

Introduction: histories of Cold War cities

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The guest editors for this special issue of *Urban History* are both Canadian, and for many Canadians the hottest conflict of the Cold War might have been the 1972 ‘Summit Series’, eight hockey games played between the Russian Red Army team and an all-star cast of Canadian professionals. Without delving into the sporting glories of the series (Canada won it, four games to three, with one tie), we can aver that the event was as much about diplomacy, national identity and political-economic rivalry in the context of the Cold War as it was about skating and scoring.¹

It was also about cities. The four games played in Canada were held in four different cities – Montréal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver – while the four played in the Soviet Union were all held in the command-and-control capital, Moscow. National leaders were present, but paradiplomacy was also central to the pre-game events in each city, with mayors and other local dignitaries feting the players. A press corps followed the teams, ensuring that the players’ experiences of each other’s cities became distant cultural exchanges for television viewers in the remotest regions touched by urban mass media. Images of the close-cropped, young Russian players, attired in matching navy suits with blood red ties, Toronto’s new City Hall rising behind them as a symbol of democracy and globalization (the building was designed by a Finn, after an international competition), contrasted with photographs of the Canadian players and their spouses, with fashionable long hair, wide lapels and aviator shades, the golden domes of the Kremlin in the background as symbols of totalitarianism and bloc-politics. Fifty thousand Canadians turned out in Toronto, back at City

¹ For a play-by-play description of the 1972 games and surrounding events, including the photographs described, see J. Macfarlane, *Twenty-Seven Days in September* (Ottawa, 1973). For comparison, see the recent work on hockey and the Cold War: J. Soares, ‘Cold War, hot ice: international ice hockey, 1947–1980’, *Journal of Sport History*, 34 (2007), 207–30; and Working Papers published by the Wilson Center, at www.wilsoncenter.org/publication-series/cwihp-working-paper-series, including Oldrich Tuma *et al.*, ‘The (inter-communist) Cold War on ice: Soviet–Czechoslovak ice hockey politics, 1967–1969’ (no. 69, 2014), which details the celebrations of a Czech victory over the Russian hockey team shortly after the ‘Prague Spring’.

Hall, to welcome home the winning team. Many of these urban themes of the Cold War – cities as symbols, as active hosts of global mega-events, as experiential spaces for encountering difference, as stages for geopolitical practices – are present in the following collection of articles.

When we distributed the Call for Papers announcing this special issue on Cold War cities, we began from the premise that Cold War history is not yet an urban history, and that cities have largely remained as backdrops in studies of the actors, strategies and technologies of the global conflict that waxed and waned from the late 1940s to the late 1980s. Moreover, we noted that Cold War history, until recently, was not particularly global.² From these two propositions, we devised a series of questions that the authors in this special issue have addressed in different ways, with emphasis on two. What was – and what made – a Cold War city? And can we craft international, transnational or comparative histories of Cold War cities? The final shape of the issue was not immediately clear, but happily we are left with a group of articles extending the reach of Cold War urban history far beyond familiar sites like Berlin, Washington or Moscow, and papers which ground their arguments in urban spaces, policies, practices and the everyday lives of residents.

Until recently, what counted as Cold War urban history were works (including our own) of cultural and architectural history, the history of science and historical geography, and work – mostly on American cities – that reached toward what Laura McEnaney called ‘the militarization of everyday life’.³ And yet even this literature is not always rooted in specific urban landscapes, except when it has been extended to post-Cold War, and especially post-9/11, sites.⁴ Instead, these studies often use ‘the city’ as a frame through which to study American cold war culture or national initiatives like civil defence programmes.

The articles in this special issue demonstrate that historians have been hard at work drawing stronger links between urban spaces, urban lives and the international history of the Cold War. The diversity of places is

² The touchstone for the recent turn toward a more global approach is O.A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge, 2006). Another exemplary title is N. Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

³ Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Princeton, 2000). Our own contributions are summed up in D. Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War* (Minneapolis, 2011), and M. Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War* (Minneapolis, 2010), especially ch. 5. Other important studies in this vein include M.Q. Dudley, ‘Sprawl as strategy: city planners face the bomb’, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 21 (2001), 52–63; P. Galison, ‘War against the center’, *Grey Room*, 4 (2001), 5–33; K. Zarleno, ‘Civilian threat, the suburban citadel, and atomic age American women’, *Signs*, 24 (1999), 925–58.

