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The Past is Still With Me: Memoir of a Soviet Yiddish Actress

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The Comparative Civilizations Review publishes analytical studies and interpretive essays primarily concerned with (1) the comparison of whole civilizations, (2) the development of theories and methods especially useful in comparative civilization studies, (3) accounts of intercivilizational contacts, and (4) significant issues in the humanities or social sciences studied from a comparative civilizational perspective.

By “a comparative civilizational perspective” we mean (1) the use of evidence from more than one civilization (the various national traditions of the modern West being regarded, if so desired, as constituents of a single civilization) and (2) a method likely to throw new light either on the origins, processes, or structures of civilizations or on the problems of interpreting civilizations.

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Guest Editor’s Note

Spring 2020

The Future of Civilization

There are a considerable number of problems that all of us human beings face in the modern world. These include climate change, conflicts originating due to religions and races, economic disparities, intolerant chauvinism, natural disasters, and so on. Each member of society should be responsible for addressing these predicaments.

It is the duty of politicians and bureaucrats to solve these problems by making and implementing policies. Scholars, likewise, share the task of confronting these problems with their academic activities. Yet, it is a tradition for academics to confine themselves to their respective disciplines.

The question arises here whether it is possible to attend to complex problems within a single field of study. Some scholars, doubting the conventional approach to social problems, have assembled to offer alternative methods, believing it to be essential to understand the progress of history and the context of society more broadly and comprehensively; this entails a multi-disciplinary approach.

The establishment of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations in 1961 is a distinctive example of this academic trend.

This intellectual movement has been supported by various scholars from many parts of the world. Japan is no exception, as leading scholars such as Prof. Shuntaro Ito and Prof. Tadao Umesao were fully aware of the necessity of utilizing an unconventional method to tackle the serious challenges that were predicted amid the process of economic growth in post-war Japan. Thus, in 1978, Professor Ito, Professor Umesao, and other prominent Japanese scholars decided to create a new association called the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (JSCSC.)

They outlined three major objectives for the association:

- General and Multi-Disciplinary Assessment and Discussion
- The Construction and Then the Implementation of Theory from Global Perspectives
- Non-Exclusiveness

The Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of its establishment in 2013.
On that occasion, the association published a book entitled *The Future of Civilizations: Again, from a Comparative Civilizational Perspective*, which consisted of sixteen papers from various disciplines. I cannot summarize each chapter here in this note, as the space is limited; however, it is worth drawing attention to the preface as written by Prof. Shuntaro Ito, who was the first President of the Japan Society and who was also the President of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations from 1995 to 1998.

There are three important issues when discussing the future of civilizations, according to Prof. Ito. First, we should think of the alternation of the course of technological development. The dominance of modern science in the present world unfortunately has created a barrier between technical knowledge and humans, who are the subject of society. Prof. Ito points out that science, which originates in the Latin word *scientia* (to know), tends to disregard the profound discussions on how humans and nature are correlated. It is true that since the era of Enlightenment, the criterion for modern science has been a rather simple measure: Is it “true” or is it “false”?

Yet Prof. Ito insists that the idea of being “virtuous” or “vicious” should be given more significance when measuring civilizations in times to come. The nuclear threat after the break-down of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant during the great Earthquake and Tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, Prof. Ito believes, raises the alarm for us all.

Exploring the means of co-existence among civilizations as well as between humans and nature is another important element when discussing the future of civilizations, Prof. Ito believes.

Although upholders of the scientific revolution in the 17th century such as Rene Descartes and Francis Bacon have contributed to the “progress” of our society today, the supremacy of humans over nature has been excessively overvalued, and nature has been subject to exploitation by humans.

It is essential, Prof. Ito emphasises, that we should remember that all humans are a part of nature; thus, the civilization that humans create should consider the potential for a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

Third, the achievement of “equitability,” which correlates with the issue of disparity among humans, is the last point Prof. Ito stated in the preface of the book. The contemporary world is marked by economic disparity as well as race and gender discrimination. Economic disparity is the most challenging obstacle to the development of civilizations.

Prof. Ito explains that the collapse of socialism in the late 1990s has brought about the misplaced conception that capitalism is the only valid system in our society.
As the result, a “money-game like capitalism” has prevailed globally, and an even greater concentration of capital in the hands of privileged people will create more social class divisions in the future.

Therefore, Prof. Ito believes, it is an urgent task for us to bring about the framework of post-capitalism as part of a new civilization. Prof. Ito concluded his note by emphasising that the role of the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations in advancing the comparative study of civilizations is central and vital to the betterment of our society.

These propositions presented by Professor Ito surely contain substantial implications regarding the future course of civilizations and are forms of encouragement for younger scholars, including myself.

When I was invited to join the publication project on Japanese civilization as an editor alongside Prof. Juri Abe (former Vice President of JSCSC) -- an idea that was proposed a few years ago by Prof. Andrew Targowski (former President of ISCSC) -- it was a time for both Professor Abe and myself to ponder the essence of Japanese civilization, even though the subjects of our respective life studies did not relate to Japan as such. Prof. Abe was an expert on Native Americans, and I dealt with Islam in Indonesia.

The outcome of the project was the book titled *Japanese Civilization in the 21st Century*. The book contains contributions from several Japanese colleagues who are members of the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. We editors were satisfied with the content of the book, the authors having concentrated on various aspects of our Japanese civilization.

However, Professor Abe and I did, in fact, have some regrets, especially that we were unable to include one subject related to the importance of peace in the book. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution declares Japan’s determination to abandon physical means to solve international conflicts and to renounce the right of belligerency. Although there are some arguments that the post-war Japanese Constitution was imposed by the United States of America, it is also a fact that Japanese citizens have supported the idea as well as the attitude of pacifism as stated in Article 9. Both Prof. Abe and I thought that, if civilization is supposed to guide humankind in its development, then surely the pacifist spirit of Article 9 is a part of Japanese civilization.

Prof. Abe and I strongly felt that it was crucial to spread the idea of pacifism upheld in the Japanese Constitution as one of the characteristics of modern Japanese civilization, especially when Japanese politicians, including current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, have little respect for the essence of Article 9 and have attempted to discard it. Their argument is twofold: The Constitution is no longer valid, as the times have changed, and the Constitution was the product of the American occupation of post-war Japan.
There is not enough space for discussing this in detail here; however, what I would like to emphasise is that the idea of Article 9 is the idea of civilization, which is the exact opposite of barbarism or uncivilized attitudes.

Throughout the history of mankind, fighting has never ceased, and numerous lives have been lost in wars and conflicts. There might be some, even some academics, who would say that these physical confrontations, which cause the death of so many people, are a valid mechanism for controlling the population. If we follow this line of reasoning, the sciences that have contributed to the development of the means of mass destruction through nuclear bombs, chemicals, and biological weapons can be justified. Prof. Abe and I have totally disagreed with this idea.

Even though at present we humans have been unable to eradicate wars and armed conflicts, this does not necessarily force the conclusion that the slaughter and extermination of fellow humans are everlasting phenomena. The role of scholars, according to Prof. Abe and myself, should be to explore the means of bringing about a more peaceful world.

What counts in the process of this academic exercise is to maintain simultaneously both the independence and autonomy of scholars and the cooperation of scholars from various fields of studies.

Thus, in addition to the three important elements that face future civilizations, as presented by Professor Ito, I would like to include the will and determination for achieving peace. This idea is relevant in the current international society, as greatly advanced civilizations now possess the capabilities to bring about large-scale destruction of this world by technologically sophisticated weapons. Because of this development, the future for all humankind, for its civilizations and for the natural world, is grim.

However, it is important to remember that another kind of civilization — one composed of those with decency, or the individuals who form part of the contemporary “civilization of virtue” — is able to deter the dangerous course being pursued by such greatly advanced civilizations, or the “civilization of the vicious.” I am convinced that both the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations and the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, which consist of various scholars from different countries and disciplines, should collaborate in order to bring about a better future for civilization. It is, however, with a heavy heart that I continue this effort alone, without my friend Professor Abe, who passed away in March of last year.

Hisanori Kato
Chuo University, Tokyo

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol82/iss82/1
Most everyone, if not all of us, wants to be happy. Peace is a common denominator frequently sought. It is human nature to seek security, another word for happiness. Human Rights, as we know, are basic rights and freedoms that inherently belong to every person.

In order to have a stable civilization, to govern and be governed, there must be a sense of legitimacy and trust by those who are governed. Actual legitimacy by policing forces must not only be perceived to be but actually be legitimate and administered according to trust and rule of law, among other considerations.

Social order is not possible without a sense of real legitimacy, compliance, and cooperation. In order to strive for the greater good, society has allowed itself to be policed by consent. In many places around the world this condition is being more openly questioned and challenged.

Factors influencing human rights, civil rights, public trust, and the role of policing must be better understood and properly carried out by law enforcement agencies and the respective (or expected) public partnership involved. Many agencies are now trying to describe anew their roles as guardians as opposed to being known simply as police. A guardian is an ally, someone who watches, protects, and takes appropriate action. Discretion and trust are fundamental and essential to their role. But making a wholesale transition to an active role as guardian from that of police will not happen quickly. It will require institutionalizing new learning fundamentals, training, partnerships, understanding, policies and law. It requires, in some instances, the transition from a warrior model of policing to a guardian model of policing.

The Washington State Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy is leading the way in changing law enforcement training from a warrior to a guardian mentality. Together with Blue Courage, the Police Foundation, and other innovators, they are developing a national blueprint and toolkit training model funded with a planning grant from the MacArthur Foundation. Guardian policing is enjoying new consideration and has appeared in the Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing issued by President Obama (Co-Chairs, 2015). A key recommendation of that report directs law enforcement agencies to acknowledge the role of policing in past and present injustice and discrimination, and how it is a hurdle to the promotion of community trust.
Another advises that communities should support a culture and practice of policing that reflects the values of protection and promotion of the dignity of all, especially the most vulnerable.

Legitimacy of policing forces and the permission that we, the people, give to those forces to conduct policing services, is an issue at the very crossroads of today’s societies. People desire to be able to decide whether their life is good or bad when evaluating how their experience, their family, and their professional and societal lives are grounded, and what meaning and security those experiences provide today. Collective responsibility helps guide the directions and the development of our experiences.

The pervasiveness of social media and awareness of it in aspects of everyday life have helped to bring into focus the disparity in which policing is often undertaken and the sense of legitimate questions by those governed. In the U.S. and internationally, heightened awareness of these issues shows law enforcement departments struggling with perceptions that the departments are not in touch with real-life situations and how best to provide policing services. Some will say that modern policing is in a crisis mode and is rated low in public confidence.

Figure 1 below from the *Public Trust and Law Enforcement – A Discussion for Policymakers* report, shows a measure of confidence in police between 1993-2017.

![Figure 1. Overall Confidence in the Police, 1993-2017](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol82/iss82/1)

The same report also breaks down the confidence level by race/ethnicity, political ideology and age, shown in Table 1.
What distinguishes liberal democracies from dictatorships and absolute monarchies is the “rule of law.” Laws are unlike the orders or whims of single, absolute powers (Executive, Legislative, and/or Judicial), and operate with an independent press to serve as a check on abuse of power by any of these other institutions.

“Norms,” agreed upon behaviors beyond force, are the habitual behavior of most citizens and most officials. If the public does not honor these norms, Rule of Law cannot work.¹

Social order is not possible without a sense of real legitimacy, compliance and cooperation with the administration of law. Enforcement agencies are searching for better ways to build trust in their communities and many use community policing programs and strategies. After all, law enforcement is a public-trust-protection program, there to provide not only public but environmental, natural and cultural resource protection as well. It works best when it is conducted in a collaborative manner; in some circles, this is known as basic Community Policing or Public-Trust-Policing.

In ancient societies, there was no official law enforcement function and very little, if any, attempt at organizing this function. Instead, individuals, families and clans took it upon themselves to take revenge against those who might have injured or offended them. The idea of trust and crime prevention was almost non-existent in the early history of law enforcement and criminology (Rufa, 2019).

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### Table 1. Confidence in the Police, by Demographic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Group</th>
<th>2012-2014</th>
<th>2015-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Ideology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Published by BYU ScholarsArchive, 2020
Throughout the ages, civilizations have contributed significantly to the development of criminal justice in society, as early as 8000-4000 BC in the middle east, through the rise of the Roman Republic, to Robert Peel’s 9 Principles of Policing in London. Legitimacy of policing forces and the permission given by those governed to conduct this kind of public service is the subject of more scrutiny, awareness, hopeful and skeptical expectations. Rebuilding and restoring real, legitimate public trust will be a partial measure of success and societal stability for the future.

When the basic values of providing public-trust-protection are formally built into an organization, the methods and policies used to accomplish the protection generally follow those values. A department or administration’s policy should describe how law enforcement, in keeping with those values, is a positive, necessary public service and a natural complement to their role as guardians and protectors.

Law enforcement powers are only tools to achieve compliance. In many cases, simply informing people that their behavior is illegal will gain compliance. At times, the law must be explained, or warnings issued. At other times, specific and increasingly consequential law enforcement action is necessary. Sometimes, behavior is serious enough to warrant immediate arrest or escalated force. The key rests with the intelligence, judgement and discretion of each officer in partnership with the public trust.

A department’s policing policies may reinforce collaboration with the public, one in which its primary jurisdiction and the community exist interdependently as part of a more complex social, economic, and environmental system (collaborative and community based). Using a community-public-trust policing model and rather than focusing only on visible symptoms of crime, all partners work together to address public safety, law enforcement and resource protection concerns. With all parties participating, community members are better able to prevent or solve problems that erode society and public trust. Public trust then leads to better understanding, cooperation, problem-solving, a stronger sense of legitimacy, and effective enforcement that does not infringe on human or civil rights. Legitimacy is the foundation of the authority given to the leadership by those governed, via promulgation of sound laws and policies or the removal and restriction of such laws through the democratic process as trust erodes.

Rising crime and various social impacts now encroach upon every aspect of life long considered sanctuaries for peace and enjoyment, places to relax, to be carefree, to get away from it all. Society’s expectations for safety and security have not changed, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to find these sanctuaries and for peace officers to preserve this expectation.
Regardless of the increased impacts and rising crime rate in many areas, all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Law enforcement agency goals would be wise to demonstrate and emphasize that they are a key provision of ensuring public trust and the human rights experience.

The contributions law enforcement departments provide to the people are ideally twofold: 1) oversee the suppression of crime and the enforcement of laws within their jurisdiction(s), and 2) on a broader level, utilize programs, services and resources that contribute to society by providing a release from the social stresses that often result in crime. Law enforcement departments and their programs, services and other resources are an integral part of community crime prevention and trust efforts.

Under the public-trust-policing philosophy, “the department” and “community” do not exist independently. Both are interdependent parts of a larger, more complex social, economic and environmental system. Public-trust-policing requires a fundamental change in responsibility for policing by law enforcement agencies alone, to the collaborative, community-trust based system.

Due to their enforcement powers and responsibilities, peace officers are held to higher standards of conduct than other employees and citizens. In addition, in order to perform their duties, peace officers frequently must place themselves in conflict with violators. It can be, and often is, newsworthy if a peace officer fails to meet the higher standards and expectations of the public. To counteract this phenomenon, especially relating to social media, it is the responsibility of departments to promote positive accomplishments of their public safety program with the media, local community, allied agencies, and within the department, while at the same time being transparent about their mistakes and challenging issues.

International human rights law is binding on all states and their agents, including law enforcement officials. Human Rights is a legitimate subject for international law and international scrutiny. Therefore, law enforcement officials world-wide are obliged to know and to apply international standards for human rights. The extent to which they do, and the extent to which they are trained can be confirmed with individual agencies and their conduct along with measures provided by community engagement. Ethical and legal-conduct human rights standards, as adopted by the United Nations, outline the following practices and expectations of conduct for law enforcement officers:

**Human Rights Practice**

- Adopt a comprehensive human rights policy for your organization
- Incorporate human rights standards into standing orders for the police
- Provide human rights training to all police, at recruitment and periodically thereafter
- Cooperate with national and international human rights organizations
Human Rights Standards

- Human rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person
- Law enforcement officials shall, at all times, respect and obey the law
- Law enforcement officials shall, at all times, fulfill the duty imposed on them by law, through serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal acts, consistent with the high degree of responsibility required by their profession
- Law enforcement officials shall not commit any act of corruption. They shall rigorously oppose and combat all such acts
- Law enforcement officials shall respect and protect human dignity and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons
- Law enforcement officials shall report violations of those laws, codes and sets of principles which protect and promote human rights
- All police action shall respect the principles of legality, necessity, non-discrimination, proportionality and humanity

In addition to referencing expected conduct, the report issues clear expectations for law enforcement to uphold human rights standards for the people who they serve and govern. Importantly, law enforcement officials are to respect and protect human dignity, and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons and shall be accountable to the community as a whole. Effective mechanisms shall also be established to ensure internal discipline and external control as well as the effective supervision of law enforcement officials (Rights, 2004). This summary report should serve as a model for local, state, national and international law enforcement policies and does for many.

Human Rights are the rights and freedoms that every person inherently possesses. Civil rights are obtained by virtue of a legal grant of that right. In the United States, civil rights are embodied in the United States Constitution, and in amendments and by acts of Congress. Even though the rights are based on the federal constitution, the 14th Amendment makes them also applicable to the states. Civil rights are often categorized into the rights of due process and equal protection under the law, and freedom from discrimination. In the U.S., the Civil Rights Act of 1964 extended civil rights protection by making discrimination because of race, color, national origin, or religion unlawful in certain federally funded entities.

Law enforcement agencies have the ethical and legal responsibility to abide by and uphold civil rights in addition to basic human rights. The difference between civil rights and human rights is how these rights are afforded. In simplest terms, the difference between a human and civil right is why you have them. Human rights arise simply by being a human being. Civil rights, on the other hand, arise only by virtue of a legal grant of that right (Resources, 2019).
Despite imperatives to protect civil and human rights, officers occasionally lapse in terms of their requirements to uphold them. When this happens and officers either intentionally or unknowingly violate these rights, law enforcement and community leaders are obligated to act. Violations, both small and large, must be addressed. Without addressing the violations in the strongest of terms, the agency credibility and the public trust are eroded. Motivation to address the violations takes clear leadership and an engaged community and will help to rebuild, reinforce and retain the public trust. There are many tools available to assist departments in addressing civil rights and human rights violations. One such toolkit is provided in the report *Protecting Civil Rights: A Leadership Guide* (Police, 2006), and provides guidance and policy suggestions along with supporting agencies available to render assistance. In addition, INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Commission) provides comprehensive and readily available resources as well.

![INTERPOL Strategic Framework 2017-2020](image)
Policing culture, rules and laws evolve. With the rise of community policing and public-trust-policing the daily environment and integration of police and the community have also evolved along with expectations on all sides. Some see community policing and public-trust-policing as trendy or not substantial while other communities and departments say they cannot imagine policing without it.

There are elements of both that increase the level of civil and human rights protections. Recognizing that the culture of an agency can contribute to effective rights protections can help elevate the culture both internally and externally. Confidence is a must. Acknowledging the need for cultural change is not new and is ongoing. Many commissions have studied policing and evaluated the need for minimizing and addressing misconduct. A large part of this reform requires training to educate officers about values, attitudes and behavior about themselves and the policing profession, both those already held and those learned.

Perceptions and the reality of legitimacy may be key in securing such public feelings of obligation and responsibility toward the law. Research conducted in the US suggests that when people view the police as a legitimate authority they are more likely to cooperate with officers and comply with the law (Sunshine, 2003).

In 1829, when Sir Robert Peel successfully lobbied for the legislative act that created London’s Metropolitan Police Force, the constables with the force were given a book of General Instructions including the nine directives for officers. Those directives are known today as the Peelian Principles. Principles 3 and 7 state: To recognize always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws. To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence (Stoughton, 2016).

Cooperation must be active and vibrant between the people and those enforcing the law. If legitimacy is not well founded, or remains fragile, the people, when sufficiently motivated and with enough resources, will begin to change the laws and the authority currently granted to those who administer such laws.

Legitimacy may be key in securing such public feelings of obligation and responsibility toward the law. According to Tyler, legitimacy is the public feeling of obligation to voluntarily defer to the police (Tyler, 2006).
Such a deference is not due to fear of sanction, nor due to personal morality regarding the law, but rather out of a pure responsibility to obey the authority of legal rules and law enforcement agents. Such legitimacy results from the authorization of authorities to determine appropriate behavior. This authorization removes the need to activate one’s own moral principles. Instead, we obey an authority because normatively, that is the right thing to do.

Human rights reflect the basic standards for people in order to live with dignity. They give people the ability to choose how they live, how they express themselves, and how they are governed. Finally, by guaranteeing life, liberty, equality, and security, human rights protect people against abuse by those more powerful. This, in turn, enables the ability to pursue happiness and peace.

Legitimacy is the right to govern and the recognition by the governed of that right (Beetham, 2013).

References
The ISCSC Celebrates the 130th Birth Anniversary of Pitirim A. Sorokin, the Founding President, with a Contemporary View of His Legacy

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Abstract

This study analyzes the legacy of Pitirim Sorokin, founding President of the ISCSC, in terms of his methodology, the scope of his works, and his acceptance by his American peers. He was perceived as a prophet rather than a scientist. Furthermore, he was a hidden anti-Leninist who lived through and was obsessed with crises, and, being spiritually cultivated, he perceived altruism, the Absolute, God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice as the only solutions that can reconstruct and save humanity. His theory of social and cultural dynamics is like Marx’s socioeconomics; however, it was reconfigured to sound different, since he was a staunch anti-Communist as well as someone who had been sentenced to death and later pardoned by V. Lenin. It appears that his stay in the U.S. was aimed more at developing a theory of how to reconstruct humanity from a big-picture point of view than to develop sociological solutions for the actual processes of industrialization, urbanization, and mechanization, even though he kept the very prestigious position of being founding chair of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University. This study found that his prophetic predictions have not taken place in the last 70+ years since the publication of his first book on humanity's dynamics and future.

Introduction

The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC) was formally established in 1961 at a meeting in Salzburg (Austria). It was organized by historian Othmar Anderle and attended by fellow historians Arnold J. Toynbee and Rushton Coulborn. Sociologist Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) was our society's first president. He was one of the most original, talented, and controversial figures in American sociology.

His spectacular rise from a miserable childhood in Czarist and Bolshevik Russia to the Olympian heights of Harvard University surprised many of his peers and followers. However, it should be remembered that at the beginning of the 20th century, the Russian intellectual elite was equal to the intellectual elite of Anglo-Saxon nations.
Among the Russian elite of the early 20th century, one can mention the names of writers such as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Turgenev, Pushkin, Nabokov, and Gogol; composers such as Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, Mussorgsky, and Tchaikovsky; ballet dancers (from the Bolshoi Theatre); and scientists such as Lomonosov, Tsiolkovsky, Pavlov, Kondratiev, Kantorovich, Danilevsky, Altshuler, Lifshitz, Mendeleyev, Sikorsky, and others.

Thus, it is not a surprise that Sorokin, coming from Russia, was the founding chair of the Department of Sociology at Harvard. It should, however, be somewhat of a surprise that such a famous American university organized such a relevant department at such a late time. By 1930, Sorokin had already been the chair of the Sociology Department at the University of St. Petersburg from 1919-1922.

However, it is incredible that Sorokin, despite being poor in his youth, was anti-Bolshevik and was a private secretary of the first and unique democratic prime minister, Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970). Sorokin luckily survived his death sentence by the Bolshevik “court” and was pardoned by V. Lenin due to intervening friends. In the meantime, he was completing his education and doctorate in a revolutionized country engaged in World War I, where hunger existed in almost every home. He eventually got permission to leave the country in 1922, going into exile. At just the age of 33, he was already a recognized scholar abroad. President Edvard Benes and Prime Minister Thomas Masaryk offered him a special scholarship and job at Charles University in Prague. Eventually, after receiving invitations from American universities to speak about the Russian Revolution, he and his wife Elena left Europe for the U.S. in 1922.

The year 1922 was a good year for immigrants, including the Sorokins. From 1890 to the mid-1920s, millions of new immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. To old immigrant generations of WASPs (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants) was added new generations of PIGS (Polish, Italian, Greek, and Slavic). In total, about 3.2 million people immigrated from Russia (Poles and other Slavic peoples are included in the count). Approximately 44 percent were Jews escaping pogroms in Russia.

Another surprising fact is that, within seven years, Sorokin (who immigrated not knowing English) was recognized at some American universities (he worked at University of Minnesota and widely traveled) as a very impressive scholar-sociologist publishing on the Russian Revolution, social mobility, sociological theory, and rural sociology, which resulted in his being asked to organize the Department of Sociology at Harvard. In such a short time, he had established himself as a leader in American sociology.
Sorokin: A Scientist or Prophet

From 1930 to 1944, the Department of Sociology at Harvard prospered under Sorokin’s leadership, attracting an entire generation of young scholars who in their own right would have a profound impact on the discipline. During that period, Sorokin published his magnum opus, entitled Social and Cultural Dynamics. However, he also became involved in a bitter battle with rival Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) for control of the department. Parsons was an American sociologist who served on the faculty of Harvard University from 1927 to 1973, and he was one of the most influential structural functionalists of the 1950s. As a functionalist, he was concerned with the elements that played an essential role in society.

Parsons ultimately deposed Sorokin and transformed the Department of Sociology into the Department of Social Relations. The conflict between Sorokin and Parsons was so vicious that even today, in the official history of the department, Sorokin is not mentioned, even though he founded the department and chaired it for fifteen years. Sorokin nevertheless stayed on at Harvard, where he established the Center for Creative Altruism in 1946; however, outside of this, he continued to work in relative obscurity. In 1961 he tried to move to the Philosophy of History and went to Europe, where, in Salzburg, he was elected the founding president of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization, with strong support provided by the father of the study of civilizations, Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), who saw in Sorokin, a creative scholar of his same age. Sorokin highly regarded Toynbee’s theory of civilization.¹ This positive regard was very rare, for Sorokin was highly critical of his peers. Sorokin’s love of the study of civilization, however, did not last long, and in 1963, he was in the end recognized for his accomplishments and elected president of the American Sociological Association (ASA).

Sorokin approached the study of sociology from a big-picture point of view, examining dynamic changes at the level of an entire nation. As a survivor of the Russian Revolution, he understood that societal change impacts the whole society, while American sociologists approached things from a more small-picture point of view, including the study of industrialization, urbanization, as well as technological progress triggered by mechanization and motorization. Sorokin argued that the American approach was provincial.² Very often he broke with conventions, frequently ridiculing and taunting his less adventurous colleagues. In revenge, they looked at him as an intellectual heretic and colorful provocateur, not as a scholar in times when sociology wanted to be rigorous science. As a result, Sorokin’s ideas have either been consistently ignored or misunderstood for more than a quarter century.

² M. F. Ashley Montague (1938). Letter to the Editor. American Journal of Sociology, 44: 282-284
Furthermore, he was not hospitable towards his students. They were overwhelmed by the supremacy and power of Sorokin’s intellect, and they often found him unfriendly, challenging, and too critical of their scholarly work. Some graduates observed that Sorokin was a man of considerable learning but very little wisdom and common sense. It appears that Sorokin was doctrinaire, which is typical for revolutionaries who are ready to die for the ideal. His attitude was not compatible with his consensus-seeking American peers. Therefore, eventually, he was by-passed and purposely forgotten. This was unfortunate for sociology since, besides its popular inductive method, Sorokin’s deductive, prophetic approach was crucial for defining societal trends, disruptive processes, and phenomenal agents.

Because Sorokin’s approach was forgotten, nowadays sociological research is mostly based on studying the past, which assumes the linear development of society; however, in the present age of high technology, the rule instead is that the future will be full of disruptive solutions which cannot be proven statistically. Hence, contemporary globalization and digitalization are accepted by political leaders who lack assistance from knowledgeable and wise sociology and economics-oriented deductive research carried out for the sake of the common good.

**Sorokin’s Bible: Social and Cultural Dynamics (1937-1941)**

Sorokin’s book *Social and Cultural Dynamics* was published in four volumes during the very troubling times of 1937–41, and it was revised in 1957. His book can be compared in scope to the works of Toynbee and Spengler. Sorokin classified societies according to their cultural mentality, which can be:

- **Ideational** (reality is spiritual) – This is the view that reality is an immaterial, everlasting Being.
- **Sensate** (reality is material) – This mentality views reality as that which is perceived by the sense organs and by no other means. It is atheistic or agnostic. Its underlying goal is the mastery of the observable world for the sake of physical gratification. Its epistemology is empirical.
- **Idealistic** – This view combines the best of the other two mentalities, with the addition of reason as a way to knowledge.

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4 Ibid., 103
5 A. Toynbee (1934-1939) - the six volumes of his main work, *A Study of History*, were published by Oxford University Press.
- **Logico-meaningful clusters** – These are the result of the integration of cultural elements such as events, relationships, and objects that branch from the same set of values or criteria of truth and that appear to somehow fit together into a shared worldview. They are clusters of attitudes which couple these periods of different orientations together.
- **Congeries** – These are cultural elements that are not compatible with any pattern and which do not give the impression that they “belong” with other items.
- Also:
  - The senses tell us about everyday sensory spectacles;
  - Intuition gives us abundant feelings, which are our only source of deep communion with the absolute;
  - Reason orders and evaluates data gathered by the senses and intuition;
  - The combination of these three gives us the “integralist” system of truth. Hence, Sorokin himself uses integralism in his investigations.

Sorokin argued that major civilizations advance from an ideational to an idealistic mentality, and eventually to a Sensate mentality. Each of these phases of cultural development not only attempts to define the nature of reality, but also stipulates the nature of human needs and goals to be satisfied, the degree to which they should be fulfilled, and the methods of fulfillment. Sorokin interpreted contemporary Western civilization as a Sensate civilization dedicated to technological progress, and he prophesied its fall into decadence and emergence of a new ideational or idealistic era.

According to Sorokin, Western culture is now in the third Sensate epoch of its recorded history. Table 1 summarizes his view of this history.

**Table 1: Cultural Periods of Western Civilization According to Sorokin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Cultural Type</th>
<th>Begin</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek Dark Age</td>
<td>Sensate</td>
<td>1200 BC</td>
<td>900 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaic Greece</td>
<td>Ideational</td>
<td>900 BC</td>
<td>550 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Greece</td>
<td>Integral</td>
<td>550 BC</td>
<td>320 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenistic – Roman</td>
<td>Sensate</td>
<td>320 BC</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>Ideational</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Middle Ages, Renaissance</td>
<td>Integral</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalism, Age of Science</td>
<td>Sensate</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Sorokin examined a wide range of world societies. In each, he believed he found evidence of a regular alternation between Sensate and Ideational orientations, sometimes with an Integral culture intervening.

These periods can last a very long time — up to several centuries, in fact, such as the Sensate (materialistic) society of Western civilization, which has been active the last six centuries from the Italian Renaissance (1500) up to the mid-20th century.

Sorokin writes:

*The organism of Western society and culture seems to be undergoing one of the deepest and most significant crises of its life. We are seemingly between two epochs: the dying Sensate culture of our magnificent yesterday, and the coming Ideational or Idealistic culture of the creative tomorrow. We are living, thinking, acting at the end of a brilliant six-hundred-year-long Sensate day. ....... The night of the transitory period begins to loom before us and the coming generations — perhaps with their nightmares, frightening shadows, and heart-rending horrors. Beyond it, however, the dawn of a new great Ideational or Idealistic culture is probably waiting to greet the men of the future.*

However, just a general analysis of historic episodes contradicts his judgment. Western civilization during the last 600+ years has had periods of Ideational orientation, such as the French, Mexican, and Russian Revolutions. It is untenable to hold that, during these revolutions as well as World War I and World War II, societies held a Sensate orientation based on materialistic well-being, which was leading to their decadence (perhaps except Berlin in the 1920s).

Even accepting, for the moment, Sorokin’s typology of societal orientations, it is difficult to view the Middle (Dark) Ages as Ideational, even taking into account the rise of Christianity in that period.

Furthermore, it is almost impossible in reality to separate the Idealistic orientation from the Sensate orientation, particularly in Western civilization; however, Sorokin could not analyze them together all the time (although he does identify the Integral [Idealistic] orientation as sometimes existing), for otherwise, he would be considered a Marxist. This is because the Sensate (material) orientation is similar to Marx’s base (the substructure composed of the production forces and relations of production) and the Ideational orientation is analogous to Marx’s superstructure, composed of culture, institutions, structures of political power, roles, rituals, and the state.

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Marx analyzes these structures together (Sorokin’s Integral orientation), emphasizing that the base influences the superstructure.

