

rc news

{MOVEMENT}

CONVERSATIONS ON
LEADERSHIP, ACTIVISM
AND SERVICE



“We are the people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.”

– Port Huron Statement, 1962



PHOTO BY CYNTHIA BURTON

Political manifestoes often begin by invoking a collective “We”: we the people, we the nation, we the members of the public(s) being addressed, harangued and called to action. Some of these documents affirm existing social and political relationships and serve a conserving function such as the “We the people” who “do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Other manifestoes have a critical edge, seeking to change what is in the hopes of what could be. Documents in this fluid category

can serve a revolutionizing function, such as the “We” said to hold certain truths to be self-evident and worth fighting for. American history is filled with both kinds of manifestoes. Whether conservative or revolutionary in nature, they remind us of the immense power of words and ideas; they also call our attention to what happens when people are brave enough or desperate enough to put words and ideas into action.

The opening passage of *The Port Huron Statement* (PHS) — “We are the people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit” — invokes the first line of the

U.S. Constitution. The “we” here is the distant prodigy of the founding fathers, actively questioning the efficacy of their inheritance as young Americans and thereby living out the very promise of American democracy and its cherished liberties. Those opening lines also, I think, echo the much darker side of social critiques issued by young people in the heady days of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked/ dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix/ Angel-headed hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection/ to the starry dynamo in the machinery of the night...”

Thus begins Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl*, a poem often said to epitomize the Beat generation and the movements in arts and letters that it embodied. While radically different in style and tone, both *Howl* and *The Port Huron Statement* embody something of the restless energy of the gifted young people who saw themselves at odds with the status quo of mainstream American life and its institutions, including universities. *Howl* has a few memorable vignettes located in universities and involving the collective: “we who passed through universities with radiant eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war/ who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull...”

Ginsberg himself was suspended from Columbia University during his sophomore year and *Howl*, his most

{from the director}



Protestors demonstrate against corporate recruiters with known war research affiliations, from Michigan Daily Photograph collection, Box 12. Courtesy of U-M Bentley Historical Library.

famous poem, was the subject of a major obscenity trial that tested the boundaries of free speech, social criticism and artistic expression.

In both *Howl* and *The Port Huron Statement* youth itself emerges as a site of social critique, a social location that grants special insights into the workings of society and the

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world. The PHS, in particular, is arguably among the first political tracts to explicitly identify not only young people but also students as agents of social change. It is students, the PHS insists, who have the ability not only to understand the world but to change it.

The 1960s was the great era of student activism in the United States and throughout the world as students launched direct action civil rights sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina; explored new terrains in the arts; and took to the streets in Latin America, Africa and Europe. Along with defending free speech at Berkeley and inaugurating a series of leftist social movements such as the

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), young people also defended the rights of free enterprise and economic liberty, as expressed in the *Sharon Statement*. Published in 1960, the statement is one of the founding documents of the Young Americans for Freedom group. On both the Left and the Right and in the spectrum in between, young people became social critics and social actors in ways that were unprecedented.

The 1960s also witnessed creative experiments in participatory democracy, spearheaded by organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) that attempted to break out of the stodgy modes of conventional, top-down leadership. SNCC was dedicated to a consensus model of decision making, the belief that ordinary men and women could do extraordinary things, and that all voices ought to be heard. Many of the authors of *The Port Huron Statement* were directly influenced by SNCC and the example of young African-Americans across the south who took to the streets to defy legal segregation and racial indignity. Indeed, Tom Hayden, a University of Michigan alumnus who will be back on the U-M campus this fall for a three-day conference on the PHS and the rise of the New Left, recalls that he wrote the first notes for *The Statement* while briefly jailed in Albany, Georgia, after a Freedom Ride. “The high school and college students engaged in direct action there changed my life,” Hayden reflects years later. “SNCC played a role in shaping my values, as it did with many SDS founders.”

We want to honor the legacy of *The Port Huron Statement* and other texts and movements from that era, and to think

The Residential College (RC) is a 4-year, interdisciplinary, living-learning community of 1,000 undergraduates established through the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA) in 1967. The distinctive educational mission of the RC is to enable students to develop their intellectual interests and creative talents in an environment in which they can find their own voice and relate learning with doing. The RC faculty and staff challenge students to take the initiative in shaping their own education, to participate actively in classes and in extra-curricular programs, to think critically about what they are learning and reflectively about what they are doing, and to engage with the University community as well as the outside world. Learn more at: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/rc>.

