic bomb brought about a "consensus culture" on one hand and a "dissenting culture" on the other.<sup>6</sup> In Henriksen's view, the consensus culture accepted the safety and security of the Bomb, while the culture of dissent exemplified disorder and rebelliousness brought on by the uncertainty of atomic weapons. Like Boyer, Henriksen views the 1950s as the era in which Americans learned to live with the Bomb. She writes how the booming post-war economy acted as a distraction from concerns about the Bomb because Americans became immersed in consumerism.<sup>7</sup> However, Americans were deeply conflicted internally about the Bomb's presence in society.

Henriksen's background as a cultural and popular culture historian influences her views of American society. Her binary view of consensus and dissenting cultures supports her ideas of competing cultures during the 1950s and 1960s, with the dissenting culture slowly gaining popularity in the 1960s.<sup>8</sup> The dissenting culture refused to adopt the consensus ideology that accepted the proliferation of the atomic bomb in society.<sup>9</sup> This afforded Americans the option of not having to agree with this nuclear presence and adopt their own ideas about the Bomb.

Henriksen uses popular culture as evidence for her claims, arguing that movies and literature featured characters facing similar conflicts. She maintains the dissenting culture gained in strength during the 1960s. Prior to this cultural movement, Henriksen notes how events like the Cuban Missile Crisis signaled America's flirting with Armageddon. She views this crisis as an example for how close the United States was to entering a nuclear war. Due to the fear of war, she contends this emotion influenced

---

<sup>6</sup> Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xxii.

<sup>7</sup> Henriksen, 5.

<sup>8</sup> "Margot A. Henriksen," University of Hawaii at Manoa, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/history/people/faculty/henriksen/>.

<sup>9</sup> Henriksen, 7-9.

doomsday themes and ideas in film. In her view, the popular culture reflected the changing attitudes and became most evident first in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, then in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. *The Birds* laid the foundation for Kubrick's classic by embracing ambiguous "end of the world" themes. In it, people experience attacks from birds which Henriksen sees as a metaphor for atomic weapons.<sup>10</sup> The vague connections to the Bomb made in Hitchcock's films became symbols for upcoming apocalyptic interpretations. Henriksen views Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* as the epitome of Armageddon-like popular culture as the film concludes with a nuclear war. The movie's success indicated the beginning of a coming cultural revolution that sought to show that Americans could live without, as she wrote, "loving the Bomb or accepting the Bomb's promise of an apocalyptic future."<sup>11</sup> This revolution in culture also sought to overthrow the consensus culture without completely destroying it. According to Henriksen, the dissenting culture proved the strength of the American people could outweigh the power of the Bomb.

### Trend towards Environmental Views

During the 1960s and 1970s, historians started exploring environmental history as a discipline. Nuclear environmental incidents such as the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl nuclear disasters brought further attention to the potential devastation nuclear production could cause. Disasters such as these helped to shift American opinion as well as expand the field of environmental history to nuclear production.<sup>12</sup> The trends in public opinion support the idea of environmental protection as a growing ideology. The 1980s represented a resurgence in positive sentiment toward environmental issues due to the declassification of government reports at nuclear facilities across the country.<sup>13</sup> During this decade, the widespread

---

<sup>10</sup> Henriksen, 300-2.

<sup>11</sup> Henriksen, 387.

<sup>12</sup> K. Jan Oostehoek, "What is Environmental History?," January 3, 2005, <https://www.eh-resources.org/what-is-environmental-history/>.

<sup>13</sup> Riley Dunlap, "Trends in Public Opinion Toward Environmental Issues: 1965-1990," *Society and Natural Resources* 4 (April 1991), 285-7.

impact of nuclear development for Americans became clearer as the focus from historian extended beyond cultural analyses.

### Significance of the Hanford Nuclear Site

At the turn of the twenty first century, environmental historians examined the impacts of nuclear power on American culture. In *On the Home Front: The Cold War Legacy of the Hanford Nuclear Site*, Michele Stenehjem Gerber discusses the environmental problems of nuclear production and waste storage. Originally built in 1943, the Hanford, Washington, nuclear site manufactured plutonium for tens of thousands of nuclear bombs. Gerber explains how the products of this facility extended beyond the plutonium it produced. She claims the nuclear materials at the Hanford Nuclear Site contaminated the air, water, and land around the facility and near unknowing residents. As a result of Gerber's Freedom of Information Act requests, the government in 1986 began releasing tens of thousands of previously classified documents that revealed it knew about and tried to hide an environmental disaster on a grand scale. In Gerber's view, these documents revealed an environmental disaster on a grand scale. For example, they show that the site dumped thirty-two billion gallons of low-level processing waste between 1961 and 1965 with most ending up in Gable Mountain Pond. This excessive dumping caused radionuclide levels in the groundwater to skyrocket with contaminants reaching within one mile of the nearby Columbia River in 1963. Other areas were at or near maximum acceptable radiation levels. The Atomic Energy Committee privileged the production of plutonium over the safety of the American people and the environment around them. The fact the government concealed this information upset those in the area. Local residents trusted the government's integrity and felt betrayed by its actions.<sup>14</sup>

Gerber has worked as an independent historian of the Hanford Nuclear Site since 1987. In the documents from Gerber's FOIA requests, she discovered previously excluded footnotes within thousands of historical documents related to the environmental effects of the Hanford site. This

---

<sup>14</sup>. Gerber, 70-1.

new information allowed historians to decipher code words in the documents, which produced a greater understanding of the environmental significance of the site. Because Gerber also served on the committee of declassification of Department of Energy Documents for the National Academy of Sciences, she achieved access to other government documents.<sup>15</sup> All of these efforts allowed Gerber to study an assortment of these government documents to understand the extent of pollution in the immediate areas around nuclear production sites. Her findings exposed multi-decade government efforts to shield this pivotal information from its own citizens. This affected not only those living near nuclear plants but also other Americans. Gerber views these moments as a turning point of American's distrust of their government. Americans started to question what other environmental hazards the United States government systematically concealed during the Cold War. Gerber's intense perseverance in the pursuit of the truth provided citizens with tangible evidence of environmental hazards from nuclear facilities.

Gerber maintains the idea of two competing cultures like Boyer and Henriksen while incorporating environmental influence. She explains how these Americans banded together and discovered a system-wide problem of environmental pollution by filing lawsuits and standing up to the powerful authority of the consensus. Due to these efforts, Gerber believes the Hanford Nuclear Site is currently undergoing the largest radiation cleanup in world history. After leading the nation in plutonium production, she views the Hanford site now represents a path toward positive change. The site now pioneers advancements in "waste remediation, environmental restoration, and the preservation of democratic principles through public involvement."<sup>16</sup> The information drawn from studying pollution from nuclear sites brought greater attention to the environmental impacts of nuclear production.

The declassification of government documents during the late 1980s afforded Gerber access to previously unconfirmed information. Before

---

<sup>15</sup>. "Michele Gerber," Daughters of Hanford, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://www.daughtersofhanford.org/michele-gerber/>.

<sup>16</sup>. Gerber, 5-9, quotation from page 10.

this point, historians could not effectively study environmental aspects of nuclear capabilities due to a lack of source material. The 1980s document releases changed the direction of the historiography of nuclear science in the United States. Historians afterward were able to examine data and reports covering pollution and toxic waste dumps from nuclear facilities across the country. From this point forward, historians studied the cultural impacts of pollution and environmental disasters in the minds and attitudes of Americans within these communities and beyond.

### Environmental Justice and Nuclear Energy

As the environmental effects of nuclear development became clearer in the twenty first century, historians turned their focus to those Americans living around nuclear sites. Nuclear communities, as they became known, felt the full economic and environmental effects from nuclear power; consequently, they developed their own sense of identity and perspective on nuclear power. In *The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice*, Stephanie Malin describes the development of these attitudes and how they differed among different communities.<sup>17</sup> Through the examination of three communities dependent on their natural nuclear resources, she depicts a dependent picture regarding their views on nuclear production in their communities.

Malin expands the study of environmentalism and nuclear capabilities through her emphasis on people of affected communities. As an assistant professor of Sociology at Colorado State University, Malin studies environmental justice, environmental health, poverty, and the political economy of energy development. She deduces how these factors influence the mindsets of those residing in rural uranium communities scattered across the western United States.<sup>18</sup> Because she is a sociologist, Malin interacts with those directly affected by nuclear energy development and

---

<sup>17</sup>. Stephanie A. Malin, *The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 26-7.

<sup>18</sup>. "Stephanie Malin," Colorado State University, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://www.libarts.colostate.edu/people/samalin/>.

concludes that members of these communities have differing attitudes toward uranium mining and nuclear power.

