In front Vygotsky's publications about poetry, theatre and arts in general, from Gomel's 1921/1922 period, I turn motivated to know something about the relation of Vygotsky as man (tchelovek), citizen and young thinker, with different kinds of insurgent social process, struggling for freedom. For instance there are, at least, 3 different situations of this kind touched by him in those newspaper publications: (1) Bar-Kohba; (2) The Dekabrists; and (3) October Revolution. But what more deeply touch me is just the first one, because I really do not know nothing about, and seems to be very very important in Jewish long history for Land and Freedom. And, believe me or not, this is important for many people here in my country, not necessarily Jews. If you pleased, could you help me to find more reliable sources about the historical process in which was envolved Bar-Kohba? If the answer would be excessively obvious - sorry for spend your time with me. I will search better by myself. Thank you, a lot.

Achilles, from Brazil.

Actually, Bar Kochba was the real Jesus Christ. There was a biography of Christ called "Zealot" written not long ago which raised a big scandal in the USA because it was written by a Muslim. The really revolutionary thing about the book, though, was that it tried to understand what Christ must have meant to the Jews of his time. Actually, there were hundreds of Christs--political leaders of the
Jews who declared themselves Messiahs and tried to get rid of Roman rule, ending up crucified.

Bar Kochba was different because he actually succeeded. That is, the Romans were expelled from Judea, and a real Jewish state was set up for three years (until 132 AD, if I remember correctly). Then the Romans took Judea back, and murdered everybody even remotely connected with the successful rebellion. The Christians, who had never been sympathetic to the rebellion in the first place (because of course they had already had their Messiah) at this point became a strongly pro-Roman religion, and decided to convert non-Jews, eventually winning over the Emperor himself.

As you probably know, there was a big debate over "Liberation Theology" in Latin America during the sixties. A lot of this centred around the discovery by some Latin American priests that prior to the pro-Roman turn, Christianity had been a strongly revolutionary creed associated with someone who was, in essence, a somewhat premature Bar Kochba.

A final note, just because I like to tie threads together and we have been talking about play. The Forbidden Colors game which Leontiev uses in his studies of attention and will is related to a traditional Jewish "Yes/No" game called "Bar Kochba".

David Kellogg
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

3

[Xmca-l] Re:About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokhba [באר-קובба (בָּאָר-קֹוַּבְבָּא)]. Bella or somebody can instruct me?
De: "Achilles Delari Junior" <achilles@delari.net> para mim - 21/06/2014 06:42

Thank you very much David,

All your explanation was very meaningful - and made me think about a lot of connections. I will try to learn more and better... "Personality development" as "way to freedom"... And how strong are we for became free, in such historical conditions? 3 years is very meaningful, but if there was no crucifying for that major military leader, there was a mass murder after. Seems to be a very difficult choice, with a great risk involved, more than an option by a card or another... But maybe, the situation with cards could be a kind of unit for more crucial volition acts in public/political life of entire nations... "Nothing to lost, except our chains" but really "nothing".... A real dramatical situation involving an actual act of will
must have some kind of of lost... If not, there will no need to claim to a voluntary "give a step in front"... I apologize if take your time, with this detour in your line of discussion about play... Thank you very much.

Achilles.

4

[Xmca-l] Re: About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokhba [Bar-Koхба (בר-קובָה)]. Bella or somebody can instruct me?
De: "valerie A. Wilkinson" <vwilk@inf.shizuoka.ac.jp> para mim - 22/06/2014 01:32

"Quite a statement" is quite a compliment, as I see it. And thank you Achilles, for a question rooted in the text. In consideration of capitalism vs ? and Party? vs ? and being in "a patron"'s pocket and vested interests versus standing for the little ones at all times, and everything we have talked about play and game here in this list, it seems that David's reference to a work that can be called "quite a statement" is worthy of discussion, framing, and debate, if that is called for, or at least response. Especially since we are also talking at the same time about a TED talk about play and the academic problems of framing problems.

