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Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence and Professor of History
Conducted by Henry Jacob
In this essay, Kendra Mills, American University of Paris ’17, argues that post-conflict Rwandan society contains three contradictions within the field of women’s rights. The first contradiction occurs when women are portrayed as the uncomplicated victims of the genocide and patriarchal oppression, yet simultaneously are separately portrayed as liberated actors, their presumed agency celebrated internationally. The second contradiction concerns the achievement of women as members of the state. The percentage of women in parliament is lionized by the Rwandan government, but women who participate in politics must conform to the regime’s vision, therefore maintaining agency and suffering political oppression concurrently. The third contradiction in Rwandan society is elitism; within the conversation of women’s liberation, only a small number of privileged, educated women enjoy the opportunities afforded to them by their urban lifestyles and political pursuits. This piece is an edited excerpt of Mills’ senior essay.

By Kendra Mills, American University of Paris ’17  
Professor Stephen Sawyer  
Faculty Advisor: David Simon  
Edited by Henry Jacob, SY ’21
In the international community, monumental violence and international failure remain connected to perceptions of modern Rwanda. In recent years, the country’s commitment to women’s rights and economic growth have drawn attention to Rwanda’s successes. However, these positive developments come with complications and nuance. Within the field of women’s rights, post-conflict Rwandan society contains three contradictions. The first contradiction occurs when women are portrayed as the uncomplicated victims of the genocide and patriarchal oppression, yet simultaneously are separately portrayed as liberated actors, their presumed agency celebrated internationally. The second contradiction concerns the achievement of women as members of the state. The percentage of women in parliament is lionized by the Rwandan government and international community because women hold a significant number of government posts and advocate for women’s rights in legislature—for example, women’s health care. Paradoxically, the Rwandan state is unremittingly authoritarian. Women who participate in politics must conform to the regime’s vision, and therefore they maintain agency and suffer political oppression concurrently. The third contradiction in Rwandan society is elitism; within the conversation of women’s liberation, only a small number of privileged, educated women enjoy the opportunities afforded to them by their urban lifestyles and political pursuits. These women receive international attention and are erroneously depicted as the sole representatives of Rwandan womanhood.

**HISTORY AND CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN RWANDAN SOCIETY**

Rwanda’s perceptions of ethnicity and power structures have informed the problematic, modern notions of women’s rights; an analysis of Rwanda’s history provides the necessary context to understand these inconsistencies. During the colonial period, the Tutsi enjoyed elevated status in Rwanda, despite being a minority.¹ The first documented instance of violence between Hutus and Tutsis occurred in 1959, when Tutsis beat a Hutu activist; this ignited a wave of Hutu violence, wherein groups of Hutus raided and burned Tutsi homes, often massacring the inhabitants.² During the revolution of 1959, Hutus consolidated power and thousands of Tutsi fled to neighboring countries. In the early 1960s, guerrilla groups of Tutsi refugees staged invasions of Rwanda. In response to these attacks, Hutus responded by murdering and persecuting Tutsis indiscriminately.³

¹ There is little documentation of the relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi prior to the colonial encounter.
Juvénal Habyarimana assumed power through a coup in 1973; during his regime, refugees were denied the right of return and Tutsi faced frequent persecution and prejudice. In 1986, the prices of coffee and tea crashed, crippling the Rwandan economy and impoverishing the entire population. In 1990, a rebel army of refugees invaded Rwanda and waged war against the Rwandan Armed Forces. This war ended when Arusha Accords were signed in August 1993. The UN deployed an assistance mission to supervise the transition process, but it was hopelessly handicapped and its mandate was limited to observation and reporting.

On the 6th of April 1994, Habyarimana’s plane was shot down while descending over his palace. His death detonated the violence, newly inflamed by propaganda, that had been fomenting in the country for decades. Trained militias gathered firearms and machetes, while others marked the doors of Tutsi homes. Hutu perpetrators emerged from all classes and professions. Each citizen still carried an ethnic identity card and the interahamwe created roadblocks where they would stop Tutsi and slaughter them beside the road. Tutsis sought refuge in churches and hospitals where the local authorities often presided over their deaths. The RPF sprang into action against the interahamwe and eventually succeeded in securing the country, resettling both Hutu and Tutsi refugees.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was authorized in November of 1994, but tried relatively few cases, given the magnitude of the violence. The ICTR set precedents within the international community for the conviction of rape as a war crime, but domestic Rwandan courts held trials for the majority of perpetrators. Crimes were delineated into three levels, wherein the worst criminals—the leaders of the genocide—were referred to the Supreme Court. Community courts, known as the gacaca, processed the lesser perpetrators. Pursuing reconstruction, the government of Rwanda committed itself to economic advancement, advocated for technological innovations, and developed projects to protect water resources and stimulate agricultural productivity. The government officially outlawed ethnicity and historic ethnic description has become taboo in conversation.

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4 Ibid.
5 AKAYESU, Jean Paul (ICTR-96-4).
6 The gacaca initiative was overseen by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission; the process entailed the accused being brought forward before the community in which they committed the crimes and are either convicted or acquitted, depending on the evidence and testimony. In generally, the consequences of conviction vary, as the prison system of Rwanda was severely overtaxed. Often criminals were faced with financial sentences or hard labor and remained in the communities with their victims. The gacaca process is posited as a method of reconciliation and is often helpful to the survivors in that it assists them in finding the bodies of their loved ones and burying them.
serving as Vice President, Kagame assumed office in 2000 and has increasingly come under fire for his authoritarian tactics and suppression of the free press. However, the Rwandan government serves as a standard for women’s rights in the international community. As of 2017, Rwanda led the globe with the greatest number women in parliament, with 64 percent.  

THE UNRESOLVED PARADOXES AND PROBLEMS OF RWANDAN WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN MEDIA AND ACADEMIA

In discussing the contradictions of women’s rights in Rwandan society, one must first examine the successes and failures of relevant historiographical materials. Popular media often assigns women the role of either liberated political actor or ultimate victim without reconciliation of the two extreme positions. Western media outlets are particularly guilty of imposing these two narratives in recent years; for example, in 2014, NPR published an article entitled Since Genocide, Rwanda's Women Have Helped Lead The Recovery, commemorating the 20 year anniversary of the conflict. The article overlooked the shortcomings of the political situation and only briefly alluded to the concerns voiced by the sources. The Washington Post and the Telegraph published similarly sunny articles, promulgating the image of Rwandan women as fully emancipated agents and heroines of the post-conflict period of reconstruction. Conversely, the New York Times and the Independent wrote pieces that soberly condemned the sexual violence committed against women during the genocide and explained how the ramifications of that violence continue to influence women's lives. Both narratives contain truths, but they exemplify the tendency to simplify a complex situation, ultimately failing to provide an integrated, accurate depiction of women's experiences in Rwandan society.

Some researchers have sought to disrupt or resituate this contradiction in constructed identity, as well as the contradictions of power and elitism. Donna J. Maier published an article about Hutu women who actively participated during the genocide; she also addressed the post-genocide rhetorical acrobatics of gendered language, which sought

10 Staff, NPR. "Since Genocide, Rwanda’s Women Have Helped Lead The Recovery." NPR. 06 Apr. 2014.
to paint the women as temporary deviants from the feminine identity that they embodied. Through her research and findings, she sought to destabilize the notion that women were exclusively victims. She contextualized women’s liberation within Rwanda’s history, rather than constituting the struggle for equal rights as a post-genocide phenomenon. The genocide occurred when women were becoming newly acquainted with their initiative. The lifting of taboos against women’s participation in society coincided with the genocidal killings and resulted in an alarming proliferation of female brutality.13 Within the context of Rwanda’s contemporary problem conceptualizing women, Maier challenges the notions of victimhood and oversimplification of gender that prevails in discourse about women in Rwanda.

Researcher Jennie Burnet examines the paradoxical phenomenon of women’s liberation within Rwanda’s oppressive regime. She documents the unprecedented increase of women’s influence within Rwandan political space and the authoritarianism that occurred under the supposed guise of democratization. She praises premiere women’s collectives including Pros-Femmes Twese Hamwe and Widows of April. Tutsi and Hutu women were left without husbands; within these groups, they were able to advocate for widows, often a poverty stricken demographic in post-conflict society. Burnet focuses on the setbacks within the women’s movement in society. She offers the unique claim that the championing of women in government and the emphasis on political involvement undermined the women’s movement. She notes that because many civil leaders who had been so effective in women’s collectives became political leaders, a void opened in the leadership of civil women’s movements. Younger members filled this vacuum, some of whom were perhaps more educated than their forbearers (as women’s education increased enormously in post-conflict society) but lacked the necessary experience to maneuver within a politically oppressive regime. In this way, the restrictive political situation compromised the veteran women in political positions, and their successors’ inexperience undermined the the civil groups’ efficiency.

Prior to the genocide, Villia Jefremovas, in conjunction with the International Development Research Centre, conducted ethnographic research in Rwanda in the mid-1980s. Her work egregiously underestimated the meaning of ethnicity within Rwandan society, but her examination of gender is momentous. Jefremovas interviewed many Rwandan women and highlights the circumstances of three female brick makers, providing an abstract understanding of the relationship between gender definition and control of resources. The author postulates that “Women are characterized as behaving as either virtu-

ous wives and virginal daughter or as loose women.” This moral authority, used to define, manipulate, and control women, is not uniquely Rwandan, but rather manifests according to the specifications of Rwandan society. Most crucially, Jefremovas notes that a class divide marks women’s experiences; upper class women enjoy the privilege of temporary access to resources, while lower class women are refused even modest rights. Similarly, Claire Wallace, Christian Haerpfer and Pamela Abbott collaborated on an analysis of women’s issues in Rwanda by delving into the facts produced by the World Value Survey. They argued that one cannot regard women as one singular entity—specifically delineating the class, education, regional, and age differences. The researchers contend that women’s liberation was a top-down exercise and that the freedoms afforded by the RPF government were unavailable to portions of the population. They examine three specific issues pertaining to gender: the workloads of women, access to education, and gender violence.

Concerning labor, women suffer a greater burden within a country that continues to be populated by subsistence farmers. Wallace states that “90 percent of the population works in agriculture...It is estimated that 60 percent of households live in poverty...Poverty falls mainly on women, for example 62.5 percent of female-headed households live in poverty compared to 54.3 percent of male ones...The heavy burden of work shouldered by women...means that the majority of women are not able to take advantage of the opportunities available to women at the top.” In discussing education, they describe perceptions documented by the World Value Survey, which suggest girls’ education is less of a priority. Furthermore, there are fewer female leaders in higher education and sometimes the schools even lack sanitary facilities for women. Finally, the researchers mention the prevalence of gendered threats against women’s safety, which can lessen their ability to participate equally in education or other opportunities.

Meier, Burnet, Jefenovas, and Wallace have committed to developing an accurate, complex, and refined examination of Rwanda. Meier destabilizes the notion of women as uncomplicated victims, while also critiquing the violence that could be construed as ‘agency.’ Burnet and Jefenovas add historical context to the narrative of women’s rights and subvert the simplistic narrative of recent women’s liberation. Burnet’s careful research also illustrates the immense contradiction of women’s participation in an oppressive state regime, noting how their political involvement has in some ways diminished women’s civic

17 Ibid., 121.
THREE CONTRADICTIONS IN RWANDAN WOMEN’S RIGHTS

agenda. Finally, Jefenovas’ and Wallace’s publications depict the ways in which Rwandan women’s rights paradigm has functioned through top-down mechanisms and fails to address several crucial problems faced by the general population of women in Rwanda. In the connection of their work, these scholars illustrate the contradictions of women’s rights in Rwandan society. In the following sections, their critiques will be applied to legal reforms and personal testimony to critically investigate the three contradictions that prevail with the narrative of Rwandan women’s rights.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND EVOLVING VIEWS OF WOMEN

It is fair to acknowledge the flourishing of women’s civil and political involvement in the years of reconstruction after the genocide. Kagame is well-known for his commitment to gender parity and also aware of the international consensus on the importance of gender equality. In recent decades, Rwanda has radically altered the laws that govern women. Nevertheless, the international media and domestic rhetoric construe women as victims even as their rights expand and their emancipation legitimized. Their participation in the formulation of legal frameworks remains contained to issues that do not interrogate or challenge the authoritarian state and lawmakers remain preoccupied with the concerns of the elite. The accomplishments and post-genocide successes of Rwanda are valuable, but women’s legal rights and civil participation in Rwanda are pieces of a more complex narrative.

Prior to the conflict, the Rwandan Family Code was instituted in 1988, constituting a basis for later reevaluations of family law, most notably in 1999 and 2016. Charles Ntampaka, a researcher at Instelling University in Antwerp, discussed family law in Rwanda in the decades before the genocide. In explaining the advancements of the 1988 Code, Ntampaka states, “...under the colonial Civil Code a married woman had no legal capacity unless authorised by her husband. She has full legal capacity under the new Civil Code. She can open a bank account, appear in court in relation to the matrimonial property regime, witness a legal act and use her own name in any administrative act in which she is involved.”

In 1988, despite encountering tensions between traditional practices and instituted civil codes, women were on course to gain rights within Rwandan society within the codified framework of the legal system.

However, provisions protecting family rights, specifically a woman’s ability to seek a divorce, depended upon circumstances of victimization; for example abandonment, adultery, and refusal to partake in household management qualified as grounds for divorce.

19 Rwanda: CIVIL CODE, Article 237 of 27/10/1988; The legal codes referenced in this text were procured from legal reference libraries or the Official Gazette of the Rwandan Ministry of
These principles applied to both men and women but men often entered a marriage with significantly more resources, leaving women in the more vulnerable position during and after a divorce. In short, women’s rights relied upon their continued status as victims—both conceptually, as victims of abandonment or adultery, and literally, as homeless persons after the dissolution of their marriages. Rwandan law codifies the tension between victimhood and liberated agent, without clarifying or interrogating the exchange between the two experiences.

The 2003 Rwandan Constitution mandated that 30 percent of the parliament must be female. The women in politics, in the intervening years, reached that objective and went on to oppose their male counterparts for the men’s seats. Women in parliament, as well as civil women’s groups, have achieved great strides in the progress of women’s rights in the country. For example, in 2008, Rwanda adopted comprehensive laws punishing gender violence. Although drafted in gender neutral terms, these laws explicitly intended to remedy the disadvantages imposed upon women. The text mentions maternity protections, HIV infection, child rearing, and ‘gender based human trafficking.’ The positive media response to female legislators often neglects discussion with the women whose lives are shaped by the circumstances described within the law: those who are abandoned at birth because of their gender, those who are infected with HIV, those who are beaten by their spouses. In this instance, outlets constitute women as liberated lawmakers, and simultaneously as the vulnerable recipients of overdue legal protections. Neither of these positions is inherently untrue, but within the modern conception of Rwandan women, these perceptions exist in contradiction rather than conversation with one another.

Jennie Burnet argues that the most crucial bills in the post-genocide reconstruction process were those in the Supplement to Book One of the Rwandan Civil Code, nicknamed the ‘Inheritance Law.’ The original 1999 bill represented the completion of a successful civil women’s group campaign, changing the inheritance laws which prohibited women from receiving land from their deceased husbands and fathers—an issue that became complicated after the genocide. However, it made other important provisions concerning a wide variety of women’s rights. The Civil Code of 1988 overlooked the plight of widows upon death of a spouse, stipulating that widows only receive care at the discretion of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, daughters were excluded from inheritance and when they were given...
In the 1999 Amendment to the Civil Code, Article 50 reads, “All legitimate children of the de cujus, in accordance with civil laws, inherit in equal parts without any discrimination between male and female children.” Furthermore, spouses can define their marriage terms so that they may keep their property separate for the duration of their partnership; otherwise, each can divide his/her own personal property.

In the event that the spouses did conjoin property, each person became the initial beneficiaries of the deceased, with the mandate to care for their children and parents as stated by Article 70, sub article 1: “In case of death of one of the spouses, the surviving spouse shall ensure the administration of the entire patrimony while assuming the duties of raising the children and assistance of the needy parents of the de cujus.” The women’s groups who spearheaded the bill were undoubtedly inspired by the plight of those who were denied their family’s property after the conflict; regardless the surviving women could not make claims under the reformed law.

Nonetheless, legal precedents for women’s rights have continued to advance, albeit slowly. The site for Rwanda’s Ministry of Justice introduces the updated version in 2016, describing the previous law as, “outdated considering how fast Rwandan lifestyle is evolving in terms of human rights and more specifically women’s rights. The new law provides comprehensible details concerning the management of matrimonial property, donations and successions and there are new articles which were not included in the old one.” The law offers a few stronger protections for women, initially by providing a definition of the entities involved with inheritance law, naming spouses and offspring as ‘rightful heirs,’ regardless of gender.

The 2016 law additionally has the potential to legitimize a women’s authority in owning property and as director of shared family property. Article 56 details reasons for debarment from succession, with new inclusions concerning sexual assault and child abuse. In all, penalties were embedded within the law to more thoroughly protect vulnerable parties—often young women—though less drastically than the legislation of 1999.

Recognition of success, however, cannot interfere with a critique of the state’s other authoritarian behavior. Kagame said, “When women advance, everyone benefits. The key principle, in addition to understanding gender equality as a human right, is to use the tal-

27 Additionally, concerning the three marriages recognized by the law the 1999 law merely required that the spouses be informed of their choices, while the 2016 law mandates that the betrothed should be given the information at least 7 days prior to their marriage.
ents of all our people to the full potential, in politics, business and elsewhere. This is common sense if we want to advance and improve our societies at the launch of the HeforShe Campaign in 2015. His normalization of gender equality is commendable, but as Jennie Burnet makes clear, the party manipulates elections so that they conform to Kagame’s wishes. As a result, women in the government apparatus are complicit with its crimes: undemocratic elections, belligerent invasions and exploitations of the Democratic Republic of Congo, reductive ethnic theorizing, and consolidation of RPF hegemony.

Burnet, Chandrasekhar, and Wallace all state that even after the conflict, households headed by women remain disproportionately affected by poverty, which implies that the new, top-down precedents heralded by the legal reform concerns itself primarily with higher class women. Wallace illustrates that while the law applies to all spouses throughout Rwanda, the perceptions and practices of Rwandans often vary throughout the country. In general, according to the World Value Survey, women possess significantly more rights in the urban areas of the country. Furthermore, Wallace demonstrates how women also enjoy more welcoming perceptions within urban spaces – which is to say that not only practices are different, but also ideas pertaining to women’s rights and abilities. In summary, the legal precedents of Rwanda have undoubtedly evolved, but remain entrenched in the complexity of varying cultural practices. It is a mistake to equate the successes of a top-down mechanism for the successes of the entire nation, rather than pursuing an adequately detailed, heterogeneous perspective in regard to legal reform in Rwanda.

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS AND FEMALE AUTONOMY

The Kigali Genocide Memorial project is one of many organizations that seeks to commemorate the lives of both the victims and survivors of the genocide. The KGM has diligently collected testimony from selection of survivors, both from citizens who reside within the country and the children of immigrants. The University of Southern California also has curated a digital archive of Rwandan voices who seek to remember the genocide in their own terms and share their experiences with a broader audience. The testimonies trace the life stories of the speaker from their childhood to their current situation. This method allows the listener to contextualize the narrative of the person – as well as the meaningful details – within a broader perspective on Rwandan politics and daily life. The interviewers primarily ask questions addressed to the ethnic tension within the country and the inter-

28 ”HeforShe Campaign.” Paulkagame.com. 2015.
views last from 20 minutes to six hours.

The women testifying demonstrate a remarkable strength in their willingness to share their stories and speak honestly about their memories and pain. While their memories cannot be regarded as absolutely infallible, the women each supply a reflection of the Rwandan experience, acting as the living counterparts to the theorizing of academic discourse. Of course, their lives cannot be reduced to a few simple ideas about Rwanda or ethnicity or womanhood. However, due to their generous descriptions of their lives and histories, one can automatically complicate the homogenized perspectives the prevail about women in Rwanda. Listeners may observe the ways in which their experiences are illustrative of larger conversations, in this case, those concerning the tension of women’s rights in Rwanda. In some cases, these tensions are implicit within their testimony, but each woman is asked if she has a message for post-genocide Rwanda, and therefore inserts herself into the discourse where before perhaps her voice was absent. Several testimonies have been condensed and excerpted below.

Testimony of Nadine Uwamahoro:

Nadine Uwamahoro was born in 1984 in Ndere and was a young person during the genocide; she was six when the civil war started and most likely ten years old when her parents were killed. During her youngest years, she faced persecution from both institutional and personal actors. Her teachers would require Tutsi students to stand in their classrooms to be ridiculed by their Hutu peers. Before the genocide, in 1990, several members of her family were taken to prison. Within her testimony, she recognized that she might have missed, or been protected from, other crimes because of her age. She remembers seeing the plane shot down from her district in Ndera and the calls on the radio for violence against Tutsi. Her family fled to a hospital; it was a common practice for the Tutsi population, so seek shelter in churches, hospitals, schools, and other traditional places of sanctuary. Several of her family members died at the hospital, when they were attacked by the militia. As a child, she only ever recognized two of the attackers and after the genocide was over, was told that both of them had been killed.

After relaying her experience of the genocide Nadine speaks about her life beyond liberation by the RPF. She was reunited with her remaining family members (two siblings, both of whom sustained serious injuries), but struggled enormously with the enforced idea reconciliation and reintegration. She was particularly distraught that her dead family members would never be given a funeral. The state appropriated her family’s land after the genocide, though some was given back to her and her siblings. In the final moments of her testimony, she offers some support to other genocide survivors and hopes that they are able to learn what happened to their families. In relating her own experience to the collective narrative of women’s rights, she embodies a disenfranchised entity within the discourse of post-genocide reconstruction. However, in relating her story, she claims her own space,
and additionally offers support to others to defend their right to their own memories. By expressing her frustration about the loss of her family’s land, she enters another new terrain — criticism of the Rwandan state. Additionally, Nadine, as well as her Hutu counterparts interviewed for the memorial, do no enjoy elite positions and privileges within the stratified Rwandan society.

Testimony of Emerthe Nakabonye:

Emerthe Nakabonye was born in 1961 in Musambira and she lost her parents and her husband in the genocide. In her village, a list was distributed and she learned that her husband had been first to die, beaten with a club. In her town, women were not to be killed until after the burial of the president. However, Emerthe and her sister-in-law were kept at a roadblock and raped continuously. The first time she was raped in front of her children, though she thinks only the eldest remembers the genocide at all. Emerthe describes everything as happening to her sister in law, who died shortly after the end of the genocide. However, when asked, she says that everything that happened to her sister in law as happened to her as well. She admits that both were infected with HIV and says that she remains scared of dying at any time. All the men in her family were killed and she tried to survive by lying about her identity as a Tutsi. After the RPF liberated the area in which she was kept, she was treated and received mental health care. She acknowledges that briefly she was considered to have gone insane and chased any Hutu that walked by her house, attacking them. She knows that some of her abusers died in prison, though she continues to feel unsafe.

At the end of her testimony she criticizes the government for their calls for unity when she says that it is not real, but rather imposed. Coexisting in principle but divided in experience, Emerthe says that she considers Hutus to be full of wickedness and innately able to kill. She goes on to make a point, more rationally and less emotionally, that Hutus have shown themselves to be changeable, supporting the genocide and then the new government, not demonstrating an integrity worthy of her trust. Finally, she says that she was promised indemnity for the crimes committed against her family. However, she is aware that the Hutu also having few resources and suggests that perhaps reparations to the Tutsi by provided by the government. Of all the women discussed here, Emerthe remains the most resistant to the reconciliatory stance of state, and exhibits continuing — and understandable — ethnic division. Her attitude is essential to understanding the diversity of viewpoints of women in the aftermath of the conflict and deriving a heterogenous perspective.

Testimony of Angelique Mukabukize:

Angelique Mukabukize was born in 1962 in Ntarama and at the time of the interview lives alone, having lost her entire family in the genocide, including her parents, siblings, husband, and children. She describes her family life prior to the conflict as loving and her community as relatively peaceful. She lived in a predominantly Tutsi community, amongst a larger demographic
of Hutus. She recalls her family's persecution in 1959 and the discrimination that she faced in school. When the genocide began, she fled with her family into the bush, but eventually made her way to the church, as historically Tutsis had been safe there. However, this time, the interahamwe attacked the church and a many members of her family were killed. She escaped into the bush, as the interahamwe left to loot property, but was later discovered; she was maimed her second child was murderd.

Angelique survived until the RPF liberated the area and remembers that she tried to bring water to other wounded victims. She advocates that the perpetrators and complacent witnesses should humble themselves and ask for forgiveness and that the survivors should be willing to accept and forgive. She experienced nerve damage as the result of her injuries and fears having to resort to begging, but nonetheless she espouses forgiveness and considers her life a gift. While she fits within the narrative of typical victim, her commitment to forgiveness reveals her agency within the framework of her own life and attitude.

Testimony of Melanie Mukamihigo:

Melanie Mukamihigo was born in 1948 near to Butare. She continues to live on the farm where she spent her married life. In describing her family's affairs before the genocide, she said they were poor, and that she lived primarily as a single mother, her husband having died years before. She farmed and went to church and took care of her children. When asked about the history of Rwanda, she didn't reveal any predilection for the Hutu Power narrative of years of oppression, but rather focused upon her own memories concerning the revolution in 1959 and the ensuing years of violence. She stated that her family always hid Tutsis and often looked after their belongings if they were forced to flee. Melanie remembered that the RPF was vilified within the community, but she said that her exposure to propaganda was mitigated by the fact that she was too busy to engage in gossip or politics. However, she consistently described the actions against the Tutsi as terrible events. During the height of the violence, Melanie cared for five children whose parents had been killed. Her own children supported her activity, though few other people in the community were aware of her actions. She was threatened once and told her antagonist that she would rather die than give up the children. However, she was not attacked and soon after fled the area with the youngest baby, as the RPF advanced. She was told to go home and found all of the children alive in the liberated area.

Melanie stated that she continued to live together with the children and the grown up children maintained a good relationship with her. Often they would stop by and help her in the house or tend to her land. The government gave Melanie a cow for her actions during the conflict. When asked her opinion about the post-conflict situation, she said that Rwandans must not succumb to divisive impulses and instead focus upon continued rebuilding of the country. It is commendable of the Kigali Genocide Memorial to seek out Hutu voices—without allowing space for genocide denial—as vast numbers of Hutu also suffered and those experiences are often erased.
Testimony of Josephine Dusabimana:

Josephine Dusabimana was born in 1957 in the DRC, but moved to Rwanda when she was 12. She lived in the Idesi commune and witnessed the persecution of the Tutsi in the 1970s. She was married in 1975 to another Hutu. When the genocide began in the 1990s, she remembers expressly that Hutus were instructed to stay at home while Tutsis were told to congregate in the centers of towns. A man fled to her house when the violence broke out and she kept him in her living room. She happened upon another man and also allowed him to take up residence in her house. She went so far as to buy them beer and care for them. However, when her husband returned home, she acted as though the men had come of their own accord, without invitation. She procured a boat for the men and generally assumed control over their care, though her husband allowed her to do so. Later, three other Tutsi fled to her home and she cared for them for many weeks. Her husband was growing scared and demanded that she get the Tutsi out of their house. She relates how she remained deferential, even whilst defying him, because she didn’t want him to ‘turn on her.’ She was able to secure passage for the people she rescued and later her own family had to flee to Goma.

Josephine makes an interesting observation that after the violence against the Tutsi, the Hutu turned on one another, fighting over the goods that had been ransacked in the genocide. Josephine posits that the migration and complete overthrow of the previous paradigm was beneficial for both the Hutu and the Tutsi. She expressed that she maintained pleasant relationships with those that she rescued. Finally, she reiterated the party line that both Hutu and Tutsi should identify themselves merely as Rwandans. Josephine is unique; her actions not only countered the dominant party’s violent rhetoric, but also challenged her husband’s wishes. Despite her ‘defiance’ she remained aware of her subordinate position, necessarily casting her as both victim of society’s standards and as liberated entity capable of incredible acts of resistance.