The first community is Nucla, in rural Colorado. To her, Nucla embodies a desperate support for the nuclear sector due to its residents' extreme poverty, natural resource dependence, and spatial isolation. For Nucla, the potential rewards of jobs from uranium mining outweighed the potential health risks from nuclear contamination.<sup>19</sup> Malin uses Nucla as an example of how economically desperate rural communities embraced economic opportunities instead of implementing strict environmental regulations that would stifle nuclear growth in the community.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Malin tells how Telluride, Colorado, transformed from a uranium-dependent economy into a tourism-based economy and now considers the environmental and health risks of uranium extraction to be too costly. Because Telluride halted uranium mining, the number of jobs available fell. Malin details how the transition to a tourism-based economy brought with it rising property values. This forced the working class, which supported the transition, to move out of the city as they could no longer afford to live there.<sup>20</sup> By not allowing uranium extraction, Telluride shows that uranium communities do not have to depend on uranium as their sole source of economic security.

Malin's third community adopted an approach in the middle of the spectrum. Monticello, Utah, actively supported environmental justice, the idea of fair treatment for all people regarding the enforcement and application of environmental laws. Yet, residents of Monticello also endorsed the reopening of uranium operations.<sup>21</sup> Many residents in Monticello understood their local need to balance environmental protection with economic security. Due to persistent poverty and spatial isolation, the community only accepts the environmental justice they think they can reasonably obtain. Residents believe they can use the uranium resources in their surroundings to combat their economic issues.

---

<sup>19</sup>. Malin, 122-5.

<sup>20</sup>. Malin, 123-4.

<sup>21</sup>. Malin, 126-7.

In the communities Malin highlights throughout her book, one theme persists in each: each community possesses deep cultural and economic ties to the growth of nuclear power and energy in the American West. She criticizes the overwhelming power that town decision-makers have for choosing jobs at the risk of long-term health and environmental problems as the source of the problem of dependence. She argues economic and political concerns force these communities to commoditize the land in hope of making a living, all while sacrificing their livelihood. However, Malin also believes activism targeting these large corporations is ultimately ineffective, since the residents of the uranium communities support the reintroduction of uranium extraction facilities. Financial gains from employment and investment remain the primary motivator of these supportive sentiments.<sup>22</sup> To this day, nuclear capabilities continue to directly impact and shape the lives and culture of everyday Americans.

Malin offers a new perspective from those who came before her by emphasizing environmental justice. She seeks to understand the attitudes of communities affected by the environmental impacts rather than focusing exclusively on nationwide views. Because fossil fuel prices climbed higher around the time of publication of her book in 2015, Malin assessed resurgence in the demand for nuclear power could be on the horizon. She warns against making the same environmentally detrimental mistakes once again and contends that the proliferation of sustainable energy could mold the mindsets of Americans towards an even greater degree of environmental awareness, a new position on nuclear power.<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

Nuclear weapons, power, and production profoundly transformed American culture and environmental attitudes. Beginning with the fear of nuclear weapons in the aftermath of World War II, Americans dealt with the impact of nuclear capabilities. In *By the Bomb's Early Light*, Paul Boyer examines the five years following the war and assesses the positive and negative psychological effects on American society. He concludes

---

<sup>22</sup> Malin, 148-55.

<sup>23</sup> Malin, 155-60.

both a culture of optimism and pessimism developed and that each took the lead in society in waves. Similarly, Margot A. Henriksen posits that the United States had two cultures vied for dominance in her book *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*. She contends that the presence of the Bomb allowed the dissenting culture to slowly grow in popularity. These two accounts, published in 1985 and 1997 respectively, both examine the cultural impact of the presence of nuclear weapons but neither examined the environmental impact of nuclear technology. Historians had yet to fully engage with the environmental aspects of nuclear power and waste.

Environmental disasters in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s contributed to the growing awareness in pollution. In response, some historians uncovered how the government concealed the environmental impact of nuclear facilities from the American people. Michele Stenehjem Gerber's *On the Home Front* showed how questioning the government can lead to the expansion of knowledge. Her discoveries regarding pollution at the Hanford Nuclear Site spread awareness of the government's attempts to mask the environmental disasters set in motion by nuclear facilities around the country. In addition, Stephanie Malin's sociological assessment of uranium communities in *The Price of Nuclear Power* highlighted how economic dependence on resource extraction can lead to environmental injustice. She stated the nuclear industries of the future should avoid exploiting nuclear communities for profit and ameliorate nuclear energy's negative environmental impact. Because of the information from documents regarding nuclear industries and the environment, historians moved beyond cultural examinations of the nuclear capabilities and explored environmental impacts and, later, environmental justice.

### Bibliography

Boyer, Paul. *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.

Dunlap, Riley. "Trends in Public Opinion Toward Environmental Issues: 1965-1990." *Society and Natural Resources* 4 (April 1991), 285-312.

Gerber, Michele Stenehjem. *On the Home Front: The Cold War Legacy of the Hanford Nuclear Site*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

Henriksen, Margot A. *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Malin, Stephanie A. *The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015.

“Margot A. Henriksen.” University of Hawaii at Manoa. Accessed July 25, 2017. <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/history/people/faculty/henriksen/>.

“Michele Gerber.” Daughters of Hanford. Accessed July 25, 2017. <http://www.daughtersofhanford.org/michele-gerber/>.

Oostehoek, K. Jan. “What is Environmental History?.” January 3, 2005. <https://www.eh-resources.org/what-is-environmental-history/>.

“Paul Samuel Boyer.” University of Wisconsin – Madison. Accessed July 25, 2017. [https://history.wisc.edu/boyer\\_memorial.htm](https://history.wisc.edu/boyer_memorial.htm).

“Stephanie Malin.” Colorado State University. Accessed July 25, 2017. <http://www.libarts.colostate.edu/people/samalin/>.

## Among the Steppes: A Societal Study of the Soviet Past in Kyrgyzstan

Whitney Spake

Abstract: “Among the Steppes: A Societal Study of the Soviet Past in Kyrgyzstan” is an analysis of the remnants of the Soviet Union in modern Kyrgyzstan. The essay examines non-textual evidence of the Soviet legacy such as monuments, celebrations, public imagery, road names, and interviews. The evidence of the legacy is used in the argument that the memory of the Soviet Union remains due to the current Russian influence, but could change due to the growing Chinese influence. The second part of the essay examines the current Russo-Kyrgyz and Sino-Kyrgyz relationships including how the Kyrgyz benefit off both major regional powers. It is due to this, that the memory of the Soviet Union still has a strong presence in Kyrgyz society.

### Introduction

A country with nomadic people up until two centuries ago, Kyrgyzstan was introduced to modernity by Imperial Russia. The strong Russian influence remained in Kyrgyzstan throughout the Russian Revolution and the existence of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, which was absorbed into the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Through wandering the streets of the two largest Kyrgyz cities, Bishkek and Osh, a picture emerges of how the Kyrgyz remember and commemorate the Russian, but especially the Soviet past. Upon closer examination of the buildings, monuments, celebrations, and public imagery, the Soviet memory comes to life.

Many scholars have studied a variety of themes in Kyrgyz history, such as the introduction of modernity by Russia, the shaping of the current political structure, the current Sino-Kyrgyz bilateral relationship, and the current Russo-Kyrgyz relationship.<sup>1</sup> This article further expands on this

---

<sup>1</sup> Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall, *Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing"* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015); Pinar Akçali and Cennet Engin-Demir, eds, *Politics, Identity and Education in Central Asia: Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).; John C.K. Daly, “SINO-KYRGYZ RELATIONS AFTER THE TULIP REVOLUTION,” *China Brief* 5, no. 9 (April 2005), <https://jamestown.org/program/sino-kyrgyz-relations-after-the-tulip-revolution/> (accessed November 16, 2017).; Kubangazy Bugubaev, “Kyrgyzstan-Russia Relations,”

scholarship by analyzing the Soviet memory in Kyrgyz society through examining non-textual primary sources such as buildings, monuments, celebrations, and other public images. This lingering presence of the Soviet memory is primarily due to the longevity of both Russian and Soviet control over the Kyrgyz society; the political power vacuum and economic turmoil in the 1990s Kyrgyzstan following the fall of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that puts the memory question on the back burner; and Russia's renewed and active role in Kyrgyz relations that aims to counterbalance the encroaching Chinese influence in the Central Asian region. The article is based on research conducted in Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2017, including oral interviews as well as other primary and secondary sources.

### Monuments, Streets, and Celebrations: The Persistent Omnipresence of the Hammer and the Sickle

Kyrgyzstan began as a land of nomads where tribes banded into khanates in the early 1800s. Under the conquest of tsarist Russia in the 1850s, these khanates became part of the Russian empire. By 1876, Russia had conquered all of the Kyrgyz lands.<sup>2</sup> After the Russian Revolution, new policies were implemented, including creating the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which by 1936 had broken into various republics and *oblasts*, including the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR).<sup>3</sup> Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan underwent a ten-year transition from communism to democracy where Kyrgyzstan experienced many changes politically, economically, and socially. Yet despite the challenges, including its GDP plummeting 47% by 1995, Kyrgyzstan emerged as one of the first democracies in Central Asia.<sup>4</sup>

---

*Strategic Outlook*, May 2013, [http://strategicoutlook.org/publications/Kyrgyzstan\\_Russia\\_Relations.pdf](http://strategicoutlook.org/publications/Kyrgyzstan_Russia_Relations.pdf) (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Madhavan K Palat and Anara Tabyshalieva, eds, *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, (UNESCO Publ., 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Madhavan K Palat and Anara Tabyshalieva.