Vandy (Valerie)

5

[Xmca-l] Re: About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokhba [Bar-Koхба (בר-קובָה)]. Bella or somebody can instruct me?
De: "David Kellogg" <dkellogg60@gmail.com> para mim - 22/06/2014 03:00

Well, first of all, I should say that no blasphemy was intended (or, in my view, committed). The reason why Reza Alsan's book "Zealot" is so interesting is in fact that as a Muslim (actually, a lapsed fundamentalist Christian who returned to Islam) he approaches the subject quite historically. History, he reminds us, deals in probabilities; only faith is really about "really". Where there is no faith, there isn't any blasphemy either, and that applies to me as much as to Reza Aslan.

In "The Problem of the Environment" (Vygotsky Reader) Vygotsky explains that ontogenetic development is unique in that the child is face to face with a complete form of development in the person of the mother, and this completed form of development helps guide the very first steps. No other kind of development (geological, biological, or sociocultural) is teleological in precisely this way.
So it's useful to keep reminding ourselves that divine revelations to the contrary notwithstanding, the people of Christ's time didn't know that this illiterate and probably illegitimate son of a carpenter and a peasant girl would be the single most important religious figure in Western culture for the next two thousand years. Even those who followed him thought he was just the Messiah (the Messiah was necessarily human and not divine) and the key problem for all who knew him was either when or whether he was really going to re-establish the temple and, not incidentally, royal line of David and with it Hebrew sovereignty in Palestine. When he didn't, and was crucified instead, it was a big disappointment to everybody—including Christ himself ("My god, my god, why hast thou forsaken me").

The Christian Jews who survived Jesus were a little like the revolutionaries in Russia--there was an elite, educated emigre wing which spoke Greek (Peter and Paul) and then his friends and relatives back home (his brother James and the other apostles). Right from the beginning there was a lot of tension between the two wings: the elites (especially Paul) were really much more interested in non-Jews, while James insisted that you had to be Jewish to be a Christian. Thanks to the repression following the Bar Kochba rebellion, the elite wing won out (the locals were exterminated to a man, and some of the tortures that the Romans designed were extremely creative: flaying alive, braining children with stones--Rabbi Akiva was wrapped in wet wool before being burned at the stake so that it would last longer). The survival of an elite explains some otherwise curious facts about the gospels, such as the fact that they are written in Greek and the very sympathetic treatment of Pontius Pilate (the real Pilate was so bloodthirsty that the Emperor called him back to Rome to upbraid him for excessive enthusiasm!) Also, as the Liberation Theologians pointed out, it explains the conservatism of the institutional church, which still sits rather uncomfortably beside some of the actual pronouncements of Jesus.

The "Bar Kochba" game concerns a prisoner who was brought, mortally wounded, before Bar Kochba. Bar Kochba wanted to find out which of his men had tortured him so as to punish him, but the man could not say "yes" or "no", hence the game "Don't Say Yes or No", and by extension Leontiev's "Forbidden Colors" game. Other versions of the Bar Kochba game apparently do allow Yes or No but no other answers--so they are rather like the English game "Twenty Questions" or "Animal, Mineral or Vegetable".

One thing I missed in Lois's talk was a discussion of the element of violence in play, and especially in verbal play. There is this very interesting sequence of spoken data at the beginning of Mark Tappen's contribution to Packer and Tappen's edited volume of papers from AERA 1995 ("Cultural and Critical Perspectives on Human Development", SUNY Press) in which the child is explaining what he would do if he woke up and he was a girl. It's a long
sequence--because the researcher is persistent--but it is essentially a sequence of one liners, most of which are violent or aggressive in some way and all of which are defensive or offensive. It is certainly play. But it is certainly not revolutionary or even clearly developmental, and one reason is that it lacks the element of convergence that we see in games like Bar Kochba.