Testimony of Marthe Sinzabakwira:

Marthe Sinzabakwira was born in 1967 in Mbrir, where she remained at the time of interview. She had been married and raised three children, two of whom were still alive. Her deceased child and husband died in circumstances unrelated to the genocide. When asked to describe her perspective of life before the genocide, she said that the community lived as one and very specifically, said that they lived ‘without misunderstandings.’ She remembered Tutsi children being made to stand in school, and she herself was instructed to identify as Hutu. However, she didn’t mention being inundated with anti-Tutsi rhetoric or being subjected to the Hutu Power victim complex. Marthe says that within her immediate community there lived about five Tutsi families and that she was brought up alongside those children. She says she remembers the skirmishes of the 70s and she ‘learned what happened when you were a Tutsi.’ She recalls houses being burned and ‘fires all around.’ However, Marthe expressed that there was tension in the community over the fires and that
many Hutu would help in building houses. She stated that the leaders often were able to provide some sanctuary in central buildings.

When speaking about the genocide, Marthe spoke at length about the crime of cattle theft. She relates a story wherein her husband was given the meat of cattle stolen from Tutsi and then slaughtered. It isn’t explicit whether the owners of the cattle had been murdered, but she implies that they were. Her husband received the meat and Marthe refused to cook it, disposed of it, and refused to eat meat during the duration of the conflict. During the height of the violence, her neighbor’s young son hid in her household. She was threatened by the one other Hutu neighbor, but she maintains in the interview that very few people knew about her actions during the genocide. Her family was in a good position because her husband brewed and sold beer, which was valuable to the interahamwe. He was conscripted into the forces, but according to Marthe, he escaped and didn’t participate in any killings. However, in order to protect himself and his family, he was expected to provide beverages to the genocidaires free of charge. However, in some way he was successful, as the boy remained safe in Marthe’s care until the conflict was over and his family was fortunately able to return. Marthe sold some of their goods, as well as their cattle, and later gave them the money when they returned to the area.

When asked about her reasons for her actions, Marthe articulated the importance of education, implying that it is crucial to the practice of tolerant behavior. Furthermore, she stated that her upbringing made her courageous and that she considered all human life to be sacred. In the time of reconstruction, Marthe agreed with the ideas of compensation that were circulated in the gacaca, but that often the men who committed the crimes were dead or in exile. As a result, their widows were facing accusations and debts that they were unable to pay. Finally, Marthe said that she maintained a relationship with the boy that she protected and that they were able to speak honestly about the conflict and their experiences. Like Josephine, Marthe defied the actions of her husband, though Marthe appeared less frightened of the consequences than Josephine. Despite her subjugation, she assumed the role of leader in opposing the genocide.

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In discussing and contextualizing the testimony of these women, one must again recognize the importance of the act of testifying, which is necessarily an entry into a political discourse. Some of the women’s testimony is not in direct correlation with the three contradictions of Rwandan women’s rights; however each of the women represent both strength and suffering. For example, there is Josephine who, despite demonstrating some fear of her husband, persisted regardless and rescued multiple Tutsi. Each of the women demonstrate unique manifestations of complex identities, that cannot be reduced to a singular category of victim or liberated body. Fundamentally, these women illustrate that there are no absolutes in the constitution of Rwandan womanhood.

Concerning the interaction between women and the state, the Memorial project
elected not to interview members of the government, but many women allude to the government, or speak about government initiatives that concern them. For example, the HIV positive women all received care from a government mandated genocide response institution. The government supports the project, so it is unlikely that any footage of direct criticism would remain on camera. This potential for silencing in itself, though obviously unproven and perhaps non-existent, displays the pervasiveness of the state’s reach and power. It cannot be known with absolute certainty, but even as these projects are providing a space for women to speak, the editors also possess the capacity to control their voices. To be clear, this critique does not seek to detract from the immeasurable improvements that the RPF government has instituted in society, but rather to invoke a thoughtful analysis of the potential consequences of some of the government’s activity.

Finally, most obviously, these women still face a myriad of issues that are not necessarily applicable to the highly touted successful women who hold government posts and enjoy resources and recognition. As stated, many bear the repercussions of rape and HIV infection. Many are left totally unable to work, while others are must continue to pay their husbands’ debts. More worry for their children and others have lost their property to the state. Not unexpectedly, most are widows and have developed, if not discovered, their abilities to live autonomously, but the media paints their harsh realities as liberated fantasies. The celebration of women’s rights has yet to reach these women whose lives are more complicated than those depicted in a simple narrative of women’s emancipation.

CONCLUSION

Examinations of tensions in women’s rights narratives in Rwandan law and personal testimony serve to illuminate the contradictions within the prevailing perspectives on women. Rwanda’s enormous advancements in legal reform are certainly beneficial to Rwandan society. However, those very reforms must continue to be challenged because, “legal rights alone are insufficient to fundamentally transform gendered power systems, as they do not eliminate the dominant gender regime, its mechanisms of production, or even male dominance — even if they soften some of its effects.”30 Individual experiences must be recognized rather than homogenized, as absolutes have proved themselves to be very dangerous in Rwanda’s history.

The legal texts and testimonies have exposed the contradictions wherein women appear as either victims of patriarchal oppression or emancipated agents — women face the imposition of simplistic definitions, often to provide rhetorical support for political maneuvering or legal initiatives. Furthermore, the sources highlight the difficulty of politi-

cal involvement in a dictatorial state, even as women retain unprecedented influence in the government. Academics congratulate women for their commitment to reconstruction and development of Rwanda, yet their efficiency depends upon the framework of an oppressive regime. Finally, the sources portray the elitism which has, often inadvertently, served to erase the variety of experiences of Rwandan women. The regulatory nature of the regime necessarily and intentionally homogenizes the experiences of Rwandans, to the greatest detriment of the underclass, the most vulnerable of whom are women.

Throughout both primary and secondary documents, the sense of “Rwandaness” is discussed at one point or another by the vast majority of academics who research modern Rwanda. For example, in the final pages of his book, Philip Gourevitch relates an anecdote about Rwandan girls at boarding school, near the border of Zaire, who are attacked after the genocide. A militia attacked them in the night and demanded that they separate by ethnic group. Instead of complying, the girls refused to answer, saying only that they were all Rwandan. In the end, the genocidaires murdered everyone. In this way, these girls became martyrs for the new Rwandan paradigm, in which ethnicity was erased and women’s strength heralded a new era of progress.

Rwandans also acknowledge the concept of “Rwandaness,” including several of the women who provided testimony. However, the construction of a Rwandan identity has been a clear initiative of the regime, both to heal the wounds of the country but also to secure the legitimacy of the RPF. In many ways, commentators have oversimplified “Rwandaness” as a generalized term for Rwandan identity. When it comes to gender as well, the narrative structure of Rwandan discourse, like that found within the law, tends espouse a presumed neutral Rwandan identity. However, it has been the project of this paper, through an examination of women’s rights, to advocate for a redefining of that experience as heterogeneous, complicated, and fluid. In this way, Nadine, Josephine, and the other attestants can reimagine and assemble their own narratives, destabilizing and reorganizing their personal and national identities within Rwandan discourse.
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TESTIMONY


TITLE IMAGE

Dr. Louise Farnam had always been exceptional, Hedy Gutfreund, TC ’18, writes. She was an altruist, a pioneer in the medical field, and the daughter of an elite, influential family – a woman of contradictions. She lived a life unthinkable to most women at the time, earning a medical degree when women did not yet have the right to vote, traveling to China for years when most of her peers had never left the United States. But why? At Yale today, the medical community often remembers Louise as a first. But “first” meant nothing to Louise: goodness, kindness, and service were everything – and it was not a straight, easy, or clear path. This is her story.
On August 5, 1930, an American woman walked alone through the rubble in Changsha in the wake of disaster. It was the middle of the Chinese Civil War of 1927-1937, and the Communist army had sacked Changsha. The morning looked apocalyptic. She walked confidently and carefully, through the small, formerly idyllic city in the Hunan province of China. She took dutiful notes on the destruction, as she observed church after church, mission after mission, torn to pieces. Her notes were objective; her thoughts were not. All of what she had worked for and believed in for the past ten years had been reduced to rubble.¹

When she returned to her comfortable Western home at the mission Yali, she felt relieved and empowered. Yali had seen some destruction, but overall, it survived intact. Unlike other missions, it could be rebuilt. It could influence for good. She could influence for good.

The woman, Dr. Louise Farnam, had always been exceptional: she was a Yale-educated physician abroad in the 1920s. She wanted to be a doctor so she could help people, wanted to go to China so she could make the greatest difference, and now wanted to help Yali recover.

Louise was an altruist, a pioneer in the medical field, and the daughter of an elite, influential family – a woman of contradictions. She lived a life unthinkable to most women at the time, earning a medical degree when women did not yet have the right to vote, traveling to China for years when most of her peers had never left the United States. But why? She was driven by a special type of ambition, a profound desire to serve. She had been taught philanthropy from a young age, and she took the lessons to heart. Was it enough to be a doctor? A doctor at a mission? Was it enough to make a mission a good mission, or were missions doomed to fail? Could she marry, or was that selfish? Was it enough to serve soldiers in World War II, at the expense of her family life? Questions of service, of goodness, and morality preoccupied Louise all her life. At Yale today, the medical community often remembers Louise as a first. But “first” meant nothing to Louise: goodness, kindness, and service were everything – and it was not a straight, easy, or clear path. This is her story.

GENETIC GENEROSITY: 1896-1920

Louise Walcott Farnam was the daughter of Elizabeth Kingsley Farnam and of Henry Walcott Farnam, Jr., an influential professor of political economy at Yale University from 1880 to 1918 and the president of the American Economic Association. He attended Yale for his undergraduate and masters degrees and then studied at the University of Strasbourg with leading German economists.² Henry was the son of railroad executive and philanthropist Henry Farnam, Sr. Henry Farnam, Sr. came to New Haven from a rural home in upstate New York in 1825 to work on the Farmington Canal, after having engineered

¹ Louise Farnam, “Places Visited in Changsha by Dr. Farnam,” August 6, 1930, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence, RU 232, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.
on the Erie Canal. His shrewd business acumen and country-boy charm shot him through the ranks. By the outbreak of the Civil War, he had secured a reputation as a railroad titan. He supervised the construction of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad and the Missouri and Mississippi Valley Railroad, among others. At the same time, his ballooning fortune gave credit to the family name, bestowing his descendants with power in the city and the institution that had given him so much: New Haven and Yale.

The Farnams towered over New Haven high society. Louise’s uncle, William Whitman Farnam, was essentially a full-time Yale man. A member of Skull and Bones (and four other college societies), he studied in Germany after college with his brother and then made Yale nearly a full-time job. He practiced law, but he preferred working as a trustee and treasurer of Yale and serving on various New Haven charitable boards.

At 43 Hillhouse, Henry Jr. ran his family home like a well-disciplined ship. He opposed frivolity, alcohol, smoking, and laziness. His three children, Louise, the eldest, followed by Katherine and Henry, grew up with high expectations for their success. After his time in Germany, Henry adopted an affinity for both the German language and the academic intensity he experienced at Strasbourg. Henry insisted his household speak only German, the premiere academic language of the day. Dinner conversation was elevated and extremely serious.

Despite his harshness, Henry held a genuine interest in – or obsession with – philanthropy. People who knew him claimed they “could scarcely mention any activity of his which was not fundamentally altruistic.” Generosity had always been a Farnam family tradition, but Henry strengthened it. During his lifetime, the Farnam family donated to Yale the funds for a freshman dorm (Farnam Hall), a burnt-down family property (Farnam Memorial Gardens), and their most prized family home the Yale President’s mansion. His generosity also extended to temperance organizations, anti-tobacco groups, and Christianizing missions.

Henry expected his three children to match his altruism and success. Katherine and Henry met his expectations in their own rights, finding their paths as full-time philanthropist and businessman, respectively. But Louise was undoubtedly the star child from a young age. She adopted her father’s expectations so well that when she spoke French in front of strangers, they often mistook her as a native French speaker. Even from her

4 Will Farnam (Louise Farnam’s nephew) in discussion with the author, April 7, 2017.
5 “Obituary: Henry Walcott Farnam,” 175.
6 Rosemary Taylor (Louise Farnam’s daughter) in discussion with the author, April 9, 2017. Rosemary told me an anecdote in which she said that when her friends would hear Louise speaking French, they were so blown away that they would say, “Oh, I didn’t know your mother was
childhood, Louise was always considered the smart one, a bit bookish, wearing big round glasses from her youth. Her family also knew her as kind and selfless. They affectionately called her “Old Bee” throughout her life; she was a bit of an old soul, quiet, wise, and often with her head in a book. Though she had childhood friends, she was often content alone, exploring the old mansion late at night or identifying flora and fauna in the backyard. She made up stories of traveling to Germany with her father in which they would research economic theory together. Her mother recognized in her little girl that a traditional domestic life would not work well for her. Perhaps, thought Elizabeth Farnam, Louise should marry a diplomat, so she could travel, live a life of service, and seek adventure.

Louise was not interested in that, more concerned about her academics than her marriage prospects. She had loftier aspirations than marrying well, young, or at all. Though the Farnam family was yet to see any women as professionally accomplished as Louise, the family’s power and wealth afforded such a possibility. As the suffrage movement gained momentum in the early twentieth century, women’s equality was moderately conceivable, and Louise grew up with more opportunities and imaginative possibilities than women ever had.

Like many women of her social standing, Louise attended one of the Seven Sisters Schools. At Vassar College, the women’s school most closely associated with Yale, she immediately established herself as an outstanding student. In 1912, she graduated with a chemistry degree and high honors, and she was chosen by her peers as commencement speaker. Her Vassar yearbook quotation reads simply and mysteriously, “The clamorous owl that nightly hoots.” The full quotation, from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, is, “The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders/At our quaint spirits.”

Louise, like that clamorous owl, looked upon the world with a particular wisdom, ready to hoot and wonder. Her first “hoot” was her desire to continue her education, a highly unusual goal for most women in 1912. She enrolled in a Chemistry PhD program at Yale, wrote her dissertation on dietary deficiencies in guinea pigs, and graduated in 1916. From there, she voiced her biggest hoot yet: she wanted to be a doctor, a perfect match of achievement and service.

Women had been doctors in the United States since the 1800s, but only rarely, and usually not by way of elite medical schools. Johns Hopkins was the first prestigious east coast medical school to admit women, following smaller medical programs across the

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7 Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 15, 1931, Box 10, Folder 169, Farnam Family Papers, Accession 2004-M-028, MS 203, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.
8 Susan Baserga, “Louise Farnam and Her Colleagues: First Woman Graduates of the Yale School of Medicine: An Exhibit in the Harvey Cushing Rotunda, the Historical Library,” held at Yale University School of Medicine, September 1986-February 1987, book prepared 1987.
9 Ibid.
country that produced pioneers like Elizabeth Blackwell, the first female doctor, in 1849. Medical schools started to accept women in the 1890s, but some of those revoked coeducation in the 1900s or accepted many fewer than before. In 1916, across the country, there were 31 fewer coeducational medical schools than in 1910. Yet around the time that Yale started accepting women, other Ivy League institutions were breaking with the national trend against coeducation. The University of Pennsylvania accepted women into their medical school in 1914, and Columbia accepted women in 1917. Harvard refused to admit women into its medical school until 1945. That year, a Harvard Medical School faculty member said that “profeminists” overlooked “the fundamental biological law that the primary function of women is to bear and raise children.”

The official account of how Henry Farnam’s philanthropy single-handedly opened the school’s doors to women is a bit apocryphal. As the story goes, the Yale Medical School was eager to admit women into the school but for one practical but pressing need: where would women use the restroom? What followed was a supposedly spontaneous exchange of letters between George Blumer, the Dean of the Yale Medical School, and Henry Farnam. These letters revealed that the Yale Medical School would consider admitting “a limited number of women provided that they are graduates of a college and provided funds can be raised to put in a suitable lavatory.” Farnam generously offered to pay for the restroom, the official story goes. It is possible that the Yale Medical School did need money for this bathroom, since it was operating on a deficit as a result of a failing endowment campaign and really would not have been able to finance a new bathroom.

In truth, Dean Blumer and Professor Farnam were best friends, a fact conveniently omitted in the official story. Dean Blumer was already leaning towards coeducation but many of his influential, more conservative colleagues were opposed to it. So he created a fake roadblock – the bathroom – and found the perfect person to un-block it. Discussing it over beer – more likely tea, as Farnam was a temperance activist – they staged the letter exchange, filled with the right amount of drama and tension and culminating in an official offer from Farnam to the President of Yale, Arthur Hadley. “I shall be glad to be responsible for meeting the expenses of suitable lavatory arrangements. Believe me,” said Farnam at the end of his letter officially offering funds. Believe him Blumer did.

The Yale Medical School proceeded with coeducation, but female and male students were

10 Susan Baserga, “The Early Years of Coeducation at the Yale University School of Medicine,” Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, (53: 1980), 186.
11 Baserga, Louise Farnam and Her Colleagues.
13 Will Farnam in discussion with the author, April 7, 2017.
held to different standards even from admission. Women were admitted according to strict quotas that limited their numbers in the class. Only in 1919, three years later, did the school change its policy so that “all qualified students” were admitted “as far as possible.”\textsuperscript{15} In addition, women were required to have completed the pre-medical requirements as well as to have obtained an undergraduate degree, whereas men were required only to have completed pre-medical requirements. That posed no problem for Louise who held a B.A. and a PhD.

In Louise’s class, the class of 1920, there were three women, two of whom completed the program. Louise is considered to be the first female graduate thanks to alphabetical order, placing her before Helen May Scoville, a Wellesley graduate, and Lillian Lydia Nye, who earned both a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Minnesota.\textsuperscript{16} Nye dropped out after two years. Louise finished first in her class, ahead of Scoville – and ahead of all thirty-two men.\textsuperscript{17} She won the Campbell Gold Prize, the highest academic honor at the Yale Medical School.

The women faced numerous intellectual and psychological challenges to graduating. The notoriously-challenging curriculum tested everyone, including the men, who by virtue of their gender did not have to burden disdain from their peers. Female students in the early years of Yale Medical School recalled that they tried to go about their business, often dressing in suits and blouses and riding their bikes to school like men. But they found their peers looked down upon them and preferred not to work with them. One woman in the second year of coeducation recalled that one of her lab partners was “courteous and distance” but felt it was “a trial to him to have a partner in whose presence he had to behave.”\textsuperscript{18} Louise’s academic performance in this environment was no small feat.

Louise was lucky that Dean Blumer was willing to coeducate and that her father could finesse it, but her success in medical school was her own. Her next step was less clear. In the year after she graduated, Louise got to work. She spent some time in pediatrics at New York’s Bellevue Hospital and at New Haven Hospital. She was one of the only female doctors at each of these institutions and faced some prejudices but usually focused more on her patients’ ailments than her personal challenges. At first, she was content with medical work in the Northeast; it fulfilled her deep, inherited desire to serve others using her brilliant scientific mind. But then she heard about Yale-in-China. It was tempting. Elizabeth Farnam had pegged young Louise correctly: she sought service, achievement, and adventure.

\textsuperscript{15} Baserga, \textit{Louise Farnam and Her Colleagues}.
\textsuperscript{16} Baserga, “The Early Years of Coeducation,” 186.
\textsuperscript{17} Baserga, \textit{Louise Farnam and Her Colleagues}.
\textsuperscript{18} Ella Calhoun, quoted in Baserga, “The Early Years of Coeducation,” 188.
THE CHANGSHA CHOICE: 1920-1921

To its founders, Yale-in-China was the next great philanthropic endeavor. It was founded in 1902 by a group of religious Yale students associated with the Yale Christian Association, also called Dwight Hall.\(^{19}\) This founding occurred against a background of an increasingly Christian Yale, often described as “muscular Christianity”, a masculinist, patriotic movement. Three men who had gone to missionary conferences about Christianization were inspired to start their own mission.\(^{20}\) The men, Brownwell Gage, Arthur Williams, and Lawrence Thurston, founded the Yale Foreign Missionary Society in order to take the next step: to establish a Yale-based Christian mission presence overseas.\(^{21}\) This was a common practice for elite institutions; Harvard, for example, also had a missionary presence across Asia, with the goal to help “undeveloped” countries find Christianity and accept Western values.

The Yale Foreign Missionary Society quickly morphed into the Yale-China Association. The group had originally chosen China because Yale had a pre-existing relationship with acclaimed Chinese academics, through student exchanges and professors who visited Yale from China. The founders further understood China to be a place ripe for Westernization at a time of modernization after instability in the late nineteenth century.\(^{22}\) The Yale-China Association launched and decided on Changsha, a beautiful walled city in the Hunan province. Changsha had, until the early 1900s, kept Western influence outside of its walls. Before Yali, Changsha had a mysterious, romantic air that suggested an earlier, nostalgic time and place.\(^{23}\)

With a staff of dozens of Americans, Yale-in-China became a dramatic Western presence in Changsha. Yale-in-China was not simply a Christianizing endeavor of clergymen but also an educational undertaking of teachers and administrators. The mission touted its academics above its Christianizing mission, leading some missionaries to wonder if Yali was Christian enough. The mission advertised that its schools instilled Yale values of honor, responsibility, and manliness, claiming that Yale’s institutions in China were the same caliber as those in New Haven.\(^{24}\) Yali comprised a number of separate schools: Yali Middle School, the College of Yale-in-China, the Hsiang-Ya Hospital, Medical College,

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22 Chapman and Plumb, 10.
23 Ibid., 12.
24 Louise Farnam to Yale-in-China Trustees, 1927, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
and Nursing School. The Yale-in-China mission also included the Bachelors Program, which closely resembled today’s Teach For America. Recent Yale graduates taught in China for one to two years, but the program eventually floundered because of the Bachelors’ limited presence and lack of experience.

From the mission’s inception, there were conflicts between foreigners and Chinese nationals. Unsurprisingly, the Chinese sought more control over the institution, which often came up short on its promise to value local input and grant the Chinese coequal administrative power. Dr. Fu-chen Yen was the first Western-trained Chinese physician to work at the hospital at Yale-in-China, and he argued for equal treatment of the Chinese and American staffs, a problem that persisted long past Yen’s tenure. He helped create the Hsiang-ya agreement of 1914, the negotiation upon which the Hsiang-ya Hospital and Medical College were founded. The name itself denoted the partnership: Hsiang for “Hu-nan,” “Ya” for Yali.¹⁵ The hospital was completed in 1918, four years after the college of Yale-in-China opened. The Yale-in-China mission was still in its infancy but hosted guests as influential Mao Ze-Dong as early as 1919, when he edited several issues of a Chinese journal published by students at Hsiang-ya.

In the early years of Yale-in-China before Louise arrived, there had been East-West and foreigner-native tensions. The choice of China was moderately arbitrary and eventually unlucky: Yali emerged in China amidst extreme political turmoil. Dr. Edward Hume, the leader of the Yale-in-China mission, had to temporarily flee as early as 1910 because of Chinese student protests, a glimmer of the chaos to come. Despite that, Dr. Hume, a Farnam family friend, made a compelling case for Louise to go to China.

Dr. Hume long had his sight set on Louise. Hoping to staff the recently-opened Medical College with competent, accomplished doctors, he aggressively encouraged her to go to China. He urged her that there was no place to “use your training better.”²⁶ Most of all, Hume thought that Changsha needed, “as never before, a woman physician to round out the staff now on hand.”²⁷ For Hume, Louise could balance out a male-heavy staff, but there was something in it for Louise, too. Practicing medicine in America, Louise was an outsider as a woman. Abroad, Louise would join a staff entirely of outsiders. With them, she would share a nationality, a profession, and goals, rendering her gender inconsequential.

Hume’s letters had not convinced Louise, so he brought her to a Yale-in-China meeting at the Church of the Redeemer in New Haven. Yale-in-China sold itself impressively; they advertised that a dollar would go much farther in Changsha and touted their

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²⁵ Chapman and Plumb, 8.
²⁶ Edward Hume to Louise Farnam, January 3, 1920, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence, RU 232, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.
²⁷ Ibid. (Hume to Farnam 1/3/10)
programs as service-driven and challenging.\textsuperscript{28} Louise was sold instantly; as Hume described it, she decided quickly to “heed the call to Changsha.”\textsuperscript{29} The Yale-in-China Mission was thrilled; she was an excellent doctor, and the Farnams were remarkable donors.

Hume at first seemed to be an excellent, caring mentor, but in a letter shortly before her departure from New Haven, he inadvertently revealed that China needed Louise more than Louise needed China.\textsuperscript{30} He needed a female doctor “to round out the staff” in particular ways: in practice areas he felt appropriate for women. He suggested that Louise work in a teaching hospital, rather than in a specialized mission hospital so that she could use her strong interpersonal skills and continue learning. In that teaching hospital, he assumed she would practice obstetrics – he thought it “a natural thing for a woman to think of Obstetrics.” In that same letter, he backtracked and admitted that she should decide based on her “own mental equipment for Obstetrics as compared with Medicine or Pediatrics.”\textsuperscript{31} This suggestion nonetheless continued to presume Louise’s preferences and skills based on her sex, urging her toward pediatrics because she was a woman. Dealing with little children in China, he said, meant handling those children and their mothers, “and if other things are equal a woman ought to do this better than a man. Let us find another person for Obstetrics and agree that you shall take Pediatrics as your branch of internal medicine.”\textsuperscript{32} Pediatrics was a good fit for Louise, but Hume continued to conflate Louise’s gender with her professional trajectory. Hume’s gendered treatment of Louise typified the attitudes of her male colleagues – and society at large – in America.

Louise worried more about moving to China than about Hume’s stereotypes. Hume knew Louise well and probably made an informed choice for her in the end, but Louise was too distracted preparing for her major life change to worry about Hume’s musings on her faculties. Louise had spent nearly all her life in New Haven, at an institution to which her parents were deeply connected. They were not thrilled to see her go, but they supported the missionary work of Yale-in-China. And, the mission was closely connected to New Haven and Yale; they knew the trustees, could attend Yali reunions in New Haven, and could check up on her through many different Yale men in China. Most of all, they wanted Louise to succeed and to serve, and this was the path she had decided upon.

Louise was organized and considered every aspect of her life analytically, particularly her trip to Changsha. She exchanged letters with executives of the Yale-China associa-

\textsuperscript{28} 1920s Publicity Materials, Yale-China Association Records: Scrapbooks, Articles, and Clipping Files, 1900-1964, Box 146, RU 232, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.
\textsuperscript{29} Edward Hume to Rex Wheeler, January 25, 1949, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{30} Edward Hume to Louise Farnam, October 27, 1920, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
tion to determine details of her insurance plans, get the dates of pre-departure meetings to attend, and arrange the logistics of her ships. She wrote Dr. Hume detailed letters that read more like formulas or instructions for a lab experiment. In one, she made a list of all her questions, including: should she bring a Ford to Changsha? What would the living arrangements be? How could she convince her father that she would be comfortable, happy, and useful? Could she suggest a few names of other female doctors who might be good for the mission?

These questions were astute. In China, she would experience a wide range of living arrangements, would constantly be trying to reassure her father of her safety, and would be eager to yield administrative influence over Yali. Hume already knew Louise, but these letters among other things made him confident that she was a “remarkable woman, with initiative, research spirit, [and] a considerable experience with children in the medical wards here.” Hume believed in her, but she recalled that strangers sometimes found it harder to believe that she was a missionary than that she was a doctor. Those prejudices mattered little once she set sail.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE: 1921-1923

Though Louise had carefully considered many questions before she boarded her ship to China, she had many more to ask. Can missionaries dance? Louise wondered nervously to herself as she watched secular women on The Russia change into ball gowns. As she sailed from Seattle (after a few weeks on the Canadian Pacific Railway) to her destination of Peking, she realized she had not considered what it meant to be a missionary. A Yale-in-China executive had suggested she bring a ball gown on The Russia for her two-week long journey, “as apparently there never was a boat yet that crossed the Pacific without a fancy dress ball,” but now she questioned if she should wear it. She was not much for frivolity, but she grew up dancing at balls, socializing properly and modestly. Some of the other missionaries on the boat strongly disapproved of dancing, and Louise realized it was a question of whether, as a missionary in China, she could dance. She decided she would not, eschewing the dance floor for an evening looking upon the Pacific, thinking about her purpose.

