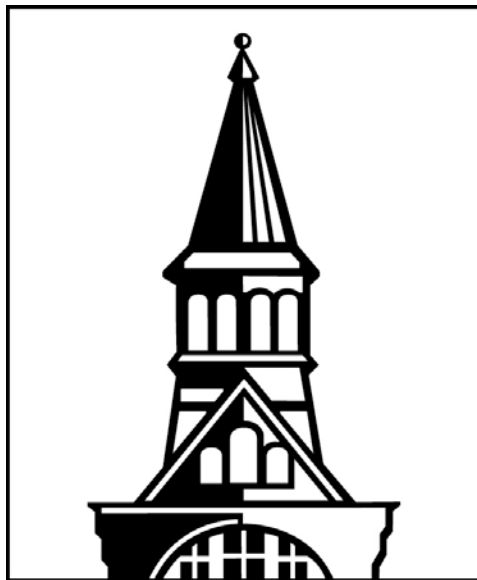


The University of Vermont History Review



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2015-2016

The UVM History Review is a yearly publication of the University of Vermont History Department. It seeks to publish scholarly essays and book reviews of a historical nature from current and past UVM students.

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Cover: UVM's 1958 graduating class from *The University of Vermont Alumni Magazine*, vol. 39 no. 01 (July 1958). As described in the magazine: "...the graduating class lined up on the steps of Billings, having its official class picture taken by Mr. Louis L. McAllister, of Burlington. He has taken pictures of undergraduates and alumni for the past 48 years, and the number of UVM students and alumni who have appeared in the ground glass of his camera runs into the tens of thousands. Mr. McAllister, atop a 12-foot ladder, is using the panoramic camera he bought in 1915 – and it's still going strong."

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to present to you the 2015-2016 University of Vermont History Review, which collects the very best historical work composed by the UVM undergraduate and graduate student body. Below you will find seven interesting and well-researched articles. The topics range from the psychology of women in the siege of Leningrad to the legal history of involuntary servitude in Britain. Notably, this issue features a substantial body of work focusing on World War II and Holocaust history. The diversity of approaches taken here to examine World War II and the Holocaust not only speaks to UVM's strength in teaching the period, but also to the creative ways in which students continue to offer new perspectives on the war and its aftermath.

I am very proud to have worked with such an excellent editorial staff this year. The editors of the History Review worked tirelessly in collaboration with the authors to ensure that each article was refined and revised until it was ready for publication. I could not have asked for a better or more dedicated group of people to work with throughout the year. The editors' work lies behind the scenes throughout this volume, on every page and in every footnote, as they silently and thanklessly helped to make every article the best version of itself.

As senior editor, I would like to thank each author and editor for their contributions to this year's History Review. I would also like to give special thanks Professor Francis Nicosia, the faculty liaison for the History Review, as well as Kathleen Truax and Kathy Carolin for their assistance.

Adam Quinn, May 23, 2016

Involuntary White Servitude and English Law

Daniella Bassi

The birth of English Virginia in the early seventeenth century was like that of any infant in that it was quickly followed by hunger. In the case of colonial Virginia, the appetite was for labor rather than milk: there was a vast expanse of arable land to be divided up among wealthy venturers, cleared, and exploited in the form of tobacco plantations. The same was true of the choice Caribbean holdings—Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, among others—that the English Crown also acquired around this time, with the difference that sugar was to be the staple crop to which the land would be devoted. The inception of English North America, with its insatiable need for labor, coincided with a swell in the unemployed population of England¹ due to the enclosure of common farmland (incentivized by an industrializing economy) and the residual effects of serfdom's end.² This large unemployed, destitute population was the source of most indentured servants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This large unemployed population was a resource that, like the Virginia Colony, needed infrastructure to be laid down before it could be tapped. This infrastructure was found in the English Poor Laws of the late-fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and in English, Irish, and Scottish convict transport legislation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both of which facilitated the purging of the poor from the British Isles and their exploitation as bonded laborers in the English colonies. This paper explores the classist undertones of English law from the end of feudalism to the early eighteenth century and will argue that many more indentured servants than numerical data will ever be able to account for may have come to the colonies against their will by virtue of its draconian provisions.

Over the years, many scholars have directly and indirectly mitigated the involuntary nature of many servants' indenture. The extent of their poverty has been questioned, and kidnapping has been dismissed as rare or effectively legitimized because

¹ In this essay, any mention of "England" refers to the Kingdom of England, which included Wales, which was conquered by Edward I in 1283 and annexed under the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284. Wales was fully incorporated into the Kingdom of England after the passage of the Laws in Wales Acts of 1536 and 1542, which reorganized Welsh lands and completed the imposition of the British legal system over them by ending the lingering use of Welsh laws. The effect of these rulings is important to this study, because from then on all English legislation applied to Wales as well. (*Britannica Academic*, s.v. "The Edwardian Settlement," "Rebellion and Annexation," and "Union with England" in "Wales," accessed December 10, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/634468/Wales>.)

² Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 43-46; Eugene Irving McCormac, *White Servitude in Maryland, 1634-1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1904): 8-9; Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 71; and William P. Quigley, "Five Hundred Years of English Poor Laws, 1349-1834: Regulating the Working and Nonworking Poor," *Akron Law Review* 30, no. 1 (1996): 83, <https://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/726694.pdf>.

it involved more inveigling than physical force.³ In their attempt at thoroughness and transparency, scholars have emphasized the rewards that followed servitude when it was survived and the fact that servants had legal right to seek redress for a master's abuses in court.⁴ They have also compared servitude to apprenticeship and labor in husbandry of the era, not simply to find a structural or systemic ancestor to servitude, but sometimes to emphasize the commonness of bondage and the overall lack of workers' rights that characterized the era.⁵ The fact of the matter, however, is that the commonness of certain practices does not make them okay. The fact that someone is not at the very bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum does not sanction their suffering, and compensation never effaces a wrong.⁶

This paper questions the supposed willingness of white indentured servants, arguing instead that most either came against their will or were forced to consent to indenture by circumstances created by the anti-poor stance of English law and society. It will first examine the relationship of feudalism and the English Poor Laws to white indentured servitude in the seventeenth century, identifying the scenarios that these systems created for involuntary servitude among specific segments of the English population. Next, it will examine the additional legislative infrastructure that was put in place to increase the yield of involuntary servants that would keep the English colonies supplied with domestic, agricultural, and artisanal/specialized laborers, namely the English (and Scottish)⁷ convict transportation acts of the mid-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, as well as Interregnum- and Restoration-era legislation regarding religious dissenters, political rebels, prisoners of war, and those whom Hilary Beckles has termed "the defenseless poor."⁸ It will also reveal the adjoining agreements struck between merchants, ship captains, municipal officers, and the English Crown that allowed for the collection and physical conveyance of involuntary servants off the streets of cities like Bristol and London and to the colonies. Private interests were key to the continuation of the servant trade; they facilitated the exploitation of the "reserve" of

³ David W. Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), ix, 5, 49-50, 76-78, 97-99, 113, 208-209; A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43, 68; and Smith, 5-7, 67-68, 85-86, 138-140, 150-151.

⁴ Galenson, 7 and 171-172. In fact, many servants did not survive their indentures. The case of Barbados is a glaring example, where 3,000 servants imported per year by the 1650's still amounted to a total white population of only 13,000. Newman, 75-76.

⁵ Galenson, 5-10 and 171-172.

⁶ Galenson has, moreover, also shown that many servants were not, in fact, middling people, as more recent scholarship had begun to assert. Galenson, 76-78.

⁷ The Kingdoms of England and Scotland were united in 1707 by the Acts of Union (the English Union with Scotland Act of 1706 and the Scottish Union with England Act of 1707) to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. Their Treaty of Union, signed in 1706, allowed for separate legal systems to be retained, which makes Scottish law in effect during and passed after that year relevant to this study. *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Act of Union," accessed December 10, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/614670/Act-of-Union>, and *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "The Act of Union and its Results" in "Scotland," accessed December 10, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/529440/Scotland>.

⁸ Hilary M. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 46.

unemployed able bodies that existed in England around this period by serving as its exporters. In the course of these arguments, this paper will delineate the classes of involuntary servants and question the nature of consent and the value that it might retain when there are few options available to those presented with the choice of bonded labor.

English Poor Laws, 1349-1601: Laying the Foundation for Involuntary Servitude

The English Poor Laws were a response to increasing numbers of people wandering from town to town with no fixed employment. These people, considered vagrants, were seen as a burden on the English people and economy.⁹ But this vagrant population did not materialize out of thin air: the end of serfdom in the early fourteenth century and of the informal poor relief system of the Catholic Church in 1536 drastically changed the social order, putting strain on a class that was not used to fending for itself.¹⁰ During the feudal period¹¹, the English lower classes were almost exclusively tied to the land of a wealthy landlord. They worked the land and in return were provided with their basic needs.¹² William Quigley notes that “[p]rior to the Norman Conquest [of 1066], as many as two-thirds of the population existed in [this] state of slavery, though even within the slave population there were class distinctions based on the value of service to the manor.”¹³ Over the course of the fourteenth century, this system was gradually replaced with a more egalitarian relationship between landlord and serf. Quigley describes it as follows:

As slavery phased out, each serf developed an economic relationship with the landlord. The serf, in return for being able to farm the land gave the landlord a share of the crop harvested or the animals raised. Or the serf would perform services for the landlord. Common law recognized two

⁹ William P. Quigley, "Five Hundred Years of English Poor Laws, 1349-1834: Regulating the Working and Nonworking Poor," *Akron Law Review* 30, no. 1 (1996): 75, 77-78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

¹¹ The exact date of feudalism's introduction to England is unknown. Some form of it likely developed in the early Middle Ages, as it did in Continental Europe. In the eleventh century, the Normans introduced the system that is studied today after they conquered England in 1066. This Norman feudalism remained solidly in place until the fourteenth century, at which point it began a gradual decline. By the sixteenth century it had largely become a relic of the past. The system was not technically abolished until 1660, however, when the Tenures Abolition Act, which took key feudal rights away from the Crown, such as its ultimate ownership of all lands, was passed. *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Feudalism," accessed December 09, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/205583/feudalism>; *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Feudal Land Tenure," accessed December 10, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/205571/feudal-land-tenure>; and *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "The Introduction of Feudalism" s.v. "The Normans (1066-1154) in "United Kingdom," accessed December 10, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/615557/United-Kingdom>. Also, Tenures Abolition Act, 1660, 12 Charles II, c. 24 § 4, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Cha2/12/24/section/IV> and "The Norman Conquest," last modified fall, 2015, <https://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/123/123%209%20Norman%20Conquest.htm>.

¹² Quigley, 74.

¹³ *Ibid.*

classes of manorial tenants: freemen and villein, “with the villein having no ordinary recourse to the common law for protection against his lord.”¹⁴

By the fifteenth century, this latter system had largely been superseded by wage labor with the advent of factories geared toward wool production.¹⁵ As the wool industry grew, Quigley states, “the landlords saw the villeinage as no longer necessary for their economic survival, they could make more by turning out many of their numerous small tenant farmers and combining the small farms into large pastures to raise sheep.”¹⁶ With the rise of free labor, however, came the disappearance of feudalism’s “paternalistic system of economic security.”¹⁷

Following this long period of transition, during which newly free and mobile laborers might have found themselves struggling to make a fully independent living and thus might have sought recourse in poor relief, the established system of welfare was also eliminated. Before the advent of the Poor Law system, the government had been under no obligation to assist the poor. Relief for “widows, orphans, and all of the poor and oppressed” was the responsibility of parish (Catholic) church institutions, in particular monasteries.¹⁸ Ecclesiastical institutions were, in turn, supported by parish locals who had been brought up with the belief that “the poor were to be given charity” and that “there was a duty to tithe or give something to the institutional church so that the church may, after deducting for its own expenses, give a percentage of that to the poor.”¹⁹ Quigley gives a brief summary of the system and its demise after the Protestant Reformation that is worth quoting at length:

In the sixth century...monasteries emerged as centers for the relief of the poor, particularly in rural areas. Some religious communities were formed for the primary purpose of helping care for the poor. Later, hospitals, which cared for not only the sick but the orphans and the aged, grew out of the monastery experiences and were built alongside or attached to many monasteries. Church authorities directed that each local parish, and each geographical collection of parishes[,] called dioceses, take responsibility for assisting the poor in their area. This continued until 1536 when, after the Protestant Reformation, Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries forcing out the religious inhabitants and the poor who lived in their institutions.²⁰

¹⁴ Ibid., 74 and Robert C. Palmer, *English Law in the Age of the Black Death 1348-1381* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), *supra* note 3, 16, quoted in Quigley, 74.

¹⁵ Ibid., 75.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 75-76.

¹⁹ Ibid., 76.

²⁰ Ibid. Note: in 1534, Henry VIII severed ties with the Catholic Church and formed the Church of England. This separation was largely due to the papacy’s refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon (as opposed to philosophical or theological reasons, though he might beg to differ).

Thus the end of feudalism and the dissolution of Catholic monasteries marked the disappearance of two forms of social welfare for the landless English peasantry.

With feudalism's demise, guaranteed employment and labor simultaneously disappeared. This difficult social transformation was exacerbated by the concurrent attack of the Bubonic Plague of 1347-49, which "kill[ed] almost a third of England's population[.]" creating a labor shortage that allowed workers to wander from parish to parish extorting the highest wages possible from desperate landholders.²¹ The Ordinance of Laborers, passed in 1349 and revised in 1351 as the Statute of Laborers, sought to alleviate this shortage. It required "[t]hat every man and woman...able in body, and within the age of threescore years, not living in merchandise, nor exercising any craft, nor having of his own whereof he may live, nor proper land...and not serving any other...shall be bounden to serve him which so shall him require,"²² effectively forcing workers to go where needed to close the gap. The 1351 amendment also placed a ceiling on the wages that laborers could demand and, for good measure, that employers could pay (the original act had unsuccessfully tried to force workers to accept pre-Plague era wages). The punishment was imprisonment, which threatened those who "depart[ed] from...service before the end of the term agreed, without permission or reasonable cause."²³ The new legislation also forced laborers to work by the year "or other usual terms," rather than by the day or otherwise as the worker pleased, and placed "geographical limits on where work could be sought." As if that weren't enough, Quigley notes that "at the same time [that limits were placed on their wages] the prices for what [workers] bought to survive could continue to rise,"²⁴ the only stipulation being that "vendors of any victuals, be bound to sell [them] for a reasonable price, having regard for the price at which [they] are sold in the adjoining places: so that such vendors may have moderate gains."²⁵ These early provisions herded the able-bodied, working-age peasantry into a corner where the only options were to take the employment offered or go to prison. They also wrote contract labor—labor by indenture—on an annual basis into law and reinstated some of the abusive traits of serfdom, tying people to a temporary employer's premises *against their will* and offering no protections or means of backing out of a bad employment situation. The Ordinance of Laborers nipped a nascent post-feudalistic free labor system in the bud, putting the peasantry back into the hands of the English gentry. Arguably, the order that it imposed was even more favorable for landholders, since it essentially restored the terms of serfdom for the laborer while it left the traditions of a landlord's feudalistic commitment to his bondmen, which entailed more than just the provision of food and shelter, to evaporate. More importantly, the system of labor that it established was a direct structural ancestor to involuntary indentured servitude.

²¹ Ibid., 77-78.

²² Ordinance of Laborers, 1349, 23 Edward III, (Eng.), available at <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/seth/ordinance-labourers.asp> and Quigley, 77-83.

²³ Statute of Laborers, 1351, 25 Edward III, (Eng.), available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/statlab.asp> and Quigley, 79-81.

²⁴ Quigley, 82-83.

²⁵ Statute of Laborers, 1351, 25 Edward III, (Eng.), available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/statlab.asp>.

Problems arose because the wages imposed by the Statute of Laborers were not reasonable, quite out of sync with inflations in the cost of living. Insufficient income forces people to beg or steal to make ends meet. The Statute of Laborers made it a crime for anyone who was able-bodied to beg and made a criminal of anyone who might assist such a person. As usual, the penalty was imprisonment.²⁶ The Ordinance and Statute of Laborers thus not only laid an organizational foundation for the system of indentured servitude but also created a legal and social climate conducive to the involuntary recruitment of servants in the future: it criminalized destitution in the form of begging, which could land someone in jail, and by capping wages and simultaneously allowing inflation to rise uninhibited, made it almost impossible for the lower classes to find sufficient comfort through their toil, since resisting unfair employment arrangements could also land one in jail. While the laws encouraged a lack of sympathy among those with means, it brewed crime among those without them, who found themselves working hard but without relief and with no means of improving their situation that were not criminal—a combination that could make for reckless actions that also led to prison. The laws also set a direct legal precedent for involuntary servitude by permitting parish governments to forcibly employ those whom the Crown did not consider to be satisfactorily engaged wherever needed and denying them mobility. The only legal means of resistance would have been to dispute one's alleged status as an idler or beggar in court. Further, the fact that all roads led to prison ultimately allowed for the creation of a more literal reservoir of potential involuntary laborers, which subsequent convict transportation legislation would allow indentured servant merchants, colonial plantations, and the English Crown to exploit with ease.

The sixteenth century saw a new bout of vagrancy afflict England, which Quigley attributes to continuing changes in the economy, saying that “[t]enant farmers were evicted so more-profitable sheep might be raised and the prices of food and clothing rose much more quickly than wages.”²⁷ The new surge in wandering beggars compelled the English government to set about developing the system of poor relief that it had planted the seeds for when it stipulated that the able-bodied would be barred from begging and potentially compelled to work in the Ordinance and Statute of Laborers of the mid-fourteenth century. This effort resulted in the passage of the 1531 “Act how aged, poor and impotent Persons, compelled to live by Alms, shall be ordered; and how Vagabonds and Beggars shall be punished” and the 1536 Act For Punishment of Sturdy Vagabonds and Beggars.²⁸ The Acts of 1531 and 1536 wrote clear distinctions into law between vagabonds, defined as “poor, able to work,..unemployed” and thus prohibited from begging,²⁹ and legitimate vagrants, “the aged poor and the impotent,”³⁰ who were

²⁶ Ordinance of Laborers, 1349, 23 Edward III, (Eng.), available at <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/seth/ordinance-labourers.asp> and Statute of Laborers, 1351, 25 Edward III, (Eng.), available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/statlab.asp>.

²⁷ Quigley, 83.

²⁸ Quigley, 83, and “Tudor Poor Laws (1485-1558),” last modified September 25, 2014, <http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/twiki/bin/view/EngLegalHist/StatuteofLabourers>.

²⁹ Quigley, 84.

permitted to beg. They also imposed harsh punishments, not only on those legally defined as vagabonds, but on legally sanctioned mendicants who were found begging outside of their parish of birth or residence, as well as on those who were not in possession of a permit of authorization for the area in which they were found. As with prior legislation, those lending a hand to unlawful beggars were liable to be incriminated.³¹ Though legislation such as the 1495 Vagabond and Beggars Act, which punished “[v]agabonds, idle and suspected persons,” had been enacted in the fifteenth century that by no means showed leniency toward beggars, the Acts of 1531 and 1536 showed a new aversion to clemency and an intense determination to stamp out vagrancy.³² Though this legislation brought relief to those who were unable to provide for themselves by compelling municipal officials to seek them out and shelter them, essentially taxing parish residents by pressuring them to donate to (Anglican) church institutions and local parish officials,³³ it represented an increasingly hardened stance against the greater proportion of people who were on the brink of starvation but able-bodied. The stricter punishment schedule that the laws imposed guaranteed that more people would be dragged into the criminal class by virtue of their poverty. Such people would later form a large portion of those systematically transported to British America as indentured servants, a conversion akin to turning a large batch of putrid water into drinkable wine.

The Acts of 1531 and 1536, in concordance with the dissolution of monasteries and other Catholic institutions by Henry VIII in the latter year, took the sturdiest crutch of a slightly more sympathetic welfare away from the able-bodied poor of the British Isles; they also laid the foundation for a government-mandated version of what many scholars identify as the system from which indentured servitude was extracted: apprenticeship.³⁴ The Act of 1536 gave “justices of the peace and local officials...authority to take ‘children under fourteen years of age, and above five, that live in idleness, and be taken begging, [and] put [them] to service.’”³⁵ This was a step past forcibly employing able-bodied people; it set a precedent that gave not only the Crown but a mere parish official the right to bond a person to a master for long-term servitude *at*

³⁰ “Act how aged, poor and impotent Persons, compelled to live by Alms, shall be ordered; and how Vagabonds and Beggars shall be punished,” 1531, 22 Henry VIII, c. 12, (Eng.), quoted in Quigley, 84.

³¹ Quigley, 84-85.

³² Vagabonds and Beggars Act, 1495, 11 Henry VII, c. 2, quoted in “Tudor Poor Laws (1485-1558),” last modified September 25, 2014,

<http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/twiki/bin/view/EngLegalHist/StatuteofLabourers> and Quigley, 85.

³³ Quigley, 86.

³⁴ Warren M. Billings, “The Law of Servants and Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Virginia,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 99, No. 1 (Jan., 1991): 46-47 and McCormac, 7. Note: Some scholars, most notably David W. Galenson in *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (published in 1981 by Cambridge University Press) and “The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis” (published in *The Journal of Economic History* in 1984), are now suggesting that indentured servants were the equivalent of English servants in husbandry rather than apprentices and that it was the system of the former that was transplanted to the colonies. I do not believe that this finding necessarily precludes a connection between the systems of apprenticeship and indentured servitude.

³⁵ Quigley, 86 and Act For Punishment of Sturdy Vagabonds and Beggars, 1536, 27 Henry VIII, c. 25, § 6, quoted in Quigley, 86.

his discretion. The 1536 Act was a dangerous infringement on the rights of indigent children that would soon spread beyond them, possibly enabled by another of its provisions, which “compelled [local officials] to keep [poor able-bodied adults] in continual labor.”³⁶ This early form of involuntary government-mandated apprenticeship differs little from the involuntary government-mandated impressment into indentured servitude of convicts, political/religious rebels, and the unemployed and dishonorable of city streets that the seventeenth century would usher in.

The Poor Law of 1601 gave local officials more power to impose apprenticeship on poor children by wresting power from poor parents.³⁷ It maintained that local officials

shall take order from Time to Time, by, and with the Consent of two or more such Justices of Peace as is aforesaid, for setting to work the Children of all such whose Parents shall not by the said Churchwardens and Overseers, or the greater Part of them be. thought able to keep and maintain their Children: And also for setting to work all such Persons, married or unmarried, having no Means to maintain them, and use no ordinary and daily Trade of Life to get their Living by[.]³⁸

Quigley notes the questionable character of this ordinance, saying that it “allowed the justices to take children for apprenticeship, without pay, whether or not their families were on poor relief[,]” and that “the concept of keeping families together in order to aid them was not a part of the law.”³⁹ Many of the apprenticeships were local, with children sometimes remaining in the same parish, but the law did not maintain that they had to be. One victim of the 1601 law’s provisions was Richard Frethorne, who was sent to Virginia in 1622 and wrote to his parents and parish vestryman, Robert Bateman, “detail[ing] his lack of food, clothing, and shelter, as well as his fear that he would not survive if his present condition continued.” Unfortunately, Richard’s parents died before his letters could reach them, likely of the plague epidemic that struck in the 1620’s and 30’s, and, though his letters made a splash with the Virginia Company (who then tried to defend its reputation), it is not known whether they achieved the redemption he sought so dearly. Earlier, Richard’s brother had been given to another household as well, though he at least avoided going overseas.⁴⁰

The 1601 law was also worse for children in that it specified the length of their apprenticeships, 24 for males and 21 or marriage for females.⁴¹ Dahlberg rightly points out that these “terms...were [often] twice as long as [those of] youths in voluntary trade

³⁶ Quigley, 86.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁸ “An Act for the Relief of the Poor,” 1601, 43 Elizabeth, ch. 2, § 1, (Eng), available at <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/1601act.shtml>.

³⁹ Quigley, 89.

⁴⁰ Sandra L. Dahlberg, “‘Doe Not Forget Me’: Richard Frethorne, Indentured Servitude, and the English Poor Law of 1601,” *Early American Literature* 47, no. 1(2012): 2, 11, 15, and 24-25. accessed December 10, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/early_american_literature/v047/47.1.dahlberg.html.

⁴¹ “An Act for the Relief of the Poor,” 1601, 43 Elizabeth, ch. 2, § 5, (Eng), available at <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/1601act.shtml> and Quigley, 89.

apprenticeships,” who generally served seven-year terms.⁴² Parish-indentured children began serving at an average age of seven, though some were bound as young as two years old and almost always under the age of fourteen, which was when voluntary trade apprentices were just beginning to serve.⁴³ A significant advantage of apprenticeship was that children were educated in a trade in exchange for their toil. Parish-indentured children, especially those who ended up abroad, were not.⁴⁴ The legal text also provides proof of the link between indentured servitude and apprenticeship when it sets the lengths of service, stating that “the [age limits are] to be as effectual to all Purposes as if such Child were of full Age, and by Indenture of Covenant bound him or her self.”⁴⁵ Moreover, the use of the same vocabulary and syntax to enact the compulsory employment of able-bodied adults as had provided for the forced apprenticeship of children in the 1536 and 1601 laws—“...*And also for setting to work* all such Persons...having no Means to maintain them[selves] [emphasis mine]”⁴⁶—opened the door to the possibility of forced apprenticeship or other long-term bonded labor for adults as well. Still, parishes did not technically have the power to “compel adults to indenture themselves” just yet.⁴⁷

These laws were not the only forces at work in getting the poor sent out of the country. There was much social support for such action, and measures were sometimes passed on the local level to facilitate transport to the colonies. For example, “transportation petitions” were sent to municipal governments, which, once endorsed took effect at least temporarily. London, for example, endorsed such a petition in 1618 and “began sending hundreds of its poor children to Virginia as indentured laborers[.]”⁴⁸ Some considered putting the idle to work a matter of Christian virtue, as work was believed to be a source of salvation. Dahlberg even says that some parish officials may have sent children to the colonies in a genuine act of kindness, believing that there was more food and opportunity to be had there than in England.⁴⁹ As always, there were also profit-motivated interests groups, such as the Virginia Company, which in 1621 proposed a law to Parliament that attempted to make indenture to the colonies, rather than local parish indenture, a more affordable option for parishes and thus a more common fate for indigent children.⁵⁰ Dahlberg illustrates the reality of the 1601 law’s connection to involuntary indentured servitude and the scale that child servant exportation took under its influence and those described above:

⁴² Dahlberg, 6-7.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “An Act for the Relief of the Poor,” 1601, 43 Elizabeth, ch. 2, § 5, (Eng), available at <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/1601act.shtml>.

⁴⁶ “An Act for the Relief of the Poor,” 1601, 43 Elizabeth, ch. 2, § 1, (Eng), available at <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/1601act.shtml>.

⁴⁷ Dahlberg, 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7-9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 7-8 and 24-25.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 9-10.

[c]ontemporaneous estimates...indicate that approximately 8,500 poor children were sent to Virginia as indentured servants between 1619 and 1625, yet names were recorded for only 165 of these children and fewer than 1,250 survived more than a couple of years. Parish-indentured poor children were not supposed to be servants for life, but conditions were such that most of the poor children in Virginia were, in effect, indentured until death.⁵¹

For those fortunate enough to be employed in a yearlong contract of their own volition, the 1563 Statute of Artificers nullified the Statute of Laborers and other labor laws and provided for wages to be updated annually in various professions.⁵² At the same time that it provided relief, however, it placed more restrictions on workers: whereas the Ordinance and Statute of Laborers had vaguely allowed people to serve terms of varying lengths as dictated by custom, the 1563 Statute explicitly states that “no...person...shall retheyne hire or take into service, or cause to bee retayned hired or taken into service, nor any person shalbee retayned hired or taken into service, by any meanes or colour, to woorkke for any lesse tyme or terme then for one hole yere[.]”⁵³ It also retained the practice of restricting worker mobility; this provision is worth quoting at length so that the extent of bureaucracy impeding travel can be made evident:

And bee it further enacted...that no person retheyned according to this Statute shall departe from his Master Mistress or Dame before thende of his or her terme, upon the payne hereafter mentioned, unlesse yt be for some reasonable and sufficient cause or matter to bee allowed before twoo Justices of Peace or one at the least within the said Countie, or before the [Major] or other Chief Officer of the Citie Burghe or Towne Corporate wherin the said Master Mistress or Dame inhabitethe to whom any of the parties greved shall complayne; which said Justices or Justice Major or Chief Officer shall have and take upon them or him the hearing and ording of the matter [betwene] the said Master Mistress or Dame and Servante, according to thequite of the cause[.]⁵⁴

The 1351 Statute of Laborers and the 1563 Statute of Artificers, in combination with the draconian provisions of the poor laws of 1495, 1531, 1536, and 1601, kept the able-bodied poor laboring, pinned between the streets and prison in an unending state of

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

⁵² Quigley, 88.

⁵³ “An Acte towching dyvers Orders for Artificers Laborers Servantes of Husbandrye and Apprentises,” 1563, 5 Elizabeth, c. 4, § 4, (Eng.), available at http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/_An_Acte_towching_dyvers_Orders_for_Artificers_Laborers_Servantes_of_Husbandrye_and_Apprentises_1563# and Quigley, 87.

⁵⁴ “An Acte towching dyvers Orders for Artificers Laborers Servantes of Husbandrye and Apprentises,” 1563, 5 Elizabeth, c. 4, § 4, (Eng.), available at http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/_An_Acte_towching_dyvers_Orders_for_Artificers_Laborers_Servantes_of_Husbandrye_and_Apprentises_1563# and Quigley, 87.

discomfort. Labor laws tipped the balance in favor of the employer after the harrowing yoke of serfdom had been removed, perpetuating a sweatshop-like state of employee subordination by threatening imprisonment for those who resisted. Simultaneously, the anti-vagrancy measures of the poor laws forbade them from begging—also on pain of being thrown in the gaol—but failed to provide relief in the form of an income supplement or even a temporary subsidy. These were the conditions under which poor men, women, and some parentless children consented to indentured servitude: unable to get ahead when employed and despised and threatened with imprisonment if unable to find work or still hungry in spite of it.

The Beginnings of Servitude: “Voluntary” Servants and the Spirits

The large number of wandering unemployed people in England at the founding of English America was ascribed to overpopulation. The idea that this “surplus” population would destroy English society and economy was prevalent and pointed to this migrant population as the ideal source of new labor for the Colonies. They would cease to be a burden on the state while finding gainful employment, hopefully becoming better in the process.⁵⁵ Looking to the French and Spanish empires as a model, planters in the colonies noted that the latter countries had peopled and raised their colonies with convicts and vagrants for labor.⁵⁶ The first indentured servants were brought to the English colonies as part of a private venture permitted by the Crown and funded by the Virginia and London companies.⁵⁷ The majority of these servants were likely voluntary, migrating “mainly through personal arrangements with individual planters and merchants.”⁵⁸ The fledging industry, Beckles notes, was soon encouraged by the passage of a memorandum in 1646 that made it “lawful for any person or persons...to transport from hence into the said several plantations [of the Americas] such persons being fit to serve, or advance the trade there as shall be willing to servitude, as to be employed in the said foreign plantations.”⁵⁹ This proviso officially created the new industry in the transport and sale of servants to the Colonies—anyone could become an authorized retailer and the product was all around, provided those individuals had consented to being sold into servitude.

Merchants employed aggressive recruitment strategies to increase the number of voluntary servants being transported, from pamphlets and alleged “letters from actual settlers” to the employment of recruitment agents to purchasing servants from unaffiliated dealers who gathered them up independently.⁶⁰ Both John Wareing and Abbot Emerson Smith note that it is hard to determine precisely where the exaggerations

⁵⁵ Smith, 45; McCormac, 8; and Beckles, 37.

⁵⁶ Beckles, 3 and Beckles, 37.

⁵⁷ McCormac, 9 and Beckles, 14-15.

⁵⁸ Beckles, 39.

⁵⁹ Ordinance of the Privy Council, June 23, 1646, David Mss., box 7, no. 2, RCS, quoted in Beckles, 39-40.

⁶⁰ Smith, 53-62.

of honest recruitment efforts became outright lies and even kidnapping in some form.⁶¹ The questionable methods of “recruiting” servants, which often involved “a mixture of false promises, drink and deception”⁶² have led Wareing to argue “that a majority of indentured servants recruited in London were recruited illicitly, although they were mainly trepanned by the spirits rather than kidnapped by force.”⁶³ If a person happened to come to his senses, whether by seeing through a recruitment agent’s pitch or waking up from their drunken slumber, there was little room for backing out once a person had been lured on board a ship, as “once the servant was enticed aboard, the deceit became force” and requests to be put ashore were not honored.⁶⁴ One person who got lucky was Griffith Jones. Wareing quotes his story:

‘Mark Collens, commonly called a spirit, did upon pretences to get [Griffith] to be a clerk in Barbados, draw him to consent thereunto, and promised to supply him with books for that purpose. And afterwards carried him to an alehouse at Billingsgate and there made him drink much brandy. And then conveyed him to a ship called the *Exchange* and there sold him for 50 shillings. And when he understood thereof, he sent to his friends to fetch him off who accordingly did. But it cost him and his friends above three pounds before he could be discharged.’⁶⁵

The extant body of legislation concerning kidnapping is a testament to the extent of the problem of the spirits and of the problematic nature of confident assertions that most indentured servants came to English America voluntarily. It also identifies those groups most vulnerable to being impressed into servitude — children, who were again at a singular disadvantage since the Crown had condoned the transportation without consent of those who were already doomed to be apprenticed in 1620,⁶⁶ as well as the many adults who were unemployed and illiterate, thereby lacking the capacity to understand the trap being laid for them.⁶⁷ Wareing notes that “bills [were] passed in 1670 and 1671 ‘to prevent stealing and transporting Children, and other Persons’ [as] part of a law and order concern to prevent the illicit spiriting of people to serve as indentured servants in the American colonies.”⁶⁸ They did not stop the spirits from keeping poor William Tanner drunk for three days and then forcing him on board a ship for 50 shillings. He wrote to his wife from Barbados in 1670 and she promptly sued them. Though William’s spirits

⁶¹ John Wareing, “‘Violently taken away or cheatingly duckoyed’. The illicit recruitment in London of indentured servants for the American colonies, 1645-1718,” *The London Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2001): 7, 13 and Smith, 62, 67-69.

⁶² Wareing, 7.

⁶³ Wareing, 5.

⁶⁴ Wareing, 8.

⁶⁵ Public Record Office, Colonial Papers, CO 389/2, quoted in Wareing, 7.

⁶⁶ McCormac, 9.

⁶⁷ Beckles, 46.

⁶⁸ John Wareing, “Preventive and punitive regulation in seventeenth-century social policy: conflicts of interest and the failure to make ‘stealing and transporting Children, and other Persons’ a felony, 1645-73,” *Social History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 2002): 290.

were charged with “assaulting [him] and transporting him against his will to Barbados,” it is unclear whether he was able to return home.⁶⁹ It is important to remember that the stories that have a record are often successful—someone who could write and get in touch with family, like Tanner, or who knew the name of his spirit, like Jones, could have a case brought to court on their behalf. People without family, without proof, without the ability to write, or, in the case of the very young, to even understand what had happened to them were much less likely to be able to begin a suit, much less win their freedom. Smith also notes that “[t]he only recourse of persons whose children or apprentices has been kidnapped was a special petition to the highest authorities,” which doubtless decreased the odds of success by drawing out the process and making it more difficult.⁷⁰ Because of such factors, it is impossible to know precisely what proportion of the indentured servant population was kidnapped or deceived into servitude apart from surmising that it is like an iceberg—for those cases on record there must be many others lost forever. Incidents of random ship inspection are telling. Smith notes that in 1657, the *Conquer* was ordered to be inspected and that eleven kidnapped indentured servants were found on board who, happily, were allowed to disembark.⁷¹

Wareing also notes that “[t]he policy focus on children in 1645, its extension to servants in 1662 and to ‘other persons’ in 1669 reflects both a growing social problem and a recognition of a problem of increasing complexity.”⁷² While adults might be spirited through the aid of alcohol, Smith says that “[c]hildren were interested by presents of sweets, and were then concealed in obscure haunts until they could be shipped.”⁷³ In 1686, yet another act was passed concerning “the frequent Abuses of a lewd sort of People, called Spirits, in Seducing many of his Majesties Subjects to go on Shipboard, where they have been seized, and carried by force to his Majesties Plantations in America.”⁷⁴ Most telling is the fact that kidnapping children “was not made a felony until 1814[.]” when the failure of previous legislation and an increase in the incidence of spiriting compelled Parliament to impose a harsher penalty.⁷⁵ The English Crown’s half-baked efforts at protecting its poverty-stricken subjects from being kidnapped by servant merchants helped encourage the indentured servant industry further, augmenting an insufficient supply of allegedly voluntary recruits with a much-needed infusion of more questionably garnered souls.