{from the director}

about what's changed (or not) in the past fifty years. In 1962 the authors of *The Port Huron Statement* could imagine themselves "perhaps the last generation to experiment with living," but students today continue to reflect – some with equal discomfort – on the world they inherit. How close is our "war on terror" to the Cold War that looms so large in the PHS? Are there similarities between our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war in Vietnam that shaped so much of student activism in the 1960s? Can we hear echoes of the PHS and SDS in contemporary shouts of outrage against the 1% in the name of the 99%? And, above all, is participatory democracy and all that it implies still a dream worth fighting for?

This year the Residential College is launching a series of conversations, events and activities grouped under the broad theme "RC Movement: Conversations on Student Leadership, Activism and Service." Movement is obviously a major touchstone for us this year. We have successfully moved out of East Quad and into our temporary locations in South Quad, West Quad, and the Dennison Building as our East Quad home undergoes a massive renovation. We are "at large" on the central campus and on the move through spaces new and exciting. While I don't want to downplay the importance of this year away from our traditional EQ home, I don't want to overemphasize it, either. The RC is always on the move as incoming students become seniors and then alumni, as new faculty join our ranks and others retire, as new programs get created, consolidated, or spun off, as the wheel of history continues to turn and we are confronted with new challenges that require fresh and innovative ideas.

Since this summer marks the 50th anniversary of *The Port Huron Statement*, which played a major role in the founding of the Students for a Democratic Society and other youth-based social movements in the 1960s, we are using this unique political manifesto as part of this year's RC Summer Reads Program. We'll be spending some time thinking and talking about what it means to read the PHS fifty years later, in 2012. To help situate a conversation about student activism and leadership then and now, we'll also be reading sections from RC faculty member Helen Fox's excellent new book: *Their Highest Vocation: Social Justice and the Millennial Generation* (Peter Lang, 2012).

And, during the fall semester (Oct. 31–Nov. 2) RC students and faculty will also be participating in a major academic conference on the U-M campus entitled, "A New Insurgency: *The Port Huron Statement* in Its Time and Ours."

We'll be posting information about the conference and about other activities related to the RC Summer Reads and the RC Movement theme on the RC website. We also have a blog on our year – At Large – up and running, and are pleased to welcome guest bloggers of all types – students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. You can also use the blog as a way to keep track of the latest developments as the EQ renovation proceeds. We hope you'll join us on campus, online or just in spirit as we use this year to reflect on the history and contemporary challenges of student activism and leadership, and as we explore the theme of movement of all kinds – in word and deed, in the arts and sciences, in politics and social life, in physical space and through the outer reaches of the imagination. ■



FIND US! We have moved to temporary quarters while East Quad undergoes extensive renovation. Our locations for the next year:

RC ACADEMIC SERVICES - SUITE M112, WEST QUAD

Jennifer Myers, Director Academic Services,
Associate Director Residential College
Charlie Murphy, Student Services
Melanie Karner, Student Services

RC ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - SUITE G104, SOUTH QUAD

Angela D. Dillard, Director Residential College
Patti Kardia, Key Administrator
Candice Middlebrook, Executive Secretary
Lana Kanitz, Admissions
Robin Goldberg, Student Affairs Program Specialist
Cynthia Burton, Outreach and Communications

(Faculty offices are in Dennison, South Quad and West Quad.)



AMERICA'S CITY OF MOVEMENT

DETROIT

BY CRAIG REGESTER (RC '93)

The Movement Electronic Music Festival is what they now call Detroit's annual techno extravaganza which draws over 100,000 fans to Hart Plaza every Memorial Day weekend to kick-off the summer festival season. In 2012, Movement celebrated its 13th year of the festival and boasted a line-up of over 100 artists including two of the original "Belleville Three" members – Kevin Saunderson and Juan Atkins – credited with creating the musical style in the early 1980s. Public Enemy even made an appearance to draw in less nimble middle-age hip-hop fans. One of the more notable characteristics of this annual Detroit festival is that almost everyone who attends – no matter their age – moves and grooves continuously. Chairs are scarce and largely unused throughout the weekend.

Mass dancing in Detroit, of course, is not a new phenomenon. "Boogie Chillen," released in 1948, was the first hit single by renowned Detroit Blues Guitarist John Lee Hooker. We can all rest assured that, back in the day, more than a few people shook hard to that tune and even

beyond Hastings Street in Detroit's Paradise Valley. Sixteen years later, Martha and the Vandellas' hit Motown single, "Dancing in the Streets," would get the world shakin' in 1964. Detroit Rock City emerged only a few short years later with the MC5. Fast-forwarding to the present, Jack White, Eminem, and Danny Brown continue Detroit's legacy of rhythmically moving the world. And this is just a partial look at how Detroit's music history moved the world.