Most of her thoughts about her trip so far had been about the medical work she would do, not the implications of doing Christian work. Had she just wanted to practice

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33 Edward Hume to Mason Knox, October 26, 1920, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
34 Louise Farnam to Edward Hume, June 18, 1922, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
35 Louise Farnam to H.H. Vreeland, December 4, 1921, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
pediatrics, she could have done it anywhere. Had she wanted to explore the world, she could have married a diplomat. But she was a missionary. Though there for medical work, she bore a Christian purpose. This, she felt, was how she would help the Chinese, as she later reflected:

*I arrived in China in the Autumn of 1921 filled with the idea that a great and ancient cultured people was looking to me and my likes for instructions in some of the branches of the Science which they had not happened to develop, and feeling sure that Christianity was growing and developing by leaps and bounds in extremely fertile soil.*

Altruistic and positive, Louise believed she could help. She was convinced that she could bring them Christianity and felt no qualms about it. Christianization was humanism. Throughout her life, Louise was a kind, giving person, and she believed westernization and missionary work were good. Serving Yali well was serving others well. Christianization was intertwined with the causes of the day, what Dwight Hall supported in the 1920s. So Louise became intertwined with Christianizing, too.

To Louise, Yale-in-China meant freedom and service more than it meant religion. Louise was raised a devout Protestant but gave that up later in life without much difficulty for a less religious husband. Her children remember little about religious life growing up, besides vague recollections of sporadic Sunday school sessions. More than religious issues, Louise understood that China would provide her a new opportunity, free of gender norms, to serve and practice medicine well. In a place where everyone was far from home, no one would know her as a first, no one would pressure her into marriage, no one would suggest she sit by the fire or run a home, no one would hold her to quite the same standards of femininity. Instead, they would let her work her hardest.

Louise was thousands of miles from Henry’s influence. She could make decisions for herself, while still adhering to his expectations of altruism and success. Her first obstacle to success was mastering Chinese. Pre-medical requirements for Yale included French and German, but she had no grasp of Chinese when she arrived. To learn Chinese, Yali sent her to a beautiful compound at the American Board – filled with Western-style houses and a Gothic Church – where she would attend Chinese classes five hours a day. Louise was immediately frustrated that she studied Chinese only five hours a day and lived in English for the other nineteen.

A week later, she found herself singing in Chinese to the tune of “Jesus Lover of my Soul!” with a Christian Chinese family. Mr. Cheun, the patriarch of the household, was

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36 Louise Farnam, 1926 Reflections, Undated, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
37 Rosemary Taylor in discussion with the author, April 9, 2017.
38 Baserga, *Louise Farnam and Her Colleagues.*
39 Louise Farnam to Young People’s Association, January 15, 1922, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
the language school’s Dean’s secretary, and the Dean had arranged for Louise to move into a Chinese household. Her American friends in Peking scoffed, saying she would get fat on Chinese food or freeze on the cold days without the high-quality heating the foreigners enjoyed.  

But Louise loved it. She began with a limited Chinese vocabulary and was forced to improve quickly. She was also immersed in Chinese culture in a way most missionaries never were. Yale-in-China had an unspoken code that foreigners – the Yalies in China – would live according to Western standards and enjoy a higher standard of living than the local Chinese. Professor Farnam was appalled when he learned that Louise was not following the carefully wrought rules of the luxurious missionary game. “Well!” he wrote to her after hearing of her new arrangements, “We are always glad to hear from you, but your announcement that you were going to live in a Chinese family did give us something of a jar.” He got “the shivers” thinking of Louise sleeping in a room with a brick floor and a brick bed and “no proper heat.” Henry seemed concerned not just that Louise would be cold but that she’d be giving up some of her elevated foreigner status and power in exchange for greater knowledge of the language and culture, a trade he felt was imbalanced. Louise latently expected that foreigners should live more comfortably than the Chinese. Her time in the Cheun house altered her experience from a typical missionary one, but it did not alter her beliefs. She later reflected, “How could the Americans eat Chinese food or live in unheated rooms? Why should not the Chinese teachers [teachers at the Peking mission, native to China] continue to live in the same way to which they had been accustomed all their lives?” And why should she not live a relatively luxurious life as she had been accustomed to? In her years in China, it was normal for her to take a boat to cooler areas in the hot summer or for her father to wire her money to improve her standard of living. 

Though she always maintained a high standard of living in China, her perceptions soon shifted. Right before she left for Changsha from Peking in the spring of 1922, the Chinese teachers at her language school demanded better standards of living. As Louise understatedly put it, they noted the “inequality between their condition and that of their American colleagues.” Louise convinced herself, however, that the Chinese still maintained “a great deal of respect for the foreigner” and that the “prestige of Western people was good.” Westerners often did receive privileged treatment. In Peking, where Communist tensions were brewing, a common practice involved marking carts carrying rice or fuel with

40 Ibid.
41 Henry Farnam to Louise Farnam, January 9, 1922, Farnam Box 155, Folder 1486, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam, MS 203.
42 Louise Farnam, 1926 Reflections, Undated, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
43 Ibid.
British or American flags to protect them from Communists. Whether or not it was out of “respect,” the Communist agitators were not yet willing to cross foreigners.

And Changsha itself looked peaceful. Louise arrived in Changsha excited to get to work, taken aback by the town’s natural beauty. Changsha lay in the middle of a rustic natural setting, and Yali was enormous. With the middle school, high school, college, hospital, and medical school, Yali took up a massive amount of physical space. Amidst rivers filled with traditional Chinese boats and steep mountains Louise planned to summit, Yali added a track and field course, a baseball field, and numerous Western-style homes for the missionaries. After Yali entered the previously untouched Changsha, other missions followed through the early 1910s. Changsha natives felt this change deeply, from the difference in the built space to the presence of Americans in Western clothing scurrying through the Changsha marketplace speaking in broken Chinese.

Changsha’s walls could not keep out politics either. Louise went to Changsha and had a relatively normal first few years, unaware of the rising political tide. Shortly before Louise arrived in Changsha, in the late 1910s, Mao Zedong had catapulted his political career from Changsha. Mao, the founder of the People’s Republic of China, went to a teachers’ training school in Hunan, Changsha’s province. In Changsha, students at all sorts of schools – including mission schools – started to subscribe to Communist ideology.

THE TROUBLES: 1924-1930

Through the eyes of an observer, Louise’s experience in Changsha seems daring, romantic, even heroic. This story would be a simple one to tell: Louise was there from the start, as students started protesting Western influence. She remained at Yale-in-China caring for patients as the Communist Revolution of 1927 raged on, staying as long as possible in Yali to do the most good. Louise, a trailblazing female doctor, found herself in an extraordinary situation, through years of turmoil. At the frontlines of the revolution, analyzing every detail and ailing every wound, she worked tirelessly for the good of the Chinese people, as she had set out to do.

That is not exactly what happened. Though Louise served her patients passionately, her China years were, with exceptions, shockingly quotidian. In 1930, as war raged on, she wrote, “My own routine is quite unaffected by all the troubles, though I think I find a friendlier spirit all the time. It is a great place for work.” How is this possible? How could Louise – and Yale-in-China – live so normally when a civil war raged on that threatened their lives as well as the values Yali brought to China. How could Louise, who wanted more

44 Ibid.
45 Louise Farnam to Palmer Bevis, July 19, 1930, Box 62, Folder 135, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
than anything to use her great mind for humanitarianism, ignore the realities and contradictions that Yali faced? This is a fascination of her years in Yali.

Louise loved routine, and she established one quickly. There were the ill patients at the hospital, and there were the administrative crises at the mission. The former was her formal role; the latter, a volunteered one. Louise took on administrative needs to an extreme degree, once offering to escort a chronically ill nurse home to America and even to personally find her a more suitable job at the Red Cross in Virginia.\(^\text{46}\) The nurse stayed, but Louise’s selflessness during unexpected intra-mission crises never wavered.

Louise was so busy with her patients and her teaching that she often went days without writing to her parents. She was always a dedicated and prolific correspondent – Louise as a young adult had once gotten into a rare argument with her father when she accidentally took too much stationery on a trip (“Dear Pa, I never meant to take the whole family’s supply of note paper,” she wrote).\(^\text{47}\) She enjoyed her busy schedule of teaching at the Hsiang-ya Medical College, rote medical work, and administrative bureaucracy. She was excellent at all her work, and she also felt it was purposeful. Improving the mission was working toward a common good, and, in her medical work, she had dozens of meaningful interpersonal connections a day with Chinese children, mothers, and students.

In 1924, medical students at Hsiang-ya struck in support of nationalism. An alleged unfair expulsion of a student incited the strikers, but their larger aims followed the trend across the country of anti-foreign movements. In particular, the Hsiang-ya strikers accused their teachers of being inefficient and old fashioned and “being representatives of imperialistic nations, because they were in China under the protection of unequal treaties.”\(^\text{48}\)

Hume reacted peculiarly to the crises. He found them “ominous” because they were not about xenophobia (aimed at Westerners) but about nationalism. Hume’s analysis seems a difference without a distinction: the Chinese nationalist movements wanted a country without foreign influence. But Yali forged ahead, unaware of the contradictions its imperialist practices carried. Under the nationalist principles, Yali should not have existed.

Blind to the paradox of their mission work, Hume and other Yali leaders responded to growing tensions by making administrative changes. After the 1924 strikes subsided, Hume, Louise, and others sat down with Chinese students to negotiate. On June 2, 1925, certain that they had found a solution. The parties calmly gathered around the table, the Yali representatives confident in their diplomacy and power. The outside world had dif-

\(^{46}\) Louise Farnam to Edward Hume, April 25, 1922, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.

\(^{47}\) Louise Farnam to Henry Farnam, April 20, 1921, Farnam Box 155, Folder 1486, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam.

\(^{48}\) Louise Farnam, 1926 Reflections, Undated, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
ferent plans, and moments into the meeting, a student burst into the room, pulled Hume aside, and told him of May Thirtieth. The room got cold.

On May Thirtieth, the British police force, the Shanghai Municipal Police, had fired on thirteen Chinese protestors, resulting in virulent anti-foreign protests that dwarfed the 1924 students strikes at Yali. Hume was shocked by May Thirtieth, an event that dramatically revealed wide, vehement opposition to his vision of China.

Yali changed little, except for putting more Chinese professionals in leadership positions. Louise seemed to change her mind about mission work. She reflected on May Thirtieth, saying it was “extremely natural, though very painful for those who have been in contact with the process” for the missionaries to be on their way out. She developed a more nuanced understanding of her role in China. Yet she still worked fervently to keep Yali the way it was.

News of chaos reached America, and the Farnams worried, particularly in light of their upcoming plans to visit Changsha. But within the walls of Yali, it was calm. Louise confidently assured them that the political situation would pass, and they took her word for it. In their letters preceding the trip, the political conditions were a mere footnote; Louise was certain she would stay in Changsha through the instability. Henry wrote to Louise, “What you say about the desirability of sticking to the post in spite of the averse wave and in the hope of a reverse wave before long, agrees absolutely with my views.”

The Farnams visited in the summer of 1925, and Louise found herself concerned with being a dutiful daughter once more. She worried that her father would find Shanghai unimpressive and that her mother would not have enough blankets.

They had a lovely visit, and Louise was a wonderful host, but the political “wave” did not reverse. She impressed them with Shanghai, showed them the mountains of Changsha, and gave them sufficient bedding. But in the wake of May Thirtieth, outside of the lovely Westernized walls of Yali and unbeknownst to Louise and Hume, the National Revolutionary Army consolidated against the Communist Party. Since the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, China had been in what was known as the Warlord Era, constantly pulled between the Kuomintang (The Nationalist Party) and the Communist Party. In response to the growing Communist threat, the National Revolutionary Army became an outgrowth of the Kuomintang. Led by Chiang Kai-Shek, the Nationalists began to mobilize in partnership with the government of China against the Communists.

“I hear of a pretty dark picture of the political future in Hunan. This has not had a very stimulating effect on the Trustees,” said secretary Palmer Bevis in a letter to Louise.

49 Ibid.
50 Henry Farnam to Louise Farnam, May 9, 1925, Box 155, Folder 1491, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam.
51 Palmer Bevis to Louise Farnam, May 5, 1926, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association
Yali – in New Haven and in Changsha – was more concerned with the resulting administrative issues of the turmoil than its political gravity. Louise continued her medical roles; but after being at Yali for a full five years, she became more involved in the bureaucratic aspects of the mission at a time when the mission was struggling both philosophically and financially.

From New Haven, the politically oblivious Palmer Bevis addressed intra-mission concerns with Louise, like the finances of the mission and a flooded dormitory. Bevis had his own ideas about how Louise could appeal to the “surprising number of wealthy women in this country who subscribe large amounts to all sorts of things.” He urged Louise to “appeal to them in groups as well as individually in a way that none of the rest of us could, though I do not know what your father would think of you doing such a thing. I hope he would approve [of your fundraising] provided of course that it would not over-tax your strength.”

Though strikingly patriarchal and patronizing to the woman he acknowledged as the only female equal to him in the organization, the most shocking aspect of these letters is that Yali was truly going about its usual business during such turbulent times.

That same summer, in July 1926, when Chiang Kai-shek passed through Changsha, Yali had no idea what was about to hit them. The Nationalists took control of Changsha, and Louise wrote to the Yale-in-China trustees that the troops were well-disciplined and that the new government officials were easy to deal with. Still, this was nothing but an administrative intricacy to Louise and Yali. During that visit, Chiang Kai-shek, on a break from the fighting, found that he had an impacted wisdom tooth. Louise, with the help of another doctor, removed it. It was great press for the Yale Mission, which was looking to send home any good news. “Even a general in the midst of a war may suffer from toothache, like the rest of humanity,” an editorial entitled “Dentistry and Discipline in China’s Civil War” read, “and a person able to relieve him may turn the course of history.”

The Communists began to take hold of Changsha, and the Hunan province responded strongly. Yale-in-China officials believed that their students were loyal to Yali and to Americans but felt pressured into joining radical demands, being trained “to think that anything that had ‘national’ in the name was really for the good of China.” Louise and others felt that Yali had done nothing wrong.

As Louise herself stated, she hated “going back on things unless it was absolutely

Records: Staff Correspondence.
52 Palmer Bevis to Louise Farnam, August 10, 1926, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
53 Louise Farnam to Yale-in-China Trustees, 1927, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
54 “Dentistry and Discipline in China’s Civil War,” Editorial from The Outlook, October 26, 1926, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
55 Louise Farnam to Yale-in-China Trustees, 1927, Box 62, Folder 133, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
Yet in the face of warfare, Yali decided it was necessary for Louise and all the staff to go back to America. On December 26, 1926, the Yale-in-China governing board voted to close the campus. The staff slowly emptied out of Yali, and Louise was one of the last to leave. She, like a few others, dreamed of rebuilding the financially struggling mission. Before she left, she sent a fundraising plea to her family, but they just wanted her home.

Though Yali was set to close, officials worried about the implications of the chaos on the educational goals. In February 1927, Louise, still in Changsha, wrote to her parents quoting a Yale-in-China official, who said, “it seems to me incumbent on the friends of Yale-in-China to exercise every possible patience in giving a reasonable time for the clarification of the situation in central China and that, in the meantime, both moral and financial support should be given to those who are directly in charge of this important educational undertaking whose history has been so notable an expression of Yale ideals and Yale spirit.”

A few miles away from the fighting, Yali was still so isolated that they worried more about the Yale ideals and simply “clarifying” the situation than their role in a China in crisis.

Eventually, Louise went home. With the exception of a few summer furloughs, she had been gone for nearly six years. Her parents were elated to have her home, but she was distracted, thinking about all the work she left behind in China. In late 1928, after a year in New Haven, Louise was one of the first people to return to Yali, taking on a strong leadership role through budgeting, hiring, and revamping the mission. She believed firmly that, to serve well, she must serve the mission.

She did an objectively good job improving a mission barely avoiding collapse. By 1929, as the Great Depression ravaged the United States, Louise was peacefully in China, hitting her administrative stride. She had raised money, made new friends (Chinese and American), evaluated the quality of premedical courses, and acquired new hospital equipment. She loved it. She was empowered, writing home to many people telling them what a tight ship she was running and feeling as though she was successfully serving, from providing pediatric care to organizing the finances. She oversaw the first female medical students enrolling at Hsiang-ya; she had her eyes on expansion. She found that the “outstanding impression is that more foreigners are needed, and that they would probably be as well treated as we have been,” a strong statement after years of turbulence.

From her perspective, it would be impossible for the mission to rebuild without more help.

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56 Louise Farnam to Edward Hume, April 25, 1922, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
57 Ibid.
58 Louise Farnam to Palmer Bevis, September 21, 1929, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
59 Ibid.
Her days in the summer of 1930 were peaceful but foreboding. She boasted to her family how she watered zinnias, hoped for chrysanthemums, and sat contently in the 92-degree heat. Only the middle of her back was damp, she said cheerily, thanks to an intermittent breeze. In the same letter, she wrote that the Communists were close, and that she would be worth a lot of ransom to them. She was not afraid.

The Communists were indeed close, and days after she wrote that letter, between July 27 and August 5, missions across the country were ransacked, the most chaotic days of Louise's ten years in China. The moment she heard Communist soldiers marching outside her door, she followed the instructions she had been given to board the Palos gunboat, sent by the United States to help Americans.

For five nights, she heard gunshots, cries for help, and the commotion of young soldiers pillaging Changsha. It was unprecedented for a woman of both her social stature and accomplishment in the early 1900s to find herself in such a position. Knowing the concern her family felt and the expectations that she would be afraid, she cabled home nonchalantly on July 30, that she was well and on the gunboat, worrying more about the safety of the mission than her own: Hospital safe. Yali unknown. Other missions burned. On August 5: Palos remaining. Yali not burned. Her father expressed his panic in his cables back to her: Cable received. How can we help? Then: Loving greeting. Where are you. Family. He urged her to come home, to take a vacation, to get out of the chaos. But Louise stayed – she hated going back on her word and on her goals. To Louise, it was clear that now was the time to stay. The morning of August 6, when the fighting stopped and Nationalists regained control over Changsha, she chronicled the disaster and then was ready to return to normal. She was persistent, determined to reestablish Yali as a beacon of good. The schools at Yali and the missionaries’ homes were untouched, but the Hsiang-Ya Hospital was completely looted except for beds and mattresses and the remaining twenty patients who could not leave, many of them Nationalist soldiers. The Italian Catholic Mission Church was totally empty, and the American Church Mission’s church was completely sacked.

Louise made it out unscathed thanks to good luck and the American gunboats, and

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60 Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, July 26, 1930, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
61 Telegram from Louise Farnam to Henry Farnam, July 30, 1930, Box 155, Folder 1495, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam.
63 Telegram from Henry Farnam to Louise Farnam, August 7, 1930, Box 155, Folder 1495, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam.
64 Telegram from Henry Farnam to Louise Farnam, August 10, 1930, Box 155, Folder 1495, Farnam Family Papers: Series II, Henry W. Farnam.
65 Louise Farnam, “Places Visited in Changsha by Dr. Farnam,” August 6, 1930, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
she saw no other next step but to get the school back off the ground. Louise saw that Yali had not been touched by the Communists, and she wanted to take advantage of Yali’s good fortune. Normality returned fast, thanks to her efforts. By the beginning of 1931, she felt “as if no invasion had ever taken place,” with enrollments soaring and the school thriving. The Yale-in-China trustees later credited her as almost single-handedly keeping the mission afloat after the 1930 crisis. Somehow, in the bubble of Yali and despite the fighting that raged outside, Louise did her work as if everything were normal, and she continued her devotion both to the school and to the other foreigners in Changsha.

**IN THE WAKE OF DISASTER: 1931**

The Chinese Civil War did not end until 1937, but for Yali in 1931, it was over for the time being. For Louise, a new chapter was about to begin. As her administrative power over the mission increased, her care for others never waned, especially not for Jess. Jess Norelius, was a nurse at Yali. According to most of her coworkers, she was not particularly competent, got no recognition for her work, and almost got fired on several occasions. She was physically awkward. Though relatively slender, she moved so awkwardly that when she rode horses, another nurse commented that she really just bounced along like Sancho Panza, embarrassingly and uncomfortably. Her big brown eyes often darted around the room, unsure where to focus. Louise was far more confident and comfortable than Jess, but the two of them connected strongly. They traveled together during some of the rockier years and spent much of their time together. Yet Louise certainly held the power in the relationship. When the Communists came to Changsha, for example, Louise stayed on watch while she made sure Jess was escorted to a boat. When Jess’s performance suffered at work, Louise suggested Jess bolster her performance by working on a nurse’s handbook that Louise had started. She improved, trying to get recognition in the Alumni Weekly, but it was only when Louise confidentially wrote to Yale-in-China trustee Fay Campbell that Jess was featured.

It is difficult to say whether Louise took on a motherly, sisterly, or even husbandly role with Jess. Louise was kind and caring to everyone in her life, but she spoke about Jess

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66 Louise Farnam, Speech at Center Church Parish House, September 17, 1931, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
67 Yale-in-China Trustees, Resolution upon Dr. Louise Farnam Wilson’s Death, January 29, 1949, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
69 Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 4-8, 1930, Box 62, Folder 134, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
70 Louise Farnam to Arthur Bliss Dayton, December 7, 1931, Box 62, Folder 135, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
far more affectionately than anyone else. Never in her years in China did she demonstrate so much care for anyone in particular, generally spreading around her service and kindness to her patients, friends, and colleagues.

That was until Mr. Hugh Brian Wilson. Brian changed everything for Louise, and the first thing he changed was her relationship with Jess. He was an English manager of the Asiatic Petroleum Company, based in Changsha. As some of the few foreigners in Changsha, the staffs of Yali and the A.P.C mingled often. Jess had developed a crush on Brian, eager to find a man to marry. She fell for the kind Brian, admiring his unconventional but endearing looks – graying brown hair, a reddish moustache, and a stocky build.

Brian paid no attention to Jess. He had fallen for Louise, who, nearing forty, had completely ignored him and saw herself as the old maid everyone predicted, with no possibility for romance. Louise had told Jess that Brian was certainly the nicest man in Changsha, but she rebuffed his early advances for Jess’s sake. On New Year’s Day of 1931, Brian started to pay a lot of attention to Louise, despite Louise’s sense that she had been so “horrid” to him that he must have thought she truly disliked him. After that night, Brian continued to pursue Louise. In an effort to help Jess, Louise would set up picnics between A.P.C. employees and the Yali staff with the express purpose of maneuvering herself away from the group to allow Brian and Jess alone time.

Her plan failed. On June 1, five months into the new year, Brian had enough. He called Louise and asked her to accompany him on his speedboat that afternoon. She accepted but felt guilty about Jess. So when he asked her out again, she refused. He persisted, and he invited her out during a weekend Jess was away. That day, Louise and Brian spent seven hours on the boat together. Two days later, they went to a party. Walking home in the pouring rain, sloshing through mud, they embraced and realized they could no longer keep their romance a secret.

Nine days after their first date, Louise wrote to her parents that she was probably getting married. Logistically, this announcement was very complicated, as letters took weeks to deliver, and she would be in New Haven for the summer just a few weeks after sending the letter. Though quite confident in her relationship with Brian, she worried. What if she changed her mind, what if it was a bad match, what if her parents were simply opposed? And would they just stop getting along in the next few weeks? She devised a clever plan, in which she would telegram her parents right before she left Changsha to ensure them that the wedding was still on, and then the Farnams could announce it at home. She felt guilty that she would be announcing the engagement to people in Changsha she cared little about before announcing it to her dear parents. But she felt it necessary, especially because they had to announce their engagement in China to be able to spend time alone with

one another – to determine if it could work.\textsuperscript{72}

She had many concerns. First, she worried that she was selfish to be getting married, and she found herself “just torn in two at the thought of how selfish it seems at this point in my career to be going off and getting married.”\textsuperscript{73} It was a bit ironic that she had lived such an altruistic life and found it selfish to finally make a decision for her own happiness, but her concern was well-founded. Her parents’ understanding had been that she would return to New Haven – or at least the United States – to stay with them as they aged. Marrying Brian meant staying with him as he finished his time in Changsha, then moving to England. As she always said, she hated going back her word unless it was absolutely necessary.\textsuperscript{74} This was absolutely necessary.

She apologized profusely to her parents, but her bigger concerns were personal. Brian was thirty-five; she was nearly forty. He was English; she, American. He was brought up in the Congregational Church, he drank, and he smoked; she grew up in the Protestant temperance movement. She described him as “rather slow and quiet”; she, always on the go. Her biggest concern was that she had three degrees, and he had nothing beyond a high school education.\textsuperscript{75}

Louise felt vulnerable for the first time in the face of the unknown. She worried that Brian – in a place less secluded than China – would forgo his affection for her in a place with younger, more classically marriageable women. She had faced many uncertainties in her life, but she had skirted areas like romance where gender performativity mattered. As an outstanding student at an all women’s school, a PhD student, a Yale medical student, and as a physician in China, her role as a woman was secondary, as she wanted it to be. Entering marriage, love, sex: that was dangerous, unexplored territory. She wrote to a friend that her decision would “unsettle your opinion of me forever. I am thinking about getting married. And the man who is considering the risk of taking the old girl on is: 1) English, 2) Business man, 3) only 35 years old, 4) never went to a university, and 5) was an aviator in the war. I think these are the main things against it. Oh by the way his name is Hugh Brian Wilson.”

Hugh Brian Wilson made her happy. And she was excited to take on the classically female role that she had rejected in pursuing her professional success. As the boat carrying her June 10 letter sailed away, she wrote her parents again about her plans, this time far less cautious. In the interim between the two letters, she had realized that domesticity would give her a new way to be “happy and useful,” as she would never do anything where

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Louise Farnam to Edward Hume, April 15, 1922, Box 62, Folder 132, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{75} Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 10, 1931, Box 10, Folder 169, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
she could not see herself as useful. She admitted that “it seems very pleasant to think of one’s first interests being domestic,” but had no plans to give up practicing medicine.\textsuperscript{76} Her devotion to career and service would not change simply because she got married. Louise’s concerns about her incompatibility with Brian turned into poetic musings about how opposites could be compatible. She found it lovely that he played music well by ear and was slow to read it, while she read music perfectly and could not play at all by ear. The only objectionable difference that remained, she wrote, was that he drank and smoked. She reminded her parents that she believed drinking was a vice but also that she believed they would work it out.\textsuperscript{77}

Now that they could be open about their relationship, they could address issues that might have later led to the marriage’s failure, as Louise said. Jess had forgiven her, too.\textsuperscript{78} She cabled her parents, directing them to announce the engagement. They received it before her detailed explanation of her engagement, though she had sent that letter two weeks before. Since that letter, she had two weeks to become confident in her decision and two weeks to fall more in love, until she was ready to telegram:

> “Wish you many happy returns of the day. I am engaged to be married. Both of us quite sure it was the right thing to do. Await letters. Expect to arrive on third approximately. Leaving for America according to plan. Announcing engagement here. Loving greetings.”\textsuperscript{79}

Loving, decisive greetings. For the first time, she made a decision not centered around Yale, her father, or service: she made a decision solely for her personal happiness. The day she sent the telegram, she wrote her parents apologizing again for telling them via telegram – “but 10,000 miles are 10,000 miles.”\textsuperscript{80} Her letters prior to her departure gushed of her realization that it was a great match. “Despite all our differences in education,” she said, “we have very similar backgrounds and we both thought about each other that he or she was ‘our kind,’ meaning our family’s kind.” Brian had told Louise his mother was, like her, of an “Old England Congregational conscience.”\textsuperscript{81} The Farnams might have been comforted by that.

Louise had never felt like this before. In her correspondence, she tried to sort out her surprising feelings with her family and on her own, but the glacial pace of communication pained her. Gradually, Louise’s parents, Brian, his parents, and New Haven society joined the conversation, lifting Louise’s confidence in her engagement. Louise’s parents an-

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 19, 1931, Box 10, Folder 169, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
\textsuperscript{79} Telegram from Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 26, 1931, Box 10, Folder 169, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
\textsuperscript{80} Louise Farnam to Henry and Elizabeth Farnam, June 19, 1931, Box 10, Folder 169, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
nounced the wedding in the New Haven Register as she had requested, saying, “Dr. Louise Farnam to Wed Englishman.” Louise and Brian’s plan to announce had worked, and their next task was to make both sets of in-laws happy, especially the Farnams.

Was it a dream? Brian felt unworthy of Louise’s love. As soon as Louise departed for America, Brian wrote the Farnams flowery letters, trying to prove himself honest and devoted. He acknowledged how disappointed they must have been to lose Louise but wrote that he believed, “comparisons are sometimes not in the best of taste, but I cannot help thinking, although your loss is great, what I am gaining is so much greater.” He felt incapable of expressing his feelings, but he admitted, “When I think about it all I just sit and gasp at this marvelous thing that has happened after all the years of waiting, and I sometimes wonder how it can possibly be that I am the one Louise loves and wonder if it isn’t all a dream.”