In a liberal democracy, it is the opposite: the superstructure influences the base. However, in turbo-capitalism, the base impacts the superstructure, which is taking place today in Western civilization.

Today, about 70 years after Sorokin’s typology of these periods, a more realistic Grand Model of Civilization has been presented, shown in Figure 1. This model is based on short periods of alternating Analysis and Design within extended periods of human curiosity, estimated to be approximately 400 years apart. This model is organized by two criteria: information and energy. Based upon its synthesis, the following observations can be made about the development of civilization:

- Four inventions — print, the steam engine (internal combustion), the computer, and the Internet—have decided the directions of civilization’s development in the last 500 years. Print liberated thinking, and as a result, the internal combustion engine was built, which provided humans more time to spend on education. Consequently, they designed the computer, which helps in improving the control of processes and the utilization of resources. Finally, the Internet has revolutionized communication among people in the world.
- Every 400 years, a great curiosity occurs, which leads towards geographical discoveries, new inventions, and undertakings in cosmic and life sciences. During shorter periods, a civilization’s development alternates through the two phases of Analysis and Design.

This is similar to a democracy where one party rules while the opposite party analyses the situation and prepare its design to rule the next time it is elected.

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Sorokin originally formulated his view of social and cultural dynamics in terms of three major processes:

- A significant shift of mankind's creative center from Europe to the Pacific;
- A progressive disintegration of the Sensate culture;
- The first signs of the emergence and growth of a new Idealistic sociocultural order.
In the same work, Sorokin put forth extraordinary effort to understand the relationship between (a) war and peace and (b) the process of social and political change. Contrary to popular wisdom, he indicated that the magnitude and depth of war develop in periods of social, cultural, and territorial expansion by a nation. In short, war is just a function of development and social decay.

Are his assumptions valid today? About 70 years have passed since Sorokin's publication of these assumptions, which have been full of grand events, such as globalization. The “shift of creativity,” however, did not move from “Europe to the Pacific;” rather, production was outsourced to Asia due to its cheap labor. The Chinese provided many patents in the 2010s, but this has mostly been in the digital sphere, which is a technology that can be easily enhanced from a home computer and is mainly based on early Western solutions in business and science.

On the other hand, it is true that the “progressive disintegration of the Sensate culture” has taken place, mostly due to substantial inequality in Western civilization, which may lead to social unrest and perhaps even revolution. For example, so-called “progressive Democrats” in the U.S. would like to switch from Capitalism to Democratic Socialism in the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Is Sorokin right that Socialism in the U.S. will drive American society “toward a new Idealistic orientation”? For example, will single-payer health care insurance enhance the speed and quality of the physical well-being of the citizens? However, will health care be better organized than in Canada and the United Kingdom, where the waiting time for service can be weeks and months and where in the U.K., people over 65 do not have the right to access the full range of health care options?

Sorokin’s View of Civilization in the Context of the Early Leaders of the Study of Civilization

In Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis (1950), Sorokin critically assesses the theories of civilization in world history advocated by Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold J. Toynbee, Walter Schubart, Nikolai Berdyaev, F. S. C. Northrop, Alfred L. Kroeber, Albert Schweitzer, and other authors.

Sorokin believes that recent systems of social philosophy and the philosophy of history have been indicative of a decaying Sensate order heading recklessly for chaos and eclecticism.

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According to Sorokin, these early theories all appear to take this social disintegration into account and are impacted by it in one way or another. His assessment of these theories is as follows:

- The general character of Nikolai Danilevsky’s (1822-1885) philosophy of history and the contemporary tension between Europe and Russia makes his views startlingly up to date. His Russia and Europe are more alive today than they were 80 years ago. Europe does not consider Russia as one of its parts, and regarding Slavs more generally, Europe perceives them as something quite alien to itself but at the same time something that cannot be used as mere material to be exploited for their profit, as they exploit China, India, Africa, and Latin America. In fact, Europe sees Russia and Slavichood not only as something foreign but also as an unfriendly force. Sorokin also endorses Danilevsky’s view of civilization, and finally, he agrees that Danilevsky’s Pan-Slavism-oriented integration would be a different civilization and would be able to compete with Western civilization.

- Furthermore, Sorokin believes that Pan-Slavism reflects the strategy of the Eastern, (formerly) Soviet-led Bloc. He provides the example of Slavic Poland, which “Europeanized” but did not accommodate “Western values” (the Protestant cult of having a good work ethic), instead opting to keep “Slavic ones” (somehow things will work), presenting a deplorable example of a distorted and unbalanced cultural “mongrel.”

- Sorokin’s evaluation of Danilevsky’s contribution was well-placed up to 60 years after it was made. However, after Poland entered NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004), a new Polish generation has eagerly applied Western values. Surprisingly, in 2016-2019 the Polish government switched from the powerful Weimar Triangle group of France-Germany-Poland to the Pan-Slavic Visegrád Group within the EU, composed of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary (non-Slavic).

- Oswald Spengler’s (1880-1936) Hegelian dialectical “Idea in itself” [the World-as-History and “the Idea in its otherness” (the World-as-Nature)] are positively accepted by Sorokin since Spengler rejects the linear development of civilization.

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12 Sorokin, 1950, 50
13 Ibid., 51
14 Ibid., 70
15 A dog of no definable type or breed.
Sorokin accepts Spengler’s Grand Culture as the essential concept needed for the study of human development, which is composed of several stages.

- The last is the stage of civilization, which is reflected in urban development, and as such, is the last stage before the fall of a given Grand Culture. He contests, however, Spengler’s assumption that all cultures pass through similar stages in their life-cycles and that each of them passes from one stage to another in about the same length of time. In connection with this, he also contests that there are 50, 100, 300, and 600-year periodicities in the historical process.\footnote{Ibid., 111} Sorokin does not like Spengler’s rigorous periodization and the life-cycle of Grand Cultures, which include birth, growth, maturation, and decline just as nature passes through Spring-Summer-Fall-Winter. In contrast, Sorokin thinks that cultures have clusters (organized entities) and congeries (unorganized entities), which pass through Ideational, Senate, and Idealistic (Integral) stages lasting very long periods (several centuries).

- Both authors (Spengler and Sorokin) are mistaken. According to contemporary views, civilizations (Grand Cultures) do not die since they transform into new civilizations. For example, Western civilization is transforming into Global civilization in the 21st century.\footnote{A. Targowski. (2015). \textit{Global Civilization in the 21st century}. New York: NOVA Science Publishers.} Without doubt, Global civilization has “genes” from Western, Roman, Greek, and even Sumerian civilization in its “DNA,” which all developed in the last 6000 years or beyond, going back as far as the times when homo sapiens sapiens first arose. Figure 2 illustrates this process.
Figure 2. The Memory, Roots, and “DNA” of Global Civilization (The Targowski Model)

Figure 3 depicts a general model of a civilization’s life-cycle.
Arnold Toynbee’s (1889-1975) theory of civilization is highly regarded by Sorokin. He gives him a pass in this very positive statement:\(^{19}\)

Such is the general framework of Toynbee’s philosophy of history. He clothes it in a rich and full-blooded body of facts, empirical verification, and a large number of sub-propositions. The main thesis, as well as the sub-propositions, are painstakingly tested by the known empirical facts of the history of the twenty-one civilizations studied. The work as a whole is a real contribution to the field of historical synthesis.

Sorokin accepts Toynbee’s concept of civilization (which is different from Sorokin’s), as can be seen by the following statement:\(^{20}\)

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\(^{18}\) Targowski, 2009, 50.
\(^{19}\) Sorokin, 1950, 120.
\(^{20}\) Sorokin, 1950, 206.
By “civilization” Toynbee means not a mere “field of historical study,” but a unified system whose parts are connected by causal and meaningful ties. Civilizations are wholes whose parts all cohere with one another, and all affect one another reciprocally…It is one of the characteristics of civilizations in the process of growth that all aspects and activities of their social life are coordinated into a single social whole, in which the economic, political, and cultural elements are kept in a nice adjustment with one another by inner harmony of the growing body social.

- Sorokin’s evaluation of Toynbee's theory of civilization was essentially correct. Toynbee’s contribution and foundational knowledge about civilizational development are still substantial and essential information even after 70 years.

- Alfred L. Kroeber’s (1876-1960) theory of civilization is, to a certain degree, accepted by Sorokin. However, Sorokin does take issue with Kroeber’s Integrational orientation, since for Sorokin Ideational and Sensate orientations are separate during most periods of civilizational development. Furthermore, Kroeber is mistaken in chiefly relying on a Sensate source — the Encyclopedia Britannica — for his data; thus, he is biased in favor of Sensate achievements.\(^{21}\)

- Sorokin’s aversion to Sensate-oriented sources of data, such as those used by Kroeber, appears to be too subjective an accusation. Nowadays, Kroeber is appreciated for his definition of civilization as an objective set of technological and informational activities as well as his definition of culture as a subjective set of elements, including religion.\(^{22}\)

Sorokin was not afraid to generalize about civilizations, making on-point statements such as his view that Greek civilization glorifies the beautiful to such an extent that it does not have any rivals among other civilizations. He was also of the view that the main contribution of European civilization (today, Western civilization) is the realization of science; of Semitic civilizations, religion; of Roman civilization, law and political organization of an empire; of Chinese civilization, the practical and useful; and of Indian (or Hindu) civilization, imagination and fantasy, together with some mysticism. Moreover, he believed that when a civilization accomplishes its task, it is bound to die.\(^{23}\)


\(^{22}\) Targowski, 2009, 4.

\(^{23}\) Sorokin, 1950, 66.
With the same ease, Sorokin evaluates great people, which can be seen in his statement that Georges Cuvier\(^{24}\) was better than Aristotle; that Laplace was more intelligent than Archimedes; that Kant thought better than Plato; that Napoleon was a more extraordinary military genius than Caesar or Hannibal; and that Canova\(^{25}\) understood beauty better than Phidias or Praxiteles.\(^{26}\)

Sorokin also states that he found neither a linear evolution nor repeated cycles of social change in history, but merely “fluctuations” and “never-ending variations.” However, this view would not be accurate if, by “cycles, one means recurring, patterned, predictable events or relationships. Sorokin argues that history ever repeats itself and yet never repeats itself, and thus both of these seemingly contradictory statements are true and are, in fact, not contradictory at all when properly understood since identical recurrent sociocultural processes are impossible.\(^{27}\) In the final analysis, Sorokin takes the following view:

- Western civilization has thus far completed two cycles that take on the following form: Ideational, Idealistic, Sensate, Chaos. We are now coming into an age of Chaos, from which we will then be transferred into an Ideational period. Wars, revolutions, famines, and epidemics can be predicted to surge in number and force since that is what occurs when a Sensate culture is dying, and its Ideational successor has not yet risen from its ruins. However, it appears that this is a cyclical theory in the long term (over multiple centuries).

- Sorokin published his book in 1941 during World War II, which had already lasted two years—long enough for one to perceive Chaos on the rise. Indeed, the war was raging in Eastern Europe and Russia. The U.S., however, was quietly preparing for the war in an organized manner, and eventually, due to a better and stronger organization than Germany and the Axis powers, the Allied Forces won the war, including the Soviet Union, where the stable totalitarian government minimized chaos. Perhaps Sorokin was also influenced by the Great Depression (1926-1941), which was cured due to the New Deal and WWII. After World War II, the winners (but also Germany) entered a period of intense reconstruction in their post-war economies with a smile on their faces, which led to the so-called fabulous 1960s—a time that was not chaotic but rather happy and organized.

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\(^{24}\) Jean Léopold Nicolas Frédéric, Baron Cuvier (1769 – 1832), known as Georges Cuvier, was a French naturalist and zoologist, sometimes referred to as the “founding father of paleontology”.

\(^{25}\) Antonio Canova (1757-1822) was an Italian Neoclassical sculptor, famous for his marble sculptures. Often regarded as the greatest of the Neoclassical artists, his artwork was inspired by the Baroque and the classical revival, but he avoided the melodramatics of the former and the cold artificiality of the latter.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 67

The exception was Eastern Europe, whose occupation passed from Germany to the Soviet Union and where chaos was surely present, although mitigated by slow central bureaucratic planning. Perhaps that period was, in fact, the Ideational in the post-chaos period. Notably, however, the Marshal Plan (1948) had already been supporting the reconstruction of Europe (Western) into an economic miracle. Then why did Sorokin not state in his updated editions (like in 1957, in the second printing by Porter Surgent Publisher in Boston) that Western civilization was no longer in a stage of Chaos but in a new Ideational stage?

Regardless, we were still in the same Western civilization, which was contradictory to Sorokin’s rule. Moreover, what about not recycling but transforming a declining civilization into the next kind of civilization? Long-lasting civilizations may be alternatively involved in stages of Analysis and Design. For example, during the past 5,000 years, Chinese civilization has passed through the stages Analysis and Design many times without transforming into another kind of civilization.

**Sorokin on the Crisis of Our Age (1942) and The Reconstruction of Humanity (1948)**

Pitirim Sorokin was removed from the chair of the Sociology Department at Harvard in 1944 after a longstanding conflict with his “employee,” sociologist Talcott Parsons, who to a certain degree represented the contrary opinion that American sociologists held about Sorokin’s research. Except for a few peaceful years when Sorokin arrived in the U.S. (1922-37)²⁸, he was in constant crisis since his childhood in Czarist and Bolshevik Russia. Hence, he decided to theorize about the crisis from a sociological point of view.

He published the book *The Crisis of Our Age* in 1942.²⁹ The book was published during World War II in Europe, eventually reaching the Soviet Union and, having moved across the Pacific, Japan. However, the author never mentioned World War II; instead, he analyzed the Greek and Roman wars in just a few pages.³⁰ He witnessed (although behind the gates of Harvard) the Great Depression (1929-41) in the U.S., but he did not consider it to be a crisis and never mentioned it! Likewise, Nazism and Communism were never analyzed as the source of “the crisis of our age.” He mentions Hitler several times, mostly in the introduction, and while Stalin is also mentioned several times, this was only done while listing similar politicians but not as a factor of the war in 1939 and the crisis of the Soviet society, which was very well known to Sorokin.

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²⁸ Between 1937-41, Sorokin published his *magnum opus*, titled *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, which triggered sharp criticism of his research.
³⁰ Ibid., 212-17
In this book, the author mostly analyzes the dynamics of war, applying his criteria associated with the Ideational, Idealistic, and Sensate mentalities, namely, the fine arts, science, truth, philosophy, religion, ethics, law, and so forth. He touches on the issues of suicide, mental diseases, impoverishment, syncretism, quantitative colossalism (in Greek and Roman world), and diminishing creativeness. In the book’s conclusion, he criticizes the popular views that the roots of the crisis are in the following:\textsuperscript{31}

- Maladjustment of a purely economic, political, or biological nature,
- Mild religious therapy, and making churches more attractive and entertaining
- The magic of power in education and changing misguided curricula
- The evils of biological deterioration, poor heredity, inferior races, negative selection, and uncontrollable birth,
- Sunspots, climate misbehavior, cosmic factors, and so forth.

Sorokin writes that remedies have often been applied but have not eliminated the crises. The roots of the crisis are deeper than those factors: namely, our sensory organs may misfunction, and our perception of reality can be wrong and too material. This leads to mechanistic materialism and vulgar utilitarianism, which controls modern culture. He believes “the remedy” lies in transforming the agonizing Sensate to the Ideational or Idealistic/Integral culture,\textsuperscript{32} with greater glory to God.\textsuperscript{33} The ultimate solution is to be found in practicing new idealistic values of the Absolute, God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice.\textsuperscript{34} These values may look good on paper, but they are utopian. Sorokin, as a leading sociologist, provides unrealistic solutions for the very pragmatic-oriented citizens of Western civilization. He reminds one of the paths of Leo Tolstoy, who experienced a spiritual awakening\textsuperscript{35} and, by the end of his life, believed he was Jesus in the second coming.

Fortunately, when Sorokin was put aside by Harvard, he obtained substantial funds from Eli Lilly, the CEO of big pharma Lilly, to create the Center for Creative Altruism at Harvard in 1946. Very soon after, he published the book \textit{The Reconstruction of Humanity} in 1948.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 308-310
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 316
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 318
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 324
\textsuperscript{35} Some are of the opinion that Tolstoy inspired and provoked the Bolshevik Revolution.
As an excellent erudite scholar, he treats the topic comprehensively. In the beginning, he disqualifies the efforts of democracy, the United Nations, World Government, Capitalism, Communism, Fascism, Socialism, education, science, technology, practiced religion (organized), legalism and ethics, and the fine arts from reconstructing humanity. His solution is in promoting altruism in all areas of human encounters. He asks, “can it be achieved?”

He understands that a “tough-minded” person may not believe in his solution; however, humanity, if it is going to continue as a Sensate culture, will disappear. This means there is no other better solution than his to reconstruct humanity. “It is for humanity itself to decide its destiny!”

Was Sorokin correct in believing that altruism will eliminate crisis? No, he was wrong. The remedy lies in practicing a Wise (sustainable) Civilization, where tolerance is of the highest value. We now understand this premise.

**Spirituality 2.0**

The solution for reconstructing humanity lies in applying a universal set of values that assure the survival of humanity, according to Targowski.  

The first pre-condition of the planned architecture of a Wise Civilization is that civilians should adopt the second stratum of a complementary pseudo-religion called “Spirituality 2.0”. This will not supersede any of the existing Religions (1.0), as it would not only be heresy and an unheard of revolution impossible to win but also unnecessary and harmful. This new religion is not about fighting religion but about its development at a global level rather than in particular regions. Spirituality 2.0 would teach a complementary morality based on the essential values of the world’s current religions. These values are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilization</th>
<th>The Values of Religions 1.0 as a Contribution to Universal-Complementary Spirituality 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>Spiritual contact with ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Worship of elders and the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>Reward and punishment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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37 Ibid., 236-240
38 Ibid., 241
The total of the above values is the morality of Spirituality 2.0, which will control the need for developing a Universal (Complementary) Civilization (UCC). One shared by the world, UCC would not be a cluster of the other civilizations; rather, it would be the highest level of the world's civilizations. In this way, an American, a Pole and any inhabitant of Earth will at the same time observe the moral values of at least two civilizations. One can imagine practicing three or more civilizations at the same time, such as when a couple living in Western Civilization each come from another civilization. This civilizational mix creates a complex cloud-like model of civilization, which will need to be practiced so that tolerance towards others can be applied locally and globally.

The question of how to successfully enforce Spirituality 2.0 remains. It will probably take several or more generations, for it took Christianity more than 300 years to be legally recognized. Today, thanks to the excellent systems of social communication, it should take a shorter amount of time than that. The enforcement of Spirituality 2.0 ought to start at school and college, but up to five generations will need to pass before positive effects of that process become visible. Spirituality 2.0 will surely not succeed with adults, and it will not work by being backed by laws — not at the beginning, at least. This religion must be enforced within all the civilizations of the world, which might be unfeasible. These civilizations will believe this process to be an assault against their religions, and they will seek to ridicule Spirituality 2.0 in the eyes of their followers. The paradox of the potential conflict is that this spirituality stands against fighting other religions — it is meant to complement the religions and allow them to continue their missions for the sake of humanism.

However, failing to enforce Spirituality 2.0 as a practice of UCC will make it impossible to eliminate or reduce the conflicts and wars that stem from the clash of moralities both now and in the future. For the time being, I know of no better solutions. More on this topic was contributed by A. Targowski and M. Celinski in their (edited) book *Spirituality and Civilization Sustainability in the 21st Century*.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilization</th>
<th>The Values of Religions 1.0 as a Contribution to Universal-Complementary Spirituality 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Co-operation with and the worship of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Sacrifice and altruism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Free election, tolerance, and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Human and citizen's rights, international law, free flow of ideas, people, goods, and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal-Complementary</td>
<td>The above plus wisdom, kindness, conditional forgiveness, equal access, sustainable development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Pitirim Sorokin embodies the phenomenon of world sociology for the following reasons:

1. Coming from a difficult childhood during times of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, he completed university study and advanced to become a chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of St. Petersburg. He became a private secretary of the democratic Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky, was sentenced to death and later removed from his death cell by V. Lenin, and escaped to Czechoslovakia, where President Benes and Prime Minister Masaryk provided him with a professorship at the University of Prague. Soon after, he emigrated to the U.S. and, without prior knowledge of English, became the leader of American sociology within only several years! It is a remarkable and unheard-of achievement. However, this dramatic heritage impacted his utopian intellectual contribution tremendously.

2. Despite his 37 books and 400 scholarly papers, he was forgotten and had a shadow cast upon his works. His American peers saw him as a prophet rather than a scientist, and they criticized him for the following reasons:
   a. Sorokin used a large number of co-workers from a pool of Russian emigrants to provide him with statistical research. However, they were dispersed throughout the country with limited communication tools and were without Sorokin’s supervision. This led to mathematical errors and inconsistencies, which Sorokin did not edit or elaborate upon within the integrated team. What is worse, he did not pay much attention to this data in his writings.
   b. Sorokin’s terminology was confusing. He used Sensate for a materialistic orientation, Ideational for a spiritual orientation, and Idealistic for an integrational orientation. He desired that all sociological research be based on these orientations, which he believed he had proven in his many books. However, those terms were misleading. For example, the last Idealistic orientation means the integration of the two other orientations. This sounds like the ideal orientation (challenging to achieve), while in practice, material and informational (spiritual) orientations take place during every period of human existence. Furthermore, he believed the Idealistic stage was the last developmental stage of society. His criteria and way of analyzing were detached from practice.

3. Sorokin’s prophetic predictions based on his colossal writings about the fate of humanity did not come to pass within 70 years, as was verified in this study.
4. Who was Pitirim Sorokin — this man with a “Russian soul” disguised as an American sociologist — based on his prophetic ideas? He was anti-Lenin,\textsuperscript{41} and he wanted to define an anti-Bolshevik theory in English to reconstruct humanity for eternal happiness. In order to do so, he did the following:

a. He copied Marx’s base and superstructure into the Sensate and Idealist orientations, but contrary to Marx, he separated them (wrongly) and, only as an exception, saw them together in the Integrated orientation.

b. He argued that only a widely applied altruism could reconstruct humanity. This is a hidden strategy of Communism, “to each according to his needs.”

c. He was not interested in the daily social issues of Americans, such as industrialization, urbanization, mechanization, and so forth since his goal was to examine how to reconstruct humanity worldwide.

d. He was motivated by a spiritual awaking, believing that the Absolute,\textsuperscript{42} God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice will make for a happy society. If he had lived longer, would he have joined one of the American communes or organized such a commune?

5. American social sciences should accept Sorokin’s big-picture approach and combine it with a small-picture approach, for example:

a. Universities should provide a service course on “civilization development” for every student.

b. History should offer civilization-oriented curricula.

c. Sociology should investigate diversification vs. unification in the globalizing world.

d. Economics should clarify that cheap labor is not suitable for consumers because it minimizes their number.

e. Psychology should clarify how individuals and society can advance from a state knowledge to that of wisdom.

f. Business science should investigate the issue of a labor-free economy.

g. Communication sciences should clarify how to write for those who do not read (they scan) and how to apply virtual civilization wisely.

h. Political science should clarify how to balance representative and direct democracy.

i. Computer Information Systems should include curricula on how to design ethical IT systems.

At the end of analyzing Pitirim Sorokin’s place in history, one can emphasize his contributions to the study of civilizations as the founding president of the ISCSC. His administrative skills and fame helped the organization to acquire the membership of prominent intellectuals like A. Toynbee, Othmar Anderle, Benjamin Nelson, Roger

\textsuperscript{41} A true anti-Lenin individual is Polish worker Lech Walesa, who led the Solidarity Revolution that liberated Poland from the Soviet Block in 1989.

\textsuperscript{42} The theory of everything.

Unfortunately, within two years, Sorokin was elected president of the American Sociology Association (ASA), and he abandoned our Society and “civilization.” Due to the cultural and historical orientations of the early members, the Society’s focus was directed at early civilizations and their micro-elements and impact. The hot issue was “Athens vs. Jerusalem.” We lost the big-picture focus and also lost “civilization” to “culture” as an academic curriculum of study.

However, a younger generation of academics was bored listening to the never-ending debates on what civilization is. Fortunately, our late member (also from Harvard) Samuel Huntington awoke not only our Society but the whole world to the fact that, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the New World Order is controlled by the Clash of Civilizations, which he argued for in his famous book published in 1996.43 That book explained to me what is happening in the world and motivated me to join the ISCSC.

Also focusing on “civilization” was our past late president, Matthew Melko (1930-2010), who in scholarly and precise language, explained the Nature of Civilizations (1969).44 Stephen Blaha, atomic physicist, published45 endless mathematical models on civilization’s dynamics.

Likewise, one of the founding members, David Wilkinson,\(^46\) is most sincere when he argues that all main-stream civilizations are merging into a Central civilization.\(^47\) Indeed, his Central civilization has recently been transforming into Global and Virtual civilizations.\(^48\) The former is broad and worldwide, but the latter is the most “Central” since it is a single entity and yet everywhere.


\(^47\) According to D. Wilkinson, Central civilization emerged about 1500 BC with the integration of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, and then engulfed the Aegean civilization in 560 BC, the Indic civilization in 1000, the New World after the Age of Discovery, and finally the Far Eastern civilizations in 1850.


Unfortunately, due to the early definition of civilization that it is a grand culture, we have a well-developed curriculum of the study of culture when the issues of civilization are lost.

Why is the study of civilization essential and even critical for humanity? Because it investigates the sense of life at the level of an individual in the broader context of the philosophy of active history treated like the vast and complex organism called civilization. Hence, the sense of life is confronted with the sense of civilization not only in a subordinated relation of person to civilization but with some optimism and arrogance of the 21st century perhaps allowing for the control of civilization to reach its sustainability. After all, we are self-directed, and we think that we are rational. Therefore, civilization is our horizon of sense which should be composed of purpose, wisdom, goodness, and beauty. The sense of life should be known at a young age, not to lose a life. We think about it when we are old, too late!

Sorokin was searching for the ideal of humanity but was utopian. His medication for the crisis was altruism. Civilization and sense of life were beyond his interest. Pitirim Sorokin was a prophet without a country. Fortunately, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, he is recognized as an important Russian intellectual whose vast publications are steadily translated from English to Russian by the scholars of the Sorokin-Kondratiev Institute as a part of the Kondratiev Foundation. Pitirim Sorokin and Nikolai Kondratiev knew each other since graduate studies in St. Petersburg, and both were in the Kerensky government. Kondratiev is famous in world economics for so-called Kondratiev Waves but was less fortunate than Sorokin since he was executed at the age of 46 in 1938, while Sorokin was pardoned by Lenin and lived well in the United States. Unfortunately, there he was disconnected with the American reality due to the baggage of being a Russian in exile and perhaps because of his projection of a prophetic altruistic future for the whole world.

However, Sorokin’s integralistic focus on society, culture, and personality is worth investigating in contemporary civilizations. Today the question is how to live in Virtual civilization without losing the skills needed for acting in Real civilization. Unfortunately, Pitirim Sorokin cannot answer this question. However, if he were among us, he would provide a surprising answer.

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53 Nikolai Dmitriyevich Kondratiev (1892-1938) was a Russian economist who was a proponent of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which promoted small private, free market enterprises in the Soviet Union. He is best known for proposing the theory that Western capitalist economies have long term cycles of boom followed by depression.

54 It is stated that the period of a wave ranges from forty to sixty years, and the cycles consist of alternating intervals of high sectoral growth and intervals of relatively slow growth. A new technology removes some jobs but that technology may employ those who were removed.
Señor Jim Crow Still Roosts in Cuba:  
A Comparative Analysis of Race and Resistance in the United States and Cuba  
Leah P. Hollis  

Abstract  
After touring Havana, Cuba, with a group of African American Scholars in the fall of 2019, I am inspired to identify the subtle and explicit racist experiences that we endured.  

A common message from those in the tourism industry is that Cubans love African Americans. This message was constant, yet it rang like a gong in our ears because the message did not match the treatment we received. In truth, this love was not for the African aspect of our identities but for the financial prosperity in the American part of our identities. The Cuban tour guide constantly announced the propaganda publicly that when Castro came to power in 1959 the government formally abolished racism. However, the undercurrent of racism saturated our visit. Proclaiming racism is abolished does not make it so; instead, the proclamation was an ostrich’s head in the sand. The obvious was ignored for the postulated utopian racial harmony indoctrination.  

Eradication of racism or other ‘isms’ involves a trajectory of social change from tolerance, then acceptance on the path to respectful inclusion. Centuries of racism are not whisked away with a few decades of government declaration and externally motivated pressure to change. These learned racially charged behaviors are derived from internal motivation and value systems that must be unlearned over time and across generations. Consequently, with the scholarship of other academics, I will utilize the self-determination theory to compare Cuba’s race politics with the United States’ own rocky history in confronting contentious race relations.  

Keywords: Cuban racism, self-determination, American Civil Rights  

Cuba and U.S. Similarities  
Antón-Carrillo (2011) reflected on an evolving Cuban identity that includes looking to its Spanish descendants who aspire to a European-style society. Such evolution continues to embrace European values inclusive of social and cultural dominance over those of African descent (Antón-Carrillo, 2011). Just as the United States participated in the slave trade with the subsequent “Negro Question” on how society should deal with emancipated slaves, Cuba as well struggled with these questions.
The common practice from both the United States and Europe was to sequester and exclude persons of African descent who remained after slavery. If Cuba truly integrated those of African descent, Cuba would then lose the opportunity to be like the “civilized and developed nations in the European style” (Antón-Carrillo, 2011, p. 329). Cuba wished to evolve with its sights on European Spain and its boot on African descendants.

Perhaps this animus is born from the Moors’ extended reign over Spain for eight centuries (Lane-Poole, 1896). During this period, the Moors developed advancements in mathematics, science and the law (Lakhtakia, 2011). Al-Khawarizmi was a renowned astronomer and mathematician; Sibawayh was deemed as a linguistic scientist; the Islamic culture brought new standards to art, literature, science and knowledge (Andersson & Djeflat, 2013). As masters of military science, their expansion of Arabic and Islamic culture occurred through many battles to capture various provinces and societies.

The Moors’ sovereignty sprawled through Jerusalem and the Levant, Persia, Egypt, and the Byzantines (Andersson & Djeflat, 2013). Their dominance also incorporated what is now known as modern Spain and Portugal (Andersson & Djeflat, 2013).

Fuchs (2008) explained that Moors could be light-skinned or dark-skinned, originating from North Africa, Spain, or the sub-Saharan region. With constant infighting and treachery amongst themselves, the Moors weakened and succumbed to Christian rule under Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 (Lane-Stanley, 1896). With the final defeat of the Moors in Granada, Spain, many of the conquered Moors (simultaneously with the Jews) fled, were expelled or were forced to adopt Christianity (Fuchs, 2008).

The prevailing Christian Spaniards, who adopted some of the previous Arab influences in art and culture, widely persecuted the Moors, racialized the term “Moors,” and marginalized those from Moorish heritage (Fuchs, 2008). The Spanish marginalization and racial aversion for the Moors extended through the next phase of global history, one that spawned the slave trades, a time when people were ostracized because of race.

Less than a decade after the Moors were ousted, Africans were subjected to a deep hatred from European Spaniards and many were sold into slavery (Diouf, 1998, p. 17). In the ‘New World,’ the whites of the Americas and the Caribbean mass murdered many of the aboriginal population while focusing on the purity of the European (Latin) bloodline.

In the process of a massive population movement, this evolving American society became averse to racial mixing, except when the slave masters raped slaves for their own carnal pleasure. This historical backdrop colorized the worldviews of the “New World” society. Their internal and autonomous values embraced European gentility, not global and inclusive cosmopolitanism.
Self-Determination Theory

Researchers have confirmed that a major part of the human experience is engaging in what is labelled “self-determination” (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). But what is self-determination? Self-determination, which examines a person’s motivation, and the types of motivation, can provide insight into human behavior, creative expression, learning and health (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Further, self-determination has two types of expression, external or internal motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Both types of motivation are significant contributors to human behavior, yet the internal and autonomous styles of motivation yield comparatively indelible behaviors.

External regulation or controlled motivation is influenced by reward, or punishment, and avoidance of shame (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182). Controls such as remuneration and surveillance (Lepper & Green, 1975) interfere with one’s internal sense of autonomy (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The external pressure, whether from family, employment, organizations or government, fosters an urgency that one must behave in a certain manner. This external manifestation of self-determination occurs when people are controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

In the Cuban example, external pressure from the founder/dictator forced the Cuban society to declare that racism is abolished; however, when such pressure dissipated, the internal motivation remained. Such external pressure seemingly ignores the internal value systems of prejudice.