Social and legal concerns with kidnapping were not unfounded. Spiriting was big business and it operated on levels from bathtub moonshine operation to large-scale organized distillery with connections.⁷⁶ Smith notes that by the 1650’s the “business...had ceased to be a casual occupation...The ordinary kidnapper could bring

⁶⁹ Wareing, “Violently,” 7.

⁷⁰ Smith, 71.

⁷¹ Ibid., 72.

⁷² Wareing, “Preventative,” 290.

⁷³ Smith, 69.

⁷⁴ “At the Court at WHITEHALL,” March 26, 1686, scan taken from the original document, which is held by the University of Virginia Library Special Collections.

⁷⁵ Wareing, “Preventive,” 288.

⁷⁶ Beckles, 50.

his victim to one of [the] houses, [which served as depots,] where he might be kept prisoner for a month or more until the master of a vessel should fetch him off.” Servants could be purchased at these depots for as little as £3.⁷⁷ Some people made a living of bringing people to merchants. One John Steward, according to William Haverland, who was himself convicted of spiriting in 1671, had apparently “been spiriting persons for twelve years at a rate of 500 a year...giv[ing] twenty-five shillings to anyone who would bring him a victim, and...sell[ing] them immediately to a merchant for forty shillings.”⁷⁸ It should be noted, at this point, that merchants were vulnerable to servants’ claims in the face of the hysteria over spiriting. In 1680, John Wilmore, for example, sent Richard Civiter to Jamaica, a boy claiming to have no family and allegedly desiring to be indentured. Soon, Civiter’s father turned up, demanding money and pressing charges for kidnapping. Since Wilmore could not bring the boy back and would have to “be taken as security [himself]” by order of the court, he was forced to flee the country, not to return until 1688.⁷⁹

Even as illicit methods of recruitment were padding the supply of indentured servants brought to the Colonies, labor merchants and consumers knew that “the supply of voluntary servants[,] [questionable or not,] was too irregular and insufficient for colonial demand.”⁸⁰ “By the late 1640s...mercantile interests, with planter support,” were lusting after the large numbers of “vagrants, beggars, and rogues,” rife for the taking in the streets. They began to lobby the government for legal sanction to transport them to the Americas against their will.⁸¹

Explicitly Involuntary Labor: Vagabond and Convict Transportation Legislation

Rogues and vagabonds were people considered on the verge of being criminal and as such, a nuisance to parish authorities. In 1652, they finally became liable “to be apprehended, seized on and detained...in any towne, parish or place to be conveyed into the port of London, or unto any other port...from where [they could] be shipped...into any forraign collonie or plantation[,]” on the mere recommendation of “two or more justices of the peace[.]”⁸² Much earlier, the 1597 Vagabonds Act had defined this class of people as:

all Juglers Tynkers Pedlers and Petty Chapman wandring abroad; all persons and comon Labourers being persons able in bodye using loytering and refusing to worcke...not having otherwyse to maynteyne themselves...or who otherwise do travayle begging...and all such persons

⁷⁷ Smith, 69.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 75-76.

⁸⁰ Beckles, 46.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Egerton Mss. 2395, ff. 228-29, BL, quoted in Beckles, 47.

not being Fellons wandering and pretending themselves to be Egipcyans, or wandering in the Habite Forme or Attyre of counterfayte Egipcyans.⁸³

Amid the continuing demand for labor in the colonies, England actively attempted to rid itself of such people, whom they blamed for overwhelming the parishes and ruining the economy. Though poor and/or otherwise undesirable by virtue of their lifestyle, they were also able-bodied, which made them unpitiable characters in need of “reform” through work and therefore useful to tobacco and sugar planters, servant merchants, and the English Crown all at once.

The 1652 provision was one of the most direct strikes against vagabonds, who, judging from the breadth of the category as defined in 1597, were simply poor, able-bodied adults without a “respectable” job. It essentially allowed the poor to be apprehended on mere suspicions of character or occupation and sent to an unknown fate in the colonies involuntarily and without trial. In 1682, for example, Beckles notes that the magistrates of Devon county charged Richard Stanley, Peter Stanley, Thomas Stanley, and Mathew Eyre with “wandring in the said county as rogues, dangerous to the inferior sorts of people” and promptly hired a private merchant to ship them to Barbados.⁸⁴ The recommendations of municipal officials like the Devon county magistrates are questionable, because such bureaucrats sometimes had a hand in the servant trade themselves. Beckles also attributes potential motivation to elitist desires “to rid England of the unemployed poor whom [they] saw as...lacking in social value.”⁸⁵ But after 1664, magistrates had overt stakes in the child servant trade: “Parliamentary legislation was passed...which encouraged magistrates to round up vagrant juveniles and supply them to West Indian merchants. [They] were to receive 50 percent of the capital paid for them by merchants, the other half going to the [C]rown.”⁸⁶ Of course, the merchants’ interest continued unabated; the English poor relief system had not only created a large supply of exploitable servants from the able-bodied poor but now merchants were getting free heads through its enforcement tactics, since they were directly given victims like the Devon men and paid to transport them. All they had to do was turn a profit!

The 1652 law also allowed for literal government-sanctioned kidnapping, such as Cromwell’s “Western Design” of 1656, which sent soldiers into London to collect prostitutes and other allegedly loose women for forcible transport to the Americas in an effort to clean the city up.⁸⁷ In a similar vein, “between 1662 and 1665,” the Scottish government gave permission for “rogues, drunks, and others who made civil life unpleasant for the upper classes” to be sent to Barbados.⁸⁸ Legislation of this sort was the most caustic because it violated the rights of innocent people: the 1597 definition of a

⁸³ Vagabonds Act, 1597, 39 Elizabeth, c. 4, quoted in Smith, 136-137, and Beckles, 46-47.

⁸⁴ Minutes of the General Sessions, 23 June 1683, APCC 2:36, quoted in Beckles, 48.

⁸⁵ Beckles, 48.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁸⁸ Beckles, 49.

vagabond had explicitly excluded “Fellons” from the category.⁸⁹ Far and away, the largest proportion of involuntary white servants were convicts, and their guilt is not always so evident.

According to A. Roger Ekirch, “[a]s early as 1597, Parliament gave magistrates the power to exile rogues and vagabonds [overseas], and in 1615 James I authorized pardons for condemned felons on condition of banishment to the New World.”⁹⁰ The law reads as follows:

Wherein as in all things els tending to punishment it is our desire that Justice be tempered with mercie, Soe likewise it is our care soe to have our Clemency applied as that greate and notorious malefactors may not be encouraged and yet the lesser offenders adjudged by law to dye may in that manner be corrected, as that in their punishment some of them may live and yeild a profitable service to the Comon wealth in parts abroad where it shall be found fitt to impoie them. Wee...give full power warrant and authoritie...to reprieve and stay from execucon such and soe many persons as now stand attaynted or convicted of or for any robberie or felonie (wilful murder rape witchcraft or Burglarie onlie excepted) who for strength of bodie or other abilities shall be thought fit to be ymployed...beyond the Seas.⁹¹

This latter proclamation gave criminals an option they had never had before: servitude over death, which was the punishment for most crimes at the time. Moreover, it was seen as a win-win solution, saving petty offenders from the gallows and, in theory, allowing them to redeem themselves while helping increase the Crown’s colonial revenue.⁹² In reality, it was not much of a choice. Death is preferable to few things. Smith adds that the commission allowed for a sentence of any length and that desertion and return to England would void the reprieve and result in execution.⁹³ The people who comprised the convict class, moreover, had not even had much choice in becoming convicts. As Peter Wilson Coldham says, “[t]he majority of those transported to the colonies may...be justly regarded as having fallen victim to oppressive circumstances and harsh environment rather than as professional villains.”⁹⁴ Though Ekirch pointedly notes that convicts were not the poorest people in England, Coldham states that “of the total number of convicts despatched to the Americas between 1614 and 1775, amounting to some 50,000 men, women, and children, all but an insignificant minority belonged to the poorest class and most were sentenced for crimes which today might incur a small

⁸⁹ Vagabonds Act, 1597, 39 Elizabeth, c. 4, quoted in Smith, 136-137, and Beckles, 46-47.

⁹⁰ Ekirch, 1 and Beckles, 56.

⁹¹ Patent Roll, C. 66/2043, *in dorso*, quoted in Smith, 92-93.

⁹² Beckles, 56.

⁹³ Smith, 93.

⁹⁴ Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas of Felons, Destitute Children, Political and Religious Non-Conformists, Vagabonds, Beggars and other Undesirables, 1607-1776* (Surrey, England: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1992), 14.

fine or...probation.”⁹⁵ That the most common crime for which they were transported was stealing a handkerchief is telling.⁹⁶ Coldham’s theory is that the thefts committed were probably of greater consequence and variation than the records would imply and that merciful judges may have charged offenders with the theft of a handkerchief so that they could avoid the automatic death penalty that a capital offense would impose. (Stealing more than 40 shillings’ worth from a private home was considered grand theft.)⁹⁷ This does not change the fact that many likely stole out of necessity, due to the circumstances created by labor and poor legislation in effect by this time.

In spite of the 1615 commission, transportation remained low until the 1640’s when criminals began to be transported under the direct authority of the king, which expedited the process. Before that time, “the method [seems to have been] too cumbersome or [its effectors] too unenthusiastic,” such that more convicts were put to work in England than were sent to the colonies.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, a precedent had been established, and in 1655, conditional pardons began to be granted en masse by the Cromwellian government to prisoners convicted of petty crimes. The condition, of course, was transportation. The practice continued after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, though not without the eager petitioning of Jamaican merchants. The conditional pardon was automatic, simple, and quick; it standardized the process and set the term of service at seven years.⁹⁹ In 1662, a new piece of poor law was also introduced, which “authorised the apprehension of any rogue, vagabond or sturdy beggar” and made it legal to transport those of them judged to be “incorrigible.”¹⁰⁰ This law reinforced the precedents set by the 1652 one and went a step further in branding at least some of the poor as irremediable. Even if the number of convicts transported to the colonies during that time was low, the poor laws worked in disturbing tandem with the conditional-pardon system until the early-eighteenth century, when the provisions of the latter became insufficient in doing away with the large surplus of criminals that suddenly appeared after the end of Queen Anne’s War in 1713.¹⁰¹

By the 1700’s, the English legal system had long been forcing its poor into bonded labor and shoveling the rest into prison. It had also learned to put those prisoners to work and, better yet, to dump them in the American colonies (there also bound to labor) where their filthy persons would not sully their English air. The Transportation Act of 1718 made the process more systematic, establishing a private monopoly on convict shipment and going back on some of the leniencies that previous legislation had afforded criminals. After its passage, the number of transported convicts spiked and rose continually until the eve of the American Revolution in spite of protests from colonies like Virginia and Maryland, which were concerned that their land was becoming a

⁹⁵ Ekirch, 43 and Coldham, 7

⁹⁶ Coldham, 2-3 and 14-15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 11 and 14-15.

⁹⁸ Smith, 95.

⁹⁹ Smith, 95-97.

¹⁰⁰ Coldham, 50.

¹⁰¹ Smith, 110. During the war, many convicts had been employed by the military. After it ended, so did a major form by which the British government could utilize them.

dumping ground for the “scum” of society.¹⁰² By this time, convicts consisted primarily of Irish vagrants and grand larcenists.¹⁰³ Among them was poor John Creamer, who in 1769 “stole nine guineas from a London home” to feed his family, having been unemployed.¹⁰⁴

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, convict transport legislation affected more than just the poor; its provisions extended to include political rebels, military prisoners of war, and religious dissenters from England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Interregnum period (1649-1660) produced a great many of these as Cromwell rounded up royalist opposers of the Commonwealth, English (though these were few), Irish, and Scottish alike, and sent them to Barbados.¹⁰⁵ According to Beckles, the restoration of the monarchy offered no respite, with “a fierce political attack upon nonconformist political and religious groups” ensuing. English Quakers, Presbyterians, Scottish Covenanters, and Irish Catholics (especially priests and teachers) were major targets and the destination was again Barbados.¹⁰⁶ Concerning the colonized Irish, Smith notes that it is difficult to distinguish between vagrants and political or religious prisoners. Most of the Irish sent to the colonies during the Interregnum period were vagrants, but Smith argues that “the reason there were so many [such] candidates available was clearly...political[,]” which renders the fact that legal distinctions existed moot.¹⁰⁷ At the end of the day, the Puritan administration was just “glad to be rid of as many as possible, whatever their classification.”¹⁰⁸ Convicts had the hardest time of any indentured servant, voluntary or not. Their status sometimes had to be concealed to encourage planters to buy them; they served longer terms than any other group except perhaps parish-indentured children (especially after the passage of the 1718 Transportation Act, which allowed for a term of service between ten and fourteen years in duration); and if they made it to freedom, they faced difficulties in gaining social acceptance due to their pasts.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

The sheer number of people transported and the variety of scenarios that led to indentured servitude ultimately make it impossible to say with certainty how many people were shipped to British America against their will, but the extant records (only the most significant of which have been examined in this brief study) should serve as an admonishment against the assumption that most British plantation laborers of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century “signed up” for indentured servitude voluntarily

¹⁰² Coldham, 59-69 and 183.

¹⁰³ Ekirch, 43.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 68-69.

¹⁰⁵ Beckles, 53 and Smith, 152-159 and 159-162.

¹⁰⁶ Beckles, 54 and Smith, 170-173.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, 163.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 174.

¹⁰⁹ “An Act For the Further Preventing Robbery, Burglary and Other Felonies, and For the More Effectual Transportation of Felons, and Unlawful Exporters of Wool; and For the Declaring the Law upon Some Points Relating to Pirates,” 1718, 4 George I, c. 11, reprinted in Coldham, 166-169 and Ekirch, 133-156.

and knowing precisely what they were getting into. But it would have been impossible to funnel so many poor into servitude in the colonies had it not been for the centuries of English Poor Laws and convict legislation that slowly tightened their grip around such people, keeping them in the position most beneficial to the Crown and the aristocracy—that of servants—even as an industrialized world emerged. Indentured servitude in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries was just the latest development in a long line of methods of exploiting the lower classes that began with serfdom and would continue in the form of factory wage labor in the centuries that followed.

With the Stroke of a Pen: Dorothy Thompson's Call for Action, 1930-1945

Kiara Day

Dorothy Thompson's commitment throughout the 1930s to exposing truth, championing democracy and its freedoms, and condemning the "Problem Child of Europe," as she called Hitler's Germany, can be described by a friend's birthday poem sent to her in the early 40s. The poem reads: "Dorothy! the skies proclaimed her, 'gift of God' the people named her, as her pencil, wand of terror, pointed out the slaves of error, marking questions to enquire, 'Where's the truth?' to shame the liar. Through it all her noble art was broad and gentle as her heart."¹ Not only did her friends view her this way, but as her fame grew throughout the 30s, a vast following recognized her as a reporter and commentator who reacted in a very "personal way to people, places, and events," a way which many Americans could relate to.² Her vast following even allowed her to become the subject of other news reports, which spread her causes further.

Thompson was driven to inform the American public through sharp detail and observation, which she always attempted to make relevant to American understanding by appealing to American ideals of freedom. In 1928 she was pronounced a "social rebel" by a fellow reporter as when her career was just beginning.³ When other reporters were focusing on internal politics, Thompson became a distinct voice as an early informant on all European issues, particularly the plight of the Jews under the "Third Reich" and the mounting danger of Nazism as the antithesis of American democracy. Although an obvious outlier as an early informant about Nazi terror, Thompson grew to be well respected and widely read among the American masses, so much so that even my great-grandmother, who claimed that she did not pay much attention to politics as a teenager, recalls Thompson's name as a household one.⁴ In 1933, Thompson's call for action left other intellectuals and journalists in the dust. In a time when journalism was internally focused and the country was not only anti-Semitic, but anti-war, Dorothy Thompson implored the public to listen and take action, with a stroke of a pen.

Throughout the 30s and early 40s, Thompson was consistent, with moral and democratic reasoning to not only expose the persecution of Jews as early as Hitler's rise to power in 1933, but to insist on American involvement in aiding refugees and preserving democratic freedoms by standing up to Hitler's fascism. Her private correspondence and journals mirrored her publications that were available to the masses;

1 Letter from Irwin Wallace & Tish to Dorothy Thompson, box 14, Incoming correspondence folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

2 Marion K. Sanders. *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 42.

3 Letter from H. R. Knickerbocker to Dorothy Thompson, 27 May 1928, box 16, Incoming Correspondence folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

4 Virginia Williams, spoken interview by author, Gorham, Maine, December 20, 2015.

their tone was urgent and overwhelmingly focused on two main themes: making sure the American public was informed about the deteriorating situation in Europe caused by Hitler's government, and pleading for, and explaining why, the American public must assist those in crisis and not turn a blind eye. "In the first half of the 1930s her articles focused on internal reasons for the collapse of democracy and the Nazis' success in the *Gleichaltung*, or coordination, of state and society to Nazi principles"⁵ and in the latter half of the 1930s and early 1940s her focus increasingly turned to the exposure of Jewish persecution and the hypocrisy of Americans who felt that nothing should be done. Her defense for condemning Nazism and her insistence on American involvement was consistently the preservation of democracy, equality, and freedom. She appealed to the moral aspects of Christianity and the historical context of the foundation of American democracy as motivation to aid Jewish refugees. Throughout the 30s, she not only wrote articles, made speeches, and radio addresses on these matters, but practiced what she preached by offering comprehensive plans for the government to consider, setting up organizations that ordinary Americans could join, and sponsoring countless refugees herself. As the "first well known American journalist to warn of developments in Germany," Thompson called Nazism "a disease of the times with more than purely Germanic roots."⁶ She exposed Hitler's regime to the American people, as not just a European, German, or Jewish problem, but also a world problem.

This paper distinguishes itself from previous investigations into Thompson's personality, life, and career by narrowing in on her specific efforts between 1930-1945, both personal and public, to combat the dangers of Nazism. Thompson was one of the few American voices to consistently focus so much time and attention on the plight of the Jews from the beginning of the Nazi regime. The limited secondary literature on Dorothy Thompson has largely been biographical and has covered the vast span of her lifetime, rather than her specific actions during the Nazi years. It has also tended to gravitate towards commenting on her influence on the public, rather than her educational and action spurring intentions which were not always acted upon by others. This research is focused on a much narrower segment of time, and delves into her prescient concern about the persecution of European Jews at the hands of the Nazi regime. Thompson's display of interest for the targeted Jewish population of Europe was unique, especially her quick denunciation of racial rhetoric and her early understanding of the threat this posed to Western democratic principles. Her unwavering denunciations of America's hypocrisy for turning a blind eye to the persecution of Jews or outright denying this "world problem" is perhaps the best evidence for Thompson's intentions. This paper, which relies heavily on the direct interpretation of the Dorothy Thompson Papers housed at Syracuse University, intends to more closely look at her consistency in dealing with the "Jewish question," which I assert, leads to personal and public calls for awareness and action that prove her intentions for the internally concentrated American people, rather than just her influence on them.

5 Michaela Moore. *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 54.

6 Ibid., 52-53.

Exposing the Initial Threat of Nazism and Gaining Prominence:

Dorothy Thompson had been conditioned from a young age to have a strong moral compass, as her father was a preacher. She wrote in her never-finished autobiography that her father once told her to “never persecute a Jew” because they gave “us” our religion and many other positive things in the world.⁷ Thompson herself did not meet a Jew until she was 24 years old when she became fast friends with Barbara De Porte (miswritten/changed during immigration) who was a devoted friend, Russian born Sephardic Jew, and goal orientated woman. On Thompson’s first trip to Europe in 1920, with Barbara by her side, she was looking to begin her career as a foreign correspondent. The women were on a boat filled with American Zionists who influenced the direction Thompson would go in as a reporter. She wrote in her diary, “I think I shall perhaps become the leading Gentile authority on Judaism.”⁸ Throughout her early years, it was said that “two things happened to Central Europe, the world economic crisis, and Dorothy Thompson.”⁹ Reporters and the public began to notice that she “saw stories that were not stories to more experienced correspondents.”¹⁰ She gained a reputation for herself as the “only woman ‘newspaper man’ of [her] time.”¹¹ She held the position of the first woman foreign correspondent to head a news bureau overseas, and with her marriage to Sinclair Lewis in 1928, she entered “the phase of celebrity” and moved back to the United States where she spent half her time at “Twin Farms” in Vermont and the other half at 27 West 10th St. in New York City.

In 1930, the alliance of democratic parties in the Reichstag had collapsed with the resignation of Hermann Müller,¹² and Thompson continued to keep a close eye on European affairs. With the Nazi party gaining prominence within the Reichstag and with Germany’s future “being decided on the streets”¹³ Thompson itched to return to Europe to investigate. Her career goals were to do more than editorial work; she wanted to influence the masses and the issue of Germany struck close to her heart.

Between Hitler’s rise to power and his death, “there was no one in journalism, anywhere in the world, who spoke louder than Thompson in the fight against Nazism.”¹⁴ Her fight began when she conducted her famed interview for *Cosmopolitan* with Adolf Hitler in 1931. She was said to be invited to conduct the interview because of her known affinity for Germany.¹⁵ The most famous line from the publication of the interview titled “I Saw Hitler” was:

7 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 24.

8 Ibid., 38.

9 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 64.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 95.

12 Ibid., 160.

13 Ibid., 161.

14 Peter Kurth. *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 163.

15 Ibid.

I was convinced that I was meeting the future dictator of Germany. In something less than fifty seconds I was quite sure that I was not. It took just that time to measure the startling insignificance of this man who has set the whole world agog.¹⁶

However, Hitler would soon become Chancellor and by March of 1933 the Nazi dictatorship was firmly established. Although her published findings seemed to diminish Hitler, her writings served as a “concise history and memorable portrait” of the Fuhrer.¹⁷ These beginnings established a basis for her knowledge and commentary on the growing power of the Third Reich and the endangerment of the Jews. Her private diaries exposed her true feelings at the time of the interview, as she asserted that, “the moment Hitler legally comes to the government the Republic is lost.”¹⁸ She also aptly denounced the dismissal of the threat of Nazism saying “it is a mistake to dismiss the Nazi movement with such jests as ‘it’s easy enough to get fighters for such a program as kill the Jews.’”¹⁹ She insinuated that Nazism was deeper, darker, and much stronger than how it was initially perceived. If she made a mistake in her interview, the mistake was thinking that people would realize Nazism as a world menace. The miscalculation of trusting the masses to realize such a threat pushed Thompson to expose the truth herself, especially regarding the plight of the Jews who she said were, “truly in a helpless state” immediately following the rise of Hitler.²⁰

In March, 1933, following the Reichstag fire on February 27th, Thompson wrote to her husband saying she had been given “an unexpected assignment from a Jewish news agency for an up-to-the-minute report on ‘The German Inferno.’”²¹ Hitler and the SA (*Sturmabteilung* or Assault Division), a paramilitary organization, had been given the opportunity to rampage legally with the suspension of free speech and press, and other liberties. The condemning reports she wrote within the next year would serve as a main cause for her later removal from the country. She “confirmed that the stories of anti-Semitic persecution in Germany were not exaggerated” and described how many Jews were being “robbed, beaten, and even murdered.”²²

She reported on the national boycott of Jewish shops on April 1, 1933 and also the exclusion of Jews from “public service, the universities, and the professions.”²³ Thompson publicly and privately insisted that:

It is really as bad as the most sensational papers report...Hitler gets up and speaks about German unity and German loyalty and the new era, and the

16 Dorothy Thompson, “I Saw Hitler!” Wiedener Library. 1932. Accessed October 13, 2015.

17 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 163.

18 Dorothy Thompson Diary, 1931, 40, box 59, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

19 Ibid., 94.

20 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 193.

21 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 184.

22 Dorothy Thompson Diary, 1933, box 59, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

23 Ibid.

SA boys have simply turned into gangs and beat up people on the streets...and take socialists and communists and pacifists and Jews into so-called “*Braune Etagen*” [brown floors] where they are tortured. Italian fascism was a kindergarten compared to it. It’s an outbreak of sadistic and pathological hatred.²⁴

She reflected many times in her journal of the “eminent refugees” beginning to appear all around her and how she would “lie awake nights thinking what one could do.”²⁵ She wrote that the list of names of those leaving and looking to leave the country read like “the German Who’s Who” and how she was shocked at the “fiendish” treatment of Jews who had contributed so much to German culture.²⁶

She returned to the US for the Summer of 1933, bringing a friend who was the “first in a long succession of fugitives from Hitler’s Europe whom [she] would shelter.”²⁷ Her commentary to the American people on the atmosphere in Germany was ominous at best, saying it “had gotten so poisonous that it even drifted through closed doors into one’s writing room, like a poison gas.”²⁸ Articles describing her commentary on Europe flooded American newspapers, reporting that she saw Hitler’s government as a “rule of fear,” and that the fate of the Jews was “ghastly” and no one even knows the “extent to which they have suffered.”²⁹ Articles reported that “Mrs. Lewis” estimated there were “50,000 Jews in jail in Germany and said the Social Democrat Party has been completely destroyed.”³⁰

In 1934, due to the “catastrophic pace of events in Europe,”³¹ Thompson once again returned to Europe for the last time as a free reporter. Her reports from this visit produced her second *Harper’s* piece called “Good-By to Germany,”³² where she described the drastic changes taking place, including her visit to a Hitler Youth camp where an enormous banner saying, “WE WERE BORN TO DIE FOR GERMANY” greeted her.³³ It was this trip when she was finally ordered out of the Reich. An SA officer leaked to the press that when she visited, a “Dorothy Thompson Emergency Squad” was established to rush translations of every word she wrote so the government would be aware of what she was reporting to the “outside” world. These translations

24 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 185.

25 Dorothy Thompson Diary, 1933, box 59, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

26 Ibid.

27 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 188.

28 Dorothy Thompson Diary, 1933, box 59, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

29 Newspapers Clippings, “Hitler’s Regime Flayed by Miss Sinclair Lewis,” box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

30 “Dorothy Thompson Tells of Nazi Ban,” *New York Times*, Monday 27 August 1934, box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

31 “Dorothy Thompson Tells of Nazi Ban,” *New York Times*, Monday 27 August 1934, box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

32 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 197.

33 Ibid.

would enable the Nazi party to oust her for speaking ill of the Fuhrer and his government.³⁴ She was instructed to leave the country within 48 hours, prompting American Ambassador William E. Dodd to investigate the request. Dodd found that the requested removal was “for her journalistic activities such as the Hitler Interview and the recent reports about the anti-Semitic campaign.”³⁵ In a cable report on her expulsion Thompson said:

My offense was to think that Hitler is just an ordinary man...That is a crime against the reigning cult in Germany...To question this mystic mission is so heinous that, if you are German you can be sent to jail. I, fortunately, am an American, so I merely was sent to Paris. Worse things can happen to one.³⁶

With commentary like this, she tried to insist that worse things were brewing in Germany and on her welcomed return to the US, Thompson gained even more fame. Reports of her ousting covered front pages and she gained the nickname “First Lady of American Journalism.”³⁷ The *New York Herald Tribune* headline reported on Thompson, saying that she gave women an outlet to read about foreign affairs that had previously been cut off from them and usually reserved for their husbands.³⁸

The *New York Times* front page on Sunday, August 26, 1934 also covered the news of Thompson’s exile, with headlines proclaiming “‘Dorothy Thompson Expelled by Reich for ‘Slur’ on Hitler: Dorothy Thompson Tells of Nazi Ban’ and ‘Punished for 1931 Article’ due to condemning ‘modern anti-Semitism.’”³⁹ Her growing audience, which included women, allowed her to gain a strong and diverse following. Her expulsion was unheard of in Western Europe and it was a “sensational, unprecedented development in international affairs” which “caused a great deal of excitement and anxiety.”⁴⁰

Because of this new attention, Thompson began traveling the country spreading news of European affairs in lecture settings with talks titled “The Crisis in Germany” and “The World Peace Problem.”⁴¹ It was then that she was offered a thrice-weekly news column in the *New York Herald Tribune*, on the front page of the second section called, “On the Record.”⁴² This was a coveted platform only occupied by the most distinguished figures in the nation’s public life, and Thompson broke the male monopoly. Her efforts turned towards educating Americans about the Nazi threat and “organizing rescue

34 Kurth, *The American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 202.

35 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 198.

36 Ibid., 199.

37 *New York Herald Tribune* Article, 10 December 1937, box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

38 Ibid.

39 “Dorothy Thompson Tells of Nazi Ban,” *New York Times*, Monday 27 August 1934, box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

40 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 202.

41 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 199.

42 *New York Herald Tribune* Article, 10 December 1937, box 73, 1933-1934 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

operations for European refugees.”⁴³ She warned that “it could happen here,”⁴⁴ and therefore the American people must be aware and willing to take action against such threats.

Education for a Diverse Audience:

In the next year she turned out countless articles and short books on the problem of Nazism, including the racial rhetoric of “new” anti-Semitism. With her many publications she became an interpreter rather than a reporter of events, which allowed her to influence and even sway public opinion.⁴⁵ Instead of just reporting the facts, Thompson used her prominent position to try to convince the public to take action. Her writings explained Nazi policies and new anti-Semitism to the American public as well as offered suggestions for what America should do. She described the Nazi ideology of racially based anti-Semitism and the so called “parasitic” nature of Jews. She also explained how the Nazis were blaming both the problems of capitalism and socialism as “Jewish problems.”⁴⁶ Always framing her lectures to show Nazism as the antithesis of American ideals, she took the stage well, and continued to draw impressive crowds of over 2,000 with Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.⁴⁷

By 1936, she was known as a “columnist, radio commentator, and lecturer.”⁴⁸ She wrote for multiple publications including, but not limited to, the *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Post*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Foreign Affairs*.⁴⁹ Her audience grew in numbers and diversity. She appealed to men and women, with reports saying that “men read her as much as women, men discuss her opinions as often as do women, men look forward to her tomorrow’s comment on today’s news—as frequently as women. Men ask her to address exclusive meetings.”⁵⁰ Another factor contributing to her diverse audience was that the *Tribune* was the most prominent and most respected right-wing newspaper in the country, appearing in more than 130 cities, giving Thompson a platform and an audience that would otherwise not be widely reached concerning these issues.⁵¹

It was no secret that European affairs were not the “the burning issue for most *Herald Tribune* readers who would rather focus on preventing Roosevelt’s reelection.”⁵² Thompson offered a unique view on issues that weren’t normally covered, and within a few months her volume of mail, both positive and negative, showed that her column was “becoming a fixture at many American breakfast tables.”⁵³ By the end of the year she had

43 Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 54.

44 Ibid., 55.

45 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 204.

46 Dorothy Thompson, “National Socialism: Theory and Practice,” *Foreign Affairs* 13 (1935): 557–73. Accessed October 13, 2015. doi:10.2307/20020215.

47 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 206.

48 Ibid., 233.

49 Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 52.

50 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 223.

51 Ibid., 218.

52 Ibid., 217.

53 Ibid., 218.

an estimated 7.5 million readers.⁵⁴ *Time* magazine's cover story declared that she and Eleanor Roosevelt were undoubtedly the most influential women in the U.S.⁵⁵ The source of her power was both the size of her following and its diversity. Her preoccupation with the evils of Nazism and her concern for its victims endeared her to both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences and "On the Record" reached the largest audience among early anti-Nazi reporters.⁵⁶ She clearly informed and stirred a wide audience of readers with a personal and moral mission to educate and spur action against the Nazis.

The Issues of Refugees, War, and American Inaction:

By 1938, Thompson had widely established the problems and threat of Nazism, and she was growing restless for action. She began tirelessly advocating for America to aid in the refugee crisis, arguing that the nation had a moral and democratic obligation. Her readership had grown to as many as 10 million readers a day,⁵⁷ and she had a large overseas network of correspondents, diplomats, and friends who kept her informed. She also had a twice weekly radio broadcast to further engage with her audiences.⁵⁸ In April, NBC News ran ads saying that Thompson's "Telephone is Hooked up to the World" and "there's always a busy signal" because she "knows when and where the stories will break."⁵⁹ Thompson's keen eye for stories and her many informants allowed her to bring up to date and shocking news to the American people that would hopefully inspire action on their part. Her reporting increasingly turned towards the issue of refugees who she felt needed to be accommodated.

In December of 1938, she wrote a letter explaining her consistency of political ideology to an author who publicly challenged her ideals. She wrote to him with examples of how she publicly showed her consistency and commitment to democratic principles and aiding Jewish refugees.⁶⁰ Her coverage of the Herschel Grynszpan incident is the best example of Thompson's consistency of democratic and moral obligation to take action against the European situation. On Monday November 7, 1938 Thompson's insistence on attending to the Jewish crisis was confirmed further when a seventeen year old Jewish boy named Herschel Grynszpan fatally shot a representative at a German embassy in Paris.⁶¹

This incident gave the Nazis a tangible scapegoat for the violence of *Kristallnacht* two days later, and Thompson proved to be one of the very few who supported Grynszpan from the beginning by telling the world his side of the story. Even the world

54 Ibid., 223.

55 Ibid., 225.

56 Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 52.

57 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 232.

58 *NBC News Service* Article, 7 April 1936, box 73, 1936-1938 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

59 Ibid.

60 Letter to George (Author of *Lords and Press*) from Dorothy Thompson, 13 December 1938, Outgoing Correspondence, box 35, 1938 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

61 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 230.

Jewish community steered clear of supporting such a violent act, in hope of self preservation. In her column Thompson wrote:

I feel as though I know that boy, for in the past five years I have met so many whose story is the same...Herschel Grynszpan was one of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from whom the terror east of the Rhine has turned loose on the world. His permit to stay in Paris had expired. He could not leave France, for no country would take him in...Herschel read the newspapers and all that he could read filled him with dark anxiety and wild despair...Thousands of men and women of his race had killed themselves in the last years, rather than live like hunted animals...Who is on trial in this case? I say we are all on trial. I say the Christian world is on trial...If any Jews, anywhere in the world protest at anything that is happening, further oppressive measures will be taken...Therefore, we who are not Jews must speak, speak our sorrow and indignation and disgust in so many voices that they will be heard...⁶²

Following this report, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a private letter to Dorothy Thompson on November 8, saying:

I read your column with interest and on the European situation I frequently feel as you do...I will gladly see what I can do to prevent cruelty to people anywhere! The world seems to have gone completely mad as far as disregard for human beings goes.⁶³

Thompson's ability to emotionally captivate, as well as rationalize her argument, allowed her to share this story with Americans who would not otherwise be informed or concerned with the Jewish situation in Europe.

In her outgoing correspondence, many letters show how she began receiving funds from her readers and listeners for the defense of Grynszpan. She wrote, "The response to my broadcast was so phenomenal that I find myself directing the collection of a fund for the defense of Herschel Grynszpan."⁶⁴ She started the "Journalist's Defense Fund" and declared it a collection "from the American people, as a demonstration of our will to support justice, secure a fair trial, to provide for a first rate and adequate defense, and bring out the underlying facts."⁶⁵ Following her multiple broadcasts and columns on the subject, over \$40,000 dollars was spontaneously contributed by non-Jewish

62 Dorothy Thompson. *Let the Record Speak*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), 230-31.

63 Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Dorothy Thompson, 8 November 1938, Incoming Correspondence, box 24, Eleanor Roosevelt folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

64 Edited manuscript calling for donations to Journalist's Defense Fund for Herschel Grynszpan, Outgoing Correspondence, box 35, 1938 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

65 Ibid.

Americans.⁶⁶ After her quick defense, Thompson began pressing the American people for more action to condemn the wider persecution and preserve democratic ideals.

One of Thompson's main arguments for the defense of Grynszpan and the entire population of European Jews subjected to Hitler's rule, was her well-informed explanation of calculated Nazi violence towards this perceived "racial" group. She latched onto Grynszpan's case and argued that this was the first of many "provok[ed] incidents which will give [Hitler's] regime an excuse to take the measures which they have already planned."⁶⁷ To broaden this narrative she published countless articles emphasizing that "it will be a great mistake to regard what is happening in Germany as primarily a Jewish matter."⁶⁸ Her loathing of the Nazi's racist worldview led her to champion the idea that this ordeal was a world problem, and an American problem, rather than simply a Jewish problem. Thompson felt that it was her mission to make sure the American public was not left in the dark.⁶⁹

In late November of 1938, Thompson wrote an article where she was determined to explain the political, economic, and social organization inside Germany in order for the American public to understand why the Jewish situation was so urgent and necessary to address. She described the Nazi party as "not a party at all but a horde blindly following absolute dictation."⁷⁰ In another article concerning refugees, she explained that the Nazi system made Jews "suffer on two counts: because of their race, and the rise of nationalism and racialism; and because, by and large, they have been political liberals."⁷¹

With her audience aware of why the Jews were in such a tough spot in Europe, Thompson began writing harshly about the immigration laws on the books in America, as well as the American version of anti-Semitism persistent throughout these years to expose the hypocrisy inside their own country. To start, she condemned the National Origins immigration bills of 1921 and 1924, which "virtually shut America's doors to immigrants."⁷² Further revealing the anti-Semitic sentiments, opinion polls from the late 1930s and early 40s, "indicated that about one-third of the American public was anti-Semitic."⁷³ Thompson was well aware of the anti-Semitic and xenophobic atmosphere. By 1940 there were more than one hundred anti-Semitic organizations throughout the United States.⁷⁴ There were few activists like her who sincerely intended to aid refugees

66 Thompson, *Let the Record Speak*, 231.

67 Edited manuscript calling for donations to Journalist's Defense Fund for Herschel Grynszpan, Outgoing Correspondence, box 35, 1938 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

68 Clipped "On the Record" Column titled *Inside Germany*, Outgoing Correspondence, 23 November 1939, box 96, "On the Record" Published Copies 1938 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

69 Thompson, *Let the Record Speak*, 233.

70 Ibid.

71 Dorothy Thompson, "Refugees: A World Problem." *Foreign Affairs* 16, no. 3 (1938): 375-87. Accessed October 13, 2015. doi:10.2307/20028859.