<sup>4</sup> Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall, 4-5.

One of the major remnants highlighting former Soviet influence in Kyrgyzstan are the ubiquitous monuments, especially of Vladimir Lenin, which often emphasize the modernity brought by the Soviets into the region. These monuments dot each little town, are scattered throughout the capital city, and line the front of the mayor's office in the second largest city, Osh. One cannot travel through Kyrgyzstan without noticing the monuments, which serve as a reminder of the Kyrgyz SSR. Many of the monuments commemorate the Kyrgyz troops, which fought in the Great Patriotic War (World War II), while others focus on displaying the ties between Soviet Union and Kyrgyzstan.

The statue of Lenin, overseeing the city of Osh, is the largest Lenin statue in Central Asia, even larger than the Lenin statute in Kyrgyzstan's capital city Bishkek.<sup>5</sup> Lenin's statue in Osh lies across from the mayor's office on a major road. Yet, the most impressive fact about the statue is its height.<sup>6</sup> The statue's location shows the importance of the memory of Lenin as the founder of the USSR. Moreover, with the statue in front of the mayor's office, Lenin serves as a reminder of a strong leader who brought advancements to Kyrgyz society (Appendix, Images 1 & 2). Lenin's statue in Osh seeks to evoke the positive memory of Kyrgyz SSR and its advancements; hence, there has been no movement to take down the statue since its construction.

Bishkek also has a massive Lenin statue in the main square. Unlike in Osh, this statue was moved in 2003 during a resurgence of traditional Kyrgyz culture and values. The removal of the iconic statue resulted in controversy throughout the capital city. Protesters paraded through Bishkek carrying Soviet banners and "Hands off Lenin!" signs. One protestor, Klara Ajbekova, leader of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, proclaimed

Who gave the small nation of Kyrgyzstan its statehood? Lenin. To crush the personality of the person who did so much for Kyrgyzstan citizens is

---

<sup>5</sup> Edward Stourton, "Kyrgyz Reflections," *BBC News*, June 12, 2010.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_8735000/8735240.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8735000/8735240.stm) (accessed October 15, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, the dimensions of the statue have allegedly been "lost." It is rumored that those who knew the dimensions are dead.; Edward Stourton, "Kyrgyz Reflections," *BBC News*, June 12, 2010. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_8735000/8735240.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8735000/8735240.stm) (accessed October 15, 2017).

a disgrace for the nation! By removing the statue we are striking a blow to Russia and bowing before the United States instead - as we are putting a Kyrgyz version of the Statue of Liberty in his place.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, many citizens believed the removal of the statue violated a decree given by President Askar Akaev who declared the statue was a historical monument. Yet, some citizens wanted the statue removed. Edil Baisalov, leader of an NGO that promotes democratic development stated,

There are around 4,000 statues of Lenin in this republic. Isn't that rather too many for a person who never even visited Kyrgyzstan, and didn't say a word about our country anywhere in his works? For Kyrgyzstan to still have so many monuments to Lenin is like Germany preserving statues of Hitler. Fascism and Communism are as bad as each other. If we really want to build a democracy and a new civil society, we must tear such things down.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the protests to remove the Lenin statue in Bishkek, the statue was not removed; instead it was relocated from the front of the historical museum to the gardens behind the historical museum. Lenin's statue in Bishkek only moved 650 feet and there have been no current attempts to remove it.<sup>9</sup> As it stands now, both statues of Lenin seem to display the importance the Soviet leader still holds on Kyrgyzstan and symbolize the communist model of modernity.

This modernity is further memorialized in the Kyrgyz-Russian Friendship Monument, built outside Ala-Too Square. The monument was constructed in 1974 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kyrgyz people joining the Russian empire.<sup>10</sup> In the front and in the back of the monument, flowers are arranged to write out "100" to emphasize the 100 years of friendship. The statue was built with two white pillars and with a band

---

<sup>7</sup> Leila Saralaeva, "Lenin Toppled in Kyrgyzstan," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/lenin-toppled-kyrgyzstan> (accessed October 15, 2017).; The statue to replace Lenin was to be a winged woman, indirectly resembling the Statue of Liberty

<sup>8</sup> Leila Saralaeva, "Lenin Toppled in Kyrgyzstan."

<sup>9</sup> Peter Baker, "They Can't Knock Lenin Off His Pedestal," *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2003. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/20/they-cant-knock-lenin-off-his-pedestal/0348e550-9e34-40ac-9e57-5a27a8dc7005/?utm\\_term=.13f15dd55231](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/20/they-cant-knock-lenin-off-his-pedestal/0348e550-9e34-40ac-9e57-5a27a8dc7005/?utm_term=.13f15dd55231) (accessed October 17, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Kyrgyzstan* (Bradt Travel Guides Ltd, 2015), 116.

wrapped around both. The band contains images of the Kyrgyz and Russian people exchanging goods. One Kyrgyz is depicted with the national instrument, the *komuz*, sharing the gift with the Russians, while others are depicted as receiving gifts from Russia such as the gift of knowledge (Appendix, Image 3). This monument is a clear reminder of the Soviet contribution to the modernization of the Kyrgyz society.

The most sacred monument in Bishkek lies a few blocks from Ala-Too Square in Victory Square. The memorial, Victory Monument, is massive and it was completed on the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War. This memorial is shaped as a yurt, the ancient Kyrgyz abode, with a woman standing by the Eternal Flame. The walk up the path to the yurt is lined with names of Soviet soldiers who died fighting in the Great Patriotic War (Appendix, Images 4 & 5). The memorial is meant to represent the cost of the war and memorialize the Kyrgyz who gave their life. Moreover, the memorial seems to hold a special place for the Kyrgyz people. Wedding pictures are taken here and flowers are placed in front of the Eternal Flame. Although this monument is sacred to the Kyrgyz, there have been cases recorded of people violating it. One example of sacrilegious actions took place when two men were caught roasting potatoes on the Eternal Flame in a video that went viral. Following the incident, about a month later, security cameras were installed on Victory Square.<sup>11</sup> As the result, additional security has been placed to prevent people from further violating the memorial. These efforts demonstrate that the Soviet past is being cultivated from the top down with much government involvement. Overall, this memorial continues to represent the importance of the Great Patriotic War on the mindset of the Kyrgyz people by emphasizing the sacredness of the memory of the war and the soldiers.

The annual commemorations of the Great Patriotic War include both war heroes and Victory Day. One example of a celebrated war hero is General

---

<sup>11</sup> Vecherny Bishkek, "Kyrgyz Authorities Looking For Men Seen Roasting Potatoes On Eternal Flame," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, December 06, 2016. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-roasting-potatoes-eternal-flame-men-sought/28159240.html> (accessed October 17, 2017).; Anastasia Bengard, "Surveillance camera installed on Victory Square in Bishkek," *Bishkek-24*, December 29, 2016. <https://24.kg/archive/en/bishkek24/183561-news24.html/> (accessed October 17, 2017).

Panfilov. The alleged war hero's tale of General Panfilov and his men's valiant effort in the war based on heroism and self-sacrifice is undergoing revival in Russia. The myth of Panfilov states that he and his twenty-eight men, mostly Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, were killed attempting to stop the Germans advancing on Moscow in 1941. They were allegedly killed after heroically destroying eighteen German tanks. This war myth has recently been depicted in a Russian film and has come under scrutiny by Russian archivists.<sup>12</sup> Sergei Mironenko, former director of the Russian State Archive, was demoted due to exposing evidence that disproved the myth of Panfilov.<sup>13</sup> The Kyrgyz, however, seem to continue to place high importance on cultivating the myth of General Panfilov and his men. Right behind the parliament building in Bishkek, lays a Soviet star-shaped Panfilov Park, which has many carnival rides and booths, with the memorial to General Panfilov as its most important feature. The gold painted memorial is located right at the entrance to Panfilov Park, almost impossible to miss (Appendix, Image 6).

When walking around Kyrgyz towns, one can also see the subtle examples of the Soviet past that have blended into the cityscape. Streets throughout Kyrgyzstan have been named after famous Kyrgyz during the Soviet era and famous Russians who served in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). General Panfilov also has a street named after him in Bishkek. Panfilov Street runs beside the memorial dedicated to Panfilov, the Russian-Kyrgyz Friendship Memorial, and the Kyrgyz parliament building, where it meets one of the major streets in Bishkek.<sup>14</sup> About five blocks from Panfilov Street, there is Turusbekov Street, which is named after Dzhusup Turusbekov, who was not only a soldier in the Great Patriotic War, but also a member of the CPSU and a famous Kyrgyz SSR

---

<sup>12</sup> Harry Bone, "Putin backs WW2 myth in new Russian film."