Brian was concerned with ensuring the less dreamlike aspects of love were taken care of, and he wrote to Mr. Farnam that a doctor has “given me an absolutely clean bill of health. I have never had any disease of which I should be ashamed.”

When the Farnams saw how happy Louise was and realized how in love Brian was, they gave their official blessing. The Wilsons, too, were thrilled with their new family in the United States, saying it was “an honour to be connected with such a family and [we] could not wish for any better for Brian's wife to belong to.” Brian and Louise wanted to marry immediately when she returned to China, which meant that Louise’s parents, neither of whom were in good health, could not make it across the ocean in time to attend the wedding.

In late September of 1931, Louise sailed back to China. For a reason that neither documents reveal nor their children understand, Brian and Louise were married in Japan. It was a small ceremony, far removed from both of their worlds. Their wedding date had been set for October 16, but as their New York Times wedding announcement reported, Brian was late. His ship, the President Cleveland, was delayed thirty hours due to a hurricane. The ceremony went smoothly the next day, except for Louise smacking her head on an arch. It was one of the first things Louise wrote about to her parents. That moment is now part of family lore, as her eighty-year-old daughter Rosemary recalled recently.

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87 Rosemary Taylor in discussion with the author, April 9, 2017.
It was “an odd way to start one’s wedding,” Louise said. “I do hope you have been having a good time, because we have been having such a good time.”

That was another difference between Brian and Louise: when he was happy, he gushed. When she was happy, she stated it simply.

THE MARITAL BLISS: 1932-1945

A month into their marriage, Louise and Brian had found a nice home in Changsha, got a dog named Paddles, and purchased two armchairs. They soon developed a characteristic routine at night, sitting by the fireplace for warmth. Brian relaxed in the armchair, while Louise sat “half upright writing on my knee as it is much too chilly to leave the fire. I am nonetheless comfortable however.” In her classically stiff manner, Louise still managed to be affectionate and loving, enjoying the surprises of marriage. She hadn’t predicted “how pleasant it was going to be to share your letters,” she wrote to her parents. “I am perfectly amazed at Brian’s perspicacity, in foreseeing it enough to bring it to pass.”

They both continued to work in Changsha. They got back just in time for Louise to attend the Yali Founder’s Day twenty-fifth anniversary celebration on November 15, 1931, at Yali, a celebration that glorified American hobbies and Western values, including a parade that mimicked American military men celebrating the Fourth of July and an afternoon of military drills, track events, and a baseball game. The celebration – documented in a black-and-white silent film – points to a remarkable valorization of American values, even after a rocky twenty-five years in existence.

Brian started to hate his job and was eager to leave at the end of his term. Louise continued her work at a floundering but more stable Yale-in-China, bolstered by the twenty-fifth anniversary mark. They had missed Louise during her summer away, and she came back to just as much responsibility as before. She also returned to Jess’s issues. Against the backdrop of a friendship tainted by what Jess must have perceived as the ultimate betrayal, Louise secured Jess reappointment (“her good qualities outweigh her poor ones”), and she enlisted her father to demand a special award for Miss Norelius, whose work, he said, was underappreciated year after year.

91 Louise Farnam to Arthur Bliss Dayton, August 23, 1932, Box 62, Folder 135, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
After a year of bureaucratic success, Louise left Yali with hero status. The Yale-in-China Trustees passed a formal resolution in honor of “her devotion to her medical work, proficiency in Chinese, and strength of character.” They wished her happiness in her “new enterprises” after a decade of service.

As they departed China, Louise and Brian were excited for their new enterprises. They settled happily in a home near his parents in Woldingham, England. Louise loved the adventure, a life she had chosen totally for herself. She could still do good there and serve in various ways, but she was now separate from her family’s looming influence. She loved the newness of England, where she was no longer Dr. Louise Farnam, daughter of Professor Henry Farnam, but Dr. Louise Farnam Wilson. She was proud to change her name, though Brian questioned her decision to retain her maiden name as her middle name, an American custom. She was excited to explore her world of domesticity, writing to her mother enthusiastically about the dishes and the stationery that she and Brian picked out together. She was surprised to find that she liked running the kitchen and serving Brian’s parents, a type of service she had rarely performed.

In New Haven, Elizabeth Farnam worried – and grieved. Henry Farnam died at the age of 79 in 1933, a year after Louise moved to England. Elizabeth and Louise mourned together, despite their distance. For Louise, the loss was significant, and it exacerbated her guilt for moving overseas, both because she never got to say goodbye to her father and because it left her mother more alone. After having corresponded fiercely with her father for years, Louise sadly admitted to her mother that “every once in a while, it hits me so hard that I can’t talk things over with him.”

When Elizabeth was not mourning Henry, she was still concerned Brian’s family was not good enough for Louise. Elizabeth thought that Louise was too smart for her “present type of life” and worried strongly about any concerns Louise ever voiced about her in-laws. Louise had once let on that Mrs. Wilson was intimidated by her status and achievement, and Elizabeth worried about it for many letters. Finally, Louise told her that Mrs. Wilson – Mrs. W., as Louise affectionately called her – was no longer intimidated by Louise and instead started asking her medical advice on health and diet.

This simple domesticity and life with in-laws was not altruistically or professionally satisfying for Louise. She took a job in the pediatrics ward of a local hospital, stepping into

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Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
93 Yale in China Resolution, November 1932, Box 62, Folder 135, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
94 Ibid.
95 Louise Farnam to Elizabeth Farnam, June 29, 1934, Box 11, Folder 177, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
96 Ibid.
97 Louise Farnam to Elizabeth Farnam, July 14, 1934, Box 11, Folder 178, Farnam Family Papers: Additional Material, Accession 2004-M-028.
the place of a doctor who had recently retired. In a decision she kept from her mother – Louise’s letters to her mother show no hints of her plans – Louise and Brian were planning to adopt a child. In her mid-forties, her child-bearing years were over, but her energy for motherhood was boundless. She had cared for children across the world but longed to care for her own.

At forty-five, Louise became Mummy. In 1935, Louise and Brian adopted Christopher from a woman who had been sexually assaulted by her employer. A year later, the Wilsons adopted Rosemary from a pianist who had become pregnant out of wedlock. This pianist was Louise’s friend, so Rosemary’s adoption, unlike Chris’s, was private. Mummy, as Rosemary remembers her, was loving and kind – when she had the time.98 Though Rosemary is nostalgic for her childhood with Louise, her nostalgia conflicts with reality; she has few examples of fun, simple times with her Mummy. Even with children, Louise had little time for fun. One of Rosemary’s few frivolous childhood memories was riding on a tricycle in the country to meet relatives at a faraway coffee shop. Rosemary was trying to keep up, cycling on three wheels while everyone else was on two, Louise giggling as she encouraged Rosemary to keep up. “That’s the only time I can remember doing something frivolous with her,” she admitted.99 Louise also rarely cared about anything as superficial as her appearance. Whenever Chris and Rosemary saw her in even the slightest bit of makeup, they’d shout, “Mummy’s a madam tonight! What is she doing?” Rosemary, in retrospect, recalls that the makeup was much better than Louise’s characteristic glasses – “those awful round glasses, they didn’t help, did they?”100

Brian had returned to a different job in the petroleum industry in England, but when World War II broke out, his priorities shifted drastically, even with two young children at home. He spent the weeks away, working as an engineer in the Air Force. For that, he eventually received a Distinguished Flying Cross for preventing an ill-timed bomb from dropping. When he was around, he was not used to the life of rations, and Louise and the children would cringe silently as he devoured their butter and sugar.101

That is, if Louise was around. She, too, was busy at wartime. She took on the work of four or five male doctors who joined the war effort. Her young children darted around at home, cutting up their knees and bruising their elbows, but they had to wait until Dr. Mummy was finished as Dr. Wilson to be attended to. Louise always meant well, but her obsessive devotion to her professional work of caring for others often meant leaving her kids running wild and lonely. Still, Louise wanted her children to engage in some of the luxuries the American Farnams would have valued. Rosemary recalled a time her Mummy

98 Rosemary Taylor in discussion with the author, April 9, 2017.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
surprised her at a picnic in the middle of World War II, a time marked by drastic rations and little fat in their diets, with a jar of bacon sent from Henry and Elizabeth. “I’ve never tasted anything quite like it,” said Rosemary.\textsuperscript{102}

After the war, there was little time for Louise to have either uncharacteristic frivolity or even normality. Instead, she got sick.

**THE END: 1945-1949**

Right after the war, Louise was diagnosed with cancer. The science at the time was weak, and she left no records indicating any particular type of cancer. But today, Rosemary strongly believes that Louise’s biggest secret caused her cancer: she was a heavy smoker. “Oh, she smoked and smoked and smoked,” said Rosemary.\textsuperscript{103}

Did Louise’s single, seemingly innocent rebellion kill her? Louise had adhered more fiercely than any Farnam to the family values of generosity and kindness. But she let go of the Farnam family taboo against tobacco, at some point during her years in China or England. She felt she affected only herself by adopting, as her father would say, the disgusting, anti-Christian habit of smoking. She was an expert in medicine, but no doctors knew the links between smoking and cancer. Had she known the science, she never would have smoked: she believed in medicine so profoundly. In her one break with Farnam values, she cut short her life.

Louise battled her cancer with characteristic determination. She knew more about what was happening to her body than her doctors did, but she could not do anything about it. She and Brian bought a farm, which each thought was for the other. Brian wanted to give it to Louise as a place to rest, and Louise wanted to give it to Brian for something to care for and occupy him after she died. Louise stayed in a bedroom upstairs, while her family tried to continue life as normal downstairs. It was hard to go on without her. One day, Rosemary and Chris begged their father to have cake with their tea in the middle of the day. Brian sent Rosemary upstairs to ask Louise’s permission, and Louise sent her down with some sort of poem that said, no, you have to have bread before cake.\textsuperscript{104} She continued to be in charge, still running a tight ship.

Five years into her battle, in 1949, Dr. Louise Farnam Wilson died at the age of 52. Rosemary and Chris had never seen their father cry. “Wasted so much time, wasted so much time,” he said to his children, regretting all the years he had been gone for weeks at a time during the war.\textsuperscript{105} Grieving, Brian sent Rosemary and Chris to boarding school

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Rosemary Taylor in discussion with the author, April 9, 2017.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
and worked alone on the 275-acre farm. He became more isolated and, after a few years, begged them to come back. But they had adjusted to life on their own at school and scoffed at the local schools because they were less rigorous. The Farnam value of hard work lived on in the Wilsons. They stayed in boarding schools throughout their educations.

Louise’s death shook New Haven, where she had already left an unfillable gap in her mother’s heart. Louise and Elizabeth had been in close contact, but Elizabeth was also ill – so ill that she never learned that Louise had died before her. Katherine, Louise’s sister, found it both a tragedy and a blessing that Elizabeth never knew. Elizabeth never got to hear the glowing tributes from those in New Haven grieving for her. Yale-in-China colleagues were devastated. Dr. Phillips Greene felt Louise “was one of the very finest people I have ever known.” Margaret Muir was assured that Louise’s “memory will live on and on in many hearts she has touched.” Dr. Reginald Atwater asked, “Couldn’t the world use a dozen like her now?” Dr. Edward Hume felt that “more than achievement, more than honor received, Dr. Louise was a great Christian personality, sunny, full of cheer, full of good sense.” He called her a “great Christian doctor” and a “competent scholar.”

Brian remarried five years later and had two sons. Rosemary settled into administrative jobs throughout her life and, at 48, became a private pilot, breaking into the boys’ club of flying. She wishes Louise could have seen it. Chris, following in the Farnam family tradition of philanthropy, spent most of his career working in nonprofits in rural England after growing up on the farm Louise and Brian had purchased. He later found his biological mother and cared for her. Louise would have been proud.

EPILOGUE: LOUISE’S LEGACY

Old Bee, Dr. Farnam, Dr. Wilson, Mummy. Louise Farnam was a daughter of privilege who exceeded her family’s high expectations, a devoted and respected physician and missionary, a beloved wife and a cherished mother. She was a trailblazer and an altruist. She left complex legacies of female achievement and service. In all her roles, she wanted to use her extraordinary mind to help others, often overwhelmed with different ways to serve. She was restlessly, relentlessly giving and combined passion, principle, and proficiency in everything she did.

A long-term evaluation of Louise’s legacy on Yale-in-China became impossible two

106 W. Reginald Wheeler to Katharine Harvey, May 20, 1949, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
107 Yale-in-China Trustees, “References to Dr. Wilson in Letters from Former Staff Received This Week,” January 2, 1949, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
108 Edward Hume to Rex Wheeler, January 25, 1949, Box 62, Folder 138, Yale-China Association Records: Staff Correspondence.
years following her death because Yali was gone, and her work became entangled with the politics of imperialism. After suffering significant damage during World War II, Yali fell to the new Communist government in 1951, without a Louise to save it. Today, Yale-China narratives try to forget the missionary era. But Louise’s motives at Yali were pure and heartfelt. She cared deeply about those around her and about sharing the great bounty of her remarkable talents and good fortune.

The Yale Medical School actively remembers Louise, though not for her time in China or for her unique trajectory. Instead, it relegates her to the mere legacy of a “first” by naming the first women’s bathroom after her. The Louise Farnam Memorial, as the restroom is sometimes called, fails to acknowledge Louise for her service and brilliance or comprehend the depth and significance of her accomplishments. Instead, the bathroom conflates Louise’s unique life with a long list of Farnam-donated land in New Haven. This reluctance to recognize groundbreaking women as full, complex humans limits the imaginative possibilities of what female achievement means. Louise was much more than her father’s generous donation, and she surpassed his loftiest dreams.

Louise overcame barriers at Yale Medical School, cared for children in Changsha, fell in love, helped the war effort in Britain, and built a family. She lived a colorful, full life at a time when most women from a background like hers devoted themselves to philanthropy and home-making. By breaking societal molds, by defying convention, and by living a life of goodness and generosity on her own terms, Louise paved the way not just for coeducation but for future women to break expectations of femininity, to create their own paths of success, and to live deeply – for themselves and for others.
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**TITLE IMAGE**

Even though the Cultural Revolution severely limited scientific progress and denigrated thousands of academics, it revolutionized China’s health policies and health infrastructure. In doing so, it set the stage for one of the most important discoveries in the history of anti-malaria medicines. Ultimately, Chelsea Guo, BK ’18, argues, the Cultural Revolution was necessary for the success of China’s malaria campaign through the transformation of China’s health, especially among the rural areas, the newfound focus on China’s “treasurehouse” of ancient medicine, and the enthusiasm of joining Project 523 of scientists who had been hindered from practicing their passions.

By Chelsea Guo, MY ’18
Written for “The Global Crisis of Malaria”
Professor Frank Snowden
Edited by Sally Ma , MY ’21
INTRODUCTION

In 2015, YouYou Tu became the first citizen of the People’s Republic of China to win the Nobel Prize in Medicine. 4 decades ago, Mao Zedong gave a 39-year-old Tu the challenge of her life: to discover a cure for malaria. Amidst the imbroglio of the Cultural Revolution, Tu turned to ancient Chinese medical books and found her answer. And on October 5, 2015, the world recognized her life’s work, discovering Qinghaosu, or Artemisinin, currently the most effective treatment for malaria, at last.

Tu’s Nobel Lecture was titled “Artemisinin – A Gift from Traditional Chinese Medicine to the World.” A gift indeed. In a clinical study conducted in 1982, 47 out of 48 patients with malaria displayed a “radical cure” response, as defined by complete riddance of the Plasmodium falciparum parasite within 6 days with no reappearance within 28 days, when treated with artemisinin.

Today, artemisinin is widely used in combination therapy with known antimalarial agents mefloquine and Fansidar to treat millions.

A discovery as groundbreaking and life-saving as that of artemisinin does not come often, which begs the question: what were the circumstances that led to such a discovery? Artemisinin came as a result of an urgent demand, draconian policies, and a 2000 year old treatment. During the Vietnam War, when hundreds of soldiers of both sides succumbed to chloroquine-resistant malaria, North Vietnamese leaders approached Mao to find a cure for malaria. In response, Mao created a clandestine military project, Project 523, to be headed by none other than YouYou Tu. The project was divided into two parts: one to develop synthetic compounds and the other to investigate traditional Chinese medicine. Tu recalls, “The reason I was appointed as the head of the Project 523 research group was partially due to the fact that I received training on both modern pharmaceutical sciences and traditional medicine and due to my hard work.”

However, Tu’s research came at the time of the Cultural Revolution, when intellectuals were denigrated as one of the nine black categories in society. Mao openly detested intellectuals and blamed them for humiliating China for the last century. In creating Project 523, he focused on traditional Chinese medicine, hoping to restore China’s image as a wise, venerable nation. Project 523 became a great opportunity for many scientists to help in this secret venture and escape from being assaulted, imprisoned, or murdered.

2 Jiang, Jing-Bo, Xing-Bo Guo, Guo-Qiao Li, Yun Cheung Kong, and Keith Arnold. "Antimalarial Activity Of Mefloquine And Qinghaosu."
3 Neill, Ushma S. "From Branch to Bedside: Youyou Tu Is Awarded the 2011 Lasker~DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for Discovering Artemisinin as a Treatment for Malaria."
In this essay, I will examine the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the malaria campaigns in China, specifically focusing on the discovery of artemisinin in Project 523, which came about during the some of the most unfavorable conditions for academics of the 20th century. The structure of this essay is pyramidal; I will cover roughly the same time frame in each section, but each section builds upon the prior. I begin with an examination of the main ideologies and history of the Cultural Revolution in relation to science to build a sturdy foundation for my analyses; then I go on to examine the changes to China’s health infrastructure as direct results of the Cultural Revolution; with both the Cultural Revolution and the new health changes in mind, I will examine the effects on the general malaria campaign; this symphony of malaria eradication building upon a health transformation building upon self-induced nationalism will culminate in the final movement on the discovery of artemisinin as a case study of the direct and indirect impacts of the Cultural Revolution on one of the most successful aspects of the campaign. Through this structure I will show that, even though the Cultural Revolution severely limited scientific progress and denigrated thousands of academics, it revolutionized China’s health policies and health infrastructure, setting the stage for one of the most important discoveries in the history of anti-malaria medicines. Ultimately, I argue that the Cultural Revolution was necessary for the success of China’s malaria campaign through the transformation of China’s health, especially among the rural areas, the newfound focus on China’s “treasurehouse” of ancient medicine, and the enthusiasm of joining Project 523 of scientists who had been hindered from practicing their passions.

**MR. SCIENCE AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has become synonymous with a period of devastation and chaos in the scientific field. “China, during the Cultural Revolution, turned against Western science and is still laboring to overcome the devastation that resulted.”4 This lack of nuance in understanding the Cultural Revolution is common among many scientists, historians, and politicians. However, reassessing the Cultural Revolution leads to different conclusions: that the country did and continues to rely on the creativity of scientists for the strength of the nation.

A brief retracing of the lead up to the Cultural Revolution is instrumental in determining Mao’s true attitudes towards science. In 1914, Chinese recipients of the American Boxer Rebellion Indemnity Fellowships established the nationalist Science Society of China, whose goal was to import Western science methods. Many of these students sought

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to “save China through science.”

Around the same time, the New Culture Movement emerged in response to the failure of the Chinese Republic, founded in 1912, to address China’s problems. Leading intellectuals included Chen Duxiu and Lu Xun, who rebelled against their Confucian educations and embraced Western-style solutions. On January 15, 1919, Chen published an article in his publication, *New Youth*, that was titled “In defense of the New Youth against accusations.” In it, he argued:

In support of Mr. Democracy, we must oppose Confucian teaching and rites, the value of chastity, old ethics and old politics. In support of Mr. Science, we must oppose old arts and old religions. In support of both Mr. D and Mr. S, we must oppose the “national essence” and old literature… How many upheavals occurred and how much blood was shed in the West in support of Mr D and Mr S before these two gentlemen gradually led Westerners out of darkness into the bright world. We firmly believe that only they can resuscitate China and bring it out of all the present darkness of its politics, morality, scholarship, and thought.

Later, Will Durant, an eminent historian, would characterize this movement: “The whole world of education has been transformed. The schools have thrown Confucius out of the window and have taken Science in.” Science had such a profound influence of Chinese intellectuals that some scholars recognize scientism as the foundation of modern Chinese thought.

The demand for Mr. Science rose throughout the 1910’s, and Mr. Science had a key presence in the May Fourth Movement of 1919. To protest the Treaty of Versailles that robbed China of the Shandong Province that had been occupied by the Germans, five thousand Peking University students marched near Tiananmen. They called on some of the principles of the New Culture Movement, exclaiming that modernization is key to increasing China’s power. Starting with the May Fourth Movement, a new “anti-imperialist, anti-feudal culture of the broad masses” emerged and endured the national and international crises of the 20th century.

In support of the May Fourth Movement, within two years, Chen would found the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The founders of the People’s Republic of China highly prioritized science and technology. At its inception, the temporary legislature, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference adopted a “Common Program” that dedicated

6 Chen, Duxiu. "In Defense of the New Youth against Accusations (Xinqingnianzui-an Zhidabianshu)." *New Youth*, 1919.
three articles to science. Article 42 focused on promoting love of science; Article 43 focused on developing “the natural sciences in order to serve industrial, agricultural, and national defense construction” and stated that “scientific discoveries and inventions shall be encouraged and rewarded and scientific knowledge shall be disseminated among the people;” Article 44 focused on encouraging a “scientific-historical” viewpoint when examining politics. When the 1954 Constitution replaced the “Common Program,” its Article 95 also focused on science and safeguarding freedom to “engage in scientific research.”

Based on this, many scholars agree that scientism was an influential ideology on political outcomes at the founding of the CCP. Historian Grace Shen claims that scientism was “second only to nationalism in cutting across political and social lines.” However, according to Danny Kwok in his prominent *Scientism in Chinese Thought*, “science in China was important only in the realm of ideology and social theory and that, as a failure to grasp real science, scientism never really helped science itself to advance.” Science at this time was primarily used to legitimize the theories of the national government for many Chinese citizens. This means that the May Fourth Movement left a gap in its enthusiasm for science, a gap of true substance within the scientific field, and a gap that would be filled with the maxims of Mao.

Later, Mao would adopt many of the founding principles of the May Fourth Movement, but tweak his interpretation of the events, especially those related to scientism, to fit his own priorities. Mao is often seen as anti-science, but throughout his political career, Mao actually supported the use of science to further China’s international power. During the anti-Japanese War, the Chinese scientific community was weakened by invasion and occupation. Mao, during what he called the War of Resistance, joined with the Nationalists in resisting Japanese threats and claimed that “the calamity of our nation is extremely grave, and only a scientific approach and a spirit of responsibility can lead our nation on the road of liberation.” This appreciation of science was not new, but rather long-standing. Previously, in 1939, Mao had stated that “throughout the history of Chinese civilization…there have been a great many great thinkers, scientists, inventors…and we have rich store of classical works.” In 1940, he published his treatise “On New Democracy,” in which he claimed that science was a vital aspect of a new China under a “cultural revolution” with the goal of moving from ignorance and backwardness to enlightenment and progressivism.

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He declared that “the new-democratic culture is scientific” and that this scientism applied to the masses, infusing the common working folk with this egalitarian view of science. In the same treatise, he described the May Fourth Movement as part of a “world proletarian movement” and claimed that it “prepared the way for the founding of the Communist Party in 1921.” Furthermore, he called the Movement a cultural revolution, stating that “there had never been such a great and thoroughgoing cultural revolution” in all of China’s history. Altogether, this suggests that Mao not only lauded the ideologies behind the May Fourth Movement but especially supported its scientific values. His dedication to scientific institutions is further supported by the fact that he gave all the backing he could to China’s two main science organizations, Academia Sinica and the National Academy of Peking, which grew rapidly at this time.

However, Communist China soon followed a socialist path that veered from this commitment to science. Mao adopted a Soviet model for industry for science and remade the Academia Sinica into the centralized Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Moreover, he decided that scientists would no longer supervise science, letting a State Planning Council take over. The State Planning Council paid no attention to increasing science education nor encouraging more students to enter the field. The resulting dearth of scientists was noted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), who, in its 1960 Chinese symposium report, predicted that “the shortage of senior scientists is likely to persist for a long time, well beyond 1967.”

The stage was now set for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which is more generally known as the lost ten year period of 1966 to 1976, ending after Mao’s death. The accepted narration of the Cultural Revolution is that Mao and his “Gang of Four” tried to eliminate the “poisonous weeds” of the “bourgeoisie” and “feudalists.” Mao urged the people of China, especially the younger citizens, to expand the socialist cause and rebel against those who contributed to the danger of capitalist restoration and class struggles. They shut down universities and scientific institutes and punished elite, bourgeois intellectuals who were accused to have aided Mao’s capitalist rivals. This was all done to rectify the CCP of over-bureaucratization and maintain an atmosphere of revolutionary vigor and egalitarianism. When the CCP first came into power, it underwent rapid development towards conservative policies, which Mao took to be a marginalization of his revolutionary

14 Ibid.
15 The Soviet Type Economic Planning (STP) focused on centralized investment decisions and linear optimization.
17 Afterwards, the new leadership under Deng Xiaoping focused on modernization and undoing the damage of the Cultural Revolution, with a goal of supporting innovation and reestablishing China as a leading scientific nation.
direction and radicalism. According to a pamphlet published by Peng Shu-tse in 1967, "Because of Mao's many mistakes, his standing is low among the intellectuals. It is understandable why they are opposed to deifying him." This opposition undoubtedly contributed Mao's hatred of intellectuals as he felt that they impeded upon his authority. Thus, the "May 16th Circular" and the "Sixteen Articles" called for an attack on the bourgeois stands of the "academic authorities."

Scientists seemed to be insulated from these attacks, at first. The 1966 *Peking Review* encouraged "broad masses" of scientists to "carry their soaring revolutionary enthusiasm." However, the Gang of Four, the radical faction of the CCP, stated that "the more learning one has, the more reactionary one is," lumping scientists into this "reactionary" group. In response, the CCP overthrew the "capitalist road" chief of state Liu Shaoqi at the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee. An article in the *People's Daily* reported that "Liu Shaoqi and other political swindlers peddled such sinister trash that genius creates science and attempted to exclude the broad masses of workers, peasants, and solders from scientific research." At the peak of the Cultural Revolution, the elite scientific class, criticized for their disinterest in politics and the masses, were humiliated at public rallies, forced to work manual labor jobs in factories and farms, psychologically tortured, and sometimes beaten to death. Among the 170 scientists in the CAS in Beijing, 131 were attacked. 41% of the total CAS staff were persecuted to death. Over ten million intellectuals and students were banished to the countryside to be re-educated by the peasants. Most of the scientific journals ceased publication. Joseph Needham, in *Nature*, observed that the Gang of Four was "fundamentally anti-intellectual, and inimical to scientists and technologists in particular."

However, in addition to the leaps in medical care that will be addressed in the next section, the Cultural Revolution actually brought about significant advances in science. China launched its first satellite in 1970; there was a breakthrough of synthesizing the

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18 Farien, Antonio. "Background to the Purge in China."
22 *Communique of the Enlarged 12th Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China: (adopted on October 31, 1968).*
24 Oldham, C. H. G. "Science Travels the Mao Road."
26 Needham, Joseph. "Rise and Fall of the Anti-intellectual 'gang' ."
27 China launched its first satellite, Dong Fang Hong I, on April 24th, 1970, becoming the fifth spacefaring nation.
world’s first biologically active protein through X-ray diffraction; and there was remarkable progress on nuclear weapons. Mr. Science was still very much relevant; the Cultural Revolution simply redirected him to be more meaningful to the broader mass. Chairman Mao, one of the most important links between the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution, clearly embraced scientism in his essay “On New Democracy” and used Mr. Science as a driving force to mimic the May Fourth Movement, which he had seen as the great cultural revolution of Chinese history. Thus, to claim that Mao was simply against scientism and scientific progress would be to overlook some of the main foundations of his great Cultural Revolution.

In fact, one main goal of the Cultural Revolution in regards to scientism was to demystify science and make it more accessible to ordinary people to better China’s population as a whole, as Mao emphasized self-reliance and avoiding dependence on foreign nations. American visitors at this time noted that most of the laboratory equipment had been made in China, including microscopes, incubators, and pH meters. According to the Chinese Medical Journal,

“Only when working among the people and for the people can science grow and flourish. The previous Chinese political system would not allow science to develop among the people. The political system of New China is aimed at promoting science among the people and to assist our scientists to become scientific workers of the people and for the people.”