72 Rafael Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle on Genocide*, (Indiana: Purdue University Press), 3.

73 Robert Moses Shapiro. *Why Didn't the Press Shout?: American & International Journalism during the Holocaust*. (Hoboken, N.J.: Yeshiva Univ. Press in Association with KTAV Pub. House, 2003), 3.

74 Rafael Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle on Genocide*, 3.

with the obstacles of U.S. immigration quotas and public disapproval.⁷⁵ She condemned the “paper walls” or bureaucratic designed obstacles to keep Jews off American shores. She became even more adamant to denounce America’s inaction towards the refugee crisis with the proposed dismantling of the Nansen Office of the League of Nations, which was the only body that tried to solve the refugee crisis internationally.⁷⁶ As early as April 1938, she declared that there “is a very serious refugee problem already, and the events of the last weeks, and the probable events of the immediate future, have accelerated and will augment it.”⁷⁷

Her article, which was turned into a book, called, “Refugees: A World Problem”, was a pushback against the increasing xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments, as well as the decreasing immigration quotas. She argued that there “need[ed] to be a comprehensive world agency” for immigration due to refugees being “trapped between a country that had spat them out and a country that would not let them in.”⁷⁸ The dedication of her book reads, “to my friends in exile, amongst them some of the noblest spirits and most gifted minds that I have ever known,” showing how much she truly cared about this cause and the human beings involved in such a crisis. She argued that the refugee crisis was a economic, political, and social world issue and envisioned a world fund for resettlement of all political exiles through some program like that of the *Haavara* in Palestine, which exchanged refugees and exported goods. Thompson called for a similar program where the U.S. would exchange exports with countries if they opened their doors to refugees. She reasoned that this would help everyone involved as well as alleviate the push back against immigration to America.

Her writings came at a vital time for Jews trying to emigrate because they could no longer go to Palestine in great capacity. The problem of the Arab revolt caused Britain to severely limit Jewish immigration to the “national home” in Palestine in order to placate the Arab population. Thompson pointed out to the American people that the closing of Palestine was a major problem because it was no longer an “effective refuge” for those trying to flee Hitler’s Europe.⁷⁹

In her book, Thompson demanded that a comprehensive international organization must be made to aid the crisis. In her plan she suggested that some countries make financial arrangements, and for others to physically take on the immigrants.⁸⁰ She thought this would be an effective way to aid the most possible refugees, countries that could not support physical people could support monetarily, and vice versa. She also saw this alternate plan as something the American people could stand behind, as it wouldn’t necessarily mean taking on more immigrants. To convince her audience, she wrote that the world, “had turned into a jungle, and the refugees are merely the people forced to run

75 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “United States Policy Towards Jewish Refugees, 1941-1945.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007094>. Accessed on [December, 1, 2015]

76 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 277.

77 Thompson, *Let the Record Speak*, 166.

78 Dorothy Thompson. *Refugees: Anarchy or Organization?* (New York: Random House, 1938), 28-29.

79 Thompson, *Refugees*, 30.

80 Ibid., 94.

away from one part of the jungle to another. Their personal tragedy can only serve one great social purpose. They are and should be recognized as an advancing crowd shouting a great warning."⁸¹ She considered her writings as functioning like a high pitched whistle, warning of what was to come if the American people kept silent.

She turned the problem into a moral conundrum by saying that, "to admit that the whole round earth has no place left for men and women of peculiar and expert skill, once the doors of their own land closed behind them, is to admit that the whole round earth, as it is at present organized, is a colossal and incurable failure."⁸² Furthering this image of failure, Thompson suggested the "inhumane" nature of the times, where for "thousands and thousands of people a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death."⁸³ She made a point to say that others, including Americans, had the ability to assist and did not. She appealed to the masses by arguing that democracy is a direct "revulsion against persecution of individuals,"⁸⁴ and further argued that the racial aspects of anti-Semitism were invalid. In one section she wrote that as a 44-year-old, "if I have been menaced by Jews I haven't noticed it yet. A Jewish physician saved my life once, and I assure you I wasn't interested in his grandmother at the time..."⁸⁵

By personally trying to appeal to emotions and then through rational historical reasoning, she wrote that, "I speak of anti-Semitism in the United States, not because I stand here as a friend of the 'Jews'-- I say it is not American to speak of 'the Jews'--- there is no such thing as 'the Jews.'"⁸⁶ She deplored the racial rhetoric and new anti-Semitism and declared that, "only a fraction are Jews by the standards of any other world than that of Mr. Hitler."⁸⁷ She called the new anti-Semitism an artificial creation of a race problem within the white race and tried to argue that due to this, a moral obligation, and a historical obligation, necessitated that Americans step up.⁸⁸

She looked at the rise of anti-Semitism in the US as an assault on the very foundation of American democracy, saying that to "close one's eyes to it would be 'ostracism' in an acute form."⁸⁹ Her appeal to the American public tried to point out flaws in the general logic of the time; that is, barring Jews in need by looking the other way even when America was founded by immigrants fleeing forms of persecution. The book highlighted how America was built on refugees coming to the new land of freedom, and therefore, if Americans did not act in the present, then they were denying the very foundations of their nationhood.⁹⁰ She ended by writing, "we are moved not merely by pity for the exiles, but by the need to re-affirm our own beliefs, to take a stand

81 Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 279.

82 Ibid., 168.

83 Thompson, *Refugees*, 28.

84 Ibid., 11.

85 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 282.

86 Ibid., 285.

87 Thompson, *Refugees*, 56.

88 Ibid., 63.

89 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 285.

90 Thompson, *Refugees*, 121.

for them, to re-capture the ground which our indifference has lost.”⁹¹ She clearly made the issue an “American problem.”

Her appeal for action was aimed both at gentiles and Jews, alike. She called for the collaboration of “Jews and Christians” to stand for “Western principles of democratic law and order.”⁹² With articles such as “A Letter to a Jewish Friend” she specifically begged Jews not to “isolate [themselves] in a fierce and bitter pride...The crisis is not a Jewish crisis. It is a human crisis.” She wrote that the question of her time was whether or not Western civilization and democratic principles will survive, saying that “the place to stand and work and fight for its survival is not, for us, in Germany, but is here, in this country, which is dear to you and me.”⁹³ Her campaign to help the Jews of Europe was seen as a contributing catalyst for the State Department to convene and discuss refugees in the Summer of 1938. Although no solution was reached, official recognition made the problem legitimate and Thompson continued to criticize the lack of action that democracies were taking.⁹⁴

Personal Actions to Aid Refugees and Enter the War:

Throughout the 30s and early 40s, Thompson’s call to action for the rest of the country was matched by her own individual actions to aid refugees. She sponsored to numerous Jews who fled Hitler’s Europe, and they became known as “Dorothy’s Refugees,”⁹⁵ as she was the contact for every Jewish refugee whose name was suggested to her.⁹⁶ Twin Farms in Vermont became a temporary home for many refugees. She provided a place to live, jobs, and great encouragement for those she brought over. Much of her incoming and outgoing correspondence in the latter half of the 30s was between legal aids and the American Consulate, discussing visas, sponsorship, and other paperwork necessary to bring refugees into her care. She filled out sponsorship applications for visas, showing that she had the means to aid refugees that she was bringing over. She had to describe her credibility, as well as the credibility of the refugee or refugees that she was taking on. The government, clearly already wary of taking new immigrants, wanted proof that those who came over would be useful citizens, could attain a job, and did not have criminal backgrounds; Therefore, Thompson had to vouch on their behalf.

Many of those she sponsored, including Fritz Kortner who she exchanged countless letters and legal paperwork with, needed extra paperwork and were delayed due to the long waiting list that the European situation produced at the time. The impossibility to obtain certain papers on the European end, due to difficult Nazi regulations, made it

91 Ibid., 122.

92 Thompson, “Refugees: A World Problem,” 375-87.

93 Thompson, *Refugees*, 122.

94 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 280.

95 Ibid., 275.

96 Ibid.

unlikely to even get your name on the wait list in the first place.⁹⁷ In these years, Thompson's income was roughly \$100,000 a year, and she gave half of that away to refugee organizations and to those that she personally sponsored.⁹⁸ Her agent's wife wrote, "In those years, whenever I saw Dorothy she had an envelope full of immigration papers in her handbag. She was always collecting affidavits of support for someone."⁹⁹ At the same time that Thompson was individually sponsoring refugees, she personally attacked the inaction and anti-Semitism of others by writing scathing letters to those perpetuating such practices.

In March 1939 she called out Robert Edmund Edmondson, an anti-Jewish pamphleteer, for publishing anti-Semitic and pro-fascist articles as well as for "defaming" her name. She wrote to him "I don't consider it an insult to be called Jewish, but since you do consider it an insult I accept it in the spirit in which it is meant, and justify the impertinence of this letter as the only way I could think of to answer your own colossal impertinence."¹⁰⁰ Her private and public life seemed to blur together in the latter 1930s. Sponsoring as many refugees as she could and calling out other's inaction on the same subject consumed most of her time.

By the end of 1939, Thompson published a book with selected articles on the European crisis called *Let the Record Speak*. The closing of this book shows her growing frustration with the masses and their lack of action on both the refugee issue, as well as their desire to stay neutral to war. This marks the beginning of the period where Thompson continued to insist on the Nazi problem being a world problem; a problem that now included entering the war in order to preserve democracy and the freedoms that come with it. Charles Poore of the *New York Times* said that *Let the Record Speak* should be called "Let the Record Shout," due to Thompson's strong insistence on American action.¹⁰¹

The organization that she started in the late 30s was focused on the American Neutrality Policy which she wanted eradicated. The Ring of Freedom, her organization which petitioned the government, worked towards ending the policy of neutrality and getting America involved in the war. This was consistent with Thompson's belief that the European crisis was a worldwide crisis. Her defense for this organization, like her main defense for aiding refugees, was preserving American and Western democracy against Hitler's fascism. The Ring of Freedom's pamphlet described the group as a "call to action" for the American people. The main goal was to "build the democracy of tomorrow, defend the democracy of today."¹⁰²

97 Letter from Leo Taub (Thompson's Attorney) to Fritz Kortner, 22 April 1938, Incoming Correspondence, box 16, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

98 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 238.

99 Ibid., 275.

100 Letter to Robert Edward Edmondson from Dorothy Thompson, 3 March 1939, Outgoing Correspondence, box 35, 1939 folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

101 Thompson, *Let the Record Speak*, 234.

102 The Ring of Freedom Pamphlet written by Dorothy Thompson, Cover, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

Thompson defined democracy as “based upon a doctrine of personal rights, [which] implies a doctrine of personal obligations.”¹⁰³ Within the pamphlet she asserted that Americans who deny action were wrong, saying “We are not democrats. Let us see what we can do to make ourselves right....if you agree with this booklet, I would like you to join me.”¹⁰⁴ She was growing tired of those who were “anti-Nazi, but pro nothing else,” calling the United States, “drunk with pacifism.”¹⁰⁵ At the time, American public opinion opposed the involvement in European affairs, and only 3% favored military involvement.¹⁰⁶ Her denunciations of neutrality were also tied to her denouncement of anti-Semitism, because “rapidly growing anti-Semitic organizations were accusing Jews of trying to drag America into the war.”¹⁰⁷ At this time, she publicly and privately accused Charles Lindbergh, an American hero, of Nazi “affinities” and isolationist sentiment.¹⁰⁸

Her most famed instance of combating this type of thought was in February of 1939 when more than 19,000 gathered to listen to the German-American Bund, a pro-Nazi organization that was speaking out against the “war-mongering, Jew-loving Franklin Roosevelt.” Thompson cut her way through the crowd to the front of the reporter section, and laughed aloud during the introduction speech of anti-Semitic rhetoric. This situation made headline news, championing Thompson and her cause for action.¹⁰⁹

Throughout the late 30s and early 40s Thompson had significant correspondence with President Roosevelt, who wrote to her praising her ideas and thanking her for “valiant support” in opposing the “powers at be” on international affairs.¹¹⁰ Due to her increased rallying call for war and public endorsement of FDR’s reelection, the *Tribune*, a conservative outlet, refused to renew her column past 1940. She switched to the *New York Post*, which had a more liberal audience. She put most of her efforts into the Ring of Freedom which produced a petition to Congress to, “Strengthen the Foreign and Internal Situation of the United States.”¹¹¹ Articles reported that “Miss Thompson Bids U.S. Scrap Neutrality Law,”¹¹² and that she argued for “freedom of action.” At an event held

103 The Ring of Freedom Pamphlet written by Dorothy Thompson, Introduction, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

104 Ibid.

105 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 311.

106 Ibid., 234.

107 Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson*, 235.

108 Ibid.

109 *New York Post* Article, Thursday 25 September 1941, Page 8, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder, Dorothy

Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

110 Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Dorothy Thompson, 27 November 1944, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

111 The Ring of Freedom Petition to Congress, adopted 24 September 1941, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder,

Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

112 *New York Herald Tribune* Article, Thursday, 27 April 1939, box 73, Newspapers, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

at Carnegie Hall, Thompson spoke to an overflow crowd of over 7,000 about the issue of American neutrality where she said,¹¹³

When we say 'stand before the world' we mean, stand, accepting the full responsibility of that stand: to resist what we know to be evil, and to resist with measures short of nothing; to build what we conceive to be good, together with all men in all lands who will go along with us. I begin by inviting you to join us.¹¹⁴

Following this, a dinner and reception was given in honor of Thompson's tireless coverage of the European crisis and the threat to American democracy. Prime Minister Winston Churchill even offered congratulations, writing that "she has shown what one valiant woman can do with the power of the pen. Freedom and humanity are grateful debtors."¹¹⁵

Through the end of the war, Thompson's journalism continued to expose the atrocities being committed by the Nazis, and she never stopped insisting that this threat could and must be stopped by Western democracies. In August 1942, the State Department received a report sent by Gerhart Riegner, a representative of the World Jewish Congress, that revealed that the Nazis were "implementing a policy to physically annihilate the Jews of Europe."¹¹⁶ Department officials decided not to release this information to the masses for fear of putting pressure on the American public to act, the very thing Thompson had been encouraging since the early 30s.¹¹⁷ After the reports were leaked, Thompson made a broadcast over CBS radio, which contained a dramatic running account of the growing Nazi atrocities.¹¹⁸ She, among a few others, tirelessly put pressure on the call for action to the American government, until they finally set up the War Refugee Board in 1944.

In April of 1945, following the end of the war, Thompson visited a liberated death camp and wrote an article foreshadowing Hannah Arendt's reflections on the "banality of evil." She observed that "the Germans are in many ways like us. That is what is terrifying about the concentration camps, with their millions of victims murdered en masse by the most modern and hygienic methods."¹¹⁹ Thompson attempted to explain how the Germans as a whole, including the desk killers, the actual killers, and the bystanders, were normal humans. Due to her involvement and action throughout the entire span of the Third Reich, Thompson was asked to advise on the situation of post-war Germany.

¹¹³ *New York Post* Article, Wednesday, 18 June 1941, box 24, Ring of Freedom folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 273-74.

¹¹⁶ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The United States and the Holocaust." Holocaust Encyclopedia.<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005182>. Accessed on [December 1, 2015].

¹¹⁷ Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle on Genocide*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time*, 292.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

She was personally asked to “spare a little time to educate State Department Personnel abroad.”¹²⁰ This alone shows how ultimately her actions did not go unnoticed, even if they were widely un-acted on at higher governmental levels during the 1930s and war years.

This research has reexamined previously used material, as well as sources that have not been extensively tapped, or tapped at all. This has resulted in a fairly narrow and deep investigation and interpretation of Thompson’s dealings with the general threat of Nazism, and, specifically the threat it posed to European Jews. Not only has this research shown her consistent concerns with these issues, but it has also looked at how she intended to spur awareness and then action among the American public by using appeals to morality through emotion and democratic reason. Thompson took her personal knowledge and urgent concern for the situation in Europe and intended to bring that same knowledge and urgent concern to the American public. She not only saw the threat of Nazism to the Jews and the Western democratic world, but also asked the American people to consider these threats within their own country, where she provided information, discussions, and organizations to combat such danger. Along with her constant pleas or “shouts” as some have said, Thompson served as a personal example to take action. This paper has shown Thompson’s multilayered appeals for public action and her equally important personal action to combat a universal human crisis that was not an imperative issue in American politics and press, until it had to be. Her influence was great, but her intentions and actions were even greater.

In conclusion, Dorothy Thompson’s early reporting on the threat of Nazism, and her quick call for action to assist the Jews of Europe, as well as for Americans to stand up and defend democratic principles were virtually unparalleled in the world of American journalism throughout the 1930s. This research reveals her own intentions and actions, as well as the influence she had on others. As she pled for action from American citizens, the government, and the military, she set an example by acting herself. Her personal and public writings prove her consistency and deep moral investment in making sure the American people, and the world, recognized the global threat of Nazism and the persecution that came with it. Although she could not affect public policy to the degree that she intended, and as quickly as she knew was necessary, she had the ability to single handedly affect public thought with the stroke of a pen. Her unique position as a female journalist, writing towards a more conservative audience, influenced many who might not have been reached otherwise. Thompson may not have been able to fully eradicate anti-Semitism or anti-war attitudes, but she made the American people aware of a foreign crisis as well as an internal moral crisis within their own country, which were too easily ignored prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and late confirmation of the Final Solution. In the context of her time, Dorothy Thompson was truly a “social rebel,” early to champion causes that were not recognized by others until it was far too late.

120 Letter from Donald R. Heath to Dorothy Thompson, 24 June 1945, Incoming Correspondence, box 29, United States Political Advisor for Germany folder, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

The Military Watershed of the Soviet-German War: The Battle of Kursk and the First Major Soviet Breakthrough

Nate Gondelman

The German-Soviet conflict was the decisive theater in the Second World War, yet in Western historiography, it is not given the attention and emphasis commensurate with its importance in deciding the outcome of the cataclysmic struggle. Indeed, the Eastern Front accounted for approximately eighty percent of German war fatalities.¹ In spite of the incontrovertible evidence corroborating the paramount importance of the war in the East, a natural inclination toward self-aggrandizement in national historical memory has combined with Cold War politics to designate Anglo-American operations, especially D-Day, as the pivotal factor in defeating the Third Reich in the popular consciousness. Since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the politics of history have changed and the Kremlin has opened its previously inaccessible archives to Western historians. Subsequently, the Western misrepresentation of the war has gradually begun to transform—albeit at a relatively glacial pace. Even with this shift, the principal emphasis and incessant search for a definitive “turning point” of the war remains rather narrow and misguided. The classic school of thought hones in on the dogged resistance and eventual resilience of the Red Army in December 1941 that halted the German advance toward Moscow or, most of all, the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in early 1943. Antony Beevor has even asserted that “the defense of Moscow was the geopolitical turning point, and Stalingrad the psychological one.”² While the gravity and long-term impact of each of these Soviet triumphs is irrefutable, they do not tell the entire story.

The Battle of Kursk and the subsequent Soviet counter-offensives in late summer and autumn 1943 are almost never elevated to a comparable level of significance. Though Kursk itself is well known in many circles, the primary awareness around it is generally predicated on the epic clash of tanks and armor — unparalleled in the history of warfare — and its set-piece display of combined-arms tactics from both the Red Army and the Wehrmacht on the open Russian steppe. No one clash on the Eastern front matches the classic conception of a decisive battle as much as Kursk. Additionally, the conspicuous presence of German Waffen SS and SS Death’s Head division has added to the mystique of Kursk. However tantalizing these features of the battle may appear to the historian or the armchair history buff, these details are a bit misleading, as they obfuscate Kursk’s strategic importance in the broader conflict of the Nazi-Soviet war and World War II as a whole.

Was Kursk *the* turning point on the Eastern Front? This is difficult to assert with any definitiveness, but it was certainly *a* turning point. To truly grasp the meaning of

¹ Stephen G. Fritz, *Ostkrieg: Hitler's War of Extermination in the East* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), xxi.

² Antony Beevor, ed., *A Writer at War: Vasily Grossman with the Red Army, 1941-1945*, trans. Luba Vinogradova (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 231.

Kursk, one must not only focus on the battle itself, but instead examine its context within German-Soviet operations during the first two years of the war and between the late winter and autumn of 1943. Kursk and the related Soviet operations in its aftermath saw the crystallization of the turning of the tide in favor of the Red Army — something that had been a glimmer after the failure of Operation Barbarossa at the end of 1941 and a still unrealized potentiality after Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943.

What was unique about Kursk was that it served as a showcase for the enormous and comprehensive growth of the Soviets' war machine over the previous two years, even while under unimaginable duress. At Kursk, for the first time, the Soviets effectively acquired and applied intelligence to their advantage through coordinated and meticulous preparation. After much debate, Stalin and the Stavka, the high command of the Soviet armed forces took an educated gamble to remain patient and develop a strategic plan that would play to Soviet strengths and exploit German weaknesses — a departure from previous Red Army campaigns in 1941 and 1942. This foresight and disciplined approach not only prevented another German summer thrust into the heart of Russia, but it served as a springboard for counteroffensives throughout the rest of year to liberate significant parts of Ukraine before 1943 closed, compelling the Wehrmacht to remain on the defensive for the remainder of the war. Lastly, from a standpoint of psychology and morale, Kursk was perhaps even more crucial than Stalingrad with respect to instilling a sense of belief both inside and outside of the Soviet Union in the attainability of absolute victory against Nazi Germany. This paper will examine these developments and their significance to the trajectory of the war on the Eastern Front in an effort to demonstrate how Kursk was truly “the crossover point between two of the most formidable instruments of war the world has ever seen . . . ”³

In order to truly grasp the singular nature of Kursk and understand what distinguished it from the successes and failures of previous Soviet operations, it is essential to grasp what transpired during the previous two years of the war on the Eastern Front. In large part due to Stalin's obstinacy, there existed an “institutional surprise” within the Soviet regime in regard to German preparations to betray the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact during the winter and spring of 1941. Consequently, the Wehrmacht achieved smashing success with the launching of Operation Barbarossa on 22 June. Stalin had refused to countenance the notion that Hitler would perpetrate such treachery and was convinced that warnings of an impending German attack were designed to bait the Soviets into an unnecessary conflict.⁴ Proceeding along three axes of advance, the Germans encircled three entire Soviet armies on the way to capturing Kiev, besieging Leningrad, and reaching the outskirts of Moscow. But Soviet opposition increasingly stiffened from the late summer onward, gradually grinding down a Wehrmacht that, with overextended and limited supply lines, had already passed the culmination point of its offensive. The Germans were unequipped and ill-prepared for the harsh Russian winter

³ Dennis E. Showalter, *Armor and Blood: The Battle of Kursk, the Turning Point of World War II* (New York: Random House, 2013), 270.

⁴ David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 44.

— weather that prohibited the kind of mobile, mechanized war of movement that they had called upon to such success in previous campaigns.

To exploit the Germans vulnerability, the Red Army, reinforced with troops from the eastern part of the country after Soviet intelligence provided Stalin with assurances that the Japanese were not planning an attack, launched its own counteroffensive on 5 December 1941. The Soviets succeeded in pushing the Germans back far enough to provide Moscow with some much-needed breathing space. However, an overzealous Stalin quickly broadened the planned counteroffensive with the intention of trying to encircle the bulk of two entire German army groups. This goal proved far too ambitious for a Red Army still fraught with weaknesses, particularly considering that the Wehrmacht, although battered and bruised by winter 1941, remained a decidedly formidable fighting force.⁵ Though Moscow was tentatively safe from an imminent onslaught, the Soviets had not dealt the Germans a decisive setback, and the Wehrmacht remained firmly lodged in Russia. Hitler had expected to subdue the Soviet Union before 1941 drew to a close, and though the Red Army did not cooperate with this vision, it had left the Germans in a favorable position to launch yet another major offensive after the spring *raspusita* (rainy season).

As the ground hardened in the late spring of 1942 to inaugurate campaigning season, the Germans prepared another major offensive: Case Blue. In contrast to Barbarossa the previous year, which was launched with approximately three million men along a 1500-mile area, Blue was not an offensive along the entire front. The reality was that the Wehrmacht no longer had the men nor the materiel to completely make good the losses of 1941. Instead, Hitler and the German High Command conceived of an attack from Army Group South's sector of the front, with the ultimate aim of reaching the Caucasus oil fields to secure their use for the Third Reich and cripple an integral resource base for the Soviet Union.

Stalin and the Stavka understood and expected another German offensive, but were unsure of where it would occur. While sensing correctly that the Germans would only have the strength to launch an offensive in one sector of the front, Stalin erred in assuming a reprise of Operation Typhoon from October 1941: a German thrust from Army Group Center directed at Moscow, the political center and communications hub of the Soviet Union. Just as he had during the German preparation to launch Operation Barbarossa the previous spring, the characteristically paranoid and too clever by half Stalin dismissed Soviet intelligence briefs which suggested that the Germans would concentrate their summer 1942 offensive in the south.⁶ Even when the entire German operational plan was recovered from a plane crash behind Red Army lines, Stalin believed that the information was deliberately intended to mislead the Soviets. Consequently, the primary disposition of Red Army forces was in the central sector of the front to the west of Moscow, leaving the enticing economic prizes of Southern Russia dangerously exposed to the true designs of the upcoming German offensive.⁷

⁵ Ibid., 96-99.

⁶ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 412

⁷ Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 296.

The Germans made significant gains, in large part attributable to Stalin's failure to accurately foresee the main German axis of advance, but the capture of no more than 200,000 prisoners during encirclement operations was a disconcerting harbinger for German success in comparison with their staggering encircling successes of the previous year.⁸ Hitler, euphoric at the triumph of the German advance, expanded the original objectives of Blue and eventually became focused on Stalingrad as a key element to its success — a departure from the initial campaign plan. In a replay of the previous year, overstretched German supply lines and hardening Soviet resistance made Hitler's lofty goals for the campaign unattainable for an increasingly weak and vulnerable Wehrmacht force. The Germans became bogged down in the kind of urban warfare in Stalingrad that was categorically antithetical to their military doctrine of mobile, mechanized combat.

By early autumn, Stalin, General Georgy Zhukov, and the Stavka hatched a plan for a counteroffensive designed to capitalize on the long exposed German flank that ran along the Don River and was primarily defended by the armies of Germany's allies: Italy, Hungary, and Romania. The forces of all three of these satellite armies were far more susceptible to a Soviet counterattack than the robust Wehrmacht.⁹ The Soviets planned multiple operations—codenamed Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus respectively—to take advantage of a Wehrmacht that was spread dangerously thin. Only Uranus went as planned, encircling the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad and eliminating portions of four other armies. In the final analysis, despite achieving undeniable successes to a point, Stalin and the Stavka had again been too grandiose in their expectations to blow the Eastern Front wide open.¹⁰

Stalingrad is often perceived as the turning point of the Second World War, specifically the Nazi-Soviet war. Though the surrender of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad and the simultaneous evacuation of the Wehrmacht from the Caucasus was an enormous setback for the Wehrmacht and a historic feat for the Red Army, the failure of Case Blue did not end the war. For the second consecutive year, the Soviets had endured a long and frantic retreat in the face of a German offensive onslaught, only to galvanize themselves in time to launch a counterstroke just as the Germans had reached the culmination point of their offensive and were especially vulnerable to a Soviet attack. Like Moscow in 1941, the Red Army had provided deliverance to Stalingrad in 1942, but was unable to achieve total success in shattering the German front in any one sector. Stalin, as in 1941, assumed that the Wehrmacht had been crippled and miscalculated its resiliency, insisting on offensives across the entire front that lacked the kind of concentration and defined objective in any one area that was necessary one to achieve decisive results against a sophisticated and challenging opponent.¹¹ The offensives undertaken by the Red Army in the winter of 1942-1943 had pushed the Germans back significant distances, but failed to achieve any kind of decisive breakthrough that would push the Germans back across to west bank of the Dnieper River. As the Soviets reached the culmination of their

⁸ Weinberg, 415.

⁹ Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 526-527.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 544.

¹¹ John Erickson, *The Road to Berlin* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1999), 44.

offensives, the desperate Wehrmacht was able to draw upon its experience and skill to extemporize an effective defense.

Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, now the commander of all German forces in Army Group South, had recently been reinforced by fresh, powerful forces and armor from German occupied Western Europe. Seizing the initiative from the overextended and fatigued Soviets, Manstein effectively used his newly strengthened forces to launch a counterattack against the exposed flanks of the Red Army. Between late February and the middle of March 1943, Manstein's forces were able to mostly eliminate a Soviet armored force under General Popov and recapture the important cities of Kharkov and Belgorod, which had been retaken by the Soviets during their winter offensives.¹²

The Germans, faced with the possibility of total catastrophe across the southern portion of their front after the disaster at Stalingrad, had managed to execute a flexible defense and then apply a counterstroke when the opportunity presented itself as Soviet offensives dissipated. In essence, by late March and early April 1943, the front line in the East had recalibrated to where it had been exactly one year before, prior to the launch of Case Blue.¹³ Certainly, this was a bitter pill for the Germans, who had hoped to win the war or at least decisively cripple the Red Army in 1942. But it was an equally unpleasant reality for the Soviets, who had hoped to parley the German overreach at Stalingrad into an offensive that would irreparably tear the German front wide open and send the Wehrmacht into a headlong retreat westward. Stalin and the Stavka had considered the position of the Wehrmacht irrecoverable after Stalingrad, but these setbacks in February and March demonstrated not only that the Wehrmacht remained a force to be reckoned with, but that a single offensive to win the war in once sweeping campaign — a “Soviet blitzkrieg” — was unfeasible. Instead, much to Stalin's frustration, the war would have to be won “gradually and incrementally.”¹⁴

It is here in particular where the popular understanding of the war finds its divergence from the historical reality. Stalingrad was an undeniably pivotal point in the war, and the Germans were irretrievably weakened by their marked losses in men and materiel during their ill-fated 1942 campaigns. Moreover, the Soviets were finally beginning to enjoy increased resources not only from their industrial facilities that had been moved east of the Ural mountains back in 1941, but also from increased Lend-Lease aid from the United States — not to mention their endemically exponential advantage in volume of forces. While it now ostensibly seemed clear that the Wehrmacht would now be incapable of defeating the Red Army, the way to win the war still seemed unclear, and the effort required to do so appeared increasingly daunting.

Consequently, as Stephen Fritz notes, in the months after Stalingrad, Stalin “did not act like a man certain of triumph.”¹⁵ Staring down the barrel of many months and perhaps years of a long, drawn-out, and bloody conflict to liberate Soviet territory and then push the Germans back into Central Europe, the Soviets became restless. During this period, the Soviets explored the possibility of a separate peace with Germany and did not

¹² Weinberg, 458.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Fritz, 324.

¹⁵ Ibid., 325.

necessarily go through great pains to keep it secretive. It is possible that the paranoid Stalin was pursuing this alternative because of his ever-present suspicion toward his Anglo-American Allies, whom he had always feared would themselves pursue a separate peace with Hitler if given the opportunity. Conversely, Soviet peace overtures in Germany's direction may have been a thinly veiled attempt to apply diplomatic leverage to the Western Allies, whom Stalin perceived to be suspiciously dilatory with respect to the matter of opening up a Second Front in Europe. Either way, the back-and-forth nature of the early months of 1943 set the stage for a momentous summer campaigning season once the spring rains ceased.¹⁶

The lull that followed the “backhand blows” by Manstein at Kharkov and Belgorod from April to June 1943 was the quietest period on the Eastern Front throughout the entire war. Despite the magnitude of the losses—48,000 for the Germans and 192,000 for the Soviets — every other three-month period of the war saw significantly more losses on both sides. Only the air war remained truly active by Eastern Front standards, as the Soviet Air Force truly began to come into its own, honing its craft in ways that would pay dividends for the remainder of the war.¹⁷

As both the Wehrmacht and the Red Army rested, recuperated, and reequipped its forces, each had major strategic decisions to ponder. German counterstrokes had proven the continued viability of the Wehrmacht, forcing the Soviets to reflect on the fact that Stalingrad, as important as it was, had been a victory against an enemy that was low on morale, spread dangerously thin, and in large part comprised of troops from the weak German satellite states of Italy, Romania, and Hungary. The modest revival of German fortunes in the late winter of 1943 seemed to wrestle the initiative away from the Soviets, indicating that yet another German offensive would come following the *rasputitsa*. Such a prospect loomed ominously for the Red Army, which had yet to prove its ability to thwart the Wehrmacht during the warm summer months that were most conducive to its *modus operandi* of concentrated, mechanized, and mobile forces.¹⁸ Consequently, the summer of 1943 was to be the true litmus test of the mettle and applied experience of the Soviet Union and the Red Army in particular.

Though the Red Army held a marked numerical superiority over the Wehrmacht at this point of the war, it was not the as lopsided of a comparison as that which presented itself during 1944-45. Richard Overy even argues that the accumulated experience from over three years of warfare combined with noteworthy improvements in battlefield technology to make the Germans potentially more intimidating as a fighting force than they had been during the glowing heights of their western European successes in 1940. Ultimate triumph, according to Overy, only “came as the result of a profound transformation of the way the Red Army made war.”¹⁹ Indeed, one of the most critical improvements by the Soviets was the important yet all too often ignored area of preparation and intelligence.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Evan Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East: The Nazi-Soviet War, 1941-1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), 264.

¹⁸ R. J. Overy, *Russia's War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 186-187.

¹⁹ Ibid.

During the two previous summers of war, the Soviets had made incorrect assumptions about German intentions. In 1941, Stalin in particular had dismissed intelligence indicating German preparations for a surprise offensive into the Soviet Union. And in 1942, the Soviets had expected a thrust by Army Group Center toward Moscow, when in fact the German offensive was directed on the southern end of the front with Army Group South. It was vital that the Soviets alter this trend and correctly gauge German intentions if they were to be able to avoid the calamitous German penetrations of the previous two campaigning seasons.²⁰

Zhukov, now Stalin's most trusted commander after the success of Stalingrad, astutely observed in March 1943 that, after appalling losses during the 1942-43 campaign in Southern Russia, the Germans would be unable to launch a similarly grandiose and ambitious offensive toward the Volga and the Caucasus — let alone follow such an operation with a wide northwest turn to surround Moscow. Instead, he surmised that the Germans would launch an offensive in spring or summer 1943 within a much more confined area. Because of the relatively limited forces at the Wehrmacht's disposal, Zhukov supposed that this offensive would have to proceed incrementally with the ultimate object of taking Moscow.²¹

The Germans were not the kind to launch direct assaults, and the Soviets had learned this quite clearly in the previous two years of conflict. Thus, Zhukov examined the strategic map and tried to forecast the German path of advance. While the tug of war between the Wehrmacht and Red Army in the early months of 1943 had left the front in a state resembling that of the prior year, one notable anomaly was a fairly sizable salient, about 160 miles in width and 100 miles in depth, around the industrial northern Ukrainian city of Kursk.²² Robert Citino notes that the bulge near Kursk was “an annoying interruption in a front that ran relatively straight across the rest of the front line from the Sea of Azov to the Arctic.” Additionally, it was located in close proximity to the demarcation line between German Army Groups Center and South, offering an enticing opportunity for an offensive.²³ The confluence of these factors, especially when considering the German proclivity for launching encircling movements with pincer attacks during the previous years of the war, made the potential for a German offensive in the Kursk salient rather obvious to the Soviets.²⁴

With this assessment in mind, Zhukov estimated that the Germans would try and launch an offensive to “envelop Kursk” in a pincer attack. Army Group Center under Field Marshal Gunther von Kluge would advance from the north and Army Group South under Manstein would advance northward from the opposite direction. Once von Kluge and Manstein linked up, pinching off vast numbers of Red Army troops in the Kursk

²⁰ Ibid., 198.

²¹ Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*, trans. APN (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), 232-234.

²² Dennis Showalter, “The Crucible”, *MHQ: Quarterly Journal Of Military History* 25, no. 3 (Spring 2013), 32.