<sup>13</sup> Peter Hobson, "Battle in the Archives - Uncovering Russia's Secret Past," *The Moscow Times* March 24, 2016. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/battle-in-the-archives-uncovering-russias-secret-past-52254> (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> MY.COM, "MAPS.ME," Apple App Store, Vers. 7.6.1 (2017).

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/maps-me-offline-map-nav/id510623322?mt=8> Download URL (October 31, 2017).

literary figure. Two of his best-known works are *Joyous Youth* and *The Fatherland*.<sup>15</sup>

Like Turusbekov, Absamat Masaliev was also an influential communist in Kyrgyzstan whose name is now memorialized in the Masaliev Avenue, which is one of the busiest streets in Bishkek today. In 1985, Masaliev became the Kyrgyz Communist Party's First Secretary and was its leader until 1991.<sup>16</sup> After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Masaliev continued to lead the nation's communist party until he died in 2004.<sup>17</sup> To underscore his stature in the Kyrgyz SSR and in Kyrgystan, he was given a state funeral.<sup>18</sup>

While Masaliev was an influential Kyrgyz communist, there were earlier communist party members who held more influence. One of them was the highly influential Chingiz Aitmatov. Aitmatov was a renowned Kyrgyz SSR author who became the most decorated literary figure in the Soviet Union who received three state awards and the Lenin Prize. Aitmatov was not only a major literary figure; he was also an ambassador to several countries, including Luxembourg.<sup>19</sup> He remains an important part of Kyrgyzstan, whose memory lives in a monument and a street name dedicated to him. There is no doubt that street names serve to memorialize key figures in Kyrgyz SSR history to keep Soviet history alive.

Another way to keep the memory of the Soviet Union in the people's mindsets is through Soviet buildings and their maintenance and usage. One building, the Kyrgyz National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre has been in use since it was constructed by the Soviets. The Kyrgyz government has recently worked on the restoration of the building to keep

---

<sup>15</sup> "Dzhusup Turusbekov," *The Free Dictionary* <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Dzhusup+Turusbekov> (accessed December 08, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> "Absamat Masaliyev, at 71; was leader of Kyrgyzstan," *The Boston Globe* August 02, 2004 [http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2004/08/02/absamat\\_masaliyev\\_at\\_71\\_was\\_leader\\_of\\_kyrgyzstan/](http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2004/08/02/absamat_masaliyev_at_71_was_leader_of_kyrgyzstan/) (accessed November 01, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> "Kyrgyz Communist Leader Resigns to Face Charges," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, August 02, 2010 [https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyz\\_Communist\\_Party\\_Leader\\_Resigns\\_Due\\_To\\_Criminal\\_Charge/2116710.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyz_Communist_Party_Leader_Resigns_Due_To_Criminal_Charge/2116710.html) (accessed November 01, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> "Absamat Masaliyev, at 71; was leader of Kyrgyzstan," *The Boston Globe*.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Yoffe, "Obituary: Chingiz Aitmatov," *The Guardian* July 14, 2008 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jul/15/culture.obituaries> (accessed November 01, 2017).

it in good condition. Moreover, the Kyrgyz government has recently allocated 29,117 million *som*, approximately \$423.5 million, to restore and maintain the theatre. However, since this amount was not sufficient, as of October 2017, the Speaker of the Parliament allocated an additional 500,000 *som*, \$7283, out of the reserve fund to finish repairs.<sup>20</sup> To put the cost of maintenance in perspective, as of 2016, the average Kyrgyz household income per capita was \$730.83.<sup>21</sup> This Soviet building, which retains the Soviet façade including the hammer and sickle, is being used for ballets and operas even despite the ongoing repairs (Appendix, Image 11). The theatre is situated among the most exclusive businesses, such as high-end hotel chains. Bishkek's only five-star hotel, Hyatt Regency, advertises the theatre, as well as its proximity to it, on its website as a drawing point.<sup>22</sup> Ironically, the theatre, a previous symbol of communist Kyrgyzstan, now resides within the most capitalist areas in Bishkek.

Museums established under the Soviet Union not only continue to operate, but they also cultivate the Soviet past. In Bishkek, the State Historical Museum is currently undergoing renovations and is closed until complete. However, other museums in Ala-Too Square are opened. The State Museum of Fine Arts and Frunze House-Museum highlight both Kyrgyz culture and Soviet history. In the State Museum of Fine Arts, Soviet artwork is highlighted through the then "traditional life." The Frunze House-Museum, named after the founder of Bishkek, references back to pre-Soviet times, but it also shows how the Russians brought modernity to Kyrgyzstan. The Osh History Museum traces Kyrgyz history, including prehistory. Yet, the Soviet period is emphasized in great detail. Photographs, newspaper articles, awards, and memorabilia of Kyrgyz SSR are displayed throughout the exhibits in abundant detail. The Osh Art Museum also focuses on Kyrgyz SSR. Most of the paintings and

---

<sup>20</sup> Anastasia Mokrenko, "500,000 soms allocated for Kyrgyz Academic Opera and Ballet Theater," *Bishkek-24* October 23, 2017

[https://24.kg/english/66423\\_500000\\_soms\\_allocated\\_for\\_Kyrgyz\\_Academic\\_Opera\\_and\\_Ballet\\_Theater/](https://24.kg/english/66423_500000_soms_allocated_for_Kyrgyz_Academic_Opera_and_Ballet_Theater/) (accessed November 01, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> "Kyrgyzstan Household Income per Capita," *CEIC*,

<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/kyrgyzstan/annual-household-income-per-capita> (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> "Hyatt Regency Bishkek," *Hyatt Regency*, <https://bishkek.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html> (accessed November 16, 2017).

sculptures are from the Soviet era and highlight life under the Soviet Union. Through these museums, the Kyrgyz people are exposed to the Soviet era, which is portrayed in a favorable light. Little criticism, if any, of the Soviet control of Kyrgyzstan is visible and available. Rather, the museums focus on depicting the Soviet contribution to Kyrgyzstan's economy and technological advancements, which are viewed as instrumental to the modernization process of the region.

The memory of the Soviet past can also be seen through public imagery. Across Osh and Bishkek, Soviet red stars line gates and doors. The buildings display the hammer and sickle. Some buildings still have the Soviet red star on flagpoles. Soviet fighter planes, such as MIGs, have been placed in several cities to show the former might of the Soviet military; even the National Defense Building in Bishkek has a MIG outside. These images across the cities have become a common place and something the Kyrgyz see on a daily basis. The Kyrgyz seem to view the symbols of the Soviet Union not as reminders of former Soviet control, but as reminders of Soviet generosity, which materialized in benefits to the people and technological advancements of the nation.

Another display of the Soviet legacy is the temporary poster exhibit, which lines Ala-Too Square. These posters in front of the State Historical Museum highlight the connection to and continuity with the Soviet Union through images such as school and home life. The purpose is to highlight the similarities of life in the Soviet Union and after. For example, exhibits depict images of children then and now to show that they still radiate happiness and innocence regardless of the era (Appendix, Images 12 & 13). Public art in Osh also highlights the Soviet influence. Two major murals line two different apartment building complexes in Osh. One mural advertises the 1980 Olympics hosted by the Soviet Union. The mural features the official mascot, Misha, the bear, as well as the Olympic rings under a building topped with the Soviet red star (Appendix, Image 14). The other mural is an Aeroflot propaganda poster. A massive airplane is depicted in the mural as well as the Aeroflot logo, a hammer and a set of wings (Appendix, Image 15). Aeroflot still flies into Kyrgyzstan today, and the people still see the same Soviet logo. Through public imagery,

street names, and buildings, the presence of the former Soviet Union is preserved throughout the country.

### Treading the Silk Road: The Importance of the Russo-Kyrgyz and Sino-Kyrgyz Relationships

The persistence of the Soviet past in today's Kyrgyzstan, detailed in the section above, can be explained by taking a closer look at Kyrgyz relations with its larger neighbors, namely Russia and China, and Kyrgyz domestic policies in the post-Soviet era. From imperial Russia through the transition of Soviet Russia to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russians maintained approximately 150 years of influence in Kyrgyzstan. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan underwent a tumultuous ten-year transition from communism to democracy where Kyrgyzstan experienced many changes politically, economically, and socially. Following the turbulent 1990s, the Chinese began exerting influence in Kyrgyzstan. The presence of China in Kyrgyzstan has contributed to a Sino-Russian competition for influence in Kyrgyzstan.