We've almost skipped over the most obvious metaphor here, and that is how The Motor City enabled people (of means, anyway) to move around the world through the automobile, which is literally defined as "a self-propelled passenger vehicle." Incidentally, most people don't realize that the bicycle was actually the original "automobile" and laid the groundwork for many aspects of early auto manufacturing. By the time Henry Ford produced his 10 millionth car (around 1920), half the automobiles in the world were Fords.



Detroit social movements have impacted the world. While America's labor movement was not born in Detroit, it certainly accelerated and gained dramatic strength through the emergence of the powerful United Auto Workers in the 1930s and 1940s. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the '60s and '70s gained tremendous national traction and strength through the efforts of many everyday people here in Detroit. Father Kern, Corktown's fabled community activist, is but one in a long line of Detroit faith-based leaders.

Today in 2012, with all of its vexing social and economic challenges, Detroiters throughout the city continue to work diligently to redefine and reimagine what it means to live, work, and move around in a 21st century urban community. Indeed, Detroit today is a movement hotbed attracting youthful social entrepreneurs, public artists, urban farmers, educational and political activists, and many more.

The U-M Semester in Detroit Program, resting proudly in this historical and contemporary context, moves undergraduate students to the city for a full semester of immersive engagement with Detroit. Launched in 2008 (and created originally by four RC students, funded by the U-M Office of the Provost and administered by the Residential College), Semester in Detroit has enabled over 100 U-M

students to live in the city for a full semester, participate in an urban studies curriculum, and intern with a community or cultural arts organization.

The Semester in Detroit experience is both intensive and transformative as our students join in reciprocal partnerships with non-profit organizations and everyday Detroiters, contributing to the city while learning deeply about themselves and their connection and role in this very important place. And unlike U-M's many other programs that move students around the world, when our students return to Ann Arbor in subsequent semesters, they can continue to maintain active and vibrant relationships in Detroit, which resides a mere 40 miles away. Who knows? Some day there might even be high-speed transit moving all of us rapidly back-and-forth and all around this region. ■

RC STUDENTS: Learn more about the Semester in Detroit program – including when/how to apply for the upcoming winter and spring-summer 2013 programs. www.semesterindetroit.com.

RC ALUMNI LIVING/WORKING IN DETROIT: Get involved as mentors and check out and post comments to our community blog at semesterindetroit.wordpress.com.

FOLLOW US on Twitter ([semesterd](https://twitter.com/semesterd)) and find us on Facebook.

Students protest in support of a student-run bookstore. From, U-M Vice-President for Development and Communication Records, Box 23. Courtesy of U-M Bentley Historical Library.

AGENDA FOR A GENERATION

THE PORT HURON STATEMENT

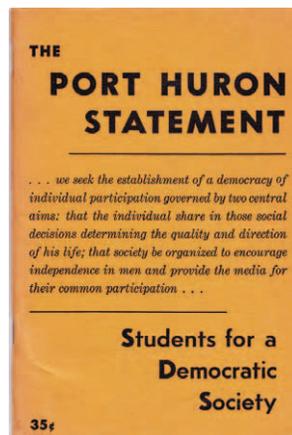


BY HOWARD BRICK

Student for a Democratic Society's (SDS) *Port Huron Statement* offered the most comprehensive analysis of American society and the most eloquent vision for radical reform to be generated by the emerging movement known as the New Left. Young radical intellectuals — including, in crucial leadership roles, undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Michigan — produced the document. Their inspiration stemmed from the energy and moral example already set by activists in the civil rights and peace movements, anticolonial struggles abroad, new signs of dissent from Latin America to Eastern Europe, and older leftwing ideas in need of renovation. Drafters of *The Port Huron Statement* were keenly aware of many of these forces; in 1962, they may not have recognized others, such as renewed women's rights agitation, that were stirring as well. The legacy of those movements and the ideals of *The Port Huron Statement* have returned to center-stage amid the stunning sweep of mass protest in pursuit of democracy and social justice over the past two years, from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street and continuing collective action against the hardships of austerity.



SDS Founder Tom Hayden.



“...their inspiration stemmed from the energy and moral example already set by activists in the civil rights and peace movements, anticolonial struggles abroad, new signs of dissent from Latin America to Eastern Europe, and older left-wing ideas in need of renovation.”