²³ Robert Michael Citino, *The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War, 1943* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 117.

²⁴ Antony Beevor, *The Second World War* (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2012), 469.

salient, Zhukov foresaw a combined German assault to “outflank” Moscow from the southwest. Moreover, Zhukov suspected that the Germans would rely on tanks, armored vehicles, and the Luftwaffe more heavily than ever before in light of the battering that Wehrmacht troops had taken during the previous two years of campaigning.²⁵ Zhukov was quite prescient in his supposition, as this was indeed the gist of the plan that Hitler and his generals were formulating from March onward — at least in relation to the Kursk salient itself.

It is worthwhile here to take a step back to examine the context of German intentions within the context of the war to gain a better grasp of its relevance to the broader Nazi-Soviet conflict. Though traditional historiography, particularly in the Soviet Union and Russia, has followed Zhukov’s lead in assuming that the German attack on the Kursk salient was a prelude to a flanking maneuver that would threaten Moscow, more recent scholarship has downplayed the supposed grandiosity of German intentions. This new school of thought argues that Hitler merely intended a relatively limited offensive to shorten the front line by eliminating the Kursk salient, destroying significant Red Army forces, freeing up about twenty Wehrmacht divisions for future offensive operations, and forestalling the possibility of the first Soviet summer offensive of the war.²⁶

Whether or not the Germans would have the men or materiel to make good on the pinching off of the Kursk salient was logistically questionable at best.²⁷ Even so, Hitler thought the German offensive would have influence beyond its strictly military implications, improving German civilian and military morale—as well as buttressing the confidence of Germany’s allies—after the still lingering disaster at Stalingrad. To this end, Evan Mawdsley refers to the German plan to attack Kursk, Operation Citadel, as “a grandiose spoiling attack, with a secondary role as a propaganda beacon.”²⁸

Regardless of the specific intentions of the Hitler and the Wehrmacht, the German position at this point of the war is revelatory. Operation Barbarossa in 1941 was supposed to have annihilated the Red Army and wiped the Soviet Union off the face of the map by the end of the year at the latest. Case Blue, in 1942, was a second attempt to either win the war or, at the very least, cripple the Soviet Union and acquire the necessary resources in the Caucasus to position Germany to prosecute a protracted war against the Allies.²⁹ Now, as the Germans prepared for their third summer campaign in the Soviet Union, the forces at their disposal prohibited anything even as remotely ambitious as an offensive along one sector of the front. Even for the notoriously quixotic Hitler, the realistic end game for Citadel was never dreamed to have involved the outright defeat of the Soviet Union.³⁰

The strategic departure from grandiose operations with war-winning intentions to an offensive in a relatively small area of the front with limited operational objectives is of enormous intrinsic importance. Credit for these diminishing German expectations is

²⁵ Zhukov, 432-433.

²⁶ Bellamy, 576-577.

²⁷ Citino, 137-138.

²⁸ Mawdsley, 269.

²⁹ Fritz, 238.

³⁰ Mawdsley, 269.

attributable to the extraordinary resilience of the Red Army and the fortitude of the Soviet people. Despite previous mistakes in counter-offensive operations in 1941 and 1942, the Soviets had put the Germans in a quandary. Though still facing still a powerful foe, the Red Army was in its most favorable position yet to defend the Soviet Union against another German assault. The question was whether or not it would make use of its experience and intelligence to capitalize on this opportunity and make summer 1943 a truly pivotal point in the conflict.

After having established what he appraised as the most likely German moves for the upcoming campaigning season, Zhukov was faced with the question of how to prepare for the German assault. Should the Soviets launch a preemptive assault against the German forces as they prepared for Operation Citadel? The Stavka had ordered a similar strike toward Kharkov under Marshal Semyon Timoshenko in spring 1942 as the Germans were preparing for Case Blue, only to run into defeat against an enormous concentration of Wehrmacht forces preparing for the massive summer offensive.³¹

With this failure from the previous year firmly entrenched in his memory, as well as even more recent counterattacks by Manstein in February-March, Zhukov demurred from the idea of a preemptive Soviet offensive, stating that he thought it “inexpedient for our forces to launch a preventive offensive . . . it being more to our advantage to wear down the enemy in defensive action, and destroy his tanks. Subsequently by committing fresh reserves, we should assume an all-out offensive completely to destroy the main enemy grouping.”³² Such a proposition was incredibly bold, as Stalin and the Stavka had been characteristically ambitious in operations against the Wehrmacht.

Though Zhukov was correct in his suppositions with regard to German intentions for the coming campaign season, he was not aware of his own prescience at the time. Intelligence would be imperative in confirming these estimations, particularly if he were to convince Stalin and the Stavka of the merits of going on the defensive and subsequently take the time to prepare not only an impenetrable defense, but also the necessary reserve to launch a counteroffensive when the time was ripe.

Writing years after the war, Marshal Ivan Konev, who himself played a key commanding role at Kursk, noted “in the course of preparations for the battle in the Kursk area, Soviet intelligence made an invaluable contribution to the defeat of the enemy.”³³ Intelligence failures had led to Soviet miscalculations in each of the preceding two years. This time, Soviet intelligence would not only corroborate Zhukov’s prediction, but also provide key details that would illuminate specifics about German intentions, troop dispositions, and the date and time of the commencement of Operation Citadel.

With amazing access to the classified plans of the German High Command through contacts in Switzerland, the so-called “Lucy Ring” was a particularly valuable resource in the period prior to Citadel, as many other Soviet intelligence sources had

³¹ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 328-331.

³² Zhukov, 433-434.

³³ Ivan Konev, “The Great Battle at Kursk and Its Historic Significance,” in *The Battle of Kursk*, ed. Ivan Parotkin, trans. G.P. Ivanov-Mumjiev (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 17.

fallen through in other parts of Europe.³⁴ With connections to the high command of the German military, the Lucy Ring had even delivered to the Soviet Union the operational plan for Operation Barbarossa back in spring 1941, only to be rebuffed by a suspicious and paranoid Stalin. Once the veracity of this intelligence was actually realized, Stalin suddenly became more receptive to the Lucy Ring's credibility. By 1942, the Soviets began to heed information from Lucy, and it is possible that this knowledge allowed the Red Army to avoid being victimized by the kind of encirclements during Case Blue that were all too familiar during Barbarossa the previous year. Yet it was really during the lead up to Kursk that the Lucy Ring played a key role, offering the Soviets information on the "position of supply depots, reinforcement and attack routes, and the numbers and quality of guns, armor, and planes."³⁵

Soviet intelligence was not simply an internal operation. Despite being allied with the British and Americans, the notoriously distrustful Stalin still conducted espionage in both countries. Early in the war, the British had cracked the German code system, Enigma, and the intelligence derived from this code breaking, Ultra, proved invaluable throughout the war. The British inclination to share this information with their Soviet allies fluctuated throughout the war, but the Soviets had inside access to Ultra intercepts via an agent by the name of John Cairncross. Cairncross had access to Ultra from 1942 until 1944, but the easily most indispensable intelligence he disseminated to his superiors in the Soviet Union was the information he dispatched prior to Operation Citadel. The British still supplied the Soviets with Ultra intelligence, but if it was withheld for whatever diplomatic reason, Cairncross could always intervene behind the scenes.

As early as the middle of March, when Zhukov was preparing his plans for Soviet operations in 1943, Ultra intercepts revealed that the Germans were planning an attack on the Kursk salient. By the end of the month, Ultra had uncovered a veritable treasure trove of intelligence: "a summary assessment of Soviet dispositions and anticipated reactions . . . prepared by Army Group South."³⁶

In addition to these intelligence resources, a supply of radios from the Anglo-Americans proved beneficial to the Soviet cause. To utilize these new means of intelligence, the Soviets set up "electronic warfare units" to intercept German radio signals. With the assistance of an entire "central command structure" of Germans captured after the surrender of Stalingrad, these units were able to make use of these signals to ascertain troop disposition as well as locations of the headquarters of various German corps and divisions within the proximity of the Kursk salient.³⁷

Though military logic and increasingly revelatory intelligence reports strongly indicated that the Germans would indeed launch their summer 1943 offensive around the Kursk salient, Zhukov's earlier advocacy to go on the strategic defensive in order to trap and weaken the Wehrmacht through a battle of grinding attrition preparatory to a massive counter offensive was by no means a foregone conclusion. Both Stalin and the Stavka

³⁴ Timothy Mulligan, "Spies, Ciphers, and 'Zitadelle': Intelligence and the Battle of Kursk", *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 2, Intelligence Services During the Second World War (Apr. 1987), 236.

³⁵ Bellamy, 570-71.

³⁶ Mulligan, 241-242.

³⁷ Bellamy, 571-573.

had to approve such an operation. Stalin, in particular, was dubious about the ability of the Red Army to withstand such a powerful German assault and was always naturally inclined to go on the offensive whenever the opportunity presented itself.³⁸ The enduringly stubborn Stalin met with Zhukov as well as Chief of the General Staff Aleksandr Vasilevsky and his deputy Aleksei Antonov, agreeing to array Red Army forces principally in the Kursk salient, though he remained nervous about a more direct assault on Moscow. By the middle of April, after weeks of persuasion, Zhukov and the Supreme Command had achieved a remarkable feat just by convincing Stalin to accede to a “preliminary decision” to prepare a defense of the Kursk salient — though the ultimate decision would not come until later.³⁹ Though Stalin’s determination was certainly not final, his newfound willingness to defer to his military commanders, especially Zhukov, prior to a German offensive demonstrated a tremendous evolution in the Soviet leader. As Vasilevsky commented after the war, “Collective discussion of plans and the experience accumulated in the two years of war by the military leaders and staffs, from front commanders to the Supreme Command, enabled us to adopt a new and correct decision.”⁴⁰

Still anxious at gambling on a German advance toward Kursk as well as committing to the strategic defensive from the outset of the battle, Stalin insisted “on transforming Kursk into the most formidable large-scale defensive system in the history of warfare.” The purposes of such an approach would be two-fold. Firstly, and most obviously, it would serve to check any German advance before it could get into open terrain and reprise the encircling tactics of previous summer operations. More subtly, however, it would instill within Hitler and the German High Command a sense that the Soviets were wedded to the defensive. Having consistently underestimated the ability of the Red Army to withstand assaults the previous two years, the Germans were ripe to fall into another trap: mesmerized by the task of eliminating the robust defenses of the Kursk salient, they would find themselves ill prepared to address any Soviet counteroffensive—especially one launched at a separate part of the front—once the Wehrmacht had been critically weakened within the salient.⁴¹

The Soviet defensive strategy was predicated on General Konstantin Rokossovsky’s Central Front (as opposed to the German designation of Army Group) defending Army Group Center’s thrust from the north under Kluge. Meanwhile, the Voronezh Front, under General Nikolai F. Vatutin, would be responsible for defending the attack by Army Group South under Manstein.⁴² While the Soviet defenses would be prepared with unprecedented thoroughness and forethought, Zhukov and the Stavka were not prepared to take any chances that could facilitate a German breakthrough. Should the Germans somehow encircle the forces of the Central and Voronezh Fronts, the Steppe Front, commanded by General Konev, would avail itself as a failsafe in the event of

³⁸ Erickson, 69.

³⁹ Zhukov, 438-439.

⁴⁰ Aleksandr Vasilevsky, “Strategy of the Battle, in *The Battle of Kursk*, 71.

⁴¹ Showalter, *Armor and Blood*, 61-62.

⁴² David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, *The Battle of Kursk* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 58-60.

potential German penetration beyond the Kursk salient itself — particular Zhukov and Stalin's feared maneuver toward Moscow.⁴³ And to the north and south of the salient, the Bryansk and South-Western Fronts, respectively, stood by to provide the counteroffensive when the appropriate time had arrived.⁴⁴ The Soviet plan at Kursk, Vasilevsky subsequently pointed out, was not just a scheme for an individual battle, but rather the centerpiece of the entire Soviet strategy for the upcoming campaigning season.⁴⁵

The Steppe Front constituted “one of the largest strategic reserves ever assembled,” consisting of “five infantry armies, one tank army, and six reserve corps (two of which were tank corps).” At this point of the war, the sheer ability of the Red Army to not only muster such a force, which included over half a million men and 1,500 tanks, but to strategically withhold it from initial action within the salient, was a remarkable feat and emblematic of the enduring strength and perseverance of the Soviet military.⁴⁶ The hope, however, was that the need for the Steppe Front to act as a defensive contingency would never arise and, instead of serving as a “backstop” to spoil a German thrust into the Soviet rear, it could support the eventual Soviet counteroffensive.⁴⁷ Either way, the Soviets had again taken the lessons of the previous two years to heart. They understood the Wehrmacht's penchant for using mobile armor and the concentration of force to penetrate into Soviet lines in multi-pronged assaults and concentrically trap numerically superior Soviet forces.

One key question surrounding the defensive preparations was the timing of the German attack. Buoyed by the success of the Wehrmacht's counterstrokes in the late winter, Manstein had hoped to exploit the sudden vulnerability of Soviet forces with the more powerful punch of Citadel as soon as possible after the cessation of the *rasputitsa*. The Germans had begun massing forces around the Kursk salient in April after Hitler's order for Citadel during the middle of the month. Initially, the attack was supposed to commence on 4 May. But Hitler was compelled to repeatedly delay the offensive as he awaited the arrival of the newly produced Tiger heavy tanks, Panther medium tanks, and the Ferdinand tank destroyer. Both the Tigers and Panthers were to become legendary implements of war and the Germans hoped that these developments would not only provide superiority to the standard Soviet T-34 tank model, but also compensate in quality what they could not hope to match in Soviet quantity.⁴⁸

Additionally, part of the postponement was also attributable to the German need to shore up their defenses in the Mediterranean, as the Anglo-Americans were preparing a landing in Sicily after having finally expelled the Germans and Italians from North Africa in May 1943.⁴⁹ Unlike the previous two years of campaigning on the Soviet Union, the Germans were not so fortunate as to again have the luxury of attending only to the

⁴³ Showalter, *Armor and Blood*, 61.

⁴⁴ R. J. Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 88.

⁴⁵ Vasilevsky, in *The Battle of Kursk*, 73.

⁴⁶ Citino, 119, 134.

⁴⁷ Showalter, *Armor and Blood*, 61.

⁴⁸ Glantz and House, *Battle of Kursk*, 19-20, 55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

Eastern Front in Europe. Though Stalin was still exhorting the Western Allies to open a Second Front via a cross-channel invasion of Northwestern France, the Soviets were already poised to benefit from the diffusion of an increasingly limited amount German forces as a result of the Allied threat to Southern Europe.

Continual postponements, eventually pushing the offensive back to 5 July, provided the Soviets with a precious buffer period to prepare their defenses, and the Red Army made full use of it. Soldiers from both the Central and Voronezh Fronts, along with well over a quarter million civilians, labored assiduously to erect eight successive layers of defensive lines, comprised of “deep tank ditches, underground bunkers, minefields, wire entanglements and over 9,000 kilometers of trenches.”⁵⁰ And unlike their German counterparts, Red Army divisions in the Kursk salient were fairly close to their usual strength in terms of manpower.⁵¹ Between the Central and Voronezh Fronts, the Soviets had amassed over 1.3 million men, almost 3,000 tanks and airplanes, and 19,000 guns—numbers which constituted the majority of the Red Army’s mechanized forces and well over two-thirds of its manpower strength, and these figures do not even include the Steppe Front held in strategic reserve. On the opposite side of the Kursk bulge, the Germans had garnered a force of just under a million men, 2,700 tanks, 2,000 airplanes, and about half the amount of guns that the Soviets were able to assemble.⁵²

But, as David Glantz remarks, the Soviet defensive effort transcended the enormous buildup of infantry and equipment, as the Red Army drew heavily on the labor of soldiers and civilians, as well as the collective experience of two years of combat against the Germans, in an all-out effort to make Kursk a German graveyard. Antitank measures were comprehensive and supported by smaller arms and particularly artillery, which were strategically situated to assist in defensive and counteroffensive operations. In general, the Red Army was prepared and deployed in a fashion that provided for flexibility, equipping it for a variety of outcomes and possibilities depending on the nature of the German attack and the subsequent opportunities for Soviet rebuttals.⁵³ Simultaneously, the Soviets successfully veiled their strategic reserves so as not to tip the Germans off to the fact that they not only had a contingency plan in the event of a Wehrmacht breakthrough, but also to deceive them about Soviet intentions for the planned counterpunch once Citadel dissipated.⁵⁴

The Soviets were taking a dangerous yet calculated risk by massing such significant portions of the Red Army in a pitched defensive battle within the salient; if the Wehrmacht closed the pincers on the Central and Voronezh Fronts and were able to overcome the strategic reserve of the Steppe Front, the Germans would not only have regained the initiative, but would also put the entire Soviet Union on its heels for a third consecutive summer. It seemed certain that the watershed moment was about to arrive. The intricate nature of the Soviet strategy at Kursk necessitated an unprecedented level of exactitude and deftness from the Red Army, but it had been afforded the occasion to

⁵⁰ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 470.

⁵¹ Glantz and House, *The Battle of Kursk*, 55-56

⁵² Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 90.

⁵³ Glantz and House, *The Battle of Kursk*, 68.

⁵⁴ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 470.

ready itself for the battle in a way which it had not seen previously in the war against the Germans.⁵⁵ As John Erickson remarks, in the months leading up to the momentous battle, “a point of balance was reached, which each side hoped to tip decisively in its favor. The Russians could not now lose the war, but the Germans could scarcely count on winning . . . moments of profound significance were passing.”⁵⁶

One aspect of the lead up to the battle itself was the increased use of the Soviet Air Force, which had been at the mercy of the Luftwaffe for much of the last two years. Increased Soviet production, complemented by Lend-Lease, was supplemented with structural, organizational, and tactical improvements to narrow the gap between the Soviet and German air arms. The Soviet Air Force had three primary charges: defense, reconnaissance, and preemptive strikes. Soviet aircraft were deployed, in numbers that now outmatched the Germans, to provide meaningful support to the fronts within and around the Kursk salient. By April, the Soviets were already launching attacks behind the German lines around the Kursk pocket in order to disrupt the movement of supplies and reinforcements to the buildup area, as well as damage and destroy existing German planes and other Luftwaffe-related installations. The Red Air Force persistently reconnoitered German preparations, providing crucial information on Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe dispositions that not only illuminated the Soviets as to the volume of enemy men and materiel, but also presented the Soviets with the necessary information to gauge the potential patterns of the impending German assault.⁵⁷

The clarity that the increasing presence of the Red Air Force afforded to Soviet intelligence was ultimately reciprocated as the battle approached. Ultra intercepts of Luftwaffe maneuvers helped initiate a Soviet airstrike on over five hundred German planes just before the battle.⁵⁸ Unceasing and purposeful in their effort, Soviet aircraft were able to concentrate on the Luftwaffe’s preparation areas to the point where the Germans were unable to attain the mastery of the skies that they had commanded decisively in 1941 and 1942.⁵⁹

Elsewhere, the vital information that the Lucy Ring provided to the Soviets culminated in grand fashion by providing Stalin with intelligence that revealed a German attack between the third and sixth day of July. Stalin accordingly notified all of the relevant fronts within the Kursk cauldron to be on high alert for the commencement of the German offensive.⁶⁰ The Red Army and Air Force was then tasked to “intensify reconnaissance and surveillance with a view to discovering the enemy’s intentions”, and several enemy prisoners were captured by small groups of Soviet front-line forces that had infiltrated the German forward lines. Interrogations corroborated the intelligence from the Lucy Ring, allowing the Voronezh and Central Fronts to launch a preemptive artillery barrage against the Wehrmacht forces that were coalescing at their jumping off

⁵⁵ Overy, *Russia’s War*, 200.

⁵⁶ Erickson, 85-86.

⁵⁷ Von Hardesty and Ilya Grinberg, *Red Phoenix Rising: The Soviet Air Force in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 226-233.

⁵⁸ Bellamy, 570.

⁵⁹ Citino, 134.

⁶⁰ Erickson, 97.

points.⁶¹ Numerous German delays and subsequent false alarms had tried the patience of the Stavka, and especially the offensive-minded Stalin, but in the end, the Soviets had “demonstrated confidence in its intelligence as a cornerstone of strategy.”⁶² Now it was time to discover whether or not these Soviet advantages — reliable intelligence, the ability to prepare a complex and strategically impressive plan of action, and experienced and increasingly astute military forces — would manifest themselves in a Red Army triumph.

Since the goal of this paper is not to go into meticulous operational and tactical detail about the progression of the Kursk battle itself, but rather to analytically examine the ways in which Kursk was a watershed for the Soviet Union, the emphasis on the progression of the battle itself will be relatively brief. Indeed, Soviet victory and German defeat at Kursk was founded less in any brilliant tactical decision by a commander than the unprecedented ability of the Red Army to draw the Germans into an impenetrable defense that materialized after thorough and intricate Soviet preparation, the effective gathering and use of intelligence, and the cumulative wisdom derived from two years of fighting experience against the Wehrmacht. In many ways, when considering that Wehrmacht was not constructed to fight the kind of pitched encounter that was necessary complete a successful pincer attack Kursk, the Germans had lost before the battle had begun. However, certain key aspects of the fight and its outcomes are undoubtedly deserved of attention.

Last minute intelligence revelations had permitted both Rokossovsky and Vatutin to launch preemptive artillery barrages on the night of 4 July, lasting for a full day. From Army Group Centre in the north, General Walther Model’s Ninth Army attacked Rokossovsky’s Central Front, while General Herman Hoth’s Fourth Panzer Army, along with three divisions of III Panzer Corps, sprang from Army Group South to attack toward Vatutin’s Voronezh Front.⁶³ Stunned by the preemptive Soviet bombardment, the Wehrmacht had still gone ahead with Citadel.

Meanwhile, despite the wealth of intelligence at their disposal, the Red Army still had to speculate as to which arm of the German advance would be the strongest. Having mistakenly supposed that Model’s force would comprise the most ferocious element of the German attack, the Soviets had their strongest forces arrayed on the northern side of the Central Front.⁶⁴ After fierce fighting through the stout Soviet defenses, Model’s advance petered out after an initial twenty-four hour advance of just less than ten miles. Barely a week into the battle, Model was compelled to acknowledge that he was locked in a “battle of attrition” that would require precious additional reserves from Kluge while offering little prospect of a decisive German breakthrough.⁶⁵

In the South, where the Soviets defenses were more vulnerable relative to the weight of the German thrust, Hoth found more success than Model—but not markedly

⁶¹ Konev in *The Battle of Kursk*, 18.

⁶² Mulligan, 252,

⁶³ Showalter, *The Crucible*, 32.

⁶⁴ Overy, *Russia’s War*, 204.

⁶⁵ Weinberg, 603.

more, as the furthest advance was only twenty-five miles.⁶⁶ The mere fact that the Soviets were still able to withstand Hoth's advance, even in light of having incorrectly assessed where the heaviest concentration of the German advance would emanate from, was a testament to the methodical construction of the defensive network within the Kursk salient. Regardless, Hitler was forced to reign in Hoth's thrust northward by 13 July, as the much-feared Anglo-American invasion of Sicily had begun just three days earlier. The incipient danger of not only the loss of Sicily but the crumbling of Mussolini's Italy necessitated a significant German reallocation of forces to Southern Europe.⁶⁷ The Soviets had baited the Wehrmacht into an attritional battle that was anathema to the elemental German conception of how to successfully conduct a war, and now the Red Army was at last reaping the benefits of the military efforts of the Western Allies.

Having checked a great German offensive in high summer for the first time in the war, the next phase of the campaign began. "More important than the initial Soviet defense of the Kursk bulge," Mawdsley argues, "was the Red Army summer offensive which followed it." Once the Germans were bogged down in the teeth of the robust Soviet defenses, the time finally arrived for the long-awaited Operation Kutuzov, which hoped to completely turn the tables on the Wehrmacht. On 12 July, Rokossovsky's Central Front combined with the Bryansk Front under General Markian Popov, as well as the Western under General Vasily Sokolovsky, to smash into German defenses north of the Kursk bulge, towards yet another bulge at Orel. Within just three weeks, Orel had been retaken.⁶⁸

As Orel was being recaptured at the beginning of August, the Red Army launched yet another offensive, Operation Rumiantsev, to the south of the Kursk pocket. Both the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts, having valiantly thwarted the Germans just weeks before, crashed into German lines, retaking both Belgorod and Kharkov before the month was out.⁶⁹ Manstein's rehabilitative counterstrokes of February and March had now been officially rolled back.

Part of the Soviet success with Rumiantsev and especially Kutuzov was actually attributable to events going on behind German lines. From the middle of 1942 onward, partisan activity began increasingly organized and coordinated, including its centralization under the Combined Command in Moscow. Partisan numbers increased almost two-fold during 1943 and provided valuable intelligence from deep behind the lines of Kluge's Army Group Center. On 14 July, on orders from Moscow, partisans launched Operation Rel'sovaya. From the beginning of August through the middle of September, partisans destroyed German communications, infrastructure, and transportation—severely inhibiting the ability of the Wehrmacht to exploit its possession of interior lines to counter the Soviet offensives.⁷⁰

The Red Army not only had the ability to create one of the most exhaustive defensive pockets in history, but it could also use this as a springboard to capitalize on its

⁶⁶ Citino, 135-146.

⁶⁷ Weinberg, 603.

⁶⁸ Mawdsley, 267-268.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁷⁰ Bellamy, 590.

“numerical and material superiority” to “launch offensives up and down the front” while the Germans scrambled to plug in increasingly limited reserves.⁷¹ Moreover, the ability to coordinate offensives in such a comprehensive manner, encompassing efforts even behind German lines, demonstrated the enormous progress that the Red Army had made since the bleak days of 1941 and 1942. The continuous momentum of the Soviet counteroffensives in late summer 1943 would carry into the autumn, as the Soviets raced toward the Dnieper. By the end of the year, Army Group South’s hold on Ukraine was slipping away and the Red Army was on the verge of pushing the Germans west of the 1941 Soviet border.⁷² The previous two years saw Soviet counteroffensives that eventually reached a culmination point and provided the Germans with opportunities to stabilize the front and ultimately push the Red Army east once more, which was not to be after Kursk, as the Soviet steamroller chugged inexorably westward. 1943 would mark a pivotal year of transition toward victory.

Aside from the practical and tangible facets of the Soviet victory at Kursk and the subsequent counteroffensives, the effect that the Soviet success in summer 1943 had on morale and opinion—both inside and outside the Soviet Union—was monumental. Embedded with the Red Army as a journalist, Vasily Grossman distinguished between the victory at Stalingrad and Kursk, noting how Kursk was even more impressive in some ways. “In Stalingrad,” Grossman wrote, “the beast was beaten in its lair. In Kursk, the artillery shield resisted the enemy’s attack and the artillery sword started crushing them during the [counter-attack].”⁷³ Boris Gorbachevsky, a Red Army soldier, noted the elation from his comrades in arms upon hearing the news of Soviet victory at Kursk. The general sense among the soldiers, according to Gorbachevsky, was that the Germans had finally been broken.⁷⁴ To convey this euphoric feeling to the entire nation, the first of many future gun salutes occurred in Moscow on 5 August 1943, marking the Soviet liberation of Orel and Belgorod.⁷⁵ The remaining two years of the war would see this pageantry become almost routine, but this initial celebration encapsulated a turning point in the collective Soviet mentality regarding the trajectory of the war against Germany: the Soviets now believed they could win.

Even outside of the Soviet Union, observers keenly noted the significance of the Soviet stand at Kursk. On 17 July 1943, a wireless dispatch to *The New York Times* noted that “The moral effect of the failure of the biggest German armored attack ever launched along a relatively narrow front was immense in Moscow.” Comparing the battle with previous Soviet successes, the report continued by noting that “Here, even more than in the Stalingrad battle, was a demonstration of a fundamental improvement in Russian

⁷¹ Fritz, 353.

⁷² Mawdsley, 272.

⁷³ Vasily Grossman, *A Writer at War: Vasily Grossman with the Red Army, 1941-1945*, ed. Antony Beevor, trans. Luba Vinogradova (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 238.

⁷⁴ Boris Gorbachevskii, *Through the Maelstrom: A Red Army Soldier's War on the Eastern Front, 1942-1945*, ed. David M. Glantz, trans. Stuart Britton (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 293.

⁷⁵ Bellamy, 593-594.

defense tactics immensely greater than the perfection in German attack tactics.”⁷⁶ Meanwhile, journalist Alexander Werth wrote on 16 July that that ability of the Red Army to not only withstand the German onslaught at Kursk but then launch a subsequent counteroffensive “was an extraordinary demonstration of the Red Army’s wealth of equipment and the high morale of its troops.”⁷⁷ In *The Times* of London, an editorial captured the role reversal from the 1941, nothing how what transpired at Kursk was illustrative of a “marked readjustment of the relative fighting capacities of German and Russian” during the prime campaigning season of high summer.⁷⁸

Years of separation from the war did nothing to temper the Soviet perception of the importance of Kursk to the overall trajectory of the war against the Germans. Zhukov, in his memoirs, declared the victory “of cardinal significance, enhancing Soviet prestige”, while simultaneously presenting Germany with “the specter of inevitable disaster.”⁷⁹ Agreeing with Zhukov, and going a step further with respect to Kursk’s influence on the last two years of the war, Vasilevsky declared Kursk a “historic victory which to a large extent predetermined the course of the Second World War and its outcome in favor of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.”⁸⁰ The sense that Kursk was a point of no return in the war was not merely a sentiment clouded by the euphoria of victory. It was a belief that stood the test of time.

Kursk’s ultimate significance transcends its recognition as a historic clash of two of the most potent fighting forces the world has ever seen. Its place as a watershed is obfuscated by the predilection to fetishize it as a climactic tank battle and nothing more. In reality, Kursk was the watershed of the war on the Eastern Front because it demonstrated that the Soviet Union had accumulated the necessary experience and learned the appropriate lessons to put themselves on a path toward eventual and certain victory. After two summers of panicked retreats and catastrophic losses of soldiers, civilians, equipment, and territory, as well as two winters of counteroffensives that failed to achieve decisive results, the Soviets finally found the formula for victory during summer 1943.

Though the first two years of the Nazi-Soviet war went poorly for the Soviets, they were ultimately able to endure the German onslaught. By the time the third campaigning season came around in the spring and summer months of 1943, though the Soviets had yet to prove their ability to defend a German offensive, the Red Army’s resilience had backed the Wehrmacht into a corner. By forcing it to launch an offensive on a much smaller scale, toward a salient that would inhibit the ability of the Germans to conduct the kind of war of movement that had served them so well in 1941 and 1942, the Red Army showed that the conflict on the Eastern Front was now to be fought on their terms.

⁷⁶ “Successes Elate Moscow: Failure of Vast German Effort is Potent Russian Tonic”, *The New York Times*, Jul. 18, 1943.

⁷⁷ Alexander Werth, “Biggest Nazi Failure Seen”, *The New York Times*, Jul. 17, 1943.

⁷⁸ “Kursk and Orel”, *The Times* (London), Jul. 23, 1943

⁷⁹ Zhukov, 476.

⁸⁰ Vasilevsky in *The Battle of Kursk*, 59.

The Battle of Kursk and the First Major Soviet Breakthrough

Improved accumulation and application of intelligence, along with shrewd military leadership that drew upon the experiences of the first two years of the war, allowed the Red Army to accurately predict the German plans for the war and develop a patient, coordinated, and stunningly thorough defensive approach with a grand design to wear down Wehrmacht forces. When the opportunity arose, the Soviets utilized their burgeoning supremacy in troops and equipment to launch a counteroffensive that would break the back of an atrophying German army. This time, the Soviets would prove to themselves, their enemies, and the world that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the Wehrmacht had met its match in the Red Army. Never again would the Germans be able to rollback a Soviet advance, and though the cost of victory over the next two years would be colossal, the confidence, skill, and tenacity that the Red Army collectively exhibited for the first time at Kursk would provide a model for future, grander successes en route to Berlin.

The Psychological Life of Women in the Siege of Leningrad: Emotions, Motivation and Mental Disorders

Ronald MacNeil

Introduction

Between one and two million Soviet women served in their country's military and military medical services during The Great Patriotic War (World War II).¹ Countless others made significant contributions working in factories, digging trenches, plowing the fields, and raising their families. The women of the city of Leningrad did more than their part and did it under the most horrific conditions imaginable. The story of the siege of Leningrad, which lasted nearly 900 days from September 1941 to January 1944, is very much the story of the women of Leningrad. This paper will examine the role emotions, motivation and mental disorders played in the lives of women caught in the blockade.

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union began in the early morning on June 22, 1941. Three *Wehrmacht* army groups were targeting different regions of the Soviet Union. One group moved southeast toward the Ukraine and the Black Sea, another went east toward Minsk, Smolensk and Moscow, and the third, Army Group North, was tasked with capturing the Baltic republics and the city of Leningrad. The lightning war that Hitler launched on the Soviets initially overwhelmed Soviet border defenses and led to the destruction or capture of numerous Soviet armies resulting in millions of casualties and POWs.

The Nazi surprise attack of June 22 was spearheaded by the German air force, the *Luftwaffe*, that destroyed thousands of Soviet planes still on the ground. Their armored forces, the Panzer divisions, drove deep behind the initial defenses and encircled whole Soviet armies. Following the ground troops were the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Gestapo and police battalions who slaughtered hundreds of thousands, later millions, of officials, Communists, Jews and others to make room for the expansion of the Third Reich into the Slavic lands of Eastern Europe, especially the Soviet Union.

The atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime continued policies already perfected in Poland. Belarus, Ukraine, and the western part of the Russian Soviet Republic were ravaged in the onslaught. The Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia were also overrun by the Army Group North, but their situation was somewhat different. Only recently incorporated into the USSR by virtue of the Soviet/German Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939 and the division of Poland by the two nations in September of that year, the Baltic States were taken as spoils by the Soviets. Their resistance to the Nazis was minimal as many saw their arrival as liberation from the Soviets. Army Group North's next target was Leningrad.

¹ Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2007), 486-487.

Peter the Great's capital city, his "eye on the West," was built from scratch in the early eighteenth century where the Neva River empties into the Gulf of Finland. The city had grown to a population of over 3 million inhabitants and was a major industrial center including some of the Soviet Union's most important defense industries.² Leningrad was a city with a preponderance of women even before the war. Data from January 1939 shows that women represented 55.4% of the population, this percentage would skew much more dramatically in favor of females with the onset of war and the starvation winter of 1941-2.³ The city had seen enormous growth in the 1930s, notably in steel production and other metallurgical industries, all in direct response to the rearmament of Nazi Germany.⁴ The Soviet fleet and naval headquarters were stationed nearby at Kronstadt.

The city was thought of as the "Venice of the North" with its myriad canals, as much of the land was filled wetlands, and boasted about 500 palaces built by Peter's nobles when he moved the capital there from Moscow in the early eighteenth century. It was a city of great culture and the home to numerous research institutes and universities. It attracted many intellectuals, writers and artists from all over the Soviet Union. The city also had an independent streak that often put it at odds with the more conservative Moscow.

Leningrad, known as St. Petersburg before the revolution, was also the birthplace of the Bolshevik revolution, which made it an especially valuable prize for the fanatically anti-communist Adolph Hitler. Although the capital was moved to Moscow after the revolution, Leningrad continued to be valuable prize to the Nazis. The city had felt the sting of war before the Nazi invasion. After dividing Poland and swallowing up the Baltic States in 1939 as part of the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, the Soviet government sought to acquire the Karelian Isthmus, a part of Finland just north of the city, in exchange for some arctic wasteland far to the north on their common border. The Finnish government rejected the offer and the Soviets invaded on the 30th of November 1939. The "Winter War" initially went badly for the Soviets who suffered over 125,000 casualties but eventually triumphed due to sheer numbers of troops committed. The three and a half month long war was equipped and staged from Leningrad which also provided a large number of troops to the conflict.⁵ Leningrad had faced food shortages throughout the 20th century and breadlines appeared during the Winter War, an ominous omen for the days of the blockade.⁶ The Finns eventually ceded the Karelian Isthmus to the Soviets but were to exact their revenge a year and a half later when, as allies of Germany, they took back their lost lands as part of *Operation Barbarossa*, the Nazi invasion of 1941.

² Richard Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944: A New Documentary History from the Soviet Archives*; Translations by Marian Schwartz, Annals of Communism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 15.

³ John Barber and Andrei R. Dzeniskevich, *Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad, 1941-44*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 14.

⁴ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 17.

⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁶ Ibid., 26.

The Winter War was a pyrrhic victory for the Soviets. The war showed their military shortcomings to the world, notably that their military leadership was incompetent and overall Soviet strategy proved inept. It also demonstrated that the Soviets were unprepared for war with Nazi Germany. Their preparations prior to June 22nd 1941 also proved misguided. Conventional Soviet military strategy called for an aggressive offensive response to any threats. Their defensive preparations were confined to the area immediately along their frontiers.⁷ They ignored, for the most part, any notions of a defense in depth, multiple fortified defensive lines behind the front, as retreat was seen as a betrayal of the revolution and the fatherland. This was to prove disastrous when confronted with the Nazi blitzkrieg.