### The Bringers of Modernity: The Longevity of Russian Influence in Kyrgyzstan

The Russians began their influence over Kyrgyzstan in the 1850s, gained complete control in 1876, and kept control until 1991. During the century and a half of Russian and Soviet influence, Kyrgyzstan was introduced to modernity and industrialization. As mentioned above, the Kyrgyz commemorated their introduction to modernity through monuments. The numerous Lenin statues across Kyrgyzstan are an ode to the leader who was viewed as introducing Kyrgyz people to modernity. These numerous Lenin statues showcase the importance he played in Kyrgyz history, a memory of the advancements brought to Kyrgyz society through a communist model (Appendix, Images 1&2). Another monument signifying the advancements brought by the Russians to Kyrgyzstan is the Kyrgyz-Russian Friendship Monument in Bishkek. This monument highlights the then 100 years of friendship between Russians and Kyrgyz. Moreover, the monument showcases the cultural exchange between the

two; the Kyrgyz are depicted sharing the *komuz* while the Russians are shown bringing knowledge. In other words, the Kyrgyz received the gift of modernity from the Russians (Appendix, Image 3). The Kyrgyz took part in World War II in the name of protecting the Soviet Union and its communist ideals, which became engrained in the Kyrgyz political, economic, military, cultural, and social life for nearly another five decades. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan underwent a ten-year period of instability, but once the tumultuous period was over Russia began to regain footing in Kyrgyzstan to recapture its long-time influence in the country, which was now emerging from communism and trying to stay on the path towards democracy.

### The Turbulent 1990s: Kyrgyzstan's Focus on Internal Issues

The 1990s in Kyrgyzstan was a decade of turbulence, especially in economic and political sectors of society, following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Askar Akaev was elected the first president of Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic in 1990, the first leader to not have been affiliated with the communist party, a role he kept after the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> As the first president of a former communist state, Akaev worked to bring the country towards democracy through a variety of reforms such as the 1991 "Main Law on Local Administration," which granted the central government the ability to give greater power to local authorities that were elected into power and it granted municipal authorities greater freedoms.<sup>24</sup> Then, in 1993, the first non-Soviet constitution was drafted, which included the usage Kyrgyz as the official language and Russian as the language of "inter-ethnic communication."<sup>25</sup>

Although Akaev set out to reform and democratize the country, he became a more authoritarian leader by his second term. The main issues Akaev and the parliament disagreed on were how to handle the economic issues and government corruption. Eventually, Akaev dissolved parliament, held

---

<sup>23</sup> Pınar Akçalı and Cennet Engin-Demir, eds, *Politics, Identity and Education in Central Asia: Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 37-38.; Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Pınar Akçalı and Cennet Engin-Demir, 24-119.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-119.

new elections, and then limited parliamentary powers in order to have his way with passing policy. From 1995-1999, Akaev also worked on abolishing democratic principles, through strengthening presidential rule and limiting the parliament, and practiced intolerance against the opposition.<sup>26</sup>

The transition to democracy negatively impacted the likes of the people. The privatization of farms left villagers impoverished. The shift from rural living to city living left rural areas abandoned. Some Kyrgyz even left Kyrgyzstan for jobs in Russia, because there were better opportunities. In addition, especially in rural settings, education was underfunded. In the 1990s, over 30,000 students dropped out of schools due to the economic decline and declining value placed on education.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, within Kyrgyz society, the people experienced many challenges due to the influx of rural migration to cities, a collapsing economy, institutional voids, coup attempts, and the increased exploitation of various ethnic groups, including disputes between Uzbek and Kyrgyz peoples.<sup>28</sup>

These internal issues created a sense of chaos in early independent Kyrgyzstan, which contributed to the lack of questioning the Soviet past. However, by 1998 the economy had stabilized enough that Kyrgyzstan became the first Central Asian republic to join the World Trade Organization.<sup>29</sup> During the “turbulent 1990s”, the issue of the Soviet past was not a priority, rather governmental and economic policy were the most important issues for the young democracy. All of this meant that the Soviet-era buildings, street names, memorials, monuments, and other public images remained uncontested, if not ignored altogether for the time being. This, in turn, contributed to the lingering of the Soviet past and its memory among the Kyrgyz people.

---

<sup>26</sup> Pinar Akçalı and Cennet Engin-Demir, 39-41.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 71-137.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

## The Struggle for Influence: The Sino-Russian Competition for Kyrgyzstan through Soft Power

The emerging Chinese influence in the 2000s in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the area of economic development, prompted Russia to reassert its interest in the region. The methods used by the Russian government include economic investments, albeit not as influential as those carried out by China, and especially the efforts to revive the memory of shared experiences during the Soviet era such as the Great Patriotic War. China, after Kyrgyz independence, has begun pushing for more influence in Kyrgyzstan through the *One Belt and One Road Initiative* in Central Asia, which aims to connect and cooperate with Eurasian countries located along the historic Silk Road. The Kyrgyz government has been receptive to such a policy, as it sees many benefits coming from it. The Sino-Kyrgyz bilateral relationship began in 2002 when Kyrgyzstan opened a consular office in China and subsequently received \$970,000 in military aid three days later.<sup>30</sup> China's deeper involvement in Kyrgyzstan was further reflected in China's \$900 million investment plan, which included a hydroelectric plant, two smelting plants, railways, and highways in exchange for access to electricity and mineral deposits.<sup>31</sup>

The Sino-Kyrgyz relationship has proven beneficial to both countries. For China, it has become Kyrgyzstan's largest import, with their exports totaling \$1.6 billion in 2016. In comparison, Russia's exports to Kyrgyzstan were approximately half of that.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, 40 Chinese plants and factories have been relocated to Kyrgyzstan, allowing Kyrgyzstan's unemployment rate to drop and Chinese business to further invest in the country.<sup>33</sup> China's most recent large-scale investment in Kyrgyzstan is clearly the result of China's *One Belt and One Road Initiative*. The Chinese hope to create a "new silk road" linking 65 countries through a

---

<sup>30</sup> John C.K. Daly, "Sino-Kyrgyz Relations after the Tulip Revolution."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Kyrgyzstan: A Bellwether for China-Russia Relations," *Stratfor Worldview*, July 6, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/kyrgyzstan-bellwether-china-russia-relations> (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Dmitriy Frolovskiy, "Amid Russian Downturn, Kyrgyzstan Turns to China," *The Diplomat*, July 14, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/amid-russian-downturn-kyrgyzstan-turns-to-china/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

trade route, which is estimated to produce \$21 trillion. As of October 2017, this ambitious initiative has already created 180,000 jobs and contributed to \$1.1 billion in tax revenue.<sup>34</sup> The Chinese plan to incorporate Kyrgyzstan into its new initiative by building a railroad connecting China to both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Chinese plan to invest \$6 billion into the project and the Kyrgyz estimate to make \$200 million in profits off of the railway through trade.<sup>35</sup>

While China is currently Kyrgyzstan's largest economic partner, a new development, it was historically Russia who was Kyrgyzstan's sole partner. Prior to the Chinese takeover as the largest economic contributor, Russia used to provide the needed finances. Within two years of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia established a seventy-five billion *ruble* credit line and \$65 million in trade agreements.<sup>36</sup> By 2004, in light of China's increased interest in the region, Russia had announced it would build an aluminum smelter and two hydroelectric stations.<sup>37</sup> For the building of the hydroelectric plants, Russia promised \$3 billion, yet only provided \$37 million. China assisted in providing the funds for similar projects. Moreover, Russia pledged \$1.5 billion in gas pipelines by 2030. This further highlighted Russia's economic weakness, as the money was only sufficient to cover Kyrgyzstan's energy needs and the fact that the Kyrgyz desired more of Chinese economic support.<sup>38</sup>

While Russo-Kyrgyz economic relationship has become weaker with time in terms of large-scale investments, in part due to the downturn in the Russian economy, Russia still maintains a strong hold on Kyrgyzstan in other areas. Russo-Kyrgyz relations have strengthened with Kyrgyzstan's joining of two Russian led organizations, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union. The Kyrgyz membership

---

<sup>34</sup> Charlie Campbell, "Ports, Pipelines, and Geopolitics: China's New Silk Road Is a Challenge for Washington," *TIME*, October 23, 2017, <http://time.com/4992103/china-silk-road-belt-xi-jinping-khorgos-kazakhstan-infrastructure/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Sofia Pale, "Kyrgyzstan and the Chinese 'New Silk Road,'" *New Eastern Outlook*, March 09, 2015, <https://journal-neo.org/2015/09/03/kyrgyzstan-and-the-chinese-new-silk-road/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>36</sup> Kubangazy Bugubaev, "Kyrgyzstan-Russia Relations."

<sup>37</sup> John C.K. Daly, "Sino-Kyrgyz Relations after the Tulip Revolution."

<sup>38</sup> Dmitriy Frolovskiy, "Amid Russian Downturn, Kyrgyzstan Turns to China."

in both organizations allows Russia to provide Kyrgyzstan financial, humanitarian, military, and technological support.<sup>39</sup> The Russo-Kyrgyz bilateral relationship continues to benefit Kyrgyz workers of which approximately one million Kyrgyz work in Russia. Their remittances make up 85% of the remittances that flow into Kyrgyzstan and contribute to one-third of the Kyrgyz GDP.<sup>40</sup> While economically Russia cannot compete with China for influence in Kyrgyzstan, the Russians can exert soft power to play on the nostalgia for the Soviet Union and the memory of the Great Patriotic War, because, unlike China, Russia shares a common history with Kyrgyzstan and a long-term relationship.

