

Briefing the Ambassador: Joseph Davies and the U.S. Press Corps in Moscow, 1936-1938

By

Dominique Petit

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA degree in History

University of Ottawa

© Dominique Petit, Ottawa, Canada, 2018

Abstract

Briefing the Ambassador: Joseph Davies and the U.S. Press Corps in Moscow, 1936-1938

Dominique Petit

Dr. Corinne Gaudin

2018

This thesis examines the writing of U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Joseph Davies, Norman Deuel of the United Press, and Joseph Barnes of the New York *Herald Tribune* over the course of their respective postings in Moscow between 1936-1938. The purpose of this thesis is to look past interpretations of perceived right and wrong reporting on the Soviet Union and instead identify precisely how and why Americans outside the diplomatic corps viewed and perhaps identified with aspects of Stalinist society. Residing in Moscow over an extended period of time, Davies, Barnes, and Deuel were not mere observers. Immersed in Soviet society, Davies and the press correspondents became themselves producers of socialist realist writing as their American affinity for ambitious modernization translated into an idealized view of Stalinist modernization projects, one which viewed present hardships through a socialist realist lens while echoing Soviet enthusiasm for medical and scientific advancements, material plenty, heroics, youth, and territorial exploration. Excluded from the close-knit circle of career diplomats, Davies and the newsmen also came to view the Moscow show trials through the same socialist realist lens, one which presented the desired utopian future through elaborate socialist realist theatre.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend a very warm thank you to Dr. Corinne Gaudin who initially sparked my interest in Russian and Soviet history as a young undergraduate and whose assistance with research and editing has been invaluable to me over these past two years. I thank her for her patience and profoundly appreciate how she pushed me to outdo what I previously thought myself capable of. Many thanks to my two examiners, Dr. Galen Perras and Dr. Heather Murray, who provided valuable feedback and challenged me to consider further avenues of research. I would also like to express my love and gratitude to my parents, family and friends who have always offered me their unconditional love and support. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Gaston Héon Memorial Fund and University of Ottawa for providing the funding which enabled me to travel and conduct archival research.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: A FINE GROUP OF FELLOWS: AMBASSADOR DAVIES AND THE U.S. PRESS CORPS	17
CHAPTER 2: SOVIET ECONOMICS THROUGH A SOCIALIST REALIST LENS	45
CHAPTER 3: SOCIALIST REALIST HEROICS AND NATIONALIST PRIDE	79
CHAPTER 4: THE SHOW TRIALS AS SOCIALIST REALIST THEATRE: ALL THE WORLD'S STALIN'S STAGE	104
CONCLUSION	133
Bibliography	139

INTRODUCTION

In the decades following the uneasy transition from World War II to Cold War, the historiography of diplomatic and intellectual U.S.-Soviet relations assumed impermeable ideological differences and cultural clashes between American and Soviet society. Seen through the Cold War lens, the possibility that Americans could have acclimated to Soviet society in the 1930s seemed unfathomable. However, the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union breathed new life into the historiography of U.S.-Soviet relations, enabling a reevaluation of early American encounters with Stalinist society in all of their complexity, as Americans observed and participated in all of the intoxicating enthusiasm for rapid Soviet modernization and cultural revolution, while attempting to reconcile this utopian enthusiasm with the dark and confounding abyss of the Stalinist Purges.

Stretched across both Europe and Asia, Russia has long confounded and captured the imagination of American travellers who at once Orientalised the Russian populace while envisioning its hidden European potential to divest itself of autocratic rule and embrace all of the qualities of American modernity. Greatly informed by late nineteenth century European travel diaries, memoirs, and academic publications on the “Russian Enigma,” Americans initially interpreted Russian society through an imperialist European lens, one which posited the Russian Government as autocratic, while its peasantry and industry were overwhelmingly characterized as backwards and lagging far behind the European model of modernization. Significantly, this American appropriation of European frames of analyses came at a time in the late nineteenth century when the United States began coveting imperial resources in East Asia and the Pacific, thereby running into conflict with Russia which shared similar ambitions in the region.

Accordingly, Americans drew on European narratives that Orientalised Latin American and Asian societies in order to justify economic exploitation, colonization, and military conquest.¹ Both American and European travellers subsequently adapted this model to represent and interpret tsarist Russia.

The turn of the twentieth century slowly heralded an evolution of American perceptions of Russian society, subsequently producing a more optimistic outlook on the potential for Russian modernization—with a push from the Americans, of course. The long-standing nineteenth century belief that perceived ethnic Slavs as biologically predisposed towards laziness and stupidity was slowly transformed by the writings of George Kennan—the later diplomat’s great-uncle—who concluded at the turn of the twentieth century that Russians were not necessarily inferior due to their ethnicity; rather, centuries of autocratic rule had beaten them into submission and laziness.² This shift in American perceptions was significant as it implied that Russian society was not condemned to an eternity of backwardness. Modernization, industrialization and a change in the political structure could thus transform the average Russian into a productive member of a modern society.

Building upon these previous interpretations, American correspondents reporting on the Bolshevik Revolution, the establishment of socialism throughout the 1920s, and the subsequent Stalinist period played a central role in shaping American attitudes towards the Soviet Union in both the lead up and immediate aftermath of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations

¹ Choi Chaterjee and Beth Holmgren, *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present* (New York: Routledge Studies in Cultural History; 19. 2013), 2.

² David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 17. George Kennan’s most famous work, *Tent Life in Siberia*, best expressed his interpretation of Russian backwardness as he detailed his travels across Siberia in the 1860s. Published in 1870, this influential travel account was republished in numerous editions and helped shape late nineteenth/early twentieth century American perceptions of Russian society and psychology. George Kennan, *Tent Life in Siberia: And Adventures among the Koraks and Other Tribes in Kamtchatka and Northern Asia* (Nineteenth Century Collections Online: Mapping the World: Maps and Travel Literature, 1871).

between the U.S. and USSR in 1933. The official Soviet-American relationship began in a positive spirit of economic collaboration under Ambassador William Bullitt, yet thereafter deteriorated until Joseph E. Davies' appointment as Ambassador to the USSR in 1936. This stagnation in Soviet-American relations stemmed from American disappointment in the Soviet Union's failure to both repay Imperial Russian debts and curtail the activities of the *Comintern* within the United States. Nevertheless, President Franklin Roosevelt's administration sought to improve U.S.-Soviet relations as a steady decline in trade between the two nations had negatively impacted the U.S. economy. Moreover, the U.S. Government wished to curb Japanese expansionism and maintain a balance of power in the Pacific.³ American diplomats and press correspondents, each with varying agendas, levels of education, and differing political ideologies, thus journeyed to the Soviet Union to both assess the progress of Stalin's Five-Year Plans for rapid industrialization and pursue strengthened economic relations.

Filtering into Moscow over the mid to late 1930s to establish a new U.S. Embassy at Spaso House, American diplomats and press correspondents were plunged into a society in flux, one characterized by demolition and euphoric reconstruction in the name of rapid modernization and the pursuit of a utopian socialist future. Soviet society was suffused with a sense that everything could be rebuilt and altered, as new buildings were erected and new technologies such as the Moscow Metro were under construction. As Sheila Fitzpatrick describes, this was an age of achievement, but also of exaggeration of successes.⁴ This enthusiasm for rebuilding and rapid modernization was ultimately best expressed through the cultural and artistic medium of socialist realism. Socialist realism constituted the only acceptable art and literary form after 1932.

³ Ronald E. Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35-36.

⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1999), 70.

Replacing the proletarian and avant-garde art forms that had dominated the 1920s, socialist realism rejected abstract forms while eliminating the distinction between low and high art.⁵ Socialist realism thus inhabited a paradox in which a nonexistent socialist utopia was depicted through representations of current society. Addressing the Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov argued that socialist realist literature "should be able to glimpse our tomorrow. This will be no utopian dream, for our tomorrow is already being prepared for today..."⁶ Most importantly, socialist realism was tasked with depicting reality "in its revolutionary development."⁷ In truth, socialist realism constituted a "realist" depiction of how life was ideally supposed to be under socialism. Socialist realism's utopian vision of the 1930s was one of a human and natural world transformed through modern technology and rapid industrialization. Superimposing future projects onto the present, socialist realist cultural representations rendered the future and present indistinguishable from one another.⁸ For the purpose of explaining socialist realism's effect on everyday Soviet society, this thesis will use Sheila Fitzpatrick's interpretation of socialist realism. Though it was initially designed as a guide for the literary field, socialist realism was most powerful within Stalinist society as it presented life through the prism of an imagined future.⁹ This preoccupation with rapid modernization ultimately provided the Soviets and Americans with a shared passion through which they could both perceive a modern utopian world.

⁵ David L. Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 160.

⁶ Maxim Gorky, Karl Radek, Nikolai Bukharin, Andrey Zhdanov, and others, *Soviet Writers' Congress: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 22.

⁷ Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 52.

⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 67-70.

⁹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 217.

This thesis will examine patterns in select U.S. journalists' interpretations of the Soviet culture of modernization, socialist realism, and the Stalinist Show Trials of 1936-38, along with their influence upon Ambassador Joseph Davies' perceptions of Soviet society. Davies himself acknowledged his increasing reliance upon the press corps' council as their influence came to eclipse that of experienced diplomats in the Embassy.¹⁰ Though the existing historiography of American Moscow correspondents has focused almost exclusively on Walter Duranty, Louis Fischer, and William Chamberlin, another eight to nine journalists constituted part of Davies' close circle of friends. Equally influential within Davies' advisory circle were, Joseph Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Norman Deuel—working alongside Henry Shapiro—of the United Press. While other reporters within his circle came and went, such as Charles Nutter of the Associated Press who was reassigned to Spain in July 1937 and Joseph Phillips of the *New York Herald Tribune* who was quickly replaced by Joseph Barnes not long after Davies' arrival in Moscow, Deuel and Barnes remained a close and constant presence throughout the entirety of Davies' tenure in the USSR, even accompanying him on several trips across the country. As the existing historiography of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy overall agrees that Davies relied heavily upon advice from American correspondents, this thesis endeavours to determine to what extent journalists influenced ambassadorial affairs. Would it be fair to argue that a handful of American journalists temporarily informed U.S.-Soviet relations in Moscow between 1936 and 1938? As both Davies and the newsmen focused on the evolution of Soviet society, did U.S. journalists join in socialist realist enthusiasm for an increasingly modern future as they witnessed the success of Stalin's Five-Year Plans for rapid industrialization and grew enamoured with the prospect of modernizing a perceived backwards population? Were these observations formed through a

¹⁰ Joseph Davies acknowledged his reliance on the newsmen's council in several letters and diary entries, most notably on January 26, 1937, March 24, 1937, October 4, 1937, March 17, 1938, April 23, 1938, and June 8, 1938. Joseph Davies, Diary, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

process of recycling previous interpretations of Russian society that posited the peasantry as backwards and Asiatic? Finally, were U.S. correspondents in Moscow perhaps more attuned to commonalities between modern states than later historians have given them credit for?

The existing historiography of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy in the interwar period has not yet examined the extent to which Davies' circle of U.S. press corps friends/advisors influenced Davies' perception of Stalinist society, nor has it given any consideration to the role of socialist realism in both diplomatic thought and subsequent narratives on the nature of Soviet modernization. Rather, U.S. diplomatic historians have overwhelmingly focused on evaluating perceived right and wrong observations within diplomatic reports, thereby lacking the necessary nuance to comprehend why and how diplomats such as Joseph Davies understood and misunderstood Soviet society and the Stalinist system. For example, Richard Ullman primarily concerned himself with comprehending why Davies was "right" in his assessment of Soviet industrial and military strength, concluding that Davies was "right but for the wrong reasons" as, unlike his diplomatic colleagues, Davies did not comprehend Soviet weaknesses—like that of the detrimental purging of the Red Army's leadership—and instead focused on the rapid pace of industrialization.¹¹ Dennis Dunn is similarly distracted by a search for right and wrong interpretations of Stalinist society while focusing on Davies' vanity, ultimately arguing that Davies was gravely hoodwinked by Soviet officials of the Foreign Office due to his general cluelessness in all things concerning Russian history and contemporary Soviet affairs. However, Dunn's analysis of Davies constitutes an oversimplification in which both Davies and the U.S.

¹¹ Richard H. Ullman, "The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941," *World Politics* 9, no. 2 (1957): 239. Also see: Frederick C. Giffin, "Improving the Image of Stalin's Russia: Joseph Davies's Mission to Moscow," *Social Science* 52, no. 1 (1977): 3-8. Giffin was similarly concerned with Davies' estimations of Soviet strength and the purges' perceived purpose as a defensive measure, as he explored how Davies' published diary constituted invaluable propaganda that assisted in building up the Soviet-American friendship during WWII.

correspondents are villainized as self-serving Stalinist apologists.¹² Nevertheless, it should be noted that Dunn correctly touches upon the notion that Davies tended to romanticize Soviet society on its perceived trajectory towards democracy, though he does not expand on this trend in the broader context of U.S.-Soviet relations.¹³

By comparison, David Mayers presents a slightly a more nuanced reflection of Davies' interpretation of the show trials, though his analysis is hindered by both the incredible brevity of the chapter he allocated to Davies' tenure and the nature of his analysis, for he again fixates on perceived right and wrong interpretations of the trials. Ultimately, Mayers concludes that, while Davies publically exonerated the show trials in his published diary *Mission to Moscow*, this published account presented a simplified view in light of its intended purpose to rally popular American support for an Allied coalition with the Soviets in 1941.¹⁴ While Elizabeth MacLean provides greater nuance to a rather biased historiography surrounding Davies' unpopular tenure and astutely concludes that Davies was too forgiving of Stalinist brutality, attributing it to revolutionary fervour, she is mainly referring to the enthusiasm promoted by the Soviet State and subsequently felt by its citizens rather than Davies' immersion into Stalinist culture. Moreover, MacLean does not stray far from the traditional historiographic tendency of assessing the accuracy of Davies' reports, for she ultimately concludes that Davies painted an accurate depiction of Soviet strengths, though he usually reached such conclusions for the wrong reasons.¹⁵

¹² Dennis J. Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015), 74.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁴ David Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 118-121.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Kimball Maclean, *Joseph E. Davies: Envoy to the Soviets* (Westport, Con.: Praeger, 1992).

The question in this thesis is not whether or not Davies formed a “correct” opinion of the show trials. Historians should question why and through what analytical grid Davies came to view Stalinist society, putting aside the questions of morality that have coloured much of the existing historiography.¹⁶ Select diplomatic historians who focus on the career of Joseph Davies have given some consideration to the question of how Davies viewed the show trials, though these analyses rarely stray further than the purges and almost always argue that Davies either perceived the trials through a French Revolutionary lens that regarded the accused as a Bonapartist threat or that he was simply lost, attempting to equate Soviet institutions with American ones. For example, Ullman emphasized the way in which Davies conflated American institutions with those of the USSR¹⁷ while Dunn stresses Davies’ application of a French Revolution framework.¹⁸ U.S.-Soviet diplomatic historians have failed to adequately consider the cultural context of Stalinist society in which American diplomats resided, as they were quite literally exposed to the culture of socialist realism on a daily basis and therefore interacted with it in one form or another.

U.S. historians of journalism analyzing American newspaper and news agency coverage of 1930s Stalinist society have been even more uniform in their methodology, almost exclusively concerning themselves with a limited pool of very famous journalists, namely Walter Duranty, Louis Fischer, and William Chamberlin.¹⁹ Focusing much of their attention on whether or not

¹⁶ The existing historiographies of U.S. journalism and diplomacy have overwhelmingly superimposed their own moral frames of analysis onto Davies and the correspondents, thereby utilizing their research to judge and condemn the newsmen rather than interpret precisely how and why Americans viewed Stalinist society.

¹⁷ Ullman, “The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941,” 228-229.

¹⁸ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America’s Ambassadors to Moscow*, 80.

¹⁹ Duranty, Fischer and Chamberlin have been the focus of several works: James William Crowl, *Angels in Stalin’s Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, A Case Study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1982), Allen McTavish Johnson, “Moscow Dispatches, 1921–1934: The Writings of Walter Duranty, William Henry Chamberlain and Louis Fischer in Soviet Russia,” PhD diss. (Tulane University, 2000), Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty’s Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times* (Michigan: Kashtan Press, 2004), and Sally J. Taylor, *Stalin’s Apologist: Walter Duranty The New York*

said journalists were aware of the Ukrainian famine and believed in the validity of the charges behind the Stalinist Show Trials, journalistic historians have similarly presented a narrow and limited analysis aiming to determine whether U.S. correspondents were right or wrong. As rather atypical reporters, Duranty and Fischer were generally regarded as Stalin apologists due to their inaccurate reporting of the Ukrainian famine and thus not representative of all American journalists.²⁰ The almost exclusive attention to Duranty and Fischer may have distorted our understanding of American journalism in the Soviet Union. Moreover, the relationship between Joseph Davies and the U.S. press corps remains relatively unexplored, as both diplomatic and journalism historians generally operate under the assumption that they enjoyed a close relationship, though this relationship is only mentioned in passing and never further analyzed.

Intellectual historians of U.S.-Soviet cultural relations have made greater strides in analyzing American interactions with Stalinist culture in the 1930s, though they have predominantly focused on the relationship between American intellectuals and Soviet modernization. This thesis will be building on the groundbreaking work of David Engerman, who argues in *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* that American intellectuals were captivated by the “romance” of Russian/Soviet development, believing that present hardship would pave the way to future prosperity. Accordingly, many American social scientists and writers sought to justify the human cost of rapid industrialization and radical social transformations, arguing its necessity for the sake of progress and modernization as the Soviet government attempted to impose order upon

Time's Man in Moscow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). By comparison, David A. Silva, “Alternative Media Portrayals of the Soviet Union and the Cold War from 1929–1933: *The Boston Globe*, *Chicago Defender*, *Catholic World* and *Catholic Worker* during the Great Depression and American-Soviet Recognition,” MA thesis, (University of Massachusetts Boston, 2010) focuses on specific newspapers in Catholic regions of Boston and Chicago and their coverage of Soviet society prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations.

²⁰ James William Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, A Case Study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty*, 35.

perceived backwards and lazy populations.²¹ Though Engerman does not stray far from the historiographical tradition of focusing exclusively upon the most famous of the Moscow correspondents, he reveals how they shared underlying assumptions about the Russian need for modernization, as well as stereotypes of the Russian “national character.”²² Similarly addressing American perceptions of Russian backwardness and the need for modernization, David Foglesong also made a valuable contribution to the intellectual history of U.S.-Soviet relations. Foglesong argues that, despite concerns that the Russian national character was not equipped for intelligent self-government, American observers remained convinced that their vision for a democratic, Christian, and capitalist world would ultimately convert the most backwards of societies and eventually produce a “free Russia.”²³ Consequently, Americans’ messianic outlook towards Russian development fostered expectations that Russians would ultimately overthrow perceived alien regimes, move beyond their backwards past, and “transcend their historical condition.”²⁴

Challenging long-standing assumptions about Americans’ interwar perceptions of European dictatorships and totalitarianism, Benjamin Alpers contributes to U.S.-Soviet intellectual history as he observes how, despite considerable American admiration for dictators such as Benito Mussolini in the 1920s and early 1930s, dictatorship became an almost entirely negative concept in American political culture by the late 1930s.²⁵ This thesis will examine whether this narrative is correct when applied to American correspondents reporting from the

²¹ Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*, 5.

²² David Engerman, “Modernization from the Other Shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic Development,” *The American Historical Review* 105, Vol. 2 (2000): 388.

²³ David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵ Benjamin Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy, 1920s-1950s* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 82.

USSR in the late 1930s as the correspondents admiringly showcased some of the accomplishments of the Stalinist regime. Did U.S. correspondents represent an exception as they were physically removed from the American political context and instead immersed in the Stalinist context of socialist realist culture?

Embedded and framed in a surprisingly seldom acknowledged socialist realist context, the Stalinist show trials of 1936-38 were undeniably theatrical in nature and choreographed to emphasize the most sensational and dramatic aspects of the alleged Trotskyist conspiracies against the Stalinist regime. Despite the obvious theatricality of the show trials, the historiography of Stalin's Purges long overlooked the significance of their theatrical presentation, utilizing theatrical metaphors instead as evidence of their contrived nature and coercive illegitimacy. However, more recent research since the end of the Cold War has reconsidered the show trials' evolution out of agitation trials and legal dramas of the 1920s, arguing that their origin lay in the theatricalization of public life during the 1920s. This argument is strongly promoted by Julie Cassiday who concludes that the Stalinist show trials constituted but one example of experiments in Revolutionary theatricality, one which specifically utilized the dramatic means of representation available at the time, namely theatre and cinema. Cassiday further argues that the Stalinist show trials invaded all of Soviet reality and transformed society into an arena for "fabricated indictment, confession, and contrition."²⁶ Ultimately, Cassiday theorizes that the show trials of the 1930s transformed Soviet statecraft into Soviet stagecraft.

Sheila Fitzpatrick similarly traces the theatrical dynamics of the show trials from the provincial agitation trials of the Great Purge, revealing their purpose as participatory political

²⁶ Julie A. Cassiday, "Marble Columns and Jupiter Lights: Theatrical and Cinematic Modeling of Soviet Show Trials in the 1920s," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 42, No. 4 (1998): 656.

theatre.²⁷ Building upon this argument, Richard Stites suggests that the theatrical trial served as a mock trial, ultimately giving shape to the real political trial. Accordingly, the theatrical trial was utilized as a propaganda tool through which the Stalinist regime created truth and subsequently communicated it to the Soviet peasantry.²⁸ Elizabeth Wood similarly recognizes a connection between the theatricality of both the 1920s agitation trials and the 1930s show trials, and state engagement with the Soviet masses.²⁹

Despite widespread recognition of the show trials' theatricality and utility as effective state propaganda tools, there remains a gap in the historiography where a tangible link between the show trials and socialist realist theatre should be explored. Significantly, this thesis will be building on the work of David Roberts, one of the few historians to astutely identify the Stalinist show trials as socialist realist theatre. Very briefly making this comparison in his book *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*, Roberts observes how the "positive" and "negative" heroes of socialist realism played a complementary role in what Roberts calls the theatre of damnation and salvation. Roberts thus argues that socialist realism and the show trials complemented one another within Stalin's totalitarian total work.³⁰ In line with Wood, Cassidy, and Stite's respective arguments on the theatricalization of life and creation of truth, Roberts concludes that Stalin's theatricalization of life fused together art and life, producing millions of real victims and granting socialist realist theatre life-transforming powers. Latching onto the more theatrical

²⁷ Sheila Fitzpatrick, "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces," *The Russian Review* 52 (1993): 301.

²⁸ Richard Stites, "Trial and Theatre in the Russian Revolution," *Theatre Research International* 23, No. 1 (1998): 12.

²⁹ Elizabeth Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 2-12. Detailing the evolution of Soviet show trials, Wood observes how they were intentionally dramatized as plays in an effort to stir up audience members to become more active supporters of the new Soviet regime. Show trials thus served as useful propaganda, engaging ordinary people on the level of their daily lives, as press coverage of the trials excited readers and drew them into Soviet society.

³⁰ David Roberts, *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 227.

representations of Soviet progress exhibited at the show trials, Davies and the newsmen similarly fused together cultural representations of a modern future with the harsh reality of everyday life.

In attendance at all three show trials and residing in the USSR over an extended period of time, American diplomats and journalists were not mere observers. Rather, American members of the press corps and their select circle of friends from the diplomatic corps became imbedded in Soviet society, not only observing, but also participating in socialist realist culture. It is thus worth noting that very few historians—whether they be diplomatic, journalistic, or intellectual historians—have considered the effect of socialist realist culture upon Americans working in the Soviet Union in the mid to late 1930s. This project will thus further contribute to the existing historiography by establishing a connection between U.S.-Soviet intellectual history and socialist realist culture. Ultimately, this thesis argues that U.S. press correspondents and U.S. Ambassador Joseph Davies in Moscow between 1936-38 became themselves producers of Soviet socialist realist writing, the former greatly influencing the latter, as their American affinity for ambitious modernization translated into a romanticized view of Stalinist modernization projects, one which drew upon socialist realist themes while projecting an Americanized deterministic direction of history that anticipated an inevitable capitalist end state onto Stalinist society.

The following thesis is thematically organized and divided into four major chapters. The first section considers Joseph Barnes and Norman Deuel's backgrounds and knowledge of Russian/Soviet affairs. To this end, I first examine of their education, journalistic training, social status, work experience, and previous international travel in order to identify and comprehend the impact of any received ideas on the Soviet Union. Ambassador Joseph Davies' previous education and international experience are also considered. Following this analysis of their respective backgrounds, I establish the level of closeness and influence in Davies' relationship to

the U.S. press corps in Moscow. This is accomplished through a close reading of Davies' personal papers, senior U.S. Embassy diplomats' diaries and memoirs, and journalists' personal papers to find comments on the nature of Davies' relationship to the press corps. In this chapter, I argue that Davies and the U.S. correspondents' view of Soviet society frequently conflicted with the opinions of more senior professional U.S. diplomats as Davies preferred conferring with his “newspaper boys” and thus shared many of their opinions. Excluded from the close-knit professional diplomatic corps whose attitudes towards the Soviet Union were generally more cynical, a type of group mentality arose between Davies and the correspondents out of a need to rationalize the seemingly “incomprehensible” differences between two societies that otherwise seemed fated on the same path of modernization.

The second chapter analyzes the theme of Soviet economics. Further building upon the theme of modernization, I examine how the U.S. press corps reported on both Stalin's rapid process of industrialization and related cultural themes of enthusiasm for a technological future of material plenty. Relying on personal papers, newswire reports, published articles, and diplomatic correspondence, I analyze recurring themes of technological, scientific, and medical advancements, as well as the future availability of consumer goods, abundance, and the conquering of natural elements. As in all chapters, I then contrast these views with that of Ambassador Davies and attempt to identify any intellectual exchanges that might be apparent in their personal papers, correspondence or published articles. I argue that the perceived romanticism of rapid Soviet modernization loomed large in the minds of Davies and the U.S. correspondents as they echoed socialist realist enthusiasm for scientific achievements and the Five-Year Plans, writing extensively on the pace of industrialization, medical marvels, scientific breakthroughs, and agricultural production. Infatuated with modernization, these American

observers paid little mind to the human cost required to meet ever-increasing quotas, as their socialist realist view of society enabled them to view present suffering in light of a projected modern future.

Further building upon the romance of modernization, the third chapter explores the theme of Stalinist heroics and nationalist pride. Specifically, this chapter examines the themes of youth, heroics, Stalin as father of the nation, geographic exploration, and Arctic expeditions in the writing of both Davies and the U.S. correspondents. I am arguing that tales of Soviet heroism, Arctic exploration, youthful enthusiasm, and Stalin's place at the helm of the nation further drew Davies and the U.S. correspondents into socialist realist culture as they shared in Soviet enthusiasm for tales of territorial exploration and personal heroism. Heroic tales and national pride ultimately appealed to American nostalgia for their earlier frontier days in the Wild West and reinforced the belief that the Soviet path towards modernization was not unlike that of the United States.

Finally, this thesis' final chapter examines the U.S. press corps' interpretation of Stalinist power struggles and the nature of law and order during the show trials of 1936-38. The U.S. press corps and Ambassador Davies were among thirty foreign correspondents who were invited to observe Stalin's three major show trials. Following lengthy evening discussions alone with Ambassador Davies in the U.S. Embassy, most American journalists departed from largely more cynical European observations of the trials to conclude that there was merit to the charges. I therefore examine precisely how they interpreted the trials and ultimately reconciled the more brutal aspects of the Stalinist regime with the romance of modernization, paying particular attention to how their narratives moulded with pre-existing notions of Russian backwardness, the necessity for rapid modernization, and Bolshevik revolutionary nature. Moreover, I shed new

light on Davies and the U.S. correspondents' interpretations of the show trials by paying particular attention to mentions of the trials' theatricality, detailed descriptions of the atmosphere, scene, and characters, as well as comparisons to Hollywood movies. I thus argue that Davies and the U.S. correspondents were at once captivated by the most sensational and dramatic staging of the show trials, while leaning upon nineteenth century notions of Western superiority that decried Russian and Slavic peoples as backwards and other, thereby relegating the show trials to the realm of incomprehensible as they attributed their perceived strangeness to Russian psychology and Bolshevik revolutionary conditioning. Ultimately, both Davies and the American press corps viewed the show trials through a socialist realist lens, interpreting this purging of society as a necessary, albeit unpleasant, step towards establishing a modern utopian society, for the show trials constituted an elaborate form of socialist realist theatre, carefully staged between dream and nightmare.

CHAPTER 1

A FINE GROUP OF FELLOWS: AMBASSADOR DAVIES AND THE U.S PRESS CORPS

Every evening after the trial, the American newspapermen would come up to the Embassy for a "snack" and beer after these late night sessions and would "hash" over the day's proceedings...They were an exceptionally brilliant group of men. I came to rely upon them. They were of inestimable value to me in the appraisal and estimate of men, situations, and Soviet development.¹

As private evening discussions between Ambassador Davies and the U.S. press corps became a nightly occurrence at the American Embassy in Moscow during the 1937 and 1938 Moscow show trials that purged much of the Old Bolshevik, Red Army, and NKVD (Soviet secret police) leadership, Davies came to rely on reporters such as Norman Deuel and Joseph Barnes, who ultimately influenced and guided the analytical framework through which Davies perceived Soviet society. Though their respective levels of education and experience in Soviet/Russian affairs varied greatly, Davies and the press correspondents nevertheless came to view Stalinist society through a similar lens, one strongly coloured by socialist realism and that emphasized the perceived commonalities between American and Soviet visions of industrial modernization, technological innovations, territorial exploration, heroics, patriotism, and perseverance.

This first chapter explores the relationship between Davies and the press corps to ascertain the extent to which reporters—namely Deuel and Barnes—influenced the analytical grid through which Davies observed a rapidly evolving Stalinist society. In order to accomplish this, I will first examine Barnes and Deuel's backgrounds, as well as their knowledge of Russian/Soviet affairs. This is achieved through an examination of their education, journalistic

¹ Joseph E. Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Bukharin Mass Treason Trial, March 17, 1938, Moscow. Box I: 7, Chronological File: 1936-1939, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

training, work experience, and previous international travel in order to identify and comprehend the impact of any received ideas on the Soviet Union. Ambassador Davies' previous education and international experience are also considered. In order to fully appreciate the conditions in which Davies and the correspondents operated within the Soviet Union, this chapter subsequently explores both the journalistic and diplomatic context of 1930s Soviet-American relations. Following this contextual analysis of both their respective backgrounds and professional setting, I establish the level of closeness and influence in Davies' relationship to the U.S. press corps in Moscow. This is achieved through a close reading of Davies' personal papers, diary, and senior U.S. Embassy diplomats' diaries and memoirs to outline the nature of Davies' relationship to the press corps.

Working alongside the United Press' Moscow office manager Henry Shapiro, Norman B. Deuel was appointed United Press correspondent for the Soviet Union in late November-early December 1935.² The son of California State Senator and Mrs. Charles H. Deuel of Chico, California, Norman Deuel was born in 1902 and raised in California where he received his early schooling in Chico, a small college town in the Sacramento Valley. Very little information is available on Deuel's life and academic qualifications as he was generally obscured by the shadow of Shapiro's impressive thirty-six year career reporting for the United Press (UP) in Moscow. But local California newspapers from the mid-1930s do shed some light on details of Deuel's career. Deuel received his journalistic training on the American West Coast—presumably California—before working as assistant bureau manager of the United Press' Los Angeles office.³ A December 1935 article from the *Madera Tribune* further reported that Deuel's father was the

² "Moscow Bound," *Madera Tribune*, 28, December 5, 1935.