In the summer of 1941, as the Nazis drove through the Baltic States, hundreds of thousands of Leningrad civilians, mostly women, were pressed into service, outside the city, digging anti-tank trenches and other defensive works.⁸ Elena Kochina, who kept a diary for ten months until her and her family's evacuation in April 1942, wrote how in late June 1941, how she and others, mostly women, from her research institute were digging trenches when they were strafed by German airplanes. She sought shelter under a bridge nearby and squatted in a puddle for an hour until it was safe to emerge.⁹ Varvara Sysoenkova worked on the city's outer defenses up to 20 hours a day, ate at a canteen there and slept in a tent. As casualties mounted she was reassigned to nursing duties.¹⁰

As the approaching Nazis, in concert with their Finnish allies, tightened the encirclement of Leningrad, women began to play an increasingly important role in the city's defense and maintaining the life of the city. Men were conscripted into the army and sent to the front or evacuated with their critical defense industries leaving the city itself overwhelmingly female. By the end of September 1941, nearly 300,000 Leningrad men had been mobilized for the armed services.¹¹ Another 160,000 men and women (approximately ¼ of the total) volunteered or were pressed into service in the people's militia (*narodnoe opolchenie*) and rushed to the front as cannon fodder.¹²

Women were to assume many new roles from factory workers to anti-aircraft gunners as well as their traditional roles as mothers, doctors and nurses, scientists, secretaries, salespeople, food preparation workers, and clerks. By the end of 1942, women made up 76.4% of all the industrial employees in Leningrad.¹³ All women, however, had to persevere under the most horrific conditions of modern industrial war directed at them. Shelling, bombing and the privations of the siege were to combine to take both a physical and psychological toll on nearly everyone, but women carried the

⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁹ Elena Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, Translated & Introduced by Samuel C. Ramer. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990), 34.

¹⁰ Tatiana Roshupkina, "Women in the Siege of Leningrad." in *Women in War From Home Front to Front Line*, eds. Celia Lee, Strong, Paul. (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2012) 173.

¹¹ Richard Bidlack, "The Political Mood in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War," *The Russian Review* 59, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 98.

¹² Ibid., 99.

¹³ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 62.

additional burden of maintaining families both physically and emotionally. Certainly not all the women of Leningrad were saints, but the majority acted as the glue that held their society together during this most difficult of times. Ol'ga Grechina noted in her memoirs during the winter of 1941-2 how she was struck by how few men she saw in the city. She wrote, men "...began to fall in the streets, take to their beds in their apartments, to die and die and die... the long-suffering women of Leningrad suddenly realized that on them lay the fate not only of their family, but of the city, even of the entire country."¹⁴

The City Surrounded

By early September 1941, the blockade of Leningrad was considered complete. Soviet troops were holding their own in the city's suburbs and trench warfare akin to that of World War I became the norm at the front. From August 21 to October 2, the Nazi invaders began to draw troops away from Army Group North and intensified their drive on Moscow.¹⁵ Hitler's thinking about Leningrad changed too at this time. He was unwilling to sacrifice troops and armor in urban warfare there. Instead, his plan was to maintain a blockade, a complete encirclement then shell and bomb the city and let mass starvation take its course. Hitler gave orders to accept no surrender, let everyone die, then raze the remains and wipe the memory of the accursed Bolshevik birthplace.¹⁶

Leningrad was never completely surrounded, as the Finns only sought to recover land lost in the Winter War and did not drive down the east side of Lake Ladoga to connect with the Nazi troops who held the southern end of the lake.¹⁷ Ladoga was located to the east of the Leningrad oblast and the Soviets held portions of both the east and west banks of this large lake. When the lake was not frozen, boats could bring troops, ammunition, supplies and food to the city while returning with evacuees and war materiel manufactured in Leningrad. When the lake froze over, trucks carried the same on what was called the ice road or the Road of Life (or the Road of Death to some). But whether via boat or truck, only a trickle of supplies could be brought in and only a limited numbers of citizens could be evacuated as the lake was constantly shelled by artillery and under attack by Luftwaffe planes.

Like the Soviet Union as a whole, Leningrad was woefully unprepared for lightning war. As mentioned earlier, outer defensive rings were hastily constructed by civilian labor at the last moment and simply did not hold back the onslaught. The city's food reserves were at best inadequate, and much of that was destroyed on September 8th by aerial bombing of the Badaev warehouses, where most of the city's reserves were stored. No one had thought to disperse these vital supplies throughout the city making them less vulnerable.

¹⁴ Cynthia Simmons, "Lifting the Siege: Women's Voices on Leningrad (1941-1944)," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 40, no. 1/2 (June 1998): 45.

¹⁵ Richard Bidlack, "The Political Mood in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War," *The Russian Review* 59, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 100.

¹⁶ "The future of the city of Petersburg" directive issued by Hitler on September 22, 1941. 42-43.

¹⁷ Michael K. Jones, *Leningrad: State of Siege*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008), 35.

Some spoke openly of their hope for a German conquest of the city. Elena Skriabina wrote in her diary of June 23, the day after the invasion had begun, that her landlady Anastasia Vladimirovna held nothing but contempt for the Soviet government and saw Nazi victory as their only salvation. Skriabina felt that she shared those sentiments but did not like the way Vladimirovna presented her thoughts.¹⁸ It was early in the war and no one was paying much attention to such talk, later, however, it would be considered a serious crime.

One of the biggest problems facing Leningrad was its leadership. Andrei Zhdanov, an old Bolshevik survivor, Politburo member, chairman of the Party Central Committee's Department of Propaganda and Agitation (Agitprop), was installed by Stalin as the Communist Party leader in the city and oblast. Marshal Klement Voroshilov, another old Stalin crony, was the military leader charged with defending the city. Essentially the two were political hacks who lacked the skills and imagination to address the enormity of the problems that they faced.¹⁹ The lack of a cogent plan for evacuation of nonessential personnel - primarily children and their mothers - was grounded in both denial and incompetence. Soviet soldiers fought bravely, but insufficient planning and poor decisions contributed to Leningrad's encirclement and siege.

Some children had been evacuated from the city in July and city officials put forth a plan to evacuate 400,000 little ones in August.²⁰ Poor planning and the tightening ring around the city, however, limited the number of children actually evacuated. Kids who were sent out without their families would have their personal information written on their hands with indelible ink. Their train trips were often delayed along the way for days at a time leading to a general state of filth and lice-infestation. Caretakers at receiving stations in Soviet-held territory would immediately wash the children thoroughly erasing the identification information, and sometimes separating the children from their families indefinitely.²¹ Some trains full of children were routed into the path of oncoming German Luftwaffe and panzers.²² By July 7th nearly a quarter of a million children were evacuated from the city, but many to areas close by, but were later brought back into Leningrad to suffer and often die in the killing winter of 1941-2.²³

Ladijya Georgievna's son was evacuated with his kindergarten class on June 28th while Ladiya remained in the city with her five month-old daughter. Her son, however, was returned a few days later.²⁴ Shortly after her son's return, Ladiya went to get the required travel permits for herself and her children, but on the day they were to depart her son disappeared for 24 hours and they missed their train. The city was then surrounded

¹⁸ Elena Skriabina, *Siege and Survival: The Odyssey of a Leningrader*, (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 5.

¹⁹ Jones, *Leningrad*, 47 & 65-68.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

²¹ Vera Mikhailovna Inber, *Leningrad Diary*, Translated by Serge M. Wolff and Rachel Grieve, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1971) 9.

²² Jones, *Leningrad.*, 97-99.

²³ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁴ Ales' Adamovich and Danil Granin, *Leningrad under Siege: First-Hand Accounts of the Ordeal* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2007) 11.

and all remained in the city.²⁵ Similarly, Alexandra Mikhailovna related how mothers and their children were evacuated, forced to disembark the trains outside the city, and were returned to the Leningrad on trains carrying wounded soldiers.²⁶

The first winter, that of 1941-2, was by far the worst period of the blockade. Food rations were negligible, heating fuel supplies became exhausted quickly, electricity was intermittent at best, the phone system shut down, and one of the coldest winters on record plunged the city into a state of collective despair. The official death toll for those killed by enemy bombardment, hunger and cold during and shortly after evacuation was 632,253.²⁷ Contemporary estimates range as high as one million but the number 900,000²⁸ is generally accepted by historians. These numbers vary from source to source because hundreds of thousands of refugees from surrounding areas were never properly accounted for, and people who died within a month of evacuation were not included in official records, burial records were woefully incomplete.²⁹ Regardless of the exact count, which by any measure is epic, starvation and cold took the vast majority of these victims- and these were particularly horrific deaths. By April 15, 1942, nearly 1,300,000 people from the Leningrad oblast had been evacuated, the better part of 900,000 had died, leaving less than a million still in the city from a pre-war total of over three million.³⁰

In the summer of 1941, many Leningrad families discovered that their “food lifelines” to relatives in rural areas had been disrupted.³¹ Food-rationing began in Leningrad on July 18, as supplies were deemed low a full two months before the Badaev warehouse fire. Factory workers were given 800 grams of bread per day, office workers 600, and dependants were allotted 400.³² By November 20, bread rations were cut to 375 grams for the top category and to 125 grams for dependants. These are just numbers, however. Shops did not always have the rationed bread, sometimes for days at a time. Much of this ersatz bread was loaded with fillers like wood cellulose that made the bread low in calories and lacking in nutrients.³³ By December, rations increased slightly but much of the damage was already done. People’s immune systems were so worn down and damaged that many did not survive the winter.

In theory, the different rationing categories were organized to distribute food equitably. The rationale for this system was that factory workers and soldiers were using the most calories in performing their critical jobs, while white-collar workers needed

²⁵ Ibid., 28-31.

²⁶ Ibid., 25.

²⁷ Jones, *Leningrad*, 293.

²⁸ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 1.

²⁹ Almost all numerical figures concerning the siege of Leningrad are contested. Death tolls, evacuation numbers, weight of food supplies, caloric content, etc. are numbers that cannot be deemed as precise. Although the Soviets tried to keep good records, this became difficult if not impossible in light of numerous factors of war and siege that became increasingly burdensome. This author will cite the sources that are now seen as the most reliable but they are still at best estimates.

³⁰ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 50.

³¹ V. M. Koval’chuk, A. I. Rupasov, and A. N. Chistikov, “Leningrad During the Great Patriotic War,” *Russian Studies in History* 52, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 10.

³² Jones, *Leningrad*, 93.

³³ Ibid., 46.

fewer calories and dependents and children required even less. The rations were nutritionally never enough to maintain health, and as they grew smaller, consequences grew more serious- people lost between a third and half their body weights and hovered on the edge of death. Some factories and institutions had cafeterias or canteens that served additional meals to workers when they were on duty. To maintain life, these rations needed to be supplemented any way possible, especially as the food situation worsened in the winter. These ways will be discussed later.

The Winter of 1941-2: Starvation

“Hunger changes everyone” (January 7, 1942)³⁴

The targeting of civilians, and starvation as tactics of war is controversial and much debated. Modern thought has been encapsulated in the various Geneva Conventions, but there is often a fine line that divides wrong from right. Targeting civilians is not solely a tactic of authoritarian governments as evidenced by British and American firebombing and nuking of German and Japanese cities during the war.³⁵ Civilians who work in defense industries are generally considered combatants and, thus, legitimate targets. Civilians precariously close to military locations are considered collateral damage in the conduct of war. Much of Leningrad and its immediate environs were legitimate military targets-- the defense industries, command facilities for the northern front, and the Baltic fleet.

Siege warfare has historically featured starvation as a weapon of war. Even the 1949 Geneva Conventions recognized the legitimacy of siege and blockade.³⁶ But the siege of Leningrad had a unique storyline; surrender was really never considered seriously by the Soviets nor was Hitler interested in accepting anything less than the death of the entire city. To Hitler, the rules of war, the Geneva Conventions, only applied to “civilized” nations, not the “barbaric” Soviets. As a protracted war of attrition waged against barbarians, *Operation Barbarossa* and especially the destruction of Leningrad carried its own nefarious internal logic.

On May 2, 1941, German officials, charged with formulating the Reich’s economic policy in the eastern territories which they believed would fall under their dominion following *Operation Barbarossa*, determined that Russia would need to feed the German *Wehrmacht*. Article 2 of the meeting’s Memorandum reads, “As a result x million (“x” meaning between 10 and 30 million depending on the source) people will doubtlessly starve, if that which is necessary for us is extracted from the land.”³⁷ The

³⁴ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 51.

³⁵ Alexander B. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War,” *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 160.

³⁶ Claire Thomas, “Civilian Starvation: A Just Tactic of War?,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 4, no. 2 (June 2005): 110.

³⁷ Alex J. Kay, “Germany’s Staatssekretäre, Mass Starvation and the Meeting of 2 May 1941,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 4 (October 1, 2006): 685.

Nazis intended to de-industrialize western Russia and transform it into a primarily agricultural area.³⁸

The first reported cases of death by starvation were reported in October 1941 and the NKVD made its initial arrests for cannibalism in November.³⁹ Matters would get progressively worse until April 1942. "Official" death tolls, which are now generally perceived as low, were 52,612 for December, 96,751 for January, 96,015 for February and 81,507 in March.⁴⁰ (In 1940, by way of comparison, average monthly death counts in the city were about 5,000.)⁴¹ During that winter, roughly one to two percent of these deaths can be attributed to shelling and bombing, the rest primarily to starvation. People continued to die from the effects of starvation in the ensuing months and others died from shelling and bombing until early 1944 when the city was liberated. Many of the survivors of the blockade of 1941-4 suffered for the rest of their lives from illnesses and deficiencies caused by starvation.

Women tended to do better than men with starvation rations. Women are usually smaller than men and require fewer calories to survive. Women also tend to have greater fat reserves than men and their cardiovascular systems are hardier.⁴² Many of the researchers in Leningrad determined that women were more adaptable to harsh conditions, notably starvation, than men.⁴³

Women's motivation to survive, a topic to be discussed later, may also have given them a psychological edge over males. Men were often the first members of a family to succumb to starvation as statistics for deaths in the winter month's show. Only in the spring did female deaths outpace men's, probably because women were able to hang on longer and the male population had significantly decreased over the winter. The only demographic group that did as poorly as middle-aged men was teenage boys.⁴⁴ Their growing bodies required more calories than their dependent rations could provide.

Not everyone starved equally. Those who worked in food processing and in canteens often helped themselves to food supplies. On November 29, Elena Skriabina wrote of a former maid named Marusa who was unrecognizable in her attractive clothes and healthy appearance, remarking, "She is not at all a citizen of a hungry, embattled city. I asked why. It turns out the reason is very simple. She works in a food warehouse."⁴⁵ Similarly on December 19th, Elena Kochina described a bread shop salesman as "round as a sweet roll."⁴⁶ Evgeniia Shavrova expressed her dismay, on July 10, 1942, about a boy she met, "He even bragged that last winter he went skiing and played. His mother works in a cafeteria."⁴⁷ Party officials who were stationed at the

³⁸ Ibid., 687.

³⁹ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 47.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 268 & 270.

⁴¹ Barber and Dzeniskevich, *Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad, 1941-44*, 16.

⁴² Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 273-4.

⁴³ Barber, *Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad, 1941-44*, 175.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 278

⁴⁵ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 42.

⁴⁶ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 59.

⁴⁷ Simmons, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad*, 43.

Smolny Institute, along with their secretaries, families and mistresses, had special rations that maintained them in generally good health. Vera Sergeevna Kostrovitskaia, a former ballerina and in 1941 a teacher, noted in her diary in April 1942 that Lidiia Semeonova Tager, chief of the ballet school of the Mariinsky Theatre and wife of the head of provisions for the whole Leningrad front was always wearing expensive dresses and furs that she had acquired by trading food.⁴⁸ Party and city officials, Communist Party members and hangers-on also did proportionally better than the general population.⁴⁹

A black market existed where ordinary people could buy food with rubles, though more likely their purchases were made by bartering valuables like jewelry and furs. There black market purchases took place in apartments and markets but also on the street where a certain body language signified that you were either buying or selling.⁵⁰ Robbery from a store, bakery or an institute was considered a serious crime and those convicted were often shot. Elena Kochina's husband had been stealing bread on a regular basis, and she rationalized these thefts, "Well, after all, the salespeople really are robbing us blind. In return for bread they have everything they want. Almost all of them, without any shame at all, wear gold and expensive furs. Some of them even work behind the counter in luxurious sable and sealskin coats."⁵¹

Thievery on the street- one person stealing another's ration card or that day's bread- often met with an immediate vigilante response from those nearby who simply beat the perpetrator.⁵² People found food substitutes in glue, wallpaper paste made with flour, boiling leather garments and eating the resultant jelly, and so on. Some resorted to cannibalism. Occasionally dead bodies on the street would be found missing parts, and other times people were killed for their flesh. About 2/3 of those arrested for cannibalism were women. Eighty-five percent of people arrested for cannibalism were originally from outside the city, people who often lacked the proper identity cards to acquire ration cards.⁵³

Random acts of kindness also helped some stave off death. Svetlana Pronberg, 13 years old during the winter of 1941-2, tells the story of how she and her sister had nearly starved to death when two elderly spinster neighbors brought their dog for them to eat. The neighbors could not eat the dog themselves but were happy to have the sisters eat it and survive.⁵⁴ Dr. Svetlana Magaeva, who survived the siege as a child, came to believe later after medical training that there was a psychosomatic component to death by starvation that should not be overlooked. She argued that fear and anxiety hastened death- essentially that a more positive attitude could maintain one, all else being equal. Citing Professor M.V. Chernorutsky, Magaeva noted that those with less stress and anxiety could call on "latent reserves" to sustain life⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁹ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 300.

⁵⁰ Koval'chuk, Rupasov, and Chistikov, "Leningrad During the Great Patriotic War," 13.

⁵¹ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 62.

⁵² Ibid., 15.

⁵³ Bidlack, *The Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*, 316-8.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 324.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 325-6.

As Leningrad entered the frigid winter of 1941-2, the vast majority of the inhabitants felt starvation. Bodies shriveled and gender and age became indistinguishable. Diarist Elena Kochina put it bluntly, "Women walk around in pants; men wear large women's kerchiefs on their heads. Everybody looks the same. Leningraders have lost their sex and age."⁵⁶ Diarist Vera Inber also noticed the sameness in people's appearance, "A quite inhuman thinness deprived them of age, or even sex."⁵⁷

Women's Emotions

"I never thought I could be so indifferent to death. I loved life...I can muster no horror over the possibility of death." (January 24, 1942)⁵⁸

As rationing began to take its toll fear and despair took hold. Women feared for the welfare of their families and themselves as the search for anything to eat became their greatest concern. Women, often on the lowest bread rations, feared not only for their families but also for themselves as the caregiver to dependent children, grandparents and husbands who were succumbing to starvation even more quickly than they were. Elena Skriabina writes in October 1941 about a neighbor family, the Kurakins, breaking apart due to the children's hunger and a growing separation between husband and wife. She noted how this family was no exception: "Almost everyone has changed as a result of hunger, the blockade, and this desperate situation."⁵⁹

Lidiya Okhapkina said that after the loss of her ration cards, she became preoccupied with thoughts of death.⁶⁰ Elena Skriabina wrote in November as regards to her husband's condition: "His apathy has me in despair. He has lost interest in everything. He won't read or talk. It is hard to believe but he is even indifferent to the bombings."⁶¹

Feelings of loneliness bred fear as communications, telephone service, newspapers, etc. broke down in the winter. Elena Kochina wrote on January 9, 1942, "In our room we live as if we were on an ark, seeing nothing and meeting no one. We don't even know what's going on at the front. Only by chance do we learn something while standing in line."⁶² Starvation, loneliness and despair all combined to dehumanize its victims. On January 28, 1942, as the hunger deepened for Elena Kochina, she wrote, "As for us, we came to know a hunger that degraded and crushed us, that turned us into animals."⁶³

Others found it nearly impossible to accept the loss of children to starvation. Doctor Anna Ivanova Likhacheva reflected on June 7, 1942, "His death (her son Volodia)

⁵⁶ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 53.

⁵⁷ Inber, *Leningrad Diary*, 44.

⁵⁸ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 58.

⁵⁹ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 32.

⁶⁰ Adamovich, *Leningrad under Siege*, 125.

⁶¹ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 35.

⁶² Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 70.

⁶³ Ibid., 84.

is like a dull ache. But I feel the death of my dear, beloved son so intensely, it calls up such pain and despair, that I could cry night and day.”⁶⁴

Even as the promise of evacuation from the city across Lake Ladoga was imminent, fear struck Elena Kochina who reported in her diary on July 2, 1942 how children were being evacuated and the emotions that elicited:

Like frightened little animals they filled the streets, moving toward the railroad station-the demarcation line of their childhood: on the other side life without parents would begin...

Crazed parents ran after the trucks.

Clinging to a lamppost, I wailed together with the other passersby. Fear and anxiety began to stir like porcupines somewhere around my heart.⁶⁵

Women were often overcome with anger at personal transgressions or the inequity of the rationing system. On November 25 and 26, Elena Kochina caught her husband eating their meager supply of millet and became enraged, “Don’t you dare eat it.” She pondered how all men are gluttons.⁶⁶ Kochina also grew angry and indignant at a young couple being evacuated with her and her family. They were well fed and rosy-cheeked and laughed heartily. They said that one of their fathers worked in supply and they had eaten well all winter. They were leaving because, “I was bored in Leningrad. There wasn’t anybody around to have a few laughs or go dancing with.”⁶⁷

As the winter of 1941-2 dragged on Elena Skriabina grew increasingly angry when confronted with people she saw who were well-fed, including the well-nourished son of an official, two well-fed girls, seeing hospital officials eating food intended for patients, and a hospital director’s wife and children eating well.⁶⁸

Anger was also directed at the Nazis who were causing the city so much pain. Anfisa Kharitonova, a sixty-year-old factory worker, knitted a scarf and gave it to a Soviet pilot who had shot down sixteen Nazi planes. Later at a worker’s conference she said,

No words can express all the boiling hatred for the damned fascist curs. When I hear of all the evil deeds, which they have committed against our brothers and sisters and against our little children, my heart bleeds...I cry with hatred for the enemy of the Motherland. We know that the wilderness has lions, tigers and jackals. These innocent creatures, transformed by the swastika, have ransacked the wilderness and seized our flourishing land. If I were younger, I would grab a gun and mercilessly kill those beasts.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Simmons, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad*, 60.

⁶⁵ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 35.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 106-107

⁶⁸ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 53, 68, 70 & 71.

⁶⁹ Bidlack, “The Political Mood in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War”, 109.

Fear and despair could be especially debilitating over the long run and different coping strategies were devised. Svetlana Magayeva wrote in January 1942 about how her mother tried to protect her from the destructive effects of fear. She wrote, paraphrasing her mother, “It was much more dangerous to think about death because that could cause a person to go crazy.”⁷⁰

The power of random acts of altruism often lifted the spirits of those racked with despair. Elena Kochina came upon a very long line for macaroni on December 4, 1941. She spoke with an older woman toward the front of the line explaining that there was no point in getting in line because by the time she got into the shop they would be all out and she really needed to find food for her husband and child. The old woman then shoved her into the line behind her saying, “Why aren’t you paying attention! After all, you were standing behind me!”⁷¹

Women’s Motivation

“My motivation is my children.”⁷² (February 18, 1942)

“Hungry, lice-infested, suffering Leningrad holds on and doesn’t think or surrender”⁷³
(December 28, 1941)

Women rallied to the defense of the motherland and their families in numerous ways. Georgi Alexeievich Kniazev reported that there was a city-wide women’s meeting where actresses, writers and workers called for the defense of Leningrad and celebrated individual heroics by women, notably a medic who was wounded twice while retrieving 29 wounded soldiers.⁷⁴

Sometimes women were driven to satisfy the needs of their children. Lidiya Okhapkina reported that she had no milk in her breasts that had shrunk to nothing. Instead she pricked her arm and let her daughter suckle her blood.⁷⁵ Ludmila Nikolaievna Bokshitskaya told the story of December 1941 when she, her sister, and her mother had all given up any hope and remained in the freezing flat without going for bread ration and instead waited to die. Then a neighbor, Nadezhda Sergeievna Kuprianova cooked them a cat, telling them instead that it was a rabbit. This act of kindness rekindled their desire to live.⁷⁶

Women sought to motivate and inspire others through their writings and public readings, often to front line troops. Poets and writers would often read their works over

⁷⁰ S. V. Magayeva, *Surviving the Blockade of Leningrad*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 39.

⁷¹ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 50.

⁷² Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 76.

⁷³ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 36.

⁷⁴ Adamovich, *Leningrad under Siege*, 67.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

the city's closed radio system to encourage the population. Poet Vera Inber included many poems in her recitations that made heroines of the selfless women of Leningrad.⁷⁷

The soldiers at the front suffered from cold and hunger also. Despite their larger rations, which they often shared with their families or visitors to the front, they also died of starvation. Ludmila Nikolaievna Bokshitskaya related how she was one of three skinny, boney women who brought socks and tobacco pouches to front line troops who saw them as the personification of Leningrad and why they must fight on.⁷⁸

The motivation to live in the face of overwhelming obstacles took many forms. Elena Oskarovna Martilla, an artist, was feeling especially depressed during February 1942. She felt exhausted and had been fainting several times a day. She realized that, if she were to lie down, she would never get up. She was bitter at Hitler for putting her, a young woman, in such a position. Instead of giving up, however, she took her paint and brushes and began a self-portrait. Her work gave her the reason to live and persevere.⁷⁹ When given the opportunity to evacuate later, her love of Leningrad and all that it had been through, prevailed, "...the city and I are together forever."⁸⁰ Lidiya Ginzburg wrote of malnourishment and how simple resistance to the Nazi onslaught could prove to be a motivation to survive:

It freed one from moral unease because we, the malnourished, realized that we had been sacrificed to the war, but what we didn't realize at that time was that we were also a community, in however dim and reflected a fashion. That the enemy wanted to kill me and I was alive, that he wanted to kill the city, but the city lived on and I was an almost unconscious particle of its resistant life.⁸¹

Psychological Disorders

"There is little humanity left in people" (January 20, 1942)⁸²

Mental or psychological disorders are differentiated from normal emotions and anxiety when their presence in the human psyche becomes debilitating, that is, when they come to affect one's normal functioning. Arguably all of the starvation victims suffered from depression (sometimes acute) and anxiety disorders.

Scientific studies of starvation prior to World War II are limited for two reasons. Resources in areas of famine are usually directed at alleviating the suffering of the population and laboratory simulation experiments are ethically questionable. What little research that had been done focused only on physiological aspects of starvation. The Minnesota starvation-rehabilitation experiment of 1944-6 looked at psychological aspects

⁷⁷ Simmons, "Lifting the Siege," 47.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 161-162.

⁷⁹ Simmons, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad*, 179.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 181.

⁸¹ Ginzburg, *Blockade Diary*, 97.

⁸² Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 57.

of starvation for the first time. Although limited in scope and by the fact that test subjects never reached the level of emaciation that occurred in Leningrad, the study tends to confirm findings from Leningrad. Notably subjects suffered from irritability, apathy, depression, fatigue, and loss of sex drive.⁸³ Studies of patients with eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia) have shown the same correlatives of depression and irritability.⁸⁴

Leningrad had several universities and scientific research centers that devoted their efforts, during the siege, to the study of starvation and its physical and psychological effects. Starvation causes multiple vitamin deficiencies that can exacerbate mental disorders. Anxiety, depression and “starvation psychosis” were common maladies throughout the city.⁸⁵ Compounding these starvation-induced disorders were the effects of daily bombing and shelling which can result in shell shock or battle fatigue on their own.

Stress-related disorders were common throughout the siege, but their severity varied from person to person depending on “individual predisposition to mental and emotional excitation, the activity of natural stress-limiting systems, and also the ability of the organism to adapt to stress pressures.”⁸⁶ Lidiiya Ginzburg wrote how the siege became so horrible and pathological and often pushed loved ones apart causing irreparable chasms in many marriages.⁸⁷

Conditions specific to women could also cause depression. Women suffered from two such conditions during the siege that robbed them of their womanliness, amenorrhea, the stoppage of the menstrual cycle and the cessation of lactation due to starvation.⁸⁸ Elena Kochina wrote on October 9, 1941:

My milk has dried up. At night I drink a whole pot of water, but this doesn't help. Lena screams and tears at my breast like a small wild animal (poor thing!). Now we give her all the butter and sugar we get with our ration cards.⁸⁹

Starvation all but wiped out the sex drive in both men and women.

Vera Inber wrote in her diary on February 8, 1942 that she was descending into deep depression, “I have never felt so low as I do now...My heart is so heavy that I can hardly write...The quiet at times drives me nearly out of my mind.”⁹⁰ She becomes fatalistic by March 29, 1942, writing of frayed nerves, emotional breakdown, “I am going to bed, and what will be, will be.”⁹¹

⁸³ Josef Brozek, “Psychology of Human Starvation and Nutritional Rehabilitation,” *The Scientific Monthly* 70, no. 4 (April 1, 1950): 271 & 273.

⁸⁴ Reinhold G. Laessle, Ulrich Schweiger, and Karl M. Pirke, “Depression as a Correlate of Starvation in Patients with Eating Disorders,” *Biological Psychiatry* 23, no. 7 (April 1, 1988): 723.

⁸⁵ Barber and Dzeniskevich, *Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad, 1941-44*, 105-106.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 124-5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁹ Kochina, *Blockade Diary*, 44.

⁹⁰ Inber, *Leningrad Diary*, 56.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

Anxiety, especially over the plight of one's family, racked many women's psyches. Elena Skriabina wrote in her diary on July 11, 1941, "I hear about the children at every turn. It seems to me that after such a terrible shock as war, concern for children is the most worrisome, the keenest anxiety, an anxiety that can lead to insanity."⁹²

Others manifested their mental disorders through frustration and random acts. T.L. Ianovich, a department head at a city factory, admitted in reference to reports of random acts of violence, "The organism had activated its protective mechanisms to shield the mind from falling apart."⁹³ Others descended into a netherworld of psychosis. Anna Petrovna Ostroumova-Lebedeva wrote in her diary that she was physically and mentally fatigued on July 6, 1941. By March 1942, her words had taken a sinister turn, she wrote, "I feel some kind of satanic romanticism, and in addition, grandeur, a head-long irrepressible rush to death and destruction...everything has gotten mixed up and has started to spin in black smoke, fire and snowstorm."⁹⁴

Others recognized the toll that depression and anxiety were taking and came up with their own remedies. Some kept as physically active as possible, while others continued to perform their artistic or intellectual work. For children this would often be more difficult. Svetlana Magayeva recalled her mother's prescription for maintaining mental health during the siege. Her mother said, "We should read good books and dwell on the happy experiences of pre-war times."⁹⁵ She also recalled her time in a children's home where many kids suffered from anxiety and depression.⁹⁶ A former teacher, Olga Symanovskaya, frequently visited the children and had them do mental exercises. She had them repeat a two-line stanza that affirmed their desire to live, "We have survived the month of January; and we will survive the month of February; when the month of March arrives, we will sing songs of happiness and joy." This positive exercise cheered the children and they looked forward to her visits each day.⁹⁷

Even evacuation brought on its own form of neurosis. Elena Skriabina wrote of women's fear and grief associated with the evacuation plans of August 1941 as many of the previous evacuation attempts had ended in disaster.⁹⁸ But others fought through their depression to rescue their families from the siege. Lidiya Okhapkina described how she, her son and infant daughter were evacuated in March 1942. All were emaciated and she used every ounce of reserve energy to deal with the city bureaucracy and gather their belongings for the journey. They struggled to get to the evacuation meeting place on time but were late. The lorry had stayed for them and they crossed Lake Ladoga in a snowstorm. Her husband, a soldier on leave, met them in Soviet territory, but did not recognize them. Lidiya had been mistaken earlier on the trek as the children's

⁹² Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 14.

⁹³ Koval'chuk, Rupasov, and Chistikov, "Leningrad During the Great Patriotic War," 16.

⁹⁴ Cynthia Simmons, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad*, 31.

⁹⁵ Magaeva, *Surviving the Blockade of Leningrad*, 61.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81-2.

⁹⁸ Skriabina, *Siege and Survival*, 17.

grandmother. She was very sick but survived, as did her son, but her infant daughter died shortly after evacuation.⁹⁹

Conclusion

This paper has drawn on the writings of numerous women siege survivors. They wrote for various reasons. Some wrote because they always had, others wrote because they needed to record this extraordinarily difficult time in their lives. Still others felt that they were on a mission. Lydiia Ginzburg quoted the great nineteenth century Russian writer and intellectual Alexander Herzen when she wrote why she and others, mostly women, kept diaries, journals or wrote poetry during the siege, “Whoever managed to survive must have the strength to remember.”¹⁰⁰

The siege of Leningrad was arguably the most devastating crisis to ever befall a city of its size. That crisis fell disproportionately on the women of the city. Their love for their families, their city and their Motherland drove them to survive and resist their Nazi oppressors. They suffered starvation, fatigue and mental disorders, and never truly recovered fully from the experience. Their emotional health suffered additional blows even after the blockade was lifted and news came home of the deaths of husbands, sons, fathers, and other loved ones.

Their efforts in cleaning the city in the spring of 1942 were monumental. Dead bodies needed to be found and buried before the city fell victim to an epidemic, which it never did. Gardens needed to be planted and tended in order to contribute to the city’s food supply for the coming winter. Women’s work really never ended, and neither did their suffering.

The women of Leningrad had difficulties following the war in finding a husband as so many of the city’s men had died during the war. Ol’ga Nikolaevna Grechina told an interviewer in June 1995, “Our eligible young men had almost all been killed off. There were not many women in our generation who were able to find themselves a husband. But I was lucky. He was healthy and handsome.”¹⁰¹

The men and women of the Soviet Army fought bravely at the front in defense of Leningrad, but the citizens, who were predominantly women, maintained the life of the city itself against enormous odds.

⁹⁹ Adamovich, *Leningrad under Siege*, 180-187.

¹⁰⁰ Emily Van Buskirk, “Recovering the Past for the Future: Guilt, Memory, and Lidiia Ginzburg’s Notes of a Blockade Person,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 2 (July 1, 2010): 287.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

Profit, Ideology, and Guilt: A Brief History of IG Farben

John Marchinkoski

The actions of IG Farben, one of the most infamous corporations associated with Nazi Germany's war effort and the Holocaust, have raised considerable questions about the role of ideology and industry in both World War II and the Holocaust. Specifically, questions as to whether or not IG Farben was ideologically invested in Nazism and why IG Farben executives were given such seemingly light sentences at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals have provoked much discussion and debate. Farben preceded the Nazi state, and so too did its ideology. How, then, did IG Farben become an integral part of Nazi Germany's state structure? How did it come to play a crucial role in the Nazi war economy, participating in the building of work camps, the functioning of extermination camps, and utilizing slave labor? Over the company's history, IG Farben transformed from a relatively average chemical conglomerate in the 1920s into an accomplice for both the Nazi war effort and camp system. IG's adaptive business strategy was to achieve economic stability through politics. With the Nazis in power, IG Farben not only professed adherence to National Socialist ideology, but also contributed to the regime's military aims and desire for autarky. Not only did much of the company itself go through significant internal changes, from the purging of its Jewish staff to the replacement of its old elite, but also, like many careerists in the Nazi state, it sought to prove its efficiency and worth to the regime while securing profits for its shareholders. Although ideologically loyal to the state when necessary, IG Farben saw itself first as a corporation engaged in industry, and second as an instrument of warfare.

The following analysis will explore how IG Farben came to cooperate with the Nazi regime and how its ideological development reflected the company's goal of economic stability through political and ideological adherence to the state. Auschwitz-Monowitz – IG's concentration camp and its synthetic rubber plant – plays an incredibly important role in this assessment. IG's participation in the concentration camp industry and its use of slave labor at the Monowitz *Buna Werke* demonstrate that the company's adherence to state ideology and its willingness to acquiesce to the state profited the company and improved its productivity. This analysis will take into consideration the prosecution of the twenty-five IG Farben executives and officials under the Nuremberg Military Tribunals. In an assessment of the trial, this analysis will also examine how IG's broad and complex corporate structure allowed the defendants of the IG Farben Trial to deny knowledge of the company's crimes, especially its link to the profitable production and sale of Zyklon B, a pesticide used in the gas chambers of Nazi death camps.