The memory of the Second World War, known as the Great Patriotic War, is sacred in Russia and post-Soviet nation-states, including Kyrgyzstan, as it especially highlights the heroism of the Soviet soldiers. The memory of the war is vital to Russia in its modern political context, and there is even legislation against discrediting the war. The current Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, passed a law through the Russian parliament with fines and imprisonment for those “deemed guilty of ‘denigrating’ and ‘falsifying’ Russia’s war history.”<sup>41</sup> Recently, the law was used to prosecute Vladimir Luzgin. He was fined 200,000 *rubles* for reposting a war article on a Russian social network, which according to the prosecutors, “instill in many people a firm conviction about negative actions of the USSR in the war.”<sup>42</sup>

One of the ways of how the Russian government continues to keep the memory of the Soviet past alive in today’s Kyrgyzstan is through shared commemorative events. In 2011, Russian officials participated in the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Panfilov division during grand

---

<sup>39</sup> Mirgul Moldoisaeva, interview by Diplomatic Connections, “Interview of Kyrgyz Ambassador to the United Nations M.Moldoisaeva for Diplomatic Connections Magazine,” *Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations*, May 23, 2017, <https://www.un.int/kyrgyzstan/news/interview-kyrgyz-ambassador-united-nations-mmoldoisaeva-diplomatic-connections-magazine> (accessed November 16, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> Dmitriy Frolovskiy, “Amid Russian Downturn, Kyrgyzstan Turns to China.”

<sup>41</sup> Cathy Young, “Putin’s Russia Has To Deal With the Legacy of World War II,” *Time* May 09, 2015. <http://time.com/3852689/ussr-russia-victory-day-wwii-putin-ukraine/> (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> Harry Bone, “Putin backs WW2 myth in new Russian film,” *BBC News* October 11, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37595972> (accessed October 25, 2017).

celebrations in Bishkek. At the roundtable discussion commemorating the anniversary, former Kyrgyz President Atambayev was recorded saying, “We should not forget such glorious dates, it is our common history.”<sup>43</sup> The Kyrgyz government continues to celebrate Panfilov, as seen with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War. The Kyrgyz commemorated this by holding a ceremony in which veterans and families of war veterans laid flowers on the Panfilov memorial. “We have to remember and honor the heroism of Soviet soldiers who gave their lives for the victory over fascism,” was spoken by the chairman of trade unions in Kyrgyzstan at the ceremony.<sup>44</sup>

The commemoration of the Great Patriotic War also continues to be reflected in the Kyrgyz celebration of Victory Day. In 2015, for the first time since Kyrgyz independence, Russian troops marched through Ala-Too Square to help commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of victory in the war.<sup>45</sup> This year, for the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Victory Day, a candlelight memorial was held and ended at the Victory Monument in Victory Square.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, this past year President Putin released a statement to the Kyrgyz people

We will always keep a grateful memory of those who, with their valor on the battlefields and with selfless labor in the home front, defended the freedom and independence of the Motherland. I am convinced that the glorious traditions of fraternal friendship and mutual assistance bequeathed by our fathers and grandfathers will continue to serve for the strengthening of the Russian-Kyrgyz alliance and strategic partnership.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> "Atambaev offers Russia to celebrate jointly the 70th anniversary of Panfilov division," *Kabar* June 22, 2015. <http://old.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/1204> (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>44</sup> "Bishkek hosts ceremony of laying flowers at the monument to Panfilov division," *Kabar* May 08, 2015. <http://old.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/1204> (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> Tamas Paczai, "Kyrgyzstan Celebrates Victory Day in Russia's Shadow," *EurasiaNet* May 11, 2015. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/73371> (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>46</sup> Jazgul Masalieva, "Bishkek to host "Light memorial candle" campaign." *Bishkek-24*, May 03, 2017 ([https://24.kg/english/51036\\_Bishkek\\_to\\_host\\_Light\\_memorial\\_candle\\_campaign/](https://24.kg/english/51036_Bishkek_to_host_Light_memorial_candle_campaign/) (accessed October 25, 2017)).

<sup>47</sup> Anastasia Mokrenko, "Vladimir Putin congratulates Kyrgyz people on Victory Day," *Bishkek-24* May 06, 2017.

[https://24.kg/english/51273\\_Vladimir\\_Putin\\_congratulates\\_Kyrgyz\\_people\\_on\\_Victory\\_Day/](https://24.kg/english/51273_Vladimir_Putin_congratulates_Kyrgyz_people_on_Victory_Day/) (accessed October 25, 2017).

Clearly, highly commemorated occasions such as the celebrations of the Victory Day in World War II not only serve as a unifying source but further tie today's Kyrgyzstan to Russia.

The most telling commemoration of the Great Patriotic War, and therefore the Soviet Union, is the memorialization of Kyrgyz soldiers around major city and town squares around the country. In both Osh and Bishkek, the major squares hold rows of large signs commemorating Kyrgyz soldiers who fought with the Soviet Union. For the seventy-second anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, these signs were placed in front of the mayor's office and Lenin statue in Osh, lining the sidewalks. The posters had Soviet symbols, such as the hammer and sickle, in the top right corner, current photo of the veteran, and a photo of the veteran in the war. The higher ranked soldiers had a biography section and more photos. In Bishkek, these posters, of the same style, lined Ala-Too Square and focused more on the veteran's accomplishments (Appendix, Images 7-10). Through such and other exhibits, the memory of the Great Patriotic War continues to resonate with the majority of Kyrgyz people, including the younger generations, and thus keeps their ties to the memory of the Soviet Union of which they only know from books and stories passed down by their parents and grandparents.

President Putin has also shaped the memory of the Great Patriotic War through creating a "single history syllabus," which promotes one narrative in all Russian schools and a national "History" channel.<sup>48</sup> This Great Patriotic War cult of memory applies not only to current Russia, but also to post-Soviet countries whose leaders do not seem to want to exacerbate relations with Russia for fear of adverse effects on their economic ties. Those who do, however, face consequences. One recent instance is the Polish removal of their Soviet World War II monuments, including memorials to the Red Army. This removal is under intense scrutiny of Russia with Moscow threatening retaliation.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, many post-Soviet

---

<sup>48</sup> Harry Bone, "Putin backs WW2 myth in new Russian film."

<sup>49</sup> "Russia Vows To Retaliate If Poland Removes WWII Soviet Monuments," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* July 19, 2017. <https://www.rferl.org/a/poland-soviet-wwii-monuments-russia-retaliation/28627350.html> (accessed October 25, 2017).

countries, including Kyrgyzstan, refuse to remove the monuments honoring the Red Army; rather, they annually commemorate the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War.

In light of Kyrgyzstan's weakening relations with Russia due to the Chinese influence in the country, Russia has been evoking remembrance of the shared past and the importance the Kyrgyz have played in it. The most defining example of President Putin showcasing the alleged longevity of Russo-Kyrgyz relations was in the statement he released this year to the Kyrgyz people on the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Victory Day. In this statement, the Russian president emphasized the Kyrgyz soldiers' "valor on the battlefields" and "selfless labor on the home front," which "defended the freedom." Moreover, President Putin expressed hope that the "fraternal friendship and mutual assistance" in the current bilateral relationship between the two countries would continue for years to come.<sup>50</sup>

Russia has utilized nostalgia of the past to help preserve relations with Kyrgyzstan and to remind the Kyrgyz what the Russians have done for them, such as the modernization of the country. Kyrgyz people themselves have also remained sentimental over their relationship with Russia. Former president, Atambayev, in an interview with *Time*, spoke of relations with Russia and Putin. When asked about his close relationship with Putin, Atambayev responded

I actually think that Putin's image in the West has been demonized in some way. If you look at Russia today, there are many things that are hard to imagine happening in neighboring countries. There are websites that openly criticize Putin, and nobody is being dragged away at night like they were during Stalin... Putin is a person that knows how to listen. I've debated a lot with him and in the end when I was right, he would accept my opinion. That's why we became friends, I guess because very few people debate with him. We debate even now sometimes. He's a very smart person with a broad knowledge of things.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Anastasia Mokrenko, "Vladimir Putin congratulates Kyrgyz people on Victory Day."

<sup>51</sup> Ian Bremmer, "Q&A: Kyrgyzstan's President on Democracy, Islam, and Being Friends with Putin," *Time*, October 9, 2017 <http://time.com/4972381/kyrgyzstan-almazbek-atambayev-muslim-russia/> (accessed November 19, 2017).

Atambayev was clear that he respected Putin and the friendship between the two countries and that he understood the importance of maintaining Russia's presence in light of stepped up efforts on the part of China to make inroads into the Kyrgyz economy and society.