David Kellogg
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

They thought that he was just another
So I think

[6]

[Xmca-l] Re: About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokhba [בר-ｺｸﾍﾞ (בר-ｺוקה)]. Bella somebody can instruct me?
De: "Achilles Delari Junior" <achilles@delari.net> para mim - 22/06/2014 08:07

Thank you very much Valerie.

I clearly remember that Vygotsky speaks about two lines of development in function of changes that play involves: (a) objetc/sense --- sense/object => development of abstract thinking; (b) action/sense --- sense/action => development of voluntary act... There are many crucial things that demand voluntary acts in entire human life in private and public spheres, in the entire personality development, I guess... But I'm making the choice to return to stay quiet, high now. Excuse me once more. I'm really learning something with you and David... Believe me or not, is so frequent learn something, i.e. something really new, nowadays... Thank you. And best wishes.

[7]

[Xmca-l] Re: About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokhba [בר-ｺｹﾍ (בר-ｺוקה)]. Bella or somebody can instruct me?
De: "Bella Kotik-Friedgut" <bella.kotik@gmail.com> para mim - 24/06/2014 12:44

Achiles shalom

Sorry for a delay, but we were on the way from 3rd Estoril Vygotsky conference. These conferences (every 2 years) became traditional and the dates of the N4 in
June 2016 are already fixed- 12-14/06. I wonder what could be a good reason (motivation, incentive) for xmca members to take part in 4th EVC of the next time? Estoril is a beautiful resort on the Atlhantic shore and Quintino Aires the organizer is a very generous host. As about Bar Kochba I asked my husband Ted Friedgut, who knows Jewish history better to answer you and here what he say:

Bar Kochba has been a controversial character since the time of his life and remains so to this day. By no means all the Rabbis of his time regarded him as a Messianic figure, but the great authority of Rabbi Akiva who supported Bar Kochba whole heartedly was sufficient to outweigh his detractors. Even as recently as 1982, Yehoshafat Harkabi, a Hebrew University professor of International Relations wrote a book with the title “The Bar Kochba Syndrome: Fantasy and Realism in International Relations” pointing to the disastrous outcome of the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome—580,000 war dead and uncounted thousands more who perished of disease and famine during the three year war; fifty towns and 597 villages razed to the ground by the vengeful Roman armies, a total destruction of Jewish public and religious life in Palestine. All this is attributed to the unrealistic fanaticism that drove Bar Kochba’s war against the Roman Empire.

In 1882, Avraham Goldfaden wrote an operetta on the life and deeds of Bar Kochba, seeking to encourage Jewish morale and resistance to the pogrom wave that swept Russia following the assassination of Alexander II. It is most likely this presentation of Bar Kochba that Lev Vygotsky saw and about which he wrote in his role as theater critic for the Gomel’ local newspaper in April 1923. His praise of Bar Kochba as a revolutionary representative of the younger generation in defiance of the older, more cautious religious-political establishment can certainly be viewed as autobiographical, for Vygotsky too, was acting against the older Jewish establishment in adopting Marxist socialism as the best way to build a new, universal and just society.

Sincerely yours Bella Kotik-Friedgut

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[Xmca-l] About Vygotsky and Bar-Kokha (בר-כוקה לְקה). Bella or somebody can instruct me?
De: "Achilles Delari Junior" <achilles@delari.net> para mim - 25/06/2014 19:26

Nice to read you Bella,
Peace and Health for you and all that you love.

Ted was very clear and deep in his analysis, thank to him, because this help me
very much, adding new important connections to the also interesting and serious considerings from David. This is very important here in Brazil, because many young people talking about a revolution without know how, neither for what, even more with some "marxists" scholars talking about Education and Revolution as this word means something kind of change of fashion in the way we dress, forgot about Lenin's statement that "Revolution is War" - and for all international civilization, is right that we here live in a democracy - not the best one, of course, but 'revolution' for me is not a good word for popular manifestations claiming civil rights inside the actual legal order... But there people in university selling books about Education and Revolution. And I disagree and try to remember than something about historical concept embodied at this word... No so simple as talk about a "revolutionary method to learn a language faster", for instant. Actually in October Revolution there was not so enormous number of deaths, history show a very fast process. But the civil war between Reds and Whites there was a very sad lost of many lives of both sides.