IG Farben's foundational history, like its history in the Nazi era, is complex. The company was founded (in its incarnation that participated in Nazi industry, at least) in 1925, combining Germany's three largest chemical concerns – Bayer, BASF, and Hoechst. In the years preceding the Nazis' rise to power, Farben appeared similar to many other large, competitive companies in interwar Europe. Although not beholden to any one

party in the 1920s, IG Farben was never apolitical. In fact, IG sought to find economic stability through engagement in politics. In the Weimar years, IG Farben funded the German People's Party (DVP) and other right-centrist, industrially-minded parties.¹ However, the political instability of the late Weimar era and IG's subsequent need to maintain control of domestic economic developments and understand foreign developments caused the conglomerate to expand its fundraising and influences to many different political parties in the Reichstag.² In the Weimar era, Farben's interests and image seemed to run in opposition to the Nazi party; the Nazis criticized the conglomerate for "impoverishing the German nation," and decried the presence of many Jews in the company's structure, a point of later contention between the two powerful organizations.³ Richard Sasuly, the earliest historian of IG Farben, identifies the company as a "cartel," even in its formative years.⁴ Sasuly's characterization of Farben relies on a quote by German industrialist Walter Rathenau: "[In the future of] enterprise the individual will not be given greater latitude; on the other hand, individualistic activity will be consciously accorded a part in an economic structure working for Society as a whole."⁵ Sasuly defines IG Farben as an innately political entity, a company whose designs, while economic, were inherently political. While this definition of the company carries certain questionable connotations (specifically, the word "cartel" implies some latent machinations by IG Farben, before the Nazis' rise to power, to transform Germany's political landscape), IG Farben did seek to find economic stability through political channels (as evidenced by the company's early donations to political parties). Therefore, after the Nazi victories in the July 1932 elections, IG Farben understood the emerging need to bridge the divide between itself and the Nazis. Its future collaboration with the Nazi regime only served as a continuation of this earlier policy.⁶

In the wake of the Nazis' July 1932 political victories, IG Farben's board, the *Vorstand*, sought to find common ground with the Nazi party. IG's press chief arranged for the first face-to-face meeting between a member of IG and Adolf Hitler. Heinrich Butesfisch, then the leader of Farben's *Leuna Werke* – as well as the production chief at Auschwitz – met privately with Hitler, where the latter discussed his need for IG Farben's synthetic fuel and rubber to build Germany's infrastructure.⁷ The meeting apparently went so well that Carl Bosch, IG Farben's founder and de-facto leader, remarked, "[Hitler] is more sensible than I thought."⁸ This marked IG Farben's earliest cooperation

¹ Peter Hayes, *Industry & Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 48.

² Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 48; Richard Sasuly, *IG Farben*, (New York: Boni & Gaer, 1947), 66.

³ Piotr Setkiewicz, *The Histories of Auschwitz IG Farben Werk Camps 1941-1945*, (Oswiecim: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2008), 25.

⁴ Sasuly, 41.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Setkiewicz, 25.

⁷ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 67; Setkiewicz, 26; Germany (Territory under Allied Occupation, 1945-1955: US Zone), *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law no. 10*. Vol. VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), 545-546.

⁸ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 67.

with the Nazi regime, and established the foundation of their relationship: synthetic rubber and fuel.

In order to align with the Nazi policy of *Gleichschaltung*, or unilateral conformity, IG Farben needed to ideologically conform to the Nazis not only nominally, but also structurally. Although Carl Bosch may have found Hitler “sensible” in one moment, he was quite far from a Nazi ideologue, unlike some of the younger members of the company. Bosch was willing to deal with the Nazi regime after its consolidation of power in 1933, mainly to discuss the production of synthetic fuel and rubber for what would become Hitler’s war economy, but ideology became a point of contention between IG and the Nazis. The presence of many Jews throughout IG Farben’s corporate structure would provoke direct confrontation between Bosch and Hitler. After Bosch broached the “Jewish question” with Hitler as it related to IG Farben, the Fuhrer declared that Germany would “work one hundred years without physics and chemistry” should Jews remain at IG Farben.⁹ Bosch then “regretfully” sent many Jewish employees into “paid exile,” though even this would prove a temporary measure in a country becoming increasingly Nazified.¹⁰ Even in the face of anti-Semitic politics, IG Farben saw the economic necessity of maintaining good relations with the regime. Carl von Weinberg, the Deputy Chairman of the supervisory board and a Jew, told representatives of the Du Pont chemical company visiting Germany that he gave the Nazi regime his “full stamp of approval.”¹¹ On December 14, 1933, Bosch and Hitler agreed to expand IG’s synthetic oil installations.¹² Although some signs of early cooperation between IG and the Nazis emerged in the early 1930s, it became clear that there could be no common reconciliation between Bosch’s “old world” mentality and National Socialist ideology. The 1930s would witness such a transition within IG Farben.

The years between 1933 and 1937 saw a growth in collaboration between the Nazis and IG Farben. The Nazi regime viewed IG Farben and its mastery over rubber and fuel synthesis as necessary tools in the road to military and economic self-sufficiency.¹³ Hermann Goering, in an address to a committee on raw materials production in 1936, noted Germany’s rubber production was its “weakest point” and that the country would “be cut off from all oil imports” when it went to war.¹⁴ IG Farben would play a crucial role in amending these shortcomings and in building Nazi autarky, but it could not do so without conforming to Nazi ideology, at least in appearance and practice, if not in conviction. The Nazi goal of German autarky meant that it was in IG Farben’s economic interest to cooperate with the state in supplying its military. 1937, the year in which the Nazi party reopened application for membership, marked a clear change in the company’s character, as certain aspects of Nazi ideology became company policy. Once membership

⁹ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 92; Setkiewicz, 28.

¹⁰ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 93.

¹¹ Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben*. (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc.), 60.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴ NMT Vol. VII, 22.

opened, almost all members of IG's management board joined the Nazi party.¹⁵ When IG representatives traveled abroad, they were instructed that it was their "special duty to represent National Socialist Germany."¹⁶ The Bayer sales organization within IG also told its employees that they should "develop a positive mental attitude towards the present regime."¹⁷ In a final nod to its ideological obedience, Farben removed the last Jews still working in the company and ended pay for German Jews in "exile," including the one outspoken Jewish proponent of National Socialism in IG's corporate structure – Carl von Weinberg.¹⁸ This does not necessarily indicate that IG Farben's management board held pro-Nazi ideological convictions. In a decree issued on January 4, 1938, Hermann Goering defined any business with Jews on a company's *Vorstand* or *Aufsichtsrat* (a company's executive and management board, respectively) as "Jewish-controlled," making them ineligible for government contracts.¹⁹ So-called "Aryanization," or the purging of Jews from the company, although not inherently profitable, was absolutely necessary for Farben to continue doing business with the regime, which came to look more and more like the conglomerate's main source of power and wealth. While IG Farben prepared the Wehrmacht for war by supplying it with "synthetic oil, synthetic rubber, poison gases," and countless other important materials, Bosch's replacement by Carl Krauch, a registered member of the Nazi party since 1937, as the chairman of the supervisory board in 1940 meant that IG Farben had finally committed itself fully to the war effort and to the Nazi regime.²⁰

There is little doubt that IG Farben's business strategy depended upon the Nazi state and its goal of autarky, and, conversely, the Nazis came to depend on IG Farben, which became an integral part of the Nazis' ongoing war strategy. The chemical conglomerate transformed from a nebulous target of early Nazi propaganda into a corporation that met with top officials in the Nazi party. Otto Ambros, for example, a member of IG's supervisory board and an expert on synthetic rubber and poison gasses, directly conferred with Hitler after the Battle of Stalingrad about the use of poison gasses.²¹ IG Farben was no longer simply a producer and profiteer in the war effort; it commiserated with and even advised the highest officials in the Nazi state. The Reich Ministry of Economic Affairs held a meeting of similar import on November 2, 1940, inviting both representatives of IG Farben and the Wehrmacht to discuss the increased demand in rubber production.²² The Reich Ministry looked to expand rubber production in Silesia, out of range of Allied bombing raids, and selected a site beside the Auschwitz concentration camp complex for the *Buna Werke*. The site would come to be known as Auschwitz-Monowitz, and its proximity to the killing process at Auschwitz-Birkenau, coupled with IG Farben's utilization of slave labor, render the factory and sub-camp a

¹⁵ Borkin, 72.

¹⁶ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 98.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 196-197.

¹⁹ Ibid., 170.

²⁰ Borkin, 75 & 99.

²¹ Ibid., 131.

²² Setkiewicz, 45.

physical manifestation of its collaboration with – and profit from – the Nazi regime. The Monowitz camp was, in a word, the apogee of IG Farben’s crimes in Europe, becoming a major point of concern in the subsequent “IG Farben Trial” at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals.

Some vagueness surrounds the camp’s origins, and the motives of IG Farben in building the camp prove particularly ambiguous. There is no doubt as to the Nazis’ need for increased rubber production. However, some disagree as to IG’s willingness to build the camp. When questioned at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals about IG Farben’s ability to decline building the site at Monowitz, Carl Krauch responded, “IG Farben could have theoretically declined. Theoretically, one can also decline military conscription in case of war. What happens to the person concerned is another matter entirely.”²³ Krauch’s vague appeal to stark adherence to the state in fear of ambiguous punishment became a theme repeated throughout the IG Farben Trial. While it might be impossible to refute Krauch’s hypothetical assertion, there are more plausible motives to consider. For one, in rejecting a contract from the Nazi state, IG Farben risked losing its most important – and only – client. Given the Nazis’ history of nationalizing industry, IG logically feared that refusal could mean the introduction of state-owned competition into its monopoly (as had happened in both the coal and steel industry) on synthesized rubber and fuel, or perhaps even more proactive government seizure and liquidation.²⁴ Krauch’s allusion to personal harm or judicial punishment is not without precedent, however. One IG official, Fritz Gajewski, endured denunciation and interrogation by the Gestapo in September 1939 for the apparent crime of asserting that Hitler and Goering were not qualified in their decision to manufacture cellulose, paper, and textiles from potato skins.²⁵

Although IG Farben may have initially hoped to build the new plant in Western Germany rather than at Auschwitz-Monowitz, it certainly saw the potential installation as an asset rather than a burden. Once the site was agreed upon, IG Farben wasted no time in hastening the deportation of the local Jewish community in Oświęcim to house IG employees in now vacant Jewish property.²⁶ By October of 1941, the number of workers available for the construction of the Monowitz plant dwindled, a problem solved after the KL Auschwitz camp supplied approximately 1,300 prisoners, who marched to and from the plant every day, to complete the project.²⁷ Like with the construction of the *Buna Werke*, Farben claimed to have little choice in the utilization of slave laborers in the construction of Monowitz. At the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, Krauch reasserted that refusing the use of slave laborers was “out of the question. It was an order.”²⁸ Krauch went on to say that “[a]ny act to the contrary [to the utilization of slave labor at Monowitz] would have immediately been interpreted as sabotage and resulted in a

²³ Germany (Territory under Allied Occupation, 1945-1955: US Zone), *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law no. 10*. Vol. VIII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), 655.

²⁴ Setkiewicz, 46; Michael Thad Allen, *The Business of Genocide: The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 168.

²⁵ Hayes, *Industry & Ideology*, 202.

²⁶ Setkiewicz, 64.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67; NMT Vol. VIII, 698 & 839.

²⁸ NMT Vol. VIII, 653.

sentence of death.”²⁹ Despite Krauch’s testimony, Farben did profit from slave labor, both economically as well as politically. Political capital, as mentioned before, played an incredibly important role in IG’s adaptive business strategy, and the utilization of slave labor served as evidence that the corporation had set out to meet the production quotas set by the regime in the face of labor shortages (as most able-bodied German workers now served in the Wehrmacht).³⁰ The sometimes deadly four-mile march made regularly by slave laborers between the Auschwitz main camp and the Monowitz site began to take a toll on IG’s profits and productivity, threatening the company’s billion Reichsmark investment in the site. In July 1942, the *Vorstand* voted to construct a concentration camp at the *Buna Werke* to exploit a closer and theoretically safer source of labor while scaling back, to a minor extent, SS presence within the camp and exerting greater control over its captive work force.³¹

The construction of the Monowitz concentration camp in the summer of 1942 served as a key moment in the development of IG Farben’s character, one perhaps more significant than the shift to ideological conformity in 1937. Before 1942, IG Farben never used the war materials it produced, nor did it interact with victims of military production. At Monowitz, IG Farben interacted with its victims directly. IG Farben did see its laborers and inmates as economic investments, but this did not, as some might expect, lead to better conditions at Monowitz. In its pursuit of cost efficiency, IG regularly mistreated workers. Although free in theory, slave labor proved costly on account of slow production, high mortality rates, the cost of SS guards’ wages, barracks, and fencing.³² In the construction of Monowitz and the surrounding IG coal mines, an estimated 20,000 to 35,000 workers perished, indicating a prisoner mortality rate as high as 70-85%.³³ IG and the SS guards at Monowitz followed similar procedure in the camp itself. For example, during raging Typhus epidemics, IG Farben displayed no intention of sustaining sick workers. Farben designed medical care at Monowitz only for short-term cases, transferring those with serious illnesses to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were almost certainly killed.³⁴ Cruelty and threats also served economic ends. In one particular case, British prisoners of war transferred to Monowitz refused to participate in the production of war materials (per the accords of the Geneva Convention). In response, an IG manager, Gerhard Ritter, reportedly drew a revolver and threatened the men.³⁵ IG foremen also utilized the SS to boost productivity, submitting written requests for punishment of individual prisoners by the SS. “Laziness” was among the chief reasons for punishment listed in such requests.³⁶ IG’s policy towards its Monowitz inmates is not entirely original either, rather accurately reflecting the chief overseer of slave labor Fritz Sauckel’s policy that “inmates must be fed, sheltered, and treated in such a way as to exploit them to the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Peter Hayes, “The Chemistry of Business-State Relations,” chap. 3 in *Business and Industry in Nazi Germany*, ed. Francis R Nicosia & Jonathan Huener (New York: Berghan Books, 2004), 75.

³¹ Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben*, 120.

³² Hayes, “The Chemistry of Business-State Relations,” 74.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ NMT Vol. VIII, 314.

³⁵ Setkiewicz, 338.

³⁶ Borkin, 125.

highest possible extent, at the lowest conceivable degree of expenditure.”³⁷ In summary, it proved economically, politically, and ideologically sensible to maintain extremely poor working conditions among the Monowitz inmates, to underfeed them, and to allow SS guards, *kapos*, and IG foremen to beat working prisoners.³⁸

Once again, IG’s policy seems to have reflected both the economic and the ideological. Even taking Krauch’s assertion that refusing slave laborers would have meant a “death sentence” for him and his subordinates as truth, there is no doubt at all that IG Farben purposefully underfed, overworked, and punished its workers in accordance with political and economic incentives. IG Farben owned farms around the Monowitz factory, and therefore did not need to negotiate for food through the SS, the Auschwitz camp bureaucracy, or the Reich Ministry of Economic Affairs.³⁹ The Director of the Centre for Research at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Piotr Setkiewicz, summarizes the dilemma best, perhaps, remarking, “if IG Farben had decided to have more potatoes added to the prisoners’ soup, it could have saved many human lives.”⁴⁰ While IG expressed trepidation towards Monowitz’s construction and constantly looked to push its productivity in the face of apparent decreasing efficiency, IG’s corporate experiment in the concentration camp system struck Krauch as valuable enough for him to write to Heinrich Himmler in favor of the construction of more work camps “following the example of Auschwitz.”⁴¹ In other words, IG’s construction of the Monowitz concentration camp and its exploitation of slave labor proved ideologically and economically profitable, despite Krauch’s claim that IG Farben had no choice but to succumb to the will of the state in fear of retribution.

While IG’s building, management, and operation of Auschwitz-Monowitz demonstrate its use of slave labor and its knowledge of the Nazi prison camp system, its role in the actual killing process raises questions about IG’s knowledge of Nazi killing centers. While many of the executives, such as Carl Krauch, Otto Ambros, and others, visited and toured Monowitz with Heinrich Himmler, no IG Farben executives visited the Birkenau killing center.⁴² In theory, this absolved the executives from any knowledge of the killing center at Auschwitz-Birkenau, but the sheer “proximity of death” of Birkenau to Monowitz was, as most witnesses put it, unmistakable. According to one SS lieutenant, the stench of the Auschwitz crematoria from Monowitz was “perceptible everywhere.”⁴³ While it is purely speculative to suggest that the IG executives smelled death at Monowitz and understood its implications, it is not an unreasonable supposition. IG Farben simply could not have managed Auschwitz-Monowitz the way it did without some knowledge within its corporate structure of the mass killings. For example, IG management at Monowitz gave Polish workers clothes belonging to Jews killed in gas chambers.⁴⁴

³⁷ Ibid., 121.

³⁸ NMT Vol. VIII, 842.

³⁹ Setkiewicz, 354.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Borkin, 126.

⁴² Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 363.

⁴³ NMT Vol. VIII, 315; Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 364.

⁴⁴ Setkiewicz, 321.

Prisoners at Monowitz also “were informed to the fullest extent” regarding the gassings at Birkenau, presumably to motivate their work, considering that inmates too weak to work were regularly transferred to Birkenau and gassed.⁴⁵ Even a defendant at the IG Farben trial, Walter Dürrfeld, IG’s chief of construction at the Monowitz plant, remarked that officials and inmates at the *Buna Werke* must have known of the gassings as Birkenau.⁴⁶

While IG Farben could not have operated Monowitz without some knowledge of the ongoing killing operations at Birkenau, to speculate on the company’s hypothetical ability to intervene or halt the gassings at Birkenau would prove counterproductive. If anything, IG’s role in the actual killing process was important though limited and motivated by profit. Zyklon B, the pesticide used in extermination camp gas chambers, links IG Farben to the killings and the Nazi death camps. The history of Zyklon B and its role in the death camps is, in a sense, the history of another company – the German Vermin-Combating Corporation, known best by its abbreviation, Degesch. Degesch’s history parallels IG Farben’s. Like Farben, Degesch went through a period of ideological Nazification, “Aryanized” their businesses, profited from its relationship with the Wehrmacht (the military often used Zyklon to fumigate barracks, submarines, and prison camps), and utilized slave labor.⁴⁷ IG Farben owned 42.5% of Degesch, and five of eleven of its supervisory board were from IG Farben.⁴⁸ IG’s semi-ownership of Degesch and, by extension, of Zyklon B points to its complicated and indirect role in Nazi mass killing.

Originally, Degesch’s Zyklon B functioned much like IG’s essential but relatively normal wartime products. Neither Degesch nor IG Farben marketed Zyklon B as an agent for human extermination. Rather, SS men found the pesticide far more efficient in killing prisoners than carbon monoxide after experimenting with the gas on Russian prisoners of war.⁴⁹ Farben undoubtedly profited from the SS’s bulk purchases of Zyklon B. IG’s dividends from its investments in Degesch, for example, doubled in 1942, 1943, and 1944, reflecting the SS’s massive purchases of Zyklon B in those years.⁵⁰ Bruno Tesch, the owner of Testa, the company that distributed Zyklon B, knew of its use in the killing centers and openly remarked upon it to his fellow employees.⁵¹ The Allies later prosecuted Tesch and sentenced him to death for his role in facilitating Nazi mass killings – a sentence that contrasts sharply with the sentences of the IG Farben executives at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals.⁵² The Nuremberg Military Tribunal sentenced the company executives convicted at the IG Farben Trial to prison terms ranging between six

⁴⁵ NMT Vol. VIII, 320, 618 & 818.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 804.

⁴⁷ Al Rosenbloom & RuthAnn Althaus, “Degesch AG and its Holocaust Legacy,” *Journal of Business Ethics* no. 91 (2010), 186.

⁴⁸ Borkin, 122; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Vol. 3, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), 953.

⁴⁹ Hilberg, 941; Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 362.

⁵⁰ Borkin, 123.

⁵¹ Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 363.

⁵² Sybille Steinbacher, *Auschwitz: A History*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 141.

months and eight years, including time already served.⁵³ Zyklon B appeared among the key indictments against executive members at the IG Farben Trial. At least one IG defendant, Rudolf Mann, even worked for Degesch and was accused of aiding the mass killings in the Nazi extermination camps.⁵⁴ In the three counts against the IG defendants detailing the production Zyklon B, as well as in facilitating medical experimentation at Auschwitz, no defendants were convicted.⁵⁵ Although IG profited from Zyklon B and prosecutors at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals identified IG's link to the production and distribution of Zyklon B as a crime, the company's organizational distance (separated by Degesch, Zyklon's producer and Testa, its distributor) from the pesticide's applications in the gas chamber allowed the defendants to deny knowledge of its lethal uses.

The "IG Farben Trial" conducted under the American Military Tribunals speaks both of IG Farben's actions as well as its character. Some, such as Joseph Borkin and Raymond Stokes, have offered interpretations of the seemingly light verdicts the IG executives received. In *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben*, Borkin argues that emerging postwar conditions – specifically the US goal of Western European economic revival at the start of the Cold War – motivated the judges in their final decision. The executives that had played pivotal roles in establishing such an enormous conglomerate would theoretically prove useful in such a restoration.⁵⁶ Raymond Stokes, in *Divide and Prosper: The Heirs of IG Farben under Allied Authority 1945-1951*, does not outright refute Borkin's claim, but proposes that "mild punishments fit with the American judicial tradition of light sentences for 'white collar crime.'"⁵⁷ One American businessman at the trial reportedly remarked "[h]ow can you expect us to punish the Germans for things we would have done in their places?"⁵⁸ Corporate participation in slave labor and mass killing was, however, an unprecedented notion in US history. It would seem that this particular businessman believed that cooperation between state and industry in wartime was honorable and necessary.

US considerations aside, there is no doubt that the charges of utilizing slave labor and facilitating mass killings are not traditional white-collar crimes. To study only the motives of the judges would partly diminish the importance of IG's defense as well as the ability of bureaucratic, institutional, and organizational stratification to diffuse individual guilt. With the Nazis defeated and IG's future uncertain, Carl Krauch appealed to the tribunal, stating, "a citizen cannot ignore the call of the state."⁵⁹ Krauch's defense generally excludes IG's profitability in working with the Nazi regime, and so too does it exclude IG's gradual adaption to a National Socialist Germany and to German autarky. To put it quite simply, IG's dense corporate structure allowed for its executives to deny any knowledge or complicity in mass killings. Wolfram Von Metzler, the counsel for

⁵³ Raymond Stokes, *Divide and Prosper: The Heirs of IG Farben*, (London: University of California Press, 1988), 54.

⁵⁴ NMT Vol. VII, 337.

⁵⁵ NMT Vol. VIII, 310.

⁵⁶ Borkin, 139-140.

⁵⁷ Stokes, 152-153.

⁵⁸ Sasuly, 196.

⁵⁹ NMT vol. VIII, 1055.

defendant Paul Haefflinger, articulated the enormity of IG's corporate structure and the ambiguity of culpability as follows:

The *Vorstand* members of this dangerous organization apparently, in the view of the prosecution, are responsible for whatever happened in this vast and complex *Konzern*, which, in the indictment, has been referred to as a "State within the State." The prosecution, as far as I can see, does not attach any special weight to the questions whether, and to which extent, the various defendants were personally connected with the numerous activities of IG which are dealt with in the indictment.⁶⁰

Von Mettler's opening statement raises an important question: Just how centralized was IG Farben? Krauch's involvement with the Nazi administration, Ambros' individual meetings with Hitler, and IG's numerous meetings with the Wehrmacht seem to suggest, at least, that the executives played vital roles in the company. Why else would party officials seek to meet with them? Why else would Krauch and Ambrose tour the Monowitz concentration camp with Heinrich Himmler and other SS officials? Such a tour suggests that Krauch and Ambrose were at least invested in Monowitz's operation. Such questions are, however, speculative. In IG Farben's case, institutional complexity allowed for the diffusion of individual knowledge. Degesch, owned partly by Farben, produced Zyklon B but claimed to have no knowledge of its use in the gas chambers (though records indicate that at least one executive did know of the pesticide's lethal applications). Testa, an independent distributor, delivered the pesticide to the SS and the death camps, and its owner, Bruno Tesch, was executed under Allied authority. In the case of Monowitz, the executives could claim – with some varying success – that abuses there fell under the authority of the SS or individual foremen, and that the sheer despotic power of the state necessitated the corporation's involvement in the concentration camp industry.

Those few found guilty in the count of utilizing slave labor and facilitating mass killing – such as Carl Krauch, Heinrich Butesfisch and Otto Ambros, whom the US Military Tribunal sentenced to prison terms of six years, six years, and eight years, respectively – were given the longest sentences of any defendants.⁶¹ These sentences contrast sharply with that of Bruno Tesch, whom Allied Powers executed in 1946. Tesch, unlike the IG executives, handled Zyklon B directly and corresponded with the SS on its applications in the gas chambers. Although the wording of the indictments between Tesch and the IG executives differs, they both concern corporate involvement in Nazi mass killing. With this in mind, the discrepancy between Tesch's sentence and that of the IG executives points to simple ability to prove guilt. Tesch admitted to facilitating the gassings at Nazi death camps, whereas corporate stratification and deference allowed the defendants of the IG Farben Trial to deny knowledge of the killings, and, later, to return to industry in postwar Germany.

The immediate postwar and post-tribunal history of IG, in some manner, reflects

⁶⁰ NMT vol. VII, 287.

⁶¹ Borkin, 154.

the company's early ingratiation with the Nazi regime in the mid-1930s. Rather than declare ideological opposition to the Allied occupiers, many defendants – even some of those convicted – returned to the European chemical industry. One defendant, Karl Wurster, who had been acquitted, returned to his old position at BASF.⁶² Fritz Ter Meer, who had been found guilty of “plunder and spoliation” as well as slavery and mass murder went on to become the chairman of the supervisory board at Bayer AG.⁶³ Although IG Farben was put into liquidation after the war, the companies that comprised it before – Hoechst, Bayer, and BASF – maintained most of their assets, produced chemicals, and subsequently made profit in postwar Europe and elsewhere.⁶⁴ Monowitz and its synthetic rubber plant share a similarly disjointed postwar history. In the immediate aftermath of the westward Soviet advance, the Red Army commissioned German prisoners of war to dismantle parts of the factory, which were shipped to a Soviet chemical factory in Western Siberia. Later, the plant would fall into the hands of Polish authorities on September 1, 1945, and by the 1950s, the Monowitz plant once again began to produce synthetic rubber.⁶⁵ Although early Allied directives stipulated the destruction of all IG plants vital in Germany's war effort, almost all would come under ownership of IG's successor companies, Bayer, Hoechst, and BASF, or come under nationalization in the East.⁶⁶ In name, at least, IG Farben only existed in liquidation, managing its pensions, claims to lost properties in the East, and its 28 million Deutschmark restitution to 5,855 Jewish survivors of Monowitz.⁶⁷ The presence of IG executives as advisors to IG's successor corporations and the presence of three defendants among their supervisory boards have raised significant questions that have yet to be answered regarding the memory of IG Farben and its degree of culpability in the perpetration of Nazi crimes. The apparent endurance of IG executives in Farben's successor companies as well as IG plants, where some inmates even returned to work, demonstrates that IG Farben's legal and, in the case of the Monowitz rubber plant, physical legacy has continued beyond the Nazi era.

IG Farben existed as an entity distinct from National Socialist ideology before the rise of the Nazis in 1933. Its gradual collaboration with the Nazi regime unfolded chiefly because of the corporation's goal of securing economic stability. This economic goal facilitated IG Farben's ideological commitment to the Nazi state. By 1937, such distinctions between industry, state, and ideology could no longer be clearly made. IG Farben adapted to the Nazi goal of autarky and proved itself essential in the Nazi war effort. Such adaption required the removal of Jewish employees and the relegation of older, non-indoctrinated elements (such as Carl Bosch) to areas of diminished economic importance. IG's role in the Nazi economic experiment culminated in Auschwitz-Monowitz. Nazi Germany could not have carried out war without the IG Farben's crucial products, nor could IG Farben have profited without the Nazi regime's patronage. Despite

⁶² Stokes, 155.

⁶³ Ibid., 155-156.

⁶⁴ Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 377.

⁶⁵ Setkiewicz, 349-352.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 355.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 355-359; Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 378.

this, IG Farben's actual postwar legacy remains in question. Auschwitz-Monowitz, serves as the physical manifestation of IG Farben's greater wartime role. Some questions remain as to IG's agency in building the plant as well as to IG's role in mistreating concentration camp inmates. It is impossible to exclude, however, that IG profited from Monowitz's operation and committed itself to the Nazis' concentration camp industrial experiment. IG's exploitation of slave labor at the Monowitz *Buna Werke* and its construction of the Monowitz concentration camp served as an extension of the company's adaptive business strategy, which sought to attain economic stability and growth through political appeasement. IG's willingness to invest in the Nazi concentration camp industry also served as evidence of ideological conformity or loyalty to the state. After the war, IG Farben's dense corporate structure allowed the executives to deny knowledge of the abuses at Monowitz and of the company's profiting from Zyklon B's lethal applications in Nazi death camps. While IG Farben went into liquidation and ceased to exist as a conglomerate after the war, IG's successor companies, which played important roles in IG's structure, remain functional. Their preservation formally distanced the companies from the memory of IG Farben and Auschwitz while maintaining much of IG's structure. It would seem that, in the aftermath of World War II, IG Farben's successor companies succeeded in securing economic stability. IG Farben's final move in accordance with its adaptive business strategy, then, was to end its nominal existence.

Images of the Red Army Soldier in World War II: Mythologizing the Great Patriotic War

Brittany Miller

I) THE MYTHOLOGIZATION OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

*"No one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten."
- Olga Berggolts*

Initial Memory

Reciting her thoughts via radio to the city of Leningrad throughout its blockade from 1941 to 1944, Soviet poet Olga Berggolts' words are carved into the rear wall of St. Petersburg's Piskarevskoe Memorial Cemetery, which houses the graves of 420,000 civilians and 50,000 soldiers, victims of one of the most destructive sieges in history. Amidst the joy, sorrow and relief of post-war Soviet Union, these words became the official motto for public remembrance of the "Great Patriotic War." This was the Soviet experience in the Eastern Front against Nazi Germany from June 1941 to May 1945, which amounted to one of the most pivotal events in all of Soviet and world history. The subsequent mythologization of the war began during the war itself and served to reinforce the state's legitimacy by celebrating the success of the Communist party over the fascist invaders, glorifying Stalin as Supreme Leader and presenting victory as a reminder of the socialism's success. All of this simultaneously effaced much of the real Soviet war experience, leaving Berggolts' solemn ode to a very tragic loss marred with bittersweet contradiction.

Although the war was a consistent theme throughout both publicly and privately produced post-war art and culture, it was addressed through many different manifestations of remembrance that tended to either reassert or challenge the original state-sponsored myth. Because the development of the myth was largely shaped by what was or was not allowed to be expressed, its character depended on the different climates of post-war leadership: 1) post-war/Stalinism (1945-53); 2) Khrushchev (1953-64); 3) Brezhnev (1964-82), 4) Gorbachev (1985-91), and 5) post-Soviet Russia (1991- today). In this paper, I will analyze the depiction of the Red Army Soldier in painting, poetry and film in order to prove that the reality of Great Patriotic War remembrance throughout post-war Soviet Union/Russia amounted to much more than the original state-sponsored myth and its selective memory. Reflecting Russia's struggle to come to grips with the great tragedy of the war, it was a very multilayered, complex remembrance that was ultimately shaped more by truth and reality than by myth.

Post-War Reality

On the first “Victory Day” holiday on May 9, 1945, three million people gathered to celebrate Soviet victory in Moscow’s Red Square in the first “spontaneous mass demonstration of collective emotion” since Lenin’s death in 1924.¹ Russian poet Yevgeniy Yevtushenko observed that as people hugged and cried, “it seemed to them that all their troubles were over and a wonderful, cloudless life would now begin.”² For the Russian people, victory meant not simply a triumph over the fascists and the success of their socialist system, but was a symbolic culmination of the great sufferings of the war and pre-war society.

Perhaps the only thing more significant than victory itself was the massive destruction it accompanied, both throughout the course of the war and within post-war society. Unlike the Western assumption that the Soviet Union remained a stable power in its initial post-war years, it was as devastated and impoverished as Germany and Japan. The achievements of Stalin’s Five-Year Plans had been reversed by an obliteration of Soviet industry, infrastructure and thousands of villages, towns and factories.³ There were also the dark realities of what led to victory: the tragic siege of Leningrad and costly battles such as Kiev and Stalingrad; Stalin’s massacre of thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest in 1940, incarceration of Soviet POWs, and persecution of deserters’ families; and Stalin’s military blunders, insisting on repeated counterattacks without adequate preparation of the Red Army. He also refused to acknowledge critical external threats such as the German invasion in June 1941, which allowed millions of Red Army soldiers to be killed, wounded or captured.⁴ But above all was the catastrophic figure of at least 30 million dead out of a population of 190 million. This number took decades to become public because many of these people, whether civilians or soldiers, perished directly and indirectly by Stalin’s arrogance and lack of regard for human life.

Stalinist Selective War Memory: The Blurring of Two Idols (1945-53)

As seen by the post-war inflation of his image, May 9 was not just a victory for the Soviet Union, but also a victory for Stalin. For example, although noting the Red Army’s heroism in his post-war speeches, this was in the context of his being the “greatest commander of all ages.”⁵ Knowing the neglectful responses and harmful policies of his leadership contributed to the unprecedentedly horrific nature of the war, “the war victory...had the power to redeem (or permanently secure) [his] good

¹ Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead* (New York: Basic, 1994), 90.

² Yevgeniy Yevtushenko, “A Precocious Autobiography” in *Yevtushenko’s Reader* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), 32.

³ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 96.

⁴ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 50.

⁵ Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II: Myths, Memories and Realities* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 17.

reputation.”⁶ As a result, Stalin worked to intertwine his own cult of personality with the memory of the war so that the glorifying of the latter would bolster the reverence of the former. The regime’s near-obsession with preserving the myth was therefore a calculated way of preventing the truth and its potential consequences, such as the destruction of Stalin’s personality cult and loyalty to the regime, from infiltrating the popular post-war remembrance. Because remembering the war in a truthful manner would call attention to his faults, creating a post-war cult that glorified Soviet achievement would effectively bury the tragedies of the war and simultaneously buttress the greatness of Stalin, whose idol status had many reasons to be precarious.

At the same time, Stalin also urgently quelled many initial exclamations of pride and accomplishment throughout the postwar period because he wanted to diminish strong public attention paid to the war and “whittle it down into a size and shape he could control.”⁷ In 1947, Victory Day was demoted from a state holiday to a regular working day, while official public records in response to Stalinist blights or Soviet wartime errors, if not absent from the developing public memory entirely, were confusing, mixed, and vague, often justified by the tenant “there was no other way out.”⁸ Wartime realities, such as military orders #270 and #226, which berated soldiers taken prisoner of treason and maintained those who retreated should be shot by special units, were forbidden to become public until 1988.⁹ Cripples, representing the horrors of war, were removed from the streets and sent to live in colonies in the desolate north. In addition, with the only true war hero being himself, Stalin assumed a strict post-war control over society by disallowing the publication of memoirs written by those alive during the war, closing archives to historians. Instead, he urged a new focus on economic reconstruction, the waging of the Cold War, and “guard[ing] our hard-won peace.”¹⁰ As a result, Stalin created a myth of the Great Patriotic War that aligned with how he wanted it remembered, which denied its many tragic realities.

Khrushchev’s de-Stalinized Myth (1953-64)

Stalinism had been the foundation of all political, economic, social and ideological facets of the Soviet system for over three decades. From the shock of Stalin’s death on March 5, 1953 emerged Khrushchev’s “Thaw,” an atmosphere of gradual liberalization that for the first time in Russian history entrusted the Soviet citizen with elements of free thought and permitted the questioning of both Stalin and his war myth. As a result, Stalin was replaced in the press by complaints about social problems and mild critiques of corruption in Soviet life. Statues and posters of him vanished and “Stalingrad” was renamed “Volgograd.”¹¹ Because the Stalinist image had been

⁶ Polly Jones, *Myth Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2013), 45.

⁷ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 102.

⁸ Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II*, 15.

⁹ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 103.

¹⁰ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 103.

¹¹ Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II*, 140.

synonymously linked to the war cult, the “cautious downgrading” of his historical role led to a reappraisal of the original myth of the Great Patriotic War.

Though Stalin’s name had been largely absent from post-war public documentation, Khrushchev’s controversial “Secret Speech” in 1956 explicitly disavowed Stalin within a public setting for the first time, critiquing his “immense and limitless power” and portraying him as an inept military leader for “physically annihilating” so many people during the war. Khrushchev also redirected the war’s success to those he saw as the “real [war] heroes”: the Party, the government, the Red Army and the whole Soviet nation.¹² Publicly casting doubt upon both cults while still glorifying victory, Khrushchev’s stance on the original war myth showed some components of the myth to be fixed and others in flux. In addition, the inconsistency of his open-mindedness and promotion of conflicting images of Stalin greatly confused party leaders and citizens alike, enormously complicating the Soviet Union’s collective struggle in perceiving both Stalin’s legacy and that of the war.¹³ Despite the more honest times of Khrushchev, post-war attitudes toward the Great Patriotic War still rested upon lies. There needed to be much more “distance” after the war and Stalin’s death before the myth could be reconsidered through a more truth-based reconstruction of the war narrative.