³ "West Coast Newsman Covers Russia," *Madera Tribune*, 12, May 14, 1938.

publisher of *The Ohtco*, a local California newspaper, which would indicate that the son chose to enter the family business, so to speak.⁴ Davies' diary and diplomatic records strongly suggest that Deuel did not speak Russian, though this was not uncommon as, generally speaking, only senior Moscow correspondents studied Russian. Due to prevailing censorship and the inherent hardships of reporting from Moscow, most correspondents did not serve longer than two or three years and thus never intended nor attempted to become Soviet experts. Walter Duranty (*New York Times* correspondent) and Henry Shapiro (UP Moscow office manager) represented obvious exceptions as they came to occupy a legendary status within Moscow foreign correspondent circles.⁵ For correspondents such as Deuel and Charles Nutter (of the Associated Press), Moscow represented a temporary assignment rather than a lifelong commitment.

By comparison, Joseph Barnes of the New York *Herald Tribune* was an American specialist in Russian and Slavonic studies who was fluent in Russian. Born in Montclair, New Jersey in 1907, Joseph Barnes was the son of a British social progressive political scientist and philosopher who raised him to become somewhat of a child protégé, frequently accompanying his father on academic lecture circuits.⁶ Admitted to Harvard College at fourteen years old, Joseph Barnes instead chose to stay with friends who lived a few miles outside of Oxford, England for a year and a half where he studied Latin before returning to Harvard where he graduated in 1927. Barnes was subsequently admitted to London's School of Economics where

⁴ "Moscow Bound," *Madera Tribune*, 28, December 5, 1935.

⁵ Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (Michigan: W. Morrow, 1988), 65.

⁶ Richard Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 297. While at Harvard, Barnes also served as president of the university's official undergraduate newspaper, the *Crimson*.

he studied Russian and joined the School of Slavonic Studies between 1927-1929, focusing on the process of agricultural collectivization ongoing in the USSR.⁷

Upon his return to the U.S. in 1929, Barnes joined the Socialist Party, though his interests remained fixed on the Soviet Union where he believed great modernizing strides and admirable achievements were being made. Fascinated by the overhaul in modern Russian farming, Barnes relocated to Moscow for seven months where he managed to obtain Soviet government permission to tour communal farms in the Ukraine and a government farm in Southern Russia with the intention of eventually writing a doctoral dissertation on the process of collectivization. Keen to practice his Russian, Barnes lived quite poorly in the Soviet Union, jumping from hostel to hostel and making frequent use of Moscow's central municipal library. Upon his return to the United States, Barnes accepted a banking job in New York City before serving as research secretary for the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations from 1931 to 1933.⁸ Barnes' comparatively brief stint in the banking industry is however quite telling as, though he studied Marxism while in the USSR, he did not seem to personally identify with, nor adopt any of Marxist-Leninism's underlying tenets as he displayed no compunction about working in the ultra-capitalist banking industry. One can thus surmise that Barnes' fascination with the USSR stemmed from its obvious modernization efforts—namely industrialization and collectivization of agriculture—rather than any ideological sympathies on his part for the communist struggle against capitalism. His fascination with the rapidly changing Soviet society unabated, Barnes

⁷ "2 New Forum Leaders Here," 1936, News Article. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Uncatalogued Papers, Box 9, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, 297-298.

frequently travelled across the USSR between 1928 and 1934 while conducting research for the Institute of Pacific Relations.⁹

Barnes subsequently pursued a change of career in 1931 when he acquired newspaper accreditation in New York as he wished to infuse greater excitement and societal involvement into his daily life.¹⁰ Reporting for the New York *Herald Tribune*, Joseph Barnes worked as an editor and foreign correspondent between 1931 and 1948, assisting to open up the *Herald Tribune*'s Moscow office in 1934. Between 1934 and 1937, Barnes moved back and forth between New York and Moscow, ultimately settling in Moscow until the outbreak of the Second World War, for he was appointed as the *Herald Tribune*'s new Moscow correspondent in February 1937. Barnes' arrival in Moscow thus coincided within a month of Davies' arrival (Davies reached Moscow in January, 1937) as Barnes sailed over from the U.S. to replace Joseph B. Phillips, who was reportedly returning to New York at his own request after ten years of reporting from Europe. Barnes was enthusiastic about accepting the Moscow posting, stating that it was "just the thing I wanted."¹¹

What differentiated Barnes the most from the other U.S. correspondents and diplomats was undoubtedly his decision to physically live apart from the group of foreigners in Moscow—commonly known as the foreign colony—and instead take up residence across the Moscow River in a comparatively normal neighbourhood of Russians, though Barnes, his wife, and daughter nevertheless lived in a nice house with three good-sized rooms.¹² These living accommodations far surpassed the average lifestyle of working class Muscovites, but this was nothing compared to

⁹ "Just What He Wanted: Joseph Barnes Sails to Serve Herald Tribune in Moscow," February 27, 1937, News Article. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Box 9.

¹⁰ Ibid. Barnes was also an active member of the Newspaper Guild since its inception in 1933 and served as chairman of its Herald Tribune unit.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, 299-300.

the overall higher quality of life enjoyed by foreign correspondents who were able to import goods and purchase food and liquor for American dollars from special hard-currency stores operated by the Soviet government.¹³ Professionally speaking, Barnes also enjoyed journalistic freedom—at least, from the American side—as he never received instructions from New York on what to cover, relatively isolated as he was from the western world.¹⁴

The journalistic reporting of U.S. correspondents in the USSR during the interwar period must be understood within the greater context of the professionalization of journalism that occurred between 1900 and 1974. This was a period in which American news leaders attempted to introduce professional standards and norms into journalism through institutions such as schools and professional associations. Professionalism thus concerned itself with independence, which ultimately paved the way to the rise of investigative journalism.¹⁵ The rise of professional journalists further transformed journalism into a well-paid profession. As David Engerman observes, changing standards in journalistic objectivity throughout the 1930s increasingly valued interpretation over objectivity as an essential aspect of good reporting. Contextualizing events within an interpretive narrative thus lay at the core of good journalism, but ultimately encouraged American journalists to present stereotypical assumptions of national character and differences between Western and Soviet society as context. Though the interwar period oversaw the professionalization of American journalism, the "amateur exoticism" of nineteenth-century reports on Russia was nevertheless incorporated into the new professional field of journalism.¹⁶ Generally speaking, Western journalists disparaged the Russian peasantry almost as much as

¹³ Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost*, 83.

¹⁴ "2 New Forum Leaders Here," 1936. Throughout his career in the Soviet Union, Barnes also remained a frequent contributor to the *American Historical Review*, *Asia*, *Fortune*, *Nation*, and other periodicals.

¹⁵ Chris Daly, "The Historiography of Journalism History: Part 2: Toward a New Theory," *American Journalism* 26 (2009): 151- 152.

¹⁶ Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*, 197.

Soviet officials did, as they used national-character stereotypes to suggest that Russian peasants were ill equipped for the modern industrial age. It was thus expected that rapid modernization would come at a high cost as Western experts anticipated that the Russian peasantry would respond with passivity, apathy and conservatism.¹⁷ As contextualization and interpretation occupied centre stage in American news reports of the 1930s, nineteenth century notions of American superiority over perceived backwards peoples continued to coexist alongside a rapidly evolving profession. Though the task of interpreting European current events had usually fallen to editorial writers prior to the First World War, foreign correspondents in the interwar period were increasingly expected to offer interpretations of events in their news reports in order to remain competitive amidst the rise of professional journalism and wire service news agencies.¹⁸

Limited by both the word limitations and high costs associated with telegraphy in the mid-nineteenth century, American publishers and newspapers were highly motivated to cooperate in the sharing of news by establishing the first ever news agency.¹⁹ Conceived in 1846 by five New York City newspapers, the Associated Press was initially created to more rapidly and cost effectively cover American conflict in Mexico.²⁰ While the Associated Press officially tasked itself with lowering costs for its members, it also largely concerned itself with reducing competition. Consequently, the Associated Press was not so much preoccupied with

¹⁷ Ibid., 197-198.

¹⁸ James William Crowl, "They Wrote As They Pleased: A Study of the Journalistic Careers of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty, 1922-1940," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1978), 2.

¹⁹ Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb, *The International Distribution of News The Associated Press, Press Association, and Reuters, 1848-1947*, Cambridge Studies in the Emergence of Global Enterprise (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13. For more on the history of news agencies, see: Giovanna Dell'Orto, *AP Foreign Correspondents in Action: World War II to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Richard M. Harnett and Billy G. Ferguson, *Unipress: United Press International Covering the 20th Century* (Indiana: Fulcrum Pub., 2003) and Joe Alex Morris, *Deadline Every Minute; the Story of the United Press* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1957).

²⁰ Associated Press, *Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 18.

newsgathering as with distributing the news gathered by member newspapers.²¹ Inspired by the Associated Press' cooperative model, similar press organizations sprung up in the 1860s, including the United Press Association. Despite rising competition, the Associated Press (AP) ascended as a nationwide news association due to the proven advantages in cooperative newsgathering. Silberstein-Loeb further observes that the AP encouraged some of its weaker rivals like the United Press in order to project the appearance of healthy competition.²² Nevertheless, the United Press (UP) and AP ultimately ascended to become the two most powerful news agencies in the United States by the early twentieth century, even expanding their news sharing capabilities abroad as they both became international news agencies with foreign bureaus opening up across the world.

The differences between news agencies such as UP and American newspapers like the New York *Herald Tribune* were perhaps most glaring to reporters posted in foreign bureaus, where intense rivalries and enormous demand from numerous member newspapers imposed greater pressure on news agency journalists to file daily reports and beat time differences to break news within print deadlines. None felt this more than American correspondents posted in Asian or Russian offices, particularly the UP's newly opened Moscow bureau where an eight-hour time difference, language barriers, and rapidly evolving events were compounded by the harsh scrutiny of the Soviet censor. While newspaper journalists in Moscow enjoyed a more relaxed pace of life, typically working upon extended projects that entailed research trips, wire service correspondents were expected to submit regular short news reports while remaining in, or close

²¹ Silberstein-Loeb, *The International Distribution of News The Associated Press, Press Association, and Reuters, 1848-1947*, 13-14.

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

to, Moscow at all times in order to avoid missing any breaking news reports.²³ In comparison to agency correspondents who filed breaking news stories around the clock, newspaper reporters enjoyed a more leisurely pace of work as the sixteen to twenty hour transmittal time between Moscow and New York meant that it was often impossible to meet the deadline for the next day's paper. Consequently, newspaper reporters did not feel rushed to file a story that could wait until the next day.²⁴ This disparity between news agencies and newspapers' styles of reporting is reflected in the more sporadic, yet reflective and analytical, newspaper articles by Barnes, particularly so when compared to the daily deluge of short news wire reports hurriedly filed by Deuel on a sometimes twice, or even thrice, daily basis.

By 1930, American newspapers and wire services had established an efficient operational infrastructure in Moscow. Bureaus were equipped with translators, secretaries, cars, and chauffeurs while budgets covered cable costs, travel, office and apartment rental, and salaries.²⁵ American correspondents were generally selected for assignment in Moscow in a haphazard fashion that prioritized availability and proximity to Russia over a profound knowledge of Russian society and language.²⁶ Barnes was one of the first American correspondents posted to the USSR to have studied the Russian language at university prior to arriving in Moscow. Foreign journalists filed their reports by submitting them to a Narkomindel (Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs) official for approval prior to transmitting them back home. However, American correspondents quickly realized as early as the 1920s that they could evade Soviet censorship by dispatching news reports disguised as letters with departing travellers on their way back to the

²³ Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*, 204.

²⁴ Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost*, 78.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

West.²⁷ This game of cat and mouse persisted throughout the 1930s as American reporters continued to evade the Soviet censor of the Narkomindel by smuggling out stories disguised in the first few lines as personal letters in the diplomatic pouch.²⁸ Another common method of evasion was to dispatch more controversial reports with departing tourists or businessmen who might hide it on their person or amongst innocuous files in their briefcase.²⁹ Generally speaking, American reporters were unrestricted in their ability to travel the Soviet Union, though the practicality of undertaking such voyages was an entirely different matter as American reporters were tethered to the responsibilities and deadlines of their Moscow offices.

By comparison, American diplomats posted with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow endured and at times strained the relationship with the Soviet government, one that was marred by mutual distrust and exacerbated by the self-imposed physical isolation of overwhelmingly anti-communist American diplomats from the general Soviet population. Deeply rooted American wariness of Soviet intentions not only stemmed from their nineteenth century misgivings about the Russian national character, but also from a profound fear of communism's threat to Christianity, capitalism, and democracy. For these reasons, the U.S. Government under President Woodrow Wilson decided against entering into official diplomatic relations with the Bolshevik government on December 1, 1917.³⁰ This remained the United States' official position for the next fifteen years as each subsequent President refused to recognize the Soviet Union, until 1933.

²⁷ Engerman, "Modernization from the Other Shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic Development," 388-389. Such efforts did not always go unpunished though as Soviet officials at times responded to unfavourable stories mysteriously filtering into the American press by exerting pressure on their contacts among American editors from newspapers such as the New York Times and new agencies like the United Press to request a revision or, on the rare occasion, encourage the recall of an American reporter from the USSR.

²⁸ Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, *Distorted Mirrors: Americans and Their Relations with Russia and China in the Twentieth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 65.

²⁹ Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost*, 76.

³⁰ Georg Schild, *Between Ideology and Realpolitik: Woodrow Wilson and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1921* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 70.

Inaugurated as President of the United States in January 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) concluded that the United States' nonrecognition policy towards the Soviet Union had failed. The absence of U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations between 1917-1933 had not succeeded in curbing anti-capitalist activities abroad, nor had it dissuaded other world powers from establishing diplomatic ties with the USSR.³¹ FDR thus planned to officially recognize the USSR in order to fully exploit its rapidly expanding economic market, thereby enabling American companies to make inroads into Soviet industry.

From the Soviet perspective, the lure of both American industrial might and enviable technological innovation was too much to resist. Preoccupied with overtaking capitalist Western nations, Soviet industrial planners subsumed perceived contradictions between Western technological influence and Marxist-Leninist ideology under the importance of rapid industrialization in conjunction with Stalin's Five Year Plans. While some Bolsheviks had initially decried the establishment of economic ties with capitalists as a break with Marxist doctrine, Lenin had rejected such criticisms, arguing that obtaining assistance from Western nations was essential to the survival of the burgeoning Soviet state. By the mid-1920s, virulent opposition to establishing ties with the West had subsided as economic reconstruction in the wake of the Civil War rendered foreign investment an increasingly alluring prospect. For example, Rensselaer W. Lee III points to Leon Trotsky's retreat from radical interpretations of Marxism in favour of a more pragmatic approach, advocating for a "gigantic expansion" of ties with the West, particularly the United States.³²

Both ambiguous and pragmatic, Stalin was generally ambivalent towards establishing ties with the West throughout the 1920s. To the extent that it benefited Soviet industry, Stalin

³¹ Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, 34-35.

³² Rensselaer W. Lee III, "Political Absorption of Western Technologies: The Soviet and Chinese Cases," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 15, no. 1 (1982): 13-14.

permitted foreign investment in Soviet industry, though this was generally for the purpose of learning and appropriating American designs, ultimately copying production methods to produce blatant copies. One of the most obvious examples of Soviet plagiarism was the American Fordson tractor produced by the Ford Motor Company. Introduced to Soviet farmers in the mid-1920s, the Fordson tractor soon became the most popular tractor in the USSR, as, in addition to importing tens of thousands of tractors, Ford engineers assisted Soviet industry to erect their own tractor factories modelled on the famed River Rouge Ford plant in Michigan.³³ By the mid-1930s, Soviet industry was reproducing three American tractor models in plants that were ironically designed by Americans, constructed under American supervision, and initially overseen by American foremen.³⁴ Despite this, Soviet industry never paid royalties to the American patent holders. Rather, they simply appropriated American technology as their own and eventually ceased purchasing American manufactured tractors. Overall, this simultaneously rewarding and frustrating experience with Soviet industry was symptomatic of the tense relationship that existed between paradoxical ideological nemeses and economic comrades.

Attempting to navigate this uneasy budding relationship, FDR exhibited a multitude of potential intentions and strategies for befriending and ultimately obtaining what he desired out of the USSR. The burgeoning U.S.-Soviet economic relationship coincided with the American Great Depression, which spanned from 1929 into the late 1930s. This was by no means a coincidence as the lure of a rapidly modernizing Soviet economy in conjunction with a struggling U.S. economy provided the necessary impetus for Congress to pressure the President to finally

³³ Kendall E. Bailes, "The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of American Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 3 (1981): 431.

³⁴ Dana G. Dalrymple, "The American Tractor Comes to Soviet Agriculture: The Transfer of a Technology," *Technology and Culture* 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1964): 193, 201. For more on the Ford Motor Company's relationship to the USSR, see: David E. Greenstein, "Assembling Fordism: The Production of Automobiles, Americans, and Bolsheviks in Detroit and Early Soviet Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 2 (2014): 259-289.

recognize the Soviet Union. Pointing to yet another motivating factor, Ronald E. Powaski strongly argues that FDR sought to maintain a balance of world power in light of perceived Japanese and German aggression and expansionist designs throughout Europe and the Pacific. In the early 1930s, FDR was one of the few Americans who recognized the vital role that the USSR would play in checking the future Axis forces of Germany and Japan.³⁵ However, the U.S. generally adhered to its isolationist stance throughout the 1930s until the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. As such, FDR was cautious in his approach to the Soviet Union, happy to reap the economic benefits of a profitable business relationship, but unwilling to embroil the U.S. in military or political commitments.

Scrutinizing FDR's choice of Ambassadors to the Soviet Union, Dennis Dunn believes that FDR pursued a policy of uncritical friendship in his dealings with the USSR. According to Dunn's reasoning, FDR likely chose Ambassador Davies as they shared the common belief that nations transitioning towards democracy should be treated with uncritical friendship in order to assist them on the path towards capitalist democracy.³⁶ Since both FDR and Davies interpreted the Soviet Union as a state in slow transition towards democracy, they sought to develop a friendlier friendship with it. As such, FDR signalled the beginning of an intended warming in U.S.-Soviet relations by formally recognizing the Soviet Union in November 1933.³⁷

³⁵ Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, 35-36.

³⁶ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*, 68.

³⁷ Not unlike Dunn, Thomas R. Maddux concludes that Davies and FDR shared in the same fundamental foreign policy that posited a seemingly cooperative and friendly American attitude as essential to their ability to influence and shape Soviet policies then and in the future. Thomas R. Maddux, *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-1941* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980). Constituting a combination of Maddux and Powaski's respective arguments, Edward M. Bennett suggests that FDR encouraged a warming in U.S.-Soviet relations to subsequently utilize the USSR in the pursuit of global security. Edward M. Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1985), 182-188. This amelioration in U.S. military security was envisaged through a U.S.-Soviet partnership to curb Japanese and German expansionism, thereby serving as a counterweight to the future Axis powers. Warren F. Kimball similarly concluded that FDR's foreign policy prior to WWII foremost concerned itself with maintaining global peace. Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman*

In November 1933, William C. Bullitt, a long-time advocate of Soviet recognition under the Wilson Administration, was appointed the first U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, thereby heralding in a new era. Though the U.S.-Soviet relationship began in the spirit of cooperation and friendship, it soon soured and faded into disillusionment as the U.S. was unwilling to risk war with Japan by concluding a nonaggression pact with the USSR alone, as opposed to the preferred proposed U.S.-Soviet-Japanese nonaggression pact.³⁸ The U.S. grew similarly frustrated over Soviet failure to curb the activities of the *Comintern* and repay Imperial Russian debts. American bitterness particularly festered over Soviet refusal to repay its debts, subsequently resulting in the closure of the American consulate-general and dramatic reduction in embassy staff in Moscow in January 1935. Soviet industry thus lost much of its credit viability in the eyes of American businessmen and diplomats, precipitating a post-1935 decline in U.S.-Soviet trade that reached levels unseen since the 1920s.³⁹ By 1936, FDR sought a new approach to U.S.-Soviet relations as Bullitt's ambassadorship had become bogged down in disillusionment and resentment on the part of many senior diplomats, namely George Kennan and Charles Bohlen, towards the Stalinist government.

In addition to appointing Joseph Davies as the new Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1936, FDR disbanded the State Department's division of East European affairs in June 1937 for it was generally perceived as a hive of Russophobic sentiment. Accordingly, the department's Russian library, which had been painstakingly built up over fifteen years, was sent to the Library of Congress where many of its valuable documents were, according to Loy Henderson,

(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 18-19. Robert Dallek is generally of the same opinion, noting that FDR believed a normalization of U.S.-Soviet relations was required in order to maintain a balance of power in the world. Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 39.

³⁸ Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, 36-39.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

"mercilessly destroyed."⁴⁰ Henceforth, the State Department had neither the personnel nor the library required to conduct any in depth research relating to the Soviet Union. The general mood amongst both the American diplomatic corps in Moscow and the State Department's Russian experts was thus embittered and disenchanted as FDR appeared to be purging their field of anti-Soviet sentiment while undermining their efforts by dwindling their referential resources and appointing a diplomatically inexperienced friend of the President as the new Ambassador.

Overall, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was staffed with diplomats with a critical outlook on the Soviet Union. Informed by a racially charged American view of Russian history, George Kennan, Charles Bohlen and Loy Henderson all believed that the USSR was expansionist, particularly so in light of its fear of capitalist encirclement, as well as xenophobic and distrustful of American friendship for it regarded the U.S.' foreign policy as duplicitous.⁴¹ Kennan, Bohlen and Henderson were united in their disdain for FDR and Davies' interpretation of Soviet evolution towards democracy. These three most senior Moscow diplomats regarded the USSR as a totalitarian empire with designs to surpass, then defeat, capitalist superpowers through rapid modernization. This belief was rooted in their understanding of Marxist ideology and its designs upon global conquest, feeding a deep distrust which can be traced back to initial debates over recognition of the USSR at the outset of FDR's presidency.⁴² Accordingly, Bohlen advocated for a policy towards the Soviet Union based on Soviet self-interest instead of FDR and Davies' policy of friendship, arguing that the U.S. and USSR did not actually share mutual interests.⁴³

⁴⁰ Loy W. Henderson and George W. Baer, *A Question of Trust: The Origins of U.S.-Soviet Diplomatic Relations: The Memoirs of Loy W. Henderson*, Hoover Archival Documentaries (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1986), 394-395.

⁴¹ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*, 70.

⁴² Davis and Trani, *Distorted Mirrors: Americans and Their Relations with Russia and China in the Twentieth Century*, 81.

⁴³ Michael T. Ruddy, *The Cautious Diplomat: Charles E. Bohlen and the Soviet Union, 1929-1969* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986), 11.

Despite Kennan and Bohlen's loudly expressed belief in irreconcilable differences between American and Soviet agendas, FDR deployed Davies to Moscow in January 1937 with orders to win over Stalin's trust, encourage U.S.-Soviet economic relations, curb the activities of the *Comintern*, and collect on Imperial Russian debts.

A wealthy Wilsonian Democrat and long-time political ally of President Roosevelt, Joseph Davies was not selected as the new U.S. Ambassador to the USSR by virtue of any outstanding diplomatic experience or knowledge in international relations. Davies' appointment instead came as a reward for years of personal loyalty and political service to the Democratic Party and a shared open-minded view of the Soviet Union, specifically the opportunity to fully mine its business potential. Born in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1876, Joseph Edward Davies was raised in an upper-middle class Welch immigrant family whose success taught him the value of hard work from a very young age.⁴⁴ A fierce believer in the American dream, Davies completed a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wisconsin in 1898, followed shortly thereafter by a degree in law from the same university in 1901. It was at the University of Wisconsin that Davies first acquired a taste for politics and began to identify with the Progressive movement under the influence of Governor Robert LaFollette who was on campus recruiting intellectuals and lawyers for the Progressive Party.⁴⁵

At the turn of the twentieth century, American progressivism—designated by David Thelen, a biographer of LaFollette, as insurgent progressivism—was still very much a group of grassroots campaigns by taxpayers against the most privileged classes that questioned the

⁴⁴ Larry Allen Weaver, "Joseph E. Davies and the American Mission to Moscow, 1936-1938" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1998), 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

legitimacy of concentrated power and wealth.⁴⁶ Therein lay a very interesting paradox within Davies' psyche and ideological beliefs, one which he never fully resolved, as he was at once an ambitious business lawyer and an aspiring politician who took an interest in quasi-socialist movements that promoted a more equitable distribution of wealth. If anything, this conflict only seemed to become more muddled while Davies served as Ambassador to the Soviet Union for he found merit in the modernizing efforts of a communist regime, yet still proudly identified as a capitalist to Stalin and Foreign Minister Molotov at his going away party in 1938.⁴⁷ While this may to all appearances seem a contradiction, this thesis endeavours to provide some clarity as I argue that Davies' fascination and enthusiasm for the Stalinist regime stemmed from an American affinity with rapid modernization and technical innovation, one which transcended any ideological considerations.

Davies subsequently entered politics in 1902 when he won his first bid for elected office as the district attorney for Jefferson County, a position he held for four years before suffering a humiliating defeat as the Democratic candidate in the 1904 Watertown mayoral race.⁴⁸ As it increasingly grew apparent over the following years, Davies was an effective political campaign organizer, but he ultimately lacked the political skills necessary to be himself elected to higher political office. Davies subsequently made a name for himself as a campaign organizer for the Progressive wing of the Democratic Party.⁴⁹ Rising up the organizational ranks of the Democratic

⁴⁶ David P. Thelen, *Robert M. La Follette and the Insurgent Spirit* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), x.

⁴⁷ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*, 62.

⁴⁸ Weaver, "Joseph E. Davies and the American Mission to Moscow, 1936-1938," 19-20.

⁴⁹ Caryn Hannan, *Wisconsin Biographical Dictionary* (Hamburg, MI: State History Publications, 2008), 97. This was in addition to his successful career as a corporate lawyer through which he was able to acquire significant wealth. When combined with a rather sizable inheritance he received from his uncle's estate, Davies was in position to make significant contributions to the Democratic Party, rendering him an invaluable asset. Davies' contributions were rewarded when he was elected as secretary of the Wisconsin branch of the Democratic State Central Committee in 1912.

Party, Davies helped win the presidential nomination for Woodrow Wilson in 1912, a campaign that significantly placed Davies in the same close-knit circle as Franklin Roosevelt. This friendship notably endured throughout the following three decades.⁵⁰

Davies remained in government service until 1920 when he opted to enter the private sector instead, establishing an extremely successful private law practice in Washington DC that specialized in antitrust and international law.⁵¹ Despite spending over a decade in the private sector, Davies remained friends with Roosevelt and ultimately served as chairman of FDR's 1936 presidential re-election campaign. Davies further contributed \$10,000 towards FDR's campaign, while his wife Marjorie is estimated to have far surpassed this donation.⁵² Davies's appointment as Ambassador to the Soviet Union a mere two weeks following the re-election of President Franklin Roosevelt thus constituted both a political reward for Davies' loyalty and financial support, as well as an opportunity for FDR to make good on his plans for improved political and economic relations with the USSR.

While Davies enthusiastically accepted the diplomatic posting this time, the mood among the diplomatic corps at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was quite different. To say that Davies was an unorthodox choice for such a complex ambassadorial position would be an understatement. Davies' complete lack of diplomatic or foreign relations experience certainly did not go

⁵⁰ Weaver, "Joseph E. Davies and the American Mission to Moscow, 1936-1938," 27, and Hannan, *Wisconsin Biographical Dictionary*, 97-98. A loyal friend of Woodrow Wilson, Davies was again rewarded when he was appointed commissioner of corporations in 1913, a position that he held until 1915 when he became the first Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. However, it should be noted that President Wilson initially offered Davies the position of Assistant Secretary of War, which Davies turned down, before offering him ambassadorships in Russia or Italy. Davies in turn refused both of these diplomatic positions, explaining that he did not desire a government position that would require him to subsidize his expenses.

⁵¹ Having already amassed a great fortune, Davies' wealth only grew in 1935 when he divorced his first wife and remarried Marjorie Merriweather Post Hutton, the business-savvy and politically ambitious heiress to the General Foods fortune. Nancy Ruben, *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004), 216.

⁵² Ullman, "The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941," 224, and Ruben, *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post*, 216-217.

unnoticed by the embassy's three most senior diplomats, Henderson, Kennan, and Bohlen, who convened a meeting with embassy staff in Henderson's rooms to consider staging a mass resignation in protest against Davies' nomination.⁵³ While they ultimately refrained, former Ambassador Bullitt did write a letter of complaint to FDR and Davies received a chilly reception from the embassy's senior diplomats upon his arrival in Moscow in January 1937.⁵⁴ Interpreting Davies' appointment as a blatant political reward, senior diplomats concluded that FDR both displayed a casual disregard for their hard work while minimizing the importance of U.S.-Soviet relations at an increasingly unstable time in Europe.⁵⁵ Davies was undoubtedly most disliked by Kennan and Bohlen, the latter describing Davies as, "sublimely ignorant of even the most elementary realities of the Soviet system and of its ideology."⁵⁶ This animosity only worsened as Davies quickly distanced himself from the diplomatic corps in favour of Colonel Faymonville, the U.S. military attaché, and the U.S. correspondents. Kennan consequently complained of an incident during the 1937 show trials in which Davies sent Kennan on an errand to get refreshments while Davies discussed the proceedings with the American press corps instead.⁵⁷ Henderson was further frustrated by Davies' exclusive focus on men who had succeeded in amassing enormous wealth and power. While Bullitt reportedly became depressed at the sight of "mud-covered, weary, half-starved-appearing women waiting in line for an overcrowded street-car or bus," Davies did not appear unduly disturbed by the sight as "his eyes were directed to the people at the top."⁵⁸ Kennan, Bohlen, and Henderson's shared disdain for both Davies' perceived naivety in the face of Stalinist power struggles—namely in their conflicting reports on the

⁵³ George Frost Kennan, *Memoirs* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967), 81-83.

⁵⁴ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*, 68.

⁵⁵ Weaver, "Joseph E. Davies and the American Mission to Moscow, 1936-1938," 86.

⁵⁶ Maclean, *Joseph E. Davies: Envoy to the Soviets*, 3.

⁵⁷ Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*, 74.

⁵⁸ Henderson and Baer, *A Question of Trust: The Origins of U.S.-Soviet Diplomatic Relations: The Memoirs of Loy W. Henderson*, 413.

Moscow show trials—and his preoccupation with art and antique shopping only deepened over the following year and a half as Davies and the correspondents seemingly became an island onto themselves, choosing to exclusively meet and travel together on a regular basis.

The frequency and length with which Davies and the U.S. Moscow correspondents met, dined, attended official Soviet functions, and vacationed together to exchange views on the Soviet Union undoubtedly suggests a deep closeness and trust between Davies and the American correspondents posted with him in Moscow. In addition to Davies' daily attendance alongside the press corps at the 1937 and 1938 show trials, Davies' diaries and personal correspondence record at least 30 meetings and outings with U.S. foreign correspondents that he described as trusted friends whose opinions and knowledge of international events largely informed his interpretations of the Purge and Soviet modernization. Contrasted against scarce mentions of his fellow U.S. diplomats who were ostensibly working alongside him at the embassy, Davies' enthusiastic and repeated mentions of the press corps become all the more significant.