By comparison, autonomous motivation arises from a person’s internal value system and sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2008). If people are internally or autonomously motivated, they do not need regulation, prodding, rewards or punishments to guide their behavior. They are inspired by their values and social mores, which they genuinely embrace, to behave in a certain manner (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

When one considers the implications of both internal and external motivation as applied to racism and Cuban behavior regarding race prejudice, Castro as an external figure to the Cuban self is easily depicted as a dominating figure whose control resulted in the propaganda-filled anthem that racism was eradicated throughout Cuba. Cuban citizens were externally motivated to avoid shame or punishment and then motivated to verbally promote this new, perhaps mythical absence of racism.

Internally, however, Cuban society, like most other societies that had been subjected to centuries of imperialistic and race-based prejudice and the accompanying deportment, internally still harbors racial prejudice and acts accordingly—in contrast to the stated propaganda.
In other words, the descendants of Europeans in Cuba openly proclaim and thus reinforce the propaganda as externally defined by Castro, yet they have continued to harbor their internal prejudice.

Afro-Cubans as well would be motivated externally to support Castro’s proclamation, yet as a controlled segment of society, they cannot act on their own value system to resist racial prejudices and practices without fear of shame and punishment. In short, the compromised self-determination has meant that Cubans regardless of race are a resultant of the motivations pushed by the external government control, and they are deprived of the right to act upon their respective value systems.

Comparatively, United States race relations have been steeped in a mosaic of ideals. These autonomous and internal values include the affinity of some citizens for reactionary and conservative right-wing positions, while some Americans can also subscribe to moderate and liberal positions.

Since its inception, the United States has exerted various controls, through the initial framing of its Constitution and other laws that only seemed to address the rights of white male property owners; it took the abolition of slavery and the following two Reconstruction amendments in the 1800s to promote civil liberties to a more inclusive set of its citizens.

Nonetheless, some basic values built into the United States Constitution such as the freedom of speech and the right to peacefully assemble for the redress of grievances have enabled disenfranchised and underrepresented groups to voice their malcontent with racism, sexism and homophobia. Underneath the controls that the United States has promoted, retracted and recast over the centuries, citizens often can still engage their internal and autonomous motivation.

This internal and autonomous latitude has allowed the creation of various hate groups, but the right to pursue autonomous action based on internal self-motivation has also yielded many thrusts to support the disenfranchised and the traditionally underrepresented. Thus, community internal motivation arguably led to the civil rights movement and desegregation of the 1950s and 1960s, the protests at Stonewall in 1969, stronger rights for women in education in the 1980s, advocacy for those with disabilities in the 1990s, and, of late, the Me Too# and Time’s Up# movements.

Arguably, the drive to make choices and to evolve can be internal or external. Regardless of the impetus of motivation, the environment assists and supports one’s choices (Sheldon et al, 2003). Such settings can exert a measure of control, allow latitude or remain neutral; therefore, a person’s motivation also operates within a community, which can either help or hinder one’s goals and actions.
Señor Jim Crow and Self-Determination

In the late 1950s, Castro came to power and subsequently declared that racism was abolished (Zurbano, 2013). First in Castro’s March 22, 1959 presidential speech and then again in the 1962 Second Declaration of Havana, Cuba confirmed that the race issue was now non-existent (Morales Domínguez, Prevost, & Nimtz, 2013). However, it is not reasonable to assume that such a profound proclamation could instantly eclipse the racist practices infused into the Cuban culture from generations of colonialism (Morales Domínguez, Prevost, & Nimtz, 2013).

So it is that the European and American influences on Cuban culture before Castro came to power had and continue to inform race relations. These Castro proclamations, seeking to dissociate the island’s society from 500 years of European and American imperialism, downplayed the persistence of an obvious racially-charged phenomenon, and thus were unable to eradicate it (Morales Domínguez, Prevost, & Nimtz, 2013). Continually declaring that racism was over in the presumed utopia of socialism, Afro-Cubans were unable to name the obvious ills of discrimination, let alone fight against the ramifications of bigotry, since such racism reportedly did not exist. To rail against, resist and protest threatened governmental control confirming time and again that racial animus was a thing of a capitalist past.

In fact, when we look through the body of master’s and doctoral level research, we find that the issue of Cuba and race is typically not studied by Cuban social scientists on the island. Such work, if it is produced within Cuba, remains in a state of limbo, rarely if ever coming to press. Further, issues of race are not addressed on Cuban television, in the newspapers or via other mass media outlets (Morales Domínguez, Prevost, & Nimtz, 2013). Overall, throughout Cuban society, race has been erased as a viable topic for critical analysis.

Congruent with the situation in pre-civil rights era America, Cuban society privileged whites. They had better living conditions and their lighter skin enabled better access to jobs (Zurbano, 2013). In the United States, scholars and society have labeled this practice as Jim Crow segregation; in Cuba the practice had and has no name (as explicitly naming racism was forbidden) but the impact on those of African descent was indelible, analogous to social and economic disenfranchisement in America.

As Zurbano wrote:

Before 1990, black Cubans suffered a paralysis of economic mobility while, paradoxically, the government decreed the end of racism in speeches and publications. To question the extent of racial progress was tantamount to a counter revolutionary act. This made it almost impossible to point out the obvious: racism is alive and well (2013, p. 116).
Black Cubans, like all others stripped of the individual right of self-determination (Mithaug 1996; Hollis, 1998) and oppressed by the external government pressure, thus lost the right to protest discrimination and did not have the opportunity to amplify their individual voices into a strong collective voice of resistance.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro was the anti-racist voice, rebuking racism and discrimination, declaring that the revolution had terminated prejudice (Clealand, 2017). His speeches and rhetoric created a tabula rasa, a framework that forbids racism, without providing any form of remedial action to re-educate a resistant Cuba society that had been informed by centuries of internally motivated racial bias. When a community blatantly ignores the racism because the government has said to do so, such a disavowed position ironically allows racial stereotypes and practices to proliferate (Clealand, 2017). Perhaps this is similar to the rebirth of the Russian church after decades of official Communist atheism in the former Soviet Union or the outbreak of extreme nationalism in the regions of the former Yugoslavia.

Further, Castro’s propaganda established an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy in foreign affairs, as he attempted to distinguished Cuba from its nearest enemy. Whereas in the capitalistic Untied States “they” were continuously engaging in racial unrest, riots and social discord, such was not the case in Socialist Cuba. Why? In comparison to Cubans, “they” [the population of the United States] are racist, and subsequently, by the declared nature of ours, “we” [Cuban citizens] are anti-racist (Antón-Carrillo, 2011, p. 338).

Ironically, a paternalistic Cuban government thus succeeded in silencing the anti-racist and potentially authentic resistance in its country; Afro-Cubans could not effectively combat local racism as it meant also resisting the Castro dictatorship.

The Cuban “no racism exists here” propaganda and the country’s anti-racism rhetoric could not deconstruct the deep racial divides and practices present in the very warp and woof of the country (Aguirre, 2002; Bonilla-Silva 2012). Control and structure enable oppression (Hollis, 2017a). Therefore, how easy is it to reverse engineer deeply-seated social prejudices? How well has a positively motivated Western Europe, for example, been able to eradicate anti-Semitism?

Close to fifty years after Castro ascended to power, it is apparent to this observer that the anti-racial communication and rhetoric, even if well intended, serves mostly to paint a superficial mirage and to generate cultural denial which ultimately boosts the endemic racism and anti-Black sentiment that still exists in Cuba in 2019. Further, with the government declaring racism dead in Cuba, Afro-Cuban citizens have not been enabled to even identify racist practices openly so as to challenge such oppression; again, this is because according to the government, such practices and oppressions are nonexistent.
This situation stands in contrast to that which prevails in the United States. Here, the civil rights movement emerged from individual suffering and group-wide concerns and it blossomed into a collective resistance on the part of millions of Blacks and whites. In 1954, Thurgood Marshall and others successfully argued against the idea of separate but equal in the Supreme Court case, Brown v. The Board of Education, ending those practices which had been enshrined in law via the reactionary 1896 Plessey v. Ferguson decision. A year later, the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. changed busing conditions for Blacks in the South. The 1961 Freedom Riders helped to desegregate interstate travel facilities (Martin, 2011).

Soon Blacks, whites, and others were raising their voices and risking their lives to openly and collectively challenge the prevailing racist politics in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The civil rights struggle culminated with the 1963 March on Washington and continued through to such victories as the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, with its Title VII prohibiting discrimination in employment; these laws were followed by the subsequent adoption of additional civil rights laws, such as Title IX in 1972 (ending discrimination based on sex), pregnancy discrimination legislation in 1978, and the American with Disabilities Act in 1990.

None of these society-wide, deeply experienced liberation moments in the United States were possible in a Castro-dominated Cuba since the leader declared there was no need in Cuban society to address such problems.

In addition, not only did African Americans in the United States exercise the right to pursue their autonomous self-determination, they also had choices on how to resist oppression. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SLC) offered a Thoreau and Gandhi-inspired civil disobedience approach. Yet if one did not subscribe to the turn-the-other-cheek philosophy, other movements arose, which included the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and then, the Nation of Islam that recruited over 100,000 members in the 1960s. These provided an alternative option to exercise self-determination (Colley, 2014).

Black Americans, unlike Black Cubans, had a choice of not only to fight, but also how to fight, and how to pick up arms, if that was their decision. One of the most successful options that emerged from such internal self-determination was through the existing justice system. The NAACP’s commitment to fight racism in court also supported the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (Tushnet, 1994). The Urban League, the Congress of Racial Equality, and others were active in the battle. The fight for equality included Tennessee Governor Frank Clement calling out the National Guard to escort Black students to Clinton High School in 1956, as it did President Eisenhower calling upon the Arkansas National Guard in 1957 to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas (Drone, 2005).
The same strategies to desegregate were employed in Florida, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana (Drone, 2005).

Additional expressions of self-determination included the many movements nationwide, developing everywhere. Many were led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered countless speeches and wrote about equity in labor for both races. Others that were prominent included the work of Malcolm X at Temple #7 in Harlem, New York, and the struggles highlighted by the Black Panthers and their community building efforts in Oakland, California, seeking to expose the diversity of resistance, a resistance that is not homogeneous in status, approach, or acceptance. Whether one chose the “any means necessary” cry of Malcolm X or Martin Luther King Jr.’s civil disobedience prescriptions, the underrepresented and disenfranchised American populations relied on their internal and autonomous self-determination, though many had to fight through hoses, dogs and bombings to fight for, and often achieve, social and economic equality.

I do not intend to elevate one form of struggle in recent American history over another, or to engage in a philosophical dispute over which civil rights path was more palatable or acceptable. Here I wish to maintain only that these examples illustrate the choices and variety of avenues for resistance that became available in the United States for Blacks and their allies to change fundamental American racial bigotry. Though a painful and bloody part of American history in which Blacks had long endured more oppression than whites (Hollis, 2017; Hollis, 2018; Kwate & Goodman, 2015; St Jean & Feagin, 2015), such resistance and struggle have afforded some opportunity to those disenfranchised American populations to change the situation. By contrast, Cuban society is just coming to terms with honestly and openly naming the racist ills which still remain largely unaddressed.

**Jim Crow Roosts in Cuba**

As a declared socialist society, Cuba continues to feel the pain of being shut off from much of the world economically and socially. The hip 1957 Chevy Taxis are an emblematic icon for tourists seeing the romantic allure of classic cars. Yet in reality, these cars signal the beginning of a time warp for Cuba, suspended in the 1950s in many ways, in ideology and commerce. How many today recall that until Castro assumed power in 1959, hotels, barbershops and beaches were reserved for whites (Darlington, 2009), similar to parallel Jim Crow practices in the United States.

Blacks in central Cuba during the middle 1990s protested against work conditions which were pushing the Black community into prostitution and other underworld crime in order to earn a suitable living (Binns, 2013).
In 2009, over 60 prominent African Americans, including Cornel West, Ruby Dee and Jeremiah Wright, openly protested that Cuban officials were harassing their Afro-Cuban citizens and obstructing their civil rights. They specifically called for an end to “the unnecessary and brutal harassment of Black Cubans who defend human rights” (Darlington, 2009). These calls were occasioned by the fact, among other instances of prejudice, that darker-skinned Blacks are still excluded from lucrative Cuban job opportunities in tourism and hospitality.

In contemporary Cuba, interaction with the mechanisms of economic tourism is still quietly reserved for lighter-skinned Cubans. Such racial bias was evident during our Havana tour in which all the service workers in the airport were light-skin or white; all of the five-star hotel staff members were light-skinned or white, just as the tour guides and drivers were light-skinned or white.

Similarly, lighted-skinned or white students earn a majority of post-secondary degrees in Cuba’s free educational system (Binns, 2013). Apparently, Jim Crow is alive and roosting comfortably in Cuba. Binns specifically wrote:

The people have been conditioned to believe that there is no racism here and that there are no races, just Cubans. This is all very beautiful as an idea but in reality, things are different. If you are Black in Cuba you are thought of as inferior and the darker you are, the worse it is. You see there is this huge gap between what the state says and what it wants us to believe and what is really going on (Binns, 2013, p. 7).

Race relations in the United States during the 1950s were not much better than Cuban race relations. American blackface, lynchings, open segregation, racial jokes and racially-driven sexual abuse were frequently encountered.

The comparative difference between the U.S. and Cuba today results from the fact that United States citizens were left the wiggle room of self-determination. They had the constitutional right to act on their internal motivations, to seek a redress of grievances while grappling with external government control reluctant at times to uphold desegregation legislation. This freedom yielded a variety of manifestations such as the end of segregated water fountains and segregated accommodations, and denial of services. Most whites had long expressed their internal motivation to stay segregated but simultaneously, Black citizens and their allies arose to express their autonomous self-determination. They sought to end racial segregation and racial hatred and, in general, they succeeded.
Though the separate but equal doctrine was struck down in 1954, five years before Castro struck down racial discrimination via executive edict, the United States spent several decades, and even into the twenty-first century, cajoling, shaping the internal motivation of the country’s consciousness to be more tolerant and inclusive of racial differences. Although racial prejudice had been woven into American culture since the advent of slavery, the people of the United States have been continuously grappling with these problems. Optimistically, the internal and autonomous self-determination of those advocating for racial justice will continue to make strides.

**Conclusion: American and Cuban Self Determination in 2020**

Cuban society has been stifled in its general desire to improve race relations; much of this is based on the external motivation of Castro declaring the end of racism instead allowing for a process to emerge analogous to those that have done so in the U.S., with its greater latitude for social action. Even the minor latitude permitted in the United States generated the autonomous self-determination of Black Americans to diminish racist practices.

Government control in Cuba has made advances in inclusive health care systems and in government-sponsored employment; as a result, the Black population in Cuba is deemed one of the healthiest in the Americans (Binns, 2013; Smith, 1986). By contrast, in the United States, Blacks and African Americans remain in the lower socioeconomic strata, often struggling to obtain health care until Obama’s Affordable Care Act in 2010.

Though Cuban advances in health care and education are notable, such advances are not a product of the will of the people, but they have arisen as a result of the will of the government. The Cuban people’s internal motivation is stifled. In the United States, internal and autonomous self-determination forges new and critical pathways in racial justice, economic justice and environmental justice. Young people with their internal motivation have grown weary of older generations who seemingly are inert about global warming (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Grønhøj & Thøgersen, 2017, Thunberg, 2019). In their resistance, younger generations also use social media to highlight racialized gun violence and assault against women (Brown, Ray, Summers & Fraistat, 2017; Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth & Dodds, 2018). These protests are possible because of the internal self-determination afforded in American society.

We may not agree with all aspects and modes of protest, resistance and advocacy, but the right to engage in such has allowed for community evolution. While the results are far from perfect, in the United States there has been a social evolution nonetheless in race relations. For Cuba, by contrast, the attempt to address race relations has been driven not by self-determination of the people but by a perhaps well-intentioned but naïve government-imposed propaganda program that has systemically asphyxiated the internal self-determination of the disenfranchised.
References


Honoring A Giant: Immanuel Wallerstein And His Contributions to Social Sciences

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“…the causes of the wealth and poverty of nations – the grand object of all enquiries in Political Economy.”
- Malthus to Ricardo, letter of 26 January 1817.

Abstract

As a salute to a preeminent social scholar of our times, Immanuel M. Wallerstein (1930-2019), this paper briefly highlights his biography, education, and academic career; however, it is mainly concerned with his scholarly concepts and theories. The author attempts to follow the development process of one of his main contributions to social sciences, the world-systems approach, as well as to analyze various important aspects of it, including its historic and philosophic significance. All efforts have been made to keep the paper informative yet also accessible and transparent, deferring, when appropriate, to Immanuel Wallerstein himself to expound his ideas to the reader.

Keywords: antisystemic movements, core countries, division of labor, economic sociology, geoculture, periphery, semi-periphery, world-economy, world-empire, world-system

Biography

Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein was born in New York City on September 28, 1930. The future scholar’s alma mater was Columbia University; there he earned a B.A. in 1951, an M.A. in 1954, and a Ph.D. in 1959. Through the years, he also studied abroad at Oxford University, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Universite Paris 7 Denis Diderot, as well as at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.


The thinker served as a distinguished professor of sociology at Binghamton until his retirement in 1999. Between 2000 and his death in 2019, Wallerstein was a Senior Research Scholar at Yale University.

Wallerstein had a keen interest in the non-European world (1, p. XVI), and most of his early publications were on post-colonial Africa. World-Systems Analysis originated in the early 1970s as a new perspective on social reality (2, p. 1). The scholar elaborated his views in his magnum opus, The Modern World-System, which appeared in four volumes between 1974 and 2011. In 1975, the first volume of the set received the prestigious Sorokin Award from the American Sociological Association.

The World-Systems Approach

In one of his now classic works, Wallerstein defined the term world-system “as a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems” (3, p. 75). The scholar envisioned the concept of a world-system as a unit of analysis in world history, instead of states, nations, nationalities, and other traditional groupings. In the Preface to the first volume of his work The Modern World System I, Wallerstein explains:

This book makes a radically different assumption. It assumes that the unit of analysis is the economic entity, the one that is measured by the existence of an effective division of labor, and that the relationship of such economic boundaries to political and cultural boundaries is variable, and therefore must be determined by empirical research for each historic case.

Further:

Once we assume that the unit of analysis is such a “world-system” and not the “state” or the “nation” or the “people,” then much changes in the outcome of the analysis. Most specifically we shift from a concern with the attributive characteristics of states to concern with the relational characteristics of states. We shift from seeing classes (and status-groups) as groups within a state to seeing them as groups within a world–economy (4, p. XI).

According to Wallerstein, the modern world-system originated in Western Europe and the Americas in the 16th century. First the Dutch Republic, then Britain and France, led the way in its gradual expansion, until, by the 19th century, virtually every area on earth was encompassed by it. The most prominent feature of the modern world-system was its division into a highly industrialized core, a moderately developed semi-periphery, and an underdeveloped periphery. The semi-periphery acted as a periphery to the core and as a core to the periphery, and, by the end of the 20th century, it included Eastern Europe, China, Brazil, and Mexico.
Wallerstein elaborated on the intricacies of those zones’ relations:

The semi-peripheral states which have a relatively even mix of production processes find themselves in the most difficult situation. Under pressure from core states and putting pressure on peripheral states, their major concern is to keep themselves from slipping into the periphery and to do what they can to advance themselves toward the core. Neither is easy, and both require considerable state interference with the world market.

These semi-peripheral states are the ones that put forward most aggressively and most publicly so-called protectionist policies. They hope thereby to “protect” their production processes from the competition of stronger firms outside, while trying to improve the efficiency of the firms inside so as to compete better in the world market. They are eager recipients of the relocation of erstwhile leading products, which they define these days as achieving “economic development.”

In this effort, their competition comes not from the core states, but from other semi-peripheral states, equally eager to be the recipients of relocation which cannot go to all the eager aspirants simultaneously and to the same degree. In the beginning of the twenty-first century some obvious countries to be labeled semi-peripheral are South Korea, Brazil, and India – countries with strong enterprises that export products (for example steel, automobiles, pharmaceuticals) to peripheral zones, but that also regularly relate to core zones as importers of more “advanced” products (2, p. 29-30).

Pursuant to this scholar’s thinking, the capitalist world-system is experiencing a number of structural imbalances, which, helped along the way by the so-called anti-systemic movements, may in the future cause its eventual demise (3, pp. 71-105).

Wallerstein also notes:

Like any other perspective, world-systems analysis has built on earlier arguments and critiques. There is a sense in which almost no perspective can ever be entirely new. Someone has usually said something similar decades or centuries earlier. Therefore, when we speak of a perspective being new, it may only be that the world is ready for the first time to take seriously the ideas it embodies, and perhaps also that the ideas have been repackaged in a way that makes them more plausible and accessible to more people (2, pp. 1-2).

If so, let us attempt to “deconstruct” the intellectual paradigm proposed here. An attentive reader can easily discern a number of intellectual influences in the Wallerstein’s scholarly doctrine, including the comparative theory of civilizations, the Annales School, Marxist tradition, as well as dependency theory.
The Comparative Theory of Civilizations

The world-systemic approach to history shares certain fundamental features with the comparative theory of civilizations. For example, both civilizational and world-systems paradigms tend to consider world history in units larger than traditional socio-historic units.

Wallerstein writes: “World-systems analysis meant first of all substitution of a unit of analysis called the ‘world-system’ for the standard unit of analysis which was the national state.” (2, p. 16) In fact, David Wilkinson notes that while the comparative theory of civilizations approach tends to be oriented more towards the cultural, and the world-systems approach towards economic phenomena, the entities they study largely are, and ought to be, the same; he even proposed to merge both theories into one (5, pp. 257-258).

Furthermore, the world-systems approach owes some of its essential concepts and even terminology to a prominent French comparative civilizationalist, Fernand Braudel (who also happens to be one of the leaders of the Annales School). Wallerstein notes:

Braudel’s influence was crucial in two regards.

First, in his later work on capitalism and civilization, Braudel would insist on a sharp distinction between the sphere of the free market and the sphere of monopolies. He called only the latter capitalism and, far from being the same thing as the free market, he said that capitalism was the “anti-market.” This concept marked a direct assault, both substantively and terminologically, on the conflation by classical economists (including Marx) of the market and capitalism.

Secondly, Braudel’s insistence on the multiplicity of social times and his emphasis on structural time – what he called the longue durée – became central to world-systems analysis. For world-systems analysis, the longue durée was the duration of a particular historical system. Generalizations about the functioning of such a system thus avoided the trap of seeming to assert timeless, eternal truths. If such systems were not eternal, then it followed that they had beginnings, lives during which they “developed,” and terminal transitions (2, p. 18).

The Annales School

The Annales School of historiography was created by a group of French historians in the 1920s, and it received its name after the group’s scholarly journal Annales d'histoire économique et sociale. The emphasis here is on very long-term (longue durée) trends and geography, as well as on social and economic themes.
For example, in his classic book *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), Fernand Braudel used ideas from other social sciences, stressed geography, economics, and the longue durée, as well as downplayed importance of specific events and individuals.

Even more pronounced are the economic themes in Braudel’s three-volume *magnum opus*, *Civilization and Capitalism*. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of essential terms of the world-systems paradigm has been acquired from his oeuvre. The French historian explains:

A world-economy (an expression which I have used in the past as a particular meaning of the German term *Weltwirtschaft*) only concerns a fragment of the world, an economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which its internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity (6, p. 22).

Braudel further presented a number of “rules or tendencies” related to world-economies.

- Rule One: the boundaries change only slowly.
- Rule Two: a dominant capitalist city always lies at the center: the power and influence of cities may vary.
- Rule Three: there is always a hierarchy of zones within a world-economy: Von Thunen’s zones\(^2\) which he projected as spatial arrangements of the world-economy. Do neutral zones exist?\(^3\) Further, we may observe envelope\(^4\) and infrastructure. (6, p. 26-45).

These principles essentially underlie the world-systems theory. Braudel, to whom the second volume of the Wallerstein’s work *The Modern System II* is dedicated, elucidated:

Every world-economy is a sort of jigsaw puzzle, a juxtaposition of zones interconnected, but at different levels. On the ground, at least three different areas or categories can be distinguished: a narrow core, a fairly developed middle zone,

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\(^2\) *Von Thunen zones* – a hypothetical model of agricultural land use which was proposed by German amateur economist J.H. Von Thunen (1783-1850) in 1826. According to this pre-industrial schema, there are four rings of agricultural activity surrounding the city, i.e., dairying and intensive farming would occur in the ring closest to the city, timber and firewood are procured in the second zone, and while the third zone consists of field crops, ranching is located in the final ring (Author’s note).

\(^3\) *Neutral zones* – according to Braudel, backward and/or underdeveloped economically areas (Author’s note).

\(^4\) *Envelope* - Braudel uses this somewhat metaphoric term to reflect on a world-economy’s area or scope (Author’s note).
and a vast periphery. The qualities and characteristics of the type of society, economy, technology, culture, and political order necessarily alter as one moves from one zone to another. This is an explanation of very wide application, one on which Immanuel Wallerstein has based his book *The Modern World-System* (1974) (6, p. 39).

As is already obvious, the most important term of the world-systems approach, world-system, originated as a derivative of Fernand Braudel’s world-economy.

**Marxist Tradition**

To substantiate his world-systems approach further, Immanuel Wallerstein turns to a method of socioeconomic analysis that views class relations and social conflict using a materialist interpretation of historical development, and he takes a dialectical view of social transformation, i.e. Marxism. Serge L. Levitsky reminds us about the method’s premises:

Having in the *Communist Manifesto* assured the workers that capitalism was doomed and that the future belonged to them, Marx owed the world a more solid proof of his assertions. *Das Kapital* claims to do just that. The task which Marx set himself was an ambitious one. His goal was nothing less than the discovery of the economic laws of motion of modern society, and then to show that these laws assured the eventual triumph of the proletariat.

He sought to do this through the historical correlation of the rise of the modern proletariat with the general development of the technical means of production – to demonstrate that the processes of production, exchange, and distribution as they actually occur proved his thesis.

The result was a curious amalgamation of economic and political history, history, sociology, and utopia. Marx, in effect, attempted to unite all the philosophical, scientific, and moral strands of the Victorian age into one vast system of a universal scope. His dialectical philosophy was borrowed from German classical philosophy (Hegel in particular) and transformed into historical materialism. With it went a concept of state and revolution that was borrowed from French revolutionary tradition. His system of political economy was built on notions of labor theory of value and the theory of surplus value which he derived from classical (particularly British) economic doctrine.

Marx’s method was not that of observation and scientific deduction. It was rather that of an *a priori* conceptual scheme, supplemented by a wealth of documentary material selected to fit the main tenets of the scheme (7, pp. X-XI).
He wrote elsewhere, on a similar subject:

In his works, Karl Marx creates an abstract model of capitalism, and then attempts to prove its inevitable self-destruction (8, p. 172).

Similar to Marx, Immanuel Wallerstein is attempting to develop a general schema of the last 500 years (from 16th century to the present) of world-historic development, mainly from the economic perspective. Also comparable to Marx, the thinker predicts that the capitalist world-system is destined for its self-destruction (3, pp. 71-105).

Dependency Theory

Yet another root of the world-systems approach extended to dependency theory. The dependistas postulate that the core of wealthy, industrialized states profits at the expense of the periphery’s underdeveloped and poor nations. Thus, Immanuel Wallerstein writes:

Core-periphery was an essential contribution of Third World scholars. True, there had been some German geographers in the 1920s who had suggested something similar, as did Romanian sociologists in the 1930s, but then Romania had a social structure similar to that of the Third World. But it was only when Raúl Prebisch and his Latin American “young Turks” at the ECLA⁵ got to work in the 1950s that the theme became a significant focus of social science scholarship.

The basic idea was very simple. International trade was not, they said, a trade between equals. Some countries were stronger economically than others (the core) and were therefore able to trade on terms that allowed surplus-value to flow from the weaker countries (the periphery) to the core (2, pp. 11-12).

It is no wonder that the world-systems approach borrowed a number of terms and notions from dependency theory as well. These have included, for example, the industrialized core, the relatively developed semi-periphery, and the typically underdeveloped periphery zones or regions.

Legacy

Immanuel Wallerstein developed an innovative macro-level and long-term socioeconomic theory, which he named the world-systems approach.

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⁵ ECLA - Economic Commission for Latin America. The organization is also known as The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as ECLAC, UNECLAC, or, in Spanish and Portuguese, CEPAL. It is a United Nations regional commission to encourage economic cooperation (Author’s note).
While working on this paradigm, the scholar creatively synthesized concepts and theories of other scholars and thinkers, such as the comparative theory of civilizations, the Annales School, Marxist tradition, and dependency theory.

The world-systems approach offers a number of plausible explanations to various pressing questions of our times. In fact, Frank W. Elwell considers the scholar among the few modern theorists who have succeeded in developing a truly macrosociological theory. (9, VII-VIII). The Wallerstein approach influences a certain number of contemporary schools of thought, such as the Russian School of Globalistics. Wallerstein’s ideas also have had an effect on multiple aspects of one of the most fundamental and seminal civilizational paradigms of recent times, created by Polish and American scholar Andrew Targowski (10, p. 23; 11, p. 30).

One may maintain justly that Immanuel Wallerstein developed and presented a long-term historiosophic and world-historic paradigm of the last 500 years.

Conversely, it could it argued that the world-systemic paradigm is a part of the economic branch of the sociologistic school of sociological theories. According to Pitirim A. Sorokin, to this branch belong “those theories which have taken one of the so-called ‘economic factors’ as an independent variable and have tried to find out its effects on or its correlations with other social phenomena” (10, c. 514).

In the case of the world-systems approach, such an economic factor would be the division of labor between the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. Having analyzed a number of such theories, Pitirim A. Sorokin, among other conclusions, postulated:

(4) Studies of a great many investigators have shown that so-called economic conditions are correlated with various and numerous social phenomena. For this reason, in an interpretation or an analysis of social phenomena they cannot be disregarded.

(5) In many fields social science can now tell not only whether the correlation of a certain social phenomenon with a certain economic condition exists, but even the degree, or coefficient of the correlation.

(6) These coefficients show that there is scarcely any social phenomenon which can be correlated perfectly with the economic factor. Some of them are correlated perfectly with the economic factor. Some of them are correlated quite tangibly; others, only slightly, and some others do not show any noticeable correlation. This means that in no way is it possible to take the economic factor as the omnipotent, primary, or the final cause, or even as the only “starter,” while all others are “only dependent” on it.
(7) This conclusion becomes still more valid if we take into consideration that social phenomena are interdependent, but not one-sidedly dependent. For this reason, the non-self-sufficiency of the economic factor shown by the character of the correlations becomes even greater if we take it by itself as a “function,” and show its dependency on other factors taken in the above studies as “mere functions.”

This is done by other sociological schools which are logically and factually entitled to proceed in this way as much as (are) the economic interpreters in their way. … (12, c. 598).

Conclusions

1. The preceding analysis demonstrates that in his works, Immanuel Wallerstein presents an original, highly developed macro-level sociological theory dealing, for the most part, with economic realities of the contemporary and rapidly globalizing world.

2. In his world-systems paradigm, one can easily discern a number of intellectual influences, including the comparative theory of civilizations, the Annales School, Marxist tradition, and dependency theory.

3. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, the fundamental feature of his world-systems approach is the economic factor of the division of labor between the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. Therefore, it could it argued that the world-systemic paradigm belongs mainly to the field of economic sociology.

4. However, was the scholar able to create a great philosophy of history? Apparently, the jury is still out on the question, and only time will give a definitive answer.

Essential Terminology (as conceived by Immanuel Wallerstein)

**Antisystemic movements.** I invented this term to cover together two concepts that had been used since the nineteenth century: social movements and national movements. I did this because I believed that both kinds of movements shared some crucial features, and both represented parallel modes of asserting strong resistance to the existing historical system in which we live, up to and including wishing to overthrow the system (2, p. 93).

**Core-periphery.** This is a relational pair which first came into widespread use when taken up by Raúl Prebisch and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1950s as a description of the Axial Division Of Labor of the world-economy. It refers to products but is often used as shorthand for the countries in which such products are dominant.
The argument of this book is that the key element distinguishing core-like from peripheral processes is the degree to which they are monopolized and therefore profitable (2, p. 93).

Geoculture. A term coined by analogy with geopolitics. It refers to norms and modes of discourse that are widely accepted as legitimate within the world-system. We argue here that a geoculture does not come into existence automatically with the onset of a world-system but rather has to be created (2, p. 93).

Semi-peripheral. There are no semi-peripheral products, as there are core-like and peripheral products. However, if one calculates what proportion of a country’s production is core-like and what peripheral, one finds that some countries have a fairly even distribution, that is, they trade core-like products to peripheral zones and peripheral products to core zones. Hence, we can talk of semi-peripheral countries, and we find that they have a special kind of politics and play a particular role in the functioning of the world-system (2, p. 97).