Brezhnev’s Resurrection of the War Myth (1964-82)

The brief loosening of controls in 1956-57 also displayed the regime’s fear that forgetting Stalin, who was inextricably tied to the formative years of the Soviet system and the war, meant forgetting the achievements of the 30s and 40s, including victory against the Nazis.¹⁴ For this reason, as well as to help stabilize the unintended consequences of the Thaw (Westernization, the development of an international youth culture) and further legitimize the state amidst Cold War tensions, this period of “stagnation” resurged the original post-war myth by redeeming Stalin’s greatness and the glory of victory. Brezhnev’s rule witnessed almost the entire span of the “high war cult” (1965-85), in which thousands of official war monuments sprung up, such as Moscow’s 1967 “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,”¹⁵ that glossed over tragedy and reinstated the state-sponsored memory of national unity and pride. The attitudes toward the war under Brezhnev, with the exploitation of the Stalinist war myth, indicate the myth’s critical political leverage at the time. Acknowledging its weakening influence in the minds of the people, a consequence of the Thaw, the state hoped that a reminder of Soviet greatness would re-inspire allegiance to the regime, since any reminder of reality proved to have the opposite effect.

¹² Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 109.

¹³ Jones, *Myth Memory, Trauma*, 103.

¹⁴ Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma*, 98.

¹⁵ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 135; 147-8.

Gorbachev's Destruction of the Myth (1985-91)

After the brief, generally uneventful leaderships of Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, Gorbachev assumed power in 1985. The first Soviet leader with no direct experience in the war, he had no wartime reputation to uphold, rendering the myth's buffering of the Party unnecessary. In addressing the past, as he did on the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in 1987, Gorbachev called for an exposure of the "blank spots" of Soviet history eclipsed by the mythologization of the war. He utilized "glasnost," an open voicing of ideas and sentiments, "perestroika," a restructuring of the political and economic system, along with freedom of speech and press, to replace the tendency for falsehood.¹⁶ Though reminiscent of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, this period of liberalization was enacted with much more consistency, marking a definitive break with Stalinist majesties and ravaging the state-sanctioned collective memory of the war. With archives made public, the "Pandora's box" that opened up after decades of quietism allowed new revelations to dominate publications and culture, traumatizing an entire generation who "[didn't] know how to deal with all of these facts."¹⁷ Due to the incredibly quick pace by which it was instituted, glasnost had other unintended consequences. This included the explosion of youth culture and an "anti-art" movement, which greatly shocked and overwhelmed Gorbachev. By 1991, as result of a turn towards truth-telling, the official myth of the Great Patriotic War, which had bound the country together, had been undermined, and the country followed. By December 25, 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

Revival of Selective Memory (1991- Today)

The collapse of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev begs the question: how much did glasnost undermine people's beliefs in a fabricated idea of the war? To what extent was the mythologization of the Great Patriotic War the only true source of binding unity for the country all along? Under the leadership of Yeltsin and Putin, the view of the war has become stratified by generational conflict. The cult has been preserved, mostly by war veterans, as well as rejected and reformed by the younger generations. Because of new evidence that emerged in the post-Soviet period, such as the publication in 2009 of secret documents pertaining to the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact and the publication in April 2010 exposing the Katyn massacre, some critical components of the myth have been re-evaluated.¹⁸ Despite this, the release of new information has not completely subverted the myth, which remains deeply imbedded within Soviet ideology and history.

A theme since 1991 has been the government's emphasis on aspects of the war that "convey particular values and ideals which sustain a positive identity,"¹⁹ a selective memory reminiscent of Stalinist methods. Along with this, any deviations from the state-

¹⁶ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 164.

¹⁷ Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 165.

¹⁸ John Harman, "Contesting Popular Memory in Contemporary Russia," *The View East: Central and Eastern Europe, Past and Present*, 1.

¹⁹ Harman, "Contesting Popular Memory in Contemporary Russia," 1.

sanctioned myth are often seen as criticizing national interest. Today, Putin has returned to a heavy mythologization of the war, praising it as a national accomplishment. This is without much mention of Stalin, whose overall approval rating has curiously increased within the past few years as a result of Putin's embrace of the myth. In a sense, the conception of the myth of the war in modern-day Russia has come full circle with that of the 1950s, as the war continues to be depicted as a proud and patriotic national accomplishment in a way that feels both very connected to and very separate from Soviet past.

II: IMAGES OF THE RED ARMY SOLDIER IN WWII

An Aesthetic Gulag (1945-53)

*"Art [was] a sweet dream, far removed from life...an escape from reality."*²⁰
- Musya Glants

Because the Stalinist administration had devoted most of its attention to the war effort, the extreme communist rhetoric of past propaganda and the enforcement of societal restrictions had been toned down during wartime. Stalin had used this relaxation to help rally the people to protect the "Motherland," leading to a spike in optimism for post-war improvements. Indeed, one reason the Soviets celebrated the end of the war was because they assumed defeating Germany meant their sacrifice would be rewarded with a new era of unprecedented liberalization. Soviet artists who felt they deserved free expression instead found their creativity crippled by an even stronger adherence to the Stalinist war myth. Despite the desire to distinguish individual sentiments from the post-war "thunder of ideology,"²¹ "poets, who had produced some fine work during the war, turned dull again," and "painters...often took as their subject state banquets...solemn public meetings, and parades."²² An observation of painting and poetry in this particular period shows art to be restricted to a tool of propaganda, used to cover up Stalinist failures, portray a favorable image of wartime USSR, and reify the war cult, as seen through unrealistic, dull portraits of the Red Army soldier.

²⁰ Musya Glants, "The Images of the War in Painting" in *World War 2 and the Soviet People*, ed. John Gordon Garrard and Carol Garrard (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 111.

²¹ Glants, "The Images of the War in Painting", 109.

²² Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Yevtushenko's Reader* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), 73-75.

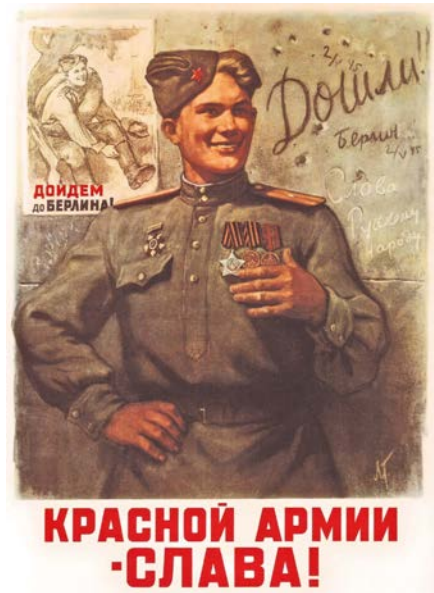
Under these draconian postwar cultural policies, unrealistic images of Red Army soldiers appeared in numerous quantities, encouraging post-war optimism. Sticking to the Socialist Realist theme of huge mass scenes, Peter Krivonogov's *The Victory* from 1948 depicts a scene that is especially meaningless and out of touch with reality.²³ Following Nazi defeat, Soviet soldiers convene on the steps of the Reichstag holding up flags, helmets and guns in communist solidarity. Their facial expressions are overtly triumphant and bright, illuminated by sunlight, while many seem to be shouting upwards, arguably declaring allegiance to the Motherland or thanking Stalin.



Peter Krivonogov, *The Victory*, 1948.

Standing upright, they appear to be in healthy condition despite the implication of being fresh from battle. Dwindling billows of smoke in the air, crumbling columns of the Reichstag and dead Germans on the steps are almost easy to miss because compositionally and stylistically, the soldiers take up the most space and are given the most precise detail. Overall, the overwhelming pride, joy and accomplishment expressed by these Red Army soldiers, bolstered by certain stylistic and compositional choices, collectively reflects the image of post-war society the regime wanted to portray: that of a powerful, united Soviet people, untouched by any wartime distress.

An even more direct example of the politicized Red Army soldier supporting the myth of the war is Leonid Golovanov's *Glory to the Red Army!* from 1946, one of the most widely disseminated propaganda posters after the war. Unlike the mass scene of "Victory!", this image focuses directly on an individual Red Army soldier. Clean and handsome, he assumes a prideful pose, brushing his fingers against his wartime medals and smiling vacantly into the distance. Most striking is the way the light illuminates the perfection of his skin in an almost angelic fashion. Even his hands appear unscathed, completely unlike the roughness one would expect to be see in a post-war soldier. Happy, proud and unscathed by war, Golovanov's soldier is more like a male model dressed in Red Army attire, especially because his demeanor is entirely removed from any of the physical or emotional damage of being involved in the war effort.



Leonid Golovanov, *Glory to the Red Army!*, 1946.

²³ Glants, "The Images of the War in Painting", 101.

A final depiction of the Red Army soldier during this period is from Alexander Tvardosky's poem, "Vasily Tyorkin" (1942-45). Though written during the war, it remained incredibly popular throughout the post-war period and exemplifies the heroic Red Army soldier the regime sought to portray. As Private Tyorkin perseveres through his homeland, he declares:

*"Vast and boundless is our homeland,
And no matter where you stray,
It is yours, it's your own land,
You belong there anyway.
"I belong, and well I know it.
Russia needs me. Here I am!"*²⁴

Though a piece of art that is much more down-to-earth and non-politicized than the previous paintings, reflecting Tvardosky's skepticism of official heroism, the poem nevertheless shows Tyorkin as an ordinary, yet optimistic and resourceful Red Army soldier whose love for the Motherland cannot be defeated. Overall, these depictions of the Red Army soldier further illustrate how art remained a critical tool of propaganda, proving there was no place for the image of the real soldier, exhausted and beaten, in both the artistic world and within the developing war narrative of post-war Stalinism.

From Propaganda to Humanity (1953-64)

*"I want art to be as diverse as myself;
and what if art be my torment
and harass me on every side,
I am already by art besieged."*²⁵
- Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "Prologue," 1957

With the tremendous outpouring of free expression that marked the Thaw, art changed from a tool used to bolster political and ideological control to a medium of expression for silenced generations. Stalin's death created an even greater need for art, since "there was no one to do our thinking for us now, if there indeed had been."²⁶ Essentially replacing Stalin, artists became the new, truthful voices of the Soviet people, attempting to convey their trauma and confusion. Much Khrushchev-era art rejected the bland features of Socialist Realistic propaganda, "its constantly repeated themes, political orientation, its reflection of the Party's demands and official slogans," and took on much

²⁴ James Von Geldern and Richard Stites, *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-1953* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995), 373.

²⁵ Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko*, ed. George Reavey (New York: October House Inc., 1967), 5.

²⁶ Yevtushenko, *Yevtushenko's Reader*, 87.

more diverse, meaningful and honest subject matter.²⁷ Despite a curtailing of efforts at free expression, especially towards the end of the Thaw, painting and poetry showed that artists, in adapting to new positions of creativity and individuality, challenging the original war myth by subtly depicting the Red Army soldier as humanized, wounded and emotional, instead of as an anonymous instrument of war.

According to poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, “the nation was demanding the truth about itself from its writers,” especially from poets. He argues this was because “poetry had [the] mobility” of being written much quicker than novels and could easily be read in public before appearing in print.²⁸ With editors no longer intervening in the “creative” process by inserting lines into texts that praised Stalin and removed dissidence, some poets and songwriters such as Yevtushenko and Vladimir Vysotsky began touching on darker issues of Stalinism and war that had been kept under the surface. In his 1956 poem “He Has Returned,” Yevtushenko describes the Red Army soldier returning from war, both with devastation and satire:

*His hair has lost its sparkle,
His jacket hangs like a sack.
His circumstantial hands
tell me everything,
and his sunken eyes
stare through my soul.
[...]
Even though he's had bad luck,
he still believes in the Revolution
with a fierce conviction.*²⁹

Compared to the post-war chiseled, healthy, invigorated soldier, Yevtushenko’s emphasis on the Red Army soldier’s physical deterioration and almost lifeless appearance reflects the psychological effects of exhaustion, death and trauma expected of a soldier returning from the front. Unlike the smooth, perfect hands in the Golovanov painting, this soldier’s hands are “circumstantial,” meaning they had not wanted to hold a gun, but had been forced to commit atrocity. Easily alluding to the fact that soldiers endured much greater hardship as a result of the regime’s ignorance, Yevtushenko notes the soldier’s intact loyalty to the socialist cause in a satirical tone. He criticizes both the post-war Stalinist adherence to mythologizing the war as well as the ignorant public’s adherence to something as far-gone in Soviet memory as the 1917 Revolution.

In a realistic yet sarcastic manner, Soviet singer-songwriter and poet Vladimir Vysotsky portrays the Red Army soldier in a similar, but bleaker fashion. In his 1964 “Everyone Had Left for the Front,” he writes from the perspective of a soldier going off to war:

²⁷ Glants, “The Images of the War in Painting”, 111-112.

²⁸ Yevtushenko, *Yevtushenko’s Reader*, 96.

²⁹ Reavey, *The Poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko*, 41.

*We'll be forgiven for our sins
That's just how our people are-
[...]
As for us... We justified everything.
Later we received rewards:
Those who came alive, got medals,
And the dead ones got the cross.*³⁰

A reminder that the Red Army soldier was trained to be a killer, Vysotsky critiques the fact that when soldiers returned home from the front, they were rewarded for their ruthlessness, which the regime had taught them to “justify” by belittling death (no matter what they have done, they will easily be “forgiven” later). In “The Song About A Hospital” from the same year, Vysotsky calls attention to the tragedy of crippled Red Army soldiers:

*But the neighbor on my right side,
[...]
Spoke of my leg aloud.
Used to torture me at times:
“You'll never walk or see your wife,
Just look at yourself in the mirror,
You only have a bit of life...”*³¹

What Vysotsky notes here, though still in a subtle manner, is the fact that cripples in post-war society under Stalin were considered useless. Stalin, having wanted to remove all “ugly vestiges” of the war, rounded up mutilated war victims from off the streets and sent them to places like Siberia and the Arctic Circle to live in isolation.³² Depicted here is an emotional soldier wrought by the long-term effects of war, suffering from the physical and psychological agony of never being able to live a normal life again.

A final depiction of the Red Army soldier is a painting from 1958 by A. Krasnov called *For His Native Land*, which marks a stark contrast to Golovanov's painting from the post-war Stalinist era and exemplifies the new type of art that abandoned elements of Socialist Realism and embraced expressionism. Striving to depict the suffering individual, a defeated or dead soldier is collapsed on the ground, front and center in an almost peaceful stagnation, despite the chaos of battle happening in the



A. Krasnov, *For His Native Land*. 1958.

³⁰ Nathan Mer, *Vladimir Vysotsky (1938-1980) Selected Songs & Poems Volume I* (Missouri: The International University Press, 1991), 41.

³¹ Mer, *Vladimir Vysotsky (1938-1980) Selected Songs & Poems Volume I*, 39.

³² Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead*, 100.

background. The use of surrealist coloring and energetic, loose brushstrokes were subtle, yet radical stylistic changes reflecting the new artistic freedoms geared towards more realistic images of the war.³³ Particularly despairing is his discolored sallow skin. With one hand pitifully outstretched and one still grasping his gun, it is almost as if he is crying out in a final exaltation, while trying to hold onto the characteristic Red Army determination and toughness he is supposed to embody. In this sense, the incorporation of new subtle stylistic elements in Krasnov's painting sums up attitudes towards the mythologization of the war under Khrushchev, both for artists and the general populace. Though not all artists broke from tradition, even those who did not at least entertained a more truthful depiction of the war in their art. This represents a damaging deconstruction of the mythologized narrative of the Great Patriotic War, which paid more attention to the suffering heroism of the soldier than the prevailing glory of Stalin or the Party.

Censored Expression (1964–82)

*“Our destruction is unthinkable,
More unthinkable what we endure,
More unthinkable still that a sniper
Should ever sever the quivering thread.”³⁴
- Andrei Voznesensky, “My Achilles Heart,” 1965*

While art in the Khrushchev era resulted in a remarkable downplaying of the war cult, the ascent of Leonid Brezhnev in 1964 marked a revival of the myth of the Great Patriotic War that coalesced into a full-blown cult, symbolized by the grandiose 20th anniversary celebration in May 1965 and the reinstatement of Victory Day as a holiday. With the country's status as a global superpower threatened by the increasingly politicized international youth culture encouraged by the Thaw, the Brezhnev administration used the war to “orchestrate a vast program of public displays of loyalty” and encourage a “devotion to the regime, its values, and its goals.”³⁵ Although a return to a Stalinist crackdown on the arts in putting to trial writers like Joseph Brodsky and Andrei Sinyavsky, Brezhnev tended to embrace censorship of art rather than strict forbiddance, allowing some themes and sensibilities of the Thaw to survive amidst the patriotic “straightforward, representational art” he preferred.³⁶ Exploiting the myth while recognizing the inability to fully re-Stalinize society once liberalization had been introduced, the image of the Red Army soldier in poetry and painting in this period

³³ Glants, “The Images of the War in Painting”, 113.

³⁴ Andrei Voznesensky, *Antiworlds & the Fifth Ace*, ed. Patricia Blake and Max Hayward (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 5-7.

³⁵ Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead*, 132.

³⁶ Denise Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2007), 142.

proved to be a highly complex, confusing mixture of both the glorified and the real.

Despite the pervasion of expansive and dramatic battle scenes, war painting often focused on somber and intimate, yet patriotic portraits of a few soldiers or of the lone soldier. According to artist Nikolai Solomin, “soldiers [still] had to look like perfect heroes,” with large, strong hands and “high, Slavic cheekbones,”³⁷ evident in Mikhail Kornetsky’s 1967 *Soldiers of ‘41*. Staring vacantly, these three soldiers are subtly



Kornetsky, *Soldiers of '41*, 1967.

reminiscent of the soldier in the Golovanov painting. Despite the contrast between their affectless, shadowed faces and his prideful grin, they are chiseled, clean and mighty soldiers, with no obvious signs of being affected by the horrors of war. Another example is the young soldier depicted in F. P. Usypenko’s *Oath* from 1971. Swearing his allegiance before an eternal flame that symbolizes the immortality of the war dead, the soldier appears fresh and rosy-cheeked, proud to join his comrades behind him. Ironically, despite the flame’s reminder of



Usypenko, *Oath*, 1971.

the costs of war and the somber mood of the cloudy sky, neither the appearance of the lone soldier nor his experienced comrades indicate a consciousness of the real experience of war. Though clearly geared to evoke Berggolts’ “No one is forgotten,” more notable in this image is the youthful strength of the Red Army soldier, his noble patriotism disconnected from the tragic fate of millions.

Taking a different stance, many artists used the Brezhnev years to test the limits of the state’s re-Stalinized attitudes by depicting the Red Army soldier “not so much through actual scenes of battle, but as traged[ies] of the human spirit and ordeal[s] of human morality,” with undertones of the spiritual “frustration and gloomy pessimism” of “Stagnation.”³⁸ “The Fraternal Graves” written in 1965 by Vladimir Vysotsky also evokes the flame from Usypenko’s *Oath*:

*“Here you won’t find one personal fate,
All fates are poured into one.
And in the eternal flame one sees a bursting tank,*

³⁷ Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead*, 139-141.

³⁸ Glants, “The Images of War in Painting”, 114.

*The Russian huts burning.
The burning Smolensk and the burning Reichstag,
The burning heart of a soldier.”³⁹*

In this example, the flame is not just a symbol of the war dead, but its “eternal”-ness is a tragic irony. It is an indication that the state’s revocation of the war myth has resulted in the greatest tragedy of all: allowing the “burning heart[s],” the lives and experiences of each soldier to be lost, dissolved in a single anonymity.

Paintings depicting the Red Army soldier in this period also depict the theme of tragedy and suffering. Gely Korzhev’s *Farewell* from 1967 depicts a truly mournful, emotional moment where a soldier clasps a woman in a final embrace. Though the soldier is broad and powerful like in the more heroic paintings of the Brezhnev period, more apparent is the tiredness and anguish of his face, detailed by different shades of brown, grey and red. A stark contrast to the busy, crowded movement of post-war Stalinist paintings, Korzhev has “frozen the tension-filled moment in time.” Like “a still from a movie,” it is a reminder of the more intimate, focused approach to composition by Soviet painters at this time, as well their more truthful and realistic depiction of the soldier.⁴⁰



Gely Korzhev, *Farewell*, 1967.



Moiseyenko, *Victory*, 1972.

Bearing a similarly transient dynamism but illustrating even greater emotional horror is Yevsei Moiseyenko’s 1972 *Victory*. Embracing a new impressionist, abstract style, it represents another “catching” of a moment. In the image, a soldier desperately cradles the body of his dead comrade, letting out a moan of despair that gets easily entangled in the wild and angular composition. It is clear that Moiseyenko’s idea of victory does not involve pride, joy or passive indifference. Instead, it embodies a brutal, tragic horror that alludes to the millions of lives lost. These people were not merely friends, sons, husbands and fathers, but were also human beings. Evident by the art of the Brezhnev era is that there was now some room for the “real” Red Army soldier within Soviet popular culture. Even though the post-war Stalinist idealization of the soldier was still recognizable, these types of artwork had not only drawn attention to a soldier’s humanity, but also appealed to the humanity of the

³⁹ Mer, *Vladimir Vysotsky*, 52.

⁴⁰ Glants, “The Images of War in Painting”, 113.

viewer.

The Art of Repression (1985-91)

*"I long not for art – I choke
on my craving for reality."*⁴¹

- Andrei Voznesensky, "Nostalgia for the Present"

A transition period between oppression and freedom that picked up from where Khrushchev left off, Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika effectively ravaged the state-sanctioned myth and collective memory of the Great Patriotic War. Under Gorbachev, art was coaxed out of its confines as an instrument of ideology to represent the collective and individual efforts of the Soviet people coming to terms with the discoveries of their past. However, responses to these terrible truths and bitter facts revealed "attitudes toward the war and victory [were] no longer simple, either in life or in art."⁴² Indeed, though glasnost may have crumbled the distinction between "official," state art and "unofficial," private art, attitudes toward the war did not form any singular consensus, but remained incredibly diverse and often contradictory.⁴³ Though with increasingly abstract, expressionistic and experimental art, it is easy to overlook an interest in the war as a subject, the varying depictions of the Red Army soldier through painting and film reveal



Kantor, *People in Desolation*, 1987.

images that reflect a new, critical relevance of the war, where artists respond to and find meaning within the now openly false myth of the war.

With art gaining freedom after years of oppression, painters depicted the war and the Red Army soldier through a multiplicity of styles. Whether figurative, non-figurative, realist, modernist or avant-garde, images of the war and of the soldier were often rendered unrecognizable, encased within symbolism and philosophical renderings.⁴⁴ For example, works from artists such as Lev Kropivnitsky, Nikolai Vechtomov and Maxim Kantor portray looming, menacing darkness through pictorial representations

very much open to interpretation, yet their images'

⁴¹ Andrei Voznesensky, *An Arrow in the Wall: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William Jay Smith and F. D. Reeve (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1987), 89.

⁴² Glants, "The Images of War in Painting", 115.

⁴³ Julie S. Berkowitz, "A Look into Glasnost's Impact on the Soviet Art World," *Loyola of L.A. Entertainment Law Review* 11 (1991): 454.

⁴⁴ Glants, "The Images of War in Painting", 117.

characteristic desolation certainly echo the reality of the war's aftermath. Though not an overt image of a Red Army soldier, Kantor's 1987 *People in Desolation* shows a suffering man and woman in ragged attire miserably embracing. Although their age is not apparent, they seem old enough to have been affected by war. Possibly a veteran, his face is the most detailed. Discolored and unattractive, he is both distinguished and anonymous, a weathered remnant of Soviet past. Though not as abstract as other works of the time, the open-endedness of images like this provoked the viewer to find answers for



Novikov, *Let Them Come In!*, 1987.

themselves, challenging viewers who were used to “art...with prepared ideas and meanings, which they had only to swallow without thinking.”⁴⁵ As a result, some Socialist Realist paintings during post-war Stalinism were popular for their familiarity and easier accessibility. One example is Igor Novikov's 1987 *Let Them Come In!*, which appears incredibly simplistic in style, content and composition in comparison to Kantor's piece. The portrayal of the patriotic Red Army soldier, fit and unscathed, is boring and weak, rendered comically out of place by the winds of glasnost.

The myth's proud, determined Red Army Soldier is a stark contrast to the jarringly anti-heroic soldiers in Elem Klimov's 1985 film *Come and See*.

Arguably the most powerful anti-Great

Patriotic War film of the period, the film follows young Soviet partisan Florian Gainush in his increasingly nightmarish journey through war-ravaged Belorussia. His fellow soldiers are shockingly young, “battle-weary and hardened,” exuding “the desperate conviviality of people who know they do not have long to live,”⁴⁶ unlike the unaffected, bored soldiers of Kornetsky's *Soldiers of '41*. The escalating horror of death and destruction “Flor” encounters is cleverly encapsulated by lingering close-ups of his face. By the end of the film, his wrinkles and gauntness, physical representations of the psychological trauma of war, evolve into an expressionistic piece of art reminiscent of Moiseyenko's *Victory*. An innocent partisan, Flor is a more unconventional Red Army soldier, but this is precisely what renders him a notable depiction. Youthful and rebellious, weak and traumatized by war,



Klimov, *Come and See* (Stills)

⁴⁵ Glants, “The Images of War in Painting”, 118.

⁴⁶ Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005*, 194.

Flor is a realistic representation of the common soldier throughout the Great Patriotic War. This complete reversal of the post-war Stalinist soldier allows *Come and See* to represent the debunking of the war myth that ultimately occurred on behalf of glasnost artists.

Between Myth and Memory (1991- Today)

*"Before you can have anything to say, you must learn to listen."*⁴⁷
- Yevgeny Yevtushenko



Law as Vasily Zaitsev in *Enemy at the Gates* (2011)

In the aftermath of accumulated public and private acknowledgements of truth that helped contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union, the war remained a significant subject of artistic expression. Considering the collapse of the country and the socialist system, "there was no other mythos [that could] rival the Great Patriotic War as the cornerstone of national pride and identity."⁴⁸ With wounds of the war still freshly



Red Army Soldiers in Bondarchuk's *Stalingrad* (2013)

open, many artists were attracted to the endless variety of interpretation that its "inexhaustible complexity and contradictions" offered.⁴⁹ In recent years, Russian film has most overtly dominated the subject of war through a slew of documentaries and revisionist films depicting truths about the war as well as massive mainstream movies recalling the essence of Stalinist mythmaking. According to Gregory Carleton, there has been a post-glasnost emergence of "annihilation narratives...as a prominent lens in popular culture,"⁵⁰ fueled by the state's push to commemorate the Great Patriotic War in a manner that evoked ideological and cultural Socialist Realist motives. Films are called upon to create "positive heroes," inspire "youth to serve in the armed forces," and "restore the true spiritual values of the Russian people."⁵¹ Prime examples are blockbuster films such as Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Enemy at the Gates* (2001) and most recently, Fedor Bondarchuk's *Stalingrad* (2013). Massive productions

⁴⁷ Yevtushenko, *Yevtushenko's Reader*, 112.

⁴⁸ Gregory Carleton, "Victory in Death: Annihilation Narratives in Russia Today," *History & Memory* 22 (2010): 147.

⁴⁹ Glants, "The Images of War in Painting", 122.

⁵⁰ Carleton, "Victory in Death: Annihilation Narratives in Russia Today," 156.

⁵¹ Carleton, "Victory in Death: Annihilation Narratives in Russia Today," 156.

meant to depict the war as "...adventure! big, noisy and romantic,"⁵² *Enemy*'s depiction of war-hero Vasily Zaitsev through British actor Jude Law is an almost comical representation of the Soviet wartime soldier. Utilizing Jude Law's attractiveness, Annaud gives this version of Zaitsev "boyish, shy...and modest" qualities, portraying him as a reluctant but impassioned hero who eventually defeats the sniper who had been trying to kill him.⁵³ *Stalingrad*, a very Hollywood-esque and modern film entirely detached from any real conception of Battle of Stalingrad, is more concerned about evoking drama in big, fiery scenes of destruction than portraying the plight of Red Army soldiers. Though different from post-war Stalinist portrayals of war and the soldier, these films' unrealistic, and at times, melodramatic depictions of Soviet soldiers prove the myth's adherence to glory and heroism is still somewhat intact.

Through analyzing a multitude of depictions of the Red Army soldier in painting, poetry and film throughout post-war Soviet Union into modern day Russia, it is obvious that the remembrance of the Great Patriotic War for the Russian people was and still is incredibly complex and dependent upon the character of each era's leadership. The mythologization of the war served to cover up its reality, including the true hardship of the Red Army soldier who had been "long denied a voice" in Soviet myth, and the loss of at least 30 million people, by selectively evoking the past and covering up its most negative elements.⁵⁴ This allowed the regime to be guilty of "two crimes on a massive scale: murder and the unending assault against memory," which made the Soviet people "a little more insane, a little more desperate" than they needed to be.⁵⁵ The constant redefinition of the war's legacy reveals the state and society's persistent struggle to come to terms with not only the reality of the war, but of how the war should be remembered. The reason for such change, especially post-glasnost, was a result of the gradual acceptance of truth over falsehood on behalf of Soviet leaders, whose increasing adherence to the truth effectively revealed to the public that the original "No one is forgotten" trope had only applied to whom the regime deemed worthy of remembering. Despite Putin's recent reverence of patriotism and the war, gradual changes in the depiction of the Red Army soldier show the mythologization of the Great Patriotic War to have been significantly deconstructed. Though there will arguably be no end to the state and public's collective struggle with their past, one cannot reflect on the Great Patriotic War today without an evaluation of the myth under the awareness of the predominating truth.

⁵² Denise Youngblood, "Enemy at the Gates as a 'Soviet' War Film" in *Repicturing the Second World War: Representations in Film and Television*, by Michael Paris (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 148.

⁵³ Youngblood, "Enemy at the Gates as a 'Soviet' War Film", 156.

⁵⁴ Carleton, "Victory in Death: Annihilation Narratives in Russia Today," 142.

⁵⁵ Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead*, 166.

The Crosses at Auschwitz: Identity Politics over Catholic Symbols in 1998

Frances E. Solnick

As an event, it impossible for every individual either directly or indirectly impacted by the Holocaust to grieve in the same manner, with the same religion, and at the same location. When attempting to make sense of such a tragic event, many look to deeply held ties to national, religious, and ethnic identity to guide them in their commemoration of the victims, and the potency of these bases for mourning are acutely expressed at Auschwitz. The addition of hundreds of cross to a larger cross outside Auschwitz in the summer and fall of 1998 reinvigorated the dispute between Poles and Jews over the symbol of the cross and the memorialization of the death camp and its victims. Reactions from influential political and religious leaders revealed the variety of viewpoints and the depth of history behind the Poles, Jews, and the Catholic Church. The strong links between post-Communist Polish identity and Catholicism helped to construct an anti-Semitic reaction to the alleged Jewish control of Auschwitz, and the actions of ultranationalist Catholics showed the desire to recognize the non-Jewish victims who perished there. Individual actions that reflected a larger identity struggle brought the act of grieving at Auschwitz into a political spotlight, and showed that commemoration can be controversial on a community and international level.

Understanding the history of Auschwitz is essential to providing context for the controversy that would occur in 1998. Previous conflicts between religious ideologies and individuals formed a background for the placing of crosses at the memorial site, and the use of the camp during World War II led to different understandings of how the location should be commemorated and used as a place to preserve memory. Auschwitz was a major site for Nazi extermination policies and mass death for many victims. The majority of those killed were Jewish, although the camp also included other inmates such as Poles, Catholics, political prisoners, gypsies, and inhabitants of occupied lands. When seeking to understand what Auschwitz represents today, it is important to view the former Nazi death camp in a way that is without influence from a particular group or ideology, but rather to assess it using historical facts and then to understand how these shape the opinions of individuals and groups today.

At Auschwitz, "...it is certain that at least 1.1 million, and possibly up to 1.5 million people were murdered in the Auschwitz camp complex. That corresponds to about 20-25 percent of all the Jews killed in the Second World War."¹ The success of the Nazis' mass murder of the Jews resulted in a post-war Poland with very few Jews, complicating the process of reconstruction and memory. While religion was an important factor both in Poland and in Nazi ideology, it was not the most essential part of every individual's identity. Those who were murdered at Auschwitz were comprised of a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nationalities:

About 90 per cent of those murdered in Auschwitz, a total of around 960,000, were Jews. ... Others killed included 70,000-75,000 non-Jewish Poles, 21,000 so-called gypsies, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war and 10,000-15,000 members of other nations, among them Czechs, Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Yugoslavians, French,

¹ Sybille Steinbacher, *Auschwitz: A History* (New York: ECCO, 2005), 133.

Austrians and Germans. About 200,000 further prisoners died from hunger, disease and inhuman working conditions.²

When viewing the events at Auschwitz when it was an active Nazi death camp, it is easier to clarify the basis for arguments made in 1998, many of which were tied to the composition of people of Auschwitz, and the identities of those who were murdered there. The politics of mourning and commemoration were both political and ideological in nature, and drew on the connection Polish Catholics felt towards the number of those like who shared their background and beliefs, however comparatively small to the Jewish population at the camp, who were killed by Nazis. The Jews considered Auschwitz to be the largest Jewish cemetery in the world, and one of the most important sites to protecting the history of the Holocaust. The inclusion of religious symbols turned the needs for Jews and Poles to mourn into a competition for the control of Auschwitz and the changing role of memory at the site.

The background between Poles and Jews in Poland has deep historical context, and varies by time and place. Demographically, there was a considerably large number of Jews in Poland, and its origins were one of tolerance during the Golden Age, from around 1500 to 1650. The Polish Commonwealth included large numbers of many minorities, including “German Lutherans, Polish Calvinists, Arians, and Anabaptists; Armenians, Greeks and Scots; Tatar and Turkish Moslems; and Eastern Orthodox communities.”³ The reign of Polish kings was more decentralized, with town governments and lower levels of politics gaining importance over one large capital and ruler, giving these smaller groups more independence to lead their own lives and order their own affairs. Many small towns, called *shtetlekh*, with Jewish majorities were formed and became areas where many Jews settled and formed strong cultural centers. After the partitioning of Poland starting in the late eighteenth century, the lives of Jews were determined by which region was dominated by which power.

In the region of Poland controlled by Prussia, many Jews were able to “westernize” and assimilate into German society, while in areas controlled by Russia, “Czarist attempts to force reforms of Jewish society were often indistinguishable from punitive decrees,” stemming from a long history of opposition to “enemies of Christ.”⁴ With a growing nationalistic brand of Polish romantic messianism, one of the strongest narratives that grew from the partitioned Poland was of martyrdom and victimhood, one that had no room for a separate, potentially threatening Jewish nationalism. Rhetoric originating from the National Democratic Party emphasized this Polish nationalism. This view was reinforced by the *Endek* ideologues, individuals who followed ideas of Polish anti-Semitism, national egoism, and the need for a struggle against outsiders. Demographically, the numbers of Jews also allowed groups to capitalize on the idea that Jews were a growing movement that could gain economic and political power.⁵ “By World War I there were 337,000 [Jews], almost all of whom had moved there [Warsaw] to escape the poverty of the borderlands. These eastern Jews were often Hassidic, and their mannerisms and lifestyles made them stand out in the larger cities of central Poland.”⁶

² Steinbacher, *Auschwitz: A History*, 134.

³ Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press: 1997), 2.

⁴ Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 8.

⁵ Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 14.

⁶ Brian Porter-Szücs, *Poland in The Modern World* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 134.

Between the World Wars, in the mid-twentieth century, only two-thirds of the population was ethnically Polish. This led to a Second Commonwealth where it was “the exclusivist, ethnically based notion of Polishness that proved increasingly influential and led to rising hostility to non-Poles.”⁷ Anti-Jewish violence erupted sporadically, especially when Poland declared independence in 1918, highlighting the exclusivity that many ethnic Poles felt that the nation of Poland should have towards other religious and ethnic minorities. Before the appearance of German anti-Semitic propaganda and racial ideology during the occupation, the Poles and Jews had an uneasy and at times violent history. Jews in Poland were traditionally less assimilated than other ethnic or religious groups, and a past filled with Christian intolerance and economic resentment led to a tense relationship leading up to the twentieth century and the occupation of Poland.

The relationship between Poles and Jews was changed radically during German occupation. Poles reacted differently towards the persecution of Jews, with some actively assisting in the murdering of their neighbors, notably at Jedwabne, others helped shelter and save Jews, and still others remained on the sidelines, choosing inaction. While the Germans focused their policies and goals of destruction mainly on the Jews, Poles themselves were not spared from victimization. The Communist-era Polish state “generally declined to acknowledge the Holocaust – the disproportional persecution and uniquely motivated attempt to exterminate the Jews – as distinct from the more general, brutal occupation of Poland and attendant persecution of ethnic Poles.”⁸ Parts of history were distorted by the Communist government, and after the end of that era in Polish history, more confusion and misinformation was added when post-Communist Poland was rife with rumors of Jewish conspiracies and links to Communist groups and positions of power. Distrust between groups was high, and relations had not been repaired after the pain caused by the Holocaust and the actions of Poles during occupation.