The press corps' influence upon Davies is further reflected in the numerous similarities between Davies' and the U.S. foreign correspondents' accounts of Stalinist society. The reports filed by Davies and the press corps shared a fascination with Soviet modernization at the expense of the great suffering, while partaking in the socialist realist excitement of an idyllic future, one that required the reduction of complex Soviet power struggles to "incomprehensible" and "strange." Conferring primarily with one another, Davies and the correspondents' view of Soviet society frequently opposed and/or ran into conflict with the opinions of more senior professional U.S. diplomats. Excluded from the close-knit professional diplomatic corps whose attitudes towards the Soviet Union were generally more cynical, a type of group mentality arose between Davies and the correspondents out of a need to rationalize the seemingly unfathomable

differences between two societies that otherwise seemed fated on the same path of modernization: the U.S. and the burgeoning Soviet Union.

The close-knit relationship between Davies and the newspapermen did not take long to blossom, as four of the correspondents were keen to greet Davies, notepads and cameras in hand, as soon as he disembarked from his train and set foot on Russian soil for the first time on January 18, 1937. Marking the beginning of a close friendship, Davies was notably met at the train station in Negoreloye by Joseph Phillips of the New York *Herald Tribune* (Joseph Barnes' predecessor), "Charlie" Nutter of the Associated Press, Norman Deuel of the United Press, and Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*. Davies' first impression of the U.S. correspondents was overwhelmingly favourable, describing them as "a fine "bunch" of well-balanced men, all thoroughly loyal to our free enterprise system and democratic ideology, but not disposed to upset relations in this difficult situation."⁵⁹ What Davies assessed to be a difficult situation largely referred to the Moscow show trials—to be more fully discussed in Chapter 4—that sought to purge the Communist Party of alleged conspirators against Stalin. The first of these show trials had occurred the previous summer in August 1936 before Davies' appointment as Ambassador, while the second commenced a mere three days into Davies' stay in Moscow, giving the relatively inexperienced diplomat virtually no time to read up on the charges and prepare for daily trial attendance. Following a full day of attendance at the Radek Trotskyist conspiracy trial, which Davies clearly did not yet know how to interpret as he simply recorded what he witnessed without any personal commentary, Davies chose to invite the "boys" of the U.S. press corps to come over to his residence half an hour after the trial adjourned, at 10:30pm for "beer and

⁵⁹ Joseph Davies, *Entering Russia - Sinister Warning of Approaching War*, January 18, 1937. Diary. Box I: 3, Chronological File: 1936-1939, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

sandwiches" to "hash over the trial."⁶⁰ Furthermore, as Davies struggled upon his arrival to make sense of both the show trials and Soviet society, he was particularly open to influence from those whose opinions he clearly valued most, such as the "boys" in the press corps. As Davies did not speak any Russian, he was entirely reliant upon translators to interpret the daily show trial proceedings for him. Davies' primary translators were Kennan and "press interpreters" fluent in Russian—namely Barnes and Shapiro—who gave Davies "the gist of the testimony."⁶¹ Thus, Davies' perception of the show trials was heavily influenced by the impressions of those around him, notably including the American press.

Davies' reliance upon both the reporters' friendship and council steadily grew from thereon as Davies routinely invited members of the U.S. press over to the Embassy for dinner where he obtained their opinions on the day's events, as well as the Soviet political and economic scene at large. The following day on January 25th, Davies invited Nutter, Phillips and Duranty over to his residence for supper at 10:30pm after an evening of witnessing "remarkable and impressive" testimony.⁶² This ritual was again repeated on January 26th as Davies hosted Demmory Best, Charles Nutter, Norman Deuel and Walter Duranty at the Embassy for supper "immediately following the trial" in order to "canvass the situation." Davies and the newspapermen were notably "of one mind" in their analyses. Addressing the charges of conspiracy that alleged the accused had plotted with Stalin's exiled political nemesis Leon Trotsky to overthrow Stalin, Davies cited yet another point of agreement between himself, the press correspondents, and his fellow diplomats (allegedly, but unlikely) as he explained how they "generally recognized" that Trotsky had been "carrying on an active campaign with his old

⁶⁰ Davies, *The Purge Trials*, January 23, 1937. Diary. Box I: 3.

⁶¹ Davies, January 23, 1937, Diary.

⁶² Davies, *Received at the Kremlin*, January 25, 1937, Diary.

buddies in Russia against the Stalinist government."⁶³ Only six days after their last recorded dinner meeting, Davies reported that Joseph Phillips came over for lunch, while the newspapermen were "coming for buffet dinner and movies tonight."⁶⁴ Evidently, the U.S. correspondents had quickly become routine dinner guests at the Ambassador's residence.

From this habit of enjoying mealtime discussions with the press corps developed a pattern of regular meetings with the newsmen whenever Davies was in Moscow and not travelling across Europe, as was often the case. However, it should be noted that even when travelling across the USSR, Davies was in the habit of inviting his reporter friends along, seemingly preferring their company and council to that of the diplomatic corps. For example, Davies voyaged with Norman Deuel of the United Press on a trip through Russian industrial regions in early March of 1937. The inclusion of Deuel's name in a letter to Marvin McIntyre, Secretary to the President, is significant as Deuel was the only member of Davies' entourage to be named in the letter.⁶⁵ Deuel again attended lunch at the Ambassador's residence on March 13th, as Davies invited Deuel, Mrs. Deuel, and Professor Geroid Robinson of Columbia University over for lunch and a bit of gossip.⁶⁶ This March 1937 trip to Russian industrial regions was followed a little over three months later by a leisurely weekend cruise in the Baltic Sea. Accompanying Davies on this three day weekend cruise aboard Davies' yacht in the Baltic were Mr. and Mrs. Deuel, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Barnes, and Charles Nutter.⁶⁷

Limited in his access to information from Western sources, Davies further relied on the newspapermen for news updates on events unfolding outside of the USSR. One such instance

⁶³ Davies, Letter to Arthur Krock, Romm Incident, January 26, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

⁶⁴ Davies, January 31, 1937, Diary.

⁶⁵ Davies, Letter to Marvin McIntyre, Secretary to the President, Moscow, March 15, 1937, Letter. Box I: 4.

⁶⁶ Davies, Moscow, March 13, 1937, Diary.

⁶⁷ Davies, July 5, 1937, Diary. Box I: 5.

was recorded in a June 30, 1937 entry in Davies' diary as he cited Charles Nutter of the Associated Press as his source when reporting that the Japanese Ambassador had served an ultimatum to the Soviets to evacuate certain boundary islands between Manchuko and Russia.⁶⁸ Largely cut off from the Western world, Davies and the U.S. correspondents were increasingly immersed in Soviet society as Davies reported, "the long distance radio is our chief source of information as to what is "going on" outside."⁶⁹ Limited to an irregular flow of Western magazine subscriptions and the BBC news over long distance radio, Davies and the press entertained themselves with popular Soviet news stories, as reported in Soviet newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. Davies was thus always sad to see one of his newsmen depart Moscow following reassignment, evident by a July 16, 1937 diary entry in which Davies singled out Nutter at a dinner with other members of the press corps ahead of Nutter's departure for reassignment in Spain. Celebrating Nutter, Davies admitted that he would miss him, as Nutter commanded "the respect and admiration of us all."⁷⁰ It is further worth noting that Davies maintained a strong relationship with the U.S. journalism community both abroad and in Moscow, demonstrated in his correspondence between himself and Webb Miller, a journalist and war correspondent for the United Press Associations of America. This correspondence reveals how Davies keenly read United Press articles as he was looking forward to receiving a full copy of Miller's articles.⁷¹ It thus stands to reason that Davies read articles written by the Moscow correspondents, in addition to regularly conferring with them and reading official Soviet newspapers.

Davies certainly did not shy away from lavishing praise onto the correspondents throughout the pages of his diary. Following his return to Moscow in the wake of a late

⁶⁸ Davies, Moscow, June 30, 1937, Diary.

⁶⁹ Davies, Goering's Frank Declaration, Moscow, January 24, 1937, Diary. Box I: 3.

⁷⁰ Davies, Charles Nutter and Senator Robinson, Moscow, July 16, 1937, Diary. Box I: 5.

⁷¹ Davies, Letter to Webb Miller, Esquire, United Press Associations of America, Moscow, October 6, 1937, Letter. Box I: 6.

September-early October trip around Central and Eastern Europe, Davies called them in for a press conference at 5:30 pm, only one hour after his return to Moscow. Sharing his observations on the situation in Europe with them, Davies described Duranty, Anna Louise Strong, Massick, Deuel, Barnes, and Joseph Brown as "exceptional men" with whom he discussed "European peace, Japan, China, and Russia frankly and at length."⁷² Davies further noted: "their views, as always, were pertinent and helpful."⁷³ This is particularly noteworthy as these select U.S. correspondents were the first people with whom Davies wished to confer with upon his return to Moscow, opting to meet with them instead of Embassy staff. Having settled back into the Moscow Embassy, Davies again invited Deuel, Barnes, and Massick over to the Embassy for a game of bridge.⁷⁴ Over two consecutive days, Davies welcomed Duranty over for lunch on November 1, 1937 and shortly thereafter hosted Deuel for a conference on November 2, 1937.⁷⁵ Early November 1937 was notably marked by a string of meals and meetings between Davies and various members of the U.S. press corps. After meeting with Deuel and Duranty on November 1 and 2, Davies had dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Massick and Mrs. Bess on November 3rd.⁷⁶ The following day on November 4, Davies once again exhibited a preference for dining with Moscow correspondents as he lunched at the British Embassy where he talked with a correspondent by the name of Charleton who had been posted in Moscow for eleven years by that point. Davies' evening dinner guests continued this trend as he again dined with Mr. and Mrs. Deuel of the United Press and Mr. and Mrs. Keene.⁷⁷

⁷² Davies, Return to Moscow, October 4, 1937, Diary.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Davies, October 14, 1937, Diary.

⁷⁵ Davies, November 1 and 2, 1937, Diary.

⁷⁶ Davies, November 3, 1937, Diary. Box I: 6.

⁷⁷ Davies, November 4, 1937, Diary.

Meetings between Davies and the U.S. correspondents were not merely an occasional occurrence as Davies explained how their private evening discussions constituted a nightly occurrence during the 1938 show trials.

Every evening after the trial, the American newspapermen would come up to the Embassy for a "snack" and beer after these late night sessions and would "hash" over the day's proceedings. Among these were Walter Duranty and Harold Denny of the New York Times, Joe Barnes and Joe Phillips of the New York Herald Tribune, Charlie Nutter or Dick Massock of the Associated Press, Norman Deuel and Henry Shapiro of the United Press, Jim Brown of the International News, Spencer Williams representing the Manchester Guardian. They were an exceptionally brilliant group of men. I came to rely upon them. They were of inestimable value to me in the appraisal and estimate of men, situations, and Soviet development... We had interesting discussions, which lasted long into the night.⁷⁸

From this description of Davies' relationship with the press corps, it is especially worth noting how the newspapermen influenced Davies' view of men—likely referring to the defendants on trial—and Soviet development, which is to say Davies and the newspapermen's joint fascination with modernization. Citing U.S. journalists' understandings of Russian psychology, Davies further attributed much of his understanding of said Russian psychology to the reporters, explaining that they were "all very familiar with Soviet conditions, personalities, and Russian psychology."⁷⁹

Davies was so impressed by his newspapermen in Moscow that he dedicated entire diary entries to singing their praises. One such entry followed a stag dinner with Denny, Deuel, Massick, Barnes, Williams, Shapiro, and two lower ranking members of Embassy staff. It should be noted that this grouping was rather representative of Davies' preferred circle of confidants in which the American newsmen largely outnumbered Embassy staff. Praising Barnes, Davies described him as a "star" of high intelligence with a serious mind and earnest outlook who

⁷⁸ Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Bukharin Mass Treason Trial, Moscow, March 17, 1938, Letter. Box I: 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

travelled about the country, "making his mark."⁸⁰ Ultimately, Davies concluded that he greatly respected Barnes, characterizing him as having "a matter-of-fact American approach that resolved enigmas to just plain American slang and generally hit the nail on the head."⁸¹ Accordingly, Davies was suggesting that Barnes possessed the ability to transform the Russian Enigma into comparable American analogies, thereby clarifying Soviet society as Barnes shared his analytical grid with Davies.

Davies ultimately attributed much of his understanding of Stalinist society to the American newsmen as he admitted feeling "a twinge" at the prospect of leaving them following his reassignment to Belgium in the spring of 1938. Reflecting on his time in Moscow, Davies concluded that the newsmen had been of "inestimable help" to him, as they became "unofficial colleagues."⁸² Davies further stressed that they had been "scrupulously honorable in keeping faith with me in all "off the record" talk" while their judgment of Soviet society had been invaluable to him.

Regarding Davies with escalating levels of resentment and frustration, more seasoned American diplomats posted to the Soviet Union—namely Bohlen, Kennan, and to a lesser degree Henderson—made little effort to conceal their disdain for the diplomatically inexperienced Ambassador Joseph Davies. This was apparent from the outset of Davies' appointment in 1936 all the way through to his reassignment in the spring of 1938. Throughout his brief but memorable tenure as Ambassador, Davies inadvertently served as a lightning rod for diplomatic grievances against FDR's perceived purging of the State Department's Soviet/Russian experts in

⁸⁰ Davies, Moscow, April 23, 1938, Diary. Box I: 7.

⁸¹ Davies, Newsmen in Moscow, June 8, 1938, Diary. Box I: 8.

⁸² Ibid.

light of his attempt to revive U.S.-Soviet relations following his re-election in 1936. Davies sought council and societal context elsewhere, outside of official Embassy staff, to fill the considerable gaps in his knowledge of Soviet affairs and guide the analytic framework through which he proceeded to form his own opinions. These opinions were nevertheless based on those of the U.S. press corps as its members came to form Davies' unofficial circle of advisors, meeting regularly with the Ambassador to exchange views on the Moscow show trials and ongoing Soviet modernization efforts. Though their respective levels of education and experience in Soviet/Russian affairs varied greatly, Davies and the press correspondents nevertheless came to view Stalinist society through the same socialist realist lens, one that strongly emphasized the perceived commonalities between American and Soviet visions of industrial modernization, technological innovations, territorial exploration, heroics, patriotism, and perseverance.

Davies and the U.S. correspondents ultimately represented the exception to a broader American intellectual trend in the mid to late 1930s in which cautious admiration for European dictatorships steadily declined, as U.S. Moscow correspondents were physically removed from the American political context and instead immersed in the Stalinist socialist realist context of the privileged Soviet elite. This is to say that firsthand experience of life within the USSR's more privileged social circles enabled American correspondents to escape a broader intellectual trend in American political culture and become themselves producers and propagators of socialist realist writing as they too were swept up in enthusiastic yearning for modernization and the romantic promise of a more joyous future.

CHAPTER 2

SOVIET ECONOMICS THROUGH A SOCIALIST REALIST LENS

Providing clothes for monkeys was comparatively simple, but when it came to the elephants, the zoo was up against another problem.¹

Reporting on the increased availability of warm clothing, domestic comforts, and x-ray-equipped hospitals, Norman Deuel of the United Press' Moscow office was not writing about services and accommodations exclusively available to human beings in the late summer of 1936. According to Deuel, Soviet society was so awash with an abundance of modern scientific equipment and state of the art technology that even the monkeys and elephants at the Moscow Zoo could enjoy human comforts and advanced medical care. Filed on September 4, 1936, Deuel's report on the Moscow Zoo was indicative of U.S. correspondents' infatuation with rapid Soviet modernization and trailblazing technological advances in the mid to late 1930s. Deuel's enthusiasm for monkeys outfitted in fur coats, pants and gloves, as well as the construction of a hospital for elephants and a giant light hall in which to warm the elephants, was further suggestive of his immersion into socialist realist culture, for he himself disseminated the themes of prevailing over adversity and harnessing the power of modern scientific thinking to overcome the natural challenges inherent in harsh Russian winters and the increasing demands of a modernizing society.

Delighted by the romance of modernization, Deuel, Barnes and Davies focused on the evolving nature of a rapidly modernizing Soviet economy, employing socialist realist themes to view a modern, industrial and productive Soviet future—stylized on the American capitalist model of modern society—through the prism of an increasingly modern future. Soviet economics

¹ Norman Deuel, United Press Report, Mailed September 4, 1936, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30: Wire Service Reports: 1935-1938, *Henry Shapiro Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

loomed large in the minds of all U.S. correspondents and Joseph Davies, though Joseph Barnes was perhaps the most fascinated with the Soviet Union's industrial output, agricultural production in conjunction with the rise of collective farming, and overall economic growth. More so than Deuel and Davies, Barnes attributed alleged lingering backwardness among the peasantry to centuries of oppression and feudalism, thus portraying the Soviet Union as a society in flux, transitioning into a modern industrial nation with the assistance of foreign capital and Bolshevik control. Visibly enchanted with modernization and economic development, Barnes argued that strict—at times brutal—Communist control over Soviet society represented a necessary discomfort on the way to modernizing a once backward peasantry and readying the USSR to occupy a leading role on the world stage. By comparison, Deuel focused almost exclusively upon great achievements in Soviet technological development, namely ambitious scientific expeditions, medical marvels, technological innovations, and industrial production. Consequently, Deuel scarcely spoke of the average Soviet citizen, squeezing them into very brief and occasional reports on workers sentenced to death for “wrecking.” Similarly, Davies rarely spoke of the general Soviet population, despite frequent visits to industrial regions and the relative freedom of movement he enjoyed upon his yacht. Loy Henderson, a senior American diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow who served as *chargé d'affaires* between Bullitt and Davies' tenures, similarly observed how Davies had a rather Machiavellian outlook to his interpretation of Soviet society. This is to say that the ends—rapid industrialization—justified the means by which the Soviet elite had come to power.²

While David Engerman astutely identifies how American observers rationalized the heavy human cost of rapid industrialization under the banner of the USSR “starving itself great,” this

² Henderson and Baer, *A Question of Trust: The Origins of U.S.-Soviet Diplomatic Relations: The Memoirs of Loy W. Henderson*, 418.

thesis goes one step further, bridging the gap between the American-felt romanticism of modernization and Soviet socialist realism.³ As romantic visions of ongoing modernization blended enthusiasm for a future idyllic society with the ability to discern the future in the present, American infatuation with rapid development either mirrored or drew upon aspects of socialist realist culture that viewed a modern communist society through the lens of the future. American and Soviet views of projected economic development in the progression of history were not dissimilar, for they both drew upon aspects of economic determinism and believed that modern economic development was unfolding along a set path towards an inevitable end state of material prosperity. For Marxists, this final end state constituted the establishment of Communism while American capitalists anticipated a free capitalist economy.

Significantly, American notions of ideological superiority did not conflict with U.S. correspondents' production of Soviet socialist realist culture as their vision for Soviet modernity echoed certain features of American capitalism while retaining all of the futuristic promise of socialist realism's projected modern and plentiful society. This American view of modernization expected rapid industrialization to erode Marxist ideals, ultimately giving way to a modern, increasingly democratic, semi-capitalist Soviet state. However, this particular hypothesis that theorized the USSR's eventual transition into a capitalist economy was only ever explicitly articulated by Davies, as he foresaw the Soviet implementation of a modified form of capitalism based on the material incentivization model promoted in the Stakhanovite movement. Introduced in the fall of 1935, Stakhanovism encouraged workers to work harder and surpass daily quotas through socialist emulation as they modelled their work ethic on that of Alexsei Stakhanov, a record-setting coal miner turned Soviet celebrity. As Stakhanovites were publicly celebrated for

³ Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*, 194.

their hard work with material rewards and social prestige, the movement was a way of intensifying production and educating workers in the mastery of technology.⁴

Davies consistently pointed out how the favoured Stakhanovite system was “based entirely on the profit motive condemned by theoretical communism” and thus suggested a perceptible Soviet shift towards capitalism.⁵ Davies claimed not be alone in this opinion, summarizing in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State both his and the newspapermen’s alleged shared belief that, “great strides are being made and that there will be a gradual evolution here into a modified socialistic state with the present communist ideas being gradually tempered by the necessity of individualistic necessities into more or less modified capitalism.”⁶ Marginally less bold in their view of Soviet economic development, Barnes and Deuel anticipated the growth of an industrious, modern, and increasingly democratic society as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat gave way to mass enfranchisement and a heightened standard of living. Observing the beginning of the late-1936 Soviet election campaign, Deuel qualified it as “the conception of democracy which is expressed.”⁷ Accordingly, Deuel described the New Constitution of December 1935 in his year-end report for the United Press as liberal and laying the basis for “rights, duties and privileges of citizens.”⁸ Bookended by examples of economic progress, internal political change was highlighted as a similar defining characteristic of Soviet development in Deuel’s 1935 year-end report.

The romanticism of rapid Soviet modernization undoubtedly captured the imaginations of Davies and the U.S. correspondents as they echoed socialist realist enthusiasm for scientific

⁴ Lewis H. Siegelbaum. *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 16, 295, 296, 301.

⁵ Joseph Davies, July 28, 1937. Diary. Box I: 5, Chronological File: 1936-1939, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

⁶ Davies, Letter to R. Walton Moore, Assistant Secretary of State, Moscow, January 25, 1937. Letter. Box I: 3.

⁷ Deuel, Letter to T.W. Gerber, United Press, New York, 1936. Letter. Box 30.

⁸ Deuel, “1935 Year End Review,” United Press Report, Moscow, Wire Service Report.

achievements and the pace of the Five-Year Plans. They wrote extensively on the themes of technological, scientific, and medical breakthroughs, along with the conquest of natural elements and overcoming obstacles, abundance, and the future availability of consumer goods. The spotlight cast on economic and industrial development shone with consistent brightness and intensity throughout the correspondents' reports, articles, and personal papers, as their enthusiasm for surpassed quotas and Soviet technical ambition weathered all storms, remaining a shining beacon of modernisation's messianic destiny to transform barren backwards landscapes into industrial cities. Accordingly, Davies and the American correspondents derived a great sense of optimism and reassurance in their American vision for modernity as they witnessed industrial chimney towers emerge from the ashes of despotic Imperial rule. In addition to the American intellectual context, one must also consider the societal Stalinist context in which these Americans served as cultural producers. While they strongly identified with the theme of economic progress, they were also consistently bombarded with Soviet propaganda exalting the success of the Five Year Plans, specifically their ability to mould and discipline productive forces, while promising a brighter, joyful, and more abundant future.⁹ This keenly felt enthusiasm on both ends of U.S.-Soviet cultural relations served to reinforce the American-perceived affinity between Soviet and American cults of modernization.

The utopian socialist realist vision of the 1930s was one of a human and natural world transformed through modern technology and rapid industrialization.¹⁰ Efforts to construct a new Moscow, as codified in the General Plan of 1935, signified an ongoing struggle between

⁹ Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*, xv. For works on the Soviet propagation of socialist realist themes, see: Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000) and Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank you, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 67.

demolition and new construction. However, this conflict was not simply a matter of spatial reorganization and city planning, as it represented the drama of Soviet modernization itself.¹¹ Accompanying these mammoth construction projects, traffic disruptions and redirected bus routes presented new obstacles. Moscow city planners sought to overcome these challenges by completing the Moscow Metro. The construction of three metro lines was thus undertaken in an effort to link new industrial sites and plants with the city. Initiated in 1931, the Moscow Metro opened its first completed line in May 1935. More so than any other Stalinist building project, the Moscow Metro was of enormous propagandistic importance as it was presented to the world as evidence of Communism's superiority and success in "conquering the bowels of the earth" while modernizing the previously underdeveloped and impoverished Soviet capital.¹² Proudly showcased to international observers at the 1939 World's Fair in New York, the Moscow Metro was presented as both a technological marvel and solution to the enviable problem of increased mobility to and from cultural venues. According to a Soviet pamphlet distributed at the World's Fair, Soviet builders overcame "a hard and strenuous struggle with nature" to collectively—as a society—complete three sections of the subway.¹³ In conjunction with this massive project, the Moscow tram network was expanded and trolley buses were introduced in an effort to connect both suburban areas and the city centre with the newly erected factories that accompanied the First and Second Five Year Plans.¹⁴ Observing the ambitious and breakneck pace of Moscow's reconstruction projects, Deuel's 1935 year end report for UP summarizing the state of Soviet

¹¹ Karl Schlögel, *Moscow 1937* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 35.

¹² Alessandro De Magistris, "Book Review: Le Métro de Moscou. La construction d'un mythe soviétique," review of *Le Métro de Moscou. La construction d'un mythe soviétique*, by Josette Bouvard, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 66, Iss. 3 (2007): 400.

¹³ E. Abakumov, *The Moscow Subway* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 11, 15, 18. For a more detailed discussion on the 1939 World's Fair: Anthony Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow at the New York World' Fair, 1939," *The Russian Review* 57 (1998): 364-379.

¹⁴ Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, 39.

political and economic progress was overwhelmingly dominated by the theme of Soviet progress and modernization as he closed his report by noting that the Moscow-Volga canal was reaching its completion while the rebuilding of Moscow was also underway. Deuel favourably reported that “unsightly buildings and traffic hindrances” were being destroyed, necessitating that trolley lines be rerouted and substituted for buses where necessary, while the second line of the Moscow subway was nearly ready to be opened to the public.¹⁵

Davies was similarly impressed by the pace of Soviet construction, in addition to both the efficiency and cleanliness of city planning. From Davies' very first steps on Soviet territory, disembarking at the station and customhouse at Negoreloye, Davies was surprised and impressed by Soviet modernization, noting in his diary that the station was “impressive, modernistic, commodious and neat.”¹⁶ Davies' choice of adjectives is significant as they represent his very first impressions of the Soviet Union while underlining his level of surprise at the extent of Soviet modernization efforts thus far. Davies' subsequent description of the train he took to Moscow reads like a copy of the previous passage, once more emphasizing its “immaculately clean” interior, as though he expected otherwise.

Reporting upon his initial impressions of the Soviet Union, Davies was also impressed with the level of relative comfort he observed Soviet citizens living in, concluding that the existing Western literature on the USSR represented two extreme viewpoints, whose truth ultimately lay in the middle. Davies was thus pleasantly surprised by the fact that he did not observe any “destitution.” Rather, he described in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State that streets and railroad stations were full of people who “seemed warmly and comfortably clothed

¹⁵ Deuel, “1935 Year End Review,” United Press Report, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

¹⁶ Davies, Entering Russia – Sinister Warning of Approaching War, January 18, 1937, Diary. Box I: 3.

with no inconsiderable display of distinction in attire.”¹⁷ Davies was further impressed by Stalinist modernization efforts as he wrote: “The amount of new buildings impresses one. There is a sense of activity that you feel in the movements of the people, that you see and the many things that are being done.”¹⁸ This “sense of activity” and energy that Davies immediately felt upon arrival in the USSR echoed the omnipresent socialist realist excitement that suffused Muscovite public culture for a brighter, modern, socialist future. This excitement was ultimately contagious, evident by the way in which it could be both detected and shared by American observers residing in the USSR. Everywhere, Davies observed: “the tempo is active, with new construction going on furiously everywhere.”¹⁹

Interpreting Stalin's Five Year Plans as a terrific modernizing and civilizing force, Davies remarked on how great industrial plants and public utility projects had “projected almost over night and whole regions of plain converted into extraordinary cities and districts dotted with smoking chimneys where but six or seven years ago it was only prairie or bare hills.”²⁰ This practice of contrasting pre-Stalinist Russia with the existing Stalinist landscape, a practice common to both Davies and the U.S. correspondents in question, served the binary purpose of underlining Stalin's modernizing achievements, while both confirming and further entrenching received notions of Imperial Russian backwardness prior to Bolshevik intervention. This is significant as Davies was echoing the same narrative perpetuated by the Soviet government throughout the 1930s, one of overcoming the legacy of Tsarist backwardness inherited by the Bolshevik regime. Referred to as the “liquidation of backwardness,” efforts by the Stalinist government to modernize Soviet society were consistently depicted in all media outlets as

¹⁷ Davies, Letter to R. Walton Moore, Assistant Secretary of State, Moscow, January 25, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Davies, Letter to Colonel House, Convention, Trial and French Revolution, Moscow, January 27, 1937, Letter.

²⁰ Davies, Letter to Steven T. Early, Secretary to the President, First Trip Through Industrial Regions, Moscow, March 9, 1937, Letter. Box I: 4.

harbingers of economic, military, and cultural progress, rapidly making up for Imperial Russian backwardness.²¹ As such, the contrast of before and after the Bolshevik Revolution was central to the narrative of energetic modernization.

In addition to ambitious and monumental construction projects, Davies and the U.S. correspondents were further captivated with the Stalinist pursuit of bold technological advances. Throughout 1937, Deuel regularly reported for UP on scientific and technological achievements in the Soviet Union, reflecting his ever-growing optimism in the future of Soviet modernization. This was apparent in early 1937 as he reported upon Soviet aviation's ambition to shatter the world's height and distance records in airplane travel. The level of technical detail in which Deuel described how Soviet aviation hoped to accomplish such a feat illustrates his profound interest and enthusiasm for an increasingly modern world whose natural obstacles and distant corners could soon be conquered by modern technology. American journalists and Stalinist culture clearly shared an affinity for travelling faster and farther than ever before, exemplified by Deuel's repeated use of the words "record breaking."²² Moreover, Deuel emphasized that previous flights undertaken by the ANT 25 plane had successfully travelled non-stop with enough fuel to spare for an even longer journey. This is further in keeping with the socialist realist habit of boasting and aggrandizing Soviet achievements. Soviet ingenuity and persistence were further showcased in Deuel's article as he described the way in which aviation engineers had overcome the challenges associated with wearing a sealed cumbersome flying suit. Aviation engineers conquered this obstacle by constructing a "strato-plane with a hermetically sealed cabin, separately installed in the central portion of the fuselage."²³

²¹ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 9-10.

²² Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed February 2, 1937, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

²³ Ibid.

American enthusiasm for Soviet aviation projects was further reflective of a broader Stalinist preoccupation with the heroics and technological innovations involved in pushing the boundaries of air travel, thereby underlining an important technological affinity between American and Soviet society. Between 1933 and 1938, the Soviet Union endeavoured to set several world records in aviation. Fully aware of the symbolic and practical benefits that could be wrought from publicized aeronautical achievements, such as compensating for military deficiencies or distracting the general public from the Purges and Ukrainian famine, the Stalinist government emphasized aviation as the symbol of newly introduced Soviet modernity in all written and visual media.²⁴ Kendall E. Bailes argues that Stalin's purpose in promoting such efforts was to win popular support for his regime both at home and abroad while counterbalancing the effect of the Purges.²⁵ However, Stalin sought not only popular legitimacy, but also "technological legitimation."²⁶ In other words, Stalin utilized modern Soviet technological achievements as evidence of his right to rule, reinforcing the notion that he was a practical and efficient ruler. Aviation thus became one of the many technologies used to underline rapid Soviet modernization throughout the 1930s, as Stalin tasked Soviet aviators with "flying faster than anyone, faster than anyone, and higher than anyone" in 1933.²⁷

Within the same February 1937 UP report on the ANT 25 plane, Deuel further expressed an American affinity with modern Soviet society when he quoted Soviet aircraft test pilot and aviation hero Valery Chkalov's description of the U.S. and USSR as "two powerful countries" while expressing a desire to soon establish a short air route between the U.S. and the Soviet

²⁴ John Etty, "Stalin's Falcons," *History Review* 67 (2010): 3-4, and Scott W. Palmer, *Dictatorship of the Air: Aviation Culture and the Fate of Modern Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Kendall E. Bailes, *Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 381.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 383.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 384.