World-economy, world-empire, world-system. These terms are related. A world-system is not the system of the world, but a system that is a world and that can be, and most often has been, located in an area less than the entire globe.

World-systems analysis argues that the unities of social reality within which we operate, whose rules constrain us, are for the most part such world-systems (other than the now extinct small minisystems that once existed on the earth).

World-systems analysis argues that there have been thus far only two varieties of world-systems: world-economies and world-empires. A world-empire (such as the Roman Empire, Han China) is a large bureaucratic structure with a single political center and an Axial Division Of Labor, but with multiple cultures. A world–economy is a large axial division of labor with multiple political centers and multiple cultures.

In English, the hyphen is essential to indicate these concepts. “World system” without a hyphen suggests that there has been only one world-system in the history of the world. “World economy” without a hyphen is a concept used by most economists to describe the trade relations among states, not an integrated system of production (2, pp. 98-99).
References

In The Brandeis University Psychology Department, 1962-65: Recalling A Great American Social Theorist

Kenneth Feigenbaum

Abraham H. Maslow is one of the best known psychologists of the 20th century. His theory of motivation, most cogently expressed in his hierarchy of needs, is based upon biological assumptions mainly devoid of cultural influences, and it is not sensitive to the role of civilizations effecting intellectual development and ideology. Critiques of these possible shortcomings in his theory are abundant (Trigs, 2004).

Maslow and the Author

This paper, however, contextualizes the man in his living space, and it also looks at Humanistic Psychology, of which he was an early intellectual leader, through my personal experience from 1962 to 1965. It focuses on my memory of the Department of Psychology at Brandeis, which was then widely viewed as an exemplar of a department promoting the ideology of Humanistic Psychology.

This paper reflects my memory of the time period I spent as an Assistant Professor from September 1962 to June 1965 in the Department of Psychology at Brandeis University. Its value may be as an eyewitness to the happenings of the department, perhaps most importantly in the fleeting memories I have of Professor Abraham Maslow as we worked together. It questions the assumption that the department was, in fact, at the forefront of Humanistic Psychology as a discipline.

There are very few persons alive who still retain memories of Maslow. I am one of the few. Whether my memories add anything to the understanding of the man and his work may be debated. An excellent biography of Maslow (Hoffman, 1988) already exists. Also, I am aware of the pitfalls of eye-witnesses (Loftus, 1996) and that memories are not isomorphic to historical truth (Spence, 1982).

My view of the Psychology Department and of Maslow also may be clouded because of the fact that they did not initially renew my contract at Brandeis. Only after lobbying by the graduate students did they offer me a one year extension of my contract, which I declined. Thus, my views are the perspectives of a sometimes insider, sometimes outsider in the department who developed no lasting friendships with the faculty members but who was a faculty member close to many of the graduate students.

It might be of interest to note that as a neutral outsider – that is, as neither a strictly Humanist nor an Experimental advocate – I served as Chairman of Graduate Admissions to the department.
Thus, I was also a neutral referee between the so-called humanistic part of the department and those who tended to be more experimental, cognitive, or psychodynamic.

How did I get the position teaching at Brandeis? I was interviewed at the American Psychological Association Annual Conference in Philadelphia by Alan Hein and Richard Held. It was in the Spring of 1962. The position for a full time Assistant Professor was contingent upon the fact that the department assumed that Jim Klee would be away for the year on a Fulbright grant. As it turned out, he did not get the grant and so, for the first year of my tenure there, I was given a half-time position at the Framingham Mental Health Center. It so developed that my clinical work there was as rewarding as my teaching at Brandeis and it provided me with a supportive environment.

The person they were seeking to hire, and the position I assumed, was supposed to be the mainstay for the undergraduate curriculum, teaching Child and Social Psychology and several other courses, including Political Psychology.

Why did I choose to teach at Brandeis University? In 1962 I had just completed three years of teaching and had been one of the founders of Monteith College at Wayne State University. There I taught in the Science of Society Division. The courses and the faculty were interdisciplinary. The intellectual firepower came from a staff of brilliant people drawn mostly from the University of Chicago and from the Departments of Anthropology, Sociology and History.

At Chicago, psychology had a secondary role in the curriculum. The Social Psychology on offer was that of the symbolic interactionism school of George Herbert Mead and his disciples. My Ph.D. was from the interdisciplinary Committee on Human Development, now known as the Committee on Comparative Human Development, of the University of Chicago.

Although today I relish my interdisciplinary education, back then I felt I was not a “real psychologist” because I did not graduate or teach in a specifically designated “Psychology” Department. My wife Carolyn was a 1955 graduate of Brandeis; the Department of Psychology at Brandeis was well respected and, of course, with a slightly haughty stance I thought that Boston had a lot more to offer than Detroit. I therefore looked forward to the opportunity of teaching at Brandeis.

As indicated above, I had been given the opportunity to go to Brandeis in order to be interviewed for a position by Richard Held and Alan Hein. At that same time, I was also offered a position at the City College of New York and at Queens College, which was my undergraduate school. Both Held and Hein left Brandeis shortly after, in the Fall of 1962, to take positions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Prof. Held’s relationship to the department at Brandeis deserves further comment in that he represented the “hard experimentalists” in the department that Maslow fought with over who should be hired by the department and what the department should be and become.

This reflected the fact that a wide intellectual gap yawned between what psychology should be and what the department should foster; the antagonists were the experimentalists and the humanistic members of the department’s faculty. This gap is expressed in the following quotation about Maslow and the department by Held, taken from an autobiographical essay later published on the site for the Society for Neuroscience. “From the top down the faculty of Psychology were a mixed group of theorists. They were a likable bunch, but as scientific colleagues I didn’t find them challenging. That ultimately was the reason for my departure from Brandeis.”

The day finally came for my interview. I was met at the airport and driven from the airport to the campus. I was immediately ushered into the office of “the great man,” Abraham Maslow. I was greeted warmly by him. He was engaging, and charming. Most definitively, he was also frank. He expounded on the state of psychology. His words as I clearly remember them were: “let’s call shit, shit.”

Maslow As A Technocrat Administrator and High-Flying Global Scholar

So, in 1962, I joined the Brandeis faculty, and there were eight or nine of us on the faculty of the Department of Psychology. The chair, of course, was Prof. Maslow, a congenial man who, as others have said, led with a light touch. Having himself chosen the faculty, he was quite supportive of all of us as well as generously laudatory. At the time he was propounding his theory of self-actualization — a sort of pep talk, exhorting people to develop their assets wherever these might lead. His ideas must have been in accord with the Zeitgeist because they caught on among various strata of people, ranging from rebellious young men like Abby Hoffman, who at the time was a student at Brandeis, to Business School professors seeking to energize their students.

Maslow became an icon for diverse people eager for new ideas. I must confess that as much as I liked him, in agreement with Richard Held, I couldn’t take his ideas seriously. Then there was Jim Klee, a huge man from the Midwest who, as Held recalled, had gained his degree in one of the departments of psychology whose faculty we, in the more enlightened departments, called “dustbowl empiricists.” He had rebelled against that sort of ideology, as had Maslow, and Klee was developing a new theory of behavior.

So, Klee and Maslow represented the core of the Humanistic Psychology members of the Brandeis Psychology Department. I remember Klee as a giant of man, sitting in a butterfly chair, always welcoming students to talk.
For students, he was one of those professors who had their doors almost always open. Klee left Brandeis in about 1964 to create a Humanistic Psychology program at West Georgia. This diminished the power of the humanistic ideology in the department.

Maslow wanted the department to be autonomous and not be restricted by American Psychological Association standards. He, therefore, opposed applying for an A.P.A.-approved clinical program. Unfortunately, this prevented our graduate students from receiving stipends for their internships at such places as the Judge Baker Clinic. In his words, he wanted the department to be “the West Point of Psychology” with high standards developed from within and not from the outside by those who possessed what he labelled “inferior minds.”

I remember only two occasions that I spent any serious time talking to Prof. Maslow in his office. On one occasion we talked about a study that I began but never finished on the psychology of police officers. Abe encouraged me to continue and he provided some motivational encouragement for me to continue, which I did not because of difficulties in collecting data and as a result of some fears about the possible political repercussions regarding the university and the Police Department of the town of Waltham, Massachusetts.

An issue that was raised during my tenure as Chairperson of the Graduate Admissions Committee was that of admitting women with families to the program. At least some members of the Department felt that they were taking a risk in admitting women to the Ph.D. program. While I do not remember Abe’s stance, I believe that it was not an adamant one in favor of equality of admission standards. He did mentor at least one woman for her Ph.D.

Abe’s political views had changed over time. As a youth he was a socialist, a great admirer of Norman Thomas. He was also a founder of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

However, during the time that I knew him at Brandeis he was not a political activist. For example, the valedictorian one year was forbidden by the then university president, Abram Sacher, from giving his speech because it might have offended one of the most prominent donors to the university. In another case two faculty members in the Department of Anthropology were asked to resign because of their support for Fidel Castro. Abe was not in the forefront of protesting either decision.

Nonetheless, it has been noted that by 1968, his class lectures on Politics actually featured the return of some of his positive views about rationality and a realistic view of liberalism infused with power (Maslow, 1970).
Abe complained a lot. His complaints about the graduate students were that they as a group were lazy and overly dependent; these charges were legion (Hoffman, 1988). Moreover, he was almost hypochondrial, fearing an early death. Yet, I thought that some of his complaints were justified, particularly those about low salary and support for the Department of Psychology. An example of this was the institution’s refusal to give me $250 for costs associated with an article that I was publishing. The attitude of the university was that it was a privilege to teach there and in the Boston area.

During my time at Brandeis, I was personally close to many of the graduate students. They, in contrast to the way Abe described them, were hard-working students, not the lazy, passive, unmotivated students that Abe described. In spite of the intellectual harassment they faced, few students dropped out. They were well funded and even without Abe there were other faculty members that they could turn to for mentoring if they wished.

During my last year at Brandeis I associated with the graduate students rather than with the faculty, who were driven by their own research agendas. “Bud” Wright, who was one of my colleagues at Monteith in Michigan, came to Brandeis to finish his doctoral work. I was to spend many hours “in withdrawal” with him in my office. Bud had been an acolyte of Robert K. Thomas, who was my colleague at Monteith. Bob himself was an inspired teacher and mentor of the working class students at Monteith; after teaching at Monteith, he taught at the University of Arizona where he became a leader, an activist and a scholar for Native Americans. I think of him now with great fondness.

**Psychology at Brandeis Under Maslow’s Watchful Gaze**

At Brandeis I remember several departmental meetings during which there was great concern about the progress of the dissertations of the graduate students. Abe generally was in the forefront of the complainers. But did this make sense? The fact was that there were only a small number of students in the graduate school but there were many times that number of students who were psychology majors or who took psychology classes at the undergraduate level. Nevertheless, not once in two and a half years was there any discussion of the undergraduate curriculum: what should be taught and why should it be taught. It was assumed that the expertise of the various faculty members in the department meant that they could teach their courses without any overlap — in an independent manner and without cooperative agreement as to what were the criteria and goals for the undergraduates.

Why was this? Founded in 1948 as an undergraduate institution, during the 1950’s Brandeis had moved its status from being solely that of an undergraduate school to what it perceived to be a “true university” with its development of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. This expansion into graduate education naturally had changed the focus of the Department of Psychology.
Moreover, as was true in many universities that offered the Ph.D. degree, undergraduate teaching was not the best vehicle for scholarly publications and for national recognition as a psychologist.

So, the founding of the graduate school turned the fulcrum of where the intellectual concerns of the faculty should be invested. Of course, that did not stop a few excellent teachers from devoting time to teaching their undergraduate classes. However, the criteria for promotion in the department were revealed starkly during my time at Brandeis when the two professors who were promoted by the consensus of the graduate students were the two least gifted teachers in the department.

From 1962 to 1965, the years that I was Chairperson of Graduate Admissions for the Psychology Department, the majority of the applicants who applied to Brandeis were attracted by the name and reputation of Professor Maslow. However, those who were admitted for the Ph.D. soon found out that the department was not the thriving center for Humanistic Psychology that they had anticipated; nor was it easy for them to work with Maslow, both because of his attitudes toward the graduate students and as a result of his frequent trips away from campus to lecture.

In a brief flashback I can remember being at a departmental party (one of the few I was invited to or attended) when Bertha Maslow approached me with a phrase something like: “Oh, you are the person who was hired to be the ‘messiah’ for the undergraduates.”

The topography of the place was significant, in my view. The Psychology Department occupied the first floor of the Brown building. It consisted of my office, a departmental office, and the offices of Richard Jones, Ulric Neisser, Norbet Mintz, Jerome Wodinsky, Marianne Simmel, and Ricardo Morant.

However, two faculty members were not in the building: Eugenia Hanfmann had her office in the Counseling Center, and Fran Perkins was in charge of the early childhood center in an office elsewhere -- not in Brown.

The second floor of Brown was the home of the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology. There was little interdisciplinary work between the Department of Psychology and the occupants of the second floor of the Brown building. This was surprising to me, since Abe, while at Brooklyn College and at Columbia University, had been a major player with Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Abraham Kardiner and others.

In particular, he had engaged in field work under Benedict’s supervision, studying security and insecurity among the Northern Blackfoot. (Feigenbaum, Smith 2019). Maslow’s notes on Blackfoot socialization were validated by the work of others, such as the anthropologists.
Oscar Lewis, best known for his work on the “Culture of Poverty,” and Esther Goldfrank. Maslow was an acute observer and an excellent field worker.

A few of the graduate students did have contact with the scholars on the second floor. This included, especially, Joel Aronoff, whose thesis to some extent validated aspects of Maslow’s world-famous “hierarchy of needs.”

As a result of the department’s faculty and its physical location, and because I had taught previously in an interdisciplinary program at Monteith College where I became acquainted with major American anthropological and sociological thought, I was quite disappointed by the lack of any close intellectual contact between the faculty in the Psychology Department and the denizens of the second floor of Brown.

Nonetheless, Maslow personally never disparaged psychodynamic approaches to understanding human behavior. One of his closest friends was Harry Rand, an analyst from the Boston area. He also hired Richard Jones, who introduced the students and the faculty to the work of Lawrence Kubie, who was merging psychoanalysis with education. Abe did attend at least one conference with Kubie. Richard Jones eventually left the department, however, in order to become part of the more liberally oriented program at Evergreen State College, in Washington State.

Thus, the department was not a thriving Humanistic Psychology intellectual hub nor a national center that many of the graduate students who came to Brandeis had anticipated that it would be. During much of his tenure at Brandeis, in fact, Maslow exhibited a preference for having students broadly educated in main domains of psychology, not just Humanistic Psychology; he pushed students to learn about such other areas of psychology as Perception; Cognitive Development; Abnormal Psychology; Research Design and Statistics.

By 1965 the stalwart of the humanistic approach, Jim Klee, had left to found a Humanistic Psychology Department at West Georgia State; moreover, Abe, because of his travels and his inability to forge a more humanistic stamp on the department, became more and more alienated from the department and its faculty. In addition, Abe feared that he would die at an early age. He became less and less engaged at Brandeis — in 1964, particularly, with the undergrads; many of them, shockingly, were beginning to see him as a reactionary authoritarian.

This was in sharp contrast to his international reputation, to the overwhelming response ascertained by an unscientific survey I administered, and to the opinion I had gathered in talks with the students to whom I spoke in my wife’s class of Brandeis graduates of 1955. He was considered by all to be a magnificent teacher and mentor.
Since the time when he had arrived at Brandeis in 1951, Abe abstained from pushing the department to be a department made in his mold. So, his first hire for the department which he founded was Ricardo Morant, whose expertise was in Perception. Other early hires included Eugenia Hanfmann, who was the head of the Counseling Center; David Ricks, a Clinical Psychologist; and Dick Neisser, who has the reputation of being the founder of Cognitive Psychology. For many years Maslow’s criteria for a faculty member were solely based on competence and not on ideology. Nonetheless, by the time I was in the department, the hire’s ideology had become more important.

During the spring of 1965 I received a letter indicating that the department was not going to renew my contract. There was no explanation offered for not renewing me and I did not pursue the reason as to why. In actuality, I was frankly unhappy with a life without either intellectual or social support; Brandeis was the polar opposite of what I had experienced at Monteith College of Wayne State University. Perhaps it was the case that, as a somewhat insecure person, my persona did not reflect to them a clearly-focused research agenda that would attract graduate students and publicize the department throughout the world of elite academic departments of Psychology.

To my credit, I think, was that I had published relatively vigorously, producing a number of professional articles while I was there, often with the graduate students being either senior or junior authors; my teaching, if not brilliant, was clearly far above average; and I developed while at Brandeis a psychometric instrument for handicapped children, a variant of the Children’s Apperception Test.

Later in the spring of 1965 I was offered a one year’s extension of my contract, probably because of the insistent lobbying of the graduate students with whom I had become close. I have always wondered what Abe’s position was on my renewal. I am tempted to believe that, while not on any personal basis, he saw my leaving as another opportunity to appoint a person with humanistic and “transpersonal” interests.

Soon after my non-renewal letter I began to search for other jobs. Two possibilities quickly came: a position at Ohio State University and a position at Antioch College in Ohio. I eventually accepted the latter.

I was interviewed at Ohio State for a joint appointment in the Social and Developmental programs in the university’s Department of Psychology and was offered a position with a promise of tenure. Additionally, I was asked to lead the Infant Development Laboratory. Apparently, Abe had invited the distinguished Ohio State psychologist George Kelly to Brandeis in the same time frame.
I have a particularly strong memory of the interview luncheon held for me at Ohio State. Professor Kelly was not particularly interested in football and I could easily converse with them about Woody Hayes, the university’s head football coach; “three yards in a cloud of dust,” a then innovative strategy of gaining ground in the game by grinding out inevitable if small advances; and related topics. But it is hard to believe that they thought they were getting the better of the exchange, Feigenbaum for such a great psychologist as Kelly!

Kelly was invited to Brandeis by Maslow and accepted the endowed chair, Riklis Professor of Behavioral Sciences. Although Kelly did not consider himself a Humanistic psychologist, avoiding being penned into any one category, he was at least a fellow traveler with Humanistic psychology. Unfortunately, he died of a heart attack two years after his appointment. He was replaced by Prof. Brendan Maher, a leader in the field of Experimental Psychopathology.

In spite of his complaining about the dependency of most of the graduate students, Prof. Maslow did mentor several outstanding students. Among them was Arthur Warmoth, who took a leading role before his death in 2018 in the Humanistic movement in the discipline. Another student who remained close to Maslow was Richard Lowry, who edited Maslow’s diary and who also edited a book containing many of Maslow’s papers. The book was titled Dominance, Self-Esteem. Self-Actualization: Germinal Papers of A.H. Maslow. Another graduate student of Maslow’s whom I knew was Bob Greenway. He continued to work with Humanistic psychologists in California.

Today, the Brandeis University Department of Psychology is an experimental one. The majority of the faculty are involved in visual perception research. Humanistic Psychology is no longer a major focus.

In an article which appeared in the Brandeis News on May 14th, 2013, Leah Burrows wrote that:

> You can find Dr. Abraham Maslow in the pages of every introduction to psychology textbook. You can find Maslow on every list of influential psychologists, among the ranks of Sigmund Freud and B.F. Skinner. You can find his papers and correspondence on exhibit at The Center for the History of Psychology at the University of Akron in Ohio.

> But walk into his former office in the Brown Center for Social Sciences and you’ll find nothing of Abraham Maslow. There is no plaque, no picture.

> The article goes on to quote the then Chairperson, Margie Lachman: “I think there were a lot of people in the department who didn’t appreciate his views.”
The article stated that many psychologists at that time, including several at Brandeis, dismissed Maslow’s theory on the hierarchy of needs and peak experiences for lack of empirical evidence. In the article I am quoted as saying that “there is still enough interest (and value in his work) in Maslow to generate a chair.” I believe this very strongly and there have been some recent efforts to do that.

Perhaps it is the case that when I was a faculty member at Brandeis, the scope of Maslow’s work was not fully recognized by me. In the years since I taught there I have developed a deeper appreciation of his work on dominance, self-esteem, security and insecurity; his prescient article on the authoritarian personality is relevant today as we seek to understand certain trends in American and international leadership. In addition, Maslow’s anthropology research on the Blackfoot was outstanding and it generated many of his later ideas, as expressed in his theory of motivation (Smith, Feigenbaum 2019).

Creative people often have personality shortcomings. This is a truism that applies to Abe. My reflections, based both upon my memories of my time at Brandeis and my readings about his life (specifically materials by Lowry and Hoffman), lead me to the following conclusions about this seminal thinker in American psychology:

- Abraham Maslow had strongly elitist feelings and he looked down upon others who did not support his point of view.
- He promulgated a viewpoint that gave little causative effect to the environment and he tended to promote himself as a “self-made man.”
- In spite of his many kudos and gigantic reputation, he felt unappreciated.
- His greatness as a foundational American psychologist has outlived both the shortcomings in his theories and Maslow, as a person.
References

The Past is Still With Me: Memoir of a Soviet Yiddish Actress

Rosa Kurtz-Dranov

Foreword
Contributed by Alexander Dranov

My mother Rosa Abramovna Kurtz-Dranov passed away in New Jersey in June 2003 after a long illness. She was 94. After the burial, I sat shiva, as is Jewish custom, for the first time in my life. (I did not sit for seven days, as required). As I was going through my mother’s papers — photos, letters, books, newspaper clippings — I stumbled upon a manuscript. That was her memoir, hand-written by her in New Jersey in 1987. It was an unexpected find; I had not known she was writing her memoirs.

My wife and I read them out loud for two days in a row. We could not stop. The memoir revealed my mom’s life, in all its sad reality, full of tragedies, grief and infrequent joys. And with it, the life in the country where we were born and lived before emigration.

The manuscript shook me. For a long time, I could not make up my mind whether to publish it. The memories were so personal and private, clearly not intended for a wide audience. They were not written for strangers. “But can I be wrong?” I asked myself. “Maybe, even though posthumously, this mercilessly candid story about the life of a Yiddish actress, written by herself late in life, can be of interest to other people, even strangers? Despite the fact that apart from some light-hearted moments, the story contained many bitter memories about the Yiddish theater in Russia and about my own father, although my mom devoted her whole life to both of them, without reservation, without holding anything back. Can these memoirs cast a shadow on her blessed memory too?”

An unbiased Russian editor, Ludmila Shakova, reviewed the memoir and finally persuaded me to edit if not publish it, providing an Afterword which would continue my mom’s story ending as it does in 1956, with my father’s death. I am grateful to that lady and her professionalism. I am also grateful to everyone who read the manuscript and shared their thoughts with me, including a wonderful editor, Valeria Popova, and two people who knew and loved my mother — Elsha Belenky, now deceased, and Mark Zilberquit. In short, I made up my mind to type this edited memoir, practically uncensored.

But translate it into English? That was even a more dubious task. I thought I would never get around to that. After fifteen years I finally decided to do that too — at the request of my daughter, born here in the U.S, whose Russian is not as good as her English. Thus I dedicate this manuscript to Julia.
My mom lived a long life. In 1928, at age 20, already an experienced Yiddish actress, she enrolled in an actors’ studio that was part of the newly established State Yiddish Theater in Moscow under Solomon Mikhoels (GOSET) and worked in that theater up to its closing in 1950. Twelve years later, along with a few surviving actors of the GOSET, she was accepted in the Moscow Yiddish Ensemble, created in 1962 under Khrushchev. With that ensemble she toured the Soviet Union until 1978 when we emigrated to the USA and settled in Houston, Texas. Here in Texas, she performed excerpts and songs from various Yiddish plays staged by the GOSET and then continued to do so in Philadelphia, New Jersey and New York City — everywhere our destiny found us. She last performed on the stage at age 85.

The daughter of Yiddish actors Abram and Balbina Kurtz, born in Warsaw when Poland was part of Russia, my mom began to perform on the stage when still a child. Yiddish troupes in those bygone days, as you know, did not have their own permanent premises. Those were touring theaters and their actors, “wandering stars” as Sholom Aleichem called them, who travelled to the villages and shtetls of Western Russia. They rented “corners” in private houses and rooms in cheap inns and performed in stationary theaters and circuses, usually Russian, wherever they could find a suitable space.

My mom told me that in Tsarist Russia, as in Soviet Russia, I should add, Yiddish troupes were subject to persecution and discrimination; they were not allowed to perform in Yiddish in many towns and villages. Strange as it is, they were allowed, before the World War, to perform in German. Yiddish actors tried to dodge the ban on Yiddish, switching to similar-sounding German as soon as a policeman showed up.

1928-48 is a twenty-year period when Yiddish theater thrived. In those years, there were several state Yiddish theaters in the Soviet Union, including in Minsk, Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa. The State Yiddish Theater in Moscow was the leading one, headed by prominent actor and director Solomon Mikhoels.

As is well-known, soon after Germany attacked the USSR, in August 1941 a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC) was established, with Mikhoels elected as its chairman. In 1943, together with the poet Feffer and other cultural figures, he toured the USA, Canada and Mexico with a view to raising funds to support the USSR in its fight with Germany. While the war was going on, Stalin found the JAC’s activities useful, but after the defeat of Hitler’s Germany, the JAC’s growing prestige began to interfere with the Leader’s plans.

In 1948, Mikhoels was killed in Minsk in an “auto accident” staged by security services. After Mikhoels was removed, the authorities began arresting prominent Jewish cultural figures, actors, poets, musicians, writers, such as Benjamin Zuskin, Peretz Markish, Itzik Feffer, etc. All of them were shot in August 1952. The Moscow
GOSET closed its doors in the summer of 1950. The remaining Yiddish theaters followed suit. The only survivor of those purges was a Yiddish magazine, ironically called Sovietish Heimland, or Soviet Motherland. The “final solution,” Soviet style, was achieved. It seemed that Yiddish culture was eradicated for good.

Dark times befell the surviving Yiddish actors. All of them found themselves out of work and with no means of support. Only one actress of the Moscow GOSET, Etel Kovenskaya, managed to get a job in the Russian theater; it was the Moscow Pushkin Theater. The others, including my mother, barely scraped a living from hand to mouth.

I remember my mother pasting together endless packs of envelopes at the end of the 1950s for some outfit or another and then making artificial flowers for the All-Russian Theater Society (VTO). Bouquets of these flowers filled our apartment; one might say, I spent my childhood in the flower garden.

That was followed by events I will briefly recount in the Afterword.

**The Past Is Still With Me: Rosa Kurtz-Dranov’s Memoir**

I am not sure if I can put my thoughts down on paper, tell about my life well enough, for my language seems poor and I may be unable to express all I have lived through, all that has left deep scars in my heart.

I was six years old, and my sister Aniuta was three and a half, when World War I broke out and my father, a talented 22-year-old actor, was drafted and sent to the front. We lost a devoted father and friend, a partner in our children’s games. From then on, all the burdens of our daily life lay on the shoulders of our beautiful mother, also a very good actress. It should be said that despite all the troubles and tribulations that fell crushing down on her, she always said that “everything will be all right!” Optimism and cheerfulness never abandoned her. She was loved by all for her kindness, her merry disposition and her talent. She was young and courageously endured all adversities that befell her.

My mom had a good position in the theater but without a regular salary. In those days, Yiddish actors were paid in “marks,” that is, their pay depended on the role and troupe receipts; they had to design and make their own costumes, to say nothing about the fact that constantly moving from place to place, they had to live in strangers’ houses or in furnished rooms.

Mother wanted a more secure future. So, she quit that theater and joined Fishzon’s repertory company where his son, Misha Fishzon, a famous Yiddish actor in those days, was the leading man.
It was one of the more prestigious theater companies, and my mother received a guaranteed salary there as a chorus girl. That made it possible for her to make ends meet and even send a small parcel to the front from time to time. That company had famous actors in its troupe and its own orchestra, support staff, costumes, and stage props. The company even traveled in its own railway cars.

I recall how once, during the old Fishzon’s benefit performance, my sister Aniuta (already a gifted little actress admired by everyone for her mimicking adult actors) and I distinguished ourselves along with a few other children actors and received two chocolate candy boxes — a blue one for Aniuta and a pink one for me. Mother allowed us to take one candy each, sending the rest to my father at the front. We were left with empty velvet boxes as a keepsake and were utterly happy.

One fantastic occasion stayed in my memory for life. As usual, we were on tour, riding in one of Fishzon’s railway cars. There were only actors in that car, among them many famous ones such as Misha Fishzon, Zaslavskaya, Dranov, Lebedev and many others. Musicians, dressers and support staff were in the other car.

I think I was a little more than seven years old already. I am lying on the upper berth. I can’t fall asleep because in the next compartment I see a picture beautiful as a fairy tale! On the berth there lies an extraordinarily good-looking curly-headed boy, and a little blond-headed girl sitting next to him in an airy gown is singing him a melody, covering him with a transparent scarf from time to time!

It seems like a dream and I am afraid to close my eyes lest it suddenly disappear. I picture myself in place of that girl. I dream that when I grow up, I will meet that boy and we will fall in love.

Later, as I was growing up and often recalling that episode, I told myself: “Perhaps he will not like me any more and will fall in love with another girl, but I would so much like to have a son who looked like him!” That girl’s name was Lisochka Arko; she was the daughter of a well-known actor. And the boy, Boria Dranov, became my husband in real life. But as they say, fairy tales are fast, and reality is slow. It’s easier said than done.

Much water has flowed under the bridge, events came crushing down in a storm, turning our lives upside down before I met Boria Dranov when we were both seventeen years old.

A lot had happened during those ten years. Fishzon’s company, his best actors, left for America, and my mother again had to act in different touring troupes. There was a family in one of them — husband, wife and two boys who were Aniuta’s and my age.
The head of the family, a rather handsome man but a mediocre actor, began to court our mother, and she reciprocated his advances!

(Now, in retrospect, I understand: she was young, beautiful and talented but very lonely and had a difficult time taking care of two children.) But we, the kids, did not understand anything and had no idea what was going on.

1918 rolled in. My dad was about to come back from the front. We waited for him on pins and needles! For two days in a row, mom took us to the railway station to meet him, but he was not there! The entire town of Zhitomir knew that our dad was to come back from the front any day now. The following day mom decided not to go to the railway station, and Aniuta and I kept running out to the street every minute, in the hope that our father would suddenly show up. But our mom did not step out of the house.

And finally, finally, we saw a young man in uniform riding in a horse carriage. He grabbed us both, sat us down next to him. I could not sit still, I was so excited and eager to tell mom that our dad was back, that he was with us! But she still was not coming out, and it seemed strange to me that she did not rush to meet him like we did. An alarming premonition pricked me but my joy at seeing dad was so great that I forgot everything else. I only felt that a happy life was now ahead of us, now that our father was back with us.

And so, every night after the play was over, there were conversations between mom and dad. Those conversations were conducted in whisper not to wake us up. But we are awake! We lie in bed with our eyes closed, pretending to be asleep. We don’t understand all of it, of course, but one terrible thought reaches our minds: our mom does not want to be with our dad!

One such night, little Aniuta jumped out of bed, went down on her knees, folding her little hands in prayer, and cried with tears running down her cheeks: “Mom, do not leave dad!” I lay in bed, sobbing.

Then we began to travel again from town to town. Dad was following us everywhere, hoping that life would come back to normal, for the sake of the children, if nothing else. I silently hated that actor who ruined our life, I made scenes to my mom and finally left her for my dad! Aniuta stayed with her. At the time the company played in Priluki where we lived for a year or two, if memory serves me.

My dad opened a theater studio there. (I remember him staging Pribyshevsky’s “Remember Snow” in Yiddish.) My dad and I lived in a very nice house, with intelligent people.
But the times were restless: every day governing authorities changed hands in the town; one day it was Denikintsi\(^1\) who staged a pogrom, now Petlurovtsi.\(^2\) The best rooms in our house were taken by Prince Dolgoruky. One day he beat a peasant to death with his whip for hiding some foodstuffs from requisition.

One day Petlurovtsi broke into the house across the street and we could all hear: “Are there Jews here?” And a woman’s voice responding: “No. Nobody here!” We knew she was hiding Jews. “Jews are everywhere here!” the same voice yelled. All grown-ups in our house stood silently behind the curtains, with bated breath… The Petlurovtsi began banging on our doors but no one answered, and they left for some reason (probably thinking that Jews could not live in such a nice house). My friend and I lay in bed, clinging to each other, and cried with fear.