I was thinking about that three historical moments about Vygotsky wrote, even in Gomel’s 1921-1922 period:

(a) Bar Kokhba;

(b) The Dekabrists (not so numerous, but also lost their cause); and

(c) 1917 October Revolution (finally finishing his utopia in 1991).

I wonder if was certain attraction by Vygotsky to insurgence process. You and Ted had wrote about the role of Vygotsky's father not in insurgence but in victorious resistance to pogrom(s). And that there was a dramatic situation in war when a Jew soldier kill an enemy and him in his last seconds of life did the pray of the same religion. And that there was a link of this political problems with de Jewish Enlightenment. I suspect that there was a dramatic (conflictive) situation again - to fight for liberation of his own ancestral tradition and/or fight for workers' class liberation... Tragically, the Nazis discourse repeatedly take hand of the false justifying that Jews in Germany was the Grate Capitalists and proprietaries of banks, etc., placing in scene an perverse kind of use of concept of class struggle. Without say nothing about catastrophic extermination of the "kulaks" in URSS. But, returning to the core, I though about the problem of oppression and liberation, and «Путь к свободе»... the great image for the development of personality - I think about this ancient problem, the personal choices, and the all human kind destiny, trough de destiny of a entire nation before... How the two planes inter-constitute reciprocally. The memory of the ancestral inheritance, the prospective imagination and planning of the future for the new generations, and our common, everyday life, with play, learning of concepts, professional choices of the adolescent... and so on... Even Hamlet feel oppressed by the vision of crime against her father, living him alone, and the
doubt about continue to live and kill himself. It’s curious, because he decides to leave, but leaving he is fatally oriented to dead dueling against the traitors. This typical of tragedy, the hero find his destiny even more he tries to scape of it...

How to be a developed personality, a free person, when the social group, or the entire social class, are ever in fight for the freedom we never have? Only when Messiah arrives? Only in the day of Final Judgment? Of course this is not only a problem of researchers in Human Sciences, but of every citizen of this world not really in peace yet. But, as a psychologist, I must to think about other spheres of social relations that not only dyads or little groups as in a classroom. I don't know. My life is really not so bad, but what I can say about the others? What mission I will have. What can I do? "Что делать"? There is no single answer, but I must to making sense of relation between personal concerns and broader social national and international concerns. Of course people follow an international mail academic list not only to distraction, but mainly because there important things to learn one with other.

Thank you, I am in a Zone of instability of sense of life "The Crisis of the 45 years"... But your precious contribution give me many keys to organize better my projects for the rest o my life, which must be not so long, I guess.

Best regards, greetings for you, Ted, and al XMCA...

Achilles from Brazil.

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P.S. Think about the same problems I was trying to read "Teatr i Revolutsia" by Vigotski, 1919. But my copy is very hard to recognize the characters. I saw your paper that quotes this source. Maybe, if you pleased, can you give a clue of how to order a copy from the correct institution? In Russian National Library of Saint Petersburg I do not find, for instance. But this is not so nuclear, is one more source to think about Way for Freedom / Insurgence / Personality Development... This is a social/personal, autobiographical concern for me, I already was arrested because political motives, and this destruct all my future perspectives along more than 10 years, because I fall very seek in prison, and never return to good health after. You fight for freedom and them you turn all your life more restrict, sometimes... but we must "perejivaem" - in the sense given by Vasiluk... overcome critical situations. And critical situations are not only accidents in our lives... Vygotsky said the crisis is a way to interior life too.