Union. Accordingly, the U.S. and USSR were presented as near equals in technological development, and corresponding visions of modernity, as both nations shared a mutual fascination with flight and the desire to ease travel between powerful nations, further cementing a technological partnership, if not a recognition of inevitable parity, in the process.

This perceived Soviet affinity with American aviation technology was further expressed as Deuel reported upon the Soviet desire to participate in the trans-Atlantic race proposed in honour of the tenth anniversary of Charles Lindberg's flight. Deuel titled his report: "Moscow (sic) (Soviet aviation plans) and America," emphasizing a distinct relationship between Soviet and American technology.²⁸ Long-distance flight constituted the primary focus of Soviet record-breaking attempts in aviation from 1935 onwards, evident by the slew of record-breaking long distance flights that occurred throughout the 1930s. John Etty argues that such long-distance flights served as a better indicator of international strength than the construction of large aircraft, for the military significance of long-range capabilities was far more apparent.²⁹ In reality, very few aircraft capable of flying across the North Pole to the U.S. were ever produced and none were put into service by the Red Air Force.³⁰ Nevertheless, the myth endured, and as Vlad Strukov concludes, long distance record-breaking flights to the U.S. represented an important cultural crossover between Soviet and American cultures in the 1930s.³¹

Deuel's faith in the capabilities of Soviet industry was further conveyed in his hope that airliners would soon fly between Moscow and San Francisco thanks to the efforts of Soviet Arctic explorers. Such an arrangement would notably benefit both American and Soviet aeronautical sectors. This was apparent as Deuel wrote: "The day when great air liners will roar

²⁸ Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed February 2, 1937, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

²⁹ Etty, "Stalin's Falcons," 4-5.

³⁰ Ibid., 6.

³¹ Vlad Strukov and Helena Goscilo, eds. *Russian Aviation, Space Flight, and Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 236.

over the North Pole on their way from Moscow to San Francisco has been brought appreciably nearer by the four men who have spent the past nine months studying weather conditions in the heart of the world's 'weather factory'.³² Furthermore, Deuel's choice to exclusively focus upon the role of the four men in the Papanin Expedition, a scientific expedition to the Arctic (to be further discussed in Chapter 3) that ultimately resulted in a dramatic rescue mission when the four scientists became stranded on a drifting ice floe, reinforced the Stalinist view of productivity that posited personal acts of heroism as integral to making great strides in Soviet modernization.

Deuel further exhibited a distinct fascination with the Soviet adoption of modern technology as he described in a report for UP how the renovated hall in the building of the *Sovnarkom* (Council of People's Commissars) was outfitted with “modernistic lighting effects glistening on light oak furnishings.” In addition to modern lighting effects, the hall was equipped with a “loud speaker system which resembles telephone booths situated at frequent intervals throughout the vast hall where czarism held its court receptions.”³³ Deuel's juxtaposition of celebrated modern technology against the background of the old Imperial tsarist regime purposely highlighted the notion that it was the new Stalinist regime that was modernizing a previously technologically stagnant and oppressive society. This is to say that Deuel was celebrating Stalinist modernization efforts, for he already noticed their obvious results and noted their presence within his rather limited view of the USSR's elite upper class—in this case, the hall of the *Sovnarkom*.

Embodying everything that was modern and futuristic, scientific innovations in the USSR provided one of the greatest forums in which Davies and the U.S. correspondents could engage with utopian dreams while extending an ideological and economic bridge between American and

³² Deuel, “Story of the Great Drift,” Foreign News - Urgent, British United Press, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

³³ Deuel, Telephoned Amsterdam, 11233, Wire Service Report.

Soviet shores. Exhibiting the socialist realist themes of prevailing over adversity and harnessing the power of modern scientific thinking to overcome the natural challenges inherent in harsh Russian winters, Deuel's UP report on the Moscow Zoo's efforts to protect its animals from the bitterly cold winter depicted Soviet zoologists as incredibly resourceful. In addition to outfitting monkeys with pants, fur coats and gloves in order to keep them warm, the Moscow Zoo had reportedly “constructed a huge light hall, of 300 square meters, replacing iron railings with a trench or moat, connected with which is a special elephant hospital” to assist in keeping the elephants warm.³⁴ Deuel reported that, following the zoo’s studies on the many health benefits offered to animals exposed to fresh air, Soviet zoologists sought to overcome the challenges inherent in clothing such large animals by instead constructing an enormous light hall, rather than relocate the elephants indoors. Moreover, the Moscow Zoo was depicted as undeterred in the face of nature's challenges as Deuel once more echoed the theme of staring down and confronting problems. Evidence of Soviet zoological success was reportedly exhibited in the animals' ability to bear young for the first time in captivity.³⁵

Comparisons between the comparatively backwards Imperial Russian scientific community and the unstoppable modernizing spirit of the Communist Party represented an important theme in American reports. Forming a recurring motif, Stalin was repeatedly singled out as a great galvanizing and modernizing force within broader Soviet society, as he encouraged scientific advancements and addressed Soviet scientists on the national stage. Deuel reported for UP on Stalin's public call for advancement in the flourishing of science in a speech to university workers at the Kremlin in 1937. Deuel further reported that Stalin praised “Lenin's foresight” to base the “victory (of) socialism (in) Russia on scientific analysis,” despite criticism by some

³⁴ Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed September 4, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

³⁵ Ibid.

contemporary Russian scientists who had believed Lenin was insane.³⁶ Accordingly, Stalin appeared to offer both revolutionary and visionary continuity with Lenin's leadership for he was portrayed as equally visionary in the fields of science and technology. Deuel's assertion that previous scientists from the old Russian Imperial age still employed in the 1920s did not share Lenin's scientific vision out of fear that he was "allegedly destroying science" further reinforced the notion that it was the Bolsheviks' modernizing efforts that brought Russians into the twentieth century, thereby modernizing a previously backwards Russian populace. Deuel's report further entrenched the Western-perceived line in the sand that consigned scientists of the Imperial age to a lower end of the evolutionary spectrum and new Soviet scientists to the higher innovative end.

Deuel's fascination with scientific ingenuity extended all the way to developments in Vladivostok as he filed a report for UP on a scientific expedition that was underway to bring the preserved body of a mammoth back from Vladivostok in October 1937. Deuel focused upon the technological means by which the mammoth was transported as he described how a ship was remodelled to feature a special refrigeration plant. Further stressing the groundbreaking nature of this expedition, Deuel wrote that the mammoth in question was the first to be discovered intact and consequently weighed four metric tons. Once more exhibiting a fascination with size and record-breaking accomplishments, Deuel reported that the crate designed to carry the mammoth was "big as (a) freight car" and weighed three tons.³⁷ Overall, Deuel focused his attention on the massive size, weight, and technology involved in the project rather than any broader purpose or social impact it may have, thus exhibiting his overruling obsession with modernization.

Deuel paid particular attention to Soviet medical advancements. This emphasis on man's ability to control and extend human life within advanced modern societies likely inspired

³⁶ Deuel, Press Unipress London Report, 19133, Telegram. Box 30.

³⁷ Deuel, Press Unipress London, 21143, October 16, 1937, Telegram.

enthusiasm for a modern industrial Soviet state in U.S. correspondents, as medical breakthroughs represented modern societies' ultimate ability to tame nature and conquer life itself, thereby ensuring a more secure and joyous future. After all, if a society still undergoing technological modernization could make great strides in medical science, so could its technological senior partner: the United States. This was apparent as Deuel reported for UP on the Moscow Scientific Research Institute of Brain in February 1936, describing it as "the world's largest collection of embryo brains."³⁸ Deuel outlined the institute's purpose as "studying the structural variability of different regions of the cortex in the adult human, the embryo and animals, beginning with anthropoid apes." Impressed with Soviet ambition and their foresight for future scientific breakthroughs, Deuel noted that the brains of "outstanding" persons had also been preserved for the purpose of study. In accordance with this eagerness to achieve medical breakthroughs, Deuel recorded examples of experiments the institute had performed thus far. These included studies of electrical currents emanating from both human and animal brains, as well as the removal of one hemisphere of the brain's cerebral cortex.

Deuel's enthusiasm for scientific progress was such that he was accused in a letter by United Press cable editor in Europe Louis F. Keemle of being too credulous in the face of Soviet scientific and medical claims reported in the Soviet press. This complaint stemmed from a report Deuel filed claiming that a Soviet professor had "created a new functioning male reproductive organ" which Keemle objected to on the grounds that the report was filed "without qualification" and only God could create such a delicate organ.³⁹ Consequently, Keemle seemed to question the objectivity of U.S. foreign correspondents as he suggested: "I think you should tell Deuel, and any other correspondents who you think need the warning, not to be too credulous in these

³⁸ Deuel, United Press Report, Mailed February 26, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

³⁹ Letter from LFK (Keemle) to Norman Deuel, June 11, 1936, Letter. Box 30, Wire Service Reports: 1935-1938. *Henry Shapiro Papers*.

matters.”⁴⁰ While American readers such as Keemle remained sceptical, Deuel appeared increasingly enthusiastic and almost proud of Soviet technological advances. This was apparent as Deuel rigorously defended in a letter to Keemle his previous claims that Soviet doctors had recreated a penis that had been cut off at the base by his wife. This letter included photographic evidence and the relevant medical treatise, along with claims that he had personally spoken to the surgeon who informed him that he had “several other patients under treatment for the same thing.”⁴¹ Most importantly, Deuel seemed to be gloating, suggesting a measure of pride in both his journalistic accuracy and Soviet innovations, as he concluded his letter with the question, “Do I win?”

Deuel's fascination with all things modern and scientific persisted as he reported to UP on Professor V. Barikin's development of a serum that could cure grippe within twenty-four hours. Deuel focused on Barikin's year of hard work and determination to develop the serum, promoting the Stalinist themes of heroic determination and academic self-improvement, as he described how Barikin's success came after “a year of experimentation and testing” first on himself, mice, and subsequently on eighty members of staff and eighty volunteers.⁴² Impressed by this achievement, Deuel elaborated on the technical details entailed in the experimentation process, a standard feature of Deuel's scientific and medical reports. It is worth noting that, as a rule, Deuel's technical and scientific reports contained far more detail than all his other reports, thus suggesting that Deuel was perhaps most enamoured with tangible displays of Soviet modernization. Accordingly, Deuel emphasized the fact that the mice had been injected with doses of the virus “thirty thousand times stronger than ordinarily would have caused death,” yet still recovered once

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Letter from Norman Deuel to Doctor Keemle, Moscow, September 14, 1936, Letter.

⁴² Deuel, United Press Report, Phoned Amsterdam, 15215, Moscow, Wire Service Report.

Barikin's serum had been administered.⁴³ Not unlike his reports on Arctic exploration, Deuel's articles on scientific discovery were laced with heroic undertones and examples of individual courage, apparent as Deuel described how Barikin first tested the serum on himself even prior to any preliminary testing on mice. Reminiscent of American frontier culture, tales of Soviet heroics and fearless scientific exploration could always be relied upon to capture the imagination of U.S. correspondents, as they observed a younger, wilder, and slightly more rugged vision of themselves in experimental Soviet modernization initiatives.

As David Foglesong argues, Russia was an object of particular fascination to American observers in its ability to be simultaneously perceived as like and unlike the United States. Foglesong suggests: “gazing at Russia involved the strange fascination of looking into a skewed mirror.”⁴⁴ By the twentieth century, many Americans embraced the notion that Russia could and should be reshaped to resemble the United States. This belief truly took root in the minds of American observers just as a modern Soviet society assumed shape of its own initiative following the Bolshevik Revolution and establishment of the Stalinist State. Stalin’s plans for rapid modernization cemented a certain tangible affinity between American and Soviet societies in the minds of American observers already susceptible to the lure of rapidly industrializing cities framed within a socialist realist narrative. This harmony between American and Soviet visions of technological and economic modernization towards an inevitable industrial state was observed by no less than Davies, Deuel, and Barnes as early in Davies’ Ambassadorship as the introduction of the New Soviet Constitution in 1936. Leading a lecture on “Understanding Russia” at a public forum at Des Moines University in November 1936, Barnes noted a “trend toward greater democracy and liberty” in the Soviet Union accompanying the introduction of the New

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 6.

Constitution.⁴⁵ Deuel similarly described the New Constitution to UP as liberal and laying the basis for “rights, duties and privileges of citizens.”⁴⁶ Deuel further emphasized the introduction of secret ballot, freedom of speech, assembly and demonstrations, racial and gender equality, and the freedom to worship and conduct anti-religious propaganda. Highlighting these perceived democratizing aspects of the New Constitution, Deuel attempted to identify common democratic values with the U.S. in order to project his vision of American modernity upon Soviet modernization through the prism of American democratic governance and constitutional values.

Davies spoke highly of Stalinist achievements in the field of industrial modernization, even likening their efforts to those of the United States, as he reported to UP: “the big dam at Dnieperstroi is second only to the Boulder Dam in size.” Davies further enthused that “their industrial equipment is of the latest and most modern type” while Soviet steel plants served as “models.”⁴⁷ Barnes similarly stressed the economic compatibility between American and Soviet visions of modernization in a November 1937 article on the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution as he recorded that Soviet annual industrial production was “second only to that of the United States.”⁴⁸

Advocating the “importance of the Soviet Union,” Barnes observed commonalities between Soviet and American development, seemingly recognizing a younger United States in the burgeoning Soviet Union. This relationship was clear when Barnes noted that the USSR's importance to the U.S. partly resided in the Soviet plan to raise “the standard of living of the

⁴⁵ Des Moines Public Library Public Forums, “Towards Understanding Russia” Lecture III – The Russian Idea, November 9-28, 1936. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Uncatalogued Papers, Box 9, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁴⁶ Deuel, “1935 Year End Review.” Box 30.

⁴⁷ Davies, Excerpts from Letter of February 18, 1937 Written in Moscow to Honorable Pat Harrison. Box I: 4.

⁴⁸ Barnes, “Anniversary (for Sunday, Nov. 7),” Mailed to New York October 18, 1937, News Report. Box 9.

Russian masses to an American level within a generation.”⁴⁹ Further inherent in this statement was the implication that the Soviet Union looked to the U.S. for economic and societal inspiration, thus elevating the U.S. to the status of an older brother within the parameters of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Suggestive of a belief in the success of American missionizing in the USSR, Barnes could always be relied upon to include any American connection to Soviet industrialization efforts. For example, when reporting on the completion of the great steel plant at Kuznetsk, Barnes proudly reported that the plant in question had been designed by Arthur G. McKee, an American from Cleveland.⁵⁰ Underlining the desired spirit of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and U.S., Davies was similarly keen to mention all the ways in which the U.S. contributed towards the modernization of Soviet oil and gas industries, thereby depicting a great affinity between American and Soviet culture while bolstering the image of America's great modernizing crusade in perceived backwards societies. With respect to the oils and gas industries in Batum, Davies recorded that the oil refinery had been installed by an American firm in 1929.⁵¹ Moreover, its machinery was all of an American make.

Economic exchanges between Russia and the U.S. had commenced with the outbreak of WWI as Russia suddenly lost its trade with Germany and was increasingly isolated from its British and French allies by the German blockade. Consequently, the U.S. emerged as an integral

⁴⁹ Des Moines Public Library Public Forums, Lecture I – The Russian Land, Summary of Points Made, November, 1936. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Box 9.

⁵⁰ Cleveland Press, “Visitor Here Cites Russia’s Vast Industry,” August 6, 1934, *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Box 9. For more on Arthur G. McKee’s export of American factory designs to the Soviet Union, see especially: Wladimir Naleszkiewicz, “Technical Assistance of the American Enterprises to the Growth of the Soviet Union, 1929-1933,” *The Russian Review* 25, no. 1 (1966): 54-76. Interwar exports of American technology are further discussed in: Christina E. Crawford, “Soviet Planning Praxis: From Tractors to Territory,” *Centerpiece/Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University* 29, no. 2 (2015): 14-20.

⁵¹ Letter From Joseph Davies to the U.S. Secretary of State, Moscow, June 1, 1938, Inspection of Oil Refinery and Gasoline Cracking Plant at Batum on May 22, 1938, and Generalizations With Reference to the Soviet Oil Industry. Box I: 8.

importer, utilizing routes through Siberia to import machinery.⁵² Attempting to reconcile early Soviet partnership with a capitalist nation with Marxist doctrine, Lenin believed that communists should take advantage of perceived rivalries between great capitalist nations in order to acquire the advanced technological knowledge necessary to emerge as a leading superpower.⁵³ American industry held particular appeal to Soviet economic planners who concluded that it had been American technological superiority that ultimately swayed the balance of power in the First World War. Accordingly, Soviet officials admired American techniques of specialization, standardization, material self-sufficiency, and assembly line techniques like those pioneered by Henry Ford.⁵⁴ Out of 117 technical aid contracts signed with foreign companies between 1920 and 1930, 64, that is to say more than half, were with American companies.⁵⁵ The American firms of Ford Motor Company and International Harvester played an integral role in founding the Soviet automotive industry, though it was ultimately the innovative production methods of Ford that stirred enthusiasm among the Soviet elite as they saw a way of increasing Soviet productivity by introducing the modern assembly line into Soviet factories.⁵⁶ The type of exported American goods to the USSR thus shifted over the 1930s from raw materials to agricultural and industrial technology.⁵⁷

Whether industrial, commercial, or agricultural, American technological exports dominated Deuel's reports as they represented the most obvious cultural link to Soviet society.

⁵² Bailes, "The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of American Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," 425.

⁵³ Lee III, "Political Absorption of Western Technologies: The Soviet and Chinese Cases," 13.

⁵⁴ Bailes, "The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of American Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," 429.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 432.

⁵⁶ Greenstein, "Assembling Fordism: The Production of Automobiles, Americans, and Bolsheviks in Detroit and Early Soviet Russia," 267-268.

⁵⁷ Bailes, "The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of American Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," 432.

Soviet enthusiasm for modern American technology was thus greatly emphasized as Deuel reported for UP on the introduction of several self-service “automat” restaurants by the Moscow Restaurant Trust, which had purchased the necessary equipment from the United States.⁵⁸ Deuel's strong emphasis upon Soviet industry's use and subsequent appropriation of American machinery suggests a belief in the compatibility between American and Soviet visions of modernity as the Soviets apparently longed for automated restaurants as much as Americans. Moreover, Deuel noted that “mechanically minded Muscovites” were “always interested in new devices,” suggesting that he was struck by genuine Soviet enthusiasm for modern technology and strong participation in the technologically innovative culture of striving towards widespread consumer goods.

Immersed in the societal modernizing efforts of industrializing while becoming more cultured, Stalinist society of the 1930s was marked by a shortage of consumer goods. Aspiring towards a plentiful, industrious, and joyful future, Stalinist socialist realist culture nevertheless espoused the merits of abundance and reward, despite the considerable hardships and shortages plaguing Stalin's Five-Year Plans. Soviet newspapers thus spoke of a future in which consumer goods were available in abundance and cultured behaviour was the societal norm.⁵⁹ This was accomplished by showcasing both the interiors and extravagant window displays of Moscow's luxury stores in order to inspire the average Soviet citizen rather than fill them with envy.⁶⁰ What had once been condemned as decadent and bourgeois during the New Economic Policy of the 1920s was redefined by socialist realism and Stalinist advertising as something cultured and

⁵⁸ Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed October 19, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁵⁹ Amy E. Randall, *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 175.

⁶⁰ Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*, 223-226.

worthy of desire.⁶¹ Socialist realism thus emphasized that material rewards could be won through hard work until communism was achieved, at which point consumer goods would be available to all. Observing and reporting upon Stalinist industry through this socialist realist lens, Davies and the U.S. press correspondents presented Soviet production and consumerism as thriving within a state of transition, one which posited the future in the realm of the present. Accordingly, all persons within the Soviet Union were able to perceive the future availability of consumer goods through their hard work and the celebration of other's accomplishments.

Consistently throughout the mid to late 1930s, regardless of actual production rates or hardships endured by the working class and farming populations, Deuel, Barnes, and Davies reported on Soviet industrial output, agricultural yields, and surpassed quotas. Perhaps most in line with their capitalist view of Soviet economic development, the increasing availability of modern consumer goods—many of which were modelled on American goods—loomed large in the minds of American observers. As early as Deuel's 1935 UP year end review on the USSR, Deuel focused on the Second Five-Year Plan, noting that it was completed in all major branches one year ahead of time, thereby praising Soviet efficiency, planning, and rapid industrialization while omitting the considerable hardships required to accomplish such a feat. Enthused by visions of prosperity and future consumerism that could be derived from spreadsheets and luxury store windows, Deuel compensated for the reported lag in light industry by noting that there was however "an increase in the amount of goods of broad consumption available."⁶² Mirroring socialist realist representations of both the present and future availability of consumer goods, Barnes optimistically noted that, with greater class equality, "some of the most powerful agencies

⁶¹ Randi Cox, "All This Can Be Yours! Soviet Commercial Advertising and the Social Construction of Space, 1928-1956," in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 126.

⁶² Deuel, "1935 Year End Review." Box 30.

of modern social change—the amenities of good living and the incentives which these breed” had emerged.⁶³

Blending enthusiasm for technological advancement with visions of future widespread consumer goods, Deuel detailed in an October 1936 article for UP the beginning of a project to construct a “powerful ultra short wave television center in Moscow,” which would be capable of not only “broadcasting prepared subjects but street scenes and picture demonstrations.”⁶⁴ Occupying two large buildings, one for two powerful ultra short wave transmitters and one for a large studio and rehearsal rooms, the television centre was set to benefit “telefans” who had constructed home-made receivers. Implied within Deuel's report were the Stalinist modernizing initiatives of both future widespread consumer goods, such as televisions, and accelerating technological advancements in order to catch up to and ultimately surpass American achievements. Accordingly, the Soviet society depicted in Deuel's reports increasingly resembled modern industrialized Western societies in which “telefans” would soon enjoy the luxury of consumer goods and broadcast entertainment from the comfort of their own homes. This perception was in keeping with many American correspondents' belief that the Soviet Union was progressing towards a modern industrial and democratic society. Deuel was further disseminating socialist realist ideas by presenting the existence of modern televisions in Soviet society despite their actual scarcity among the general population, thereby presenting life through the prism of an imagined future. Furthermore, Deuel's description of “home-made televisions” seems to suggest a genuine enthusiasm among the Soviet masses for consumer goods and technological advances, reinforcing the notion that socialist realist imagery was meant to inspire actual abundance.

⁶³ Barnes, “Soviet Agriculture – 1936,” Research Bulletin on the Soviet Union, The American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union, Vol. 1 No. 10, October 10, 1936, New York City. Series III: Box 9.

⁶⁴ Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed October 19, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

In the absence of actual productivity, socialist realist culture utilized the imagery of agricultural and industrial abundance to inspire actual abundance and productivity among the Soviet populace. Significantly, Evgeny Dobrenko observed how Soviet art wielded transformative powers, ones that could and did transform abundance into socialism.⁶⁵ Immersed in the socialist realist culture of achievement and aspired abundance, Deuel, Davies, and Barnes equally noted an apparent abundance of goods and agricultural products pouring out of Soviet industries and collective farms. This is particularly reflective of their immersion into socialist realist culture as they all made use of the actual word abundance, thereby echoing socialist realist rhetoric. Summarising the state of Soviet economic affairs for UP at the beginning of 1936, Deuel reported that the Soviet government had “solved its food problem from the standpoint of production” and thus faced the new enviable problem of having to utilize advertising to acquaint the Soviet populace with both the various products now available to them and their proper use.⁶⁶ Quoting Anastas I. Mikoyan, the People’s Commissar for Food, Deuel underlined the alleged existence of an abundance of agricultural and consumer goods as he repeated Mikoyan’s argument that it was “essential to develop Soviet advertising so that the people may know about new kinds of food and order them, so that the tastes of the people be developed for new forms of products and goods.”⁶⁷ This reflected a broader late 1930s trend in which the Soviet food industry advertised its accomplishments and published state-sanctioned cookbooks, which sought to impose a single orthodox Stalinist cuisine onto Soviet society as part of the state’s plans to reshape Soviet culture as a whole. Titled *The Book about Delicious and Healthy Food*, this encyclopaedic cookbook further explained how culturally sophisticated Soviets were supposed to

⁶⁵ Evgeny Dobrenko, “The Soviet Spectacle: The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition,” in *Picturing Russia: Exploration in Visual Culture*, ed. Valerie Ann Kivelson and Joan Neuberger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 189.

⁶⁶ Deuel, United Press Report, Moscow, Mailed January 27, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

use new products such as ketchup and canned corn while filling the socialist realist purpose of providing a glimpse into a future of material plenty.⁶⁸ Accordingly, Deuel seemed to have become yet another outlet for socialist realist goals as his immersion within the paradoxical upper class of Soviet society distorted his understanding of the true distribution of wealth and consumer goods, subsequently reinforcing genuine excitement among the U.S. press corps for the great socialist experiment and all of its accompanying industrial and engineering projects.

Once more promoting the theme of agricultural abundance, Deuel described how “bread wagons and fruit wagons formed a complete circle around the square” outside the Kremlin “in example of the plentitude of Soviet products.”⁶⁹ Deuel's usage of the word “plentitude” is worth noting as it is a synonym of the word abundance, socialist realism's favoured word for the description of the USSR's agricultural output, and conveys to the reader the desired image of having beyond exceeded self-sufficiency. Equally persuaded by both his extended exposure to socialist realist culture and routine reading of Soviet newspapers, Barnes enthusiastically reported on Soviet agricultural abundance to the American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union. Citing the estimated grain harvest for 1936, Barnes' report bore many of the hallmarks of socialist realist writing as he described how, despite facing adversity in the form of bad drought conditions, Soviet farmers prevailed, ultimately producing an estimated 90,000,000

⁶⁸ Edward Geist, “Cooking Bolshevik: Anastas Mikoian and the Making of the Book about Delicious and Healthy Food,” *The Russian Review* 71 No. 2 (2012): 295-313. Other works that discuss Soviet consumerism are: Amy E. Randall, *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁶⁹ Deuel, United Press Report, Telephoned Amsterdam, 11233, News Report. Box 30.

tons in 1936.⁷⁰ Writing in early 1936, Deuel similarly noted in his 1935 year end report that Soviet society enjoyed “an ample supply of foodstuff.”⁷¹

Further hitting upon the theme of abundance in a letter to Colonel House, Davies was pleasantly surprised to observe that “there are more stores and shops than I have been led to believe.”⁷² Davies' initial impressions of Soviet society were thus marked by the optimistic Stalinist presentation of consumer goods and abundance in order to transform this aspired future into a present reality. However, Davies noted how he had been told that most of these wares were “for show” and could not be procured inside. This signified that he understood that these items were not yet widely available, though he nevertheless seemed impressed by their very existence in Soviet society, along with the promise of modernization that accompanied them. Davies further noted that since 1934, Soviet industry had devoted itself to the production of consumer goods, the success of which could be observed in the “appearance of the people and indications of progress which we see in the shop windows and so forth.”⁷³ Davies was further convinced of the present/future availability of consumer goods as he wrote that, despite overcrowded housing conditions, “there are no indications on the streets of privation. They look well-to-do.”⁷⁴ This is to say that Davies acknowledged present hardships, yet ultimately minimized them by commenting upon the introduction of consumer goods into society, noting that their slow trickle into the present signified a plentiful and comfortable future, one that could be presently observed in shop windows.

⁷⁰ Barnes, “Soviet Agriculture – 1936,” Research Bulletin on the Soviet Union, The American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union, Vol. 1 No. 10, October 10, 1936. Series III: Box 9.

⁷¹ Deuel, “1935 Year End Review.” Box 30.

⁷² Letter from Joseph Davies to Colonel House, Convention, Trial and French Revolution, Moscow, January 27, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

⁷³ Davies, Excerpts from letter of February 18, 1937, Written in Moscow to Honorable Pat Harrison.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The theme of abundance prevailed in Barnes' 1937 economic reports for *The Economist* despite an admitted slight downturn in industrial output. Reflecting on the USSR's 1937 agricultural production, Barnes concluded that an “exceptional harvest produced more grain in 1937 than in any other year of Russian history.”⁷⁵ Barnes thus painted a picture of agricultural success as he described how the preliminary estimate already exceeded the 1937 plan and bettered “the maximum expectations of the original second Five-Year Plan by 8.8 per cent.”⁷⁶ The modernizing themes of abundance and productivity were repeated in Deuel's 1938 telegrams to UP as he reported upon the 1938 spring grain-sowing yield. Citing a reduction of seven and a half million grain acreage in 1938 from the previous year, Deuel rationalized this reduction by explaining that “higher productivity gives sufficient yield allowing acreage given (to) other crops.”⁷⁷ Once more, the term “sufficient” fits neatly into a broader socialist realist narrative of agricultural abundance and the ability to diversify available goods by planting new crops. Addressing the once simple Russian diet, Barnes further depicted the Bolsheviks as an agriculturally revolutionizing force when describing the “appreciable shift” in the Russian diet from black bread to white bread under Bolshevik influence due to mechanized farming and growing diversity in available food products.⁷⁸

Industrial output and advances in technology that served to revolutionize and expedite agricultural production, such as tractors modelled on the American Fordson tractor and combine harvesters, further reinforced visions of abundance while impressing the successes of agricultural modernization in Davies, Deuel, and Barnes' minds. Between 1924 and 1934, the tractor evolved from a mere novelty and source of curiosity to a staple of Soviet technology, passing from 1,000

⁷⁵ Barnes, *The Economist*, Hotel Metropole, Russia, April 23, 1938. Series III: Box 9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Deuel, Press Unipress London, 28153, Telegram. Box 30.

⁷⁸ Barnes, *The Economist*, Moscow, August 27, 1937. Series III: Box 9.

tractors to over 200,000 in use by 1934.⁷⁹ In fact, the Fordson tractor became so popular that Fordson themed festivals were held throughout Russian villages, as Ford became a revered household name.⁸⁰ Introduced in tandem with the collectivization of Soviet agriculture, the tractor ultimately acquired such notoriety as it accelerated the process of collectivization. Barnes was visibly excited by the perceived Soviet success in transforming the Soviet peasantry into “full-fledged members of a socialist society.”⁸¹ Accordingly, Barnes detailed how “a farming economy of an estimated 21,000,000 separate peasant households in 1916, the most backward in Europe by whatever standards it was judged, has been transformed in twenty years into one of something like 240,000 collective farms.”⁸² Barnes' focus upon Russian agriculture's prior “backward” state once more reinforced the image of the Bolsheviks as a visionary modernizing force. While Barnes did concede in two lines that this rapid modernization came at a heavy cost, he did not dwell on the details of said “heavy cost,” choosing instead to celebrate how these dangers appeared to no longer exist in 1936. Barnes' acclaim for Soviet modernization persisted as he described how “primitive farming methods have been pushed into discard by scientific agronomy” while peasants had become partners with the working class.⁸³

Rapid industrialization and subsequent high industrial output under Stalin's Five-Year Plans further reassured American observers of the USSR's eventual industrialized and economically modern end state. Davies was certainly fascinated with Soviet modernization as he recorded how impressed he was by the extraordinary “attempt to accomplish within five or six years in the field of industrialization what it has taken the United States several generations to

⁷⁹ Dalrymple, “The American Tractor Comes to Soviet Agriculture: The Transfer of a Technology,” 191.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 194.