The Port Huron Statement will be engaged in various ways throughout the fall semester by the Residential College, the Honors Program, the Program in the Environment, and the Michigan Community Scholars Program, culminating in a three-day conference — “A New Insurgency: *The Port Huron Statement* in Its Time and Ours” — at the University of Michigan (Oct. 31 – Nov. 2). This conference marks the 50th anniversary of *The Port Huron Statement* and brings together former activists associated with the Students for a Democratic Society, scholars whose work focuses on various aspects of the New Left (1958-1965), current student activists, U-M faculty, and others interested in the making of a New Left, and its impact on our own historical moment.

Tapping the viewpoints of those present at the creation of the *Statement* as well as those historians, humanists, and social scientists who have studied that period, “A New Insurgency” draws attention to the complex scene of social justice and leftwing activist movements that laid the seed-bed for *The Port Huron Statement* — and then helped spread and amplify its visions of social change. Speakers at the conference will examine the open, and sometimes hidden, elements of the new insurgent spirit of that time — including trends in feminism, Black nationalism, Latina/o and Native American struggles for recognition and power, rebellious currents around the world, gay liberation, and developments in the arts that tracked the course of rising protest. ■

“A New Insurgency” runs from Wednesday, October 31, 7:30 pm, through the evening of Friday, November 2. Evening keynote events take place in Room 100 of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library; daily panels are held in the Michigan Union, both on the University of Michigan campus. All events are free and open to the public. www.lsa.umich.edu/phs

Students gather on the University of Michigan's Central Campus to protest the Vietnam War. From U-M News & Information Services collection, Box E-5. U-M Bentley Historical Library.



HOWARD BRICK is the Louis Evans Professor of History and Professor of History, College of LSA, University of Michigan.



AN OBJECT OF RESISTANCE

BY MABEL RODRIGUEZ

I am an expert on moving. I can pack up a house, condo, or office at a moment's notice — or so it seems.

By age 29, I had lived in two continents, three countries, 3 provinces, 4 states, 41 apartments and houses... not including the multiple continents, countries, provinces and states I visited while on vacation.

Moving is not a big deal for me. I can pack compactly, quickly, and efficiently. All items are logically organized and strategically positioned to ensure that they can be found when needed in a new space. I have learned to throw away photographs, personal letters, cards, thank you notes, and mementos. I sometimes do feel some anxiety or regret if I am drawn to open the cards, bringing up events, faces, and other forgotten memories. But I have learned to quickly throw it all away when a 'to keep' pile starts to sprout.

Each year I co-teach the Migrant Education and Outreach Program. Every July my students and I travel to migrant camps near the Ohio border to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in the community. At the camps, we meet other expert packers, the migrant agricultural workers thousands of miles from their home base in Florida, Texas, or even Mexico. However, for the migrants packing and unpacking is a "regular" affair in the migrant stream. Migrants uproot not only once at the beginning of the harvest, but up to three or four times depending on the weather and job conditions in a particular year. Single men, small families, large families: all expert packers able to tear down their home and divide it into parcels that fit into their car or van, and leave by sunset. In their wake, these families also leave bits and pieces of their lives. A doll. Books. A drawing. Shoes. Not everything can make the next trip. I assume they have learned to detach emotionally from their possessions, as I have.

This attitude might seem excessive and cold or just sad and painful. And it might be. But my multiple 'migrations' throughout the years have taught me that recreating a sense of self and a sense of community in your new environment can be more significant than holding on to previous remnants. And when I walk into the migrant camps, I do not

sense sadness for who and what was left behind, but rather experience the energy of a community rebuilding in a new space. I am always in awe of the workers' ability to create a sense of home and identity in the most frugal of conditions and in the most desolate of locations, thousands of miles from their home base.

Every year we as a class travel to the migrant camps, miles from the nearest town, surrounded by corn fields; the camps are composed of non-descript structures intended, at best, to protect workers from the worst of the inclement weather, and we find *a home*, flowerpots at the door, beckoning you to acknowledge the family who planted them. Shoes placed neatly at the door, evidence of the character of their owners. You know you will be welcomed when you knock at their door. The warmth and the soul of the community are palpable in those small details, which render security and structure to a transient lifestyle and make a living space a home.

This is their Object of Resistance. No matter what the weather might bring or where they might be working, the migrants have the ability to preserve the essence of their identity and community under the most dire of conditions. And I believe the RC shares these same qualities.

Single men, small families, large families:
all expert packers able to tear down their
home and divide it into parcels that fit into
their car or van, and leave by sunset.