To narrow the gap between experts and workers and eliminate scientists as an elite class, Peking University faculty members were forced to spend time doing manual labor instead of teaching and conducting research while peasants were employed in laboratories. Additionally, intellectuals had to consider the opinions and suggestions of untrained peasants in their academic decisions. The overarching idea was to establish a system based on merit, not class, but the result was that science, especially microbial biology, were better comprehended by the lay person.

So how did Mao’s Great Cultural Revolution and his relationship with Mr. Science affect China’s campaign against malaria? In the next two sections, I will attempt to answer this question. I will first examine the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the health infrastructure of China, the improvement of which I will directly link to the successes of the malaria campaign. In the subsequent sections, I will make a more direct connection and argue that the strong nationalism fervor left behind by the Cultural Revolution allowed for an effective dissemination of insecticides, drugs, and aid; created a dearth of scientific

28 Thomson, Elspeth, and Jon Sigurdson. China’s Science and Technology Sector and the Forces of Globalisation.
29 Mao, Zedong, On New Democracy, 1940.
30 Farley, John. Bilharzia: A History of Imperial Tropical Medicine, 203.
opportunities, making Project 523 a particularly alluring means to practice science; and formed a loyalty to traditional Chinese medicine that ultimately brought about the creation of the world’s most effective anti-malaria drug.

**MEDICAL CARE AND THE MASS LINE**

Public health and the malaria epidemic were closely linked during the time of Project 523’s inception. Thus, it is important to examine the health context in which Mao set out to conquer malaria.

Known as the “Sick Man of Asia,” China had one of the world’s poorest health statuses and highest death rates in the early 20th century. The crude death rate was around 25 deaths per 1000 people each year, more than double that of the technologically developed countries at that time. The country was plagued with just about every known form of infectious disease: cholera, leprosy, plague, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, typhus, smallpox, trachoma, hookworm disease, clonorchiasis, kala-azar, filariasis, malaria, paragonimiasis, schistosomiasis, and venereal diseases. Fighting these diseases were no more than 40,000 doctors treating China’s population of 540 million people, meaning that the ratio of patient to doctor was no better than one doctor for every 13,000 people. By comparison, this ratio in the United States and other developed countries at the time was around one doctor for every 1000 to 2000 people. To exacerbate the problem of doctor shortages, most of the doctors trained in Western medicine stayed in the large cities of Eastern China, like Hangzhou, Fuzhou, and Jinan, leaving 85% of the population who lived in rural areas without adequate health care. Even if medical resources were adequate, most of the population would still have faced an economic barrier. At a GNP of around $140 per capita, most people in rural China could not afford the superior medical care offered by large hospitals.

However, in only 20 short years, China transformed from a disease-ridden land into a country in which virtually every person had access to medical care and an invested interest in the health and sanitation of the country. China was able to virtually eradicate smallpox, cholera, plague, and venereal diseases. How was China able to accomplish such feats? The root of the answer to this question lies in Chairman Mao’s philosophy on health.

31 "Death Rate, Crude (per 1,000 People)." *The World Bank.*
33 "Physicians (per 1,000 People)." *The World Bank.*
He believed that, in a country that is overwhelmingly rural, the people constitute the primary productive force and consequently, the wealth of the nation. Therefore, the country must prioritize health problems because healthier people lead to more production, which in turn leads to economic development.

With the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, a series of programs targeted to address health problems emerged. China had never had a national healthcare system before its establishment. At the first national health conference in August 1950 in Beijing, the Chinese summarized their main principles in these programs: 1) preventative medicine should be emphasized, 2) Western medicine should be combined with traditional medicine for better service to the people, 3) attention should be paid to the health of the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and 4) health work should be carried out in coordination with full participation of the people.36 Prior to the Cultural Revolution, the leadership of the Ministry of Health made radical changes to the medical training programs. “Middle” or “secondary” medical schools were set up to train “assistant doctors,” higher medical schools were expanded and shifted towards the interior of China, and “centers of excellence” were set up to teach new medical techniques in areas of need.37 By 1965, over 100,000 new doctors were trained and 860 new hospitals were built.38 However, a large shortage of doctors still existed and most of the new doctors remained in the larger Eastern cities, leaving China’s rural areas without adequate health care.

Because of the failure of the Ministry of Health to equalize health services across China, Mao singled it out in a statement made on June 26, 1965. Known as the “26th Directive,” his claims included that “the Health Ministry renders service to only 15% of the nation’s population,” that it “should better be renamed the Urban Health ministry to the Lords’ Health Ministry,” and that more emphasis should be put on rural areas.39 Additionally, during this time, professionals still put more attention on curative medicine than preventative medicine, prioritized scientific medicine over traditional medicine, and were

36 Taylor, Kim. Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945–63: A Medicine of Revolution; At this conference, Mao passionately exclaimed: “Unite the personnel in all areas of the work of medical and health care – with new medicine traditional medicine, Chinese medicine, Western medicine – to forget a consolidated united front and strive to launch the great work of the health care of the people!” Mao, Zedong, Michael Y. M. Kau, and John K. Leung. The Writings of Mao Zedong, 1949–1976, 131; Later, Li Dequan, the Minister of Health, wrote “with China estimated as needing five million hospital beds, five hundred thousands doctors and three to four million auxiliary medical personnel of all kinds and with tens of millions of people yearly suffering from preventable communicable diseases and epidemics it is obvious that a short route must be found to the problem. And it has – keep people from getting sick.” Quoted in Hillier, S. M., and J. A. Jewell. Health Care and Traditional Medicine in China, 1800–1982, 151.
38 Sidel, Ruth, and Victor W. Sidel. "Health Care Services."
increasingly concerned with raising standards instead of appealing to the masses. Thus, Mao pushed for a few directives to address these issues: 1) the time in medical school should be limited to 3 years, 2) less time should be devoted to medical research and more should be devoted to prevention, and 3) all doctors should practice in rural villages.

In 1966, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution and brought with it the implementation of these directives through the Rural Cooperative Medical Scheme (RCMS). In addition to eliminating elitism from science, Mao sought to eliminate it from health care. All urban health workers were sent to the countryside for “reeducation” by the peasants; these health workers in turn trained rural medical workers. Research laboratories closed. Almost all scientific publications ceased. Medical schools stopped admitting students.

RCMS was China’s first attempt at a full-coverage health network and was executed by more than 1.7 million “barefoot doctors” and “worker doctors.”40 They were trained for 3 to 6 months in environmental sanitation, health education, immunizations, and first aid in country hospitals to provide preventative care and treatments while working and being paid as peasants. As China Reconstructs reported, “With every brigade having a barefoot doctor who knows how to use the apparatus, make smears, and examine the cells, early discovery has been made much easier.”41 Movies including Red Rain and Spring Shoots honored barefoot doctors as the “poor peasants’ own doctors.”42 As a result, barefoot doctors achieved high political and social status in their communities. They were assessed each year by the Poor Peasants Association on “evaluations from the local population, the degree of correct prescriptions, the expense of the village health station, the fulfillment of the requirement of working 120 days in the field, the volume of TCM plants and herbs collected, and the fulfillment of the task of epidemic prevention.”43

The RCMS also encouraged gender equality. One of the barefoot doctors in each community was required to be female, and in fact, more than half of the barefoot doctors were women. Housewives were trained for a month to become “Red Medical Workers” in their neighborhoods and learned history taking, simple physical examination techniques, the uses of Western medicines, acupuncture, and preventative measures, such as sanitation, immunization, and birth control techniques. Most importantly, they learned that there are no barriers between them and becoming health service workers.

There was a hierarchy of medical services that began with the Red Medical Workers and barefoot doctors, who provided care for patients with minor illnesses. If the cases were

40 Wei, Chunjuan Nancy., and Darryl E. Brock. "Barefoot Doctors: The Legacy of Chairman Mao's Healthcare." In Mr. Science and Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution: Science and Technology in Modern China, 251-80.
41 Quoted in Wei and Brock, 92.
42 Ibid., 252.
more serious, they were referred to commune hospitals, then to county hospitals, and finally to urban referral hospitals. A typical county was made up of multiple communes which was in turn made up of many brigades. Each brigade had a small clinic staffed by barefoot doctors; each commune was staffed by Western-trained doctors, nurses, and technicians. According to historian Yang Nianqun, of the treatments provided by barefoot doctors, “indigenous medicines accounted for 10 percent, TCM [(Traditional Chinese Medicine)] 60 percent, and Western medicine 30 percent.”

This system was recognized in the 1978 World Health Organization (WHO) Alma Ata Conference as a model of “Health for All.”

Indeed, a societal commitment was made to providing health services to those with the least amount of access to it.

Regarding infectious diseases, large community efforts sprung up in campaigns against the spread of these diseases. Health propaganda played a large role in the success of these campaigns. Mass meetings were held in every community to educate the people on the handling of infectious diseases and prevention. Mao believed that the way to get people invested in preventative measures was to involve them in the work and eliminate superstitions of the feudal mind. He focused on the “mass line” and the idea that ordinary people can bring about great change to the new Communist country.

In the 1950s, Mao launched the Patriotic Health Campaign to exterminate mosquitoes, flies, rats, and sparrows and to sanitize food, water, and the environment. As this strategy was described in 1971, “old customs and habits of the people were changed,” “society was remoulded,” and “a new social attitude of regarding hygiene as an honor took root.” The success of this strategy was demonstrated in the campaign against schistosomiasis, which is spread by snails. By 1949, ten million Chinese peasants suffered from this disease. The anti-schistosomiasis campaign was launched in 1952. In only 3 years, lectures, films, posters, and radio talks were all used to inform peasants about snails and schistosomiasis. Then, twice a year, the peasants launched a “people’s war” to eradicate snails by draining rivers and ditches. These measures boasted of cleaning 60% of infested land in two weeks. In June 1958, the disease was completely eliminated from the most infested county, Yujiang County in the Jiangxi Province, the first of many successes in this campaign. Thus, in Mao’s new society, every ordinary citizen was involved and invested in the health of the community, resulting in the elimination of many of China’s most pervasive diseases.

One other objective of the People’s Republic of China that is relevant to my analy-
sis of the eradication of malaria was the focus on traditional medicine. Before the June 26 Directive, Western-trained doctors largely ignored traditional medicine. However, due to the ancient roots of traditional medicine, many patients trusted traditional doctors more than Western-trained doctors. Thus, Mao called for the study and adoption of techniques from the “treasurehouse of Chinese medicine” to integrate traditional medicine into Western medicine. Mao recognized that providing Western care to over 600 million citizens would be impossible, so he employed practitioners of traditional medicines and herbalists, both of which were plenty in the rural areas. In addition, the barefoot doctors were trained to recognize and use medicinal herbs, and scientists were employed to extract the active molecules of these herbs. While the use of traditional medicine practitioners may seem to contradict Mao's denial of Old China, Mao also focused on preventing China from being dependent on foreign nations, as discussed earlier. Thus, the use of traditional medicine would not only better disseminate all available health care, including Western care, to the peasants but would also make China more self-sufficient.

The genius in China's approach to health issues was the use of cooperation and community as mobilizing forces, rather than personal gain and competition. Every person in the People's Republic of China was given adequate access to health care and encouraged to participate in preventative measures. Each community health brigade was given autonomy to tailor the implementation of health policies in their villages. The country accepted that healthcare was under everyone's control, echoing the notion from the Cultural Revolution that social status differences must be eliminated so that the country can advance as a whole. This created enough momentum for many of China's campaigns against infectious diseases to be tackled as societal issues, for the good of the People.

THE PEOPLE'S WAR AGAINST MALARIA

Malaria has been endemic in China for more than 3,000 years. It was recorded in ancient Chinese medical books, such as the Canon of Internal Medicine of the Yellow Emperor, circa 403 – 221 B.C., and recognized during the Shang dynasty, as indicated by inscriptions on oracle-bone and bronzes. According to an article by the Research Institute of Chinese Traditional Medicine in 1961, China had records of malaria as far back as the 12 Century B.C. in the Book of Rites.

51 Malaria is caused by the Plasmodium parasite that is transmitted by the female Anopheles mosquito. There are four parasites that infect humans: P. falciparum, P. vivax, P. ovale, and P. malariae. Malaria causes fevers, seizures, chills, and nausea in humans.
52 Liu, Zuozhen. Case for Repatriating China's Cultural Objects, 17.
53 Achievements in Chinese Traditional Medical Treatment of Schistosomiasis and Malaria -
After the Yangtze river flooded in 1932, it was estimated that there were 30 million cases of malaria and 300,000 associated deaths in China each year.\textsuperscript{54} Through much effort, the number of malaria cases declined dramatically within the past few decades to around 15,000 cases in 2009.\textsuperscript{55} In 1998, there was a 99% drop in morbidity rate to 0.25 per 10,000 compared to 1954, and the proportion of malaria among all infectious diseases dropped from 61.8% to 1.3%.\textsuperscript{56} China’s success in its malaria campaign is attributed to its emphasis on participation by the masses, a layered health care network, the barefoot doctors, inter-governmental collaboration, and the discovery and distribution of artemisinin.

The formation of anti-malaria policies was closely linked to the transformation of health care services as part of the national goal of national strengthening. Unsurprisingly, “patriotic health campaigns” made up the majority of the anti-malaria efforts. After China was liberated, the main focus of the new regime regarding malaria was to gather more information on parasite species, vectors, and geographic distributions.\textsuperscript{57} In 1950, the Sanitary and Anti-epidemic Bureau of the Ministry of Public Health launched antimalarial campaigns in each province. These campaigns were integrated into an overall national health movement against all endemic diseases known as the Patriotic Health Movement.\textsuperscript{58} They implemented technical sanitary guidance, employed barefoot doctors and health aides, and tackled water conservancy and drug manufacturing. These campaigns simultaneously targeted malaria, typhus, typhoid fever, cholera, smallpox, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, hookworm, and meningitis. In December 1952, the Second National Health Conference declared the government’s intention to eliminate malaria, along with schistosomiasis, hookworm, and kala-azar.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, the battle against malaria was always paired with overall disease-fighting that aimed to improve the health of the people for a socialist

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} In 1979, government statistics showed that 948 counties (40.7%) with a combined total population of about 285 million were malaria free, while only 131 counties (5.6%) with a combined population of 74.4 million had an incidence above 100 per 10 thousand.
\item \textsuperscript{57} The main malaria vector in most of the country was found to be \textit{Anopheles sinensis} due to its wide distribution, large population, and outdoor-biting behavior. \textit{An. minimus}, \textit{An. dirus}, \textit{An. anthropophagus}, and \textit{An. jeyporiensis candidiensis} were also vectors found in certain parts of the country.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Wang, R. ”Critical Health Literacy: A Case Study from China in Schistosomiasis Control.” \textit{Health Promotion International} 15, no. 3 (2000): 269-74.
\item \textsuperscript{59} ”China Launches Summer Health Campaign.” \textit{New China News Agency} (Peking), June 29, 1959.
\end{itemize}
By 1955, the CCP established 39 anti-malaria stations to investigate and control malaria in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichaun, Guangdong, and Guangxi provinces. In December 1955, the CCP created a nine-member team to lead anti-malaria efforts. The first five-year National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) was established in 1956 and with it followed two major events: malaria was established as a “notifiable disease” and a malaria-reporting mechanism was implemented across the country.

With all of this preparatory work behind it, the government next focused on incorporating the prevention and treatment stations into a nationwide network. This network was headed by the Sanitation and Epidemic Prevention Department of the Ministry of Health, which maintained oversight over multiple layers of authority: the municipal station supervised the district station; stations in communes supervised stations in brigades. The government also collaborated with the clinic-based health care system for disease control and treatment. It utilized the already established hierarchy of medical care to maximize disease prevention, sanitation improvements, education, monitoring and reporting of diseases, and the distribution of treatments. Lastly, the government introduced programs to train barefoot doctors on anti-malaria information.

The government also recognized the tremendous geographic diversity that existed among the different provinces and counties. This correlated with the diversity in mosquito vectors and the severity of malaria across the country. Thus, instead of relying on one unitary approach, such as the DDT spraying method that was promoted by WHO

60 Wagstaff, Adam. Reforming China’s Rural Health System.
61 Zhou, Kramer, and Yang, Malaria Control and Elimination Programme in the People’s Republic of China, 4.
62 Situated on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean in eastern Asia, China comprises an area of 9.6 million square kilometers. Mountainous regions make up roughly 33% of the total land area, plateaus make up 26%, basins make up 19%, plains make up 12%, and hilly regions make up the remaining 10%, with the terrain going from high to low from west to east. Most of China lies in the north temperate climate zone, which is dominated by monsoons. Rainfall is greatest in the southeast and declines towards the northwest. China is divided up into 22 provinces, whose administrative units oversee cities and counties.
63 Based on the data collected on Plasmodium species, Scientists split the country up into four different malaria zones. Zone 1 consisted of the most tropical and subtropical areas in southern China. Here, P. falciparum was the dominant species with P. vivax following closely behind, and the season of malaria transmission lasted 9 – 12 months. In Zone 2, P. vivax was the main species, and the season of transmission lasted 6 – 8 months. The population in Zone 2 makes up about 49.9% of China’s total population. In Zone 3, northern China, only vivax malaria was present, and the season of transmission lasted for 3 – 6 months. Zone 4 was malaria-free as it consisted of cold, dry, high-altitude regions where very few mosquitoes were found. The main malaria vector in most of the country was Anopheles sinensis due to its wide distribution, large population, and outdoor-biting behavior. An. minimus, An. dirus, An. anthropophagus, and An. jeyporiensis candidiensis were also vectors found in certain parts of the country.
at that time, it targeted individual regions and allowed for the local health care system to determine the best implementation of anti-malaria techniques.\textsuperscript{64} Insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying were used in southern China, where \textit{An. minimus} was the predominant vector. In northern China, where \textit{An. sinensis} was the main vector, larvicide spraying, quinine treatment, and prophylactic chemotherapy were used in conjunction.

To support the implementation of these anti-malaria measures, the government widely used propaganda to educate the masses and promote good health as a significant part of the socialist transformation of China. When the Ministry of Health called for a national anti-malaria campaign in 1952, it was joined by other government agencies including education, culture, labor, and agriculture to mobilize all people to participate in the health movement.\textsuperscript{65} As with the campaign against schistosomiasis, the campaign against malaria employed urban communities and rural villages to actively fight against the disease. Before they could participate though, they had to first understand the disease, the preventative methods, and the up-to-date medicines. However, because the illiteracy rate was over 80\% in China at that time, the government highly depended on posters and classes.\textsuperscript{66}

The formation of the Science Society and the occurrence of the May Fourth Movement created a new culture of science that was accessible to the masses. As previously discussed, Mr. Science led the way towards social progress and modernization. Hence, science had to be presented in a simple way so that it could be understood by everyone. In the 1950s, the Beijing Bookstore published a multivolume picture book series on agriculture, natural sciences, medicine and health. One of the books was called “Malaria is Terrible” and showed the causes, symptoms, and treatments of malaria.\textsuperscript{67} Another poster explained how mosquitoes spread malaria from the sick to the healthy, how eliminating standing water sources prevents mosquito breeding, and how the use of bed nets and insecticides keeps mosquitoes away. Yet another poster explained the lifecycle of the mosquito and its role as the carrier of the malaria plasmodium. This poster also emphasized the importance of preventative actions such as spraying, filling ditches, bed nets, and getting blood samples. The reception to all of this propaganda was quite positive. The people of the rural areas welcomed insecticide and were intrigued to learn of the official Chinese name of malaria, \textit{nueji}. Malaria even decreased in the absence of insecticide with people swatting mosquitoes, getting rid of stagnant water, and cultivating larva-eating fish in ponds and rice paddies. Notably, all of the posters showed a peaceful society in which people worked together to rid of malaria and live better lives. The maintenance of this collective image was crucial.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} DDT’s IUPAC name is: dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Yip, Ka-che. \textit{Disease, Colonialism, and the State: Malaria in Modern East Asian History}.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Katzman et al. "A Chinese Version of the Mini-mental State Examination; Impact of Illiteracy in a Shanghai Dementia Survey."
\item \textsuperscript{67} Lu Zhensheng, \textit{Ke pa de nueji} (Shanghai: Beijing shudian, 1952.)
\end{itemize}
CHAIRMAN MAO’S MALARIAL LEGACY

for the overreaching goal of bolstering nationalism and fostering firm support of Mao.

After the 1960s, the focus of the posters shifted from preventative measures to anti-malaria drugs. The posters now showcased barefoot doctors, who were the main ones bringing medicine to patients in rural areas. The first drug treatment for malaria was quinine, which was isolated in 1820 from the bark of the cinchona tree. Quinine remained the dominant drug until World War II, when the Japanese seized Dutch cinchona plantations in Java, causing a huge quinine shortage across the world. Thus, chloroquine, an antimalarial drug developed in 1934, became the dominant drug until chloroquine-resistant Plasmodium parasites emerged.

This drug resistance greatly impacted the Vietnamese Communists during the Vietnam War, as thousands of soldiers on both sides fell at the hands of malaria. Five times as many American soldiers were relieved from combat due to malaria as injuries; in 1965, 50% of American soldiers had malaria at least once; the U.S. Army Health Department said malaria was the number one medical problem for the army in Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh asked Vietnam’s Chinese allies to assist them in fighting the American imperialists by creating new antimalarial drugs. In response, the General Logistics Department of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army invited the National Commission of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Chemical Industry, the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and other leading companies to create a plan of action. On May 23, 1969, Project 523 was created with the express purpose of drug development.

Project 523 was formed right in the middle of the Cultural Revolution. Due to the lack of research opportunities during this time, hundreds of scientists leaped at the chance to join this project. YouYou Tu, who worked at the Institute of Materia Medica, Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the time, was appointed head of her institute. The Cultural Revolution also marked the rise of Mao’s values, who saw China’s cultural heritage as, on one hand, a hindrance to progress, but on the other hand, a “treasure house” of solutions for modern society.

Consequently, the project was broken up into two parts: one for screening compounds for new active chemicals and one for testing ancient folk remedies. The aims of the project were to: 1) cure drug-resistant malaria, 2) combine Chinese traditional and Western medicine, and 3) discover new drugs from the Chinese heritage. Clinical research teams were formed from barefoot, worker, and regular doctors and sent to malaria endemic areas. The interdisciplinary project recruited not only scientists who had been forced to attend classes on Western medicine but also traditional Chinese practitioners, like YouYou Tu, who graduated from university at the height of Mao’s power and saw herself as part of his revolutionary plan. Echoing his words and sentiments, Tu later said “it was my firm

68 Quinine is derived from the bark of the cinchona plant.
belief that traditional Chinese medicine was a great treasure house, and efforts should be made to explore its essence."

Tu and her team collected 2,000 recipes for 640 herbs from ancient texts. One of the most promising candidates was qinghao, or sweet wormwood, which had been used for thousands of years to treat fevers. She used different methods to create extracts from qinghao but found one from the *Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies* by the physician Ge Hong that proved particularly effective. One sentence caught her eye: “Another recipe: qinghao, one bunch, take two sheng of water for soaking it, wring it out, take the juice, ingest it in its entirety.” Tu integrated this sentence into her experiments by lowering the extraction temperatures on dried *A. annua*, figuring that heating may destroy the active components of qinghao. On October 4, 1971, she ultimately found an extract that was 100% effective against asexual stage parasites in both malarial mice and monkeys.

Due to the Cultural Revolution, there were no clinical trials for drugs, so Tu and her team volunteered as the first people to test the extract. Fortunately, the drug worked in clearing the parasite and ending fevers, and in the August of 1972, this extract was shown to have the same efficacy in 21 malaria patients in Beijing. After the success of these experiment, Keith Arnold and his team went to a chloroquine-resistant area of Hainan Province to verify the safety and efficacy of the extract on humans infected *P. vivax* or *P. falciparum*. They saw a rapid clearance of the asexual parasites and prevention of the development of the activated parasites in patients treated with artemisinin within a little over 4 days. These experiments showed a rapid disappearance of the parasites in the blood and proved to be much faster treatment for fever than chloroquine. Subsequent research isolated the active substance in artemisinin, which was determined to be a colorless crystalline substance with a hydroxyl group, which the Institute of Biophysics later identified as sesquiterpene lactone. Tu concluded that this crystal “cured the disease rather than just eliminating the symptoms” and “destroyed malaria species at all stages of the parasite’s life cycle” from the observation of the disappearance of parasites from the blood samples.

These findings laid the groundwork for the development of *qinghaosu*, or artemisinin. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborated with WHO to develop a plan

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69 Tu, Youyou. "The Development of the Antimalarial Drugs with New Type of Chemical Structure - Qinghaosu and Dihydroqinghaosu."
70 Ge Hong. *Zhou hou bei ji fang* [Emergency Prescriptions kept up one’s Sleeve] Jin, 4th c. (340 AD). *Si ku quan shu* [Collection of the Works from the Four Storehouses].
71 Neill, Ushma S. "From Branch to Bedside: Youyou Tu Is Awarded the 2011 Lasker–DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for Discovering Artemisinin as a Treatment for Malaria."
72 Hsu, Elisabeth. "Reflections on the 'discovery' of the Antimalarial Qinghao."
73 Jiang et al. 2286 – 287.
74 Neill, 3772.
75 When the Steering Committee on Chemotherapy of Malaria (CHEMAL) heard about it, they were skeptical. Could this drug derived from a 2,000 year old therapy actually be the cure to
of action for distributing artemisinin across the world. By this time, artemisinin had already been used to treat over 6,000 cases of malaria and large amounts were distributed to Vietnam.\textsuperscript{76} Following the pharmaceutical production of artemisinin, the distribution of this drug initially faced challenges due to the restriction of science publications during the Cultural Revolution. However, in 1979, the China National Committee of Science and Technology granted Tu and her team a National Invention Certificate for its discovery and antimalarial efficacy.\textsuperscript{77} Tu presented her research to the World Bank and the WHO in 1981 at the fourth meeting of the Scientific Working Group on the Chemotherapy of Malaria.\textsuperscript{78} And in 2005, the WHO announced its promotion of artemisinin combination therapy, which is now widely used as the most effective drug against malaria.\textsuperscript{79}

**CONCLUSION**

The success of the Chinese malaria campaign adds nuance to our narrative of the Cultural Revolution. No longer can one of Mao’s most notorious legacies be qualified as fatal to all intellectual advancements at that time, as the progress made in science and health invalidate all such thoughts. In fact, it’s clear that without the Cultural Revolution, there would not have been a Health Revolution nor a Malarial Revolution.

Many factors contributed to these successes, but underlying all of them was one unifying idea brought forth by the Cultural Revolution: that the strength of the nation lies in the masses. This idea, admittedly, begot turmoil and ruin; millions of intellectuals either were murdered or committed suicide; a large portion of the population was uprooted from their homes by force; the Red Guards destroyed 4,922 of Beijing’s 6,842 designated historical sites.\textsuperscript{80} But this idea was also the foundation of accessible health care for all, mass malaria or was it “as in the past, when they said they could cure malaria by acupuncture only to be proven wrong later after there were clinical trials?” On the other side, the Cultural Revolution was still influencing the attitudes of Chinese officials, who were hesitant to share the information on artemisinin in fear that it would be used by Western pharmaceutical companies for monetary gain. These attitudes reflected the growing uncertainty over capitalization in a communist state.

\textsuperscript{76} In another part of the world, Dan Klayman, Chief of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry in the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research (WRAIR) decided to take a closer look at this drug because it was in a molecular form that he had never seen before. In 1984, he was able to crack the mysterious Chinese crystallization method for the artemisinin crystal and stated that the compound contained two oxygen atoms that would essentially explode when exposed to iron, which is abundant in malaria-infected red blood cells. When the molecular explodes, it virtually poisons the parasite with free radicals, killing it.

\textsuperscript{77} Tu, Youyou. "The Discovery of Artemisinin (qinghaosu) and Gifts from Chinese Medicine.”

\textsuperscript{78} Tu YY. Fourth Meeting of the WHO Scientific Working Group on the Chemotherapy of Malaria: TDR/CHEMAL-SWG (4)/(QHS)/81.3; Beijing, China. 1981.