⁸¹ Barnes, “Soviet Agriculture – 1936,” October 10, 1936. Series III: Box 9.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

accomplish.”⁸⁴ Accordingly, Davies told the Chief of the Third Western Political Division of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs just how “interested” and “anxious” he was to tour and inspect their industrial sector. Fixated on Soviet production rates associated with rapid modernization, Deuel consistently reported on heavy industry output. This held true throughout 1938 as he detailed Kaganovich's 1938 heavy industry plan to increase production sixteen percent and growth fourteen percent.⁸⁵ However, it was Deuel's fixation upon precise numbers and targets to surpass the previous year's production rates that speak the most to Deuel's immersion into socialist realist culture, as he listed the precise individual targets required to increase coal and peat mining, along with electricity, oil, iron ore, pig iron, and steel production. This emphasis on ambitious targets reflected the socialist realist culture of workplace competition and perseverance, thereby underlining Deuel's similar enthusiasm for record-breaking production.

Similarly, Barnes reported that the industrial rate of production planned for the end of the second Five Year Plan had been met nine months ahead of schedule, signifying that “Soviet industries can lag behind their plan figures and still be growing every month.”⁸⁶ Barnes' confident statement suggests Soviet mastery of its industrial potential, thereby earning his congratulations and seemingly shared pride as he appeared to identify with the USSR's economic achievements, hailing from a similarly industrialized nation that had instructed Soviet engineers in the ways of modern engineering. Touring a tractor plant in Kharkov modelled on American Ford plants in

⁸⁴ Memorandum No. 34 of February 6, 1937, from the American Embassy, Moscow, USSR, Memorandum of Conversation Which Took Place Between the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Mr. Neyman, Chief of the Third Western Political Division of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Box I: 3.

⁸⁵ Deuel, Press Unipress London, 29154, Telegram. Box 30.

⁸⁶ Barnes, “Anniversary (for Sunday, Nov. 7),” Mailed to New York October 18, 1937, News Article. Series III: Box 9.

February 1937, Davies was impressed, evident by the slew of adjectives he employed in its description: “Extraordinary - just completed - modern - efficient - up-to-date.”⁸⁷

Barnes remained focused on economic growth and industrial output in the aftermath of the Great Purge as he resumed reporting on the “slow but steady increase in Soviet industrial production” as though the trauma of the political purges could be remedied by rising industrial production and met quotas.⁸⁸ For example, Barnes reported that copper production had increased by 9,1 percent over the last quarter of 1937 while the food manufacturing industry exceeded its quarterly plan figures by 6.6 percent in the Spring of 1938. Moreover, sabotage and inefficiency “had not blocked the achievement of many of the second Five-Year Plan's objectives.”⁸⁹ In other words, Barnes leveraged rapid modernization over the general quality of life, for he seemed to reason that the advantages of an eventual modern industrial Soviet society would outweigh the suffering and sacrifices made in its name.

Notably, Barnes seemed to prioritize the importance of industrial might over politics and ideology as he predicted that Sverdlosk, the capital of Siberia, would ultimately “supplant Moscow” as the capital of Russia in tandem with the growth of its population and industrial capabilities.⁹⁰ Further elevating the value of industrialization against any political concerns, Barnes believed that Russia's future lay beyond the Ural Mountains in Siberia due to the region's vast industrial capabilities, which were protected by their geographic location, distant as they were from any borders, potential foreign invaders, and impending military conflicts.

Echoing socialist realist imagery of confronting problems head on and thereafter utilizing both modern scientific thinking and sheer strength of will to overcome them, Deuel described the

⁸⁷ Davies, Visit to New Kharkov Plant – Extraordinary – 12,000 Employees, February 27, 1937, Diary. Box I: 3.

⁸⁸ Barnes, The Economist, Moscow, April 11, 1938. Series III: Box 9.

⁸⁹ Barnes, The Economist, Hotel Metropole, Russia, April 23, 1938.

⁹⁰ “Visitor Here Cites Russia’s Vast Industry,” *Cleveland Press*, August 6, 1934, News Article.

manner in which the USSR “confronted” the “problem of reclaiming part of its 1,100,000 square miles of desert and controlling the shifting sands.”⁹¹ Deuel's use of the words “confront” and “control” suggest his immersion into state-promoted enthusiasm for overcoming challenges and surpassing expectations through hard work and determination, as he recorded how the USSR subsequently acquired control over its natural, industrial and agricultural obstacles. Accordingly, Deuel reported that the Soviet Union had “devised new methods which do not involve expensive and often impossible irrigation.”⁹² Devised by the Soviet Academy of Sciences, this method was known as the agro-physical technique.

From the outset of the Bolsheviks' rise to power in 1917, Soviet leaders concerned themselves with showcasing socialism's modernizing potential through the transformation of nature. These transformative measures primarily focused on the elimination of poor forestry practices, the transformation of desert into farmland through extensive irrigation projects, and an eventual end to forest fires.⁹³ Harnessing the power of nature for the benefit of the economy in accordance with Stalin's economic plans, Soviet scientists and industrial planners sought to master the USSR's natural resources in an effort to attain economic self-sufficiency and reinforce the empire's military strength. Extensive irrigation plans were thus drawn up to transform swathes of Central Asia into fertile farmland while massive canals, dams, and waterways were completed in Stalin's name.⁹⁴ Russia's south-eastern territory was in particular need of irrigation as its soil was quite saline, rendering cultivation of any kind difficult without extensive

⁹¹ Deuel, United Press Report, Mailed March 26, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Doubravka Olšáková, *In the Name of the Great Work: Stalin's Plan for the Transformation of Nature and its Impact in Eastern Europe* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), 7.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 8.

irrigation.⁹⁵ The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature, which began in the 1920s and reached its peak in 1948 with the introduction of Stalin's formal plan, can be traced back to pre-revolutionary conservative dreams of returning the southern steppe to its old Muscovite state. Pursuant to this dream, Stalin introduced a 1931 law creating forest cultivation zones and protective belts to combat drought.⁹⁶ By the late 1930s, Soviet scientists and geographers had acquired a great deal of experience in forestry and agricultural experimentation in the steppe and desert regions, significantly earning the respect of American scientists who ordered a number of Russian books detailing Soviet experiments to be translated in order to assist them as they launched their own shelter belt project on the Great Plains in the 1930s.⁹⁷ Grouped together under the banner of transforming nature, these initiatives displayed Soviet confidence in mankind's inventive capacities to overcome the numerous limitations of their natural environment.⁹⁸

Symptomatic of a broader journalistic trend towards contextualization, Deuel described the Soviet Union's desert territory in great detail, reporting that it constituted one fourth of the world's total desert areas. Deuel thus sought to place the significance of Soviet mastery over its desert territories into a broader global context, subsequently aggrandizing the impact and significance of the USSR's technological achievements in taming and "reclaiming" the "southern middle Asiatic territories" to cultivate numerous crops.⁹⁹ Undoubtedly, the impressive nature of these reported successes in Soviet irrigation were only amplified in the minds of American readers when Deuel drew comparisons between the size of the USSR's combined desert space

⁹⁵ Denis J. B. Shaw, "Mastering Nature through Science: Soviet Geographers and the Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature, 1948-53," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 93 No. 1 (2015): 131.

⁹⁶ Stephen Brain, "The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature," *Environmental History* 15, no. 4 (2010): 671, 674, 675.

⁹⁷ Shaw, "Mastering Nature through Science: Soviet Geographers and the Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature, 1948-53," 134.

⁹⁸ Brain, "The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature," 672.

⁹⁹ Deuel, United Press Report, Mailed March 26, 1936, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

and the entirety of Western Europe. If the Soviet Union could tame territories the size of Western Europe, surely the USSR represented a technologically advanced and mighty empire that was worthy of American business and attention.

Deuel further underlined the socialist realist motif of prevailing against the odds as he reported that the 1935 plan for agricultural production was fulfilled “despite unfavorable weather conditions in many districts,” thus adhering to the refrain of prevailing in the face of adversity.¹⁰⁰ Barnes similarly reported upon the Soviet struggle of man versus nature that challenged both industrial expansion into Eastern Russia and efforts to render hospitable the vast, harsh expanse of Siberia. Despite Siberia’s harsh and at times unforgiving climate, Barnes enthusiastically recorded the way in which Siberia was transforming from “waste to wealth.”¹⁰¹ Inherent in this assessment was belief that vast swathes of Russia constituted unused “waste” prior to Bolshevik intervention. Speaking to the Cleveland Press upon his return from a trip to the Soviet Union in 1934, Barnes described an industrializing Siberia as the “new Siberia.” Barnes further estimated that “within the next ten years,” Siberia would become “an area comparable in production of steel and coal and machines to the Bethlehem-Gary boundaried area.”¹⁰² This comparison is further telling as Barnes openly likened Soviet industrial capabilities to those of the United States, thereby establishing modern commonalities between Stalinist and American societies as he recognized a common U.S.-Soviet affinity for modernization. This was further apparent as Barnes identified Russia's equivalent for the American industrial town of Bethlehem in Kutznesk, while “Russia's Gary” was located in Magnitogorsk.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Deuel, “1935 Year End Review.” Box 30.

¹⁰¹ “Visitor Here Cites Russia’s Vast Industry,” *Cleveland Press* August 6, 1934, News Article.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Praising the Soviet initiative to both rapidly modernize Russian society and finally realize the country's full industrial capabilities, Barnes emphasized how Magnitogorsk was “undeveloped in the czarist regimes,” but now poured “forth its wealth under intensive Soviet effort.”¹⁰⁴ Repeated contrasting of Tsarist inefficiency against massive Soviet industrialization efforts ultimately served to showcase and romanticize the Stalinist regime as a great modernizing—or westernizing—force that succeeded where the old Imperial order had failed.

Framed within the dramatic narrative of an epic ideological and economic struggle, Stalin's ambitious plans for rapid modernization invariably drew in American observers who keenly identified with Soviet struggles to surmount natural obstacles and ultimately appropriated the motifs and plot structure of socialist realist literature to contextualize their reports within the theme of unremitting struggles. As Katerina Clark argues, interaction between the literary and non-literary in the USSR was closer and more frequent than is generally the case in most other societies as the Stalinist system promoted an intensification of the relationship between Russian literature and public discourse.¹⁰⁵ This might explain why reports written by American correspondents so frequently resembled the master plot of socialist realist literature in which the otherwise modest “positive hero” rose up in Soviet society through hard work and perseverance, thereby overcoming all obstacles and challenges along the way. Socialist realism's master plot was ultimately reflected in the writing of American correspondents who shared a similar fascination with Soviet heroics and the ability to conquer both natural and economic forces.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 10.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIALIST REALIST HEROICS AND NATIONALIST PRIDE

The icebreakers had forced their way to within a mile of the floe, and a party bearing Soviet flags, made their way across the ice to the camp, to be met by the scientists, also bearing flags and a portrait of Stalin. Cheers were raised in honour of the rescue party, of the scientists and of Stalin. Rescuers and rescued then started back across the ice, carrying the precious records and equipment. The entire rescue operation had lasted less than two hours.¹

Linking together the Stalinist themes of modern scientific technology, Arctic exploration, the mastery of nature, heroics, and Stalin as the father of an increasingly proud nation, Deuel's concluding United Press report on the dramatic rescue mission undertaken by Soviet icebreakers to recover the Papanin expedition from a broken Arctic ice floe in February 1938 read like a quintessential Stalinist news report, one which emphasized the patriarchal relationship between the state and its heroic citizenry.² Characterizing both the Papanin expedition—a scientific expedition of four men led by polar explorer Ivan Papanin tasked with exploring the Soviet Arctic—and subsequent rescue mission as a “great adventure,” Deuel's report served to romanticize Soviet Arctic exploration while underlining the heroic nature of both the scientific endeavour and its keenly patriotic participants who reportedly brandished a portrait of their beloved leader despite the uncertainty of their prolonged ordeal.

Tales of Soviet heroism, Arctic exploration, youthful enthusiasm, and Stalin's place at the helm of the nation further drew Davies and the U.S. correspondents into socialist realist culture

¹ Norman Deuel, “North Pole Station Closed Soviet Explorers Rescued from Ice-Floe Drifted 1,000 Miles ‘Taking a Bath’” *Foreign News - Urgent, Sunday Lead*, British United Press, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30: Wire Service Reports: 1935-1938, *Henry Shapiro Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

² Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*, 67.

as they shared in Stalinist enthusiasm for tales of territorial exploration and personal heroism. Enthralled with visions of modernity and corresponding technological advancement exhibited in Arctic exploration, Davies and the U.S. correspondents shared a deep affinity with Soviet territorial exploration. Soviet heroics and enthusiasm for colonizing the Arctic likely reminded American observers of early colonial expeditions and subsequent settlements into the American West. Fondly remembered as the Wild West, Americans remained nostalgic about their early frontier days. Throughout most of American history—particularly in the 19th century—nature occupied a special place in American literary narratives, featuring as a persistent object of nostalgic longing. Analyzing American nature narratives, Jennifer Ladino explores how themes of unspoiled landscapes, the western frontier, and a perceived pre-industrial golden age were alternately feared and tamed, or respected and romanticized throughout American history.³ For many U.S. historians, the year 1890 marked a watershed moment in American frontier history as the 1890 census seemed to suggest the demise of the Western frontier. Frederick J. Turner was the greatest proponent of this model of periodization as he cited the Superintendent of the Census of 1890's assessment that the unsettled area had been so penetrated by isolated pockets of settlement that there no longer existed a defined frontier line.⁴ Underlining the significance of frontier culture in relation to the development of the American national character, Turner argued, "American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."⁵ With the closing of the frontier in 1890

³ Jennifer Ladino, "Longing for Wonderland: Nostalgia for Nature in Post-Frontier America," *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* 5 (2004): 89, 93.

⁴ Gerald D. Nash, "The Census of 1890 and the Closing of the Frontier," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 71, No. 3 (1980): 98.

⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History 1893," *Wisconsin Historical Society* (July 1893): 1.

and the accelerating pace of industrialization at the turn of the twentieth century, Americans cultivated an anti-modern nostalgia for nature and the lost space of the frontier in an effort to ease anxieties about social, economic, and technological developments in a rapidly modernizing society.⁶ American cultural producers were further drawn to the potential for individual initiative, adventure, discovery, and a profound sense of accomplishment.

Richard Slotkin similarly identified the late 19th century belief that the American frontier had played an integral role in shaping national institutions and the mystical national character. It was thus necessary for Americans to appreciate their frontier past in order to confront the political crises and anxieties of the 1890s.⁷ This nostalgia likely resurfaced while working in the Soviet Union in the form of renewed enthusiasm for fresh exploration and adventure on a new frontier. Both American and Soviet societies promoted anticipatory cultures, though this created a paradox in which Americans looked back with nostalgic longing at the U.S.' frontier culture while observing the Soviet colonization of the Arctic with anticipatory excitement, longing to relive their early intrepid frontier days while sharing in Soviet enthusiasm for development and progress along Soviet frontiers. In this way, Americans anticipated/longed for frontier culture as they best identified with a culture of development, progress, and spreading civilization—as they viewed it. This was apparent as Deuel, Davies, and Barnes' reports on Soviet expansion into the Arctic focused upon the process of territorial exploration as well as the heroics of those who embarked upon dangerous expeditions.

The Soviet Union's love affair with Russian Arctic exploration began in 1932 when the government launched a series of unprecedented polar expeditions. 1937 marked the banner year for Soviet exploration in the Arctic as Soviet pilots set the world record for long-distance flight

⁶ Ladino, "Longing for Wonderland: Nostalgia for Nature in Post-Frontier America," 93.

⁷ Richard Slotkin, "Nostalgia and Progress: Theodore Roosevelt's Myth of the Frontier," *American Quarterly* 33, No. 5 (1981): 608.

twice in succession by flying over the North Pole from Moscow to the United States. Later that year, the USSR became the first nation in history to land aircraft and establish a scientific outpost on the North Pole.⁸ Arctic exploration subsequently occupied a central role in Stalinist culture of the 1930s as the exploits of Polar explorers were relentlessly featured in mass media, rendering them national celebrities. Arctic heroics, described by John McCannon as central to a larger “Arctic myth,” fit comfortably into the parameters of socialist realism due to its strong themes of patriotism, technological progress, determination, heroism, and the glorification of Stalin.⁹ Presented as a model for future Soviet society, Arctic settlements epitomized socialist realist visions of an ideal future. The antithesis of Moscow, the Arctic was unknown and uncivilized, representing the very edge of the world. The Arctic thus represented the ultimate battleground in the Soviet struggle against harsh natural elements.¹⁰ Referred to as the “conquest of the Arctic,” Soviet polar expeditions were framed within the narrative of “problems” that Soviet society collectively banded together to solve. A 1939 World Fair pamphlet written by explorer Otto Schmidt on the conquest of the Arctic detailed the requisite equipment and “people fit for the job” necessary for successful Arctic exploration. Schmidt ultimately concluded that the USSR had “plenty of such people” and led the way in terms of “up-to-date” technological means, namely in the form of airplanes and icebreakers. Airplanes were described as bringing “culture and civilization to the remotest corners of this territory and extend the power of man to the very Pole.”¹¹ The Arctic myth promoted the idea that Moscow's civilizing influence could transform

⁸ John McCannon, “Tabula Rasa in the North: The Soviet Arctic and Mythic Landscapes in Stalinist Popular Culture,” in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003), 241.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁰ John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83. For more on the Soviet conquest of the Arctic, see: Paul R. Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic* (Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Otto Schmidt, *The Conquest of the Arctic* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 8, 10, 11, 34.

even the most remote or hostile of environments, thus depicting the Soviet Union's polar communities, research installations, and expeditions as “advance posts of culture” in the Arctic.¹² Soviet Polar settlements and stations were described as ideal living environments and modern state of the art workplaces, while the men and women who staffed them were celebrated as model Soviet citizens.¹³ Ultimately, Soviet presence in the Arctic propagated the notion that the Soviet Union, more so than any other nation, was capable of creating order out of chaos.¹⁴

Davies was similarly excited by Soviet Arctic exploration as he reported disapprovingly on the potential purging of the North Sea Route Administration and Commander Otto Schmidt, who Davies described fondly in a 1938 letter to the U.S. Secretary of State as a “hero of the Soviet Union” and a prominent Soviet explorer who led expeditions from the north of Europe to Asia and brought the Papanin scientific group to the North Pole in May, 1937.¹⁵ Reiterating Schmidt's heroic exploits in great detail, Davies expressed particular admiration for Schmidt's contributions towards the attempted development of a commercial route north of Russia between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, once again underlining his “modified capitalist” vision of a modern Soviet society that sought to facilitate trade between the U.S. and USSR.

Davies further commended the North Sea Route Administration’s “control of fluvial and marine navigation” in the North, as well as the establishment of Soviet settlements in the Arctic and the “education of the natives.”¹⁶ This last remark was indicative of broader American attitudes towards territorial conquest that positioned American colonizers as missionaries on a

¹² McCannon, “Tabula Rasa in the North: The Soviet Arctic and Mythic Landscapes in Stalinist Popular Culture,” in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, 246.

¹³ McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939*, 46.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁵ Joseph Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Unsatisfactory Conditions of the Service of the North Sea Route Administration, Moscow, March 31, 1938, Letter. Box I: 7, Chronological File: 1936-1939, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

mission to civilize native populations. Observing Soviet expansion into the Arctic, Davies believed, rightly or not, that the Soviet state shared in the U.S.' vision for a modern missionizing society, one which espoused the ideals of rapid technological development rather than religious morality. This perceived Soviet affinity with Western colonization projects was further apparent as Davies likened the North Sea Route Administration to the Hudson's Bay and British East India companies.¹⁷

Though Davies and the U.S. correspondents each demonstrated a keen interest in Soviet Arctic exploration, Deuel was particularly fascinated with the incremental progress, heroics, and daily tribulations associated with scientific Arctic expeditions as he filed a couple dozen news reports on the subject for the United Press between 1936-38. As Soviet Arctic exploration neared the height of its achievements in late 1937, Deuel reported via wire service to UP on the hydrographic expedition aboard the icebreaker *Sedov* in October 1937. Deuel emphasized the conquest and subsequent mastery of the elements as he described the expedition as having “mastered” a northern sea route in the Nordenskjold Archipelago region.¹⁸ Deuel further detailed the expedition's discovery of nineteen previously unknown islands, reiterating the themes of scientific discovery and territorial exploration. Similar to the dramatic fashion in which Deuel later reported on the show trials, Deuel prolifically followed the status of Soviet Arctic expeditions, displaying a clear fascination with the dramatic nature of daring expeditions as though they were a Hollywood movie or weekly soap opera. Deuel's fascination with the dramatic was clear as he detailed Soviet efforts to rescue personnel from the icebreakers *Sadko*, *Sedov* and *Malygin*, which he explained were ice-locked and drifting, by sending planes to

¹⁷ Ibid. For more on the Soviet Union's policies towards native Siberian peoples, see especially: Yuri Slezkine, "From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (1992): 52-76.

¹⁸ Deuel, Moscow, Mailed October 19, 1937, News Report. Box 30.

deliver fresh food and scientific equipment in addition to removing the majority of the ships' crew, each plane carrying back a reported forty persons.¹⁹ The drift of *Goerkiy Sedov*, a Soviet icebreaker carrying out the routine duties of resupplying polar stations and conducting scientific inquiries in the Laptev Sea in the summer of 1937, became both problematic and sensational following damage sustained to its propeller as the icebreaker became stranded in the Arctic. The icebreakers *Sadko* and *Malygin* were subsequently dispatched to rescue the *Sedov*, though by that point in October the ice was thickening considerably and it soon became apparent that all three icebreakers would be ice-locked and drifting north of the New Siberian Islands for much of the duration of the winter.²⁰ The first successful relief missions were not attempted until April 1938 when long-range bombers began evacuating all but thirty men who remained behind to crew the ships.²¹ Adhering to the socialist realist literary style, Deuel's reports on Arctic exploration consistently elevated Soviet pilots, explorers, and scientists to the status of heroes, thereby assigning them the role of protagonist, while nature was portrayed as a harsh obstacle and relegated to the role of antagonist within Deuel's narrative framework.

Framed within both Soviet propaganda and Deuel's news wire reports as an epic saga, the North Pole-1 expedition led by scientist and explorer Ivan Papanin between 1937-38 quickly became a conduit for American fascination with Arctic exploration. As Pier Horensma observes, the establishment of a drifting station at the North Pole was one of the best-publicized expeditions in history, largely due to the mammoth Soviet propaganda campaign built around it. The North Pole expedition was tasked with supporting ice forecasting along the Northern Sea

¹⁹ Deuel, Unipress London, via northern, 1938, Telegram.

²⁰ William James Mills, *Exploring Polar Frontiers: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 49, and Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic*, 110-113.

²¹ McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939*, 79.

Route in addition to supporting trans-Arctic record-setting flights.²² Chosen to remain at the North Pole for nine months were three technical specialists and Ivan Papanin, a former sailor and Soviet government administrator entrusted with the care of the expedition, thereby personifying the government's authority in the Arctic.²³ Known as the Papanites, the four men staffing the North Pole expedition achieved increased fame as their camp drifted further west than expected and its icy foundation was shrinking at an alarming rate.²⁴ Ships, submarines, and icebreakers were requisitioned to rescue the four men from the drift, though it was ultimately the icebreakers *Murman* and *Taimyr* that reached them first on February 19, 1938. Characterizing Papanin and his three accompanying explorers as a "heroic quartet," Deuel described the planned expedition route through the northern sea route from Moscow towards Greenland and onto the North Pole.²⁵ Deuel reinforced this heroic qualifier by promoting the theme of overcoming obstacles as he fastidiously listed the many natural impediments hampering the Papanin expedition. These included March's cloudy days, worse conditions in the surrounding months, the dangers associated with creating an arctic camp, and finding a "big smooth floe" to unload planes from the icebreaker.²⁶ Nevertheless, Deuel's article was remarkably optimistic as he presented the expedition's plans to surmount each and every obstacle, utilizing the modern technology of planes, radios and icebreakers to conquer the farthest corners of the USSR.

Despite its optimistic beginnings, the Papanin expedition soon came into trouble, as the ice floe they had settled on broke apart and began drifting further into the sea of Greenland.

²² Pier Horensma, *The Soviet Arctic* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), 62, 61.

²³ Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*, 69. For a more detailed analysis of the four members of the North Pole expedition (Ivan Papanin, Ernst Krenkel, Pyotr Shirshov, and Yevgeny Fedorov), see: McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939*, 74, and Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic*.

²⁴ McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union 1932-1939*, 77-78.

²⁵ Deuel, Unipress London, via northern, 29001, Telegram. Box 30.

²⁶ Ibid.

Icebreakers were subsequently dispatched as part of a protracted rescue mission, which Deuel covered extensively in his UP reports with sometimes twice-daily updates. Deuel showcased Soviet organizational skills, bravery, production, and abundance as he followed up on the Papanin rescue mission in February 1938. Detailing the icebreaker *Taimyr's* preparation ahead of its mission, Deuel echoed Soviet confidence and presented an image of abundance as he reported that the *Taimyr* was “completely prepared” and equipped with a six month supply of food, polar equipment, and other freight.²⁷ In addition, the *Taimyr* carried two planes, a replenished water and coal supply, recently inspected engines, and a “new powerful broadcasting receiving radio.”²⁸

In a follow-up report to the United Press, Deuel enumerated the various natural obstacles preventing an immediate rescue. These obstacles included strong winds and shifting ice, which prevented any rescue missions by ship, airplane, or dirigible from reaching the scientists. Highlighting Soviet endurance and commitment to the expedition, these four explorers were either “riding it out on a small ice cake in the turbulent Greenland Sea or attempting to make their way some sixty miles over rocking floes to the coast of Greenland.”²⁹ More captivated by the dramatic nature of the expedition than by its initial purpose, Deuel's account of unfolding rescue attempts included far more accuracy and detail than his usual reports, thus suggesting a far greater interest on his part in the dramatic conquest of distant lands. This was apparent as Deuel described how at precisely 10pm of November 7 Moscow time, the four explorers were cut off from communication for 28 hours since reporting at 4:10 pm the previous day. Nevertheless, the group of “brave explorers” continued its journey along the eastern coast of Greenland, undeterred

²⁷ Deuel, Unipress London, via northern, 02133, Telegram.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Deuel, Phoned London, 07233, Moscow, News Report. Box 30.

as they remained committed to recording their scientific observations and never failed to punctually broadcast the results of their observations at the scheduled time.³⁰

Increasingly becoming the exclusive focus of Deuel's reports, the dramatic Papanin rescue mission consumed Deuel's journalistic work as he provided daily updates on the icebreaker *Taimyr's* progress throughout early February 1938. Deuel championed the scientists' courage as he described Papanin and his three colleagues as "heroes of the Soviet North Pole expedition."³¹ Though the *Taimyr's* admittedly slow progress could have been interpreted as weakness or failure, both Deuel and the Soviet press rationalized its struggle to reach the Papanin by framing its story within the socialist realist literary structure of having to overcome and persevere through harsh natural obstacles. Accordingly, Deuel once more promoted the idea that Soviet explorers were blazing new paths and surpassing previous records as the *Taimyr* was reportedly "proceeding through much thicker ice under heavier pressure than heretofore encountered in the slow journey toward Papanin's camp."³²

Deuel's dramatic recounting of the Papanin expedition reached a conclusion on February 19, 1938 as Deuel cabled an "urgent" report on the icebreakers *Taimyr* and *Murman's* successful rescue of the Papanin expedition off the coast of Greenland. Despite all their trials and tribulations, Deuel concluded that the Papanin expedition had compiled records of "one of the most outstanding scientific achievements."³³ Furthermore, Deuel praised the ingenuity of the stranded Soviet scientists, describing the "ice-aerodrome" they had constructed upon the "frozen wastes" that ultimately enabled airplanes to land near their shelter three days prior to their

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Deuel, Phoned Amsterdam, 13191, Moscow, News Report.

³² Ibid.

³³ Deuel, Cable News Urgent, British United Press, Telephone, Urgent, 19190, Moscow, February 19, 1938, News Report. Box 30.

rescue.³⁴ Impressed with the way in which Soviet scientific findings challenged the global scientific community's long held beliefs, Deuel recounted how the Papanin expedition “had upset previous ideas by discovering a layer of warm weather at the Pole; shown the condition of the ice there and the manner of its drift; and shed important light on polar weather, the key to better weather forecasts, as well as other baffling problems.”³⁵ Accordingly, Deuel seemed to interpret Soviet achievements as beneficial to not only the USSR but also the entire world, as Soviet scientists belonged to a much larger global scientific community. Cognizant of the numerous challenges besieging the expedition, Deuel's enthusiasm for arctic exploration never wavered. Rather, Deuel's ardour only seemed to mount in tandem with the increasingly dramatic narrative being consumed throughout Stalinist society of heroic explorers overcoming the harsh Arctic elements to advance the cause of scientific modernization the world over.

Deuel's emphasis on heroism was in-line with Stalinist public culture. Stalinist society of the 1930s was an age of heroism in which every Soviet citizen, whether they be a collective farmer, factory worker, engineer, student, or scientific explorer, could be called upon to become a hero of the Soviet Union. At the heart of socialist realist culture was the notion that the Soviet Union constituted a nation of heroes in which every man, woman, and child could become a hero. Such courage and its accompanying celebration was necessary for the success of the great socialist experiment as hard work and bravery were needed in every factory, collective farm, classroom, and army platoon.³⁶ Describing the intended role of heroism within socialist realist literature in 1934, Andrei Zhdanov explained: “In our country the main heroes of works of literature are the active builders of a new life... Our literature is impregnated with enthusiasm

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Deuel, “Story of the Great Drift,” *Foreign News*, Urgent, British United Press, Moscow, Wire Service Report.

³⁶ McCannon, “Tabula Rasa in the North,” 255.

and the spirit of heroic deeds.”³⁷ This enthusiasm for heroic deeds formed a recurring motif throughout Deuel, Davies and Barnes’ reports on record-breaking accomplishments and acts of bravery undertaken by outstanding Soviet citizens who were at once seemingly average, yet also outstanding in unexpected ways, as they profiled official Heroes of the Soviet Union and workers elevated to the status of hero by the Stakhanovite movement.

Focusing upon the dramatic and heroic, Deuel's continued coverage of Arctic exploration for UP described the creation of a new (unnamed, though presumably created in the spring of 1938) Arctic drift as “a new saga of the arctic.”³⁸ Deuel's use of the word “saga” suggests that he associated Soviet arctic exploits with “a long story of heroic achievement,” as defined by the Oxford dictionary.³⁹ Deuel further stressed how, despite the numerous natural obstacles, Soviet scientist were qualified and well equipped: “the Soviet government drafted its most experienced and famous pilots and tested airplanes for the rescue mission.”⁴⁰ Repeated use of the qualifier “most” is in keeping with the socialist realist habit of striving for the best, shattering records, and surpassing state goals, all the while boasting of said achievements with the use of enhancing qualifiers. Deuel once more promoted the socialist realist theme of the “positive hero” when he described Professor Otto Schmidt as a “polar hero” who was responsible for “the spectacular arctic achievements” brought forth by the arctic military waterway that he played an instrumental role in completing.⁴¹ Deuel further utilized rhetoric celebrating Soviet daring as he described Dr. Otto Schmidt, commander of the rescue planes, as “the hero of the Chelyuskin expedition,” thus

³⁷ Andrey Zhdanov, *Soviet Writers’ Congress: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism*, 20-22.