Regardless of the apparent dispersion of the RC throughout central campus, our intrinsic essence remains intact. We will regenerate and own our new spaces. The RC will survive this move.

And if you take part in the trek, venture into the basement of South Quad, follow the orange crates, and poke your head around the recently assembled offices, and you just might find a flowerpot. ■

What do the RC Move and Javanese Dance Have in Common?

BY SUSAN PRATT WALTON



As we make the big move out of East Quad this year, we might reflect on how the way we move expresses our cultural values. We at the RC value collaboration, careful planning, consideration for all involved, humor, and orderliness directed in a non-hierarchical way. And these values have characterized the way we have managed the move from this building. I know of other units at U-M who have moved recently, and their style is marked by top-down decisions and political expediency at the expense of people's needs.

Do styles of moving in other areas of life also illuminate cultural values? The kinds of movements used in classical Javanese dance act as a blueprint for crucial Javanese cultural values about spirituality and gender (and other things as well). One of the key concepts in Javanese culture is refinement. The refined or *alus* person is polite, polished, subdued, and restrained. He or she moves slowly, deliberately, and gracefully in controlled gestures. One is *alus* because of a deep inner equanimity, which is gained through meditation and other spiritual practices. The emotional restraint of the *alus* person is thought to emanate from within, as a natural manifestation of the spiritually evolved person.

Genres of classical Javanese dance are classified according to the degree of refinement of the movements. The most *alus* characters move their arms and legs slowly and smoothly, keep their limbs close to their bodies to show self-containment and restraint, tilt their heads forward in humbleness, and gaze downward to express deference and self-control. In contrast, less spiritually evolved beings, such as demons, move in wild, rapid, undisciplined and arrogant ways. Some RC students participated in the Javanese dance drama, "Love Flows," last year, in which our visiting Javanese dancer, Mas Yanto, portrayed the refined hero, Amir Hamzah. He moved in an elegant, smooth, flowing style as befits this deeply spiritual man.

Javanese dance also expresses core Javanese beliefs about gender. But here we have an interesting conundrum. In many ways Javanese culture elevates men to positions above women. Men are thought to have superior spiritual abilities, and they are excused from many worldly activities so they can concentrate on elevating their spiritual status. Women, who are connected to the banal and material aspects of life such as bargaining in the marketplace and organizing a household, are thought less capable of achieving spiritual powers. Yet, the Javanese also believe that women are superior to men because they can create

The most *alus* characters move their arms and legs slowly and smoothly, keep their limbs close to their bodies to show self-containment and restraint, tilt their heads forward in humbleness, and gaze downward to express deference and self-control.

human beings; one man explained to an anthropologist that men, in their envy of women's unique power, compensate by creating social institutions that place themselves in superior positions. Dance perfectly mirrors this ambiguous status of women in Java. On the one hand, the most highly evolved characters in the danced stories are always male. Yet, female bodies are believed to be best at portraying the most *alus* characters. Female dancers are frequently chosen to depict the most *alus* male characters, such as wise kings.

Seeing that Javanese dance reflects core cultural values, it would be fun to see how we could understand contemporary American dancing — say rock and hip hop — as an expression of American culture or subcultures. ■

C

remembering genocide

BY HANK GREENSPAN

THE RIVER

Even by Montreal standards, late April this year was unusually cold and rainy. I was, therefore, surprised to see the hundreds of people who turn out for the annual remembrance of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The day is organized by Page-Rwanda (in French, “*parents et amis des victimes du génocide au Rwanda*”), an organization founded in 1995, one year after 800,000 Tutsis were slaughtered in less than three months. The day of remembrance includes a mass, a memorial walk to the banks of the St. Lawrence River, and a community vigil that continues late into the night.

Rivers have a particular significance in the context of genocide in Rwanda. News videos of endless corpses washing down the Akagera, Nyabarongo, and other rivers were often outsiders’ first images of the carnage. For many, they remain the only images, although the majority of the murdered were left scattered and mutilated throughout Rwanda’s marshes and hills. Leon Mugesera, recently deported from Quebec to stand trial in Rwanda, reportedly proclaimed in a 1992 speech that it was time to kill all the Rwandan Tutsis and dump them into rivers. The country would then be rid of “the scum.”

The St. Lawrence is not a placid river. Off Montreal’s old port, there are cross-currents, roiling, and a sense (however influenced by the occasion) of blind, even violent, force. The ceremony on the bank includes participants taking a single flower from a memorial wreath and releasing it into the river. Many held their flowers for a long time before letting them go. Slowly and carefully, one woman released one petal at a time, as the forces of grief, of ceremony, and of the river demanded. Only she knows the balance between them.