One day, the company left for another town—Lubni, I think—and my mother took Aniuta there with her. My father and I stayed in Priluki. I still have a faded letter I wrote to my little sister — a funny child’s letter about a boy I played ball with, and how we lost the ball and how I finally found it among the phlox flowers in the yard! I was already going to school then. That boy’s mother, a doctor, treated me for typhus. She respected my dad and was probably attracted to him a bit. Once she started preparing to move with her son to Argentina and my dad and I decided to follow them! They did go to Argentina, but my father and I stayed in Moscow for a while. Soon, he took me to my mom and tried again to rebuild the family for the sake of us, the children. He failed … and left us! It was 1920 already. Soon I learned that he was acting in the Vilno troupe with very good, well-known actors, Adler among others.

I did not hear from him for a long time, but all the actors knew about him and said nothing to me, not wanting to upset me. Later I learned, quite by accident, that my dad had moved to Warsaw and that he got married! His wife was rumored to be a very beautiful woman, also an actress, who had lost her husband; he was reportedly killed in a train during the Civil War. She was left alone with her son, a very talented boy, who was raised by my father. They were was a close and happy family.

And so here I was, back with my mother and Aniuta, in the troupe where that actor I hated so much also worked. He lived with his family but that did not stop him from being unfaithful to his wife. Mother and we fell on hard times. It was 1921 or 1922.

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1. Denikintsi (Denikin’s men) – soldiers in General Denikin’s White Russian army fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia and the Ukrainian army under Semyon Petliura during 1918-1920. Responsible for numerous Jewish pogroms in Ukraine.
2. Petlurovtsi (Petliura’s men) – soldiers in the Ukrainian army under the command of Semyon Petliura, a prominent Ukrainian politician, who, in 1919-22, fought Russian Bolsheviks and Denikin’s White Russian army for Ukraine’s independence. Responsible for numerous Jewish pogroms in Ukraine.
The troupe toured the towns on the Volga. For a long time, we lived in Kanavino, a sloboda on the outskirts of Nizhni Novgorod with a large Jewish population.

Mother barely eked out a living, the area was stricken with hunger, and she gave us all the meager food she managed to scrape, all of it. And she went hungry, of course! In Kazan, I already was in the fifth grade and had some success performing in a school concert; I recited Nadson. And I took part in mom’s theater plays too and was very proud that I was contributing at least something to the family.

We starved terribly. One day, as we were going down the stairs we found a bundle wrapped in a rag by the door. We unwrapped it and cried with joy! It was a large piece, probably two pounds, of melted butter. We shared that butter with another family, and we the children enjoyed that unexpected gift as a delicious dish!

I even had a “suitor” in Kazan; he was a schoolmate, two or three years my senior. He stood under our hotel windows for hours. He was flattered that I was an “actress” in the theater. But I did not fancy him.

In 1924, the troupe moved, and we found ourselves in Briansk. I even played a role with the famous Libert, I can’t remember which. I only know that it was one of Libert’s best roles. I was still a very inexperienced actress and was not very interested in acting on the stage. I wanted to study, go to school and be among my peers. But school had to be interrupted because of the troupe’s frequent moves.

Arriving in a new town, the actors almost never stayed in hotels but rented rooms or apartments from private people. It was the same in Briansk. There were very few Jews there at the time and the box office was very low. We had to move out of the apartment as we could not afford it and joined another actor’s family with two children. We drank tea from the samovar and shared meager meals together.

One day we learned from letters we received from actor friends that Klara Young had come to perform in the Soviet Union from America. The famous Klara Young! They wrote that she was giving performances in Moscow! That the best of the old Yiddish actors were working with her—such as Rubin, Trilling, Lakhmansha, Yunesko, Spektorov, Kantorovich, the actors who used to work with my mother! A “family council” was held by the troupe’s actors who were helping me (with my mom’s consent, which was grudgingly given). They wrote a letter to some actor friends, asking them to recommend me to Youngwitz, Klara Young’s husband.

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3 Nadson, a nineteenth century Russian poet, very popular in the early 1920s.
A couple of days later, literally, we received a telegram: “Let R. Kurtz go to Moscow as a chorus girl. Salary 100 rubles a month.” (In those days, in the summer of 1925, it was an enormous sum of money). One simply can’t imagine my joy!

But I also felt sadness and anxiety: I was not 17 yet. How was I to travel alone, on a train, among strangers, to another city? How was I to leave my mother and Aniuta in their desperate situation? On the other hand, I knew that my departure would ease their life; receiving such a huge salary I could help them!

So, we began to pack. I had nothing to wear. I had one blouse with beige edging. No winter coat, no overcoat, no underwear. Mother pawned some of her dresses and with that money sent me off to Moscow, packing a couple of her own shirts and dresses in a basket. The basket was carefully bound with rope, and mother admonished me not to leave it out of my sight lest it be stolen.

Many actors came to see me off, everybody cried. But my mother didn’t; only her voice was muffled and choked, to avoid tears, God forbid. I sat next to the basket all through the night, without sleeping a wink, all the way to Moscow. At the railway station I was met by smiling Kantorovich and Spektorov! (He was combining acting and administrative work in the theater). And right off the bat they told me that the chorus’ salary had been raised and I would be getting 125 rubles. My joy knew no bounds: I was among nice, friendly people and, most important, would be able to send money to my mom! I was introduced to Youngwitz, I sang for him and he seemed pleased. First thing, Sonia Kantorovich took me to a seamstress to order cambric shirts — they were not expensive, and gradually, after a long while, I even bought myself an overcoat!

My first performance was in “Jakele Blofer” where I sang and danced with two other chorus girls, playing a shoe shiner. I moved well and danced like a perky little boy I portrayed. Many actors stood in the wings watching me closely. As I learned later from students of Moscow music schools and conservatories who were also accepted in the chorus, everyone was watching me perform because I had been hired to replace a plain-looking short chorus girl. (Youngwitz selected only tall women for the chorus.) And though I was not much taller than her, my success inspired me; I was liked by everybody.

From then on, Youngwitz moved the taller women back. I and another actor’s daughter, Eva Sharavaer, later known as Nusya Sheinfeld, were moved to the front as the youngest, most agile and capable. Later on, when the season was over and Clara Young went back to America, our troupe received a vacation and I, feeling quite happy, went back home to my mom. During my vacation I received a letter from Rubin telling me that upon Young’s return I would get a major role in a new operetta, “Leibele, the Tramp,” and would be Clara Young’s partner!
My first appearance in that play: I stumble into a kissing couple. I must scream “Fire, Fire!!” I was young and naïve, I could not understand why I should lie since there was no fire! Why a fire if the people are kissing? And so one day, when I came to rehearsal, I discovered that the role had been given to Nusya Sheinfeld to rehearse who understood what was required of her. She was more experienced and very talented. To tell the truth, I was not upset by that replacement; on the contrary, I sighed with relief as if a huge weight was taken off my shoulders.

It was only for a moment that I felt baffled and confused by Nusya’s appearance in rehearsal, but I told myself: “That’s fine, I won’t have to lie and do something I do not like.” Immediately I felt relieved and any hurt feelings were gone.

After working with Young for another season, I went back to mom; she was working in Odessa then. There were many actors there, and soon Rubin, a wonderful actor whom I loved so much, joined us there. He had translated into Yiddish “The Staircase to Fame,” a play performed at Korsh Theater, where he played the lead. He also staged “The Bayadere” and the classical operetta “The Virtuous Susan.” He was great in every play, transforming himself in each role! To say nothing of his beautiful voice; he translated operatic arias into Yiddish and sang them in concerts. During Clara Young’s tour in the Odessa Opera Theater, its opera singers stopped, surprised, in the wings, hearing him sing.

Clara Young left a big mark on my acting career. Her repertoire seemed light-weight, operetta-like but she played with such taste, so tactfully, with such talent and charm that everything else seemed low and tacky in comparison. Although there were many very good actors in that company, she stood out and shined as the brightest star.

So. there I was again with my mom and Aniuta and began to play small roles in plays. Rubin even staged “200,000” by Sholom Aleichem, playing Shimele Soroker. Later I realized that he had been impressed by the GOSET’s production and Mikhoels’ performance in that role but he acted his own way and was very good. Soon he left. Rumor had it that he had wanted to play in the GOSET but was not accepted by Mikhoels and left for America. I know nothing of his life in the American theater. I wish I did; he was such a marvelous actor.

The theater we played in was a long way from the France Hotel in Deribasovskaya Street where we stayed. We played in a Jewish neighborhood and were popular with the public.

One day, a rumor spread that a young man named Boria Dranov was in the audience. He had recently arrived from Harbin, China, with his uncle and aunt who raised and housed him. The Dranovs had lived in Harbin for many years. They were all good actors, but the father was a very famous and talented dramatic actor.
In those days, actors (especially Yiddish actors) hauled a lot of baggage with them from town to town — costumes, props and other essentials. Upon arriving in Harbin (about 1916-17) the Dranovs received their luggage, but instead of the costumes it was filled with stones! And the elder Dranov, Nathan, lost his mind. He was sick for a long time and died in a hospital holding a golden pocket watch he had received for his benefit performance, bearing his initials N.D., and kept saying “En-De,” “En-De” – “the end”. (I was unable to take that beautiful watch covered with “American gold” out of the Soviet Union; I could not get a permit and left it with Aniuta who, I think, sold it before her departure to the U.S. I was very sorry that I didn’t take it with me; it was a memory of Boria’s father.)

Boria’s mother had left for America, and he stayed behind and became a young Communist (Komsomolets.) He did not want to go with her and stayed with his uncle and aunt who adored him. In 1926, the three of them came to Odessa and put up at the same France Hotel where we were staying.

So Boria, who had been in my heart since early childhood when I saw him in Fishzon’s railway car, was now walking together with our troupe’s actors towards France Hotel after the performance. He is walking in front, in the company of sociable Aniuta, my sister, and another actor girl, and I am walking behind with my mother, burning with curiosity and jealousy! I do not recall how it happened but towards the end of that road, we walked all together, and it seemed that he was addressing me more than the others. Our hearts reached for each other, and often, returning home together after the performance, we talked about many things. He was a very interesting, well-read and educated person.

Our hotel had a patio and balconies circling it, with room doors opening into them. Boria and I often sat on our balcony late into the night. Next to him I felt timid, hanging on his every word; he knew so much, his stories were so interesting! We would talk late into the night until his uncle appeared from across the patio, candle in hand; a little worried, he would call Boria to come home. A bit embarrassed, we would part reluctantly.

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4 It is a family legend. I do not know if it is true. – A.D.
5 Rosa told me a little more than that. Boris’s mother, she said, had only enough money for the two of them to travel to California but not enough to get to New York, where Yiddish theater was thriving. So, she decided to leave Boria behind, planning to send for him later.
As I said, Boria was a Komsomolets and as such he was sent to a regional center to participate in “dekulakization”. Before his departure I plucked up the courage to say: “It is wrong for a girl to say this, but I would not like you to leave.” He left, proud of performing his Komsomol duty. To my joy, he came back a few days later. I think he did not like anything connected to Dekulakization: he was 18 and did not yet have a real understanding of Soviet life.

Young actors spent time enjoying themselves, having fun and taking part in many interesting undertakings. To say nothing of me: Boria was nearby!

I recall that one day before New Year’s I had a performance somewhere while the theater was preparing for a grand New Year’s ball. Boria loved to dance, so after my performance I rushed to the theater to be with him, to dance with him, and most important, to talk to him, to listen to him.

A happy, one-of-a-kind time of my life! But soon my happiness came to an end: the theater was preparing to go to Bobruisk! I remember our last meeting before my departure. Mother permitted me to stay out till midnight. The troupe was to leave early the next morning. Aniuta, although two and a half years younger than me, had a suitor, Nolia Emiliev, a much older, rather attractive man who had already been married and divorced. He often came to the theater, sitting in front rows.

According to him, he was at first interested in me. But I took no notice and he switched over to Aniuta. She did take notice and they started a love affair. That night, we two couples walked around the hotel, having agreed to meet at home by the appointed hour. Of course, we came back late, and mom put us through the ringer, giving us an awful dressing-down. My happiness ended so prosaically!

Boria and I gave each other a pledge to stay in touch. He was about to leave for Moscow to go to college, and I wanted to quit the nomadic life and, if I was to be an actress, to enroll in an actor’s studio, to get a theater education. Maybe we could meet in Moscow? The next morning the troupe left, and Boria and I parted for long!

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6Dekulakization (raskulachivanie) – Soviet campaign of dispossession of kulaks (well-to-do peasants), expropriation of their land and grain stocks, evictions, arrests, exile and executions as part of Stalin’s collectivization program. That campaign started in earnest later, in 1930, but mom is telling about Boris being recruited into it in about 1926, so it looks like it was an early, relatively mild stage of the campaign, a few years before it turned into a policy of “eliminating kulaks as a class.”
After Odessa, Bobruisk seemed very dull and gray. But constant correspondence with Boria kept alive my hope of meeting him in Moscow before long, a hope for a wonderful future. (I have some of those letters.)

My theater continued its travels from town to town. Back in Odessa, a young and very talented actor, Lesia Meerson, had joined the troupe. His talent revealed itself especially during our tours; he was very good in all his roles. As in Odessa, we were having a good time, went to the beach and roamed about town in our free time. He was attracted to me, but I only liked him as an actor.

After a while, he joined another theater and wrote to me from there that I had made a mistake not reciprocating his feelings; still, he was asking me to join his troupe and work with him. Many years later, when we met, he would talk about that. (I have saved some of his letters.)

In 1927, our troupe arrived in Minsk. That city had a permanent Yiddish theater — BelGOSET, Belarus State Yiddish Theater. It was on tour when we played there. Of course, we were no match for it; theirs was a state theater with wonderful young actors under the direction of Rafalsky. But soon rumors started that they would select the best actors from our troupe, add a few more from other groups, and create a new state-sponsored theater in another city. That actually materialized, later; the newly established company became the Odessa State Yiddish Theater (Odessa GOSET) under the direction of E.M. Loiter.

But I am ahead of myself again.

I now want to tell you about my little sister Aniuta. Before we arrived in Minsk (I can’t remember what town we were in then), Aniuta announced that she was getting married! She was only 16. My mother and I were appalled! But no amount of persuasion had any effect, and one fine day — no, one very sad day — we saw her off to Stalino, a seedy little town (former Yuzovka, renamed, after Stalin’s death, Donetsk, which became a modern beautiful city.) I gave her my favorite dress of black liberty; I had nothing else to give her. She stood in the railway car portal bursting into tears — she was so fragile, so defenseless, still a child. At 16, she was going away to marry a man we hardly knew! We also wept, standing on the platform. Feeling orphaned, we trudged home.

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7 We began to write to each other, and our correspondence lasted for over two years. His letters were so interesting, informative and thought-provoking; it seemed he wrote so effortlessly, so spontaneously! And I sat over my letters for a long time, wanting to express what I felt as best I could… but what came out sounded clumsy and childish. I was always afraid that my letters were dull and of no interest to him. I have saved most of his letters (and even a few of mine) and one can see from their addresses that they came to all the towns and shtetls where our wandering theater traveled.
The marriage was unhappy. Many years later she told us that her husband had a very bad temper and was impossible to bear from the first. They moved to Kharkov, Ukraine’s capital in those days. In 1935, Aniuta gave birth to a daughter, Iva. Unable to tolerate her husband’s temper, after six years of marriage, Aniuta took her one-year-old daughter to our mother in Odessa. There they shared the joys and hardships until the Second World War when all of us reunited in evacuation in Tashkent.

Aniuta’s life was very hard; she was raising a daughter all by herself. She worked as a typist to make a living. (Over time she became a very good, skilled typist.) All her life she barely made ends meet. Her optimism and cheerful, sociable disposition helped her a lot.

So, my mother and I remained in Minsk without Aniuta. I continued to correspond with Boria. At first, he had a very hard time in Moscow; no friends, no one he knew. He slept on boulevards or in an abandoned shed, carrying a little cushion with him.

It was very hard, almost impossible in those days to get admitted to an institute (college.) He applied to three — Industrial College, College of Film-Making and the Law School of Moscow University. And he was admitted in all three. Vishinski accepted him to the second year of law school, having said, “This young man’s tongue is well hung.”

Minsk became a turning point in my life. First of all, Boria came to see me during his winter break; he was already a university student, studying and working at the Red October candy factory. He believed that he had to be closer to the working class and abandon the ways and habits of the “intelligentsia.” We were together for two days without parting— two happy days! And again, we gave each other a pledge — to meet in Moscow.

Do svidania, my love!

Soon thereafter the BelGOSET, having returned from the tour, announced admission to an itinerant troupe that was supposed to play in the towns and shtetls of Belarus. Experienced actors from our troupe, Feldman and Leshinskaya, and I, a promising young actress, sat for an examination by two directors of the future theater, Aisenberg and Litvinov (who had put on “Fuente Ovejuna” by Lope de Vega at BelGOSET, with great success.)

The examination was very difficult; I was given one sketch after another to act out, having never done anything like that before. I did what was requested of me the best I could. An ardent desire to be admitted and to become part of Jewish culture, to be among interesting, talented, modern people helped me. Long after that examination I could not pull myself together from exhaustion and anxiety.

We were admitted to the new theater, to my mom’s horror and anguish. She was remaining alone! But do you worry about things like that when you are 18 or 19? You long to get out, to live an independent life. Entering that theater seemed to make my dream closer to reality! I saw that job as a step to future studies in Moscow, to meeting with my dear Boria. Also admitted were a few young men and women who had never worked in the theater before. Some of them were quite capable and had a great command of Yiddish.

We started studio work, attending lectures, meetings, mainly with Aisenberg, Litvinov and Rafalsky, BelGOSET’s artistic director (he later disappeared in the Gulag without a trace.)

We went to classes and worked with Litvinov on “The Steppe Is Burning,” a play by Vevterka, and soon were touring Belarus, continuing intense studies at the same time. To live in an itinerant theater on wheels was rather hard but we were young, enthusiastic about our art and that gave us strength and hope for a better future.

After working in that troupe for a year and earning a vacation, I finally went to Moscow in the spring of 1928 to take entrance exams at the studio of the Moscow Yiddish Theater which had just returned from a sensational tour of Europe. Its artistic director Granovsky did not return. He was replaced by Solomon Mikhailovich Mikhoels.

Boria could not meet me. He was one of the organizers of the first Young Pioneers rally and lived in Zamoskvorechie9 where he had been given a very good room in a communal apartment. The door was unlocked, I went in and I waited for him all day. I ended up falling asleep on the edge of the bed. Towards evening he showed up, smiling, apologetic for not meeting me. And we spent an unforgettable evening together! The next day he rushed to his rally and I started preparing for the exams.

At last, the long-awaited day arrived. All the future students sit in the auditorium. A large table is set up in front of the orchestra, with Mikhoels, Litvinov, Dobrushin and many other people, unknown to me, sitting behind it. There are about 30 to 35 people taking the exams. Quite a few young people auditioned before I did but no one was out of the ordinary.

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9 A district of Moscow, on the right bank of the Moskva River.
Only one guy, Boria Kreigman, quite plain-looking, seemed gifted to me but he was too stereotyped, likely under the influence of provincial actors visiting his town.

Finally, my turn came. The examiners asked me a few biographical questions. (I was unable to answer one political question.) Then I was asked to go on the stage. I was as anxious as all those before me but was sure of the poem I recited: I had rehearsed it with Rafalsky in the itinerant theater. Right away I knew that the committee liked what I was doing. In the end, Mikhoels asked me to say “Once there was a king...” And I said it like a child who heard that word for the first time. I even chuckled with surprise and bewilderment: what kind of word was it, “a king,” when there were no kings? Everyone laughed and I knew I had passed!

Later Mandel, the party secretary of the theater, walked me home (from Malaya Bronnaya to Arsentievsky Alley where Boria lived), congratulating me sincerely with my admission. I was the only one admitted; Kreigman (who later became a very good actor and got rid of his shtetl-like clichés) was admitted conditionally.

Intense work began. Suffice it to say that lectures on acting were delivered by Mikhoels, Zavadsky (Stanislavsky’s method) and Kaverin, very popular then. Studies in voice and breathing control (endless recitations of hexameter!), rhythm, gymnastics, movement, lectures on literature, etc., etc. All of that was fascinating.

We all went hungry, of course, but no one particularly suffered or mentioned it; we were so overwhelmed by all those new captivating experiences that absorbed us. When I had no money to buy even tea and sugar, I would get a small package from mom! It was as if she felt when I needed her help the most: the packages contained chocolate butter, cookies and everything else that she was able to scrape or save from her modest budget. (My fellow students living in the next room confessed to me a long time afterwards that they had been sneaking through the narrow passageway separating our rooms to secretly treat themselves to my parcel’s contents.)

Kreigman and I received a stipend of 35 rubles for the two of us: I got 20 and he 15. I earned that twenty rubles as the studio’s secretary, and Kreigman, his fifteen rubles, for acting as my liaison with the faculty, doing all kinds of errands. I sometimes stayed behind after classes to clean the rooms, earning another ruble and a half. The following year I was already earning 35 rubles by myself.

The lectures were amazing, especially those by Zavadsky, and we forgot all else. But lectures by Mikhoels were the most fascinating. We often had to wait for him for hours, but communicating with him was riveting. He was quite fond of us; it seemed that he too had a good time talking to us. He spent all his free time with us.
At first, Elsha Bezverkhnyaya, another girl and I shared a room in the theater, but the following year we moved to a hostel on Nikolskaya Street, across from GUM which opened many years later. It was a large light-filled room with many beds, placed right next to one another. It was to that room that after my first year at the studio I brought Mania Karlos, an actor’s daughter, and coached her for the exams which she later passed with flying colors. Her father, however, held a grudge against me for a long time for taking his daughter away from him.

My studies were more than successful. I felt that I was coping with every task, that I was loved by everybody. That happiest time of my life was darkened by one event, however.

After my first year at the studio, returning to Moscow after a vacation, I came to Boria’s place and found a Russian-looking girl there! She left quickly, and Boria, returning from his factory, explained that she was a co-worker. During my absence, his mother had come from America to visit him and left a few little gifts for me. I felt that Boria was holding something back, that he had changed. On one day, leaving all those gifts behind, I went to live with the girls in that room in the theater. After a while I learned that Boria had moved to Tverskoy Boulevard.

We agreed that I would stop by to gather the few belongings remaining at his place. The apartment where he lived was a typical Moscow communal flat. The corridor was filled all the way to his door with all kinds of junk. The room was a mess. I gathered my things, we walked out together, and then, looking very embarrassed, he said, “I got married! To Maria” (the girl I had seen at his place). I said good-bye quickly and trudged along to my place. He walked with me for a while, but my throat was so choked that I was afraid to turn my head, fearing I would burst into tears. I said good-bye quickly and returned to the hostel.

I did not share my grief with anyone and hid my pain inside my heart. My consolation and refuge were my studio studies, an interesting, fascinating process of learning. Every time, walking from the studio which was located in Stoleshnikov Alley to the theater in Malaya Bronnaya, I passed Boria’s building and peered, from afar, at his window. I could see a small mural I had given to him, but it soon disappeared, and I realized that he had moved.

My second year of studies was just as interesting, and Solomon Mikhailovich was still close with us — until a misfortune struck: Pennochka, a student from my year, died after an operation on her eardrum, a complication after the flu. We took her death very hard. She was so buoyant, so happy; she had recently been married. Gifted, sunny, young — and now she was dead! Immediately, we felt Mikhoels’ alienation, he drifted away from us. Of course, that death stunned him. Gradually, he came to see us less and less often.
In the summer of 1930, GOSET selected a small group from our year, including me, to go on a tour. And early the next year, a year before graduation, I was admitted in the theater troupe! My fellow students Tsibulevsky and Pustylnik were also admitted. In 1932, my entire year was admitted. We rehearsed and played in “The Witch,” a production that had made GOSET famous (it was produced at the same time as the famous “Princess Turandot” in the Evg. Vakhtangov Theater.)

Of course, what had come naturally to the young actors of the GOSET in those days was strange for us, inexperienced rookies, and we copied, mechanically, what those actors had been doing. But it seemed we only interfered with the main performers, got in the way. And they were not patient or tactful with us, expressing their annoyance right on the stage. Slowly, each of us in his or her own way, adjusted, found our footing, accepted the atmosphere of that unconventional production.

I accepted the principles of GOSET and that production on faith, as folk-acting on the square: free-wheeling “Purim spielers” (jesters) or characters from the Italian del arte theater. I tried to understand, to make sense of my conduct on the stage, of the mis-en-scenes offered to me. Looking back, I realize that our participation in that production was a mistake. That was a time of searching for new forms and means of expression; it was not accidental that Granovsky had stayed abroad, feeling that he had exhausted himself in his theater.

Everything about GOSET impressed me, particularly the acting of Mikhoels and Zuskin, which stood out in its spontaneity and expressiveness, especially against the background of formalism typical of most other actors.

Accepting, young as I was, everything in that theater, I gave up previous influences, my past experience, my spontaneous expression of feelings and sensible conduct on the stage. I was confident that GOSET was the best theater in the world and that was the proper way to act!

Over the years I realized that all that was superficial, that I should not have abandoned my principles and experience. And while I had felt free and unfettered in the studio, surrounded by love and attention, I felt somewhat cold and alienated in the theater, although I was treated well, no longer feeling the warmth and unity of actors of the troupe I had worked in before.

Solomon Mikhailovich treated me very well, I loved talking to him, hanging on his every word. Often we heard that one had to be in the theater for five years before getting a small role (a two-word line), that one had to be “corpulent.” We were all slender, thin girls, however! I see it all differently now, but in those days we believed that was how it should be.
After a while, I got a “part” in Bergelson’s play, consisting of one line: “Yes, father, but why did they call us here?” Working at the table with all the actors engaged in the play, Mikhoels coached me, dictating a tone for the line. From his tone I saw that the girl I was to play was stuck-up and spoiled. But inwardly I resisted the ready-made tone he insisted on.

I thought that the tone should come from my communication with the partner, from the inner life of the character, but I had no guts to argue with Mikhoels. And, like a parrot, I mimicked his tone, deciding “Why resist? After all, that one little line does not make or break the play.”

I understand now that much of what I accepted uncritically due to my youth and fascination with that theater did me a lot of harm as an actress. I thought that I should act in a different way here, do unconventional things, give up the way I had been — natural, unfettered by any formal devices. Three years of study had distanced me from my previous life in the theater. I seemed to myself a helpless child making first steps.

In the play “Three Little Raisins” I was brought in as a third “raisin;” in “The Evening with an Old Fisherman” I played a young man, along with three other dancers. I watched them for a long time, at first trying to learn their movements. But gradually I began to give my own content, my own meaning to the dance: that was, as I saw it, an exalted young man with his head in the clouds, talking to God. Later I learned that everyone had liked my performance.

If my memory serves me, the theater put on “The Wailing Wall,” in which I was given a part consisting of four or five lines. It was considered a big part for a fledgling actress — the part of Zabeida, an Arab girl oppressed, like all her people, by the British and in love with her fiancée Zaal with whom she was forced to part. The play was staged by Fedorov, a director from the Meyerhold Theater. My few lines drowned in numerous mis-en-scenes made up by the director. I was constantly pushed around, by my grandfather, by my fiancé, and had to crawl all over the stage from one end to the other. It was too much of an overload for such a small part!

The audience had no time to feel the charisma and tragedy of that Arab girl, no time to figure her out because she flickered and darted about on the stage so much. It was my fault; having received my first “big” part, I tried to put all my soul into it, and the part did not withstand the director’s and my own overload.

The music for that production was written by composer Milner, and I sang Zabeida’s song addressed to her fiancé.

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10 V. Meyerhold, a prominent Soviet theater director, actor and producer. His provocative experiments with physical being and symbolism in an unconventional theater made him one of the seminal forces in contemporary international theater. He was arrested, tortured and executed in 1940.
The composer was taken aback when Mikhoels ordered me to sing it from the orchestra pit. By that time, Mikhoels was not treating me the way he used to. I felt it, but tried to dismiss those thoughts. But soon I felt a vacuum and emptiness around me. Now, many years later, I understand what underground currents had changed Mikhoels’ attitude toward me.

After some time, Solomon Mikhailovich’s wife Levitas, a good actress, still young, suddenly died. He took her death very hard. His first wife lived separately, with his two daughters. The girls often came to see him in the theater. He had left them long before my entering the studio and had married Levitas, who had also left her husband, actor Chechik, assistant director and Solomon’s faithful right hand, for him. That sudden death stunned everyone but also lit a light of hope in some of the women working in the theater.

I understand now that Solomon Mikhailovich wanted very much to be closer with me. I know that he had asked Chechik to help him with that. But Chechik saw him as a rival; while I was still in the studio he was writing me affectionate letters which amused and annoyed me. I am glad now that I did not understand any of that then, although I did feel that something was going on around me. I kept telling myself that it was only my imagination, so absurd it seemed.

Later I came to realize that I had been correct in my feelings. I was not getting work. They only engaged me in crowd scenes. Many of my former fellow students received parts and I sat in the audience as a stranger. I was gradually losing what I had learned in the previous years and was also losing self-confidence, the worst thing for an actress.

The atmosphere around me was made even more complicated by my affair with Veniamin Lvovich Zuskin. At first, I did my best to avoid him. But when he began setting up a theater archive and museum, he recruited Sara Fabrikant and me into that project. It was very exciting, and I enjoyed it a great deal — until I realized that he was showing a special interest in me. I avoided him, trying to overlook his advances, but he continued to pursue me. I was appalled at the thought of his wife; I respected her and often wanted to go to her and talk about what was going on.

But she, apparently feeling or having noticed something, acted in hostile manner. Not even hiding her hatred, one day she physically pushed me during a performance on the stage, expecting a reaction. I tried to overlook that and tried even harder to avoid Zuskin. But he continued to pursue me. And I gave in — so lonely and sad was my life at the time. Compared with everyone’s indifference to me, his attention seemed like a relief of sorts. And of course, my youth and credulity worked against me. All that depressed me a great deal. I lived in a constant state of anxiety and isolation.
In 1933, Aniuta came to visit me from Stalino where she lived with her husband. I recall that she brought lots of candies with her. Plain candies stuffed with something — that was a gift of luxury in my modest life. I recall scurrying around shops, looking for cups for her, and barely managed “to get a few glasses. She did not stay long.

Having seen her off to the station, I returned to the theater; there was some sort of banquet there. I felt low: my mother was having trouble in her theater, Aniuta’s visit was a hassle. (I had just rented a corner in Sretenka, and Aniuta had to spend the night at a friend’s place.) In addition, my situation in the theater and my affair — all of that depressed me. I left the banquet early, before it ended.

As I was leaving, I recall glancing at the clock; it was 11. I walked towards the Nikitski Gate, where Tram A was running towards Sretenka. After that — a total blank! I came to the next day at the Sklifasofsky Hospital. It was hard to open my eyes due to a splitting headache. For a long time, I lay in a large ward with many patients, trying to figure out what had happened to me. I tried to recall the details of the previous day: seeing off Aniuta, the banquet, glancing at the wall clock as I left, and I drew a complete blank after that. I must have been run over by a motor car! That meant it had happened during the night.

It was evening now, it was getting dark. What play was on today? “Three Little Raisins,” probably. I called the nurse, asking her to call the theater and tell them that I was in the hospital and could not play in the third “raisin.” As I learned later, everybody in the theater was alarmed: I had never missed a theater appearance before without notice. Everyone concluded that I had had an accident and had to be looked for at the Sklifasofsky.

Later it became known that I had indeed been run over by a car, that I was taken to a pharmacy next to the Nikitski Gate and received first aid there; that when asked for my name, I gave someone else’s, that going through my purse, they found 60 rubles and decided that I had stolen it. Fortunately, they also found an Udarnik (shock worker) of socialist labor card which led them to trust me. And the 60 rubles was for the rent I was going to pay to the lady who was leasing me a corner in her room in Sretenka.

The next morning, they stitched a wound in my head which turned out to be not too serious. I stayed in the hospital for a while, whereupon I was given a voucher to Abramtsevo, a rest-house for writers, where I stayed a whole month, having a very good time. It had a room where Gogol had read out loud the second part of “The Dead Souls” and ran away afterwards; there was Vrubel’s statue there too. Well-known writers had visited that house, formerly belonging to the writer Aksakov. Film director Pudovkin and other filmmakers were taking a vacation there during my stay.
It was winter already and many people skied. I was gradually recovering and observing cheerful and interesting people. As usual, my shyness and timidity stood in the way of my meeting them easily. I returned from Abramtsevo quite recovered and ready to work again.

1934 came around. It was a very good and joyful year for me.