⁴ See, for instance, S. Graham (ed.), *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (Oxford, 2004); P. Marcuse, ‘Urban form and globalization after September 11th: the view from New York’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26 (2002), 596–606; M. Sorkin (ed.), *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (New York, 2008).

immediately apparent here, from 'secondary' cities in the United States, Great Britain and New Zealand, to national capitals in ostensibly non-aligned states and in aligned, Cold War dictatorships. Furthermore, urban populations appear in these papers as geopolitical agents, embracing or rejecting national and international imperatives and opportunities. We are summoned to city council chambers, streets and neighbourhoods to witness citizens responding to Cold War concerns. To do this, the authors demonstrate the archival diligence expected of historians, but they also employ new or underutilized sources, in multiple languages, while threading their specific cases into the rich and diverse literatures of Cold War scholarship.

In Baltimore, a city whose Cold War history seems to rest in the shadow of its neighbour, the national capital, we see the erosion of national civil defence plans as they were implemented in local communities.⁵ As Eric Singer demonstrates, when racist and militaristic officials hijacked Baltimore's civil defence agency in the early 1960s, it was volunteer civil defence workers from the city's neighbourhoods who, through a coalition with anti-nuclear activists, effected the abolition of any planning and provisioning for Cold War defence. This resistance to civil defence planning presaged similar, more broadly based, mobilizations of citizens and cities against the encroachment of nuclearism into everyday life, especially in the 1980s. Susanne Schregel's ambitious article further documents the global extent of municipal resistance to nuclear arms and Cold War planning in that decade, with her transnational comparison between urban anti-nuclear policies supported by cities in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany and New Zealand. In each country, municipalities positioned themselves and their policy statements according to the politics of the national state – sometimes resistant, sometimes in alignment. Meanwhile, Jonathan Hogg's article on Liverpool delves deeper into the municipal dimensions of anti-nuclear campaigns. His careful study delineates how Liverpoolians received and interpreted both Cold War propaganda from the Thatcherite state and counter-propaganda produced from the multifaceted nuclear culture of the 1980s.

These three articles are situated within moments of high tension during the Cold War. The 1970s, meanwhile, is known as the era of *détente*, and, as Timo Vilén reveals in his artful article, Helsinki fashioned itself as the city of *détente*, by hosting the meetings that finalized the 1975 pact known as the Helsinki Accords. The city erected a new congress hall partly to attract the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and locals embraced the exciting presence of masculine world leaders and their celebrity wives, while Finland was able to portray itself as both unaligned and open for business with the west.

⁵ On that capital city, see D.F. Krugler, *This is Only a Test: How Washington D.C. Prepared for Nuclear War* (New York, 2006).

Cold War capitals, then, took many forms, but, as the remaining articles show, each represented national strategies and ideologies through their built form. In Belgrade, another nominally unaligned centre, the urban plans and architecture that materialized during the Cold War period served to position the nation in relation to Soviet communism and European modernism. Drawing impressively on Yugoslav publications, Aleksandra Stupar describes a long history of cultural, and especially professional, exchange centred on Belgrade, but moving both east and west. Cold War currents of modernism and modernization also washed the shores of Latin America. Managua's devastating earthquake of 1972 provided a kind of high-modernist 'clean slate' for re-envisioning the city. David Lee compellingly argues that a new city plan, which abandoned the old centre in favour of dispersed neighbourhoods and housing estates, was an urban strategy of social and political control propounded by Nicaragua's US-backed dictator, Anastasio Somoza. According to Lee, the strategy backfired dramatically, and citizen dissatisfaction with the urban fabric contributed directly to the 1979 revolution.

The built environment of Buenos Aires was likewise reformed under a totalitarian regime in the 1970s. Jennifer Hoyt explains how Argentina's military dictatorship introduced proactive municipal administration in its capital city, to show how things were better with the country under its control. Massive freeway and greenbelt construction projects, and a new sanitation system, were undertaken by multinational corporations, as the country was neoliberalized. However, as in Managua, citizens were dissatisfied with the urban results of these sweeping initiatives, and with the governments that promoted them.

No matter the location, therefore, the making of a Cold War city was a point of contention. Some cities certainly celebrated their moments of fame in international spotlights. These moments are worth noting and exploring, but as the articles in this issue collectively demonstrate, connecting the complex social, economic, political and cultural histories of the Cold War to specific urban histories results in more nuanced understandings of the 'Cold War' itself. We trust that this is a spur to further research on the many dimensions of Cold War cities.