One river, or one ghetto, can stand for another, next to which, or inside of which, one now has at least a modicum of control. Remembrance may be communal or individual. Most often, it is both.

THE GHETTO

I first met Reuben in 1977, a survivor of Auschwitz and the ghetto of Lodz, and one of the first Holocaust survivors whom I interviewed at length in a project that has now extended over thirty-five years. In one

interview, he talked about the small electric parts store he owned in what was then called “inner city” Detroit. He noted that after the 1967 riots, which destroyed much of that part of the city, he could have moved his store but chose not to. “I could have moved out, years back...I could have moved out, I mean, to a different neighborhood.” He asked himself why he stayed. “Maybe I’m punishing myself,” he wondered (to the psychologist). He then said something that seemed to go deeper: “It reminds me sometimes of the ghetto.

Everything is a lot like in the ghetto. After the riots in the city, they never fixed it up. Everything was boarded up. And ruined. It was a lot like in the ghetto. It was a lot like in the ghetto.”

The ghetto in Lodz was the last place Reuben knew the remnants of his family and his world. He told me that when there were no customers in his store, which was most of the time, he would sometimes “dream back,” trying to remember the “whole life” that once was. He even considered writing:

“I tried to write a novel around it, around it. Not about the Holocaust, just about the whole life, before the Holocaust, with the Holocaust included. So many different characters. The good and the bad....A few pages. That’s all I got. To me, writing the story would be like a monument. The way they worked and the way they lived and the way they dealt with people. How happy they were, how sad they were, at different times....The way they lived, for generations. It’s hard for anybody, actually, to imagine. To imagine what it was like.”

Reuben was not talking about the Holocaust.

BEYOND TESTIMONY, BEYOND TRAUMA

In what many call an “age of testimony,” we usually imagine that remembrance means survivors retelling in front of a video camera, and often it does. But remembrance may also be enacted, releasing flowers in a river or dreaming back in a store. One river, or one ghetto, can stand for another — next to which, or inside of which, one now has at least a modicum of control. Remembrance may be communal or individual. Most often, it is both.

In the aftermaths of destruction and loss, the project has inspired a riot of creativity. Perhaps “re-creativity” is the way to say it.

In an age obsessed with trauma, we imagine that the anguish survivors carry is some version of “post traumatic stress,” and sometimes it is. But loss, not trauma, is what being a survivor means most literally: “I’m still here. While the others, my family, my friends, my people, my world, are not.” Grief on this scale is even harder to imagine than terror. Life goes on, but there is no therapy beyond life and remembrance, especially remembrance with others.

I have been making arguments like these for almost four decades in the context of my work with Holocaust survivors. In 2006, I was invited to meet with a large oral history project in Montreal entitled, “Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced

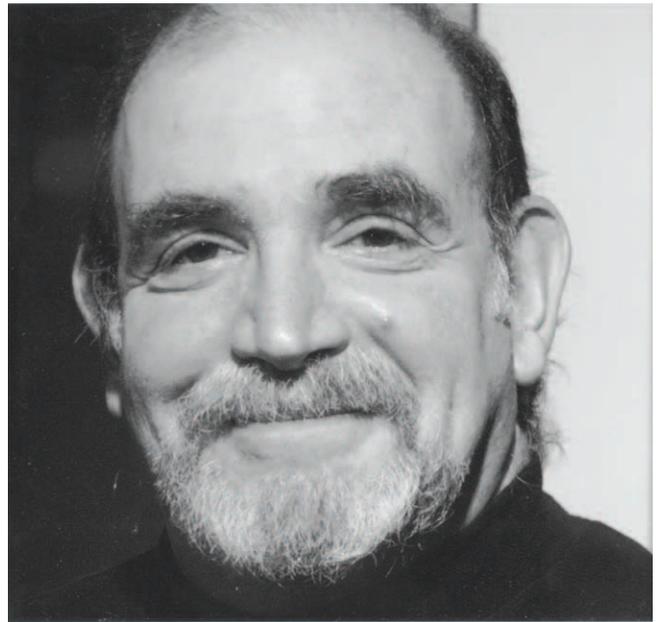


PHOTO BY NANCY HART

by War, Genocide, and Other Human Rights Violations.” Concordia University Professor Steven High, director of the project, had read some of my work, and he felt that its ethos and approach complemented what was being developed in Montreal. Over the following six years, we stayed in touch, with occasional visits and many emails. This past winter, I had the opportunity to spend four months in Montreal as Concordia’s Fulbright Visiting Research Chair.