Director Rotbaum who came over from Poland to visit his sister Sara, our leading actress, gave me regards from my father, a wonderful actor, the only one, he said, who was met with applause by the Yiddish audience in Warsaw. Rotbaum told me many nice things about him; during our tour in Minsk I even called my dad on the telephone. After so many years of separation, I heard his dear voice. I knew he was married to actress Dina Shayevich, a very beautiful woman he loved dearly. She had a son from a previous marriage, who went to the Warsaw Conservatory and graduated, with flying colors, as a violinist and conductor. My father, deprived of his own children, raised and loved him as his own.

Five years later, that young man fled from occupied Poland to Bialystok, hoping to get his family out too; he even came to Moscow for a couple of days. Together with him, I sent a small parcel to Warsaw from the Main Post Office, realizing, though, that my father and his wife were unlikely to receive it.

A Lexicon of Yiddish actors, writers and Jewish public figures who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto has been published in America. An extract from that volume was sent to me in Moscow in 1978 by my son’s American friend Joseph Drew. I found in it an article about my father, with his photos, wonderful reviews and details of how he died. Till his last day in the Ghetto he played in the Eldorado Theater. One day his wife disappeared; he rushed out looking for her, was caught by the Germans and sent to Treblinka where he died.

After the war, the famous actor Morevsky sent me my father’s photograph in the make-up from Shakespeare’s “Tempest” in which my dad was a great success. Ida Kaminskaya, the actress, told me about it too after the war. Even here, in America, there are actors who knew and worked with my father; I hope to see them some day. I sent my father’s photos and other documents to Israel, to Yad Vashem, and to the Holocaust Study Center in New York. That is all that I know about my father, a wonderful person and a very good actor.

I should, however, return to 1934 which was a very happy year for me. I talked with Warsaw from Minsk on the telephone. I heard my father’s voice, cheerful and tender, he said many kind words to me, something I had been deprived of, and missed so much for many years.
In my memory, he remained a wonderful father, very gentle and kind. He soon sent me a package which, among other things, contained a piece of fabric for a dress. It was quite timely. I had a magnificent outfit made from it for the theater’s fifteenth anniversary. Then he sent me and Aniuta his photos. We corresponded; I have saved two or three of his letters.

And then…the Germans invaded Poland and our communication was interrupted, forever.

That year I was traveling with the theater on a country tour, and we arrived in Dnepropetrovsk. Having settled with Sarochka Fabrikant in an apartment rented for us, I set out to see the city and was going to stop by the theater, when suddenly a smiling Boria appeared out of nowhere in front of me. It was like a bolt from the blue!

It turned out that he knew about my auto accident and said he felt like it was he who had run me over. He said many nice and kind words to me. In the past years, he had graduated from the university and was in Dnepropetrovsk on an assignment from Tsentrosoyuz, a trade union, to inspect restaurants. He had found out that I would be in Dnepropetrovsk with the theater.

I was very surprised and upset: why Tsentrosoyuz? What did he have to do with it? Why restaurants? What for? In the evening after the play, he took me out to dinner, and we talked about many things. Quite candidly, he told me that he had had a baby who got entangled in the umbilical cord during birth and choked. So, nothing tied him to Maria anymore, he said.

We agreed that he would part company with Tsentrosoyuz and apply to a post-graduate course at the university. That evening it felt like we met each other for the first time all over again. We even danced a tango to the music of “Oh, those black eyes”. (Since then, after so many years, I feel excited every time I hear that melody, my heart aches and my eyes well up.) Boria loved to dance, and I, despite my timidity, did not say no and we danced a little bit. It was a magic evening.

A few days later he left; my heart was filled with joy, hope and anxiety. After my return to Moscow, we started dating again. I lived near the Red Gates: the theater was renting a two-room apartment there. I lived in the bedroom, and Minsker and Kreigman, my former classmates, lived in the pass-through room. Boria soon enrolled in the post-graduate program of Moscow University, and I continued my work in the theater. We began to see each other more often. It was so interesting to be with him that I forgot all else under the sun — just to hear him talk!

One day we went to the First Variety Show Contest which featured two complete unknowns — Arkady Raikin and Klavdia Shulzhenko. Nobody knew them at the time.
A thin tall young man, poorly dressed, in a jacket that he had outgrown long ago, with his hands sticking out from the sleeves, came on stage and with a straight face, performed funny sketches, but so unconventionally, in his own way, that everybody knew: a great actor, a great talent appeared in the theater. He received the first prize in that contest. Klavdia Shulzhenko also captured everyone’s heart right away and went on to bring joy to listeners with her extraordinary singing for many years to come.

And now both are gone. She passed away first. On December 17, 1987, Raikin died too. It’s hard to believe that he is no more. It seemed that he would live forever, that he and death were incompatible. A unique, wonderful actor, our favorite. And Boria and I were among his very first audience.

My dear Borenka! That year, when our love affair resumed, you and I went everywhere together — to museums, to the Caucasus-Russia Highway, to concerts, to the conservatory, to the theaters. While studying for your post-graduate degree, you earned a living giving lectures on philosophy and, when we got married, by writing articles on international law and international affairs for newspapers and magazines.

We settled in an apartment of our former theater manager Somov, in a very large room which seemed like a palace to us. We shared the apartment with another family — a man (an engineer, I think), his wife and child, a charming little girl who would tell her parents: “Oy, Uncle Boria kissed Aunt Rosa!” That girl’s father was a cruel, despotic man. As we learned later, he was in a permanent feud with our former manager and transferred that hostility to us. We felt under his constant observation and tried to avoid him as much as possible.

It was there that on September 22, 1936 our wonderful boy, Tolechka, was born! We wanted to name him Nathan, in honor of Boria’s father, a great actor, but a diminutive name did not sound right, and we chose a similar-sounding name, Anatoly, Tolik, Tolechka.

For the first three months, he slept non-stop during the day but at night he screamed non-stop. Boria watched me like a hawk from his couch and, having read all kinds of literature on child-rearing, gave me strict instructions about the baby. Accompanied by the little boy’s incessant screams, I heard Boria’s stern voice saying, ”Don’t pick him up!” “You gave him the pacifier again?” And I would feel lost from both the baby’s screams and Boria’s stern shouts. There was no help from our neighbors, except that sometimes, on occasion, the woman next door, in secret from her husband whom she was in fear of, would give me a piece of advice.

Later, everything worked out fine, but papa Boria’s control remained very strict. He was a wonderful father, gentle and caring. And our boy grew very attractive and good-looking by the time he was three months old.
We had his pictures taken; according to our friends and other people, those photos were soon sold in Moscow as postcards. I have saved those photos. I often admire them and cry.

We did not enjoy the manager’s room for long; he returned, and we had to vacate the comfortable room and move to a den in a semi-basement in the theater building where other theater staff who had no place to go lived also. Our boy was not yet a year old when, in the summer of 1937, we rented a dacha together with Boria’s friend Ilya Vaisfeld and his family.

Ilusha Vaisfeld had been Boria’s classmate back in Harbin; by this time, he was head of the screenplay department at Mosfilm and later a VGIK\textsuperscript{11} professor and a Ph.D. His wife’s name was Lina; she was a writer; they had two daughters, Lialya and Natasha, five and two years old. The dacha was in Mamontovka; we had a lot of fun there in our free time, having interesting discussions and playing games. Aniuta and little Iva were with us, too.

After that summer, we were to move back to our awful tiny den! But I recall that Boria and Maria had a two-room apartment in Ipatievsky Alley whose windows faced the Party Central Committee, and it occurred to him that it should be easy to exchange that apartment for two rooms in a different area. Maybe he had lived there by himself after his divorce. I can’t remember. I only know that Boria would have never left Maria, had the baby survived.

And, oh happiness! He got a room on Nikitsky Boulevard, not far from the theater in Malaya Bronnaya Street. It was on the fourth floor with no elevator, but that was only half the trouble; to our dismay, the communal apartment was chock-full of neighbors. One woman even lived in a kitchen nook which probably had been a servant’s quarters in the old days.

The neighbors, as we soon found out, were bullies, full of hostility to everyone and everything. We were only saved in the summer when we went to the country; we enjoyed our freedom there. Boria was working at a newspaper, where he headed the international department, and he often published articles on international subjects, which enjoyed great success. He was respected and well-liked by the newspaper staff.

The trouble was that, by the time our relationship resumed, Boria was already very sick. He told me about it right away. He had become ill when working in that candy factory. He had stood all day next to a huge vat into which he had to pour milk from large cans many times during the workday.

\textsuperscript{11} VGIK - Soviet National Film Institute
The temperature in the shop was high. There was a door nearby, always open to let in fresh air. (High temperature and an open door any time of the year.) Russian guys did not stay long in that job, but a Jewish university guy wanted to prove his mettle.

So, by the time we got married he was already very sick. It was his back, the Bekhterev disease. He explained to me that salts were deposited between the vertebrae and slowly calcified, bending the spinal cord forward. The salts caused the vertebrae to expand, painfully reacting to every movement. He felt terrible pain when someone just passed by, without even touching him.

He was treated by Burdenko and some other professors; he would take a ten-day therapy course and forget about it for the next thirty days. His physique fundamentally was strong, with a good foundation laid in his childhood. On another professor’s advice, he also went to the Institute of Physical Therapy to work out on exercise equipment and machines to prevent calcification. Those exercises were painful, but the professor said they were the only way, that an effective medication was to come around “soon,” but for now there wasn’t any.

Boria was a healthy-looking, broad-shouldered, handsome man, and when we got married, one could not even imagine what would happen to him in later years.

Now I think that when his mother came from America in the late twenties to see him, offering to take him with her and he refused, he made a fatal mistake. (How many mistakes and silly errors we make in life, realizing it too late.) When his condition became worse, I even suggested that he leave me to be with his mother and bring me over later, if he wanted. I thought to myself that if he loved me, he would do so, and if not, his health was more important. As for me, what was in store was to happen no matter what. But he did not want to go.

His illness progressed slowly but he believed in his recovery! And in 1936, when our Tolechka was born, everything was fine; we were happy and enjoyed life. I recall that early in 1938 we rented a dacha in Kratovo where Aniuta and little Iva lived with us.

In 1937, however, my situation in the theater took a turn for the worse. I wrote a letter to Mikhoels. I sat over it a long time, not sure how to begin. To say, “Respected Solomon Mikhailovich” seemed too formal and trite; so, exhausted by my indecision, I started the letter without addressing him at all. I asked him why, having graduated from the studio with such success and being admitted to the theater long before graduation, was I not getting any parts? Was I worse than all my classmates? I received no answer.
Some time later, I spoke at a theater staff meeting attended by Litvakov, the editor of *Der Emes*, a Yiddish newspaper, poets Peretz Markish¹² and Samuel Galkin, and many other well-known figures. I said that I was astonished that a theater such as GOSET, with its own character and style, known the world over, included in its troupe actors who acted in different manners and styles, often inconsistent with the theater’s trend. I said I thought there were many indifferent and accidental people in the theater, that some of the actors were overlooked and relegated to the last place.

In the end, I asked the question that bothered me the most: why was I not getting parts? Could it be because I had a child? (During my speech I saw Litvakov nodding his head in agreement.) The meeting continued the next day, but I could not attend, unable to leave little Tolik for two days in a row. Mikhoels chewed me out, focusing on my letter to him, so disrespectful that it had no address even. He “played” my letter in such a way, “performed” it so that I looked like an idiot and a bad actress.

Also attending that meeting were party officials who brought up the case of the theater’s general manager, Ida Vladimirovna Lashevich. A purge of the party ranks was going on in those days, but Mikhoels spoke highly of her as an excellent manager and person. She was indeed the best of all the managers who had come before her. She had brought the theater out of stagnation, enforced discipline and attracted the public’s attention to it. On her invitation, Karl Radek, Lazar Kaganovich and other high-ranking officials came to visit: she knew them personally as she and her husband were both old Bolsheviks. But her husband had been a Menshevik, and he was eliminated even before she came to the theater. For a while Mikhoels was able to protect her but not for long. Soon she too disappeared in the Gulag, forever!

She treated me very well. I used to visit her in the government building now known as “the house on the embankment,”¹³ next to the Udarnik movie theater, in her apartment, furnished with valuable rarities brought over from China where her husband, I think, had been an ambassador for a while.

I was still engaged only in crowd scenes; sometimes, I was offered a part to replace a sick actress. In “Freylekhs,” I once replaced Rom, a merited actress, who was sick, in the part of a poor aunt who came to the wedding uninvited¹⁴. She appeared from the wings, poorly dressed, and sang a song saying that although she had not been invited, she came anyway because she was an aunt after all. During a dance scene she threw off her rags and appeared in a beautiful dress, dancing with the servant boys.

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¹² Executed in 1952 together with Zuskin and other Jewish cultural figures.
¹³ A notorious building where many important people lived, many of them taken away in the 1937 purges, never to be heard from again.
¹⁴ As far as I know, “Freylekhs” was not put on by the GOSET until 1945. I may be wrong.
The day of the performance I was asked to attend a rehearsal and waited for Solomon Mikhailovich for several hours — from morning till 5 p.m. He came by the end of the day and showed us the mise-en-scenes. Emil May, our choreographer, who had brilliantly staged the dances in that play, showed me the movements. It was two or three hours before curtain. I ran home to arrange everything for Boria and Tolechka and rushed back to the theater.

I cannot describe my anxiety; May showed me one thing and Mikhoels something quite different. Standing in the wings before my entrance, I thought in horror, “I must remember everything Mikhoels showed me.” (What could he show in half an hour of rehearsal?) I felt his “directions” vanish from my head and was quite high-strung. My state of mind captured the audience the moment I appeared. A woman screamed, frightening and stimulating me at the same time. I forgot everything, all Mikhoels’s mise-en-scenes and directions. Unexpectedly to everyone, myself included, I played the scene with pathos and inspiration. It was such an unexpected joy! My success was overwhelming. After the play was over, everyone came over to congratulate, kiss and express their admiration for me.

But Mikhoels was not there. Contrary to custom, however (the understudy normally played every third performance), I was allowed to replace Rom, a merited actress, every other performance. (Although I was a great success in that role, I think I did not play it as well later.)

Even Boria wanted to see me in that role, although he was sick and his forays into the world usually ended badly. But that time everything went well. He was glad at my success; his spirits were high, and that gave him strength; we rejoiced together.

One day Mikhoels was in the audience. I did not know that. After the performance he suddenly appeared in our dressing room. I got scared and turned away momentarily. I made myself turn back right away, but he was already gone.

My participation in “Freylekhs” occurred after the war, when we returned from the evacuation and after Mikhoels came back from America. He had staged “Freylekhs” shortly before the war and that play won admiration of the Jewish — and not only Jewish — audiences. In 1945, it was a declaration to the world: the Jewish people are alive and will stay alive. “Freylekhs” was awarded the Stalin prize; it was hard to get tickets to it for several years.

Mikhoels, too, was awarded the Stalin prize. But, for some reason, Pulver, who wrote the music, was passed over, as was Emil May, who staged the dances with such talent and expression. They both contributed to the success of the production.
Rumor had it that Pulver’s prize was thwarted by Dunayevsky,\textsuperscript{15} who told the committee that Pulver was making wide use of folk songs. How could anyone fail to see how brilliantly and creatively Pulver used that music and that it had so many new melodies in it?

But “Freylekhs” was staged before the war, before our evacuation from Moscow, and many events happened before it was produced, which twisted and broke down my life.

In the fall of 1939, the theater traveled to Leningrad for a month-long tour. I had to take Tolik with me. When we returned to Moscow, Boria did not meet us. When we came home, I found him in bed. In my absence, he had gone to Odessa to see his beloved uncle. The uncle was dying of cancer. Lying in bed, Boria said that he probably had the flu. But the doctor who came over the next day, Lev Kassil’s\textsuperscript{16} aunt, a very good doctor and a nice person, told me quietly that he was seriously ill. She promptly sent him to the hospital, the First Clinic, in Pirogovka Street.

A professor whose name I do not recall told me his condition was very serious, that it was hopeless, and that, if he recovered, it would be entirely due to his youthful constitution. It was as if a heavy rock fell on me, or it would have been, if it were not for Boria’s friends and co-workers in the newspaper. I would have hardly coped with that misfortune. They called and visited us in the hospital every day. They brought oranges and lemons from the agricultural exhibition which had just opened then. Those delicacies were not to be found anywhere else in the city.

Boria sat across the bed, gasping for air. This time, it was his heart reacting to the bad back, they said. He could not lie down. He was given all kinds of medications, injections, and ground raw liver. I was turning away so that he could not see my face, wondering how he was able to eat that. But apparently he realized that it was the only thing that could save him. And he ate lemons with no sugar without wincing; it was I who, standing beside him, shriveled with sadness, but he followed all of the doctor’s orders.

And he survived. He checked out of the hospital, a first group invalid at 30 years old. Without the help and support of his colleagues, led by Boris Yakovlevich Kamensky, he would hardly have survived. I could not think straight, paralyzed by the new disaster.

Subsequently, I lived in constant worry for him, always afraid that even worse things were in store for us. I cannot recall but I think it was his newspaper that helped him get a voucher to the heart sanitarium Podlipki.

\textsuperscript{15} Isaak Dunayevsky, a prominent Soviet composer who enjoyed great popularity.

\textsuperscript{16} Lev Kassil, a very popular author of children’s books.
After that there was no more talk of physical therapy; his heart was in jeopardy. Gradually, he resumed his work for the newspaper.

One day I noticed that Boria tossed and turned in bed at night, unable to find a position, to adjust to the pillow. I thought it was his back pain. But it occurred several nights in a row. He dodged my questions. Finally, he told me something he had no right to tell “under penalty of death”: one “fine” morning, when he left the house to go to work, he was approached by a man who asked him to get in the car and took him to an office which he still could not recall without horror and shuddering.

They started questioning him about Belenki, director of my theater studio, who gave lectures on philosophy, a writer who later published several books, including “What is Talmud?” and a book about Spinoza. He was married to my former fellow student, Elsa Moiseevna Bezverkhnyaya, my dear friend Elsha. We were close friends and often saw each other, had fun and good times together.

It was that Belenki that they questioned my husband about. He responded that he had nothing negative to say about him and would not make things up. One had to have great courage in those days to respond like that. They interrogated him a long time, and getting nothing, let him go, warning strictly not to tell anyone, even his wife, about that “visit.” I listened, shuddering. Just what we needed on top of all our troubles! But Boria made up his mind and warned Belenki to be careful, that he was in danger. They summoned Boria once more, without getting anything else out of him.

One day, after the war, he wrote to me – I was in a rest-house then – that “the Malach amoves (angel of death) came again” but he told him, “I am a sick man, leave me alone, I can be of no help to you.” And they did.

In the early summer of 1941, Boria was taking treatment and resting at the heart sanitarium Podlipki. I was with him there, too. Our dear little son was in a kindergarten in the country. On June 22, a war was announced. It seemed so unreal and far away to us there in Podlipki. But sitting in the garden in the evening, we heard the bombings and saw tracer bullets in the sky. We felt more and more alarmed each day and went back home.

The situation in the city was very alarming: offices and factories were being evacuated from Moscow; children were the first to be evacuated. We sent Tolechka, along with other children of theater workers, to Ples on the Volga. The bombings began in Moscow, too. At the sound of alarm, Boria and I went to the House of Journalists which had a bomb shelter; we lived nearby. But that trip, although short, was very hard for him and we stopped going there, staying at home.
Sometimes, in the evenings, Julietta17 or Iliusha Vaisfeld dropped by to see us. Everyone tried to be optimistic, believing in the strength of our country and in Stalin – we still believed in him then! Boria was working in the “Communications Vestnik”. That job suited him well, particularly that he could work from home.

It was getting more and more alarming and dangerous to stay in the city. The theater was seized by confusion. I went to Ples to pick up my child. One had to take a train and then a boat on the Volga. I was filled with anxiety; Boria remained home alone. The trains and railway stations were packed with people. The train took me to Kashira; from there, a boat took me to Ples, to my little boy. At long last, I brought him home, having completely lost my voice from all the worrying and anxiety.

In the theater we were told to pack the necessities and bring them over. No one knew when the evacuation would take place. I had a couple of suitcases with clothes sent to the theater, pillows, blankets, and a basket with the essentials: some cereals, sugar and soap. A small suitcase with some food and a few suitcases with other stuff stayed at home. So, we sat there, waiting for a signal from the theater. One can easily imagine our state of mind.

Boria decided, just in case, to call his “Vestnik” and learned that the entire editorial board was leaving Moscow on October 15 by special train provided by the ministry of communications. He arranged for us to be on that train. In the evening of October 15, we called the theater and were told, “You can come if you like.”

We had our stuff loaded into a car; arriving at the theater, we found confused theater workers running around in a state of total panic. The theater’s general manager Belilovsky, Mikhoeles and his family, Zuskin and his family, Belenki and his family had all fled, leaving the actors and other theater workers behind to fend for themselves. In a panic, we had our stuff loaded again and rushed to the railway station, leaving many things, including the basket with foodstuffs in the theater.

The weather matched our mood and the confusion reigning in the city: snow was falling in large wet flakes, swirling in the air, mixing with a drizzle. Masses of state bonds, like flocks of birds, were flying in the air, falling on the heads of people packing the Square of Three Stations to the bursting point. The driver helped us unload in a small place where he had managed to park his car.

Boria, Tolechka and I stood, pressed on all sides by an endless stream of the moving crowd; our situation was hopeless: any attempt to get to the station would be fatal for my sick husband and child.

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17 Julietta – a friend of the family. Her daughter Natasha, five years my junior, is now in Canada; her twin brother Sergei, in New Zealand.
Suddenly, a truck appeared from nowhere next to us, with a Red Army soldier on it. I yelled, “Do you want to make a hundred rubles?” He answered, “Yes. I do!”

He jumped off the truck and, with Boria and my child in tow, carrying our suitcases, began to slowly make his way through the crowd towards the railway station. I stayed behind with many other suitcases, waiting for him to return. After a while the soldier came back for me.

I found my poor husband and my little son not far from the entrance to the waiting hall. Boria sat on the floor on some bundle and Tolechk was standing beside him. It was a heart-rending sight. I paid the soldier and he smiled thankfully. Looking around, I saw a few of our actors with a look of consternation on their faces. Boria and I had agreed with my friend actress Sirotina and her husband Lakhman to stick together in case of evacuation. I found them among the actors. Boria gave Lakhman the name of the head of the echelon and the number of the train which was to evacuate Vestnik’s personnel.

Lakhman told him that he had been sent by their editor Boris Dranov and asked for permission to board. And permission was granted. Lakhman helped us carry our things to the platform where our echelon was; it was an electrical train. The situation on the platform was calmer and more organized.

We entered one of the cars which turned out to be empty. After catching our breath, we remembered that the pregnant Taiblina and her daughter were back at the station, and Lakhman again went to see the head of the train, deputy minister of communications, to request, on behalf of Boris Dranov, permission to accommodate the GOSET actors in our car. Boria could not move by himself. Although he had only started working in that magazine recently, he had already gained the staff’s respect both as a journalist and as a person.

Lakhman gave Boria’s name, and permission to board the actors was granted. Very soon our car was crowded and filled with voices of people hurrying to settle down. We were among “our own.”

I am putting “our own” in quotes because the next day, when everyone had settled down, the leaders of our overcrowded car, in the person of merited actor and director Krol, with the participation of some distinguished actors, began to compile some lists (I don’t know for what purpose), and I was told that I was not on the list.

I could only tell them
At a time like this, when our leaders have fled, when a terrible war is going on and the people are fleeing Moscow, you decide to get rid of me? You all stood abandoned and lost at the station and had it not been for my husband who got permission from the deputy minister for you to get out so easily, you all would have
remained at that station, lost and abandoned, for a long time. It was me who asked him to help you. He too feels hurt for me! But at a time like that, what scores are there to settle?

As it turned out, they were certain that the permission to board had been arranged by Lakhman. Now they had to add me on the list. But bitterness and hurt returned to my heart. A feeling of alienation and isolation came back, deeper than before.

That train dragged on very slowly. A couple of times there were some bombings, and everybody trembled with fear. The food supplies in our little suitcase were melting away. We gave some of the food to Sara Davidovna Rotbaum who had, in the confusion, left her food supplies and some of the necessities at home. Nobody was willing to help her. She had a lot of stuff with her, and we found some space for it next to us and supported her as much as we could. She had never been so close to Boria and admired him as a very interesting companion, the father of a wonderful boy and the head of a beautiful family.

Very soon, our food supplies were gone; at some waystation, during a long stop, Boria decided to take a slow walk to the station store and try to buy something. The station snack bar was filled with crab legs. He returned empty-handed. But we survived; we were young, and whatever we were able to get was given first to the child, to my Tolechka. Besides, the “leaders” of our car sometimes managed to get bread and some other stuff for everybody.

After many days of travel, we were all taken off the train in Kuybyshev (now, Samara) where we were supposed to change to a locomotive train bound for Tashkent. There, we met the theater leadership who had fled in panic: the general manager Belilovsky, Mikhoels, Zuskin and Belenki, with their families. We were friends with the Belenksis. Boria had shown a lot of courage, saving Moisey from persecution by the NKVD, but in a difficult moment he did not even call to tell us of the emergency evacuation, of their flight from Moscow, although we had kept in touch constantly.

My mother and Aniuta with a six-year-old Iva were already in Tashkent. They had evacuated from Odessa by boat and saw another boat, bombed by the Germans, sinking before their eyes, while attempts were made to save the survivors. We were happy to see our loved ones safe and sound. They lived in Paravoznaya Street in a room about fifteen square meters, with no amenities, which they rented from some local Russians, quite unpleasant people. With our arrival, the room became too close for comfort, but it did not diminish our happiness: we were together.

Boria started looking for a job right away and found one as the head of the foreign department of the “Pravda of the Orient” newspaper. We lived a long way from the city center, and Boria had a hard time commuting to work.
Tashkent was overcrowded by refuges from all the corners of the country, and the city transportation could not cope with it.

The Uzbeks, pushing everyone aside, stormed the tram cars, hanging in bunches off the steps. It took a lot of effort and time to get to work but Boria endured it stoically; my heart sank when I looked at him.

Very soon my theater was sent to Samarkand, and I had to go there with everybody else, taking Tolik along. They said it would not be for long. Boria stayed behind with my mom and sister.

Tolik and I lived in Samarkand, an ancient city, where the shabby and dilapidated buildings were next to the beautiful architectural monuments of the past. I remembered forever a rare temple with oriental ornaments, leaning a bit, threatening to collapse for many years. It made a stunning impression on me. We lived near that temple in squalid cells, two or three people in each.

We all looked like all refuges usually do in such awful conditions. Solomon Mikhailovich was doing all he could to have us return to Tashkent and obtain a permanent place for the theater. He looked like Menahem-Mendel whom he had played in “Man of the Air.”

About three months later, we came back to Tashkent, and the theater moved into the old building of Tashkent Conservatory, which had an auditorium and a stage. If I am not mistaken, Leningrad Conservatory had worked there for a while, before moving to the new building of Tashkent Conservatory.

The Theater of the Revolution with my beloved Babanova was also in Tashkent, where many well-known actors and theater people gathered. Our theater set up a group which supplied us with foodstuffs. The group was led by Falik, director of Cherovtsi Philharmonic, Sidi Tal’s husband, who spoke a funny mix of Moldavian Yiddish and Russian. Soon after arriving in Tashkent he was arrested, but a few months later, thanks to Sidi Tal’s efforts and energy, he was released and started the work of distributing the meager foodstuffs his group was able to procure.

In addition, later we received coupons for bread and “zatirukha” dinners; it was a kind of soup for which we had to go very far and stand in long lines. It was mostly me who went to get those dinners; sometimes it was Aniuta, who later found a job as a secretary in a law office.

18 There is also a 1925 silent movie “Jewish Luck” (it was never shown in the Soviet Union in my lifetime), where Mikhoels plays the same Sholom-Aleikhem character. I saw it here.
19 Sidi Tal – an outstanding Yiddish actress from Moldavia.
Working there was attorney Gottlieb and his energetic cheerful wife who literally saved him from the hands of death. They turned out to be Boria’s friends from Moscow. They became friends with Aniuta and were very fond of her.

Boria often wrote articles on international matters and worked successfully as the head of the newspaper’s international department. But his illness progressed, and life in Tashkent during the war was having an adverse effect on his health. He started having pain in his heart again, to say nothing of his back. Fortunately, he was admitted to a clinic where a wonderful doctor, Professor Slonim, was working. He put my poor husband back on his feet, although that took a great deal of effort on his part. He was so mild-mannered, so caring, not looking like an important professor at all. He inspired trust and respect from the start.

The clinic was very far from where we lived, and I had a hard time getting there. The situation in it during the war was unimaginable. Boria was alone in a small gray room, gasping. In front of me, just before I left, Slonim gave him morphine, and Boria settled down and fell asleep blissfully before my eyes. The doctor’s bedside manner and precise treatment gave us hope.

Boria did not like the clinic’s food but loved the peaches I brought him. Those peaches were delicious and very good for the heart. (Nowhere else, neither in Sochi nor even in America, have I since come across such peaches, either in taste or in appearance.) Whatever little that I managed to bring Boria other than that, he also wolfed down eagerly. Gradually, his strength was getting restored; he was slowly coming around. To this day I recall Doctor Slonim with affection and gratitude.

After the hospital Boria was placed in a government sanitarium, a clinic of sorts, where everything was different: superb health care, excellent conditions, food and premises. I was happy for him. After the sanitarium Boria went back to work at “Pravda of the Orient” for a while, and then he was assigned to the post of deputy director of Uzbekistan TASS.

Soon thereafter he was named director of the TASS.20 There was a good group of people working there whom Boria got along with very well. Talented journalists Tamara Kvitko, Ida Sirkina and Tsilia Moiseevna Fradkina21 were very experienced, and the work went well. Often, on Thursdays, there were meet-ups with interesting people. One day Boria invited Akhmatova22 and Ranevskaya23 to one of those meet-ups.

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20 TASS, the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, - Soviet Central News Agency.
21 I knew all three.
22 A famous poet.
23 A famous actress.
By that time, he was receiving a government food ration and got a two-room apartment in Transportnaya Street, where my mother, our Tolechka and I, as well as Aniuta and Iva “luxuriated.”

That apartment was much larger and more spacious and not far from the railway station. Life became easier for us. The family was large and of course it was hard to make ends meet but we had it much easier compared to many of the refugees. Boria was even invited to an Uzbekistan party conference and was writing yet another speech for the party boss Yusupov. (From that conference Boria brought us each a fresh bread roll with ham in it and was telling us how he had relished wolfing down the delicacies served there.)

His work at the TASS went on smoothly. Tamara Kvitko, slender, fragile, with huge feverishly shining dark eyes, was writing talented articles and essays and edited other authors’ materials without taking a cigarette out of her mouth, despite her bad thyroid gland and emotional distress over her sister whom she had lost during their evacuation from Odessa. Not having a corner of her own, she slept in Boria’s office. Later, back in Moscow, she worked for various newspapers like a packhorse, working harder than anybody else.

Ida Sirkina, her close friend, was also an excellent journalist and editor with many years of experience. Her fate was sad. After we had left Tashkent, Tamara became head of the TASS, with Ida as her deputy. Ida had started a love affair with an author, well-known in Uzbekistan, and soon gave birth to a girl. Everything would have been all right if it had been a son.

But he already had two girls with his first wife, and the affair was soon over. Ida turned out to be a wonderful mother, and that girl was her only consolation. Later, she came to Moscow and successfully defended her thesis on Louis Aragon24 at the Literary Institute. A few years later she died unexpectedly, orphaning her daughter. Tamara took interest in the girl’s fate but soon lost sight of her. (Tamara herself passed away in 1976.)

Tsilia Moiseevna Fradkina, also a journalist, was part of the TASS editorial staff as well. She lived with her husband and their two daughters and stoically endured all the hardships of the war years. She and her husband were old Bolsheviks. Having been in close touch with her, I can say that she was a pure crystal of a human being, highly ideological, a member of that old cohort of communists that was later almost totally eliminated.

24 Louis Aragon – a French poet and novelist, one of the leading voices of the French surrealist movement, a long-time member of the French Communist Party.
Suffice it to say that as an old party member she received a government food ration, and when she got yet another ration at work, gave it up, believing it unethical to receive two rations at a time like that. After the war she and her family moved to Vilnius. Sometimes she would come to Moscow on business. She was writing a book about Dzerzhinsky and met with his wife. Then her husband died. Tsilia became ill and moved in with her daughters in Leningrad where she soon passed away.

I write about these wonderful people, our friends, beautiful, honest people, always ready to help a friend. They are very dear to me.