\textsuperscript{79} Bosman, Adam, and K. N. Mendis. "A Major Transition in Malaria Treatment: The Adoption and Deployment of Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies."

\textsuperscript{80} Song, Yongyi. "Chronology of Mass Killings during the Chinese Cultural Revolution."
participation in health movements, and the focus on education and preventative medicine, all of which were instrumental in the campaign against malaria. Every citizen of the PRC felt it was his/her duty to make this campaign succeed, and the PRC was there to guide them and provide support. This collective force by the people, not the state, has not been seen in any other malaria campaign in world history.

This collective force made it possible for the state to implement its anti-malaria measures through propaganda, education, health structures, and community organizations. Posters focused on the creation of a peaceful, positive society through the elimination of malaria. Education campaigns taught villagers about the malaria parasite, the mosquito vector, DDT, and available drugs. Individuals held each other accountable for health habits. Communities worked together to drain ditches, kill mosquitoes, and destroy larva.

On top of all of this, the improved health network that the Cultural Revolution generated made malaria prevention and case reporting much more efficient. The inadequate health services before 1949 ensured that most of China’s population did not have access to basic care. Diseases were rampant and there were no doctors to treat them. The new health care infrastructure provided both preventative and primary care, with an emphasis on preventative measures. Every county had multiple barefoot doctors to spray DDT and disseminate bed nets and drugs, trained Western doctors to treat malarial patients, and a superior hospital to go to for severe cases. Different counties with different vectors were also targeted differently, and the state gave the local governments control over these anti-malaria measures. This horizontal approach proved to be much more effective than the vertical approach the WHO was encouraging at that time. That vertical approach was mainly based on building anti-malaria structures in developing countries separate from any clinic-based health care system to continually spray DDT. The approach ultimately failed in many countries, leaving those counties without functional health infrastructures to provide preventative and primary care.

Perhaps most indicative of the contribution of the Cultural Revolution to the anti-malaria campaign was that one of the most important discoveries in the history of anti-malaria efforts occurred during the Cultural Revolution. Artemisinin was truly a diamond in China’s treasurehouse. And Mao’s emphasis on traditional medicine led to the retrieval of this diamond.

This interpretation of the effects of the Cultural Revolution on the malaria campaign suggests that the success of malaria campaigns is highly dependent on the political atmosphere of the country. On one hand, this is good because it implies that a government that emphasizes providing health care access to all and a horizontal approach to fighting malaria is likely to succeed. This, of course, depends on a positive reception of the people to governmental efforts to provide health care. However, there are also many problems in this approach. The role of the government is, inevitably, vital, subjecting an anti-malaria
campaign to political uncertainty. Power struggles within the PRC would have created ambiguity in anti-malaria policies that could disrupt any improvements. For example, when a major malaria epidemic broke out in northern China in 1960, the widespread confusion in the agricultural collectivization program halted all anti-malaria activities, and the number of malaria cases jumped from 1.58 million to 10 million in the Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, and Anhui provinces. The outbreak of the Cultural Revolution also caused a spike in the malaria cases, but the number declined afterwards due to the newfound efforts brought about by the Cultural Revolution.

China's anti-malaria campaign, a product of the unique political environment of the Cultural Revolution, provides many lessons for modern campaigns. Undoubtedly, horizontal structure matters. Mass investment matters. Governments must work with and energize its citizens to ensure proper implementation of preventative measures and treatments. This approach equates the health of the individual with the health of the state, leading to stronger people and stronger nations. Of course, the discovery of a pearl on our treasure hunt wouldn't hurt either.

81 Yip, 111.
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**TITLE IMAGE**

Despite the prior indoctrination and pro-Soviet rhetoric disseminated throughout youth organizations from 1930 to 1945, Elsa Welshofer, Princeton ’18, argues that youth support of Stalin in the USSR faltered under post war conditions as a reaction to Stalin’s cultural crackdown and oppression. Stalin’s youth constituency resisted cultural oppression due to multiple reasons: they missed participating in pre-WWII western culture, they were displeased with the impoverished postwar state and slow postwar economic progress, they witnessed and participated in the rise of Soviet individualist thought, and they were disappointed with new youth organization leadership – whom they saw as both disorganized and out of touch. The combination of all these factors experienced by post war youth limited the success of Stalin’s postwar goals of suppression and total control over his people. This breakdown in control over youth is integral to our understanding of the state of the USSR by 1953, the year of Stalin’s death.
STALIN’S HOPE FOR THE NEXT GREAT GENERATION

"If I can't dance to it, it's not my revolution"
– Emma Goldman, 1931

In 1952, a propaganda report boasted that “Beautiful Russian musical ball dances have almost completely forced out vulgar western fox trots and tangos” from state sponsored popular culture, thanks to the initiative of the Komsomol, Stalin’s state sponsored youth organization. Such reports were followed by a critique of the Bauman factory club in Moscow for playing jazz. Meanwhile, the youth counter-culture movement of the Stilyagi wore tight western clothes around town, breaking out “complex and absurd dance moves” after hours in the heart of Moscow. Such were the years leading up to Stalin’s death: a chaotic mixture of oppression and resilience, misery and fun all intertwined in the world of Soviet youth. Such, as we can surely guess, was not the vision of communist youth Stalin pictured when creating state funded youth organizations like the Komsomol in 1936. How do youth organizations and the rise of this chaotic relationship between youth and state fit into the Stalin years? The Stalinist years can be categorized as the period from 1929-1953 under the rule of Joseph Stalin. In these years under him, the USSR dramatically increased industrialization and production, collectivized agriculture, and dramatically increased international military might. This, however, came at the cost of millions of lives, human rights violations, and a period of political suppression known today as The Great Terror. Stalin today is historically characterized as ruling with an iron fist. It is in this backdrop, we will look at Stalin’s relationship with youth during his reign, specifically in the 1930s through 1952. Joseph Stalin placed especial interest in funding youth organizations, leisure events, culture and consumption throughout the early 20th century, doing so with the intent of monitoring against insurrection, while simultaneously indoctrinating the next generation of comrades. This interest in youth manifested in the creation of the Komsomol league and others like it, state run youth groups for comrades ages 14-26. Official Soviet records show little to no resistance to this new monitoring of culture and socialization of young people before 1945. In fact, the Komsomol and youth organizations

5 We will discuss this in later sections, evidence taken from Fürst source.
In general were continuously praised as building the Soviet Union’s next great generation. After WWII, however, Stalin’s goals regarding party interaction with youth changed considerably, from monitoring and supporting the next generation to intimidating and assimilating all young comrades, stamping out any outside/non-Soviet influence. With this change, Stalin hoped for a united front against the growing Western aggression towards communism. Yet, while a sizeable portion of Soviet youth remained loyal to the party and Stalinism through the 1940’s, the organization of youth groups in the USSR diminished substantially in size and influence after WWII up until the death of Stalin in 1953; and the organization as a whole completely changed under Nikita Khrushchev before rebuilding their active membership again in the late 60’s and 70’s.

If this is so, why and how did youth organization and indoctrination both inside and outside state parties like the Komsomol break down after World War Two, thus limiting the success of Stalin’s goals? Despite the prior indoctrination and pro-Soviet rhetoric disseminated throughout youth organizations from 1930-1945, youth support of Stalin in the USSR faltered under postwar conditions as a reaction to Stalin’s cultural crackdown and oppression. Stalin’s youth constituency resisted cultural oppression due to multiple reasons: they missed participating in pre-WWII western culture, they were displeased with the impoverished postwar state and slow postwar economic progress, they witnessed and participated in the rise of Soviet individualist thought, and they were disappointed with new youth organization leadership- whom they saw as both disorganized and out of touch. The combination of all these factors experienced by postwar youth limited the success of Stalin’s post war goals of suppression and total control over his people. This breakdown in control over youth is integral to our understanding of the state of the USSR by 1953, the year of Stalin’s death

ORIGINS OF THE KOMSOMOL AND GENERAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION: LONG LIVE YOUNG PIONEERS!

In order to understand the change in relationship between the State and youth prewar versus postwar, we need to look at Stalin’s original goals in creating youth organizations, particularly the Komsomol. Allen Kassof, author of *The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion*, defines the purpose of the Komsomol as such:

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6 While one of the most popular and influential of these organizations was the Komsomol, I think it is important to note within this paper that my analysis of Soviet youth includes not only members of the Komsomol but all youth ages 14-25, members and non members. Additionally: my discussion of the youth includes both members of the Komsomol, and other youth organizations during this time frame. While ultimately we will be discussing youth as a whole in the postwar era, our view of prewar and postwar Soviet youth is incomplete without looking at the Komsomol specifically, simply because it was the most popular youth organization.
to afford opportunities for young workers to associate with their peers in various organized activities and to provide a sense of personal contact and solidarity with other young workers in the plant, both on and away from the job. The Komsomol is also charged with the responsibility of creating in workers an appreciation for their contribution to the overall productive process, in order to counteract fragmentation.\footnote{Kassof, Allen. \textit{The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion}. Cambridge Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965, 110.}

According to Kassof, the organization fell into five categories: education, socialist competition, surveillance, checking on management, and labor recruitment.\footnote{Ibid., 108.} Originally created around 1922 under Lenin, it was not until the mid 1930’s that the Komsomol experienced expansion in both membership and funding.\footnote{Dmitriev, Oleg. "Of Russian Origin: Komsomol." Komsomol – Russiapedia of Russian origin. Accessed April 14, 2017. http://russiapedia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/komsomol/.} This was not because of population growth (in fact, the 1930s are historically known for Stalin's purges and widespread famine), but instead increase in funding by Stalin himself. What were Stalin’s motivations behind paying special attention to youth? This, in itself, is complex. Scholars today still contest the reasons Stalin had in wanting to organize and fund youth activities extensively. We could argue, given the sponsorship of lively leisure activities, that Stalin’s hope was that the Komsomol would be a stable outlet for the energy and vitality of youth, steering teens away from everything except the state. Kassof supports this idea asserting, “The Komsomol is the antithesis of a youth movement. It is an organization sponsored by the party precisely in order to monopolize the field and to forestall the emergence of what is viewed as authentic youth movements in democratic societies.”\footnote{Kassof, \textit{The Soviet Youth Program}, 49.}

Similar to these theories, is the hypothesis that Stalin used youth organizations as a medium for incentivizing good behavior. Stalin understood that ideological obedience meant nothing if workers were not given goals to work for and rewards for working hard. This incentive was already in place with older workers and families. Paul Gregory and Mark Harrison, researchers on Stalin’s funding allocation, discuss this incentivizing. Both analyze that “Stalin saw this surplus (in the economy) as depending critically on worker incentives; he managed these by giving unflagging attention to consumption. While keeping consumption low, he feared that at anytime it could fall so low as to promote worker revolt.”\footnote{Gregory, Paul, and Mark Harrison. "Allocation under Dictatorship: Research in Stalin’s Archives." \textit{Journal of Economic Literature} 43, no. 3 (September 2005): 723. doi:10.1257/002205105774431225.} Additionally, motivation meant provisioning workers well in order to keep morale up: “Consumer supplies were one of the most frequent items on Politburo agendas; in Stalin’s words, the provisioning of workers was one of the more contested issues... Stalin
interpreted declining labor production as a sign that workers were not provisioned as well as last year.”\(^\text{12}\) With older comrades, Stalin encouraged workers through providing (what he imagined as) stable and well equipped environments.\(^\text{13}\) He applied this idea of incentivization to youth, but through a completely different medium: sponsoring culture and leisure through the Komsomol, in addition to education and indoctrination. Mark Steinberg writes, “The authoritarian state… constructed, promoted, and even financed” Soviet popular culture, but it did so even under Stalin “With the people in mind.”\(^\text{14}\)

Another darker yet equally probable theory is that Stalin wanted to suppress, indoctrinate, and brainwash youth so that opposition was made virtually impossible. Only through monitoring and guiding youth was Kul’turnost (ideological purity) possible.\(^\text{15}\) With this monopolization of youth movements, we can theorize Stalin in turn hoped that youth preoccupation with the organization made it easier for the State to institute surveillance and censoring: “The surveillance that is exercised over all public and semipublic activities in the USSR had made it virtually impossible for illegitimate or clandestine youth groups to operate. Certainly the Soviet Press indicates the existence of no such groups, and refugee sources could cite none.”\(^\text{16}\)

Furthermore, monitoring and guiding youth ideologically only comprised a part of the state’s purpose for the Komsomol. The state didn’t just want to brainwash youth, but train them to operate as the organs of the body of the party itself, teaching students how to not only form collectives, but how to “engage in ‘socialist competition’, and conduct ‘light Calvary raids (unannounced inspections of local factories and shops)” like the older party members did.\(^\text{17}\) Stalin’s darker desire to monitor, indoctrinate, and rear youth to be good communists is feasible.

In the end, why Stalin created the Komsomol and other youth organizations is an open question, as archival records are difficult to obtain. Gregory and Harrison conclude, “The evidence can be interpreted in two ways. One is that Stalin’s preferences were unstable; fitful humanitarian impulses…or fits of orthodoxy.”\(^\text{18}\) While Stalin’s mot-

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., 731.
\(^\text{13}\) Stalin’s perception of the communes (that workers were well equipped and incentivized), this is inaccurate at best in reality. As we know, the communes were poorly equipped and featured massive brutality and suffering. For more information, see source below:
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid., 49.
\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 50.
\(^\text{18}\) Gregory, Paul, and Mark Harrison. "Allocation under Dictatorship: Research in
vations for organizing and funding youth organization through the Komsomol and others like it were multifaceted, his shifts in goals surrounding the postwar youth culture were more streamlined and clear (which we will discuss later). Meanwhile, in addition to understanding why Stalin valued and funded youth organizations in the first place, we must also understand the cultural atmosphere surrounding prewar Soviet society, an atmosphere of openness and cosmopolitanism, which contributed to the difficulty Stalin faced in executing stauncher control after World War Two.

PREWAR WESTERN INFLUENCE: LEVI’S, JAZZ, AND SPONTANEITY

“Each of the big hotels in Moscow has its own Jazz band and dancing floor, presumably for the sake of foreigners and tourists. But more Russians go there, especially on Red Saturday, the night before their free day… Jazz music is staging a remarkable comeback in Soviet Russia after years of virtual prohibition… In cafes, restaurants and amusement parks [visitors] find orchestras playing their version of American jazz in response to a popular demand.”

– New York Times on Moscow, 1933

In looking at the infiltration of western culture in the prewar and WWII years, we have to understand two factors: the demand for and welcoming of new cultural influence by the everyday Soviet youth, and the absence of restraints on western influence by the party leadership. To begin, we will look at the birth of youth curiosity towards western culture, particularly American culture.

Between the end of the Russian civil war (1922) and the beginning of World War II (1939), Soviet Russia was completely upended societally, which created a gap for new ideas to intrude. Both the economic devastation and political instability under Lenin and then increased oppression under Stalin caused a transformation of everyday relationships amongst people. While communism in the prewar Soviet Union called for collectivization and total reliance on the party economically, comrades did not rely exclusively on the party for cultural consumption. In fact, in response to the oppression and hardship endured by comrades under Stalin, cultural production was established through grass roots movements in both big cities like Moscow and in the countryside. Juliana Fürst, Author of Stalin’s Last Generation, writes on the prewar culture under Stalin that “Personal networks rather than official structures were the motivational force of much that was happening in the Soviet Union.”20


Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, MISSING PG #.

So what exactly was happening in the Soviet Union? According to Gleb Tsipursky, author of Socialist fun, seemingly everything that enticed the rest of the world also infiltrated these communities, which experienced an influx of western cultural influence by the mid 1930’s. Tsipursky writes: “Between 1927 and 1932, the Soviet Union established 912 urban clubs, but, from 1932-1937, it established 2,951. Clubs began to include more light entertainment… Millions of people openly listened to and danced to the Fox Trot, Tango, Charleston, Lindy Hop, and Rumba to jazz music…”\(^\text{21}\) In addition to music came state support of art and leisure, where “Parks of culture and leisure run by city level cultural organizations played a significant secondary role in the cultural life of young people… Libraries often dedicated spaces and logistical support for amateur artistic collectives.”\(^\text{22}\) Film also flourished, and flicks like \textit{Love and Hatred} (1934), \textit{The Girlfriends} (1936), and \textit{Volochayevsky Days} (1937) were popular not because of propagandist sentiment, but their relatable themes and new inclusion of sound in the film.\(^\text{23}\) One of the most popular films was Aleksandrov’s \textit{Jolly Fellows} (1934), a comedy written in a similar style to then current American films. Aleksandrov commented in an interview: “We want to show by our film that the living is merry and cheerful amid the intense work required by the socialist construction.”\(^\text{24}\) The \textit{Proletkult}, a Soviet artistic organization that had been previously banned under Lenin, was resurrected, funded, and furthered film and drama interests, as well as promoted professionalism in the arts.\(^\text{25}\)

Music, dance, and other western cultural consumption combined two incongruous entities together: dissident youth and strict party members. For example: while jazz was seen as having “emphasis on individuality and personal expression, [becoming] the lingua franca of dissident soviet youth,” by the mid 1930s it was the Komsomol itself who encouraged and furthered opening the leisure dance halls. Fürst recounts, “In the 1930s the Komsomol Press even embraced the cause of proper and demure dancing, attributing to it the aura of Kul’turnost and judging its mastery an attribute of a good young socialist.”\(^\text{26}\) This continued throughout the prewar period, where, Jazz was often found at “Student recreational evenings organized by Komsomol committees in local Universities.”\(^\text{27}\)

1934-1936 at least seven bands from Western and Central Europe are known to have ac-

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cepted invitation to perform in the Soviet Union.”

Those who had greatest reason to partake in this cultural consumption was Soviet youth. Fürst writes, “overall, [cultural] consumption, not ideology, became the dominant identifier for young people, who defined themselves bound together by a shared communist outlook”; however, to nuance the early Stalin consumption years, she notes that “for the most part young people did not see themselves in opposition to the system.” Rather, Soviet youth believed that communism and personal autonomy were not necessarily in opposition to each other. In fact, it was these very people who played music in the halls that also led Komsomol meetings, and were predicted to be future leaders of the CPSU. Rather, Soviet youth saw cultural consumption as their expression of agency in addition to the Soviet culture they also enjoyed. This consumption occurred alongside their dedication to the party, creating a dynamic that would prove complicating in the post war years under Stalin’s crackdown. Until then, however, Fürst asserts: “While the new ethos of revolution produced communes, literary circles, anti-religious drives, and proletarian agitprop among those of the young who devoted themselves to the new ideals, the existence of apolitical entertainment was denied and thus remained wide open to imports from America, Paris, and Argentina. Despite some attempts to create a specifically Soviet entertainment culture of the 1930s from higher ups, official policy never managed either to convince the young of superiority of [domestic culture].”

Put simply, the prewar Stalin era experienced a massive influx of western culture and influence, because Soviet youth both celebrated its infiltration, and perpetuated it within the Komsomol itself.

Just as the Soviet youth knew what they wanted to consume, the CPSU failed to control and curtail this consumption. At first glance, this seems surprising, given the voraciousness of Soviet oppression and control through the purges and the prevalence of state issued propaganda. However, it wasn’t that the party didn’t want to control youth, it was more so that they didn’t yet know how, or even furthermore, what controlling youth meant not just logistically, but philosophically. The pre war CPSU understood that the power and influence of youth was different than adults, because youth attitudes were typically more radical and less responsive to fear. It was this understanding that was an impetus for creating the Komsomol in the first place. Additionally, as explained by historian Yasuhiro Matsui, the party knew that youth was one of the fastest growing demographic sectors in Soviet society: “popular opinion under Stalin was not homogenous at all, but showed a significant diversity and complexity. Since the proportion of youth in urban society grew drastically after the revolution from above, especially in the factories, their views comprised

28 Starr, S. Frederick. Red and Hot, 121.
29 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 4.
30 Quoted in Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, MISSING PG #.
an important part of the public opinion of those days.” Knowing this, the CPSU understood that this growing power made youth simultaneously potentially dangerous and incredibly useful. As a response to this phenomena, Fürst writes on the ambiguous and often inefficient/ineffective decision making of the party in directing the Komsomol: “states and organizations wavered between harnessing the powers of youthful radicalism for their own purposes and attempting to contain these powers.” The party knew youth needed to be organized and mobilized, but they didn’t know how to sustain the spirit of youth (which was what made them so effective in the first place) while guaranteeing obedience to the party.

Unfortunately, this backdrop of discussion on how to control youth organizations would be put on hold with the onset of World War Two. World War Two could not have come at a more inopportune time. The Soviets may have figured out how to achieve youth regulation and indoctrination through the Komsomol had they been given more time, but the onset of the war left this agenda unfinished, as party leaders shifted their focus from subduing dangerous citizens to defeating Nazi Germany. This completely alters the history of Soviet youth and culture, because the War (despite its incredible hardships and loss of life), gave youth the autonomy they wanted without virtually any repercussions. Here, the Komsomol, once a potential group for subduing youth, was, arguably, relegated in responsibilities during the war to become a purely social institution that not only condened western influence and culture, but provided the outlets for youth to congregate and exchange these ideas, beliefs, and experiences. We can speculate that the slackening of the Komsomol’s influence during the war was probably seen as temporary, and merely a result of the war’s strain on funding. Regardless, temporary or not, the period of slack Komsomol control had its effects that would be felt post war when the Komsomol was supposed to regain control. Fürst discusses the effects of this deterioration of the Komsomol’s influence during the war: “the attempt to establish an inclusive popular soviet youth culture unraveled with the onset of the purges, the chaos of war resulted in a suspension of the official debate and essentially gave free reign to pleasure seeking youth, which could draw inspiration from abroad to an unprecedented degree.” This unchecked cultural autonomy also produced unexpected economic effects. In regards to the communist command economy, Fürst comments: “While official politics and ideological engagement were no longer high on the Soviet citizen’s agenda, other sectors of life showed more dynamism. Engagement with the west and in particular consumption of its products produced not only a vibrant second culture but a second economy, whose complicated practices soon dwarfed the Soviet

32 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 10.
33 Ibid., 236.
Person’s relationship with the official market.” Now, not only did the youth have virtually unchecked social leniency, but also asserted themselves as active participators in the Soviet economy, which gave them even more influence than before.

The effects of WWII, however, did not just affect the state’s control on its comrades because of its own preoccupations with Germany. While the war shattered previous youth notions of security, it also revealed to them their own importance in furthering the global and domestic goals of the communist party and protecting the USSR. Komsomol First Secretary Evgenyi Tyazhel’nikov later reflected in 1968 on the power of youth in World War Two:

Fulfilling their international duty, Soviet youth volunteers joined the battle against fascism, for the freedom of republican Spain. Their strength was seen by the Japanese in the skies over China, and their courage was admired by the peoples of Europe during the Second World War. Today their traditions live on in those (young people) ….

Such words rang true: by 1944, historians predict that USSR suffered approximately 7 Million Soviet citizen casualties and 11 million Soviet soldier casualties—40% of which were under the age of 25. The war may have given a reprieve in Soviet domestic oppression, but it completely altered the attitudes of the youth that survived the war. Those remaining saw their fellow comrades die for their country and/or fought alongside of them. The horrors of war may have devastated them, but it also empowered those remaining, because they understood that they played an integral role in both the war and their society, which gave them the motivation to speak out and voice their frustration with Stalin. Comrade Kondratiev later reflected on youth soldier’s post war desire for acknowledgement and recognition from the party: “We felt unwanted, handicapped. We were insulted when Stalin compared us to nothing more than the little screws in a machine. This is not how we felt at the front. We thought then that we held the destiny of Russia in our hands, and we acted accordingly, in the belief that we were citizens.”

It was through the devastation and sacrifice of WWII that Soviet youth realized their own influence, and that the party needed them. This gave youth not only confidence and an even greater voice, but a renewed hope that with the end of the war would come a hopeful opportunity to reset, regain communist party momentum, revitalize the prior activities and culture that they shared with their peers, and reform a broken society. Many saw the postwar USSR as an opportunity to leave the vestiges of state control behind, and

34 Ibid., 27.
believing that with the end of the war would come a reform in Stalinist policies. However, Stalin's idea of a postwar Soviet Union looked vastly different. It is here, from 1945-1953, we see conflict between the post war goals of Soviet youth and the postwar goals of Stalin. This would result in growing resistance to Stalinist crackdown, the clinging to prewar cultural vestiges previously discussed, and simultaneous breakdown within the youth organizations like the Komsomol itself.

**POST WWII AND THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE BETWEEN STATE AND YOUTH**

“*Youth in late Stalinism continuously challenged the state’s vision of a Soviet Youth. Young people presented this challenge less through verbal opposition than through a plethora of behavioral patterns, which could range from provocative dressing and dancing to ignoring ideological and political demands. The relationship between state and youth was renegotiated on many fronts.*”

– Juliane Fürst

With the official end of WWII in 1947, Stalin addressed the CPSU, commending the soldiers and citizens whose sacrifices led to victory in what was referred to as the Great Patriotic War. However, it was from 1945-1947 where Stalin's attitudes switched from congratulatory to critical. With growing Cold War tensions, Stalin became gradually more aware of the need for not only increased nationalism as opposed to western cultural tolerance, but also a rapid revitalization of State-led strictly Soviet culture production. After the overall tense Potsdam conference in 1945, the relationship between Stalin and US President Truman continued to be strained. As a result, it was apparent that if the USSR were to assert its dominance on the world stage against increasingly unfriendly western states, its cadres would have to be in a united front not just economically and ideologically, but culturally. This left no room for any western influence, and this call for change was addressed directly to the surviving youth of the war. We first see signs of this in 1945, when Stalin voiced his anger to advisors regarding the slip in party control over cultural production, saying: "We did not build soviet order to teach people nonsense… You inculcate extreme respect for foreigners. You inculcate the feeling that we are second class, and they are first. You are pupils, they are teachers. This is false." Shortly thereafter, well known party advisor Andrei Zhdanov criticized current affairs, reprimanding the press openly because

38 Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 3.
of their “passivity” towards Western cultural influence in the USSR, advising that writers are “to be guided by what Soviet literature cannot live without, that is, politics” instead of “attempts of literary riffraff to poison our youth’s consciousness.” Zhdanov further chastised then current youth magazines for showing fantasy instead of “the wondrous beauty that is real life.” These types of sentiments marked the ideology behind the gradual shift from wartime cultural liberality to postwar crackdown. This stiffening of party/comrade relations was felt across all aspects of everyday Russia. From 1945-1952, the Gulag’s population went from 1.7 million to 2.5 million, in part by punishing youth dissenters, many of whom discussed opposition to the party through art, culture, and literature.

The ripple effect of this crackdown directly effected youth, who were active consumers of this culture. Fürst writes that after the war, youth found “many buildings that had housed youth clubs or houses of culture were destroyed or occupied by other agencies.” What replaced it was what Journalists of the time identified as new public projects “embodying soviet exceptionalism and social honor.” Meanwhile, Stalin publicly praised the Komsomol for the work they had done and would do to mold the minds of youth for the party. Directly addressing the Komsomolskaya Pravda in 1945, Stalin proclaimed:

I congratulate the fighting organ of Soviet youth, the paper “Komsomolskaya Pravda,” on her twenty years. During the years of peaceful construction and throughout the days of the Great Patriotic War, “Komsomolskaya Pravda” has educated the Soviet youth in the spirit of unreserved service to the Motherland. I am sure that in the future, the “Komsomolskaya Pravda” is going to successfully accomplish educational tasks towards the next generation in the devoted spirit to the Leninist party.

Here we see Stalin’s clear shift in goals. As opposed to the ambiguous attitude of pre-war Soviet Russia towards youth education and consumption, Stalin’s change in attitudes is marked- here was the beginning of regimentation, removal of outside influence, and a revitalization of intense indoctrination and suppression of plurality of ideas. With this change, Stalin hoped to stamp out any possible dissention, as well as build nationalist rather than cosmopolitan sentiment, in order to fuel comrade support heading into the cold war. Whether or not Stalin achieved his goals of provoking genuine nationalist sentiment among older comrades and party officials is unclear. However, I argue youth rejected this shift. Furthermore, the failure of Stalin’s post war goals is a contributing reason for both the hindrance of the advancement of the Komsomol, the alienation of many youths from

41 Ibid., 208, 209.
42 Ibid., 197.
43 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 93.
44 Ibid., 198.
communist party politics, and a limiter on the overall success of Stalin’s domestic control. So how did youth resist Stalin’s iron hand, rendering him less effective than perceived by historians?