The nostalgia of the relationship between the two countries is even more prevalent in personal interviews. Dr. Sultanov, thirteen when the Soviet Union collapsed, reflected on the positive aspects of Soviet rule. He talked about his parents' jobs, his mom was a doctor and dad an engineer, and how difficult it was for his dad to find a job during the turbulent 1990s once the Soviet Union fell. Dr. Sultanov had vivid recollections of the difficulties following the collapse, of how there were never any goods in the stores and the long lines when such goods became temporarily available.<sup>52</sup> Uzakbek, a toddler when the collapse occurred, spoke of the longing in his parents' voices when they spoke of the Soviet Union. Uzakbek's parents spoke of the difficult transition, the lack of jobs. However, when speaking of the Soviet Union, Uzakbek's parents spoke of the affordability of goods and the equality felt in the society, thereby emphasizing the positive aspects of the Soviet-era.<sup>53</sup> Ainura, too, spoke of her parents' fond regard for the Soviet Union. When describing how her parents remembered the Soviet past, Ainura described it as "a fairytale."<sup>54</sup> The nostalgia felt by the older generation, those from 45-60, for the Soviet Union remains prevalent in Kyrgyz society, thus contributing to retaining the Soviet memory and keeping it in a positive light. This longing for the "good, old days," continues to be exploited by both Russian and Kyrgyz leaders in the face of China's ambitions and its looming impact in Central Asia.

## Conclusion

By analyzing the Soviet memory in Kyrgyz society through examining primarily non-textual sources such as buildings, monuments, celebrations, and other public imagery, the lingering presence of the Soviet memory

---

<sup>52</sup> Talant Sultanov, interview by author, July 12, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Uzakbek Bakirov, interview by author, July 16, 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Ainura Kubanychbek Kyzy, interview by author, July 26, 2017.

comes to life. From the names of streets to posters of Kyrgyz World War II veterans, the Soviet past is present in modern Kyrgyzstan. The persistence of this memory has been primarily made possible due to the longevity of Russian and Soviet influence in the Kyrgyz society, the turbulent 1990s in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, and the recent Sino-Russian competition in Central Asia. Even though Kyrgyzstan seems to be benefitting more economically from China than Russia at the moment, the Kyrgyz people understand their need to remain independent. This is why they tend to tread carefully to maintain some kind of balance between Russia and China, which both seem to be using Kyrgyzstan to project their political and economic power in the Central Asian region. Interestingly, one of the side effects of this power struggle and the delicate balance seems to be the lingering presence of the Soviet past. In order to ensure that China's influence on Kyrgyzstan is kept in check, the Kyrgyz leaders seem to cater to Putin's recent uses of selective historical memory, often fueled by nostalgia for the old Soviet era, by playing up the positive aspects of both Russian and Soviet influence on Kyrgyz history. This is why the most iconic symbols of the Soviet Union – the hammer and sickle – are still omnipresent through monuments, celebrations, street names, buildings, and other public images such as museums. However, this lingering Soviet past may not receive the recognition it does currently once the Kyrgyz become more intertwined economically with China than with Russia in the years to come.

## Appendix

*Editor's note: All images were taken by and remain the intellectual property of the author, Ms. Spake. The photos, originally in color, were taken in the summer of 2017.*

Image 1 - Osh Mayor's Office



Image 2 - Lenin Statue in front of Osh Mayor's Office



Image 3 - Kyrgyz-Russian Friendship Memorial

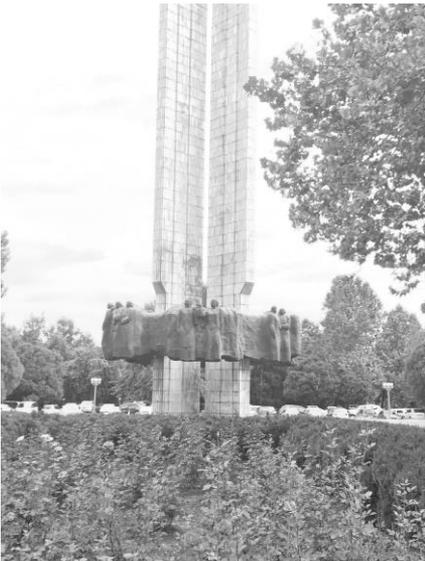


Image 4 – Victory Monument



Image 5 – Victory Monument (close-up)



Image 6 - General Panfilov Memorial, Panfilov Park



Image 7 - Commemorating Kyrgyz SSR soldiers in Bishkek



Image 8 - Kyrgyz SSR soldier poster, Bishkek (close-up)



Image 9 - Kyrgyz SSR soldier commemoration, Osh



Image 10 - Kyrgyz SSR soldier poster, continued, Osh



Image 11 - Kyrgyz National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre



Image 12 – “Then” poster



Image 13 – “Now” poster



Image 14 - “Misha”, 1980 Olympics Poster, Osh



Image 15 – Aeroflot poster, Osh



## Bibliography

"Absamat Masaliyev, at 71; was leader of Kyrgyzstan." *The Boston Globe* August 02, 2004.

[http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2004/08/02/absamat\\_masaliyev\\_at\\_71\\_was\\_leader\\_of\\_kyrgyzstan/](http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2004/08/02/absamat_masaliyev_at_71_was_leader_of_kyrgyzstan/) (accessed November 01, 2017).

Akçalı, Pınar, and Cennet Engin-Demir, eds. *Politics, Identity and Education in Central Asia: Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

"Atambaev offers Russia to celebrate jointly the 70th anniversary of Panfilov division." *Kabar* June 22, 2015. <http://old.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/1204> (accessed October 25, 2017).

Baker, Peter. "They Can't Knock Lenin Off His Pedestal." *The Washington Post* September 20, 2003.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/20/they-cant-knock-lenin-off-his-pedestal/0348e550-9e34-40ac-9e57-5a27a8dc7005/?utm\\_term=.13f15dd55231](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/20/they-cant-knock-lenin-off-his-pedestal/0348e550-9e34-40ac-9e57-5a27a8dc7005/?utm_term=.13f15dd55231) (accessed October 17, 2017).

Bengard, Anastasia. "Surveillance camera installed on Victory Square in Bishkek." *Bishkek-24* December 29, 2016.

<https://24.kg/archive/en/bishkek24/183561-news24.html/> (accessed October 17, 2017).

"Bishkek hosts ceremony of laying flowers at the monument to Panfilov division," *Kabar* May 08, 2015. <http://old.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/1204> (accessed October 25, 2017).

Bishkek, Vecherny. "Kyrgyz Authorities Looking For Men Seen Roasting Potatoes On Eternal Flame." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* December 06, 2016. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-roasting-potatoes-eternal-flame-men-sought/28159240.html> (accessed October 17, 2017).

Bone, Harry. "Putin backs WW2 myth in new Russian film." *BBC News* October 11, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37595972> (accessed October 25, 2017).

Bremmer, Ian. "Q&A: Kyrgyzstan's President on Democracy, Islam, and Being Friends with Putin." *Time* October 9, 2017.

<http://time.com/4972381/kyrgyzstan-almazbek-atambayev-muslim-russia/> (accessed November 19, 2017).

Bugubaev, Kubangazy. "Kyrgyzstan-Russia Relations." *Strategic Outlook*, May 2013. [http://strategicoutlook.org/publications/Kyrgyzstan\\_Russia\\_Relations.pdf](http://strategicoutlook.org/publications/Kyrgyzstan_Russia_Relations.pdf) (accessed November 16, 2017).

Campbell, Charlie. "Ports, Pipelines, and Geopolitics: China's New Silk Road Is a Challenge for Washington." *TIME*, October 23, 2017.

<http://time.com/4992103/china-silk-road-belt-xi-jinping-khorgos-kazakhstan-infrastructure/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

"Chronology for Russians in Kyrgyzstan." *Minorities at Risk*. January 10, 2007. <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=70301> (accessed November 16, 2017).

Daly, John C.K. "SINO-KYRGYZ RELATIONS AFTER THE TULIP REVOLUTION." *China Brief* 5, no. 9 (April 2005).

<https://jamestown.org/program/sino-kyrgyz-relations-after-the-tulip-revolution/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

"Dzhusup Turusbekov." *The Free Dictionary*.

[http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Dzhusup Turusbekov](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Dzhusup+Turusbekov) (accessed December 08, 2017).

Frolovskiy, Dmitriy. "Amid Russian Downturn, Kyrgyzstan Turns to China." *The Diplomat*, July 14, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/amid-russian-downturn-kyrgyzstan-turns-to-china/> (accessed November 16, 2017).

Hobson, Peter. "Battle in the Archives - Uncovering Russia's Secret Past." *The Moscow Times* March 24, 2016. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/battle-in-the-archives-uncovering-russias-secret-past-52254> (accessed October 25, 2017).

"Hyatt Regency Bishkek." *Hyatt Regency*.

<https://bishkek.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html> (accessed November 16, 2017).