³⁸ Deuel, Phoned London, 30222, Moscow, News Report. Box 30.

³⁹ *The Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 796.

⁴⁰ Deuel, Phoned London, 30222, Moscow, News Report. Box 30.

⁴¹ Ibid.

underlining the importance of official hero status within the USSR for the term “hero” became a regular qualifier when contextualizing Soviet reports.⁴²

Deuel's joint American and Soviet fascination with modernity, speed, record breaking achievements, and heroism was even apparent as he reported on the tragic crash of a dirigible piloted by Commander N. S. Gudovantzev into a mountain, 275 kilometres from Murmansk, on February 6, 1938.⁴³ Despite the death of Commander Gudovantzev, Deuel found it noteworthy enough to mention that Gudovantzev had established the world endurance record in 1937 when he remained 130 hours and seven minutes in the air, ultimately covering five thousand kilometres.⁴⁴ Deuel's focus on shattered world records occupied one third of his total report on the crash, suggesting that perceived gallant achievements undertaken in the name of progress loomed large in the narrative framework through which Deuel understood and rationalized Gudovantzev's death. In this way, heroism served to imbue life's sacrifices and struggles with greater meaning, thereby enabling every Soviet man, woman, and child to derive greater purpose from their place in Stalinist society.

Another favoured theme of Stalinist public culture centred on the promise of youth. Despite an at times disproportionate focus on the more sensational exploits of Soviet explorers such as Papanin, heroism did not constitute an exclusive club reserved for the most accomplished and experienced of professionals, as the Soviet Union's youth were enthusiastically upheld by both Soviet and American observers as promising champions who bravely took on the mantle of blazing new paths and carrying communism into an increasingly modern future. Soviet youth culture of the mid-1930s emphasized the transformation of young communists into a cultured

⁴² Deuel, “Sunday Lead,” Foreign News, Urgent, British United Press, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁴³ “Russian Dirigible Disaster: 13 Killed in Crash on Mountain,” *The Argus*, Melbourne, February 09, 1938, 11.

⁴⁴ Deuel, Press Unipress London, via northern, 08160, Telegram. Box 30.

Soviet citizenry, one that rejected class identity in favour of idealized socialist modes of behaviour, morality, and education. Stalin's expressed vision of a cultured Soviet youth stressed the importance of a formal education while strengthening gender differences. In accordance with Stalin's vision, the model youth activist shifted from a militant revolutionary to a polished, educated bureaucrat who was both willing and capable of implementing Stalin's plans.⁴⁵ As university education became more widely accessible in the Stalinist period, Soviet youth were well positioned to fill vocational openings left vacant by the Great Purges of the late to mid 1930s, thus promoting many newly educated and ideologically committed young Soviets to positions of power. Sean Guillory further notes that a lack of effective Communist Party control imbued Soviet youth with the power to shape Stalinist political culture through the independence accorded to them in the Komsomol (Soviet youth league). The Komsomol thus represented an autonomous forum in which its members could determine for themselves what it meant to be a young communist.⁴⁶ Celebrated as a beacon of hope and future prosperity, Soviet youth appeared regularly in socialist realist literature and visual propaganda, attracting attention far and wide from both Soviet and American cultural producers.

American journalists were similarly captivated by the promise of a motivated, hard working, and better educated new rising generation. Writing for *The Economist* in late January 1938, Barnes noted the successful training and education of Soviet youth as he explained how the Bolsheviks felt increasingly confident delegating responsibility and initiative to newly trained workers, for the technical intelligentsia was, "for the first time overwhelmingly young and

⁴⁵ Seth Bernstein, *Raised Under Stalin: Young Communists and the Defence of Socialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 41, 42, 47.

⁴⁶ Sean Guillory, "We Shall Refashion Life on Earth! The Political Culture of the Young Communist League, 1918-1928" (PhD diss., University of California, 2009), x-xi.

Soviet-trained.”⁴⁷ Promoting Stalinist faith in the promise of youth and increasing reliance upon a new communist educated generation, Barnes further reported for the New York *Herald Tribune* that most collective farms were being better “managed than ever before” as “a younger Soviet-trained generation is more and more taking over control.”⁴⁸ Davies was similarly impressed with what he observed to be an enthusiastic and proactive Soviet youth. This opinion was particularly prevalent throughout Davies’ reports on trips to industrial regions in which he noted the “generally young” age of management personnel, characterizing them as “studious, earnest, capable.”⁴⁹ Davies further observed in a letter to Steven T. Early, Secretary to the President, how the Soviet education system combined with the Five Year Plans enabled upward mobility in Soviet society as these young managers were “generally drawn from the soil, typical country boys who are making good and would probably make good anywhere. Men below 30 years of age were also recruited from the countryside to build these plants by day and at night were trained at night school sessions during the building.”⁵⁰ Davies’ keen focus upon the delegation of power to Soviet youth melded well with the socialist realist practice of elevating Soviet youth in literature, film, and painting.

Deuel similarly remarked upon the theme of youth and their enthusiastic participation in the construction of a socialist future when reporting for the United Press in early 1938 that a nineteen-year-old factory worker girl served as deputy in an unspecified Committee Council. Underlining the significance of youthful participation in Soviet governance, Deuel emphasized

⁴⁷ Barnes, *The Economist*, *Zatsepa* 22, ap’t. 2, Moscow, USSR, January 30, 1938, News Report. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Box 9.

⁴⁸ Barnes, “Anniversary (for Sunday, Nov. 7),” Mailed to New York October 18, 1937, News Report.

⁴⁹ Davies, Letter to Steven T. Early, Secretary to the President, First Trip Through Industrial Regions, Moscow, March 9, 1937, Letter. Box I: 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

that this nineteen-year-old girl was the youngest member of any parliament in the world.⁵¹ Deuel further dedicated an entire paragraph to the academic successes of a twelve-year-old boy, emphasizing the way in which he was impressed that Boris Korenblum was expected to graduate from the University of Kiev in mathematics in the spring.⁵² Moreover, Deuel reported that Korenblum's "brilliance brought him a state scholarship from the government of the Ukraine."⁵³ Deuel's decision to insert this off-topic anecdote into his report to the United Press office in New York seems to suggest that he was personally struck and impressed by both this rising generation of better educated Soviet academics and the improving merits of the Soviet education system.

Davies remained consistently optimistic about the future of Soviet industry largely due to his favourable impressions of Soviet youth, a new generation already in the process of inheriting managerial and administrative vacancies as a result of the purges. Having toured the model Pioneer youth Camp at Gurzuf, near Yalta, in May 1938, Davies' faith in Soviet modernization was nourished by the strong, enthusiastic, and intelligent group of young Pioneers that greeted him. Davies was thus confident in the stability and sustainability of rapid Soviet modernization as those set to inherit the State were described in a letter to the Secretary of State as: "exceptionally fine looking, well coordinated physically with generally handsome features, of a sensitive character with well balanced heads. They looked well and healthy... They were eager, enthusiastic, most friendly and kindly to the Amerikanskis."⁵⁴ Echoing socialist realist faith in Soviet youth, Davies concluded: "a very extraordinary situation will develop. There will also be produced here an extraordinary amount of talent and genius out of the hitherto unmined millions

⁵¹ Deuel, Press Unipress London, via northern, 14123, Telegram. Box 30.

⁵² Deuel, Letter to T. W. Gerber, United Press, March 31, 1936, Letter.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Visit to the Pioneer Camp Atrix at Gurzuf, Near Yalta, Moscow, June 1, 1938, Letter. Box I: 8.

of the human wealth in the country.”⁵⁵ This last sentiment is of particular significance as Davies depicted the Soviets as a great modernizing force, one which harnessed the previously untapped potential of Soviet youth and thereby repeated the Stalinist vision that posited youth as the lifeblood of an eventual communist utopia.

Further emphasizing the importance of technically-educated Soviet youth, Davies praised the manner in which young men who received scientific training and education in Soviet universities were running the oil and gas plants at Batum. Reporting to the Secretary of State by letter on June 1, 1938, Davies characterized this young management as “orderly and apparently well administered.”⁵⁶ Moreover, these young administrators appeared to be “very earnest and hard working.”⁵⁷ Organization, enthusiasm, and hard work thus constituted recurring qualifiers when describing Soviet youth to American audiences, particularly so in Davies’ letters home to both his family and professional superiors. Having attended the Soviet youth day parade, Davies was keen to express his enthusiasm for the inspiring potential of Soviet youth. In addition to their appreciable numbers, their coordinated performances and athletic tableaux very much impressed Davies, leading him to describe the displayed Soviet youth as “a very healthy, strong youth.”⁵⁸ Davies was visibly impressed by the vitality, enthusiasm, and physical fitness of Soviet youth as he dedicated nearly an entire page to describing their physical build and attire.

I suggest that the reasoning behind Davies’ intent fascination with the idealized human form is two-fold. In first place, Davies regarded Soviet youth parades as a promising assessment of Soviet military capabilities. Secondly, Stalinist emphasis on clearly defined gender identities and their physical representations coincided with a reactionary 1930s American

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Inspection of Oil Refinery and Gasoline Cracking Plant at Batum on May 22, 1938, and Generalizations With Reference to the Soviet Oil Industry, Moscow, June 1, 1938, Letter. Box I: 8.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Davies, Letter to Bijou, Russia: Soviet Youth Day Parade, July 14, 1937, Letter. Box I: 5.

remasculinization movement. Though such choreographed and meticulously staged displays of physical strength, organization, and the ideal human physique in Soviet youth became synonymous in the post-war period with totalitarianism and dangerous ideological indoctrination, they were not necessarily viewed with the same apprehension and mistrust in the interwar period. Common to both Stalinist society and the Third Reich, the carefully selected youth on display at Soviet youth day celebrations and elite Pioneer training camps continued in the same tradition as Boy Scouts, wherein young recruits were educated in the art of discipline, combat-oriented sports, and military preparedness.⁵⁹ The militarization of Soviet youth served to further the education of young communists, thereby assisting in the progress of twentieth century Soviet development. Preparation for military service thus became one of the main tenets upon which Soviet youth shaped their community and nation.⁶⁰ In this context, Davies' particular fascination with the idealized human body is rather striking as it fits into his broader diplomatic mission to, in part, assess Soviet military capabilities. As Davies rather controversially championed Soviet industrial capabilities to raise and supply a large army, his favourable impression of visibly strong and healthy Soviet youth fed into his larger confidence in Soviet military capabilities.⁶¹ Witnessing the Soviet ability to organize mass choreographed spectacles and train an elite segment of society to attain this image of peak physical fitness, Davies was likely reaffirmed in his assessment of overall training capabilities and future Soviet fighting potential.

Working in tandem with this interpretive framework, American public culture of the 1930s was undergoing a similar process of remasculinization. Josep Armengol argues that the

⁵⁹ Ann T. Baum, *Komsomol Participation In The Soviet First Five-Year Plan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 22.

⁶⁰ Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 9. Sanborn emphasizes the importance of total war in the development of twentieth century Russia and the Soviet Union.

⁶¹ Ullman, "The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941," 236.

Great Depression caused millions of American men to feel emasculated, for mass unemployment robbed them of their ability to fill their traditional male roles as the family breadwinner.

Confronted with the great social upheaval of the Great Depression, FDR's administration sought to remasculinize America by promoting images of "hard bodies at work" in public murals.

Interestingly, Armengol notes that the work of Marxist authors and critics complemented the U.S.' remasculinization efforts as they suggested a link between hard, masculine, working class men on one end of society, and soft upper class men on the other. Within this context, physical strength symbolized strength of character.⁶² Erika Doss similarly observes how American artists responded to the Great Depression by celebrating work and workers, depicting the latter as heroic figures of action.⁶³ Suggestive of a greater cultural parallel between American and Soviet societies, 1930s American art celebrating strong workers was sometimes described as socialist realist imagery. As Doss describes, "many American artists chose to depict sturdy, strong, muscular, and dynamic laborers, as if these painted and sculpted symbols of manly might and movement might actually propel America out of its economic slump."⁶⁴ Though Doss does not explicitly make the connection, she is describing socialist realism's ability to view life through the prism of an imagined future. This suggests an affinity between American remasculinization initiatives and the Stalinist hyper-masculine culture, which could be observed at mass spectacle events promoting an idealized male physique. The Soviet mass spectacle of sculpted bodies was thus not as foreign to American observers as one might expect. Davies' optimism in the mobilization of Soviet youth was again expressed in his diary following his attendance of the

⁶² Josep M. Armengol, "Gendering the Great Depression: Rethinking the Male Body in 1930s American Culture and Literature," *Journal of Gender Studies* 23, No. 1 (2014): 59-66.

⁶³ Erika Doss, "Toward and Iconography of American Labor: Work, Workers and the Work Ethic in American Art, 1930-1945," *Design Issues* 13 (1997): 53.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Sports Celebration in Leningrad on July 18, 1937, as Davies characterized “youth athletic celebrations” as “one of the inspiring things one finds here.”⁶⁵

Ubiquitous throughout these Soviet youth celebrations were images of a seemingly patriarchal nature, as Stalin’s portrait was plastered upon posters and banners, proudly presented to the world by carefully selected Soviet youth who accepted the mantle of inheriting the Stalinist state. Figuratively watching over the Soviet Union’s youth, Stalin represented the father of the nation and was depicted as such—frequently surrounded by children and young workers—in socialist realist literature and imagery. As the Soviet Union shifted from representations that posited the nation as the “fatherland” to instead become the “motherland” or “homeland” at the beginning of the 1930s, Stalin mythically cast himself as father of the nation, thereby cementing a union between Stalin—the great father—and the nation.⁶⁶ This mythic patriarchal relationship was widely disseminated through Stalinist art and propaganda of the late 1930s, which presented Stalin in familial poses, strategically positioned among happy women and children.⁶⁷ Within Stalin’s “Great Family,” Soviet heroes were among Stalin’s favourite sons and daughters. Accordingly, Stalin bestowed fatherly wisdom upon Soviet heroes while providing them with support and discipline in order to make their heroic exploits possible.⁶⁸ Soviet news articles and propaganda imagery depicting Soviet aviators, commonly known as “Stalin’s falcons,” were laden with patriarchal images of Stalin as the loving father, affectionate and concerned about the lives and safe return of his aviators.⁶⁹ Representative of Stalin’s patriarchal relationship with Soviet idols, heroes returning from exploits such as Arctic exploration were usually invited to the

⁶⁵ Davies, Sports Celebration in Leningrad, July 18, 1937, Diary. Box I: 5.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank you, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ McCannon, “Tabula Rasa in the North,” 248.

⁶⁹ Bailes, *Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941*, 386.

Kremlin in order to meet with Stalin, the symbolic father of the nation. These visits to the Kremlin were largely symbolic as heroes were brought into the presence of the living embodiment of Soviet power in what increasingly resembled a religious pilgrimage.⁷⁰ These heroes included soldiers, artists, workers, farmers and athletes who had surpassed all expectations and earned public admiration.

Deuel's concluding report on the rescue of the Papanin mission prominently showcased Stalin as father of the nation while strongly linking arctic exploration with national pride. Vividly describing the party of rescuers that dismantled the icebreakers to traverse the ice floe, Deuel emphasized the heroic manner in which these rescuers carried Soviet flags while the scientists proudly displayed a portrait of Stalin.⁷¹ Stalin's image as father of the nation was thus inextricably linked with Deuel's portrayal of the rescue mission as he reported: "Cheers were raised in honour of the rescue party, of the scientists and of Stalin."⁷² Stalin's symbolic inclusion in the rescue mission only served to highlight the apparent extent of his reach within an ever expanding and modernizing motherland.

Deuel further engaged with the mid to late 1930s narrative that posited Stalin as the loving father of the nation as he reported on Eteri Gvanzeladre's invitation into Stalin's home as a reward for her academic excellence back in her native Georgia in late March 1936. Profiling both Gvanzeladre and Stalin's daughter Svetlana in a letter to the United Press, Deuel emphasized how Svetlana was well cared for, studying French and music while still playing with dolls and other toys. Stalin was thus depicted as a good and caring father to both his daughter and any young Soviet who might merit it. Focusing upon the way in which Stalin shook hands with

⁷⁰ McCannon, "Tabula Rasa in the North," 249.

⁷¹ Deuel, "North Pole Station Closed Soviet Explorers Rescued from Ice-Floe Drifted 1,000 Miles 'Taking a Bath,'" Foreign News - Urgent, Sunday Lead, British United Press, Moscow, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁷² Ibid.

Gvanzeladre in the Kremlin, awarded her a gold watch and a phonograph, and then personally invited her to visit his daughter Svetlana, Deuel's description of Stalin conformed to the norms of socialist realist imagery in which Stalin was consistently painted alongside happy children and depicted as the father of the nation.⁷³ Stalin's personal celebration of outstanding pupils was further representative of a mid 1930s shift towards highlighting personal academic achievements over group homework.⁷⁴ As all Soviet children were essentially raised as children of the state, and by extension Stalin, their official relationship to Stalin emanated from a special branch of Stalin's personality cult directly aimed at earning children's devotion while providing valuable propaganda material of thankful children surrounding their loving patriarchal leader.⁷⁵ The slogan "Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for a happy childhood!" thus appeared on Soviet propaganda posters from the mid 1930s onwards as Stalin was seen to be nurturing a new generation of happy, educated, and appreciative young communists.

Paradoxically, the notion of a personality cult was taboo in Soviet rhetoric as the Soviet state wanted both its citizens and the entire world to believe that the glorification of Stalin stemmed from genuine democracy. This is to say that public adoration for Stalin was supposed to emerge from natural outbursts of love by Soviet citizens for their great leader. According to Jan Plamper, Stalin sought to appear modest and uncomfortable in the face of such adoration by seemingly only grudgingly tolerating the cult.⁷⁶ Barnes likewise characterized Stalin as a modest leader who shied away from attention-seeking roles. Depicting Stalin as the modest, albeit dedicated, father of the Soviet Union in a 1937 prepared obituary for the New York *Herald Tribune*, Barnes contrasted Stalin's role in the Civil War against Trotsky's flashier role of

⁷³ Deuel, Letter to T. W. Gerber, United Press, March 31, 1936, Letter. Box 30.

⁷⁴ Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 94.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁶ Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), xviii.

building the “Red Army by the magnetic and enthusiastic self-confidence which he radiated.”⁷⁷ Placed against Trotsky, Stalin appeared far more modest, “quietly leading a division against General Denikin in the Ukraine, acquiring little fame but at all times certain of ultimate victory.”⁷⁸ Citing H.G. Wells' interview with Stalin in December 1934, Barnes further underlined Stalin's purported modesty as Stalin reportedly interrupted Wells' words of admiration to comment that “much more could have been done had we Bolsheviks been cleverer.”⁷⁹ As such, Barnes' choice to emphasize Stalin's quiet dedication only reinforced the themes upholding Stalin's cult of personality, namely that of modesty, dedication to the nation, and fatherhood to the USSR.

Though obituaries typically focus upon the deceased's most positive contributions to the world, Barnes' prepared obituary of Stalin was remarkably laced with socialist realist themes while paying homage to the most controversial aspects of Stalin's personality; his “shrewd manipulation of the party apparatus,” modesty, and “political cleverness.”⁸⁰ Stalin's perceived modesty constituted a recurring refrain throughout the obituary as Barnes asserted that Stalin “cherished no illusions” of being a great revolutionary thinker like Lenin or Marx, even “requiring an American journalist who had submitted a copy of his interview to change the phrase “Lenin's successor” to Lenin's disciple.”⁸¹ This was reflective of a much wider Stalinist propaganda campaign initiated in the late 1920s-early 1930s to coincide with Stalin's consolidation of power in the wake of Lenin's death. Stalin thus created and disseminated a series of legends that posited him as both one of Lenin's close confidants and Lenin's ideological

⁷⁷ Barnes, Stalin – Prepared Obit, 1937, News Report. Series III: Box 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

successor in order to legitimize his right to rule. Positioning himself as Lenin's disciple, Stalin incorporated Lenin into propaganda images that alternated between falsified historical scenes of Stalin as Lenin's studious and loyal pupil and inclusions of Lenin's image either on flags or in the background of contemporary Stalinist events.⁸² As Stalin's image increasingly supplanted that of Lenin's in early 1930s propaganda, Leninism was ultimately replaced by Stalinism. Despite Stalin's larger than life presence in 1930s Soviet society, the official narrative presenting Stalin as a modest man endured. Accordingly, Barnes described Stalin as driving his own car around Moscow and living in a humble three-room apartment, all of which demonstrated his financially "modest" way of living. Barnes further depicted Stalin as a modern, intelligent man of the world through lengthy descriptions of his education, study habits, extensive reading, and great command of English, Russian, Georgian, and German, as well as his "surprising familiarity with English and American history."⁸³ A seemingly modern educated man, Stalin was characterized as someone to whom Americans could relate.

Immersed in a rapidly evolving and modernizing culture that increasingly embraced nationalist themes of patriarchal leadership, heroism, the promise of keenly patriotic youth, exploration, and territorial conquest, Davies and the U.S. correspondents identified with many of the Stalinist themes of nationalist pride and subsequently incorporated them to varying degrees within their writing. Most impactful upon Davies, Deuel, and Barnes were the themes of enthusiasm among Soviet youth and territorial exploration as they appealed to commonalities between American and Soviet societies. These cultural affinities existed both in present American patriotism and the past where America's frontier days still evoked the power of nostalgia for a

⁸² Brooks, *Thank you, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, 61-62.

⁸³ Barnes, Stalin – Prepared Obit, 1937, News Report. Series III: Box 9.

romanticized gone by nation, one that was ever expanding its frontiers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Consequently, Davies and the correspondents were more attuned to commonalities between modern states than later historians have given them credit for, as their immersion into Stalinist society enabled them to perceive what David Hoffmann astutely characterizes as Russia's development within a "shared comparative framework of European modernity."⁸⁴ This is to say that Russia's pattern of modernization did not constitute a great departure from that of the Western world as Soviet socialism responded to many of the same challenges as European—and by extension, American—modernity, namely that of reshaping society.⁸⁵ For the purpose of this thesis, modernity refers to any cultural initiative with the purpose of reshaping society, while modernization is used in an economic and industrial context. Though the concept of modernity is quite nebulous and therefore difficult to define, Hoffmann provides a more nuanced guide to observing and identifying modernity's role in society. Applicable to both Western and Soviet societies, modernity could be best observed in state projects to reorganize, manage, and categorize society, as it was ultimately less concerned with industrial capitalism and liberal democracy than previously believed.⁸⁶ Utilizing a similar framework, Davies and the U.S. correspondents were able to perceive numerous cultural affinities between large-scale American and Soviet state modernizing initiatives, particularly in light of FDR's big work program to reemploy Americans into massive construction projects and Stalin's Five Year Plans.

⁸⁴ David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis, ed., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800-1950* (London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

CHAPTER 4

THE SHOW TRIALS AS SOCIALIST REALIST THEATRE: ALL THE WORLD'S STALIN'S STAGE

It is not a trial, since it is a military court, the prisoners have all fully confessed their guilt, and the only apparent problem is to make the punishment fit the crime. But it is not even a courtmartial as much as it is theatre, school and party meeting, all three staged perilously between dream and nightmare.¹

Observing the careful and at times paradoxical coexistence of utopian dreams within a brutal reality, Barnes' detailed reports on the three Moscow trials of top Bolshevik leaders held consecutively in 1936, 1937, and 1938 served as an all encompassing metaphor for Soviet society and socialist realist culture of the late 1930s. Initially added by hand but later scratched out, Barnes' comment that the trials were "staged perilously between dream and nightmare" is particularly telling. It suggests the uneasy coexistence of ideal socialist goals in the form of a "dream" alongside the brutal tactics employed to purge the Communist Party and achieve this dream that sometimes resembled a "nightmare." Though deleted from his final report, perhaps to appease the Soviet censor, the statement echoes the socialist realist method of viewing the dream socialist future within the harsher demanding present of the Great Purge.

The Moscow treason trials were a series of three widely publicized show trials between 1936 and 1938 that were officially tasked with purging the Communist Party of alleged Trotskyists and right oppositionists who had allegedly conspired with fascists and Leon Trotsky to overthrow Stalin and restore capitalism. The accused were typically Old Bolshevik Party leaders, though the scope of this purge inevitably widened to consume former Soviet ambassadors to major nations, officials of the NKVD (Soviet secret police) and Red Army

¹ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 3. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Uncatalogued Papers, Box 9, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

leadership. The first of these trials, known as the Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre (also known as the Trial of the Sixteen), was held in 1936, shortly followed by the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Center that famously featured Karl Radek and Yuri Pyatakov among its defendants in 1937, and finally the Trial of the Twenty-One that starred Nikolai Bukharin and Alexei Rykov, officially known as the Case of the Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, in 1938.² Though show trials were by no means a new concept, they became one of the hallmarks of the Stalinist era, commencing with the 1928 public trial of foreign and Soviet engineers who had worked in the Donets coal basin, most commonly known as the Shakhty case.³ Charged with “wrecking” and industrial sabotage, the accused all publicly confessed. This marked the beginning of a slew of public trials over the early 1930s as Stalin worked to consolidate his hold on power by eliminating any potential or imagined opposition. Constituting part of Stalin’s Great Purge of Soviet society launched ostensibly in response to the murder of Old Bolshevik and head of party organization in Leningrad, Sergei Kirov in 1934, the show trials were utilized to rid the party of any prior or current opposition (real or imagined) to the direction in which Stalin was leading the Communist Party.

Though greatly exaggerated and frequently made up altogether, vocal opposition to Stalin’s brand of communism did fester in the decade following Lenin’s death. Factional

² Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, 68, 125, 519. Karl Radek was an international Communist leader and member of the Central Committee until his expulsion in 1923. Yuri Pyatakov served as deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Economy prior to his expulsion from the Communist Party, though he was reinstated in 1928 after renouncing Trotskyism, thereafter reappointed Chairman of the Board of the USSR State Bank. Yet another Old Bolshevik, Nikolai Bukharin had been a member of the Politburo, architect of Soviet economic policies in the 1920s, and leader of the Communist Party’s right wing. Alexei Rykov twice served as Premier of Russia and the Soviet Union before his reappointment as People’s Commissar of Communications between 1931-1937.

³ John Arch Getty, and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 113. For more on early Soviet show trials between the Civil War and Stalinist periods, see: Elizabeth Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), Julie A. Cassidy, “The Theater of the World and the Theater State: Drama and the Show Trial in Early Soviet Russia” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995), Matthew Rendle, “Revolutionary Tribunals and the Origins of Terror in Early Soviet Russia,” *Historical Research* 84 (2011): 693-721, and Sarah Davies, “The Crime of “Anti-Soviet Agitation” in the Soviet Union in the 1930’s,” *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 39, no. 1/2 (1998): 149-67.

struggles marked the 1920s as the Trotskyite “left opposition,” joined in 1926 by Old Bolsheviks Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, opposed Stalin’s abandonment of internationalism with his program of building “socialism in one country” without waiting for revolution in more industrialized nations. The “right communists,” led by Bukharin and Rykov, advocated for socialism in one country, though they argued that this should be accomplished through gradual industrialization, without forcibly collectivizing Soviet agriculture or abandoning market mechanisms.⁴ Stalin’s First Five Year Plan ran in direct opposition to these more moderate proposals and, as such, right-wing leaders opposed the Stalinist model of modernization for as long as possible. Such efforts were ultimately in vain as the “right opposition” was squashed in 1929 when Bukharin was removed from both the Politburo and his position as editor of *Pravda*, while Rykov was dismissed from his position as Premier.⁵ Meanwhile, Trotsky—arguably Stalin’s greatest opponent—had been deported from the USSR earlier in 1929.⁶ Once removed, most former oppositionists nevertheless remained in the Communist Party and ultimately expressed their approval for the party line, loyally praising Stalin’s leadership while inwardly harbouring reservations.⁷ Stalin’s memory remained long though and many among his late-1920s opposition were arrested between 1936 and 1938.⁸ The predominantly guilty verdicts that followed the three show trials’ seemingly coerced or at least rehearsed admissions of guilt led to a great many executions, thus achieving Stalin’s goal of purging the party of any potential rivals

⁴ Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen, ed., *The Great Purge Trial* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), XVII.

⁵ Getty, and Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, 41, 554., and Tucker and Cohen, ed., *The Great Purge Trial*, XVIII.

⁶ Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky, 1929-1940* (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

⁷ Wendy Z. Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37-41.

⁸ Other works that more fully explore the process of arresting and charging alleged oppositionists are: Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), James R. Harris, ed. *The Anatomy of Terror: Political Violence under Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott, *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

or future military coups.⁹ The extent of this purge is most striking when one considers that of 1,966 delegates to the Party Congress in 1934, 1,108 had been arrested by mid-1938.¹⁰ The trials further served as imagined dialogue with the Party, warning its members that the formation of a bloc would be interpreted as an act of terrorism.¹¹ Most importantly, the trials cleared the way for the establishment of an unrestricted Stalinist dictatorship in which the Communist Party was fully subordinated to its leader, personally imbuing Stalin with totalitarian power that he did not yet possess in the mid-1930s.¹²

A sub-category of the political trial, show trials constitute dramatic performances in which both the prosecution and defence play predetermined roles, much like actors in a theatrical performance.¹³ Eugene Lyons, press correspondent for UP prior to Deuel's arrival, first coined the term "show trial" in 1928 when observing the Shakhty trial.¹⁴ The term subsequently gained traction and was used to describe the Moscow show trials. For example, American reporter Harold Denny characterized the 1937 treason trials as "show trials" in a September 1937 article for the *New York Times*.¹⁵ Just as every play needs actors, every show trial also requires a director and scriptwriter. Endeavouring to direct the entire Soviet Union, Stalin both directed and scripted the show trials, observing the performance from a darkened room at the back of the courtroom in the Hall of Columns. As Robert Tucker describes, the Moscow show trials were actually a one-man show, secretly produced, organized, and managed by Stalin who quietly

⁹ Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 25, 122, 123.

¹⁰ Melanie Ilic, ed., *Stalin's Terror Revisited* (London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

¹¹ Vladimir Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," *Russian Journal of Communication* 3 (2010): 75.

¹² Tucker and Cohen, ed., *The Great Purge Trial*, XXIX.

¹³ *Ibid.*, IX.

¹⁴ Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia*, 193.

¹⁵ Harold Denny, "Present Conditions in Russia," *Int'l Conciliation* 18 (1937): 817.

observed from the shadows, concealing his authorship from all of Soviet society.¹⁶ It was thus Stalin who ordered investigations, crafted indictments, and transmitted the lessons on offer at the treason trials.¹⁷ Instead of measuring the show trials against a normal court of law, Karl Schlögel in his monumental book *Moscow 1937* suggests that the proceedings should be viewed as a well-planned drama designed to dehumanize Stalin's potential political opponents and destroy their reputations, thereby surrendering them to a lynch mob. Analyses of the show trials should thus concentrate on the staging and rhetorical terms of incitement utilized by the prosecution to eliminate alleged societal dangers.¹⁸ Increased focus on the elaborate staging of the trials is particularly important in light of Davies and the correspondents' noticeable interest in the trials' overall *mise en scène*.