The scene on the banks of the St. Lawrence is one of hundreds I now carry with me. Along with the convictions—reinforced by what I learned from a host of new and stunningly wise friends — there are so many different ways to “live after” and so many different ways to retell. In Montreal, performance, film, radio, storytelling, digital formats, and more all play essential roles. In the aftermaths of destruction and loss, the project has inspired a riot of creativity. Perhaps “re-creativity” is the way to say it.

Personally, I am always most drawn to the stories of individuals. One Rwandan survivor has become an active member of Page-Rwanda and very involved in Montreal Life Stories as well. She has viewed and summarized interviews with many other survivors, yet she has never retold her own experiences. She says she is not ready. It remains “unreal”; it is hard to believe it really happened. And yet she sits at the computer day after day, helping to preserve the memories of others whose experiences almost certainly resemble her own.

Is this a way to remember? Is it a way not to remember? Or is something more subtle and multi-layered than our usual categories help us to understand? ■

HANK GREENSPAN is a psychologist and instructor in the Social Theory and Practice Program at the Residential College.

MOVEMENT THOUGHTS

BY CHARLIE BRIGHT



PHOTO BY LEISA THOMPSON

While so many in the RC were focused on moving out of East Quad, I was far away, travelling by train from Berlin to Warsaw and back. Physically in motion to be sure — across a borderland that has absorbed more blood and human pain in the last century than, perhaps, anywhere on earth — but I found myself reflecting

more on how time moves across space, erasing and creating traces, leaving reminders and muddling memories.

In the middle of the borderlands is Poznan — once Polish, then Prussian, then Polish (part of Napoleon’s Duchy of Warsaw), then Prussian, soon to be German, then Polish again, then German, and now, (perhaps finally?) Polish. Under Nazi occupation, this region was annexed as the *Reichsgau* Posen, soon known as the Warthegau, which was a notorious site of radical Germanization in which the Polish population was expelled or murdered or reduced to servile labor and German colonists were settled on the land. After the war, Poland — the entire country — moved 280 kilometers to the west and the border settled down at Frankfurt on the Oder. Poznan’s German inhabitants have long since left; its older churches bear a north-German Protestant stamp, but are now fully Polish and Catholic; the battlefields of what was once East Prussia are now green pastures and pleasant farms with no hint of former horrors. The two countries have moved back and forth across this city in waves of violence and bloodshed, and now Poznan is an important trade and convention center, with many things German moving east again — Deutsche Bank, Siemens, T-Mobile, not to mention DSL, Starbuck’s, and CitiBank ATMs.

Neither Berlin nor Warsaw at either end of my journey can be called beautiful cities. They were both largely destroyed in the Second World War — Warsaw the more so, because it

was not only pulverized with bombs and shells, but also systematically razed from the ground up. After the Ghetto uprising in 1943, the Germans deported all survivors and burned or detonated the entire area, leaving a field of rubble that, to this day, remains significantly under-built and somewhat empty — a lingering scar of the past in the middle of this, what is now the tenth largest city in the European Union (EU). After the “Home Army” uprising a year later, another large sector of the city to the south was also leveled. Here the Poles have built a museum to the heroes of that uprising — an impressive nationalist testimony which, however, doesn’t mention the Jewish Ghetto or its

I found myself reflecting more on how time moves across space, erasing and creating traces, leaving reminders and muddling memories.

uprising — another scar, perhaps more of the mind. There were 1.3 million people in Warsaw in 1939 — (a third of them were Jews) — and only 1,000 were left, hiding in the ruins, when the war ended in 1945.

After the war, the Poles rebuilt the old city center of Warsaw, brick by brick, using paintings, maps, and drawings to produce an exact replica of what had been destroyed. It was a thirty-year act of national self-healing. The Royal Palace in the heart of the city was a pile of rubble in 1945; now it’s entirely restored. You wouldn’t think the 18th Century had ever left. The narrow streets and squares — the buildings, the courtyards, the angles and irregularities — have all been recreated exactly. I had expected a kind of Disneyland effect, but found, in fact, that this act of national self-reclamation — by a socialist regime, no less — works: it’s both beautiful and full of people, strolling, meeting, eating, watching acrobats and break-dancers — not tourists, but city residents,

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crowding into the narrow spaces, moving about. They have re-established a city center of sociability and piazza life, made, perhaps, all the more attractive because the rest of the city is pretty grim, thanks to a generation of socialist architecture and unimaginative modernist planning.