"Kyrgyzstan: A Bellwether for China-Russia Relations." *Stratfor Worldview*. July 6, 2017. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/kyrgyzstan-bellwether-china-russia-relations> (accessed November 16, 2017).

"Kyrgyz Communist Leader Resigns To Face Charges."

*RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* August 02, 2010.

[https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyz\\_Communist\\_Party\\_Leader\\_Resigns\\_Due\\_To\\_Criminal\\_Charge/2116710.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyz_Communist_Party_Leader_Resigns_Due_To_Criminal_Charge/2116710.html) (accessed November 01, 2017).

"Kyrgyzstan Household Income per Capita." *CEIC*.

<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/kyrgyzstan/annual-household-income-per-capita> (accessed November 16, 2017).

Laruelle, Marlene, and Johan Engvall, eds. *Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing State"*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015.

- Masalieva, Jazgul. "Bishkek to host "Light memorial candle" campaign." *Bishkek-24* May 03, 2017. ([https://24.kg/english/51036\\_Bishkek\\_to\\_host\\_Light\\_memorial\\_candle\\_campaign/](https://24.kg/english/51036_Bishkek_to_host_Light_memorial_candle_campaign/) (accessed October 25, 2017).
- Mitchell, Laurence. *Kyrgyzstan*. Bradt Travel Guides Ltd, 2015.
- Mokrenko, Anastasia. "Vladimir Putin congratulates Kyrgyz people on Victory Day." *Bishkek-24* May 06, 2017. [https://24.kg/english/51273\\_Vladimir\\_Putin\\_congratulates\\_Kyrgyz\\_people\\_on\\_Victory\\_Day/](https://24.kg/english/51273_Vladimir_Putin_congratulates_Kyrgyz_people_on_Victory_Day/) (accessed October 25, 2017).
- Mokrenko, Anastasia. "500,000 soms allocated for Kyrgyz Academic Opera and Ballet Theater." *Bishkek-24* October 23, 2017. [https://24.kg/english/66423\\_500000\\_soms\\_allocated\\_for\\_Kyrgyz\\_Academic\\_Opera\\_and\\_Ballet\\_Theater\\_/](https://24.kg/english/66423_500000_soms_allocated_for_Kyrgyz_Academic_Opera_and_Ballet_Theater_/) (accessed November 01, 2017).
- Moldoisaeva, Mirgul. "Interview of Kyrgyz Ambassador to the United Nations M. Moldoisaeva for Diplomatic Connections Magazine." by Diplomatic Connections. *Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations*, May 23, 2017, <https://www.un.int/kyrgyzstan/news/interview-kyrgyz-ambassador-united-nations-mmoldoisaeva-diplomatic-connections-magazine> (accessed November 16, 2017).
- MY.COM. "MAPS.ME." Apple App Store, Vers. 7.6.1 (2017). <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/maps-me-offline-map-nav/id510623322?mt=8>Download URL (October 31, 2017).
- Paczai, Tamas. "Kyrgyzstan Celebrates Victory Day in Russia's Shadow." *EurasiaNet* May 11, 2015. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/73371> (accessed October 25, 2017).
- Palat, Madhavan K., and Anara Tabyshalieva, eds. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. Vol. 6. UNESCO Publ., 2005.
- Pale, Sofia. "Kyrgyzstan and the Chinese "New Silk Road"." *New Eastern Outlook*, March 09, 2015. <https://journal-neo.org/2015/09/03/kyrgyzstan-and-the-chinese-new-silk-road/> (accessed November 16, 2017).
- "Russia Vows To Retaliate If Poland Removes WWII Soviet Monuments." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* July 19, 2017. <https://www.rferl.org/a/poland-soviet-wwii-monuments-russia-retaliation/28627350.html> (accessed October 25, 2017).

Saralaeva, Leila. "Lenin Toppled in Kyrgyzstan." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/lenin-toppled-kyrgyzstan> (accessed October 15, 2017).

Stourton, Edward. "Kyrgyz Reflections." *BBC News* June 12, 2010. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_8735000/8735240.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8735000/8735240.stm) (accessed October 15, 2017).

Young, Cathy. "Putin's Russia Has To Deal With the Legacy of World War II." *Time* May 09, 2015. <http://time.com/3852689/ussr-russia-victory-day-wwii-putin-ukraine/>(accessed October 25, 2017).

Yoffe, Mark. "Obituary: Chingiz Aitmatov." *The Guardian*. July 14, 2008 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jul/15/culture.obituaries> (accessed November 01, 2017).

## Division News 2017-2018

---

The Division of History and Philosophy would like to congratulate our undergraduate and graduate award winners of 2018:

Colonial Dames of America Paper Award – Nola Ayock, junior

G. Ray Mathis Memorial Award – Cori Horton, junior

Nathan Alexander Memorial Phi Alpha Theta Scholastic Award –  
Whitney Spake, senior (graduated December 2017)

Trapp History Education Award – Joanna Ellis, junior

Outstanding Student in History – Elizabeth Driskell, senior

The David Warren Bowen Award for best paper presented by a graduate student at the annual Alabama Association of Historians Conference –  
Leilani K. Harris, graduate student

### Faculty News:

Congratulations also to the Division's faculty for their recent publications:

Scott Merriman's book, *When Religious and Secular Interests Collide: Faith, Law, and the Religious Exemption Debate*, was published last fall by Praeger.

Aaron Hagler's "Unity through Omission: Literary Strategies of Recension in Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi l-Ta'rikh*" was accepted for publication in the journal *Arabica*. It will be published later this year.

Luke Ritter published "Mothers against the Bomb: The Baby Tooth Survey and the Nuclear Test Ban Movement in St. Louis, 1954-1969" in

the *Missouri Historical Review* and “The American Revolution on the Periphery of Empires: Don Bernardo de Galvez and the Spanish-American Alliance, 1763-1783” in the *Journal of Early American History*.

Joungbin Lim published “The Incompatibility of Animalism and Eliminativism” last fall in the *Philosophical Forum*.

Rob Kruckeberg’s article “‘A Nation of Gamesters’: Virtue, the Will of the Nation, and the National Lottery in the French Revolution” appeared in *French History*.

Invited lectures/journals:

In March, David Carlson gave two talks at Bainbridge State College, Georgia, on the use of games in the classroom and on Confederate conscription in Georgia.

Luke Ritter was a featured presenter on Tedx Talks, Troy University, in November 2017, “Islam and the Immigration Crisis in the U.S.: What History Teaches Us.”

Karen Ross has been name editor of the *Journal of the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science*.

## Gratitude

---

As we celebrate the *Alexandrian's* seventh year, co-editors Lauren Post and Karen Ross would like to extend our thanks to the many people who make the journal possible. First, to the Troy students who submitted their manuscripts, your hard work makes the *Alexandrian* a pleasure to work on and a valuable contribution to student scholarship. To the student authors whose work was selected for publication, we appreciate your hard work as you revised (and revised and revised!) your papers for publication. To the faculty who gave their time to work with our student authors on this process, thank you! *The Alexandrian* is a collective effort and would not be possible without you all.

We would also like to thank the Alexander family who have embraced the journal and our department. Thank you for your support, intellectual, spiritual, and financial, that makes the publishing of the *Alexandrian* possible. We are so grateful to you for your interest in the students and your efforts to aid them in their academic journeys. I hope Nathan is proud of what we have accomplished over the past seven years. His legacy continues to be an inspiration to us all. Thank you Sandra, Steve, Rachel, Sarah, Andrew, and Elise.

## **Professor Nathan Alexander Remembered**

---

In this section we remember our colleague, teacher, and friend, Nathan Alexander. We miss you, Nathan!

From Joe McCall, Senior Lecturer:

Nathan had an amazing capacity to show up for work in the morning in a beautifully-cut three piece suit – and then linger in his office until late in the day wearing the most ragged looking shorts and shirt imaginable. He wore the suit when he had a meeting on campus with his extensive committee work where he left a lasting impact on Troy's larger community of scholarship and community. Then he changed for a rousing pick-up basketball game with some of his students. Word was that Nathan was not a great shot-maker, but he could pass as well as anybody on the court. It is not surprising that Nathan was more concerned about how his team did than how many points he could make. He always tried to make those around him better.

From Sandra and Steve Alexander, Nathan's parents:

Elisa, Nathan's daughter, reminds us so much of her Dad and we are continually amazed at how much she remembers of what he taught her. Elisa's mother spoke Portuguese, so Nathan decided to learn Portuguese so he could also encourage Elisa to speak both English and Portuguese. This happened until Elisa's mother called him up and said, "Stop speaking Portuguese with Elisa. You're pronouncing it all wrong and she is imitating you." Nathan's attempt at the Portuguese language became known as "the Portuguese du (of) Daddy!" Elisa also told us that Nathan had instructed her to pick out three virtues which she would never compromise on. She remembered this and has followed though.

**Phi Alpha Theta Inductees, Fall & Spring 2017-18**

---



Christopher Anderson  
Lacey Folmar  
Cori Horton  
Lauren Post