In attendance at all three show trials and residing in the USSR over an extended period of time, American diplomats and journalists were not mere observers. Rather, American members of the press corps and their close friend Ambassador Davies became imbedded in Soviet society, not only observing, but also participating in socialist realist culture. Barnes and Deuel were among thirty foreign correspondents who were invited to observe Stalin's three major show trials. Following lengthy evening discussions alone with Ambassador Davies and the remainder of the close-knit American press corps in the U.S. Embassy, most American journalists departed from largely more sceptical European observations of the trials to conclude that there was merit to the charges. For example, British journalist Alfred Cholerton of *The Daily Telegraph* remarked to Davies that he believed "everything but the facts" while an Austrian reporter for the *Neue Freie Presse* believed it would be necessary to return to the Middle Ages "to find a similar fervent

¹⁶ Tucker and Cohen, ed., *The Great Purge Trial*, XV.

¹⁷ Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," 75.

¹⁸ Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, 523.

longing for execution.”¹⁹ Writing for the *Australian Quarterly* in 1937, Francis C. Hutley, an expert in jurisprudence, also cast serious doubt upon the validity of the charges, arguing: “there is no reason for believing in the guilt of any of the other major defendants than there is for believing in the guilt of Trotsky himself.”²⁰ Hutley further noted that, “the mixing of the guilty and the innocent” was “a favourite device of the architects of faked trials.”²¹ Overall, Western European and Australian accounts of the show trials were overwhelmingly dismissive of most charges. Max Radin, an American legal analyst who believed there was probably merit in the prosecution’s case, wrote for *Foreign Affairs* in October 1937 that “the foreign comment on the trials has been in the main highly unfavorable to the prosecution.”²²

Attempting to account for this divergence in European and American opinions, this chapter examines precisely how Deuel, Davies and Barnes interpreted the trials and ultimately reconciled the more brutal aspects of the Stalinist regime with the romance of modernization, paying particular attention to how their narratives moulded with pre-existing notions of Russian backwardness, the necessity of rapid modernization, and Bolshevik revolutionary nature. Moreover, I shed new light on Davies and the U.S. correspondents’ interpretations of the show trials by paying particular attention to mentions of the trials’ theatricality, detailed descriptions of the atmosphere, scene, and characters, as well as comparisons to Hollywood movies in order to fully flesh out underlying socialist realist themes that ultimately framed the show trials as heretofore scarcely acknowledged socialist realist theatre. Reporting on the show trials, Davies, Deuel, and Barnes collectively developed two distinct ways of viewing the proceedings: either as incomprehensible or emphasizing their theatricality. Limited by the late nineteenth century

¹⁹ Tim Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 114.

²⁰ Francis C. Hutley, “The Moscow Trials,” *The Australian Quarterly* 9, No. 2 (1937): 77.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

²² Max Radin, “The Moscow Trials: A Legal View,” *Foreign Affairs* 16, No. 1 (1937): 64.

analytical framework that posited a racially distinct Russian psychology as the reasoning behind Russian actions, American observers were left with few alternative lenses through which to interpret the purging of the Communist Party when this inherited framework failed to make sense of the Stalinist Purge.²³ Consequently, both Davies and the American newsmen branded Bolshevik psychology as incomprehensible and instead focused on the obvious theatricality of the show trials, ultimately viewing the show trials through a socialist realist lens. Applying this new analytical framework, the purging of society was interpreted as a necessary, albeit unpleasant, step towards establishing a modern utopian society.

Informed by lingering nineteenth century notions of Russia's Asiatic backward national character, Davies and the newsmen presented the most confounding aspects of the show trials as inherently Asian, psychologically different than Western minds, and thus unintelligible. As both Davies and the American correspondents regularly noted the perceived strangeness and bizarreness of the show trials, confused by the seemingly endless parade of detailed confessions that were certain to lead the majority of the accused to face a firing squad, their analyses frequently hinged on the strange and "incomprehensible." While Deuel and Davies were capable of participating in the more theatrical and idealistic aspects of the trial as part of their greater absorption into socialist realist fervour, they were nevertheless unwilling to search beyond the theatrics to better comprehend the brutality that accompanied the centralization of power. Consequently, both Davies and Deuel—and to a lesser extent, Barnes—described the "bizarre" proceedings as they witnessed them, foregoing any more prodding attempts at unravelling the true motivation behind the trials and the astonishing confessions they elicited, as they reasoned

²³ See p. 2, fn. 2.

that Russian psychology and Soviet power struggles were, as Davies concluded in a January 1937 letter to the Assistant Secretary of State, "incomprehensible to us."²⁴ This assumption that Soviet society was incomprehensible and simply could not be demystified by American observers echoed the underlying late nineteenth century idea that perceived Russians as Asian and thus inherently different from Western societies.

Barnes went one step further in his analysis of the show trials: though he too was swept up in the theatrical nature of the trials, he ultimately concluded that the accused were predisposed towards acts of rebellion and revolution and therefore may have conceivably been guilty after all. Similarly to Deuel and Davies, Barnes did not visibly preoccupy himself with determining whether or not the charges were resolutely sound, as he cited the defendants' revolutionary Bolshevik backgrounds, suggesting that they were definitely capable of conspiring and thus likely guilty of something. Ultimately, Barnes attributed the charges and subsequent show trials to Bolshevik political culture, relegating their motives to what Davies perceived as incomprehensible: the Bolshevik nature. Ultimately, the accused were condemned in the eyes of the Americans by virtue of both their radical and subversive Bolshevik disposition and the potential impediment they might pose towards maintaining the momentum of Soviet modernization through challenges to the stability of the existing order; i.e. Stalin.

Barnes stressed the strangeness and uniquely Russian character of the show trials, whose logic—or lack thereof—was incomprehensible to Western minds. Reports in the *Herald Tribune* thus posited that the Purges might stem from an ideological or conditioned problem rather than a political weakness. Barnes explained this distinct Bolshevik way of thinking as follows in an interview to the *Herald Tribune* in August 1936: "they had been bred in a strange school of

²⁴ Davies, Letter to R. Walton Moore, Assistant Secretary of State, Moscow, January 25, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3, Chronological File: 1936-1939, *Joseph Edward Davies Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

which no American can have any conception; "death did not frighten them," as one exclaimed, for they had lived with death throughout their careers."²⁵ Arguing the existence of a distinct Bolshevik mindset, Barnes further reasoned that the alleged conspirators were accustomed to death and revolution and thus likely to have conspired in one way or another against the Stalinist government. Referencing the Bolshevik Revolution, Barnes argued that the accused had been "conspirators against constituted authority from the days of their adolescence under the czar" and it was thus "understandable that they should be compelled to follow their trade, even after it had brought them to the highest seats of the new authority."²⁶ Revolutionary spirit and a predisposition towards violence were notably presented as innately Bolshevik—or even Russian—traits that served to explain lingering power struggles within Soviet society. Ultimately, Barnes deemed it possible that Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev's "character and backgrounds" rendered their final confessions "voluntary and sincere."²⁷ The *Herald Tribune* continued to propagate this notion as it theorized that the use of the death penalty might suggest, "the ablest men in the new Russia have not, even yet, outgrown their revolutionary backgrounds."²⁸

Interpreted as a knee-jerk revolutionary reflex, the alleged existence of a Trotskyite conspiracy was presented by American journalists as the logical result of years of radical insurgency. Summarizing the reason why Zinoviev and Kamenev stood on trial for treason in August 1936, Barnes referred to the stated occupation each had given inquiring Tsarist tribunals before 1917: that of "professional revolutionists."²⁹ Barnes thus hypothesized that Bolshevik

²⁵ "The Death of the Old Bolsheviks," New York *Herald Tribune*, August 25, 1936.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Barnes, "Zinoviev, Kamenev Face Death as Victims of Own Revolutions," *Herald Tribune*, August 23, 1936.

revolutionary tendencies rendered the accused indeed likely to conspire against the Soviet state, whether that be against the mid-1930s Stalinist regime, as accused, or in the years to come. Regardless, the Soviet state had identified a lingering revolutionary threat, conditioned as they were by years of anti-tsarist conspiring, and thus responded by publicly eradicating these would-be conspirators. Lingering on Zinoviev and Kamenev's perceived "agitator" backgrounds, Barnes diligently detailed their respective ascents to power in the *Herald Tribune*, focusing on the most brutal and conspiratorial actions taken during the Bolshevik Revolution. This was perhaps most evident when Barnes wrote: "Both men, from the days of their boyhood, had dedicated themselves to the career of agitator, revolutionist, and organizer of men in secret places."³⁰ Assuming that once a revolutionary, always a revolutionary, Barnes asserted that "habits of disagreement, conspiracy and minority action die hard... not even the gradual consolidation of Soviet power could remake minds already fixed in the pattern of conspiracy."³¹ Viewing revolutionary tendencies as a permanent mental state rather than a passing contextual and reasoned strategy suggests that Barnes believed Bolshevik revolutionaries were psychologically apart from Western democratic thinkers and thus somewhat beyond the pale of Western comprehension, much as Deuel and Davies believed.

Consistent with the lingering late-nineteenth century Western perception that othered Russians along racialized lines, most commonly denigrating them as Asiatic, Davies observed in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State: "the psychology of these Russians seems to be different" as they were willing to forfeit their lives in the "egotistical desire for a place in history, almost amounting to paranoia."³² While pondering the Soviet judicial theory that compelled

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Davies, Letter to R. Walton Moore, Assistant Secretary of State, Moscow, January 25, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

defendants to testify in court once a prima facie case had been established, Davies sought to account for Soviet inconsistencies in legal proceedings by blaming Russian psychology. Davies thus described this peculiar Russian psychology in a letter home to a colleague as "the imponderable factor in the equation" for "Russian psychology is different from ours certainly."³³ Inextricably linked to this understanding of Russian psychology was the idea that the Russian populace was overwhelmingly backwards. Applying long-standing Western prejudices against perceived Russian backwardness to his analysis of the show trials, Barnes argued that "heavy turnover in the executive personnel of the Communist party can be understood only in its Russian context, against the background of human backwardness with which the Communists have had to struggle even in their own ranks."³⁴ Barnes' use of the word "backwardness" is significant as it paints the Bolsheviks in a central modernizing role.

Building upon visions of a backwards populace, Deuel labelled "Russian psychology" and "revolutionary fanaticism" as "incomprehensible." This was best expressed when Deuel reported on the third show trial for UP in 1938: "The trial tends to bring out under conditions almost incomprehensible to the Western mind, because of Russian psychology, strange revolutionary fanaticism and ideology and soviet procedure, the story of an underground struggle for control of the richest and largest slice of the world's area under any government."³⁵ Differentiating between Western and Russian psychology, Deuel suggested that Russians were either mentally conditioned differently or ethnically apart from members of Western society, thereby presenting an impenetrable barrier between the western world and Soviet eastern society that precluded American observers from ever understanding any underlying motives for the trials. Davies and

³³ Davies, Letter to Colonel House, Constitution and Trial, Moscow, February 5, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

³⁴ Barnes, "The Bolshevik Purge," New York *Herald Tribune*, Hotel Metropole, Moscow, 1938. Series III: Box 9.

³⁵ Deuel, Phoned Amsterdam, 06230, Moscow, News Report. Box 30: Wire Service Reports: 1935-1938, *Henry Shapiro Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Deuel thus evaded deeper analysis by othering Soviet psychology, relegating it to the realms of the inscrutable.

Consistently emphasizing the “strange nature of the situation here,” Davies chose to concentrate on the “incomprehensible” makeup of the trials in letters home to friends and colleagues rather than delve further into possible motives behind the slew of confessions.³⁶

Davies concluded at the first show trial that “regardless of what motive prompted these seventeen defendants to plead guilty, they are unfolding the true facts.”³⁷ Barnes similarly suggested that the show trials constituted a mystery to Western minds as he observed that the assassination of Kirov had “by now been confused through charge and counter-charge of successive Soviet trials into a mystery reminiscent of Russia's “Time of Troubles” at the beginning of the seventeenth century.”³⁸ Returning to Moscow following a period of travels across Western Europe in the early summer of 1937, Davies remained captivated and mystified by Russia, which he described as “an enigma,” echoing the time-stained 19th century phrase. Davies thus observed that Russia was “as much of a contradiction and puzzle as ever.”³⁹ Moreover, Davies described the ongoing purges as “shrouded in mystery,” thereby once more designating the show trials and purges as mystifying and other.⁴⁰

Barnes further connected the show trials to a tendency within Russian Communist history for dissent and the subsequent purging of disagreeing forces. One such example was the 1921 purging of Mensheviks from the Russian Social Democratic Party in order to consolidate Bolshevik power, which Barnes described in a 1938 article for the *Herald Tribune* as “their

³⁶ Davies, Letter to R. Walton Moore, Assistant Secretary of State, Moscow, January 25, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Barnes, “The Bolshevik Purge,” New York *Herald Tribune*, Hotel Metropole, Moscow, 1938. Series III: Box 9.

³⁹ Davies, Letter to “Boss,” Russia: “Thermidor” Stage Has Arrived in Russia Far Eastern Developments Moving Swiftly, Moscow, July 10, 1937, Letter. Box I: 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

pledge to purge their own ranks of individuals who threaten the honest fulfillment of this trusteeship."⁴¹ Acknowledging the suspicion and cynicism with which many foreigners regarded the show trials, Barnes nevertheless recognized that the charges levelled against the accused were symptomatic of a genuine struggle against treason and desire for orthodoxy within the Communist Party. Barnes thus explained in a January 1938 article for the *Herald Tribune*: "Whatever foreigners think of the Soviet purge, for Bolsheviks it is a merciless struggle against treason, and therefore primarily a political problem."⁴² Depicting rebellion and conspiracy as conditioned—or innate—Bolshevik traits, Barnes once more reasoned that revolutionaries were predisposed to treason and thus continued to very subtly defy Stalin during the show trials. Barnes concluded: "these are the last conditioned reflexes of experienced revolutionaries who now want to square themselves with the proletariat, and also with Stalin."⁴³ Moreover, Barnes pointed to perceived festering sore spots among Communists who "had earlier jibbed at the speed with which the revolution was developing" in the wake of the first Five Year Plan and the introduction of collectivization.⁴⁴

Barnes ultimately summarized this assessment that posited many Old Bolsheviks as conditioned, permanent revolutionaries when he reasoned: "In the case of Zinoviev and Kamenev, and the fourteen defendants on trial with them, the record of the last ten years and the conspiratorial habits which are the housemaid's knee of revolutionists, probably will constitute sufficient explanation to the Soviet judges."⁴⁵ Anticipating that the judges presiding over the show trial would likely share his view of a fixed revolutionist psychology, Barnes seemed to

⁴¹ Barnes, "The Bolshevik Purge." Series III: Box 9.

⁴² Barnes, "Moscow Counts Missing Chiefs By the Hundreds," New York *Herald Tribune*, January 2, 1938.

⁴³ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 10.

⁴⁴ Barnes, "The Bolshevik Purge," New York *Herald Tribune*, Hotel Metropole, Moscow, 1938.

⁴⁵ Barnes, "Zinoviev, Kamenev Face Death as Victims of Own Revolutions," *Herald Tribune*, August 23, 1936.

share in the Stalinist—perhaps even socialist realist—view that the elimination of lingering revolutionary elements/threats constituted a necessary stepping stone on the path towards a brighter Soviet future. Focused on rapid modernization, Barnes interpreted the purpose of the Soviet purges as an expedient way of revolutionizing Soviet society.

Barnes' interpretation of Stalinist society during the Great Purge seemed to identify the Bolsheviks as a rejuvenating force, one that modernized a once backwards society while granting opportunities to a new generation of Russians. Describing the ongoing purge within the Soviet Writers' Union in a May 1937 report for the *Herald Tribune*, Barnes argued that the Bolsheviks thought "in terms of a continent and revolution" and that "gentler forms of literary criticism than a "purge" are also slower, and they are in a hurry."⁴⁶ As the Bolsheviks were in such a "hurry," Barnes suggested that they utilized the purge to enable the rise of fresh Soviet talent. This is to say that "for every writer who falls, they believe, there are a hundred trying to stand up."⁴⁷

Though Barnes shared Deuel and Davies' belief that the show trials represented yet another incomprehensible aspect of the Russian mind, he did so to a lesser degree as he made more concerted attempts at the close of the show trials in 1938 to ascertain the motives behind the Purge. While the initial charges concerning the assassination of Kirov continued to mystify Barnes, leaving him to conclude that a predisposition towards treason simply constituted part of the Bolshevik psyche, he later also identified revolutionary stagnation and the desire for young Soviet-educated leaders to take the helm as the motivation behind the final political purges of 1938. This was apparent as Barnes reported to the *Herald Tribune* in January 1938 that most of the accused "have been guilty chiefly of bureaucracy and revolutionary inertia."⁴⁸ Barnes further

⁴⁶ Barnes, "Purge," Mailed New York, May 11, 1937, News Report. Series III: Box 9.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Barnes, "Moscow Counts Missing Chiefs By the Hundreds," New York *Herald Tribune*, January 2, 1938.

explained: "These are the men, more common in Russia than most foreigners realize, who had secured a political strangle hold on desirable jobs, and who could be pried from them, under socialism, only by political levers."⁴⁹ Under this interpretation, the show trials could be viewed as a cleansing and reviving force, propelling the Soviet Union towards a more productive socialist utopia, one that could be seen through the dramatic staging of a political purge.

As Davies and the newsmen struggled to comprehend the purges based on their limited nineteenth century analytical framework, they abandoned all attempts to demystify Russian psychology and instead looked to the theatricality of the show trials to explain party cleanses and broader societal purging. Significantly, this focus on the theatrics of the trials had the inadvertent effect of further exposing Davies and the press corps to socialist realist frames of analyses.

Davies and the American correspondents displayed a profound fascination with the perceived theatrical nature of the great socialist experiment, one that was ultimately channelled into the dramatic staging of Stalin's 1936-1938 show trials. Vivid descriptions consistent with the professionalization of journalism's emphasis on contextualization imbued Barnes and Deuel's reports on the show trials with a dramatic soap-opera like quality that wove characters together in a suspenseful and well crafted plot, one that the U.S. correspondents seemed to eagerly anticipate reporting on. Ultimately, it did not seem to matter whether or not there truly existed a vast Trotskyist conspiracy against Stalin, as Deuel, Davies, and to a lesser extent Barnes, were caught up in both the details and unpredictable nature of such a fluid and intricately woven plot. While Soviet censors undoubtedly prevented Deuel and Barnes from dispatching overtly sceptical interpretations of the show trials, they were also motivated by intense competition between various news outlets to provide a titillating narrative that both reflected their genuine interest in

⁴⁹ Ibid.

the dramatic nature of Soviet power struggles and sought to capture the attention of American readers.

As a result of this push towards greater contextualization and interpretation, Deuel's reporting on the show trials became increasingly sensationalized and colourfully descriptive in its depictions of the accused, prosecutors, judges, and audience members as characters were frequently compared to those of Hollywood films. Deuel was visibly captivated by the theatrical and sensationally staged aspects of the show trials, as evident in one of his earliest UP reports on the show trials where he set the stage, so to speak, describing how, "six powerful floodlights gave eerie blueish brilliance."⁵⁰ Going hand in hand with the dramatic and cinematic, modern technology featured prominently in Deuel's reports as he paid particular attention to modern aspects of the proceedings, consistently writing on the use of modern filmmaking technology—in this case "powerful floodlights"—during the show trials.⁵¹

Quite openly comparing the show trials to Hollywood movies on several occasions, Deuel's description of the third trial in 1938 read like an advertising campaign for a Hollywood blockbuster. Deuel thus seemed enthralled by the trial's gripping plot when he wrote: "Twenty-one pawns in a game exceeding a Hollywood scenarists dreams of mystery, war, murder, espionage will go to trial for their lives March second when Joseph Stalin engages Leon Trotsky in another shadow boxing match."⁵² Frequent comparisons to cinema and sport thus cast the show trials in the same light as any spectacle event. Deuel habitually likened trial participants to Hollywood actors, for instance describing the new associate judge B.I. Yevlev as having "bald spectacted slightly mustchached austerely handsome looks like Hollywood version of sinister

⁵⁰ Deuel, Press Unipress London, via northern, 11123, Telegram. Box 30.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Deuel, Moscow, 0102, Wire Service Report.

European nobleman in seduction melodrama."⁵³ This description is laden with stereotypes and xenophobic distrust as Deuel at once expressed misgivings with noble elites, Europeans, and handsome foreigners who might try to seduce the unsuspecting. Likening Yevlev to a Hollywood caricature in a "seduction melodrama" further served to simplify Yevlev's character while underlining the most theatrical aspects of the trial, perhaps suggesting that Yevlev was seducing the audience in an ongoing Soviet, if not socialist realist, "melodrama."

Deuel's descriptions of the show trials only seemed to increase in their theatricality, as he grew ever more absorbed in the daily soap opera. This was expressed in the language Deuel employed to describe the murder allegations made against Bukharin. Deuel was notably fascinated by the trial's intricate narrative and interweaving plot as he described it as a "melodramatic treason trial" that sought to "solve a murder mystery with all the trimmings."⁵⁴ Comparing the trial to a "murder mystery," Deuel seemed to view the alleged plot against Stalin as a fascinating narrative akin to an Agatha Christie novel. Emphasizing the "sensational" and jaw-dropping moments that transformed the show trials into daily entertainment for U.S. correspondents, Deuel was always in a frenzied rush to report upon the last minute revelations that no doubt intentionally resembled theatrical or cinematic cliff-hangers. This was apparent as Deuel hurried to telephone London late at night following the "greatest mass trial's recess"—referring to the third show trial in 1938—at 10:25pm, subsequently filing his report as a "new night lead." The extent of Deuel's excitement and absorption in the daily theatrics was apparent in his use of the words "last minute sensation tonight" as well as his concluding anticipation for the following day's testimony "tomorrow concerning the murder and poison plot."⁵⁵

⁵³ Deuel, Press Unipress London, via northern, 04211, Telegram. Box 30.

⁵⁴ Deuel, Wireopener, Phoned London, Moscow, 08025, News Report.

⁵⁵ Deuel, "new night lead," Phoned London, Moscow, 08024, News Report.

Attempting to capture the spectacle of the show trials in a way comparable to the drama of motion pictures, Deuel provided physical descriptions of the protagonists, typically focusing on one aspect of their appearance. Said chosen aspect was generally unflattering, exaggerated, or distinctly foreign from American appearance and fashion. For instance, Deuel described the presiding judge V. V. Ulrich as "heavy jowled" while he read out the verdict for the twenty-one defendants.⁵⁶ Deuel's habit of utilizing vivid adjectives served to further dramatize Nikolay Krestinsky's denial of guilt when he characterized Krestinsky as having a "stooped highpitched voice quivering in the microphone."⁵⁷ State prosecutor Andrey Vishinsky was similarly profiled in detail: "Badgered by grayhaired Vishinsky who pounced catlike on his every answer and shifted witnesses to accuse Krestinsky almost as swiftly as dealer in cardgame."⁵⁸ It should be noted that Deuel rarely provided detailed physical descriptions of persons he encountered within his more mundane everyday reports on Soviet achievements. Considerable attention to people's outward appearances and minute actions was foremost given to participants in the show trials, thus suggesting an intense interest in the proceedings, in addition to the importance Deuel placed upon the visual and theatrical aspects of the trials.

Deuel's fascination with both the staging of the show trials and the physical appearances of its participants is also suggestive of a greater search for answers outside of the official court records, as Deuel made a habit of noting what had been altered or altogether removed from the visual scene. For example, Deuel noted that Bukharin's beard had been "clipped shorter than when seen before arrest" while former NKVD Commissar Genrikh Yagoda "unwore military

⁵⁶ Deuel, "urgent," Unipress London, via northern, 13044, Telegram. Box 30.

⁵⁷ Deuel, Press Urgent Unipress London, via northern, 02153, Telegram. Nikolay Krestinsky was an Old Bolshevik revolutionary who served on the Central Committee and was a member of the first Politburo in 1919. Supportive of Leon Trotsky's faction, Krestinsky was removed from the Politburo and reappointed as Soviet Ambassador to Germany.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

uniform which customary even with accused persons in nkvd or army who allowed wear tunic stripped of insignia (sic)."⁵⁹ Though Deuel did not elaborate on any conclusions he may have extrapolated from Yagoda's lack of uniform, the mere mention of this fact suggests that Deuel found it unusual or at least noteworthy. Consequently, this reliance upon calculated wardrobe choices and carefully staged scenes underlines the similarities between Deuel's approach to analyzing the show trials and the average audience member's approach to comprehending the subtext of any given theatrical production or movie.

Not unlike Deuel, Barnes paid considerable attention to the defendants' physical appearances for he too was interested in capturing the dramatic atmosphere that both shrouded the trials in intrigue and drew its audience into more of a participatory role. For example, Barnes commenced a report on the 1938 Bukharin treason trial for the *Herald Tribune* by dedicating over three pages to vivid descriptions the courtroom's decor, along with the seating arrangement and outward physical appearance of the twenty-one defendants. Barnes observed that Bukharin had "cut his reddish beard to the exact pattern of Lenin's, whom he resembles in other ways. The stoop of his shoulders and the pile of books beside his chair make him look like a professor waiting to read a lecture."⁶⁰ Barnes further caricatured Yagoda, observing that he looked like a "wolf," in line with what the Soviets had been calling him. Yagoda was thus reduced to a dramatic caricature, not unlike a movie villain, whose features and behaviour were more wolf-like than human when Barnes wrote: "He looks like the "wolf" that Russians now call him. Slim, of medium height, with a small black mustache and thin hair turned almost white, he speaks in a low voice, hard to hear."⁶¹ These caricatured comparisons to animals only continued as Barnes

⁵⁹ Deuel, Unipress London, via northern, 02191, Telegram. Box 30.

⁶⁰ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 1. Series III: Box 9.

⁶¹ Ibid.

explained: "If Bukharin seems an agile red fox caught in a trap, Yagoda suggests some rangier animal at bay, quietly defiant, showing his fangs instead of yapping."⁶² Remarkably, Barnes either mimicked or drew inspiration from the *Pravda*'s reporting of the show trials as he too barbarized the accused by comparing Yagoda to a wolf, thereby echoing a tactic employed by Soviet media to dehumanize the defendants through the use of Russian folklore. These references to Russian folklore, namely in the form of comparisons to snakes, wolves, and rabid dogs, appealed to superstitions among the Russian peasantry that rendered them wary of these animals, ultimately acting as a populist call to arms against treacherous elements of society.⁶³

A thick aura of mystery and suspense, which strongly imbued the show trials with a theatrical feel, consistently fascinated and perhaps even distracted Deuel and Barnes as they filed very similar accounts on how Nikolai Yezhov, Yagoda's successor as director of the NKVD, was believed to be sitting behind a little green curtain on the balcony above the judges' heads.⁶⁴ Barnes and Deuel were notably captivated by this rumour and the obvious theatrics involved in a fluttering curtain and occasional spark of light, all of which were just enough to ignite the audience's imagination. This was evident as Barnes reported on courtroom gossip in which everyone was engrossed, as a sense of community seemed to have naturally developed out of attendance at the show trials. Accordingly, Barnes wrote: "Whispers in the courtroom have it that his successor, Nikolai Yezhov, is sitting there now. When someone sees a pipe being lighted behind the curtain, his comment falls dead in the dense courtroom. No one makes precise in words the fact that Josef Stalin is one of the rare Russians who smoke a pipe."⁶⁵ Stalin's carefully staged position behind a curtain—yet never officially confirmed in order to preserve an air of

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," 79.

⁶⁴ Ibid. For Deuel's description of both Stalin and Yezhov's rumoured presence behind the curtain: Deuel, Moscow, 0102, Wire Service Report. Box 30.

⁶⁵ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 1-2. Series III: Box 9.

mystery—further titillated American observers who were increasingly drawn into a spectacle rather than the substance of a judicial proceeding. This is evident as Barnes provided more detailed visual descriptions of the show trials' setting than Deuel, despite Barnes' far more extensive education and experience in both Russian and Soviet affairs. For instance, Barnes spent an entire paragraph describing seemingly innocuous details from the staging of the third show trial:

Cascades of white glass fall from the ceiling in nineteenth century chandeliers. White plaster Cupids and Muses romp around the wall against the light-blue background of a Wedgewood frieze. The tables of the judges, the prosecutor and the defense lawyers are covered with green felt. The light from a green student's lamp frames in the center of the room a miniature bust of Lenin and the round, bald and shining head of V.V. Ulrich, presiding judge.⁶⁶

This meticulous description continued through another paragraph, providing a level of visual detail unrivalled by any of Barnes' other reports on the Soviet Union. The trials' carefully staged scene became the story, as the theatrical supplanted the political.

Americans thus consistently emphasized the theatrical and suspenseful atmosphere surrounding the show trials, as Barnes noted their ability to “transfix” an entire courtroom.⁶⁷ Describing the proceedings as a "drama," Barnes recorded how "the courtroom sits transfixed in silent horror" as Yagoda and three doctors discussed their medical murder of the novelist Maxim Gorky and "other dead heroes." This melodramatic suspense had its desired effect as Barnes noted in this same report for the *Herald Tribune*: "even the wooden seats stop creaking when prisoners talk."⁶⁸ Like Deuel, Barnes was unable to resist the dramatic lure of the show trials, which captured viewers' imaginations and drew them into the daily soap opera-like entertainment of what Barnes compared to "an exciting play." As such, Barnes sought the defendants'

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

motivations for treason not only in their confessions, but "in the tangled silences and tones and gestures of the actors." Barnes further sought answers to the mystery in "the rules and conventions of a world which, although it is more real than life or death to those acting in it, still looks to us like theater."⁶⁹ This is to say that, despite Barnes' attempts to comprehend the mystery at the foundation of this elaborate script, he was admittedly unable to adequately see past its theatrical state. In the absence of true comprehension, the show trials were relegated to engaging, entertaining theatre in the minds of a close-knit group of U.S. correspondents and their good friend Davies.

Arriving in Moscow just in time for the start of the second show trial in January 1937, Davies shared in Deuel and Barnes' captivation with what he described in a letter to Colonel House in early February 1937 as "a terrific human drama."⁷⁰ Davies' prolific diary entries and letter correspondence demonstrate a clear fascination with the dramatic nature of the show trials. Seemingly treating the show trials as either a macabre form of entertainment or the subject of intellectual study, Davies described the trials as "fascinating" while recommending in a March 1937 letter to Mr. Hearst—presumably William Randolph Hearst—that others come to Moscow to witness what Davies observed as possessing "the many earmarks of the progress that marked the French Revolution."⁷¹ As Karl Schlögel argues, the meaning of the show trials lay not in the search for proof, but in the telling of a dramatic and fantastical story. Rather than highlighting and providing clarification for a large number of inconsistencies in the proceedings, the trial sought to focus on these inconsistencies as their fantastical and unbelievable nature transformed a dry political process into a "breathtaking spectacle that would hold the public spellbound and

⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁰ Davies, Letter to Colonel House, Constitution and Trial, Moscow, February 5, 1937, Letter. Box I: 3.

⁷¹ Davies, Letter to Mr. Hearst, Moscow, March 17, 1937, Letter. Box I: 4.

paralyse them with fear."⁷² Intentionally moulded into a dramatic spectacle, the show trials were thus imbued with the ability to captivate audiences, both domestic and foreign, and lure them into an outlandish story, one that simultaneously served as entertainment, education, and a theatrical stepping stone into a more promising future.