With Stalin’s increasing control over cultural production, access to literature, dance halls, and resources through youth organizations like the Komsomol were limited at best, and forbidden at worst. Subsequently, instead of buying into Stalin’s new nationalist push, youth found themselves resisting change through personal expression in private relationships, inside the home, and in their own thoughts. Jochen Hellbeck, author of Working Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts, discusses this. “Though the system was successful, through a combination of propaganda and coercion, in enforcing a degree of outward popular conformity, individuals were able to mitigate these pressures by retreating into private spheres unaffected by ‘official’ ideology.”

Here, in the retreat to private spheres, youth underwent a period of disillusionment with state funded youth organizations, the Communist party, and Stalin himself. In this retreat to private spheres, we see the simultaneous rise of individualism and communal call to action in opposition to Stalin’s crackdown. Fürst comments on this disillusionment saying, “young people who found themselves to be victims in the anti cosmopolitan and anti western drives lost their beliefs in the righteousness of the system, in which they had hitherto fervently believed.”

ON THE DEFENSIVE: THE RISE OF PRIVATE REBELLION AND DISCUSSION

“My daily secretiveness, the secret of my inside- they don’t allow me to become a person with an independent character. I can’t come out openly or sharply, with any free thoughts. Instead I have to say only what everyone else says. I have to walk on a bent surface, along the path of least resistance.”

So how exactly did youth convey their frustration with the party’s new direction? Young comrades began their own rebellion by taking back entities within party organizations for themselves, turning party initiatives and practices into mediums for individualist thought, discussion, and to voice frustration. One of these entities youth used as a new form of rebellion was the personal diary. One of the biggest and most widespread

47 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 93.
48 Fitzpatrick, Sheila. Stalinism: New Directions. London: Routledge, 2006, 87. This quote is by Podlubnyi’s diary account in the 1930s Moscow. While his discussion of state control is based in the pre war period, I include his words in this section because he continues this writing and discussion through the postwar period, and was a youth rights champion through the 1940s and 50’s.
vehicles through which youth recorded their lives in the 1930’s was the authoring of autobiographical diaries. Hellbeck writes that historically, “The most widespread type of formalized self-presentation in the soviet system was the avtobiografia- a short account of an individual’s life, submitted in prose and presented orally, listing this persons educational and professional achievements, but in its core focusing on the formation of his or her personality.” Additionally, the autobiography was a longtime part of the application into the Komsomol itself, and autobiographies were traditionally used in Moscow as a part of applications to universities. However, throughout the 1930s and into the 40s we see the evolution of these personal accounts: now autobiographical diaries contained not just personal achievements, but political and philosophical opinions. Thus, the autobiographical account changes from more formalized to a type of art form, a politically charged medium of self expression. Fürst notes the historical importance of this shift from formal prose to active thought, commenting: “The Soviet idea of a writer was not that of a commentator but of a builder of society. Stalin’s famous interpretation of the Soviet writer as the engineer of the human soul was one of the mantras of Soviet education… Increasingly, however, the ambition of these young, critical writers became focused on creating a new individual reality in their works that was truer to their state of mind than the of officially prescribed imagery of socialist realism.”

After World War Two, another evolution of youth writing occurred: now the earlier medium for expression, autobiographies, changed once again- this time to letter writing. Letters soon became a more politically charged and connecting form of expression than private journaling, incorporating their personal diaries into dialogues with others: “personal narratives formed a significant part of many letters. There narratives were concerned with the subjective experiences of young people- their joys, pains, disappointments, and ideological dilemmas…. It is in these letters where we see most vividly the change from excitement to disillusionment with the party itself, articulated through letters written by youth to party authorities and Komsomol leadership. Such increase in letter activism prompted the Komsomol to devote an entire division of comrades to deal solely with “the reception and administration of incoming letters.” In fact, the Komsomolskaya Pravda received over 4,000 letters a month by 1950, and 5,000 letters a month by 1952.

While, naturally, not all of these letters received by the Komsomol were strictly crit-

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52 Ibid., 327.
53 Ibid., 330.
ical of the party, the rise in letters received coupled with the evidence of youth disillusionment portrayed in many letters studied allows us to make the argument that a significant percentage of these letters were negative or challenging in tone and content. It is through these letters we see the disillusionment in the post World War Two era reflect similar dissent in the post Russian Civil War era. For example, in the 1920’s before a flourishing of western culture, a Komsomol member wrote to his mother saying, “I was disillusioned because I fully realized that everything happened in ways that other people and I had not imagined. If I had known in advance that all would end up this way, I would not have joined the Komsomol.” This exact disillusionment would repeat itself with increased fervor in the post World War Two era, as if mimicking the call for change from the 1920s. In a letter penned to Komsomol secretary Semichastnyi in the late 40’s, a young Komsomol member expresses her anger at being dismissed from her job as a Pioneer leader writing, “I go to university and when I come back from the lecture, I do not know what will happen to me in the future. Soviet youth are always surrounded by attention and care… Why is it not like this for me?” Youth were disenchanted not only with the crackdown from the party, but also that these regulations seemingly brought no benefit to their everyday living.

Alongside frustration with the Komsomol, came accounts of youth disturbed by the poverty and suppression surrounding them. In the diary of young comrade Galina Shtange, she writes: “It’s just horrible when you think about how people live these days. I heard about one engineer who lives with his wife in a nine square meter room… I wrote down this example so that those who come after us will read it and get a sense of what we went through.” Similarly, in Maria Gobach’s letter to Komsomol officials, she reflects on the fact that being a member of the youth organization did not prevent her father from being taken away to the gulag years prior in the interwar years. She later describes the day: “a wonderful summer day… a dark shadow fell on our family. My father Vasilii Grigorevich was arrested… I will not describe all the tortures, of which were more than enough.” Here, Galina and Maria’s diary make marked shifts in content. Where as previously both consistently discussed their own relationship with the party and desires to be good and productive comrades, each in the post war becomes increasingly aware of the steadfast condition of poverty surrounding them. Whether or not each accepted these conditions or later rebelled against it is not recorded. However, both Galina’s and Maria’s diary reflect the new wave of content discussed amongst youth party members.

Alongside youth’s disillusionment with the party and understanding of the poverty surrounding them, manifested another attitude Stalin feared: individualism and continued

54 Quoted in Matsui, "Youth Attitudes," 68.
55 Quoted in Matsui; Ibid., 339.
56 Quoted in Hellbeck, Working, Struggling, Becoming, 348.
57 Quoted in Fürst, Juliane. "In Search of Soviet Salvation," 338.
western curiosity. A letter by Shtange reads: “The year is drawing to a close. It was a painful one for me. The family is upset that I spend so little time at home. I’m sorry for them, but what can I do? I’m not old yet, I still want to have a personal life. Now that I’ve fulfilled my obligations to my family, in the few years that remain to me I want to live for myself.”

Meanwhile, a young Komsomol comrade wrote a letter to Aleksandr Fadeev, posing the following: “What place will I occupy in life? Who will I be in my life? For what can I live?” This individualist and independent thinking pervaded diaries and letters and led to youth discussions of their own ideas and wants regarding their future. For many, it included the continued desire for interaction with the west. However, while prewar sentiment often was detached wistfulness for change, the post war youth contingency became more action based. For example, while a pre war account reads: “Let all have their own way! It is necessary to think about myself, you, our life, and our happiness alone. And I don’t want to go hungry. The first thing I would do abroad is to buy bread, especially white bread, without a ration book,” this sentiment was turned into open resistance after World War Two through the emergence of activist literary groups like “Green Noise” and “Union Struggle for Revolution,” both of which promoted internationalist tolerance and encouraging open communication with the west. Brooks, in his historical research, found another post war youth account which reads: “the contrast between living standards in Europe and among us, which millions of fighting people encountered, was a moral and psychological blow that was not so easy for our people to bear despite the fact that they were the victors in the war.”

While these accounts were the most common forms of resistance to Stalin’s goals of uniform culture, there was also the rise of a smaller population which took collective resistance in the form of public actions. In her research surrounding “Prisoners of the Soviet Self? Political Youth Opposition in Late Stalinism,” Fürst discovered almost 30 illegal and anti-Stalinist youth unauthorized organizations that existed in the 1940s. Additionally, Fürst writes that rebellion reached beyond the organized groups to normal everyday teens: “Post war youth danced. At any occasions and in any place, young people set up makeshift dance floors and spent their time revolving to the tune of waltzes, foxtrots, and tangos.” While this open resistance would not fully develop and become popular until the late 1950s in the Khrushchev era, the beginning formation of the Stilyagi and counterculture movement in the late 1940’s reflects yet another limiting factor in Stalin’s post war control, allowing us to further add nuance to his success in coercing post war youth. Youth’s private resistance and

58 Hellbeck, Working, Struggling, Becoming, 356.
60 Matsui, "Youth Attitudes," 69.
61 Brooks, Thank You, Comrade Stalin!, 196.
63 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 355.
expressed frustration with Stalin’s new policies played a huge role in limiting his successful implementation of cultural crackdown. However, it wasn’t just general disillusionment and frustration with Stalin that caused youth resistance. By the end of the 1940’s, institutions like the Komsomol were experiencing a changeover of upper leadership, leadership which further discouraged youth from buying into the vision Stalin tried to implement for the new generation of post war comrades.

OUT OF TOUCH AND INEFFECTIVE: PROBLEMATIC TRANSITIONS IN KOMSOMOL STRUCTURE

“I’ve reached the conclusion that between the Central Committee and the working class there is still a heaving, slow moving, inert and viscous party administrative layer, which doesn’t particularly want radical change. Some just carry their party card but have long since ceased to be communists. From the party they expect only privileges, but are themselves in no hurry to give to the people either their efforts or their knowledge.”
– Pravda

Just as youth’s loyalty to Stalin began to crumble, so did the very institution itself which housed the indoctrination and organization of these same comrades. While youth found their major dissatisfaction and disillusionment pertaining mostly to Stalin’s staunch cultural crackdown, the devolution of Komsomol leadership and resource allocation after World War Two was the last breakdown in party control that served as yet another impetus for youth to reject Stalin’s postwar vision. In the late 1940s, Maria Sudarik recounts the dilapidation of the warehouse where she had attended Komsomol meetings before the war, writing: “The house of culture was a grey and unfinished building of huge and unwelcoming proportions… the following dance was equally unorganized. It did not elicit even the tiniest bit of pleasure from the dancers…Dust was covering the legs of the dancers…There is no cultural establishment in this village. There are no sports grounds to exercise one’s muscles…the park is dirty.”

This description of the dilapidation of a former leisure hall reflected the growing breakdown in the Komsomol’s influence and reach itself, as well as the curtailing of its resources for youth. Much of this, looking back, had to do with two things: the poor transition of leadership from pre war to post war Komsomol officers, and the breakdown in the actual education and indoctrination of youth.

The more systemic problems of the Komsomol like misallocation of funds and lack of upkeep of its cultural venues can be traced back to the new postwar leadership. Fürst

65 Quoted in Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 45.
writes that “the move towards a very young and inexperienced membership base ran parallel with two other trends that were equally damaging to Komsomol work…top Komsomol leadership was composed of those people who had benefited from the purges of Komsomol leadership in 1938.” This is accurate, looking at the history of the First Secretaries of the Komsomol, up until 1940, every single first secretary was shot with the exception of Alexander Milchakov, who was still arrested. New leadership not only struggled to gain the support and cooperation of their youth, but they found themselves struggling to appeal to members coming back from the war and reignite members who had fallen away in disillusionment with Stalin: “Party and Komsomol files indicate the degree to which the youth organization struggled under the burden of education and socializing the young generation after the war. The war had not only annihilated almost an entire generation of Soviet youth, it had also financially and structurally crippled the organization.” These new officials were, instead, characterized as “out of touch with its rank and file who could not acquire the front identity of their superiors, but was also left without a clear sense of what youth was to represent post war years.” Furthermore, it did not help that this lack of direction within the leadership was coupled with higher officials depicted as “career hungry climber who often enjoyed nomenclatural connections, or a disinterested bureaucrat who had forgotten the fact that he was in charge of human beings.”

Besides being depicted as out of touch, the changeover in Komsomol leadership also proved to be largely incompetent, partly as a result of the tremendous change after the war, but also because the organization itself was overstretched, and no longer functioned as a source of resources and entertainment that attracted youth membership in the first place. Additionally, the Komsomol no longer provided services to the extent they had before. JW Hahn, author of “The Komsomol Kollektiv as an Agency of Political Socialization” analyzes this breakdown:

The Komsomol, in order to encourage the genuine support of its members, must provide some sort of beneficial output for them, the main agency through which this is done being the primary organization. Moreover, if the Komsomol failed to manifest some positive concern for the needs and welfare of its members, the support input necessary for the system to function properly would be largely absent. As Hahn discusses, the Komsomol’s leadership may not have been as problematic if the

66 Ibid., 56–57.
68 Fürst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 50.
69 Ibid., 62.
70 Ibid., 314.
organization itself still gave the same resources, but it didn’t. By the 1950, youth only
joined the Komsomol for possible advantage in university acceptance, labor distribution,
and good housing stipends. None of these intentions were ideological or a part of their
new personal identity. Now that the Komsomol was becoming more and more obsolete
in the eyes of youth, they created their own clubs, forums, and personal and collective
identities. In these new self formed organizations, youth felt a new sense of cultural and
ideological autonomy that not only furthered the breakdown in Stalin’s post war goals of
cultural control, but arguably made the division between youth and State irreconcilable
until Stalin’s death.

STALIN’S YOUTH: A MIXED LEGACY

By the end of World War Two, Stalin hoped that he would be able to mold the
minds of youth away from western curiosity and towards fervent patriotism, in order to
build a foundation of defense against the ideological threats of the Cold War. Overall, he
did not reach his goals because he underestimated the enticement of prewar and wartime
western influence, the persistence of youth, and the failure of local organization officials
in implementing these goals. However, even though Stalin failed to control the attitudes
and cultural consumption of young comrades, youth USSR patriotism grew under the
Khrushchev era and resurged to play a prominent role in Pro-Soviet domestic life in the
60s and 70s as a result of the de-Stalinization of the era, where increased freedom moti-
vated youth to actively choose Soviet culture. However, had Khrushchev not conducted the
de-Stalinization period after the death of Stalin, would the cultural consumption of youth
still change or remain the same?

In my analysis of soviet youth and State relationships leading up to the 1960s, I
rely heavily on Julianne Fürst among others on the discussion surrounding why Stalin’s
post war goals failed. However, there is a question that none of the scholars I reference
in my analysis pose, which I would like to add as a nuance to current academic dialogue:
Could Stalin have enticed youth to reject western culture and individualist ideology if he
had taken a more moderate approach? Or was Stalin destined to fail in enticing youth after
the horrors of World War Two and the famine and failures of the collectivization of agricul-
ture? Within Fürst and other historians’ research, there are two groups of youth left unac-
counted for: the youth who did not revolt post World War Two and genuinely still believed
in the party, and the youth who believed in the firm hand of Stalin, but perhaps felt that
he took his control too far. Further complicating the diverse attitudes of youth surround-
ing Stalin is the fact that in recent years the attitudes surrounding the legacy of Stalin have
grown in approval. Today, the legacy of Stalin carries an attitude that despite the suffering

72 Ibid., 232.
experienced by the Soviets, Stalin made the USSR a global power, and he did what he had to do. In fact, in a January 2015 survey conducted by Russian sociologist Yuri Levada, 52% of Russians think that overall Stalin played a “definitely positive” or “mostly positive” role in Russia’s history. Given this, we must wonder, if given enough time after Stalin: did the youth who rebelled in the 1940s carry the same sentiment years later as adults? Did the moderates towards Stalin grow resentful? Did the party towers remain faithful? We cannot fully understand the picture of state/youth relations under Stalin unless we consider these unaccounted groups.

So where does that leave us today? Russia, now a “democratic” nation, has in the last decade grown in its membership of the 21st century youth organization, Nashi. The goals of the pro-Kremlin organization include preserving the current domestic political system under Vladimir Putin while promoting pro-Russian culture and Pro-Putin worldwide politics. Today, however, it is impossible to control all cultural consumption of Russian youth, given the existence of the internet and era of global socialization. If Putin wants to be successful in shaping the minds of the next generation of Russian Nationalists, he must learn from Stalin’s mistakes and focus on appealing to youth rather than assimilating, intimidating, and oppressing them. And if Putin succeeds, how will the rest of the world respond? Finally, we must ask ourselves: if Putin can appeal to today’s youth, how will they shape his legacy in the future?

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File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-R78375,_Budapest,_II._Weltfestspiele,_Festumzug,_Komsomolzen.jpg
A RACIALIZED "RESORT"
IMMIGRANT UPLIFT, BLACK DEGRADATION, AND THE WHITE REPUBLIC OF CENTRAL PARK, 1851-1860

In this essay, Gabriel Malek, TD '20, advances ongoing scholarship surrounding New York City’s Central Park and Northern antebellum urban politics by relating issues of black suffrage and property ownership to shifting and evolving facets of Jacksonian racial discourse. He argues that the racial views of 1850s New York Democrats influenced the creation of Central Park. These politicians used racial modernism not only to justify the seizure of black-owned land on the Park site but also to strip black men of the right to vote. Given that both white Europeans and free African Americans occupied Park land prior to 1857, New York City’s evictions of Park residents served as a tool to separate African Americans from white Europeans and thus safeguard against racial amalgamation, which Democrats feared would disrupt white virtue. In this regard, Democrats acted on their racially modern views, protecting white immigrants and by extension the white nation.

By Gabe Malek, TD ’20
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“It is a fact not a little remarkable that as ultra-democratic as are the political tendencies of America, its most intelligent social tendencies are almost wholly in a contrary direction,” mused American landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing in 1851. Downing’s commentary reflected his frustration with the lack of major public parks in the United States. An avid horticulturalist, Downing studied the sprawling public gardens of English and French cities and believed these common areas helped democratize what were otherwise politically hierarchical societies. Given that the United States was far more democratic than its European counterparts, Downing viewed the lack of public parks in American cities as a glaring omission in metropolitan design.¹

Fortunately for Downing, politicians in New York City would soon fill this void in the American cityscape, passing legislation later that decade to establish what would become Central Park. Yet, whether this space fostered democracy in the Big Apple as Downing had predicted appeared dubious at best. Entangled in racially discriminatory evictions and questions of black suffrage, the creation of Central Park, rather than reinforce the United States’ grand principles of political sovereignty, reflected the questionable nature of democracy in America.

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During the summer of 1853, New York politicians debated a proposal from Whig Senator James Beekman to establish a new public park on New York City’s Jones Wood estate, located between 66th and 75th streets and Third Avenue and the East River. Beekman originally devised the plan in 1851 in response to Whig Mayor Ambrose Kingsland, who suggested politicians address the fact that “the public places of New York are not in keeping with the character of our city.” Rich Whigs, many of whom lived near Jones Wood, lauded Beekman’s proposal and hoped the beautification of land adjacent to their houses would increase property values in the area. Conversely, Democrats like Senator James Cooley opposed Jones Wood, arguing that “it was not called for and would never have been thought of except from interested motives.” They insisted that government legislation should not privilege the wealthy.²

Instead, Cooley advocated for the creation of a public space to benefit the masses: Central Park, a 778-acre plot bound by 59th and 106th streets and Fifth and Eighth Avenue. Cooley’s plan countered Beekman’s “aristocratic lounging place on one side of the city for the benefit of the rich” by presenting an alternative “popular with all classes.” The

Albany Argus, a Democratic newspaper, called Cooley “the master-spirit of the Senate” and “perhaps the most industrious and devoted of the public servants now [in office].” On the surface, Democrats’ preference for Central Park over Jones Wood made sense given the Democracy’s disapproval of economic special interest throughout the antebellum era. Jacksonian Democrats hoped to preserve “liberty for all white citizens” and consequently resisted political intervention that would serve only the financial elite. If Central Park could truly accommodate both “the rich man’s carriage, and the poor man’s carryall,” Democrats would understandably favor it over the patrician Jones Wood estate.³

Why Democrats lobbied for Central Park is harder to reconcile with the Democracy’s views on private property. Democrats considered the protection of private property sacred. They championed Jefferson’s idea of “self-sufficient yeomanry” and believed that political freedom was possible only by securing economic independence. In fact, Cooley rejected the Jones Wood bill in part because “the owners of the land do not want it taken, but desire to hold in peaceable possession of their own property.” The creation of Central Park should have evoked similar outrage from Democrats, given that approximately 1,600 people inhabited the Park’s plot by 1853. That Democrats who often criticized state intervention supported an unprecedented extension of government authority over private property presents a quandary historians must address.⁴

This paper attempts to make sense of the apparent discrepancy between Democrats’ pro-private property values and approval of Central Park by relating the Park’s establishment to historian James Brewer Stewart’s analysis of “racial modernity.” According to Stewart, racial modernity was “a reflexive disposition on the part of an overwhelming number of northern whites (intellectuals and politicians as well as ordinary people) to regard superior and inferior races as uniform, biologically determined, self-evident, naturalized, immutable ‘truths.’” Stewart refers to these views as “modern” not because they adhere to twenty-first century progressive norms but because they marked a shift in antebellum thought away from long-held notions of racial uplift. Before the 1840s, many Northern whites believed that African Americans could obtain “upward mobility…thanks to the strength of [their] moral character.” Following anti-abolitionist violence in Northern cities, however, white citizens, afraid of associating with free black communities, adopted the belief that African Americans were permanently degraded. Thus, Stewart and other

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historians have referred to the emergent racial ideology of the mid-1840s as “modern” because of it was novel compared to the beliefs that had previously gripped white America during the Jacksonian era.\(^5\)

Stewart’s concept of racial modernity helps explain how the racial views of 1850s New York Democrats influenced the creation of Central Park, as these politicians used racial modernism not only to justify the seizure of black-owned land on the Park site but also to strip black men of the right to vote.\(^6\) I argue that, given that both white Europeans and free African Americans occupied Park land prior to 1857, the City’s evictions of Park residents served as a tool to separate African Americans from white Europeans and thus safeguard against racial amalgamation, which Democrats feared would disrupt white virtue. In this regard, Democrats acted on their racially modern views, protecting white immigrants and by extension the white nation. Moreover, I relate the Park’s development to 1850’s New York debates over black suffrage, in which Democrats supported a property requirement to determine black voter eligibility. I contend that stripping black families of their Park land while simultaneously lobbying for a property requirement enabled Democrats to accomplish their racially modern goal of total black exclusion. Ultimately, then, this paper contributes to ongoing scholarship surrounding Central Park and Northern antebellum urban politics by relating issues of black suffrage and property ownership to shifting and evolving facets of Jacksonian racial discourse.\(^7\)

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The establishment of Central Park symbolized an attack on racial amalgamation, as the city separated European immigrant communities from free black enclaves via Park-oriented evictions. Racial modernity, which held that blacks were biologically inferior, informed fears of amalgamation, as white Northerners thought racial mixing would diminish the inherent superiority of white people. Certain that African American neighborhoods were “magnets of ‘vice’ and ‘corruption’ where racial boundaries and white identities had already been compromised far too often and for too long,” New York Democrats champi-


6 It is important to note that the New York Democratic Party of the 1850’s was divided between anti-slavery Barnburners and pro-slavery Hunkers. This paper addresses specifically why Hunkers, those most likely to hold notions of racial modernity, would have supported Central Park. Research from Rosenzweig and Blackmar suggests that most Hunker Democrats supported Central Park over Jones Wood. Refer to Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 15-19. For the purposes of this paper, understand Democrat as Hunker Democrat unless otherwise specified.

7 Understand that this paper does not attempt to prove that New York City created Central Park solely to oppress black people. Rather, this essay hopes to help historians better grasp why Hunker Democrats, opposed to government intervention in private property, would have backed the Central Park proposal.
oned the Park to save Irish and Germans from the dangers of black communities.  

Reports that the African American neighborhoods situated in Central Park contained debased shanties conform to racially modern rhetoric used to defend razing black homes. Identifying this vocabulary as racially modern helps contextualize Central Park’s creation in the larger Jacksonian racial climate that permeated New York City Democratic circles by the 1850s. According to the New York Ledger (Democrat), prior to the construction of the Park, “rogues” who “laid low till the police gave up search for them” inhabited the “central thousand acres of [Manhattan].” The land contained “five hundred shanties and twenty thousand hogs,” and throughout these communities “dead horses were skinned, cut up, and boiled.” These remarks portray the Park’s denizens as uncivilized. The Ledger continued that, because the area “was the forlornest and most disgusting piece of ground in the State of New York,” New Yorkers should consider city officials’ transforming the land into “a magnificent work of art,” an act of “bold patriotism.” The squalor of the Park’s neighborhoods thus justified the city’s seizure of private property to create a new public space. The government was not acting antagonistically by confiscating black land; rather, it was improving the city. Such framing of black neighborhood deconstruction mirrors the rhetoric Stewart attributed to white mobs who destroyed black communities.

Census data suggests, however, that the black residents of Seneca Village, the primarily African American and partially Irish community in the Park, were not as economically deprived as the Ledger’s account implies. Differences between newspaper reports and census material allude to the racialized undertones entrenched in Democratic publications’ articles. Seneca Village’s black residents lived atypically stable lives for Northern free blacks. Rosenzweig and Blackmar note that “three-quarters of those residents (or their families) who were taxed in 1840 were still there fifteen years later.” In fact, Seneca Village was middling income compared to other free black communities in New York, such as Little Africa, located in downtown Manhattan. 14 families in Seneca Village owned property, while no families did in Little Africa. Moreover, Seneca Village contained a larger percentage of single family homes than Little Africa. This evidence indicates that black residents in Central Park were not as impoverished as Democratic sources maintained. The extent to which the Ledger deemed the Seneca Village neighborhood degraded thus appears hyperbolic and implicitly racial.