The serried ranks of what the Germans call Plattenbau high-rise apartments reach all the way to Berlin, of course, as the entire borderland region came under Communism after the war. But because Berlin was divided by the Cold War and, as it were, rebuilt competitively, there is, despite reunification, no real city center. This vast, sprawling metropolis has multiple sites of activity, and people seem to be constantly in motion in every direction. Public transit carries millions of riders every day. It's a city of stations — under, on, and above ground — that link busses, trams, subways, S-bahn surface trains, and commuter lines in an orchestrated movement that is mesmerizingly precise in its timing. While living in Wannsee — incidentally, just across the lake from the villa where the Final Solution was planned at a meeting in January 1942 — I've used the transit system to anchor daily walks of exploration in neighborhoods all over the city.

Along the way, I've encountered many traces of the city's recent, troubled past. There are the often eerie open spaces

where the wall, together with its perimeters of security clearings, once cut through the city like a jagged scar. These are slowly being erased by vast construction projects and, most especially, by the movement of people. You also happen upon startling reminders of the *Hitlerzeit* — none more bizarre, in my experience, than Albert Speer's *Schwerbelastungskörper*. I came upon it at Südkreuz in a vast overgrown space which had been cleared in 1941 for the new Berlin-to-Moscow railroad station that the Nazis planned to build after defeating the Soviet Union. Hitler wanted to turn Berlin into a monumental celebration of the German *Volk* — including a triumphal arch, nine times bigger than the one in Paris. To test whether the sandy soil of Brandenburg would take the weight of such a structure, Speer, his architect, drove a test-footing into the ground and put an enormous concrete cylinder on top of it, the size of a fuel storage tank — and left it there. In 1948, after the war, it was found that the thing had already sunk some four feet. But the concrete block was too gigantic to tear down. So it continues to sink, now tilting slightly as well. Hitler would never have had his arch. And the weight test that proves it will eventually subside into the ground and disappear is another (very) slow-healing scar. ■

NICK-WHISTLE

BY CLAIRE SCHORIN

One week ago, I sat in an auditorium as hundreds of women rose from their seats to share their stories, literally standing up for issues they are passionate about. Yes, we will see a woman elected president in our lifetime. Yes, we have the right to make our own reproductive choices. Yes, we have the power to assume leadership positions in a myriad of professional fields but often put too much pressure on ourselves to do so. And yes, we watch too much reality TV.

It was at the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) that I discussed these topics and many more with over 550 female college students from across the country and the world. The 2012 conference was held at the University of Maryland – College Park, a beautifully manicured campus that seemed to leap from the pages of an admissions brochure. Planning my trip was a whirlwind of scholarship applications, informational meetings, and wondering what I would learn and who I would meet. In April, I learned that I received a national scholarship, and faster than I could figure out how to pronounce NCCWSL (it's "nick-whistle"), I was on a bus to Maryland.

The most amazing part of NCCWSL was meeting women who share a commitment to female leadership but have drastically different opinions about everything else. For example, during the opening ceremony, students stood up for both sides of every issue; many didn't think we would see a female president! Even though we disagreed on certain topics, the beauty of the conference was manifested in the discussion afterwards. These conversations came from a place of curiosity, trust, and a desire to understand. In the end, I discovered that there is no universal truth regarding feminism, politics, or business practices, but none of those are stronger than the sisterhood between women with a dream.

I also loved taking workshops that focused on career, academic, and personal development. My favorite was called "Creating and Maintaining your Mentor Relationships." Now I have a great excuse to apply what I've learned — I've met so many amazing women at NCCWSL who will serve not only as mentors in the academic sphere, but also as inspiration for me to use my voice to spark leadership in those around me. ■

CLAIRE SCHORIN is a second-year student in the Residential College.



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Thank you

for supporting the RC

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed to the RC this past year. Your gift is making an immediate difference, enabling students to build foreign language skills and to engage in learning outside the classroom, both in the communities surrounding the campus and in study and projects abroad. We've also enjoyed the notes of support and encouragement; please keep those coming!

As we continue our odyssey away from East Quad this year, we require a little more help from our alumni and friends. Please consider making a gift to the RC's strategic fund. Your donation will assist us as we carry on the mission of the RC "at large" and begin preparations for our return to East Quad in time to welcome a new group of RC first year students in Fall, 2013. These funds will be used for everything from hiring students to help us negotiate "business as usual" while scattered in various locations to finding inventive ways to promote community-building. Your contribution will ensure the continued health and stability of the RC Community, both present and future.

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RC Instructor Alvin Hill teaches
"Performance Technology:
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