The placing of crosses in 1998 and the ensuing controversy was not the first time there had been a clash over Catholic presence at Auschwitz. Many of the themes that were brought up in the later half of the nineteenth century were also present in 1984, when a group of Carmelite nuns moved into an abandoned building outside the walls of Auschwitz. Their intention was “to bear witness to the ‘victory of faith and love,’ as the pope had described Father Kolbe’s martyrdom, and to pray for ‘all the victims’ of Auschwitz”⁹, a purpose that was guided and based on the Catholic faith. While the intentions of the nuns may have been to commemorate all the victims of Auschwitz, their act shows a lack of understanding of how those of the Jewish faith mourn their dead, and what the presence of Catholic symbols would change about the memorial site. As the head of Poland’s Union of Jewish Councils, Jerzy Kichler, said “We believe there should be no religious symbols at Auschwitz...because Jewish tradition does not allow us to pray for our dead relatives in the presence of symbols belonging to another religion.”¹⁰ While the controversy over the convent was defused at the time through agreements to relocate the nuns, the underlying tensions had a large impact on the discussion that would come after hundreds of small crosses were placed at the base of the larger cross, which had stayed in place after the convent was moved. Since the dispute over the Carmelite convent, “Jewish leaders have

⁷ Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 15.

⁸ Erica Lehrer, “Jewish Heritage, Pluralism, and *Milieux de Mémoire*” in ed. Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng, *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2015), 177.

⁹ Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 118.

¹⁰ Jonathan Luxmoore, “Poland Takes Down Crosses at Auschwitz.” *Guardian Weekly*, June 6, 1999. Date Accessed: 12/1/2015

expressed concern that an effort was underway by the Vatican and the Polish Catholic Church to clothe Auschwitz-Birkenau in Christian garb.”¹¹ Jewish fears over the Christianization of the memorial site were reignited when the crosses were put in place in 1998, and the same clashes between claims to memory and symbolism resurfaced.

The cross controversy had its roots in past conflicts between Jews and the Polish State and the Roman Catholic Church. While many of these clashes have gone unresolved, the tension in 1998 was amplified by the context of Auschwitz, and the role of memory and commemoration that the site embodied. A previous ruling that was worked out between the Auschwitz Museum Council and the Catholic Church led to results where “in February 1998 eight crosses and 11 Stars of David were removed, under orders from the Polish government... The removal of the religious symbols was one condition the Holocaust Memorial Council had imposed before agreeing to co-operate with the Polish government on a master plan for Auschwitz-Birkenau.”¹² This agreement recognizes the importance of religion and religious symbols at the former Nazi death camps, and foreshadows the disagreements that would arise if symbols were to be placed at one of the campsites. A cross that was present at the gravel pit at Auschwitz had already caused heated discussion when it remained in place, when “Jewish groups protested immediately when the papal cross was erected in 1988 on the property bordering Auschwitz, near the former camp’s notorious penal block and Death Wall.”¹³ This cross is the tallest cross at the gravel pit, and was established well before the smaller crosses were placed at its base.

Understanding the origins of the first cross allows a deeper consideration of ownership of the space, and the intersecting claims of commemoration, even before the events of 1998. Located in the center of the gravel pit, the cross was visible from inside the camp itself, as it was taller than the walls surrounding Auschwitz-Birkenau. This cross has been referred to colloquially as the “papal cross,” noted for its role in a 1979 papal mass at Birkenau that was led by Pope John Paul II, and its transportation to Auschwitz in 1988. The threat of removal of the “papal cross” caused an uprising from those who felt that the removal of Christian symbols was a threat to the memory of those who had died at Auschwitz. In the summer and fall of 1998, ultranationalistic Polish Catholics placed hundreds of smaller crosses around the base of the larger cross. The group of militant Catholics was led by Kazimierz Świtoń, who fasted and remained at the site to protest the planned removal and perceived “de-Catholicization” of the space. Their efforts in bringing Christian crosses to the gravel pit was successful, as they managed to place a large amount of crosses and gain international and national awareness of their cause. At the conclusion of the controversy, when the law was passed restricting religious symbols, the number of crosses showed their achievements, when “By the time the Polish army finally removed them in May 1999, 322 crosses stood at the gravel pit.”¹⁴

While the group that Świtoń led and organized was dedicated to their cause, and what they perceived as the defense of Auschwitz and the memory of the Polish Catholic victims who were murdered at the camp against the controlling Jewish control of Auschwitz, they were often described as being extremist and misleading of the opinion or views of a majority of Polish

¹¹ Berger, Cargas, Nowak; John T. Pawlikowski, “The Struggle for Memory and Memorialization at Auschwitz” *The Continuing Agony: From the Carmelite Convent to the Crosses at Auschwitz*, 105.

¹² Emma Klein, *The Battle For Auschwitz: Catholic-Jewish Relation Under Strain* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 69.

¹³ Tom Cohen, “Crosses Removed from Auschwitz.” *The Gazette (Montreal Quebec)*, May 30, 1999. Date Accessed: 12/5/2015

¹⁴ Genevieve Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communism Poland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 10.

Catholics or Catholics of any nationality. The *Guardian Weekly* reported, “A spokesman for Poland’s Roman Catholic Bishops Conference, Adam Szulc, said the protest led by Mr. Świtoń had been the work of a ‘very narrow, unrepresentative group of Catholics.’”¹⁵ Reports also included descriptions of leaflets handed out by Świtoń that included themes of Polish victimization and Jewish dominance, with one Jewish paper including an account that “Świtoń said in leaflets: ‘The time has come so that we, Poles, wage merciless war on Jewish-communist-masonry, the biggest enemies of the Polish state. Leaflets described Israel and Germany as ‘satanic-pagan forces aiming at extermination of the Polish nation.’”¹⁶ Many of the radical ideas and language used by Świtoń later led to a conviction for inciting hatred against Jews, although these sentiments echo a long history of anti-Semitism against Jews.

While not necessarily the spokesperson for Polish Catholics or the Roman Catholic Church, Świtoń gained prominence for his role in placing the crosses, spreading his message through the increased media attention and the resulting platform it gave him, and through his organization of the crosses. The placement of the crosses was symbolically important, as the description of their geographic location entails:

All crosses brought to the gravel pit were planted under the supervision and with the assistance of Kazimierz Świtoń, who arranged them in a semicircle around the papal cross. The great majority of them bore a small commemorative plaque indicating the name and prisoner number of the victim in whose memory the cross was being erected...¹⁷

The positioning of some of the crosses was ceremonial, while others were placed in a quieter way, with fewer attempts to draw attention. Many groups sponsored or dedicated the crosses, including groups from members of the diaspora who lived overseas in the United States and Canada, as well as groups from within Poland. A consistent theme included with many of the crosses was one of commemoration for the Polish victims who were murdered on the site, and an acknowledgement of their martyrdom as Poles.

News sources such as the *New York Post* reported on the nature of the crosses, writing “The crosses – from crude, handmade ones to thick, varnished ones bearing inscribed plaques – had been erected in the past year.”¹⁸ The addition of decorations and inscriptions on the smaller crosses added personal and specific meanings to the overall symbolism of Christianity that the crosses represented. The placing of the crosses drew international attention for legal as well as ideological and religious reasons. As Rabbi Avi Weiss argued, “the 1987 Geneva Agreement and the 1972 United Nations Convention are violated not only by the Birkenau church, but also by the twenty-four-foot cross still standing alongside the old convent building at Auschwitz I.”¹⁹ In 1972, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage was the first sign of development towards preservation of Auschwitz as it was historically, which did not include additions like the church and cross, and the inclusion of Auschwitz to the United

¹⁵ Luxmoore, “Poland Takes Down Crosses at Auschwitz.” *Guardian Weekly*, June 6, 1999.

¹⁶ Beata Pasek, “Auschwitz Cross Inciter Fined.” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 13, 2000. Date Accessed: 12/1/2015

¹⁷ Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communism Poland*, 144.

¹⁸ Andy Geller, “Auschwitz Rid of Crosses That ‘Insulted’ Jews.” *The New York Post*, May 29, 1999. Date Accessed: 12/1/2015

¹⁹ Rabbi Avi Weiss, “The Future of Auschwitz: Raising a Voice of Moral Conscience Against the Christianization of Auschwitz-Birkenau.” *Cordozo Law Review* 671 (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1998)

Nation's World Heritage List in 1979 gave it international recognition and protection, including provisions that required a buffer zone of 1000 meters to protect the area surrounding the camp. However, with the events of 1984 and 1998 it was shown that "the 1000-meter protective zone clearly has been violated. New structures have been built, existing historic structures have been misused, churches have been established, and crosses have been erected..."²⁰ The preservation of Auschwitz had already been established as internationally important, and the violations of the protections of the site brought international attention from various groups.

The cross as a Christian symbol is multifaceted, and often has varying significance and history for each individual. In the context of Auschwitz, however, the experiences of people at that location and their own identities and ideologies result in a wide range of perspectives on the cross and its presence. While the cross was a strongly religious symbol for many Catholics, its physical presence was not a source of strength and reassurance for many who had previously been persecuted by the Catholic Church. The Jews had long viewed the cross as a symbol of hatred, and of the ongoing persecution of Jews throughout European history. The placement of the large papal cross was resented, but when hundreds of smaller crosses were added, the perceived "Christianization" of Auschwitz became unbearable for many Jews, who felt as if their struggle and loss was being erased.

To confront the differences in how the cross is perceived, it is necessary to explore what the other group values in the symbol, and the source of this value. In coming to a resolution, "Polish Catholics must realize that their fidelity must be to the values the cross represents, not the mere physical presence of the cross itself."²¹ The strong religious symbolism can be divorced from the physical manifestation of that symbol, and may be the best way to resolve the dispute over the presence of the cross, but for many Catholic Poles the threatened removal of the cross was an attack on their right to view symbols of their religion at a place they considered to be a Catholic memorial. "That Christians today may have difficulty imagining the cross as a symbol of hatred, and that many Jews cannot imagine it otherwise, is at the crux, so to speak, of the ongoing conflict over the cross at Auschwitz."²²

The inability of many Polish Catholics to understand the history of suffering that the Jews may have associated with the cross as a symbol made the controversy harder to overcome, as the Poles largely viewed the cross as important to their identity but not necessarily exclusive to the identities of other groups. For many Poles, the cross itself has a strong sense of national identity and symbolism associated with it. Inscriptions on the crosses placed at the gravel pit at Auschwitz include many references to Christian salvation, or to the cross as Poland's protector. These inscriptions include phrases such as "He who fights the Cross, who sells Polish land and the Nation's property, is the enemy of and traitor to the Fatherland," and "The cross is the salvation for everyone."²³ The contrast that these selections of writing draw is one where Poles are seen as martyrs for the cross, and heroes in the eyes of Christianity, whereas Jews are excluded and undeserving of the same type of salvation. Further complications in how Jews view religious symbols arose after the Holocaust itself, and the challenges it brought to those who are religious. Rabbi Yitzhak Greenberg, a leading Jewish Holocaust theologian, characterized the

²⁰ Alyza Lewin, "The Future of Auschwitz: The World Heritage Convention and the Future of Auschwitz.: *Cardozo Law Review* 677 (Yeshiva University Press, 1998)

²¹ John M. Grondelski, "Theological Literature in Poland on Catholic-Jewish Relations Since the Auschwitz Convent Controversy: A Survey." *The Polish Review* Vol. 37, No. 3 (University of Illinois Press, on behalf of the Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America, 1992), 291.

²² James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Books, 2001), 152.

²³ Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communism Poland*, 148.

Shoah, or Holocaust, as “the most radical countertestimony to religious faith, both Jewish and Christian...” although there are many who say that “their faith in God has been confirmed by the catastrophe...the more intense the suffering of the people, the closer the advent of the Messiah...”²⁴ A split within the Jewish community on how to view the Holocaust and its impact on religion echoes a larger discussion on how the Holocaust changed the ways individuals viewed religion, and the importance religion had at Auschwitz for both Catholics and Jews.

Relationships between Poles and Jews in the Polish state had historically been tense, and the events of 1998 caused a deeper rift between both groups until the resolution in 1999, even after which many still felt as though the state had either gone too far or had not gone far enough in dealing with the crosses. In post-war Poland, there were very few Jews still living in the state, as some had fled in a large diaspora to other nations that would accept them, or most had been murdered. After World War II, “Poland was seen by Jews as little more than the site of the Holocaust. It was considered a backward, anti-Semitic country. Concentration camp sites were the main places Jews came to Poland to visit,”²⁵ resulting in many Jews who had returned to towns and counties in Poland having to confront Poles who were increasingly nationalistic and who lacked understanding of Jews and their suffering. “The confrontation with the past and the cooperation in the present which Poles and Germans learned through mutual work and prayer at Auschwitz paved the way for contacts between the two peoples...”²⁶ In the way that the memorial site helped two groups reconcile, many Poles felt that the relationship between Jews and Poles could be resolved, and that anti-Semitism was not as prevalent in post-war Poland as many Jews believed. In a pastoral letter from the Polish Episcopate in 1990, there was an attempt to improve Polish-Jewish relations, but also a reaffirmation of the importance placed on the importance of Christianity to the nation. The letter echoes much of the popular sentiment that the Church itself had not been responsible for the murder of the Jews, and that Christians should not “accept a memory of the years of Hitlerism which, with its emphasis upon the Jewish *Shoah*, results by omission in forgetting Poland’s own Way of the Cross in the period 1939-1944.”²⁷ In line with the narrative that Poland had constructed around Christianity and its importance to the nation, many Poles felt that the symbolism was essential in order to commemorate the Polish Catholic victims of Auschwitz. Anything less than the presence of the cross would be a rejection and exclusion of the needs of Poles to mourn their dead, and would be a sign of Jewish dominance over a site that held importance for both groups. While not all agreed on the importance of religion in their lives or at Auschwitz, “In Poland, the cross at the death camp wall was seen by some Catholics as a commemoration of the many Catholics who had died there...”²⁸ The desire by Poles to honor and respect the Polish nationals who had died at Auschwitz was expressed through the cross, and the presence of religion at the site itself, something that could not be conveyed as strongly without a religious symbol. The way memory was symbolically represented held a position of such high importance to many people that the perceived control or dismissal of memory and victims caused the controversy over the crosses to grow.

²⁴ Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 159.

²⁵ Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, “Rediscovering the Jewish Past in the Polish Provinces” in ed. Erica Lehrer, Michael Meng, *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, 148.

²⁶ Grondelski, “Theological Literature in Poland on Catholic-Jewish Relations Since the Auschwitz Convent Controversy,” 288.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 295.

²⁸ Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews*, 230.

The controversy over the crosses brought up many of the same conflicts that had occurred previously in the discussion over the Carmelite convent, and raised the same questions of denial and responsibility in who is commemorated and in what ways they are commemorated. As an institution, the Catholic Church felt it was the defender of those Catholics who had died at Auschwitz, and thus was a key player in the conflict over the role of Catholicism at the memorial site. Even after the decision was finalized to move the Carmelite convent the Church “found itself given the opportunity to reinforce its politico-religious hold on Auschwitz and to capitalize on it in the campaign for the Christian re-foundation of Europe promoted by the Vatican.”²⁹ The Catholic Church in Poland saw its opportunity to use Auschwitz for its own religious ends, and used both the controversies over the convent and the crosses to promote an ideology that depicted Auschwitz as a site of Catholic mourning, and of atrocities committed on Catholics. More than just the Catholic Church spoke out on the subject of Catholic symbolism at Auschwitz. Individuals of Jewish faith, speaking from their own perspective rather than as an institution, were motivated by the controversies in 1984 and 1998. One was Rabbi Avi Weiss, who wrote that the existence of a church

At this sacred Jewish space is inappropriate, misleading and a violation of *Shoah* memory. If the church structure remains, its large cross casting a shadow over Auschwitz II, the site could suggest to the uninformed that the Holocaust was either an attempt at Christian genocide or that the church defended the Jews at that time – when in fact the church turned its back on the large-scale attempted annihilation of the Jewish people.³⁰

The role of memory at Auschwitz was shaped by these events, and the future of the site was the center of the clashes between the Catholic Church, Jews and Jewish organizations, and others who were concerned about what the site would become or would cease to be. Distinct and separate senses of the history and events of the Holocaust led to a deep divide between who the Poles felt deserved commemoration, and who the Jews felt should be preferenced and protected in history. Many Poles felt that “the three million non-Jewish Poles who died during Nazi occupation, of whom close to 100,000 were killed at Auschwitz, are somehow invisible to Jews because of the scale of the Holocaust.”³¹ This feeling of non-Jewish Poles who were also victims being overlooked in the aftermath of the Holocaust, and in the commemoration at the memorial site where they died, led to resentment against the Jews, who were perceived as ignoring and diminishing the suffering of Poles and Catholics. Many Jews in Poland, including Rabbi Avi Weiss, were concerned with the long-term preservation of the memory of the *Shoah*, and how Christian symbols at Nazi death camps would change the way people in the future viewed and conceptualized the history of the Holocaust.

There was also a deeper religious significance to religious symbols like crosses at memorial sites. In the Jewish tradition, mourning for the dead is often an internal, private process

²⁹ Bernard Suchocky and Madeleine Dobie, “The Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz: The Nature and Scope of a Failure.” *Yale French Studies, Discourses of Jewish Identity in Twentieth Century France* No. 85 (New Haven: CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 165.

³⁰ Avi Weiss, “Auschwitz is a Sacred Place of Jewish Memory. It’s No Place for a Catholic Church.” *Washington Post*, January 28, 2015.

³¹ Roger Cohen, “Poles and Jews Feud About Crosses at Auschwitz.” *The New York Times*, December 20, 1998. Date Accessed: 9/28/2015.

that does not include public symbols, whether religious or not. The head of Poland's Union of Jewish Councils, Jerzy Kichler, said "We believe there should be no religious symbols at Auschwitz...because Jewish tradition does not allow us to pray for our dead relatives in the presence of symbols belonging to another religion."³² This difference in mourning practices made it difficult for Jews to merely put aside what could be seen as mere discomfort or unhappiness over the presence of the cross, because the reaction to the symbol was more deeply tied to Jewish religious tradition and the way it dictates treatment of the dead and the traditions of mourning. While many Jews respected the rights of the Church and the symbolism of crosses to exist, they felt that Auschwitz-Birkenau was an inappropriate location for those symbols.

The controversy over the crosses was not limited to Poland, or to the Jewish and Christian communities within Poland, but rather was an issue of international concern. Nations that contained many Jews who had fled the Holocaust were particularly motivated by those members of the diaspora to take a position on the crosses, and to report about the events taking place at Auschwitz in their media. The international nature of the events of 1998 illustrate the importance that Auschwitz had, and still has, to Jews around the world, and the variety of opinions that were shared as a result of the placing of the crosses shows the lack of unity in how to approach Christian-Jewish relations. Many Jews worldwide were invested in the outcome of the cross controversy because for them, Auschwitz held a lot of meaning for the memory of the Holocaust and its Jewish victims. The eventual law for the removal of the crosses was largely met with a sense of relief from Jews, and a sense that Auschwitz was being respected as a Jewish site of mourning. An article in the *New York Times* reported on the removal of the crosses, writing that while the smaller crosses were removed by police, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church said that "The Jewish side...has shown a lot of restraint and understanding in the whole case, and also understanding for the Polish sensitivity to the symbol of the cross, and made it clear it will agree for the papal cross to remain."³³ While tensions still remained over the "papal cross" and its continuing presence at Auschwitz, the idea of a compromise was prevalent in the narrative coming from Catholic and Polish officials.

The wide range and strength of reactions to the placing of hundreds of small crosses at Auschwitz necessitated an official response on the issue. While the Polish government had, for a time, argued that the papal cross was the property and responsibility of the Catholic Church, and that the state should separate itself from religious affairs, the Church claimed that the crosses were on government property, and that the symbol of the cross was not only owned by the Church, but was a decentralized symbol that belonged to all Christians. Eventually, pressure on both the government and the religious institution increased to a point where action was necessary. For the Catholic Church, a response was required due to the "disobedience of Catholics to the episcopate's request, in late August, to stop planting crosses..." and for the government, pressure grew because of "demands by Israel and pressure from representatives of the U.S. Congress to remove all crosses from the proximity of Auschwitz at precisely the time when Poland was negotiating the terms of its NATO membership."³⁴ Another factor that led to the resolution of the problem was "the imminence of a papal visit to Poland, scheduled for 5 to 17 June."³⁵ This held great importance for the Polish state because Pope John Paul II was Polish

³²Luxmoore, "Poland Takes Down Crosses at Auschwitz." *Guardian Weekly*, June 6, 1999.

³³ "300 Crosses Are Removed At Auschwitz." *The New York Times*, May 29, 1999. Date Accessed: 9/28/2015

³⁴ Genevieve Zubrzycki, "'Oświęcim/Auschwitz': Archeology of a Mnemonic Battleground," in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, 28.

³⁵ Klein, *The Battle For Auschwitz: Catholic-Jewish Relation Under Strain*, 79.

and had strong ties to the region, and the state wanted to maintain good standing with the Catholic Church. After discussions with Świtoń, the Church, and Jewish groups, the Polish parliament passed legislation in April 1999 that restricted activities outside a 100-meter protection zone at former Nazi concentration camps, and important factor in resolving the conflict. While the “papal cross” was not threatened by the legislation, and was later protected and allowed to legally remain, the crosses placed by Świtoń and the group of Catholics were removed before Pope John Paul II’s visit to Poland and transported to a Franciscan monastery.

The removal of the crosses was significant for several reasons. As one Canadian newspaper noted, “By taking away the smaller crosses, church and government officials wanted to display a unified resolve to combat Poland’s reputation for anti-Semitism linked to the Holocaust and the Soviet era.”³⁶ The support that many Christian institutions and bodies gave to the planned removal of the crosses also showed the desire for compromise and reconciliation between Jews and the Catholic Church. Statements made by the “Reverend Adam Schulz, the spokesman for the Polish Episcopate, which is the church’s top body, said he hoped the move would ‘present us in a new, better light’ and ‘show our maturity and moral and spiritual sensitivity to the world.’”³⁷

Relations between Jews and the Catholic Church had been historically strained, and showed little improvement in post-war Poland, which gave the Church some motivation to use this event as a way to promote a message of reconciliation. The removal of the crosses also showed the goals of the Polish government in the post-war nation, and its decision represented a turning point for how the Holocaust would be remembered, and what role the former Nazi death camps would play in the remembrance of future generations. The worry that the crosses would misrepresent the past, and show an inaccurate depiction of the numbers of Jews and non-Jewish Poles who were killed at Auschwitz, was one motivation for the government in its decision to maintain historical accuracy and remove possibilities for distortion. Fears that “decades from now, visitors to Auschwitz, seeing the Christian symbols and places of worship, will assume that they symbolize accurately those who were killed and will fail to understand history as it really was.”³⁸ In passing the law, the Polish government acknowledged the claims by both Polish Catholics and Jews, and the problems presented in symbols distorting history and fact, and showed that it was pushing for a change in the way Jews viewed the Polish government and in the ways the memory of the Holocaust can be controlled.

The cross controversy was, in itself, a disagreement over religious symbols at a memorial site. What made it such a controversial topic that affected so many was the history between those religions, the context to the memorial site and its role as a Nazi death camp, and the misunderstanding between groups about the importance of the cross as a symbol. The desires for each group, Jews and non-Jewish Poles, were similar in that they both sought to mourn their dead in a way that followed their religious traditions. The importance of these competing claims is clarified through understanding the history behind the Polish nation, Jews, Catholics, and the reasons for concern over whose memory was prevalent at Auschwitz. For all of the confusion over crosses and symbols, the basis was that “in each side’s narrative of victimhood, the other

³⁶ Tom Cohen, “Crosses Removed from Auschwitz.” *The Gazette (Montreal Quebec)* May 30, 1999. Date Accessed: 12/5/2015

³⁷ Tom Cohen. “Crosses Removed from Death Camp.” *The Herald (Glasgow)* May 29, 1999. Date Accessed: 12/5/2015

³⁸ Walter Reich, “An End to Symbols at Auschwitz.” *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1998. Date Accessed: 9/28/2015.

has served mostly to illustrate the first's heroism or its own incomparable suffering.”³⁹ In a competition over commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust at one of the most important sites in Poland, identity and religion came to the forefront when smaller crosses placed in 1998 raised deep, unhealed rifts to the forefront of the national and international consciousness.

³⁹ Lehrer, “Jewish Heritage, Pluralism, and *Milieux de Mémoire*” in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, 178.

2016 Phi Alpha Theta Inductees, UVM Chapter, Alpha Alpha Psi

Olivia S. Ambo	Sarah Adeline Jauris
Jonathan P. Cares	Clayton Maxwell Kendall
Erin Elizabeth Claus	Kelly Jean Knight
Hunter Alexa Colvin	Summer Elisabeth Leppanen
Kiara Brynne Day	Ronald Colin MacNeil
Jesse Eaton	Carrie T. Madden
Keely Mae Farrell	Ryan Patrick McHale
Gabrielle Fernandez	Tom James Oettgen
Robin Fitch-McCullough	Adam Quinn
Meredith Dillon Gensch	Emilela Elizabeth Thomas-Adams
Brendan James Hersey	Naomi C. Vass
Linda M. Howell	Sophia E. White
	Ellie M. Young

Phi Alpha theta is a professional society, established in 1921, whose mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication, and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. There are 860 chapters nationwide and a membership of 350,000. A national biennial convention and thirty-five annual regional meetings held each spring provide a form for undergraduate and graduate students to present papers and exchange ideas. In addition, over twenty-five scholarships and prizes are awarded annually to both undergraduate and graduate students. The society publishes *The Historian*, one of the most widely circulated scholarly historical journals published in the United States.

Our chapter at the University of Vermont, Alpha Alpha Psi, was chartered in 1982. Undergraduate students who have completed at least fifteen credit hours in History courses at UVM, with a 3.6 grade point average and an overall GPA of 3.4 are eligible for membership. History master's students are required to maintain a 3.75 GPA in their graduate studies. Induction ceremonies are held annually in April.

History Department News

Since the publication of the last issue of the *History Review*...

Andrew Buchanan had two articles accepted for publication: one, on American soldier-tourism in Italy during World War II, will appear in a special issue of *American Quarterly* in November 2016, and the second, on America's wartime occupation of Morocco and the rise of Moroccan nationalism, will be in *Global War Studies*. In the spring, Professor Buchanan spent a term at the Modern European History Research Center in Oxford, work on a comparative study of universal military service and the emergence of the modern nation state.

Associate Professor **Erik Esselstrom** spent the summer of 2015 in Tokyo with the support of a research grant from the Japan Foundation, where he collected additional source material for his current book project entitled *That Distant Country Next Door: Popular Japanese Perceptions of Mao's China*.

Professor **Sean Field** published articles in *Speculum*, *French Historical Studies*, and *Franciscan Studies* in spring 2016. He is off to Paris to give a series of seminars in May and June as an invited professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, and then is looking forward to his 2016-2017 sabbatical year, when he will be completing a book on *Holy Women and the Capetian Court*.

Melanie Gustafson is pleased to announce the digital history project *Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution*. Free to use and free of advertisements, *Click!* highlights the collective action and

individual achievements of women from the 1940s to the present. This innovative project was developed by a team of historians and educators in collaboration with technical advisors, filmmakers, artists and website designers. It features 46 film clips taken from 27 documentary films, extensive interactive timelines, in-depth essays supported by primary documents, photos, and other resources.

In the spirit of 1970s consciousness-raising, the name refers to the “click” moment when women discovered the powerful ideas of contemporary feminism. The name also refers to the computer keystroke that connects women (and men) to the Internet. Visit *Click!* at <https://www.cliohistory.org/click/>.

Frank Nicosia saw the publication of the new paperback edition of his co-edited volume (with Lawrence Stokes) *Germans against Nazism: Non-conformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich. Essays in Honor of Peter Hoffmann*. The revised new paperback edition of this book, originally published in 1990 by Berg Publishers in London, was published by Berghahn Books in July 2015. Frank also completed the work on his edited volume of 208 mostly German documents from 22 Archives in Germany, Israel, the United States and Russia. The volume will be published with the title *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1933-1941*, and it will appear in the Leo Baeck Institute's series “Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts,” published by Mohr/Siebeck Verlag in Tübingen, Germany in late 2016 or 2017. With History Department colleague Bogac Ergene, Frank is also editing

the forthcoming book *Responses in the Middle East to National Socialism and the Holocaust*. The essays in this book are based on the lectures presented by a group of international scholars at the 7th Miller Symposium (with the same title) at UVM in April 2015. The book will be published by Berghahn Books in 2017 as part of the series “Vermont Studies on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.”

Nicole Phelps continued research on her major project *The United States in the World: The US Consular Service, 1789-1924*, spending several weeks at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, with the generous assistance of a UVM Faculty Research Support Award. She also launched a website about the project, which includes elements of the work in progress (and an exhibit of early twentieth century corporate letterhead); visit at <http://blog.uvm.edu/nphelps/>. She contributed essays on embassies and consulates and the US Foreign Service to the supplemental volume of *Scribner's Dictionary of American History on America in the World*, and reviewed books for *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, the *American Historical Review*, *The Historian*, *H-Diplo*, and *H-SHGAPE*. As a recipient of a Coor Collaborative Fellowship Grant from the UVM Humanities Center, she participated in and helped to organize a series of workshops about tools and challenges in the digital humanities.

Susanna Schrafstetter published her book *Flucht und Versteck. Untergetauchte Juden in München - Verfolgungserfahrung und Nachkriegsalltag* (which translates roughly as *Escape and Concealment: Jewish Fugitives in Munich during the Second World War and their Experiences in the Postwar Period*) with the German publisher Wallstein in the fall of 2015. The presentation of the book was organized by cultural affairs department of the Jewish community of Munich and took place in December of 2015 at the Jewish Community Center in Munich. Together with Alan Steinweis, Susanna Schrafstetter published the anthology *The Germans and the Holocaust: Popular Responses to the Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, New York: Berghahn, 2016. Her essay “‘Life in Illegality Cost an Extortionate Amount of Money.’ Ordinary Germans and German Jews Hiding from Deportation”, is forthcoming in: Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr (eds.), *The Holocaust and European Societies*, London: Palgrave, to be published in 2016. Susanna Schrafstetter spoke in November of 2015 at the University of Vermont, as part of a mini-symposium on *Survival Underground: Jews in Hiding in Poland and Germany during the Holocaust*. She gave a lecture on Jews in Hiding during the Holocaust as part of a lecture series on “Refugees in the 20th and 21st century” at the University of Erfurt Germany in January 2016.

Prof. **Alan E. Steinweis** published the volume *The Germans and the Holocaust: Popular Responses to the Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Berghahn Books, 2016), which he co-edited with Susanna Schrafstetter, and which grew out of the 2012 Miller Symposium sponsored by the UVM Center for Holocaust Studies. In October 2015 he presided over the conference “Exile and the Holocaust,” which was held at UVM, and which Steinweis had co-organized with Helga Schreckenberger of UVM's Department of German and Russina and Bettina Bannasch of the University of Augsburg. A volume based on this conference will appear later this year. He delivered the annual Hans Heilbrunner lecture at the University of New Hampshire, and gave invited lectures at the University of Erfurt (Germany) and the University of Nebraska- Kearney. He continues editorial work on

several projects, including a volume on Holocaust memory in global perspective, a collection of Holocaust essays being published in conjunction with the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, and a multi-volume collection of documents on the Holocaust being published by a consortium of German and Israeli institutions. He also continues work on a synthetic history of Nazi Germany, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press. In October 2015 he published an op-ed about gun control in Nazi Germany in the *New York Times*.

Denise J. Youngblood has two articles forthcoming in 2016: “Soldiers, Sailors, and Commissars: The Revolutionary Hero in Soviet Cinema of the 1930s,” in Birgit Beumers, ed., *A Companion to Russian Cinema* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons) and co-authored with Tony Shaw, “Cold War Sport, Film and Propaganda: A Comparative Analysis of the Superpowers, in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*. The latter is a revision of Shaw and Youngblood’s keynote address for the conference “Spanning and Spinning the Globe: History of Sport in the Cold War,” co-sponsored by the German Historical Institute-Moskau and the Wilson Center, which took place in Moscow last summer.

Steve Zdatny has spent the 2015-2016 academic year largely reaping the profits from the semester he spent in Spring 2015 as a Fulbright grantee and a visiting research scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, in Paris. He published several book reviews in the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of Modern History*, and contributed a chapter to an edited volume on the history of “female beauty systems.” Mostly, however, he continued to work on his current book project: a history of hygiene in modern France.

Author Biographies

Daniella Bassi is a graduate student in history from Miami, Florida. Her research interests include colonial Southern and New Netherland history, American regionalism, and legal history. This summer she will conduct research on Jewish migration in the early Atlantic world through a Gomez Foundation for Mill House fellowship. She loves to learn languages, play the saxophone regularly, and go hiking with her boyfriend, Daniel.

Kiara Day is an undergraduate sophomore History major and Holocaust Studies minor at UVM. She looks forward to studying abroad in Germany next year where she hopes to conduct further research for her senior Honors College thesis. She was recently inducted into Phi Alpha Theta in Spring 2016 and is excited to be published for the first time in the History Review. Her future plans include attending graduate school for a PhD in History, focusing on the Holocaust.

Nate Gondelman completed his BA and MA in History at the University of Vermont. His writings and research have predominantly focused on American slavery and the Civil War era, as well as the Second World War and the Holocaust. In his free time, Nate spends his summers on the beaches of Lake Champlain and his winters drinking tea

and watching his beloved Pittsburgh Penguins. Sometimes, he takes a break from history to read an Agatha Christie novel.

John Marchinkoski is a senior graduating in May with a degree in history and English. His academic interests primarily focus on Central & Eastern Europe in the twentieth century and postmodern American literature. After graduation, John will begin working in background investigation in Washington, DC.

Ron MacNeil is a graduate student at the University of Vermont and a history and psychology teacher at Burlington High School. He was formerly a press photographer for the United Press International. Ron focuses his studies on the 20th century history of Europe and the U.S.

Brittany Miller is a senior at UVM graduating with a BA in History and English as well as a minor in Studio Art. In her free time she likes to read, hike, do yoga, travel, bake cookies, watch animal documentaries and contemplate her existence.

Frances J. Solnick is a senior undergraduate student completing a B.A. in History and Political Science with an interest in European history, international relations, political theory, and criminal justice. She is also involved in the Lawrence Debate Union, and enjoys traveling, reading, and visiting museums.

Editor Biographies

Cullan Bendig is a senior undergraduate student from Acton, Massachusetts studying history and political science. His primary areas of interest are early modern European history, political theory, and swimming on his free time.

Erin Clauss is graduating from UVM with a double major in History and Classical Civilization. After graduation she plans to move to Washington, D.C. for the summer and return to Burlington in the fall for a job at the UVM Archives.

Nate Gondelman completed his BA and MA in History at the University of Vermont. His writings and research have predominantly focused on American slavery and the Civil War era, as well as the Second World War and the Holocaust. In his free time, Nate spends his summers on the beaches of Lake Champlain and his winters drinking tea and watching his beloved Pittsburgh Penguins. Sometimes, he takes a break from history to read an Agatha Christie novel.

Sarah Holmes is a Junior History Major with a Minor in Gender Studies and Women's Sexuality. She is a member of the Women's Honor Society, Tri Iota. Sarah is also a member of the Eta Chapter of Delta Delta Delta where she serves as the Member Development Chairman. While at UVM, Sarah has enjoyed taking classes about women and gender in history.

Ron MacNeil is a graduate student at the University of Vermont and a history and psychology teacher at Burlington High School. He was formerly a press photographer for

the United Press International. Ron focuses his studies on the 20th century history of Europe and the U.S.

Kieran O'Keefe is a second-year graduate student from Newburgh, New York. His current research examines loyalism in New York during the American Revolution. In his free time he enjoys reading, riding his bike, and watching sports.

Julia Walsh is a specialist in 20th Century Jewish history and the Holocaust. Prior to arrival at UVM's MA program she was a History major at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. There, she won multiple essay awards for work in Holocaust Studies, and for two years served as a Kurt Mayer Summer Fellow in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. In July 2013 she was the youngest-ever participant in the International Tracing Service Seminar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. After imminent graduation from UVM's Masters program she will be moving back to Tacoma to work as a writer and local scholar.

Elizabeth Van Horn is graduating this spring with her MA in history, having focused on women in British India. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, she and her husband, Max, are currently planning their escape to Japan.