Democrats’ rejection of these African Americans’ middle class status is consistent

with 1850’s ideas of racial modernity that regarded black people as biologically inferior and unable to reach a civilized state. New York Hunker Democrat Daniel Dickinson remarked that “the unfortunate African race can never attain to a true state of freedom so long as they remain amongst a people so unlike them in physical development, and so greatly their superiors.” Dickinson’s emphasis on physical features underscores racial modernity’s focus on science to justify black inferiority. Similarly, an 1850 New York pamphlet reasoned that “there is not a church, theatre, lecture, or museum in the north that will admit a negro among the audience” because “Nature makes the dislike.” The publication continued, “We have a repugnance to an odious color, an ugly feature, or a bad smell. We know negroes can’t help these matters, but neither can we help our likes and dislikes.” Characterizing white racism as natural again portrayed racial difference as inherent and unavoidable. These views of racial modernity that dominated 1850’s Democratic thought help explain why New York Democrats emphasized and likely exaggerated the squalor of the African American neighborhoods within Central Park. Regardless of how wealthy these free black families were, they would always be degraded in the eyes of Hunker politicians.11

Because Democrats believed that blacks were permanently depraved, they saw no value in living near African Americans. Whites could not uplift these inherently lesser creatures, and thus residing alongside blacks became a nuisance. This racially modern logic suggests that Democratic politicians perhaps thought they were assisting Irish and German immigrants by forcibly separating them from free blacks. One New Yorker speculated that if the Southern states emancipated their slaves, free blacks “would perform just labor enough, in addition to what they could rob from the whites, to live a lazy, dancing, dissolute, savage life, till the whites finding it impossible to live with them, would abandon everything and fly with their families to the free states.” Black and white cohabitation thus depended on blacks’ being enslaved; the two races could not live harmoniously as equals. Democrats suggested that not even abolitionists would voluntarily reside alongside African Americans: “We should like to see any of our screeching and prominent Abolitionists marrying into a good, fat, rank, and thick-lipped nigger family! Catch ’em at it!” Members of the Democracy thereby saw black communities as nuisances to the white population. Applying this racially modern mindset to the issue of Central Park reveals that Democrats potentially felt they were aiding their Irish constituents against dangerous African Americans.12

12 Stewart, “The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North,” 183; Amor Partiæ, A Comparison of Slavery with Abolitionism; Together with Reflections Deduced from the Premises, Touching the Several Interests of the United States, (New York: 1848); Abolitionism Unveiled!
Additionally, some Democrats thought that black neighborhoods were not merely burdensome but also actively dangerous to white virtue. Contextualizing the construction of the Park in this ideological framework indicates that Democrats pictured themselves as European immigrants’ saviors, not just helpers. The Democracy ardently asserted that European immigrants had virtue worth preserving. New York Democrats hoped to “treat [Europeans] as to prove, that, unlike the whigs, our regard for them does not begin and end with an effort to obtain their votes.” These politicians planned to “meet [immigrants] with liberal naturalization laws in one hand, and with the other, point them to our flourishing cities on the seaboard.” Party representatives ultimately contended that “there are no better republicans than those who have been trained in the severe school of European democracy.” Yet, Democratic leaders across the country insisted that free African Americans could jeopardize “the American, the Irish, [and] the German…moral and social standing.” These Democratic leaders feared that amalgamationists would “unite in marriage the laboring white man and the laboring black woman, to reduce the white laboring man to the despised and degraded condition of the black man.” Northern Democrat John Campbell wrote in his 1851 book *Negromania* that “all nature forbids an amalgamation between [the negro] and the Caucasians.” Because “nature tolerates not hybrids, or mules, or mulattoes,” politicians needed to ensure that blacks and whites did not live in close proximity. *The New York Herald* (Democrat) additionally noted that African Americans were “incapable of amalgamation without shocking both moral and physical sensibilities.” Connecting this widespread Democratic concern of amalgamating black neighborhoods with the Central Park evictions exposes a possible Democratic attempt to protect Irish and German immigrants from the corrupting influence of free blacks.\(^{13}\)

In fact, Democrats had reason to believe that European immigrants’ wellbeing needed defending from black families, as newspaper articles suggested that the African American residents of Central Park were more financially stable than their Irish and German neighbors. *The New York Times* (Whig) presented the “Ebon inhabitants” of “Nigger Village,” as “a pleasing contrast in their habits and the appearance of their dwellings to

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the Celtic occupants, in common with hogs and goats, of the shanties in the lower parts of the Park.” This description notes that European immigrants, economically positioned below free blacks, lived in the very state of destitution Democrats dreaded. Furthermore, by 1856, the southern section of Central Park, inhabited primarily by the Irish, fell into such disrepair that “if some of the hogs and goats, and other inmates of the shanties in the vicinity do not die of the Yellow fever this summer, it will only be because Death himself hesitates to enter such dirty hovels.” Although Whig newspapers likely embellished their accounts of immigrant wretchedness, articles from Democratic publications confirm that the Park’s Irish and German denizens did face more acute poverty than the Park’s African Americans. In June of 1856, a “commissioner” from The New York Herald (Democrat) travelled through one of the Park’s German enclaves, “occupied by miserable looking broken down shanties, and piggeries innumerable.” Unlike Seneca Village, in which 14 families owned property, “all” of the German locale’s residents “are tenants of Comptroller Flagg, and pay the city, through him, a monthly, quarterly, or yearly rent for their holdings.” The wealth disparity between the Park’s African American and European inhabitants thus reflected Democratic fears that blacks would parasitically benefit from living near whites, while immigrants and Americans would suffer.\(^{14}\)

Rosenzweig and Blackmar’s analysis of 1850s census reports confirms the financial differences between the African American and immigrant communities presented by New York City newspapers. The two historians write that “compared with Seneca Villagers…German ragpickers and gardeners were even more closely tied to the park land for their subsistence.” The majority of these Germans “eked out a marginal existence.” This census evidence further exemplifies the Democrats’ racially modern concern that living near free blacks would diminish white immigrants’ virtue.\(^{15}\)

Although the elevated financial status of the Park’s free blacks stemmed from their occupancy in the city longer than most immigrants, racially modern thought would have framed this wealth gap as unnatural. That biologically inferior blacks were more prosperous than whites was evidence of amalgamation’s degenerative effects on Europeans. The Central Park eviction and construction processes indicate that Democrats viewed the economic stability of the Park’s black communities in these racially modern terms. As Democrats saw their nightmare of white degradation become a reality, they implemented a policy that would restore racial order to the city. Although officials evicted both African Americans and European immigrants, they offered many Irish and German inhabitants Park construction jobs that provided immigrants with steady wages and housing. This plan, viewed in relation to racial modernity, suggests that the Park’s overall development rescued white


\(^{15}\) Rosenzweig and Blackmar, The Park and the People, 74.
laborers from abasement caused by free blacks.\footnote{On why a wealth gap existed between the black and European Park residents, see Rosenzweig and Blackmar, \textit{The Park and the People}, 67. The authors find that African American residents were generally wealthier than European immigrants who lived on Park land because these Irish and German families had just arrived in the United States and had not yet been able to secure employment; For information regarding Democrats’ relationship with immigrant laborers, consult Amy Bridges, \textit{A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Due to space limitations, this paper does not discuss machine politics in 1850s New York City.}

The city began formally removing the Park’s inhabitants in 1856, initially angering both the Park’s black and European communities. In communicating with African American residents of Seneca Village, “policemen find it difficult to persuade them out of the idea, which has possessed their simple minds, that the sole object of the authorities in making the Park is to pressure their expulsion from the homes which they occupy.” \textit{The Park’s} free blacks hence seemed reluctant to abandon their neighborhoods. Similarly, The \textit{Herald’s} commissioner remarked that the Park’s German denizens “regarded our presence among them as the beginning of the invasion which was to end in their total expulsion.” After the commissioner told one German that his garden “looks very well here,” the man responded, “Ah, yaw! very well – don’t take him away, den, if de garden ish good.” European residents thus appeared hostile at first to the Park’s development. This frustration accumulated as Joseph Rose, the Collector of City Revenue, considered many of the Park’s houses “in such a dilapidated condition as to be hardly tenantable.” Consequently, these cabins “were considered so insignificant by the Commissioners, that they made [the owners] no award for them.” This apparent lack of reimbursement disadvantaged already exasperated park residents.\footnote{“The Present Look of Our Great Central Park,” \textit{The New York Times} (New York, NY), July 9, 1856; “The Central Park,” \textit{The New York Herald} (New York, NY), June 5, 1856; Joseph Rose, “Letter to the Editor of The Herald,” published in \textit{The New York Herald} (New York, NY), May 26, 1856.}

However, by hiring Irish and Germans to build — and consequently live in — the Park, the city more than compensated European immigrants, while only the Park’s African American residents faced permanent displacement.\footnote{To gain a better understanding of how politicians treated European immigrants in Antebellum New York City, refer to Catherine McNeur, \textit{Taming Manhattan: Environmental Battles in the Antebellum City} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014). McNeur notes that although Irish and German laborers were treated better than free African Americans, they still faced recurring hardship.} Understood in the context of racial modernity, this scheme represents a possible Democratic attempt to liberate whites from the corruption of black neighborhoods. Irish immigrants “constituted the largest proportion of park workers” while “no black workers were employed on the Park.” Park employment offered the Irish “a route of upward mobility” by providing “steady, if seasonal, wages.”
city’s eviction protocol, conceptualized in relation to the Park’s overall construction, hence seems to have aided European immigrants while harming African Americans. These construction jobs additionally supplied Irish immigrants with housing, thereby mitigating the effects of eviction. *The New York Herald* reported that “about forty buildings were reserved for the use of workmen engaged in the park” while *The New York Times* wrote that “every fortnight each man gets his twelve dollars in specie, the greater part of which finds its way to the chests of tenement landlords.” Although immigrants might have been too poor to own property, they at least had consistent shelter. Some European families even kept their land inside the Park after the 1857 removal deadline. In 1859, “lands appropriated for the new Central Park” still contained “a population composed of Irish and Dutch” who had lived in the area “for several years.” Although police visited this immigrant neighborhood frequently to ensure that the residents’ piggeries were not “endangering the health of the city,” no reports indicate that law enforcement agents tried to evict these Europeans. The city’s eviction ordinance thereby disproportionately affected the Park’s African American inhabitants, who did not receive the same employment compensation offered to the Park’s immigrants.19

The disparate impact of the city’s evictions helps explain why Democrats might have supported the Central Park project. Democrats, attached to a racially modern fear of amalgamation, perceived the Park’s racially integrated neighborhoods as a threat to white virtue, reinforced by the fact that the Park’s African Americans were wealthier than its immigrants. Democrats considered the Park’s construction an opportunity to restore a natural hierarchy between whites and blacks and capitalized on this chance by implementing a racialized eviction protocol.

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The eviction and compensation of Central Park’s residents did not merely re-establish order by uplifting white Europeans; it additionally allowed Democrats to limit African Americans’ political rights. Positioning the creation of Central Park next to 1850’s New York suffrage debates suggests that the Park’s establishment helped Democrats fulfill their racially modern desire to exclude biologically contaminated black people from the electorate.

In November of 1846, a New York referendum asked voters, “Equal suffrage to colored persons?” Since 1821, state law had required that African Americans hold at least $250 worth of property to be eligible to vote, but as reformers and abolitionists became

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more vocal for change in the 1840s, state politicians were forced to reconsider the property qualification. Equal suffrage lost 224,336 votes to 85,406, and thus the property requirement lasted into the 1850s.\textsuperscript{20}

Due to party realignment, activist efforts, and the divisive issue of slavery, political debates over black suffrage persisted into the 1850s as well, revived primarily in 1854 with the emergence of the Republican Party. This new political organization served as a haven for anti-slavery Democrats (Barnburner Democrats), who felt less attached to the racially modern Democracy, occupied by pro-slavery Hunkers. As a result, throughout the second half of the 1850s, “increasingly, Democrats tended to come from those areas which objected least to racial discrimination.” During these years leading up to another 1860 vote on black suffrage, “blacks became even more convinced that the Republicans were the key to success on equal rights.” By 1855, the Democrats operated with “a traditional aversion to the black.”\textsuperscript{21}

As the Democratic Party of the 1850s became more entrenched in ideas of racial modernity, its members highlighted notions of inherent black inferiority. Two months before the 1860 suffrage referendum, New York’s main Democratic newspaper, \textit{The New York Herald}, published a “Historical Account of the [Negro Suffrage Question] from the Adoption of the Constitution of 1777,” which featured “opinions of several of the most distinguished men of New York.” The individuals \textit{The Herald} decided to quote expose the prevailing sentiment of the Democracy by the end of the decade. The article detailed the remarks of John Leslie Russell, a Democrat from St. Lawrence County who attended the 1846 constitutional convention. Russell believed that his stance against black suffrage “was not an expression of prejudice.” Instead, he characterized it as “the expression of the sentiment of the Almighty, who had ordained the colored man to be inferior to the free white race.” \textit{The Herald} evidently promoted racially modern ideas of blackness. Furthermore, the publication discussed the views of Mr. John H. Hunt, another member of the constitutional convention of 1846. Hunt alleged that his opponents “forget that negroes are aliens — aliens, not by mere accident of foreign birth, not because they spoke a different language, not from any petty distinction that a few years’ consociation might obliterate, but by the broad distinction of race.” Hunt concluded that this distinction “must separate our children from their children forever.” \textit{The Herald}’s willingness to print these speeches suggests that

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the Democracy fully subscribed to racial modernity by the end of the 1850s.22

Mayor Fernando Wood and Senator James Cooley, two Democratic politicians crucial to Central Park’s creation, both championed these racist views. Wood openly supported the *Dred Scott* decision, which denied free blacks legal rights, and advocated expanding slavery into new territories. Wood justified his beliefs by alleging that “The Almighty has fixed the distinction between the races” and has “made the black man inferior.” Wood, like Russell, thus held that blacks were innately lesser creatures than whites. Cooley also allied with the anti-black faction of the Democratic Party. In an 1853 speech before the Democracy of Syracuse, Cooley referred to the anti-slavery Barnburners as “bullies” with “their lips blistered with lies, their hearts black with deception, and their every feature smothered with treachery.” Cooley’s loyalty to the pro-slavery Hunker Democrats indicates that he likely held similar racially modern views as Fernando Wood and the writers of *The Herald.*

Officials such as Wood and Cooley, because they considered black inferiority natural, believed all African Americans, regardless of class status, were unqualified for voting. These Democrats did not simply want to enforce a property requirement; they wanted to do away with black suffrage altogether. New York lawyer Hiram Hastings, who called himself “a steady supporter of the principles and regular nominations of the Democratic party from the time I became a voter in 1829,” questioned, “Why should a property qualification be applied to Negroes, more than to white men?” Hastings maintained that “all property qualifications for office or the right of suffrage should be abolished, and all people of color excluded from the right of suffrage.” Indeed, this stance was the logical end for individuals who insisted that blacks and whites “are not one people” because blacks are “intellectually inferior, and not fit to be trusted with a voice in our public affairs.” Clinging to ideas of racial modernity, Democrats in the 1850s saw the entire black race as unfit for civic engagement.24

Wood and Cooley’s rhetoric, coupled with the Democracy’s overarching message


during the 1850s, helps explain in part why Democratic politicians advocated for Central Park. By evicting the Park’s African American inhabitants, these officials could prevent middle class blacks from owning enough land to qualify to vote. In effect, the Central Park evictions allowed Democrats to accomplish their goal of excluding blacks from the electorate.

Census data indicates that Seneca Village’s black residents wielded considerable voting power compared to other free African Americans in the state. This evidence shows that Democrats had a legitimate political reason to target Central Park’s main black neighborhood through eviction. According to the 1845 census, ten of the less than 100 eligible black voters in New York lived in Seneca Village. Accordingly, occupants of Seneca Village “were several times more likely to have voting privileges than black New Yorkers in general.” By displacing these African Americans from their land, Democrats decreased state-wide black voting capacity.25

Thus, by understanding 1850’s Democrats’ racially modern stances on blackness and suffrage, we can explain Democratic politicians’ advocacy for Central Park as a method not only to uplift European immigrants but also to remove innately degraded blacks from the electorate.

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During New York’s 1853 debates surrounding the establishment of a new park, the Democratic *New York Herald* repeatedly demanded that the state legislature “give us that great Central Park.” Central Park offered a haven for all New Yorkers. *The Herald* envisioned the new public space as a place “where all our citizens may walk and breathe” and deemed the Park “indispensable to the health and comfort of the inhabitants of the metropolis.” Precisely because “the vox populi is for a magnificent green spot in the center of the city,” the Democrats of *The Herald* “don’t want Jones Park.”26

Ultimately, then, scholars must understand whom the Democrats considered “our citizens” to grasp why pro-private property politicians advocated for the massive expansion of government authority to create Central Park. By embedding the Park’s creation in 1850’s Democratic ideology, this investigation reinforces Lacy Ford Jr.’s assertion that “the Jacksonian construction of racial modernity defined…the entire American nation-state as ‘white man’s country.’”27

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I do not conclude that historians must now conceive of Central Park’s construction as solely an attack on African Americans. The Park’s supporters consisted of individuals from different political parties with conflicting views on many social and governmental issues. Moreover, as Mayor Fernando Wood admitted in 1856, “The Government of the city is far more utilitarian and practically [sic.] perceptible than either [the State or Federal Government].” Ultimately, the Central Park project largely revolved around personal interest, as political elites on either side of the aisle recognized they could benefit financially and politically from the new development.28

However, although the idea of racial modernity was not the sole factor that compelled Democrats to back Central Park, it was central the justification of a public work that otherwise would have contradicted party dogma that favored private property. Many of the officials who led the Park campaign were Hunker Democrats whose views of fixed black inferiority influenced how they perceived the body politic and consequently public space.

Andrew Jackson Downing wrote in 1851 that a large common space “must be taken in republican America, for it belongs of right more truly here than elsewhere. It is republican in its very idea and tendency. It takes up popular education where the common school and ballot box leave it.” In short, public areas across American metropoles reflect the status of democracy in the United States. As Democrats discriminatorily evicted African American families from their homes to create Central Park, the state of American democracy appeared grim. The United States served not as a “place of…resort” for the masses but as a haven for the white man.29

28 For information on the Park’s supporters, see, Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 37-58; Fernando Wood, “Communication from His Honor the Mayor, Fernando Wood, Transmitted to the Common Council of New York, January 7, 1856” (New York, 1856), 2; For information on politicians’ personal interests consult, Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 37-58.

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SECONDARY SOURCES


TITLE IMAGE

Upon first glance, the words hierarchy and humanitarianism represent almost antithetical values. However, according to Samuel Moyn, Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence and Professor of History, these two concepts share an uneasy union. Indeed, in his analysis of the genealogy of human rights discourses, Moyn suggests that philanthropic movements can fortify elitist hegemony. Brushing against the grain of historical scholarship, Professor Moyn reevaluates income inequality, the humanization of war, and other topics now common in our political vernacular. In an interview with Yale Historical Review Editor Henry Jacob, SY ’21, Professor Moyn outlines his theoretical framework for understanding past mistakes, assessing present crises, and planning for a more equal future – a coming community that pursues humanitarianism divorced from hierarchy.
Yale Historical Review: Today, we have Samuel Moyn, Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence and Professor of History at Yale, speaking with me about human rights, humanitarianism, and above all, history. He is an author of critically acclaimed books and articles, editor of eminent publications, and a scholar of intellectual history. Welcome Professor Moyn.

Sam Moyn: Thanks for having me.

YHR: Of course. Before delving into your career, let’s discuss briefly your life before teaching. You majored in French literature and history as an undergraduate, received a PhD in History from UC Berkeley as well as a JD at Harvard. What academic threads tied together your education and how did human rights become the focus of your studies throughout that time?

SM: Well, like most people I have had a really accidental life. A lot depended on the teachers I encountered at the university, especially the ones who convinced me that history would allow me to study so many other walks of life on the rationale that they were all taking place in the past. While studying history, I could think about art and music, as much as I could literature and philosophy. And so I pursued a doctorate in European intellectual history and taught in that field for a long time. My first position was in the History Department at Columbia University where I also taught in the famous great books program that Columbia College has, much like Directed Studies here at Yale College. It was only later that I decided I would write a book about human rights – sort of on a lark. So just as with that old accident that led me into intellectual history, there was this later accident.

I had gone to law school, not liked it very much, and done an internship at the White House during a humanitarian intervention in the late '90s. But, I still would say the reason I got to think about human rights and mainly had to do with the fact that it was a new field of history to think about where this set of moral norms and collection of ethical movements came from. I gave a somewhat skeptical reading of human rights movements probably because of what I had seen in the White House and in the following years. But then, the publication of my first book on human rights did lead me in a very different direction, again, accidentally.

YHR: Let’s now shift to your most recent book, Not Enough. In this work, you trace the development of human rights, emphasizing the 20th century's failures. In other words, the victory of neoliberal economics over the welfare state project to combat inequality. Nonetheless, your reflections on previous decades resonate today. This history reveals the shortcomings of past and gestures to current mistakes, reading both as a tragedy and
a diagnosis.

SM: In this new book, I work with three possible agendas involving rights and distribution that a state might take up. One is what I call status equality. This is really what most human rights today, whether nationally or globally, protect. The idea is that human beings in virtue of their humanity have high standing. Because they have this high status, a certain number of very basic protections flow from them. We don’t think of this bearing on the distributonal question of who gets what, especially when it comes to free speech or related rights. In most cases, the state just has to stop doing things; stop interfering with my right to speak or stop torturing me if it’s doing so. Relevant here is a big breakthrough in rights protection that goes along with status equality, which says that no one should be treated differently because of the kind of person they are. Actually in our time, which some people call neoliberal, we have done a huge amount to combat discrimination. There is still a long way to go to ensure that lots of different kinds of people should get that high status and hopefully equal status.

But what I’m really concerned about in the book, since I have written about the basics of human rights before, is the distributonal question. I devote most of the new book to charting the history of so called economic and social rights, which I say are about sufficient provision. These are rights that demand protection of individuals to make sure they get the most basic decencies of life. So everyone should get some kind of job, some amount of food, water, sanitation, healthcare. What I worry about in the book is that there had been a project in the modern history concerning distribution that demanded also equal distribution or some modicum or amount of it. And what’s interesting is that all our gains in the past half century in pursuing status equality and even this new commitment to sufficient provision seem to be occurring at the time that we’re abandoning any commitment to equal distribution. And so the book is bleak because it suggests that we have made this big moral choice and abandoned equality when I worry that it’s worth some attention too.

YHR: Do you think that we pay any attention to the balance among status equality, sufficient provision, and fair distribution?

SM: The most high functioning welfare states were created in Western Europe. It is just unthinkable today in any Western European country that you wouldn’t get sufficient provision of healthcare, at least on paper, whereas in the United States our right to universal healthcare was never granted. And yet when the West European welfare state was created, there was comparable attention to equal distribution. Through lots of policy devices from antitrust doctrine to high taxation and on down the list, the rich were made to pay enough to be part of our society so that there would not be two parallel societies. By and large in
Western Europe, the levels of equality that were achieved in the middle of the 20th century have been maintained. The big exception is the United Kingdom, which like other Anglophone countries has embraced neoliberal doctrines, and therefore generated more and more inequality materially than had prevailed in the middle of the 20th century.

YHR: Fascinating. Let’s now shift a little bit towards your research methodology and in the book itself. You draw upon countries and thinkers from the Global North and South, and you provide a look into the diverse genealogy of human rights along with that. How do you envision historical literature in the coming years? Do you see a shift toward a more global style of scholarship that treats boundaries only as lines on a map and not as signs of actual difference?

SM: What it means to live after the Cold War and after decolonization in an era of much greater ease of communication and mobility is a topic of ongoing debate. The state still matters and the Global North, which has typically gotten the lion’s share of attention from historians, is still much richer and more powerful than the Global South. Historians are trying to level the playing field. When I was trained in European history, we were not taught about the events known as decolonization. And we read thinkers like the German thinker G.W.F. Hegel, who wrote about universal freedom, while still operating with a sense that the theater of world history – Hegel’s expression – was really Europe or at best, the transatlantic.

One of the big events of my career is the belated recognition that I needed to care about the world beyond Europe or the transatlantic space. The trouble is, it’s very difficult. I think the principal difficulty that historians debate is how we can globalize history while still ensuring the kind of quality that a once geographically localized history involved. Like anthropology or other kinds of social science, history requires us to look closely at one place. Yet we also are more and more sensitive to the way that every place is a snapshot that cannot be understood without zooming out. The challenge is to study that local place in time while also taking account of the whole sweep of world history at the time that one studied.

YHR: So, to be clear, future historians need to balance this global and local perspective, without losing the precision we have, while also maintaining a holistic view of our work.

SM: Correct.

YHR: Perhaps one of your greatest claims to fame is your critical stance towards humanitarianism.
SM: Humanitarianism seems to work across a gradient of power and wealth. It does nothing to affect it. If we tell a celebratory story of humanitarianism, it’s like praising an aristocrat for noblesse oblige; someone who has privilege also chose to be charitable. From the point of view of the underprivileged, you might well ask where that privilege comes from in the first place, and whether humanitarianism undoes the hierarchy that produces that privilege. The answer is almost always no. In fact, it might stabilize the hierarchy and maybe immunize it from challenge. These days, when the state has retreated even from much of its development projects that were a kind of global state-based humanitarianism, when we think of humanitarians, we think of figures like Bill Gates. Bill Gates chose to be charitable, but there are a lot of wealthy folks who choose not to be.

We live in an age in which addressing the worst kinds of penury and poverty, seem like the highest expectation for reform. Part of the point of my most recent book is to argue that getting people off the bare ground to some level or floor of protection is actually a pretty unambitious goal, even globally. We should also care about constraints on inequality. Which of course Bill Gates never addresses. Why would he? The critique of humanitarianism is fundamentally about hierarchy and whether and how it could be undone.

YHR: Your current research focuses on the humanization of war. Could you elaborate on what this phrase means to you?

SM: There has been an agenda since the mid-19th century of making the conduct of hostilities in war less brutal, and especially for innocent victims like civilians, and notably children and women among them. The humanization of war could have many forms. I am especially interested as a law professor nowadays in the legal forms of humanization. The Red Cross originally wasn’t a kind of do-gooding organization for people like Clara Barton. It was an organization that was sponsoring legal reform, including the first Geneva Convention and all the subsequent Geneva Conventions—legal instruments that are intended to make war fought more humanely. My new project is really trying to figure out how we should think about the history of war humanization in relation to the rise and fall of movements calling for the abolition of war.

Even before we hit the wartime context, we should acknowledge that reformers have tried to humanize many other practices other than war. In a way, philanthrocapitalism is a humanizing project. It says that capitalism is good. Now we'll bring the love of man, which is what philanthropy means, to it, and sweeten the bitter tea for some of capitalism with a bit of humanitarianism. A really interesting earlier example is the attempt before the U.S. Civil War to make slavery more humane. What’s fascinating about it is that people argued that slavery couldn’t yet be challenged, but if we insisted on making slave owners less cruel to their chattel of slaves, there might be more and more people who see the very
practice as evil.

When one shifts to the later 19th century, and much of the 20th, and the wartime humanization project, you also find both the claim that making war less cruel will end war in the long run, and the claim that you have to assess the risk that the reverse is coming true. Maybe by making obscene practices more humane, we help guarantee that they'll just go on and on. I'm very interested in Leo Tolstoy, who worried precisely—and with respect to slavery and war alike—that we should be wary of the risks involved in humanization if we care about abolition. All I want to do is ask, especially in the face of our contemporary endless war, whether we should think twice about our decision to bracket the project of abolishing war, which was once very popular. Because it seems as if we've just embraced the project of making war more humane sort of thoughtlessly. I want to just test people to make sure they haven't classified war in the wrong way in their thinking.

YHR: Many of our readers will know Tolstoy for his literary talent. Could you explain why he figures so much into your current studies?

SM: I got interested in Tolstoy principally just because of a page of War and Peace, in which a character named Prince Andrei says that if we really wanted to be sure we should fight wars, we would not make them more humane. Later Tolstoy converted or forged, in a way, his own religion, based on his understanding of Jesus' significance. At that point, Tolstoy retrieved Prince Andrei's arguments and made them more radical. One way he made them more radical is by comparing war and the risks involved in making war more humane with other practices he found abhorrent—not just slavery, but also meat eating and meat production, for instance. Again, the worry there, which I think is very palpable, is that if we struggle to make meat eating more humane by putting the U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection teams in every slaughterhouse in the United States, to make sure that the killers of the cows aren't too cruel along the way, we may help guarantee the perpetuation of meat eating. What I like about his imagination is that he place the problem of war, and its entrenchment through making it more humane, in the context of these other practices. By doing so, he helps us think through which practices we really must abolish and which was can defensibly humanize.

YHR: So in Tolstoy, we can see a critic not only of humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, Nobel Prize, but also a kitchen sink philosopher who saw abolition, vegetarianism and also the end of war as all pretty much on equal footing.

SM: Right.

YHR: Then how can we use Tolstoy today, 100 years or so after his death, as a basis for
a new critical framework?

SM: Well, the most obvious thing would be to just agree with his perspective. I don't, because I think he reached these views through a religious event in his life – which not everyone has had – and it returned him to a very specific version of Christianity. American Christians seem like some of the most militaristic elements of our society. So it's not clear we can rely on Tolstoy's metaphysics to drive any politics that we might find that he inspires. But I think he gives us some really interesting tools to work with. Maybe it's the case that we don't follow Tolstoy in opposing humanization but we conclude that there are risks in it, especially risks to long-term peace that have to be confronted and managed. Maybe we don't adopt Tolstoy's pacifism and conclude that war is required from time to time. But we do take inspiration from his skepticism of endless war.

YHR: Great, so to conclude the interview, I'll ask you not to look at the past but instead look ahead. What role should historical discourses play not only in the development of human rights, but also in the creation and cultivation of knowledge?

SM: I think it's often said that if you don't study history you will repeat it, but no historian really thinks that's the reason to study history. The present and future are just different – so different that it seems implausible to say history can guide us directly. In the old days before modern times it was frequently said that history was *magistra vitæ*, the master of life; the idea was that somehow we would study its example to know how to live now. But the premise there was that life is sort of the same whenever or wherever you live it and therefore studying how other men have lived will guide you now. No one can believe that anymore.

Instead, the study of history gives us a way of thinking about how we came by the beliefs that we hold dear. And it allows us to think hard about the relation of those beliefs and values to the practices that we're undertaking. I want to be in position to give the sense in a reader that making war humane, which seems just obviously in line with our values, may in fact conflict with them. Or if we don't adopt more of an abolitionist perspective alongside the humanization perspective we may be also betraying values that have come to us from the past. I'm not going to make any great claims about history. I think history is merely there, like other forms of inquiry, to provide orientation in the confusion and that's probably the best that can be hoped for its role.

YHR: Thank you so much for an engaging conversation on your life, scholarship and hopes for the future. It's been a pleasure.