My situation in the theater was getting even worse. Because of the reduction in subsidies Solomon Mikhailovich had to move a few actresses from my group to a different category, the “supporting staff.” For example, Sarochka Fabrikant was classified as Mikhoels’ secretary, and I as a “dispatcher.” There was something very humiliating about that title; Mikhoels knew how to hurt my feelings! Appearing, as before, in crowd scenes and classified as “dispatcher” on paper only, I felt put down. But I tried not to show my hurt, not wanting to reveal how hard it was for me to take it. I was almost never assigned to participate in the performances. Soon thereafter, Mikhoels and Fefer, the poet, left for America to raise funds for the Soviet Union.

Then a rumor started that the theater was about to return to Moscow. The theater’s pending departure created a problem for my family. I realized that Boria liked his position at TASS, an interesting job among good people; besides, he had earned a name and some standing in the city. He thought I might work at a local theater with actors who had arrived from other cities. But it was quite unthinkable for me. I longed to return to Moscow, to our room in Nikitski Boulevard (for which he had been sending rent.)

Besides, that climate, that heat, were both bad for his health; during those years he was twice in the hospital in critical condition. I tried not to insist, realizing how hard it was for him to part with a job he loved. He had his doubts too and did not insist. We decided that he would remain in Tashkent while I, along with Aniuta, Iva and Tolechka would go back to Moscow with the theater, and my mother and his friends at the office would be taking care of him.

Aniuta and Iva would share our Moscow room with me and Tolik until he returned and then move in with Sarochka Fabrikant, who had agreed to share with them her tiny den in Stoleshnikov Alley where many of our young and not-so-young actors lived. I did not quite like that decision, but I decided not to object, hoping to find a better solution for Aniuta in Moscow.

25 Felix Dzerzhinsky, an early Bolshevik revolutionary and official, head of the first state-security organizations, the Cheka and the OGPU. Established Soviet secret police. One of the architects of post-revolutionary Red Terror.
We traveled for several days, and finally arrived, straight to the theater! Actor Zhabotinsky helped us carry our belongings to our apartment in Suvorosky Boulevard near the Nikitski Gate. (He had always helped us load and unload our stuff, thereby earning some money to support his wife and child. He was a good actor and a quiet, humble man.)

Finally, we were home. But there was a family from Leningrad living in our room: a man and his wife, a famous Leningrad tailor, and a son, about ten years old. All our books were in the dust on top of a bookcase, piled up to the ceiling, replaced in the bookcase by a lot of crystal and other ‘luxuries.’” The woman was an ethnic Russian, her husband was Jewish, fond of drinking and women. Our “nice” neighbors seemed to be fond of them and met us with apprehension. We felt quite uncomfortable and squeezed in.

Aniuta immediately got a job as a typist in my theater, hired by the new manager, Fitman, who had known her in Odessa. Iva went to school; she was already 8. I saw that my little boy secretly brooded, envying her. By that time, he could read and write beautifully. In the kindergarten in Tashkent he had often been surrounded by children for whom he recited fairy tales. Here, in Moscow, he was left without his friend Iva and felt lonely. Perhaps, if I had hustled a bit at the school, they would have accepted him a year early, and the problem would have been solved. It only occurred to me later—in hindsight, as always!

I had to drag him with me to shop, to go to the market, standing in long lines. The child, though very obedient and gentle, could not stand still for too long, and I was very worried when he would run away. From time to time, Aniuta stopped by for lunch, but for the most part she ate at a nearby canteen, getting lunch coupons from the management office. And that family from Leningrad still lived with us, waiting for an apartment.

We wrote letters to Boria in Tashkent and even talked on the phone with him. Boria said to Tolik, “Promise me to behave well,” to which Tolik replied, “I can’t promise but I’ll try.” Boria and I were delighted with his answer. He was still quite little, not even seven yet.

One day, actor Traktovenko told me that my friend, a BelGOSET actress, was to pass through Moscow and that I could go to see her at the railway station. He knew that Rivochka Gurevich was a dear friend; she had finished our studio and her graduation play, “The Oppenheim Family,” based on Feuchtwanger’s novel, where she shined in the lead role, had made a big impression on me and everyone who saw it. Her life at the GOSET did not pan out; she was considered to have no talent and was given no parts. That, of course, struck a chord in my heart, and I felt for her. I too was unhappy at the theater.
The day before, Tolechka, taking a walk on the boulevard, had met a boy dressed in rags, and asked if he could play with him. I could see he was somewhat embarrassed by the boy’s appearance. I said that he was a nice boy and they could play together. (To myself, I thought that the boy was most likely a street urchin, and my little son might get carried away playing and forget everything.) But I left him with that boy and Iva, then eight, in the boulevard, telling them both, strictly, not to leave the boulevard, saying that I would be back soon.

I rushed to the railway station to see Rivochna Gurevich to express my sympathy; her pain was my pain too. On my way there, I felt worried about having left my little boy without proper supervision and got off at Smolenskaya Station, deciding to go back home. Next to the station I stopped to stand in line to buy some rotten potatoes and then hurried back home. A terrible, irreparable misfortune had happened in my absence: my boy was run over by a motor vehicle!

I started calling all the hospitals and, having reached the Sklifasofsky, learned that my Tolechka was dead. As I was told later, that boy and my son had run across the street where a car was parked by the sidewalk, a dream of boys of all ages in those days, and they were examining and touching that car. Suddenly, that boy called out to Tolik from the boulevard. My boy darted towards him and a truck, turning from around the corner, ran him over. Later, at the militia station, they made all kinds of excuses for the driver, concealing the details.

In short, I am to blame for my son’s death and carry this guilt with me to this day. During all these years, many misfortunes have befallen me, and I always blame myself, saying, “Don’t complain, it is all your fault, you are clumsy, awkward and silly.” It is hard to forget the charming, affectionate little boy with his expressive glittering eyes.

I will never forget how he, together with other children, was at a rest-home near Tashkent. I came to visit and found him still looking thin and pale. To my question, why he did not sleep during the “nap hour,” he replied, “I lie there with my eyes closed and tell myself fairy tales. You know how much fun it is to make up stuff.” I was delighted by his answer. And when I said, “You haven’t put on any weight; you are not eating well; you don’t like it here?” he said, “I miss home.” Adding, “No, that’s not right, I do not miss home, I miss you.” Those words pierced my heart for life. How could a six-year-old express himself like that?

In those days, I seldom heard kind words addressed to me. Lately, Boria’s illness made him more and more nervous and irritable. Hot climate, the daily commute in an overcrowded bus and the hard work, though mentally satisfying, were not making him any healthier. His illness made itself known more and more. Whom could he take out his pain and irritation on, if not me? No matter what my excuses, I was always to blame.
Once, during one of such scenes in Tashkent, Tolik, clinging to me, said in a low voice a few short words (I can’t remember them exactly) to the effect that he disapproved of his father. Boria asked him to say it louder and was taken aback. He did not expect such a reaction and reflected on it. And the quarrel stopped, that time.

And now, having returned to my beloved Moscow, I lost my boy forever. It was like parting with my heart and soul. Only then did I realize how much he meant to me, how deeply he took hold of my whole being, how much charm and charisma that boy had — he was radiant; his expressive eyes left no one indifferent. That blow broke me, tore me apart. I blamed myself alone for what had happened, and even now, so many years later, I still carry my guilt with me, always.

Now, whenever a new calamity or trouble befalls me, I tell myself, “Don’t complain, don’t whine, you are nothing, you could not keep your child safe, keep him from such a terrible death. There is no forgiveness for you.” A deep wound has remained in my heart.

Soon I went to Tashkent to pick up Boria, broken, carrying a heavy burden in my heart. He was at a sanitarium-like clinic again. It was terrible to look at him. How could anyone break the awful news to such a sick person, a loving father like him; it would kill him. I visited him every day. Smiling, I told him about our son, and Boria was happy, getting ready to see him again. Tamara and Ida knew everything. On the way to Moscow he made all sorts of plans for the future, getting ready to meet with his darling son. At the station, we were met by Elsha and her husband who told him his son had died of meningitis. (We had agreed on that story beforehand.)

Boria took this news, this terrible blow, stoically. He did not even torment me too much with his questions. There was no talk any more about him getting a job and commuting there daily. He worked at home, editing materials I brought him from TASS and other editorial boards; later he got a job as an editor with the “Soviet Sport” publishing house, preparing articles and books for publication. I was his liaison with the publisher, bringing various materials for final edits and reviews.

As before, he was well respected and valued as a journalist. I was always met by the staff very warmly and cordially; the people there were likable. Our friends — Iliusha Vaisfeld, Julietta and Dorochka, to say nothing of Elsha and Belenki — surrounded us with such attention and caring. Tamara Kvitko, Ida Sirkina and Tsilia Moiseevna often called and wrote to us from Tashkent; everyone was trying to ease our grief.

Soon we learned that I was pregnant, and our friends’ attention redoubled. Boria often felt very ill and found himself in the hospital every now and then. He was treated by Professor Vinogradov whom we sometimes asked to come for a home visit, each costing us 300 rubles.
I recall one day when Boria felt very bad; he had developed a terrible cough which did not stop day or night, on top of his other problems. It seemed that his heart would burst with strain. Vinogradov used all the means he had but his efforts were in vain, nothing helped. So, one day, after a physical examination, he asked me to step outside the room to discuss the situation. The “discussion” lasted five minutes, and he prescribed some cough medication. I quickly bought it at a pharmacy.

And a miracle happened! Those five minutes saved the day. Boria must have worried a great deal during our secret “conference.” (The doctor said nothing significant.) But by evening the cough was almost gone from simple ephedrine which he did not even have to take for long. We realized that Vinogradov had used that “conference” as a psychological ploy. But soon we could not afford 300 rubles for each visit and, on Vinogradov’s recommendation, we invited his assistant, also a very good doctor.

But let me go back to the time when Sasha, our hope and consolation, was about to be born.

Our friends became even more attentive and helped us with all the chores associated with the upcoming birth. Elsha was the most helpful of all; it is hard to overestimate everything she did for us. Our friends were always by our side during that time, and in the evenings, an interesting, cheerful company gathered in our room. One night, on July 11, 1945, as I sat at the table with everyone else, I felt a strange, inexplicable condition and thought, “Can it be the beginning?” I decided to sit it out, to wait, and only said to Boria, in a low voice, that I might be mistaken. But he decided to send me to the maternity ward right away, accompanied by Elsha and Julietta. I was certain his panic was unwarranted. But, strangely enough, they kept me in the hospital and, after some procedures, put me in a pre-natal room where a few women were waiting to give birth.

Lying in bed, I heard the groans and cries of the women in labor. There was a woman with a huge belly sitting not far from me, tossing and turning with pain. I watched all that and, during my own contractions, grabbed the headboard and whispered, “Help, help,” trying not to scream. Suddenly, I said almost calmly, “Come here, I am giving birth.” The woman with the belly crossed herself. They had no time to take me to the operating room; I gave birth right there, in the bed. It was so easy. A red creature appeared, screaming at the top of its lungs, with eyes about to pop out of its head. The nurse said, “A boy!” And I screamed, “A boy, a boy!” and started asking to call my husband to tell him about that joy.

Soon I went home, and a life full of daily worries began. I was taking care of my two boys, the sick Boria and the newly born bundle (1 kg 900 g.) For four months I breastfed him; then I did not have enough milk and had to run to the clinic for more milk, which they often ran out of.
Gradually, we started giving the baby other food; the boy began to put on weight and looked better. It was not easy to take him out for a walk. The boulevard was close by, across from the building, but taking the crib down from the fourth floor was quite a task.

One day, Boria went downstairs with us; he needed fresh air too. I left the two of them on the boulevard and rushed back home to cook some food for them and clean up a bit. But soon I heard Boria’s voice and Sasha crying loudly. I dashed down the stairs and was horrified. Boria, sick, hunched forward, was barely able to hold the baby in his arms. It was a terrible sight; the baby was screaming so the entire street could hear him. With difficulty, we climbed back up the stairs to the fourth floor.

Soon we decided to exchange our 22-meter room and our anti-Semitic neighbors for any other room. After a long search, we found a place on the other side of the boulevard, on the second floor of a five-story building. The room had a balcony. Boria could breath fresh air, sitting on the balcony, and so could Sasha. He was almost a year old. A couple of months later, when we finally placed our meager furniture in a new 17-meter room, we celebrated Sasha’s birthday. Many guests came over; it was all very joyful; we had a lot of fun.

But very soon we realized what we had gotten ourselves into. Shortly before we moved in, a fellow with wife and son had moved into the other two rooms. The young couple was very quarrelsome. The father and son fought a lot. The father, taciturn and glum, was fond of horse races and spent all his scant money there. He did not talk to his son. That was their business. They had had an apartment consisting of two adjoining rooms and exchanged it for two separate rooms in the same communal apartment where we now lived.

From the start, these neighbors were very hostile to us; that united them. When bills for gas and electric arrived, we paid our share, leaving the money in the kitchen. They pocketed that money. The common facilities were very dirty, and I often had to clean up for everybody, to avoid arguments. Soon, the man divorced and married some old maid; the situation became even worse, she often quarreled with him over the races, and fought with his former wife and son constantly, about everything. The atmosphere was unpleasant; I had to navigate carefully to avoid confrontations. We were saved by the summers when we went to the country.

I had one bit of luck: I found a housekeeper, a wonderful, diligent young woman, Masha. She was 25. She was fond of our little son and was very devoted to us. She became part of the family. Soon she learned to cook, easing my life quite a bit: I often had to go to rehearsals and performances. Fortunately, the theater was nearby.
I recall Boria, sick and lying in bed, taking his last post-graduate examination at the university. Two professors came over to our place to examine him. Having prepared everything for their arrival, I rushed to the theater for a performance. He passed the examination with flying colors.

Later on, Boria was accepted in the Academy of Social Sciences, and I often took him there to attend lectures. Slowly, with long intervals, he was writing a thesis which he was to defend in the Academy’s law department. He was a strong-willed man, of course; he worked on his dissertation, fighting his illness. Ossification of the spine it was called—constant pain, crippling him and bending him down so that he could not straighten his back. And his heart—arrhythmia, heart attacks. More and more often, he was in the hospital in a serious condition. Those hospitalizations interrupted his work on the dissertation. There was no talking about it anymore. I did not push him, seeing what effort it took to continue his work.

But, with his attention off that work, he focused on me again and made wild, ugly scenes. No matter how I tried to defend myself, nothing helped. All his accusations were the result of his torment, and I was unable to calm him down. Very rarely, in his good moments, he would admit, “I am biting the hand that feeds me.” But those moments were fleeting, and then it was repeated all over again. Those ugly scenes took place in front of the little Sasha and Masha, who worried and felt for us deeply.

Those absurd, senseless scenes exhausted me, to say nothing of Boria. I often thought that his work on the dissertation would take less of his energy, less strength than those ugly, baseless quarrels. But he could not help it. I was the only person that he could take his constant pain and frustration out on. In those moments I felt humiliated and had a hard time pulling myself together. But I forgot my grudges quickly. That helped me to survive and take care of him and the family.

I recall how one day, having put Sasha to bed after yet another scene, I also went to bed, reliving the unfair accusations, and cried silently, not to wake him up. And I heard my boy crying too. That was in 1952, when we lived in a new, separate, two-bedroom apartment already, in Levitan Street. It was the only time when my little son showed empathy for me. Later, as he grew older, that never happened again; on the contrary, his father must have influenced him in many ways. But I am getting ahead of myself again.

The defense of the thesis went on swimmingly. Boria did not let me attend that event, and I stood behind the door, worrying for him. I was torn by anxiety: I wanted so much to see him like he had been — strong, handsome, healthy. I prayed for him, wishing him success; he deserved it. The subject of his thesis was “The Black Sea Straits – The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.”
The committee, consisting of leading experts in the field, was unanimous in awarding him the title of Candidate of Science (PhD) in international law.

A celebration was held at our house: oh, joyous days! Yet, I constantly worried: how would that strain, that effort, that feat that he had so heroically accomplished and survived, affect his health? I felt limitless joy and anxiety at the same time. Our friends were ecstatic too. We had many of them, all very interesting people. Our evenings were passed in discussions and conversations, and Boria was always the most interesting person among them all.

Soon after the defense, he had to go to the hospital in Pirogovka again. After staying there for some time, he decided that he was well enough and could return home.

Soon he announced that he had an appointment at Moszhilotdel, the City Housing Department. He had, a while before, written a letter to N.S. Khrushchev, then first secretary of the Moscow Party Committee, requesting a separate apartment. He wrote that he was a very sick man engaged in scientific work, that the four of us shared a 17-meter room in a communal apartment, with neighbors who made life very difficult. Of course, this is a primitive retelling of his letter which was much more expressive and interesting.

Khrushchev was not yet the party leader; Stalin was still alive. But from 1949 on, he was the city’s boss, involved in the development of new districts of Moscow. Boria knew that his letter had been received. Every morning at 9 a.m. he called Khrushchev’s office. Of course, he was talking to one of the deputies, who gave him some hope and politely asked him to wait. And Boria kept waiting and calling almost every morning. I trembled with fear that it all would end badly. But, right after he came home from the hospital, he was given an appointment at the Moszhilotdel.

Again, I worried about him. It was hard to watch him climb the steep stars to the third floor of that building. He stopped at every step. My heart was sinking with anxiety; he had just checked out of the hospital; he did not complete his treatment. I prayed that everything would end well.

We expected to find many visitors at Moszhilotdel’s office but there was no one; soon we were called by the head of the office. The first question he asked Boria was, “What floor do you want?” What joy! What happiness! We were given a brand new, two-room apartment near the Sokol metro station! No more communal living.

All the way back home, I was trying to persuade Boria to lie down upon return, to catch his breath and recover from that visit. He did lie down but sat up right away and, grabbing the telephone, began to call our friends, telling them, in every detail, about our joy.
My entreaties were of no avail and, giving up, I rushed to the store to buy Sasha something warm for the winter and shop for some food for Boria’s birthday, 28 October.

The next morning, sending Sasha and Masha out for a walk, I started cooking breakfast for Boria. He got out of bed to go to the bathroom and fell down on the bed with a contorted face. His mouth shifted to the right, almost to his ear. Right away, I summoned a doctor from a very good clinic that Boria had recently been assigned to. The doctor’s diagnosis: a stroke, with paralysis of the left side.

Boria tried to speak but I could not understand a word. His left arm and leg were absolutely paralyzed. A lady doctor did her best to help, to bring him back to his condition before the stroke at least. He obeyed every order and instruction and it helped. On the tenth day, his left leg moved slightly, and we began hoping for an improvement. We breathed a little easier.

Later, it was time for him to go to the hospital again, and we managed, with great difficulty, to get him in. He could move his leg a little, but his left arm would not move at all, and his twisted mouth could barely pronounce some disjointed words. After a long stay at the hospital, he felt a little better but his arm remained motionless. Fortunately, it was his left arm. He used his right hand to lift his left hand and place it on the table to press down on a piece of paper to write me a few words, an instruction or request. Gradually, his condition improved but his left hand’s movement remained limited for the rest of his life.

Later, when he started working at the international department of the Foreign Literature Publishers — he continued to edit and write essays on international law — he would use his right hand to place his left on the desk to press down the pages. Among other works he edited were four volumes of Charles Hyde, an American author\(^2\), and Boria wrote articles and reviews about Hyde’s works.

The publishing house was in the suburbs, and I had to take the metro, then a suburban train and then walk for a long time on foot, carrying heavy volumes and manuscripts. But who other than me could do that? I would have done anything to keep things quiet and calm at home, not to waste my last energy on worthless, petty stuff.

He was slowly getting better, and we were discussing plans to move to the new apartment.

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\(^2\) Charles Hyde, a U.S. authority on international law, an early advocate of vesting all military power in an international security organization. Professor of international law and diplomacy at Columbia University (1925-45), member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. My father edited and commented on his seminal publication, International Law, as Interpreted and Applied by the United States (1945). I kept those four volumes for a long time.
Then he was given a voucher for a sanitarium-type rest-home in Peredelkino. I often visited him there and, having visited the new apartment, had to describe it to him in minute detail over and over again. I was worried about the fact that the apartment and its two balconies faced the railway. I was afraid that the noise and clanging of the freight trains would interfere with his sleep and his work. But he replied joyfully that he liked it all and was quite happy.

At last, the day came when I packed our belongings and scanty furniture and took Sashenka to Levitan Street (later renamed Panfilov Street) near Sokol, to the third floor of an eight-story building. It was a first-rate apartment: two separate rooms with high ceilings; one room was 22 square meters and had a balcony running its whole width, the other was about 12 meters. Both rooms opened into a cozy, rather spacious hallway which led into a small corridor with a bathroom and a separate restroom. On top of all that, there was an excellent kitchen with another balcony. The kitchen had an attic, and the little corridor had a closet with a garbage chute in it. And of course, hot running water in the bathroom and kitchen. What else could one dream of? We were so happy.

Boria was at Peredelkino at the time, and I was able to accomplish the move relatively easily. I even managed to buy a wonderful German kitchen cupboard, very beautiful and not too expensive, but it stood in the middle of the kitchen; the only wall it could stand against was taken up by a heating radiator. The apartment had many snags and defects in the workmanship, and I had to keep going to the chief of the construction office, which was quite annoying. Over time, I bought Boria a handsome massive desk and a beautiful bookcase for our large library.

There was a lot of hassle and running around but the most unpleasant thing was the absence of power in the entire building. The elevator was not working. We were lucky that the apartment was on the third floor.

Here is what happened one fine day, if you can believe it. I was about to go somewhere. We did not have a lock on the front door yet, and it was ajar. Suddenly, there was noise outside the door and a man’s voice said, “This door is unlocked, let’s go in here!” The door opened and I saw a group of men filling the entire stairway landing. A few very important-looking men stood in front, all wearing the same astrakhan cake-shaped hats, and among them stood N.S. Khrushchev! “Can it be Khrushchev?” I thought and immediately dismissed that idea. “How silly you are. Khrushchev walking around visiting apartments, especially yours.” He had looked quite different on the grandstand, and I thought, “It must be chief of construction or something.”

They entered, and the man I had taken for Khrushchev asked how we felt settling in. As we spoke, I realized that it was indeed Khrushchev in the flesh but decided not to back down, not to apologize, and to continue talking to him as if he were chief of construction. That made it easier.
Plucking up courage, I went on the offensive: it was such a wonderful apartment but without power. And we were spoiling all that beauty and magnificence with our kerosene lamps.

At once, a short Jewish man stood up next to me, saying in a low voice: “That is Mosenergo (Moscow power grid)’s regulations.” Khrushchev came forward: “Well, dear lady, show us what defects there are in the apartment.” Getting bolder, I took him and his entourage in their astrakhan hats to the kitchen, where my beautiful cupboard stood, blocking the way. “Was this thing here or did you buy it?” asked Khrushchev. Proudly, I said, “Of course I bought it but there is nowhere to put it. The only wall it could properly be placed against is taken up by the radiator.”

The same short Jewish man said in a low voice, “Where would you like to have it put?” I pointed to a space next to the balcony where vertical pipes ran from the ceiling down through the floor. The Jewish man said quietly, “No, that’s impossible.” Khrushchev overheard it. Pushing everyone aside, he cried, “How so? Why can’t that radiator be put over here?” and stuck his finger into the opposite wall, next to the stove, where there clearly was no room for it.

Then I led them to the bathroom where a large rusty hole graced the bathtub mounted into the wall. I said that I would have had it fixed myself but did not know who to turn to. Khrushchev went red in the face. “Where is chief engineer?” he yelled. A tall man, his face white as paper, his eyes unblinking, appeared before him. “Shall I have you prosecuted or give you time to start working properly?!” Khrushchev thundered. In a trembling voice, the chief engineer mumbled, “Please give me time.”

My seven-year-old Sasha followed us all that time. In the kitchen, Khrushchev suddenly turned to him. “Well, how do you like it here?” To which my son, sticking his finger in the wall, said, “Well, this… this is cardboard!” I froze: how will it all end for us? Khrushchev sniggered and patted my boy on the shoulder. He then asked me to continue, and I led the way into the larger room, showing him the ceiling, which was waved and uneven. Khrushchev started yelling again. I decided it was probably enough with the defects; I was not sure if I would get away with it.

Following me back into the hallway, Khrushchev asked me about my husband, and I said he had once worked with comrade Khrushchev in some district committee or other. The man did not bat an eyelid. About to depart, he said, “Well dear lady, I think you will feel good here, you’ll like it.” Turning to Sasha, he suddenly asked, “Well, what do you want to be when you grow up?” To which Sasha blurted out, “I want to be a drummer.” Everybody laughed and moved toward the door.

27 I remember this episode. The drab wall paint made it look like cardboard. What did I know?
On the landing, approaching the last man in the long procession flowing down the stairs, I asked in a low voice, “Who is that comrade?” The man in an astrakhan hat looked at me as if I was insane and said, “That is Khrushchev.” A mute scene followed.

That day the entire team was given a dressing down, lasting well into the evening. And the name Dranov was repeated many times – as I learned from the same quiet little Jewish fellow whom I saw in the backyard a couple of days later. “What have you done?” he said, reproach in his voice. The day after Khrushchev’s visit, people started coming in, fixing the defects. It took them half an hour to move the radiator to the spot I had indicated, and my cupboard was installed where I wanted it.

Never in my life did I have it so easy. Everything was done to my liking: the bathtub was replaced by a new one, the ceiling straightened out, new parquet floor was installed, and many, many other things were fixed. I wrote a thank-you note to Khrushchev, saying that he had prolonged my sick husband’s life, that we were happy, that my husband would now be able to continue his work in beautiful conditions. And my seven-year old added a line too: “I’ve changed my mind! I want to be a builder.”

Later, when I called Khrushchev’s office, his deputy told me that our letter had been received and made everybody laugh. I often took Sasha to see Boria in Peredelkino and every time told him this story, adding new details.

At last, the day arrived when Boria arrived in the new apartment from the sanitarium. It was a joyful, exciting day. I felt overjoyed looking at him. So much energy and nerves had been spent to get to that day and now, what bliss, what happiness could be seen in his face, what comfort. Happy days followed. Every day workers kept coming in, fixing remaining little things.

Soon my seven-year-old Sasha went to the first grade. The school was nearby. I accompanied him. He held onto my hand, looking at everything, surprise and wonder in his eyes. With his class, we went up the stairs to the second floor; the parents were not allowed further, and he mistakenly walked into someone else’s classroom. He ran back to me, lost and upset. A teacher had to get him into the right classroom. That was a happy day too. He was going to study, but he could already read and write well.

A more or less peaceful life began: Boria was editing manuscripts which I brought him from the Foreign Literature publishers. Yet it was not quite peaceful. My dear husband was a highly educated person, knowledgeable in his field, a Ph.D. in international law, which he had earned by his heroic effort. But it took great willpower for him to sit at the desk and continue his work after a bad night, when pain in the back would not let him sleep. Constant worry tore me apart, yet my heart told me that his work was less difficult and harmful for him than the ugly scenes he was constantly making.
Apparently, he needed that diversion, needed to take his constant pain out on someone. I understood that, but it did not make my life any easier. My situation in those moments was very humiliating. One day, in a rage, he even struck me with his cane, leaving a large bruise on my leg that stayed there a long time. My mother who was visiting me at the time sat in the kitchen, crying. Tamara Kvitko, with whom we had started a friendship back in Tashkent, could not tolerate one such scene. She stood up for me, and Boria kicked her out.

What was I to do? I forgave him everything. Could I have left him, sick and helpless? I understood that he was unable to control himself and his pain; his diseases were too many and too hard to bear. It was unfair for one man to endure so much adversity.

One evening, angry at me over something, he went downstairs without a jacket, wearing slippers. The elevator was not working; it was windy, snowing and raining. He stood outside the entrance doorway, complaining loudly about his no-good wife, crying for help. I ran back and forth, begging him to come home. I brought him a warm coat, trying to calm him down, but nothing worked and, giving up, I returned home, thinking that he would not be able to stay out for too long and would have to come back. Indeed, that is what happened. He came back soon.

It was quiet in the house for a while. But the consequences came around before long: I had, with great difficulty, managed to get him into the Botkin Hospital in a very grave, critical condition. There were no vacant beds in the hospital rooms and many patients lay on narrow cots in the corridors. Even Boris Pasternak was placed there, his wife relieved from time to time by a woman who took care of him. I stayed by Boria’s side for 41 days, taking occasional naps at night, nestling by his feet. I spent many sleepless nights there. No one kicked me out, and I was on nurse duty day and night, caring for him. Soon, he was moved into a room with one other patient in it. Professor Votchel, a very good doctor, treated him.

The doctors said that he survived thanks to me. I do not believe so; it was the doctor who did all he could to put Boria back on his feet. Perhaps the fact that I was always by his side and followed the doctor’s orders to the letter had a calming effect and helped him. Masha, always reliable, stayed at home; she loved Sasha and was a really kind-hearted, empathetic person.

The doctors and nurses treated me warmly. Most important, Boria was recovering. He was feeling better and I was able to break away for a short while to go home to my child and buy something tasty and nourishing for Boria.

Finally, we returned home. I could not believe that miracle. True, Boria did not protest during that time, taking all his medications, tests and injections patiently.
He had got used to all that long ago; now he knew it was his last chance to stay alive and followed the doctor’s orders faithfully.

True, he was always treated by good doctors, but coming home from the hospital previously he used to get nervous over everything, every little trifle. But this time around, peace came to our house, and I was happy. Many friends started visiting us again; those were the best hours of our life. The conversations and arguments concerned various subjects, and Boria was still the most interesting conversationalist! Needless to say, I prepared for those meetings, trying to treat our friends to the best food I could get, which was not at all easy in those days.

There was a lot of talk about Stalin in our circle. Boria had figured out the “great leader” many years before. Thinking about my poor husband now, I recall him as a 17-year-old idealist, believing in the shining future and the victory of communism. He came to the Soviet Union in 1926 with his aunt and uncle from China, having refused to go to America with his mother. All his unbearable life, all the hardships and suffering that befell him, were a great injustice towards that remarkable, talented, brilliant man.

He could not straighten his back, could not turn his head. I washed him, shaved him, did everything I could, but the disease bent him over and limited his movements more and more. Three heart attacks, two strokes, left-sided paralysis. He was near death 22 times. Too much for one man!

I got it in the neck too. The evacuation to Tashkent, the return home, a trip back to Tashkent to pick up Boria after Tolik’s death, and our subsequent life, full of adversity. The only joy I had was obtaining that new apartment.

I described all that above in these notes but... the cruel fate of my dear husband is still very much on my mind! We moved into the new apartment in 1952. Boria arrived from Peredelkino and was quite pleased and quiet. That happy time lasted quite a while, until the quarrels resumed, leading to his hospitalization at the Botkin. Before it happened, it seemed that luck had finally come our way; we started living in normal conditions, in a wonderful new apartment, and were financially secure. Boria kept working at the international law department of the Foreign Literature publishing house. He needed to be cautious, save his energy, be careful about his every move, but he could not control himself, forgetting about his condition and continued to bring his pain and anger down on me.

Sometimes, those scenes took place in front of Sasha and, as he grew older, he began to copy some of his father’s antics. One day, doing his homework, Sasha would not sit still, fidgeting and playing pranks. He was about eight.
Passing by, Boria took a look at his exercise book and, seeing an ink stain on the page, struck Sasha with his cane. I only gave a stifled scream, saying under my breath, “What example are you setting. He will act like that when he grows up.” It turned out to be a prophesy.

Three years passed, and 1956 came about. It was Spring, time to go the country. I found a dacha in Krestovo, in a very picturesque place. We rented half a house there; the other half was occupied by a Russian family with two kids. Those people were very nice, and we became friends with them.

Tamara Kvitko spent one month of her vacation with us. Guests came over on Sasha’s birthday. Even Aniuta, my dear little sister, having come from Chetnovtsi, with her Ukrainian Drama Theater on a Moscow tour, was with us that day at our dacha.

A few days later, she was going back home, and Boria did not permit me to see her off! I disobeyed, deciding that it would not be fair to Aniuta and that I would return soon. After reaching Moscow by train I took a train back and returned to the dacha. Boria said, “Why did you come back? You should have seen her off.”

Summer was drawing to a close, and it was time to go home. Boria was not feeling well: his mouth twisted again, and we were afraid of another stroke. He slept badly, the sedative did not help, and it was risky to take it, so I gave him pyramidon instead and he slept well. In the evening, before going to bed, he would make a usual scene, and I trembled, afraid that the neighbors behind the wall would hear. I kept trying to defend myself, with no effect. Later on, the neighbors told me that they had heard everything, deciding that I was a mean person and a bad wife.

Every day Boria kept insisting that we return home, and we decided that I would take him home first, and then Sasha and I would return together with our neighbors — they had booked a truck.

To take Boria home, I ran around for several days, looking for a car. At long last, our neighbors found one, and I took Boria home in that car, leaving Sasha in the care of the neighbors.

I spent two days at home and made arrangements with a very nice woman to care for Boria. (He had helped her to get an apartment, and she was happy to do something for him in return.) I called a professor from the Litfond clinic, who had treated him before, to come to see him, and then went to the dacha to pick up Sasha and our belongings.

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28 Mom does not mention Malakhovka for some reason. That is where we spent almost every summer, as I recall.
29 Litfond – a support agency for writers, providing them with various services, including medical care.
When we returned home, Boria had nothing but praise for that woman but said that the doctor had been surprised that I had left him. Again, I felt guilty. But what could I have done? Boria had been unwilling to wait two or three days to go back home together with us. He was not feeling well and needed to go to the hospital as soon as possible.

I insisted on the Botkin where he had been treated so well and put back on his feet before, but Boria wished to go to a nearby hospital and would not change his mind. He must be thinking of making it easier for me, I thought. I took him there. But the hospital staff treated him with indifference. They sentenced him to death right away!

A doctor and a professor who came to see him once or twice a week sat on the couch across from his room and talked, doing nothing to help him. I stood at his door, looking at them pleadingly but they remained indifferent. I called all our friends, asking them to talk to these doctors, with no success. The nurses neglected him, and I even quarreled with them; one, taking pity on me, gave Boria an injection. He sat hunched on his bed, gasping, and apparently realized that nothing was being done to help him.

Pushing me aside, he screamed, “Uncle! It hurts! Uncle! It hurts!” How hard was it for me to hear it. He was addressing his uncle who had raised him. That scream of despair, was of course, addressed to me. I was paralyzed by the doctors’ inaction; a wall of indifference surrounded us.

He was soon moved from a common room to a more private one, where there was only one other patient — a hopeless one, I was told. Boria continued to sit across the bed, his mouth open, wheezing. I placed his swollen legs on a chair to make it a bit easier for him. That was how we spent the night.

The next morning, a Jewish doctor on duty stopped by. In answer to my pleading gaze, he only raised his arms helplessly. He allowed the nurse to give the patient some warm tea. It did not help. A few minutes later my Boria, uttering a short scream, collapsed on the pillows, his eyes still, yellow. It was the end. A terrible end!

I cannot forget it. That death will remain with me as an eternal rebuke, reminding me what a good-for-nothing loser I am.

As I left the hospital, I told the woman doctor that my husband was 48 (his birthday was three weeks later, in October) and that he had a Ph.D in law, to which she said, “Why didn’t you tell me that before?!” She should have been put on trial for those words. And me too. She added that the hopeless patient in Boria’s room would most likely be discharged. She had condemned my husband to death from the get-go.
So, I live with this terrible guilt that I did not do everything to save my husband. That I did not do enough for my mother. That I was so wrong to have left my dear son Tolechka on the boulevard with a boy I did not know.

Can I forgive myself for all that? Especially now, when I live alone and feel very lonely. I look at the photos of my loved ones, put fresh flowers next to them. I feel pain and sadness, and I constantly blame myself for their deaths.

Afterword

My mother’s memoirs end with my father’s death in September 1956, when I was 11. I think that before he died, my dad witnessed the XXth party congress and the first revelations about Stalin’s “personality cult.” The party bosses replaced one another at the helm until Khrushchev came out on top. A few years later, with the advent of the “thaw,” the ice began to thaw towards surviving Yiddish actors of the GOSET as well. Those of them who could still move about were allowed to establish a traveling Yiddish Ensemble under the leadership of a remarkable actor, Shwartser. That troupe, consisting of the GOSET veterans and a few young people who unexpectedly joined them (Polina Ainbinder and Yakov Yavno, among others), had no permanent place of their own; the GOSET’s building had been occupied by the Malaya Bronnaya Theater since the 1950s.

The Ensemble put on old GOSET plays: Goldfaden’s “The Witch,” Sholem Aleichem’s “200,000” and “Tevye the Milkman,” Gordin’s “Across the Ocean,” “The Bewitched Tailor,” “Three Little Raisins,” and some others. As before the revolution, the troupe toured cities and towns in Russia, Ukraine and the Baltics, traveling in trains and buses and performing wherever possible — philharmonic halls, “houses of culture,” clubs, and the like.

Local authorities were often inhospitable, even hostile. Sometimes, in Kyiv and elsewhere where Jews were treated less than warmly, the actors found pre-booked stages closed to them; the troupe would then be sent to some village or a kolkhoz where oftentimes there was no Jewish audience at all: the unheated auditoriums were filled with kolkhozniks shivering with cold. Those people did not understand Yiddish, of course, but as mom told me, they would give the performance quite a warm welcome. Poor actors! Poor people! They were ready to applaud art they did not understand.

In many towns with Jewish populations, however, especially after emigration to Israel began, which led to the rise of Jewish consciousness, a performance by the Yiddish Ensemble turned out to be quite a significant event of local life; the auditoriums were packed with young people who came with parents who translated Yiddish into Russian for them; after a funny line the audience’s laughter often rolled in two waves.
Those audiences, in Donetsk, Kishinev, Riga, Vilnius, Odessa, and many other cities, gave the Yiddish Ensemble an enthusiastic welcome.

Between tours, the troupe rehearsed in Moscow, usually in some basements or other similarly unsuitable places. Their performances in Moscow and Leningrad were extremely rare. But I did attend a couple of them in Moscow in the 1970s. I recall the unusual, uplifting atmosphere in the theater. After one such performance, my friend Mark Zilberquit, now a well-known Moscow publisher, gave me a rare, fragile book he had found somewhere, titled “The Life of a Yiddish Actor,” published in 1938, which had many old photos, including that of my grandfather, Nathan Dranov. I was struck by the resemblance.

I recall further, how, in about 1974, at Shwartser’s anniversary celebration in the VTO, actors and writers were congratulating him and suddenly my mother also rose to speak. She talked about the fate of the Yiddish theater. “It was hard for us before the revolution. But it is not much better now. We are still wandering,” she said. And she went on to talk about the death of the GOSET and the continuing hardships of its, now elderly, veterans having to endure an itinerant life.

I sat in the packed auditorium, watching her in fear. “What is she saying?” I thought, a chill running down my spine. Those were the not-so-liberal 1970s. “It will not end well!” But my mom got away with it.

Many pages in my mom’s memoirs are devoted to my father, Boris. Like her, he was an “actors’ child.” His father, Nathan Dranov, a Yiddish actor, quite famous before the revolution, and his wife Nadina (Nadia) Dranova both hailed from Warsaw. Mom’s story about the suitcase filled with stones instead of props and the golden pocket watch with the initials N.D. is one of the family legends I had heard since childhood.

According to another family story, after Nathan died in Harbin, (I do not know the exact year, but some records show it was about 1922), Nadina decided to go to America. She had only enough money for two tickets to San Francisco or one to New York. The family council decided that she would go by herself, leaving Boris in the care of his uncle and aunt, the Kuschinskis, also well-known Yiddish actors at the time, and later, after settling down in New York, come back for him. In New York, she was accepted in a Yiddish troupe led by the famous Adler: they knew her and Nathan. That was, I estimate, in about 1924.

They say that one of Nadina’s brothers, emigrating to America some years later, saw her name on the playbill and came over to the dressing room during the play to give her flowers. That is how they first saw each other after some 20 years.

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30 All-Russia Theatrical Society.
Nadina came to the Soviet Union twice, first in 1928 or 1929, and then again, if I am not mistaken, in the 1930s. Both times she met with her son, trying to persuade him to go to America with her. He refused. The first time, having returned to Odessa with his aunt and uncle, he refused for ideological reasons; he had become a Komsomolets, an idealistic young communist, joining the party in 1929. There, in Odessa, he met my mother in 1925 or 1926. The second time he refused for a different reason — he was very ill and/or might have been afraid to apply for a visa in those years. I do not know if I would have been born if my dad had gone with his mother to America in the 1920s.

I have always been interested in the fate of my grandmother Nadina who emigrated to the States. I tried to find her. It turned out I was too late; she died somewhere in New York in 1976. The place of her burial is unknown.

I remember my father well, although I was only 11 when he died. Hunched over by his illness but cheerful, witty and entertaining when his friends came to visit — Iliusha and Lina Vaisfeld, a writer; Moisey and Elsha Belenki; Milia Vilensky, a historian; Julietta Romeovna Batistini, a journalist who worked in the state “Gypsy Theatre”; Ida Sirkina; Tamara Kvitko — all those people my mother recalls so warmly. Those were wonderful gatherings indeed. I watched and enjoyed them very much.

I do remember the ugly scenes my mother talks about, but they did not leave a lasting memory; apparently, unpleasant things get easily forgotten in an otherwise happy childhood. I remember other things: for example, how my father helped different people, including those who, having been “rehabilitated,” returned from exile and the Gulag in the 1950s, such as Lidia Veniaminovna Milkhiker, my first English teacher.

My dad died in 1956 of heart disease. I believe they would have been able to save him here in America. Or would they have?

It remains for me to add that my other grandfather, Abram Kurtz, a Yiddish actor in Warsaw, whom my mother recalls so fondly, died in Treblinka during the German occupation. And my other grandmother, Bablina, whom mom talks so much about in her memoirs, was determined to emigrate with us, but she died one year before we left for America. She passed away in our apartment in Moscow at the age of 88.

Mother’s sister Aniuta emigrated to the United States too and died in 1988 here in New Jersey. Her daughter Iva, my cousin, now 84, lives in New Jersey. Nina Sirotina, Sonia Binik, Grisha Traktovenko, my mom’s fellow actors from Mikhoels’ theater and the Moscow Yiddish Ensemble, all passed away in New York in the 1980s and 1990s.
Today, of all the actors of Mikhoels theater, only three survivors remain: Ethel Kovenskaya in Israel, Mania Kotliarova in Moscow, and my mom’s close friend Elsha Bezverkhnaya, wife of Moisey Belenki. She is 93 and lives in Israel. Her son Solomon lives in New York. We are friends.  

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As I said earlier, my mother’s memoirs, containing so much private, personal, bitter and subjective memories, were clearly not meant for publication. But it seems to me that the personality and life of that remarkable, talented, self-effacing woman and everything she lived through in “the best country in the world” is of interest not only to those who knew her. You be the judge of that.

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31 This Afterword was written originally in 2003. All these people have since passed away. I saw Elsha in a nursing home in Israel in 2007; she still looked great and we had a wonderful time. “Do you know that I was present at your birth?” she said. Both Solomon and Elsha passed away a few years ago, too.
On So-Called Russian Euroasianism: In Reply to Dmitry Shlapentokh

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Dmitry Shlapentokh’s article on Russian Eurasianism [Comparative Civilizations Review: No. 81. 9-29, 2019] contains a number of questionable statements without any attempt at documentation in support of his thesis. For example, in explaining why his version of “Eurasianism” was marginalized in the “West,” he states Western observers approached Russia from the perspective that “the triumph of American-type capitalism …shall be the omega point of all humanity, including Russia.” [emphasis in the original]. Moreover, “Gorbachev and Yeltsin were deeply hated by the majority.” [My emphasis.] No references are cited in support of these extraordinary statements, which would indeed require some impossible poll of the perspective of such observers. Ironically, according to the web site of his own institution, although born in the Ukraine, Shlapentokh has been in the West at least since the 1980s, [https://clas.iusb.edu/history/faculty-and-staff/shlapentokh.html, accessed October 21, 2019], so he is a “Western observer” himself.

He also provides in the guise of his academic approach an egregious defense of Putin’s expansionism: Putin, Shlapentokh informs us,

1) “engaged in conflict with Ukraine only because the majority of Russian-speaking East Ukrainians indeed wanted to be closer to Russia than to Kiev” [my emphasis], that
2) “losing the Black Sea fleet Crimean ports would have been a strategic blow against Russia’s geopolitical position” and
3) “…there was no desire [by Putin] to expand to territories with non-Russian-speaking people hostile to Moscow.”

These are extraordinary examples of what may be termed Putinophilia, or in analogy to the USSR, Putinism.

Shlapentokh misstates Putin’s “desires,” which are clearly to reestablish for Russia the role of the former USSR. A former KGB officer, he is simply shrewd enough to calculate the cost-benefit equation in how far he can push Russia’s position, either by small wars or military adventures as in Georgia or the Crimea, or indirectly by aiding tyrants elsewhere as in Syria, without provoking a hot war. Shlapentokh can’t possibly know that Putin has no desire to expand into the other former USSR republics. If there is anything to learn from history, it is that we can no more believe Putin than any other dictator.
**Book Reviews**


Reviewed by John Berteaux

**Applying Wisdom When Civilization Is at a Crossroads**

Whether we are talking about the ongoing climate crisis, the global wave of street protests, the plastic in our bodies, food, and water, or the near world financial meltdowns that seem to occur with increasing frequency, it appears for many a coming apocalypse is a real possibility. Journalist and author Jean-Baptiste Malet (2019, 16) reports, “Prophesying the end of the world is now fashionable.” In current parlance apocalyptic talk is called collapsology. Of course, there is nothing new about collapsology. After all, there was the Flood, the plagues in Egypt, and Christians have been predicting the Rapture or Second Coming for more than a millennium. If, however, civilization is on the road to collapse and wisdom is the quality of being able to make thoughtful decisions that affect the common good during times of catastrophe, a natural question is: What’s the wise thing to do now?1 Historian Geoffrey Parker (*Global Crisis*) and Professor of Finance William Goetzmann (*Money Changes Everything*) advance works that trace fundamental difficulties in harnessing wisdom when nations are in crisis. They track neglected forces that influence our mental lives, addressing the difficulty of grounding practical judgment on more than appetites, urges, or desires (Parker 2013; Goetzmann 2016, 675 & 370).

My whole life I have heard it said that wisdom requires calmer heads prevail when all about you people are losing theirs and things are falling apart. Yet, celebrated teen environmentalist Greta Thurnberg does not want us to be calm or hopeful. She wants us to panic. Greta scolds, “I want you to feel the fear I feel every day and then I want you to act” (Malet 2019, 16). Despite empathizing with her appeal, still I believe we should be careful. If Parker and Goetzmann are correct, unearthing a common good has a lot to do with maintaining a critical attitude.

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1 Although there are a variety of wisdom traditions (Abrahamic, Buddhism, Taoism), in the West the standard way of thinking about wisdom often accentuates Abrahamic conventions – ideas of philosophy, religion, and folklore drawn from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Narváez 2014, 232).
Common sense may dictate that it is possible to look in and subject our predetermined ideas, values, and beliefs to rigorous and imaginative inquiry, yet Professor Emeritus of Comparative and World Literature Michael Palencia-Roth points out we are not transparent to ourselves or to others. Professor Palencia-Roth says, “We are, after all, the stories that we tell ourselves, and we use those stories, consciously or not, to justify our thoughts and actions.” He writes there are stories or narratives that you and I “deliberately construct at the conscious level, for explanatory and justificatory purposes.” There are also the stories that operate at a more unconscious level. These unconscious stories may look like conventional narratives but they tend to be determined by hidden motives (Palencia-Roth 2015, 1–2). In Freudian psychoanalysis these unconscious stories are like dreams motivated by insensible desires. As a result, it isn’t possible to look in and appreciate all the reasons for our actions, reasons that may be relegated to the fringe of consciousness.

In his 800-page tome, Global Crisis, historian Geoffrey Parker explores occurrences surrounding the “Little Ice Age” — a change in the weather that occurred in the seventeenth century and led to the death of a third of the world’s population. Even though war, fire, and major epidemics have contributed to widespread destruction and dislocation around the globe Parker’s concern is that historians often overlook key events behind catastrophes – happenings behind the story that affect how we see, feel, or think. According to Parker (2013, xviii) although extreme climate events produce catastrophes, they often take us by surprise and are then relegated to the edge of consciousness. He observes that conscious and unconscious narratives matter because they draw attention to the limits of what seems good sense (Parker 2013, 325, 356).

To consider a case in point, Parker argues “in his book Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes (then a refugee from the English Civil War living in France) provided perhaps the most celebrated description of the consequences of the fatal synergy between natural and human disasters faced by him and his contemporaries (Parker 2013, xxvi).” Hobbes (1996, 89) writes of the state of nature:

There is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of Time; no arts; no letters; no society. And, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

The problem is that generally Hobbes is recognized as a practical philosopher who lived at the time of powerful partisan political conflicts. The English Civil War (1642-1651) lay in the background of his work. He was writing at a time when the feudal social and political system had begun to give way.
There arose within society the beginnings of a capitalist class embracing notions illegitimate in a feudal society. As a result, this famed quote from Hobbes’s *Leviathan* is taken to be merely an assertive characterization of life outside of a body politic, (in a state of nature.)

In contrast, Parker pushes chroniclers to analyze Hobbes’s hidden motivations. He suggests that the experiences that led to Hobbes’s intellectual fervor were also the product of extreme weather occurrences. In other words, although necessary, it is not sufficient to acknowledge that Hobbes was writing during a civil war and that the political culture of the time had begun to collapse. In addition, seventeenth-century Europe experienced some of its coldest weather in over a millennium. Hence, when raconteurs of the time remarked, “Those who live in times to come will not believe that we who are alive now have suffered such toil, pain and misery,” they were not solely influenced by the political controversies of the day (Parker 2014, xxv.) According to Parker, linking the social and psychological impact of climate change in the seventeenth-century with the political controversies of the day alters our understanding of the past and could offer significant application at the moment. Presently, to appraise the consequences of climate change, the center of attention is current and future events. Parker labors to make us aware that another strategy exists. “Instead of hitting ‘fast forward,’” he advises, “we can ‘rewind the tape of History’ and study the genesis, impact, and consequences of past catastrophes” (Parker 2014, xix).

Just as we are not transparent to ourselves, so too we are not transparent to others. In *Money Changes Everything* Professor of Finance William Goetzmann reminds us, though “civilizations over the past 5000 years have faced a common set of problems and have either borrowed or invented a similar set of financial tools to solve them” imagining the lives of others is problematic. Take as an illustration measures implemented in response to the harsh worldwide economic depression of the 1930s. Countries around the world, including the United States, suffered severe unemployment, drastic declines in industrial output and acute deflation. The standard way of thinking about Franklin D. Roosevelt’s (FDR’s) presidency (1933 - 1945) is as a time when the country awoke, turned a new leaf, and began to rationally resolve problems associated with the Great Depression. FDR’s administration became concerned about old age, poverty, and protecting vulnerable citizens. New government programs offered workers social insurance that paid federally funded unemployment benefits, retirement benefits, and gave federal assistance to widowers and children (Goetzmann 2016, 493.) And yet, while FDR’s wisdom was apparent, still it is difficult to find people who never make mistakes or who are always on the right side. FDR’s compassion, good judgement, and foresight attacked unemployment and uncertainty but he was also accused of turning his back on African-Americans.
Specifically, in discussions of the Social Security Act of 1935, one controversial issue has been its exclusion of farm workers and domestics from coverage – targeting the disproportionately minority sectors of the work force and denying protections and benefits routinely afforded whites. These exclusions have led many to insist that the Social Security Act of 1935 was biased against women and minorities (Berteaux 2017, 65). In contrast Public Historian Larry Dewitt (2010, 49–50) claims that this is a story line that has unjustifiably passed from historical narrative to historical fact.

Historian Dewitt (2010, 49) argues “the racial-bias thesis is both conceptually flawed and unsupported by the existing empirical evidence . . . The allegations of racial bias in the founding of the [New Deal Era] Social Security program, based on the coverage exclusions, do not hold up under detailed scrutiny.” While Dewitt offers a number of reasons, based on empirical evidence, to support his thesis, I wonder about the limits of practical judgement, given the underlying psychological and social complexity of the world. It may seem trite to say individuals are unwittingly influenced by the world they inhabit. Yet in view of the prevalence and wide spread acceptance of racial narratives in the United States in 1935, how might one accurately assess the extent to which race was or was not excluded for explanatory and justificatory purposes in the development of Social Security policy? Given that analyzing our own motivations is not that easy, is it possible to simply look in and tell what others are thinking?

Goetzmann’s basic premise is that “civilization demands sophisticated tools for managing the economics of time and risk.” Financial technology, he argues, emerged as a set of methods, ideas, or tools developed and maintained as hunters and gatherers came together to form larger and larger settlements (Goetzmann 2016, 71). For instance, “[ancient] Rome,” he observes, “became an empire because of its financial technology – coinage as well as investment and credit institutions. Finance was not a side show – it was the lifeblood of Rome” (Goetzmann 2016, 131).

Although financial instruments, markets, and contracts appear to objectify our fears and aspirations, Goetzmann’s point is that we cannot simply point to finance to thoroughly assess motivation. Consider, speaking before a group of fervent supporters in Manchester, New Hampshire, President Donald Trump suggests that he speaks to the fears of many Americans. He contends they should “put aside their distaste [for him] for their own economic well-being . . . You have no choice but to vote for me,” he argued, “because your 401(k), everything is going to be down the tubes.” What Trump advises is that economics should always triumph over politics. What is valuable, all should subordinate to what is profitable.

In contrast, Goetzmann observes that Socrates had a problem with the use of money. Drawing on the work of Richard Seaford, Money and the Early Greek Mind, Goetzmann insists that while “money played an important role in the mental framework of ancient Athenian society . . . Socrates recognized this and did not approve. . .
In Socrates’s view, the monetization amounted to bribery of the soul. Salaried service corrupted incentives” (Goetzmann 2016, 95). The money system, Socrates argued, reoriented citizens’ identity away from traditional virtues, values, and institutions, making it difficult to assess their intentions.

In addition, Goetzmann directs our attention to how we mislead ourselves, believing what we prefer while ignoring the truth. In his view, “it seems almost as though the ancient part of the brain, the part that thinks in myths and stories, has harbored a long grudge against the rational mind, and jealous of its increasing control over human behavior, it has seized on the failures of reason” (Goetzmann 2016, 379). For example, drawing on our most recent financial catastrophe, he writes,

> Since the most recent crash, securitization of mortgages is dismissed as a hopelessly complex financial innovation that failed, and society has turned the modern crisis into a simplistic morality play with leading financiers as villains. These archetypes are dangerous because of their universal appeal to the subconscious, particularly in democratic societies in which elected official need to communicate to the electorate. (Goetzmann 2016, 370)

In making this comment, Goetzmann stresses the importance of probing the connection between reality and our subjective experience.

What does all this add up to? Professors Parker and Goetzmann remind us that, in many ways, our complex mental lives are constraining. To be sure, the Oracle at Delphi may have been on to something by advising Chaerephon that Socrates was the wisest man in all of Athens because he was the only person aware of the limits of his perceptions (Cumming 1956, 25–28.) As Renaissance philosopher, and essayist Michel de Montaigne (1993, 425) remarks, “What does Socrates treat of more fully than himself? To what does he lead his disciples’ conversation more often than to talk about themselves, not about the lesson of their book, but about the essence and movement of their soul?” Hence, it seems applying wisdom when civilization is at a crossroads requires first, conceding the limits of one’s acumen.
References


EdX and HarvardX. China X. China’s Past, Present and Future.  
https://www.edx.org/chinax-chinas-past-present-future

Part I: China's Political and Intellectual Foundations: from the Sage Kings to Confucius

Reviewed by Constance Wilkinson

It's a MOOC, a Massive Open On-line Course. It is China X, a 10-part survey course covering the 6,000+ year history of China from the distant beginnings of its civilization up into the present.

China X is the brainchild of Harvard University's Harvard X, “a strategic initiative, to enable faculty to create online learning experiences . . . and enable groundbreaking research in online pedagogy.” Free public education at its Harvard-quality finest, China X is a challenging opportunity that is available to anyone (and everyone) who can connect to it on the internet.

It was conceived by (and is taught by) Harvard professors Peter K. Bol and William C. Kirby and staff, including a lively team of pre-doc and post-doc teaching assistants.

China X is self-paced, well-designed, and intriguing, featuring video presentations by China X lead professors Bol and Kirby, along with others from Harvard and beyond. Each sub-section - or module - offers assignments - mainly primary source readings - with opportunities for individual interpretations and discussion, colorful interactive maps, visual explorations of artifacts, with follow-up assessments and even "office hours."

Information delivery has been broken down into short, easily digestible chunks - extremely helpful for those with short attention spans - not to mention helpful to those with lives lived on the run (which I won't mention) - so that if one stumbles on an extra 5-10 minutes, it's easy to re-pick up the narrative thread and continue to progress through the course.

One can gain access via desktop, laptop, or smart-phone, with the program transferring seamlessly from one device to another, so that learning can occur on a bus, train, plane, boat, subway, or late night in bed.
Indeed, this MOOC's educational process is swift, sweet, and surprisingly addictive. Within its very first module, Part I's use of visuals succeeded in magically/effortlessly implanting in my consciousness a new understanding of the effect China's geography and climate had (and has) on the course of its civilization, shaping politics and culture, as dynasties ebb and flow - or ebb when flooded.

Worse yet, it features a terrifying musical earworm mnemonic which -- to the tune of *Frere Jacques* -- implants in mind 12 Chinese dynasties -- "Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han; Shang Zhou, Qin, Han." - in chronological order.

Colorful dynamic interactive maps illuminate the physical features that characterize China: plains, mountains, the great rivers. One can move the maps back and forth in time, changing modes of movement, population shifts and twists and turns as we witness puce Chu being gobbled up by magenta Song.

Professor Bol presents two different versions of the origins and early history of China: one based on archaeology and another based on stories/histories from written texts.

Based on physical evidence, discussion of origins begins with migrations from Africa to Asia; Harvard Professor of Archaeology Rown Flad presents Swedish archeologist Johan Gunnar Andersson's groundbreaking work done in the early 20th century at Zhoukoudian (Chou-k'ou-tien) which led to the discovery of Peking Man, Homo Erectus; at Yangshao, Andersson finds evidence of culture: painted kiln-fired pottery, the cultivation of millet, domestication of animals.

Artifacts are brought out from Harvard's Arthur M. Sackler Museum collection for our observation: we can contemplate up-close their fragile Neolithic-era pots made of clay, smoothed, decorated, fired in a kiln. We can see maps of the many late Neolithic settlements of China in addition to Yangshao: Hongshan, Tuzhu, Dawenkou, Majiabeng, Hemudu, Tanshishan, Fengbitou, Shizia, Shanbei, Dazi. We view two Neolithic Yangshao burials and are asked what conclusions can be drawn from observations of objects placed in the graves - one is buried with clay pots, the other buried with an ax-like tool that could be jade.

The existence of a Xia Dynasty is posited in texts, unsupported by archaeological evidence. However, the Shang Dynasty's existence, from the 17th to the 11th century BCE, was confirmed by the discovery of Bronze Age artifacts.

Learners are able to view Shang Dynasty artifacts that are in the Sackler collection; there are two important categories of objects of crucial importance: bronze ritual vessels typically used as burial offerings and what are called "oracle bones."
Burial pits in Shang include bones and many valuable objects such as bronze pots and ceremonial daggers. In the Shang Dynasty there is a constant demand for ritual objects to honor the dead, funerary offerings to the dead from the living, a practice that consumes social energy and wealth based on beliefs about how to create conditions of auspiciousness.

The Sackler Museum collection includes many of these objects, which learners can inspect in detail, as they have been filmed 360 degrees around. The technical structure and social function of objects such as a dragon-headed wine vessel are explained by Dr. Robert D. Mowry, Head of the Department of Asian Art at the Sackler Museum and by Professor Zhang Changping.

Shang dynasty rulers gained legitimacy through their ability to communicate with ancestors through making sacrifices (sometimes human) and by their use of divinatory objects called "oracle bones."

Thanks to the Sackler collection, we see and can study actual artifacts, tortoise cartilage and large shoulder bones used as instruments to help rulers in making decisions; writing starts as record-keeping for questions asked and predictions made, reading the cracks in the bones as one might read tea leaves.

Written information includes:
- The date (of the divination.)
- The topic (it will rain tomorrow - yes it will/no it won't.)
  *At this point, the ruler performs a ritual that will make a crack in the bone. He will then observe the way the bone cracks in response.*
- The interpretation (that's a yes/that's a no.)
  *The ruler gets to decide what the crack means.*
- Lastly, though rarely, the outcome: yes it rained/no it did not
  *Who wants to keep good records of bad divinations?*

Eventually Oracle Bone records include more and more pictures; over time this record-keeping evolves into the hieroglyphics of written Chinese.

What is striking is the emphasis on taking the advice of the bones; socio-political decisions are driven by successful reading of tea leaves; Oracle Bones are cast like dice (or a proto-I Ching.).

Professor Bol skips over the Yellow Emperor and the Divine Farmer entirely (not saying why) and concentrates on the latter three. Emperor Yao, according to Bol, “in some sense, invents government” around 2400 BCE. Yao creates useful agricultural calendars; he rules wisely — sagely, even, he harmonizes his subjects. Learners read excerpts from "The Canon of Yao" and discover Yao was "reverent, intelligent, accomplished, sincere, and mild."

The actions of the Sage Kings are seen solely through rose-colored glasses. Yao, Shun, Yu- their good qualities are pervasive! They are worthy! Modest! Respectful! Able to make bright [their] great virtue! Capable of bringing affection and harmony! Benevolent! Their good qualities are so pervasive as to make a learner take the accuracy of these descriptions with some grains of salt.

The Shang Dynasty is succeeded by the Zhou Dynasty; we can follow that transition as it is expresses itself in Zhou Dynasty bronzes, again, supplied by the Sackler Museum collection.

As the Bronze Age becomes the Iron Age, we see sharper, more durable tools and wider land cultivation. Tension between the central state and states on its periphery increase; from the Spring and Autumn Period of the Eastern Zhou on there is increased social frictions; with the beginning of the Warring States period, there is, as the name suggests, constant warfare.

Along with the Warring States comes the rise of warring states of mind — Confucius and Mencius and Lao Tse and Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu), among many others. Excerpts from each are offered, with passages from Confucius' Analects examined at some length. The lecture on Zhuangzi by Professor Puett is quite long and is simply superb.

Having learned (via Part 1) that China traditionally sought wisdom from history, those interested in China's present urgently need to know its past.

For that reason - and for its graceful ease of academic engagement - China X, Part 1 is well worth your attention. Have a look at the trailer!

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- Comparative Scientific Principles, Economic and Political Systems
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In October 1961, in Salzburg, Austria, an extraordinary group of scholars gathered to create the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. Among the 26 founding members from Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, England, Russia, the United States, China and Japan were such luminaries as Pitirim Sorokin and Arnold Toynbee.

For six days, the participants debated such topics as the definition of “civilization,” problems in the analysis of complex cultures, civilizational encounters in the past, the Orient versus the Occident, problems of universal history, theories of historiography, and the role of the “human sciences” in “globalization.” The meeting was funded by the Austrian government, in cooperation with UNESCO, and received considerable press coverage. Sorokin was elected the Society’s first president.

After several meetings in Europe, the advancing age of its founding members and the declining health of then president, Othmar F. Anderle, were important factors in the decision to transfer the Society to the United States.

Between 1968 and 1970 Roger Williams Wescott of Drew University facilitated that transition. In 1971, the first annual meeting of the ISCSC (US) was held in Philadelphia. Important participants in that meeting and in the Society’s activities during the next years included Benjamin Nelson (the Society’s first American president), Roger Wescott, Vytautas Kavolis, Matthew Melko, David Wilkinson, Rushton Coulborn and C.P. Wolf. In 1974, the Salzburg branch was formally dissolved, and from that year to the present there has been only one International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC).

The presidents of the ISCSC are, in order: In Europe, Pitirim Sorokin and Othmar Anderle; in the United States, Benjamin Nelson, Vytautas Kavolis, Matthew Melko, Michael Palencia-Roth, Roger Wescott, Shuntaro Ito (from Japan), Wayne Bledsoe, Lee Daniel Snyder, Andrew Targowski, David Rosner, Toby Huff, and current president Lynn Rhodes. To date, the Society has held 47 meetings, most of them in the United States but also in Salzburg, Austria; Santo Domingo, The Dominican Republic; Dublin, Ireland; Chiba, Japan; Frenchman’s Cove, Jamaica; St. Petersburg, Russia; Paris, France; New Brunswick, Canada; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Suzhou, China.

More than 30 countries are represented in the Society’s membership. Its intellectual dynamism and vibrancy over the years have been maintained and enhanced through its annual meetings, its publications, and the participation of such scholars as Talcott Parsons, Hayden White, Immanuel Wallerstein, Gordon Hewes, André Gunder Frank, Marshall Sahlins, Lynn White Jr., and Jeremy Sabloff.

The Society is committed to the idea that complex civilizational problems can best be approached through multidisciplinary analyses and debate by scholars from a variety of fields. *The Comparative Civilizations Review*, which welcomes submissions from the Society’s members as well as other scholars, has been published continually since its inaugural issue in 1979.

Prof. Michael Palencia-Roth
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