Described by Barnes as "staged perilously between dream and nightmare," the show trials constituted an elaborate form of socialist realist theatre in which the desired utopian socialist future could be both perceived and accomplished through the harsher and at times unpleasant realities of the present.⁷³ This suggests the uneasy coexistence of idealistic socialist realist goals in the form of a "dream" with the brutal tactics employed to purge the Communist Party and achieve this dream that sometimes resembled a "nightmare." Though cut out from his final report, this statement demonstrates the socialist realist method of viewing the dreamed socialist future within the harsher demanding present. Despite widespread recognition of the show trials' theatricality and utility as effective state propaganda tools, very few historians other than David Roberts have explored the link between socialist realist theatre and the show trials. Very briefly making this comparison in his book *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*, Roberts observes how the "positive" and "negative" heroes of socialist realism played a complementary role in what Roberts calls the theatre of damnation and salvation. Roberts thus argues that socialist realism and the show trials complemented one another within Stalin's totalitarian total work. As the Stalinist show trials possessed a great affinity with drama, Stalin's theatricalization of life fused together art and life, producing millions of real victims.⁷⁴ Socialist realist theatre thus wielded life-transforming powers, not unlike the remainder of socialist realist culture that

⁷² Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, 71.

⁷³ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 3. Series III: Box 9.

⁷⁴ Roberts, *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*, 227.

transformed both present and future realities, inextricably weaving the idealized future into the present. Accordingly, the show trials functioned in a similar way, applying utopian goals to socialist realist theatre—in this case, the show trials—in which "saboteurs" and party enemies were rooted out of the utopian socialist realist future.

Assuming an instructive role, the show trials not only underlined perceived threats to the USSR but also constructed a mobilizing narrative educating Soviet citizens on how to serve as vigilant agents of the state.⁷⁵ In this way, the treason trials served as educational theatre, specifically guiding Soviets towards Stalin's envisaged centralized socialist utopian society, one that was purged of any dissent and backed by the loyalty of a hyper-vigilant populace. Yanni Kotsonis' interpretation of Soviet modernity in relation to the Great Terror is particularly useful as he argues that Soviet violence and terror can be understood as a phenomena of modernity in which terror was channelled into universalizing drives to educate, discipline, and mobilize society.⁷⁶ As Vladimir Dobrenko argues, the three Moscow show trials constituted a top-down communicative process directed and conceptualized by Stalin that ultimately manifested Stalin's imagined enemies in the flesh.⁷⁷ Communicated in writing to the general public through state media organs, the show trials also provided a legitimizing political narrative, confirming Stalin's role as both the descendent and defender of Leninism, through the staging of a political show. Building on this, I suggest that the Moscow treason trials can be interpreted as one of Stalin's favoured methods for projecting his own socialist realist vision onto the public sphere.

⁷⁵ Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," 72.

⁷⁶ David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis, ed. *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800-1950* (London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 8-9.

⁷⁷ Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," 73. For more on Stalin's personality and vision of society, see: Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York: Norton, 1973); Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014); Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

American coverage of the show trials thus represented another manifestation of Davies and the journalists' immersion into socialist realist culture as they were similarly captivated by the daily proceedings, including themselves in the narrative of Soviet history, as the audience became an integral part of the show trials. As Sheila Fitzpatrick suggests, Soviet show trials, whether they be the grand internationally publicized trials in Moscow or smaller rural trials against local leadership, constituted a form of participatory political theatre in which the audience revelled in the destruction of alleged treasonous blocs—sometimes even their former employers—while absorbing the state's carefully crafted political message.⁷⁸ Willing participation in the audience of Stalinist theatre thus further submerged those already immersed in Soviet society into socialist realist culture. Deuel drew direct comparisons between the show trials and theatrical productions when describing the third show trial in a report filed over the telephone to UP in 1938: "another act in the drama of communist intrigue... will be staged today."⁷⁹ Once more underlining the aura of mystery that accompanied and amplified the theatrical nature of the trials, Deuel observed how a "mantle of mystery" surrounded all Soviet proceedings.⁸⁰ Barnes was keenly aware of the theatrical nature and educational purpose of the show trials as he described the 1938 show trial in a report for the *Herald Tribune* as: "not even a courtmartial as much as it is theater, school and party meeting."⁸¹ Barnes further noted that, "Unlike some of earlier trials, this one has none of the conscious unreality of theater. There is no radio; cameras and Klieg lights are admitted only on the final day. There is some consummate Russian acting, and some bad Russian oratory, but it is all intimate, low-pitched. Confessions of

⁷⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces," *The Russian Review* 52, no. 3 (July 1993): 299, 301.

⁷⁹ Deuel, Phoned Amsterdam, Moscow, 02015, News Report. Box 30.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Barnes, "Notes on a Moscow Trial," 3. Series III: Box 9.

high treason in this setting sound like Wagner played as chamber-music."⁸² This first line is particularly note-worthy as the perceived lack of "conscious unreality of theater" suggests that the show trials were becoming increasingly realistic theatrical presentations, thereby rendering their underlying political message and rallying cry more credible, as either the audience or the trials' participants—perhaps both—lost awareness of the trials' once overly-dramatic unrealistic qualities. Despite the show trials' lessening sensationalism, they remained theatrical gateways to the future, slowly signalling a quieting end to an uneasy chapter in the evolution of communism as Barnes likened its increasingly "intimate" feel to "Wagner played as chamber-music."

Despite Barnes' reporting on the exclusive and intimate feel of trial attendance, he seemed attuned to the trials' socialist realist goal of better engaging with the Soviet public in an effort to transform the average citizen into a more politically active and ideologically vigilant communist. This was evident in Barnes' explanation for the authorized presence of a few workers at the show trials in his assessment for the *Herald Tribune*: "The workers holding passes will be speakers before each night is over at mass meetings held at every Moscow factory, where the indignant proletariat will demand the blood of each of these quiet, submissive prisoners."⁸³ As Elizabeth Wood observed, show trials served as useful propaganda, engaging ordinary people on the level of their daily lives, as press coverage of the trials excited readers and drew them in.⁸⁴ More importantly, the show trials instructed their audience in the ways of party vigilance against saboteurs and misinterpretations of the official party line while teaching Soviet society to not only speak Bolshevik, but also Stalinist.⁸⁵ The language of Stalinism was the official mode of speech across all levels of Stalinist society that enabled people to survive and manoeuvre within a

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia*, 12.

⁸⁵ William Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Show Trials and the Construction of Moral Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, ed. Sarah Davies and James R. Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 236.

society that demanded group conformity and whose language was crafted by the highest echelons of power, ultimately presented to the public in the form of carefully crafted confessions and charges disseminated through the Soviet press.⁸⁶ The sentencing of accused traitors to death in the presence of an audience also framed their executions within the narrative of a betrayed community demanding the death of double-dealers and terrorists, thereby including broader society in the purging of the Communist Party.⁸⁷

Barnes' March 1938 article for the *Herald Tribune* further underlined the show trials' alleged rallying effect in promoting both patriotism and communist loyalty as Barnes captured how "the entire Soviet Union" was demanding the death penalty in the third treason trial.⁸⁸ This further reinforces the notion that the show trials served to better engage the Soviet public with the state and thus better incorporated them into the Communist future. Barnes' recounting of popular demand for the death sentence also interestingly incorporated heroism into the show trials, seemingly depicting a public crusade against disloyalty and treason, as he described how the heroic Soviet explorer Ivan Papanin, "leader of the Arctic expedition recently taken off an ice floe," was among those "demanding death."⁸⁹ Notably, this trend toward widening the scope of the narrative to include the general population in the show trials was indicative of a much larger mobilizing practice employed by Soviet state media.⁹⁰ Similarly reporting on calls from the Soviet masses to convict and destroy the enemy, Barnes seemed to be echoing the Soviet press. As Vladimir Dobrenko argues, "People had to believe that a collective effort in the destruction of

⁸⁶ Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, 23.

⁸⁷ Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Show Trials and the Construction of Moral Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, 236.

⁸⁸ Barnes, "Moscow Plans 4 More Days of Confessions," New York *Herald Tribune*, March 7, 1938. Series III: Box 9.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Dobrenko, "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror," 78.

the enemy and the protection of Stalin was necessary for the survival and well-being of the future.”⁹¹

Mirroring the Soviet public’s supposed socialist realist view of the show trials, Davies ultimately concluded in a March 1938 letter to the Secretary of State that the show trials were “clearly a part of a vigorous and determined effort of the Stalin government to protect itself from not only revolution from within but from attack from without.”⁹² As such, Davies interpreted the show trials through a socialist realist lens, regarding them as a societal necessity in the interest of protecting the Stalinist government and all of its modernizing initiatives. This socialist realist interpretation of Soviet power struggles further permeated Davies’ enthusiasm for art as he wrote in a letter to his ex-wife Emlen Knight Davies that he eagerly anticipated the opportunity to visit the studio of Aleksandr Guerasimov, who Davies praised as “the greatest living Soviet artist in oils.”⁹³ Dream and nightmare once more coexisted in Davies’ description of Guerasimov’s painting of conferring Soviet generals as he simultaneously emphasized its size and magnificence while mentioning in passing that it had to be repainted in the wake of the 1937 show trials to remove Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevski, among other Red Army generals, in order to reflect their purging from society before the painting’s exhibition at the Paris World Fair.⁹⁴ Socialist realist beauty and terror thus seamlessly coexisted in the mind of Davies as Soviet beauty and the promise of an idyllic future endured amidst the horror of the show trials.

⁹¹ Ibid., 79.

⁹² Davies, Letter to the Secretary of State, Bukharin Mass Treason Trial, Moscow, March 17, 1938, Letter. Box I: 7.

⁹³ Davies, Letter to Miss. Emlen Knight Davies, Moscow, April 6, 1938, Letter. Aleksandr Guerasimov was one of the most famous painters of the Stalinist period and a leading proponent of homegrown Russian Socialist Realism against Western styles, ultimately favouring heroic realism in his paintings of Soviet heroes such as Lenin and Stalin. For more on Guerasimov, see especially: Matthew Cullerne Brown and Brandon Taylor, *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-party State, 1917-1992* (Manchester; New York: NY: Manchester University Press, 1993) & Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars. Modern Art--practices and Debates* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Maintaining a surprisingly consistent view of the show trials over the course of three years—two in Davies’ case—Davies and the U.S. correspondents were at once captivated by the most sensational and dramatic staging of the show trials, while leaning upon old nineteenth century notions of Western superiority that decried Russian and Slavic peoples as backwards and other, thereby relegating the show trials to the realm of incomprehensible as they attributed their perceived strangeness to Russian psychology and Bolshevik revolutionary conditioning. Ultimately, both Davies and the American press corps resorted to viewing the show trials through a socialist realist lens, interpreting this purging of society as a necessary, albeit unpleasant, step towards establishing a modern utopian society, for the show trials constituted an elaborate form of socialist realist theatre, encompassing both dream and nightmare. After all, as Barnes fittingly concluded in his October 1937 report on the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution: “Russians have grown used to living in the future.”⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Barnes, “Anniversary (for Sunday, Nov. 7),” Mailed to New York October 18, 1937, News Report. Series III: Box 9.

CONCLUSION

Observing the great many societal transformations revolutionizing Stalinist society between 1936-1938, Ambassador Davies and the U.S. press corps diverged from the prevailing early twentieth century American analytical framework that posited the Western European model of modernization as the measure by which the success or failure of modernity in all industrializing nation states should be measured. Davies and the U.S. correspondents were fascinated by Stalinist plans to reengineer Soviet society along cultural, territorial, and industrial lines as they recognized that modernity could exist in many forms beyond the Western model. Accordingly, the numerous cultural affinities between U.S. and Soviet societies expressed in the writings of Davies, Deuel, and Barnes speak to the extent to which American and Soviet forms of modernity were entangled, interacting with one another across national borders through joint enthusiasm for technological, territorial, scientific, and industrial daring and innovation.¹

Casting a long shadow over U.S.-Soviet relations, American unease towards the Bolshevik Revolution and the later period of Cold War exacerbated Western bias/distrust towards communist states and distorted historiographical interpretations of American outlooks on Soviet society, particularly during the volatile Stalinist period. The resulting climate of Russophobia and profound cynicism in matters concerning the Soviet Union created an inflexible dichotomy in which American observers posted to the USSR were either perceived as wise and loyal capitalist Americans who viewed the Stalinist regime through a deeply cynical lens or as left-leaning Stalinist apologists who unquestioningly allowed themselves to be hoodwinked and blinded to the excesses of the 1930s by Stalinist propaganda. A serious reassessment of this rigid dichotomy

¹ Göran Therborn, "Entangled Modernities," *European Journal of Social Theory* 6, 3 (2003): 293-305. For a fuller discussion on the historiographical debate surrounding Russian/Soviet modernity, see: Michael David-Fox, "Russian-Soviet Modernity: None, Shared, Alternative, or Entangled?" *New Literary Observer* 140 (2016): 19-44.

underlines the extent to which American perceptions of Stalinist society, as well as their relationship to the prevailing culture, were in fact nuanced and not necessarily able to be understood as right or wrong. Reevaluating the role of American observers in late 1930s Soviet society, it is apparent that Americans excluded from the overwhelmingly anti-communist U.S. diplomatic corps did not merely undertake societal evaluations of the USSR from the position of spectator, for extended stays in Moscow and tours of Soviet industrial regions submerged them in Stalinist society, transforming them into participants rather than mere observers. For Joseph Davies, this immersion began as his appointment as Ambassador was clearly unwelcome news to the diplomatic corps in Moscow. Receiving a frosty reception in Moscow, Davies ultimately widened the gulf between himself and Embassy staff as he chose to ignore the opinions of more senior diplomats, instead leaning on the opinions of American journalists and the military attaché. Fluent in Russian and keen to truly experience Soviet culture, Joseph Barnes similarly chose to distance himself from the community of Western diplomats, instead taking up residence in a small cabin with his family some distance away from the tight-knit community of foreigners.

Having formed their own community, one which did not exclusively rely on prevailing diplomatic anti-Marxist and racially charged nineteenth century notions of Russian backwardness, Davies and the U.S. correspondents turned to official Soviet culture to assist them in their measure of ongoing socially transformative projects and political volatility. As socialist realism permeated all aspects of Soviet culture, Americans who had moved beyond the role of observer to participate in the reengineering of Soviet society were thus immersed in socialist realist culture. This is to say that Davies, Deuel, and Barnes' shared enthusiasm for rapid modernization and societal rejuvenating projects enabled them to view beyond present hardships through the prism of an increasingly modern future of material plenty. Equally enthusiastic about

both modern technology and rapid industrialization's potential to transform the human and natural world, Davies and the U.S. correspondents shared in Stalinist society's passion for all things modern, thereby extending a common framework through which Americans and Soviets could both perceive a modern utopian world.

Echoing an abundance of socialist realist themes, Davies and his close circle of journalist wrote extensively on the societal reengineering themes of Soviet medical marvels, scientific innovations, territorial exploration, heroics, youthful enthusiasm, agricultural production, and the pace of industrialization, thereby expressing an affinity with the most modern aspects of Stalinist culture. Bridging the gap between U.S. diplomacy—both official and informal—and socialist realist culture, Davies, Deuel, and Barnes became themselves producers of socialist realist writing. Echoing Stalinist themes, they further projected onto Soviet society an American deterministic path of development that conflated economic modernization with progression towards a liberalized economy and thus anticipated an inevitable capitalist end state.

This socialist realist view of technological revolution and social reengineering notably extended to the three Moscow show trials as the future oriented framework of prevailing socialist culture seemingly managed to explain what antiquated nineteenth century grids of analysis had failed to decipher. Reconciling the more brutal aspects of the Stalinist Terror with the romance of modernization, Davies and the correspondents drew on inherited nineteenth century notions of Russian backwardness and conditioned Bolshevik revolutionary nature to decry Bolshevik actions as “incomprehensible.” American observers thus posited that the Purges might stem from a cultural or conditioned problem rather than a political weakness. Searching elsewhere for analytical clarity, Davies and the press corps shifted their focus onto the obvious theatrics of the show trials. Consequently, both Davies and the American newsmen came to view the show trials

through a socialist realist lens, interpreting this purging of society as a necessary, albeit unpleasant, step towards establishing an idealized utopian nation. The Moscow show trials thus constituted an elaborate form of socialist realist theatre, carefully staged as Barnes described between dream and nightmare.²

Though Davies and the U.S. correspondents' interpretations of Stalinist society have been overwhelmingly condemned as incorrect by both diplomatic historians and historians of U.S. journalism, the opinions they formed were in some ways—and quite ironically—more correct (if such a thing exists) than those of more senior U.S. diplomats whose opinions have been generally heralded as correct. Though they failed to report on the Ukrainian Famine and the true extent of the Great Purge, their more open-minded approach to Stalinist society nonetheless facilitated a more profound immersion into Soviet society, one that ultimately rendered them more attuned to socialist realist culture and shared cultural values, which more accurately expressed the purpose behind Soviet policies. As historians of U.S. diplomacy and journalism have overwhelmingly focused on evaluating perceived right and wrong observations within official reports, their findings lacked the necessary nuance to comprehend why and how diplomats and journalists understood and misunderstood Soviet society and the Stalinist system. The question is not whether Davies, Deuel, and Barnes formed a “correct” opinion of the purges and show trials. Historians should instead question why and through what analytical grid American observers came to view Soviet society. It is only by asking how and why Americans perceived Stalinist culture as they did that the extent to which American and Soviet models of modernity were entangled becomes apparent.

² Barnes, “Notes on a Moscow Trial,” 3. *Joseph Barnes Papers*, Series III: Uncatalogued Papers, Box 9, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

Soviet and American engineering and technological experts, so easily able to interact and exchange ideas for their respective visions of advanced society, shared numerous economic and industrial commonalities, thereby highlighting shared societal values between the U.S. and USSR. Selectively appropriating aspects of American modernization, particularly industrial methods such as Fordism, productivism, and the celebration of consumerism, the Stalinist model of modernity became entangled with that of its American consultants. Stalinist modernity was thus never monolithic, nor purely ideological, as its technological and industrial culture converged with that of its ideological antithesis: the United States. Consequently, American and Soviet visions of modernity frequently overlapped, yet ultimately remained distinct.³

Keenly observing the great many Stalinist projects aimed at reshaping and modernizing Soviet society, Davies and the correspondents were more attuned to commonalities between modern states than later historians have given them credit for, as their immersion into Stalinist society enabled them to perceive what David Hoffmann astutely characterizes as Russia's development within a "shared comparative framework of European modernity."⁴ This is to say that Russia's pattern of modernization did not constitute a great departure from that of the Western world as Soviet socialism responded to many of the same challenges as European modernity, namely that of reshaping society.⁵ As Michael David-Fox observes, modernity constitutes an array of ambitious projects and discourses seeking to reshape and remake society, culture, and man.⁶ Contrary to popular twentieth century Western beliefs, modernity does not progress along a linear line. Instead, modernity is always incomplete, developing in stages as it

³ This interpretation is based on the analytical framework of Adeeb Khalid who argued that two visions of modernity could overlap yet remain distinct. Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁴ Hoffmann and Kotsonis, ed., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800-1950*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁶ David-Fox, "Russian-Soviet Modernity: None, Shared, Alternative, or Entangled?" 5.

responds to societal crises while always retaining elements of tradition and the past.⁷ Taking note of the decidedly modern aspects of the Stalinist state, namely the enthusiastic absorption of modern technology and the conception of social engineering projects, American observers were more easily able to overlook anti-modern paradoxes and reconceptualised Russian traditions as they latched onto the visibly Western aspects of modernity present in Soviet society and incorporated them into their teleological world view. Accordingly, Davies and the newsmen only ever acknowledged perceived anti-modern vestiges when attempting to rationalize the most brutal and confounding aspects of Stalinist culture. Accepting that paradoxes can naturally arise within modernizing drives, Americans could perceive signs of burgeoning modern nation states congruent to their specific liberal-democratic capitalist model of modernization within even the most oppressive of governments.

American enthusiasm for innovative social and technologically transformative Stalinist projects that strongly resembled—and sometimes even mimicked—American modernization projects, both contemporary to the interwar period and the much romanticized nineteenth century, ultimately shed light on the extent to which American and Soviet cults of modernity were at once alternative and entangled across transnational borders.⁸ In this way, Davies and the press correspondents were not so much enamoured with Stalinism as has been so frequently suggested, but instead identified with the distorted reflection of American industrial, territorial, and technological ideals they saw reflected in the idealized mirror of socialist realist culture and Stalin's Five Year Plans.

⁷ Ibid., 16. Alexander Etkind also noted that, while the Soviet state was modern, its results were decidedly anti-modern. Consequently, Soviet modernity was mixed and complex, fusing archaic features with modern technology. Alexander Etkind, "Soviet Subjectivity: Torture for the Sae of Salvation?" *Kritika* 6, 1 (2005): 171-186.

⁸ For a more extensive discussion on alternative modernization theory, see: György Péteri, "Alternative Modernity? Everyday Practices of Elite Mobility in Communist Hungary, 1956-1980," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Lewis Siegelbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Alternative modernity theory proposes the existence multiple modernities, as opposed to a single Western European model.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Material

Henry Shapiro Papers - Library of Congress, Washington DC

- Box 6 Agriculture
- Box 7 Architecture, Art
- Box 10 Five Year Plans
- Box 16 Industry
- Box 19 Purges
- Box 22-23 Trials
- Box 30 Wire Service Reports, 1935-1938

Joseph Barnes Papers, 1907-1970 - Columbia University Libraries, New York City, NY

- Series III: Uncataloged Papers: Box 8-9: 1936-1939

Joseph Edward Davies Papers - Library of Congress, Washington DC

- Box I:3-9 Chronological File, 1936-1939
- Box I:93 Articles
- Box II:8 Correspondence 1936-1951
- Box II:34-36 Correspondence 1936-1938
- Box II:65 Newspaper Clippings 1937-1957

Published Sources

Abakumov, E. *The Moscow Subway*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939.

Bohlen, Charles. *Witness to History, 1929-1969*. New York: Bulzoni, 1973.

Davies, Joseph Edward. *Mission to Moscow*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941.

Denny, Harold. "Present Conditions in Russia." *Int'l Conciliation* 18 (1937): 817.

Gorky, Maxim, Karl Radek, Nikolai Bukharin, Andrey Zhdanov, and others. *Soviet Writers' Congress: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977.

Henderson, Loy W., and Baer, George W. *A Question of Trust: The Origins of U.S.-Soviet Diplomatic Relations: The Memoirs of Loy W. Henderson*. Hoover Archival Documentaries. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1986.

Hutley, Francis C. "The Moscow Trials." *The Australian Quarterly* 9, No. 2 (1937): 77-86.

- Kennan, George Frost. *Memoirs*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967.
- Kennan, George. *Siberia and the Exile System*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1970.
- Kennan, George. *Tent Life in Siberia: And Adventures among the Koraks and Other Tribes in Kamtchatka and Northern Asia*. Nineteenth Century Collections Online: Mapping the World: Maps and Travel Literature, 1871.
- Radin, Max. "The Moscow Trials: A Legal View." *Foreign Affairs* 16, No. 1 (1937): 64-79.
- Schmidt, Otto. *The Conquest of the Arctic*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History 1893." *Wisconsin Historical Society* (July 1893): 1-9.

Secondary Sources

- Alpers, Benjamin. *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy, 1920s-1950s*. Cultural Studies of the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Armengol, Josep M. "Gendering the Great Depression: Rethinking the Male Body in 1930s American Culture and Literature." *Journal of Gender Studies* 23, No. 1 (2014): 59-68.
- Associated Press. *Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007.
- Bailes, Kendall E. *Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Bailes, Kendall E. "The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of American Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917-1941." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 3 (1981): 421-448.
- Bassow, Whitman. *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost*. Michigan: W. Morrow, 1988.
- Baum, Ann T. *Komsomol Participation In The Soviet First Five-Year Plan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.
- Bennett, Edward M. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Security in American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1985.
- Bernstein, Seth. *Raised Under Stalin: Young Communists and the Defence of Socialism*. Ithaca:

- Cornell University Press, 2017.
- Brain, Stephen. "The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature." *Environmental History* 15, no. 4 (2010): 670–700.
- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*. Cambridge, MA and London, EN: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Brooks, Jeffrey. *Thank you, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Brown, Matthew Cullerne., and Brandon Taylor. *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-party State, 1917-1992*. Manchester; New York: NY: Manchester University Press, 1993.
- Cassiday, Julie A. "Marble Columns and Jupiter Lights: Theatrical and Cinematic Modeling of Soviet Show Trials in the 1920s." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 42, no. 4 (1998): 640–60.
- Cassiday, Julie A. "The Theater of the World and the Theater State: Drama and the Show Trial in Early Soviet Russia." Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995.
- Chatterjee, Choi., and Holmgren, Beth. *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present*. New York: Routledge Studies in Cultural History, 2013.
- Clark, Katerina. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Crawford, Christina E. "Soviet Planning Praxis: From Tractors to Territory," Centerpiece/Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, *Harvard University* 29, no. 2 (2015): 14-20.
- Crowl, James William. *Angels in Stalin's paradise: Western reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, a case study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty*. Washington DC: University Press of America, 1982.
- Crowl, James William. "They Wrote As They Pleased: A Study of the Journalistic Careers of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty, 1922-1940." PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1978.
- Dallek, Robert. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Dalrymple, Dana G. "The American Tractor Comes to Soviet Agriculture: The Transfer of a Technology," *Technology and Culture* 5, no. 2 (1964): 191-214.

- Daly, Chris. "The Historiography of Journalism History: Part 2: "Toward a New Theory." *American Journalism* 26, no. 1 (2009): 148–155.
- David Fox, Michael. "Russian-Soviet Modernity: None, Shared, Alternative, or Entangled?" *New Literary Observer* 140 (2016): 19-44.
- Davies, Sarah. "The Crime of "Anti-Soviet Agitation" in the Soviet Union in the 1930's." *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 39, no. 1/2 (1998): 149-67.
- Davies, Sarah and Harris, James R., ed. *Stalin: A New History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Davis, Donald E., and Trani, Eugene P. *Distorted Mirrors: Americans and Their Relations with Russia and China in the Twentieth Century*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009.
- Dell'Orto, Giovanna. *American Journalism and International Relations Foreign Correspondence from the Early Republic to the Digital Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Dell'Orto, Giovanna. *AP Foreign Correspondents in Action: World War II to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- De Magistris, Alessandro. "Book Review: Le Métro de Moscou. La construction d'un mythe soviétique." Review of *Le Métro de Moscou. La construction d'un mythe soviétique*, by Josette Bouvard. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 66, Iss. 3 (2007): 400-401.
- De Santis, Hugh. *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933—1947*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Deutscher, Isaac. *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky, 1929-1940*. London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Dobrenko, Evgeny. *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Dobrenko, Evgeny. *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Studies in Modernity and National Identity. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003.
- Dobrenko, Vladimir. "Constructing the Enemy: Stalin's Political Imagination and the Great Terror." *Russian Journal of Communication* 3 (2010): 72-96.
- Dodge, Norton T. and Dana Dalrymple. "The Stalingrad Tractor Plant in Early Soviet Planning." *Soviet Studies* 18, no. 2 (1966): 164-168.

- Doss, Erika. "Toward and Iconography of American Labor: Work, Workers and the Work Ethic in American Art, 1930-1945." *Design Issues* 13 (1997): 53-66.
- Dunn, Dennis J. *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015.
- Eagles, Keith David. *Ambassador Joseph E. Davies and American-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941*. New York: Garland, 1985.
- Engerman, David C. *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Engerman, David C. "Modernization from the Other Shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic Development." *American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 383-416.
- Etkind, Alexander. "Soviet Subjectivity: Torture for the Sake of Salvation?" *Kritika* 6, 1 (2005): 171-186.
- Etty, John. "Stalin's Falcons." *History Review* 67 (2010): 3-6.
- Fer, Briony, David Batchelor and Paul Wood. *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars. Modern Art--practices and Debates*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1999.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces." *The Russian Review* 52, no. 3 (July 1993): 299-320.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *George F. Kennan: An American Life*. New York: Penguin Press, 2011.
- Geist, Edward. "Cooking Bolshevik: Anastas Mikoian and the Making of the Book about Delicious and Healthy Food." *The Russian Review* 71 No. 2 (2012): 295-313.
- Getty, John Arch, and Naumov, Oleg V. *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. Annals of Communism. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Giffin, Frederick C. "Improving the Image of Stalin's Russia: Joseph Davies's Mission to

- Moscow." *Social Science* 52, no. 1 (1977): 3-8.
- Goldman, Wendy Z. *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Greenstein, David E. "Assembling Fordizm: The Production of Automobiles, Americans, and Bolsheviks in Detroit and Early Soviet Russia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 2 (2014): 259-289.
- Groys, Boris. *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Translated by Charles Rouge. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Guillory, Sean. "We Shall Refashion Life on Earth! The Political Culture of the Young Communist League, 1918-1928." PhD diss., University of California, 2009.
- Hale-Dorrell, Aaron. "The Soviet Union, the United States, and Industrial Agriculture." *Journal of World History* 26, no. 2 (2015): 295-324.
- Hannan, Caryn. *Wisconsin Biographical Dictionary*. Hamburg, MI: State History Publications, 2008.
- Harnett, Richard M., and Ferguson, Billy G. *Unipress: United Press International Covering the 20th Century*. Indiana: Fulcrum Pub., 2003.
- Harris, James R., ed. *The Anatomy of Terror: Political Violence under Stalin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Harris, James R. *The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Hessler, Julie. *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Hoberman, John M. "The Body as an Ideological Variable: Sportie Imagery of Leadership and the State." *Man and World* 14, no. 3 (1981): 309-29.
- Hoffman, David L. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Hoffmann, David L. *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Hoffmann, David L., and Kotsonis, Yanni, ed. *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800-1950*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.
- Horensma, Pier *The Soviet Arctic*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

- Ilic, Melanie., ed. *Stalin's Terror Revisited*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Johnson, Allen McTavish. "Moscow Dispatches, 1921–1934: The Writings of Walter Duranty, William Henry Chamberlain and Louis Fischer in Soviet Russia." Order No. 9971304, PhD diss., Tulane University, 2000.
- Josephson, Paul R. *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic*. Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Kelly, Catriona. *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Khalid, Adeeb. *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015.
- Khlevniuk, Oleg V. *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Kimball, Warren F. *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Kinsella Jr., William E. "Relations with the Soviet Union." In *A Companion to Franklin D. Roosevelt*, edited by William D. Pederson. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Kivelson, Valerie A., and Neuberger, Joan. *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Kluger, Richard. *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*. New York: Vintage Books, 1986.
- Kotkin, Stephen. *Stalin*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014.
- Ladino, Jennifer. "Longing for Wonderland: Nostalgia for Nature in Post-Frontier America." *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* 5 (2004): 88-110.
- Lee III, Rensselaer W. "Political Absorption of Western Technologies: The Soviet and Chinese Cases." *Studies in Comparative Communism* 15, no. 1 (1982): 9-33.
- Luciuk, Lubomyr Y. *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*. Michigan: Kashtan Press, 2004.
- Maclean, Elizabeth Kimball. "Joseph E. Davies and Soviet-American Relations, 1941-43." *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 1 (1980): 73-94.
- Maclean, Elizabeth Kimball. *Joseph E. Davies: Envoy to the Soviets*. Westport, Con.: Praeger,

1992.

Maddux, Thomas R. *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-1941*. Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980.

Mayers, David. *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

McCannon, John. *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

McLoughlin, Barry, and McDermott, Kevin. *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*. Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Mills, William James. *Exploring Polar Frontiers: A Historical Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003.

Morris, Joe Alex. *Deadline Every Minute; the Story of the United Press*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1957.

Naleszkiewicz, Wladimir. "Technical Assistance of the American Enterprises to the Growth of the Soviet Union, 1929-1933." *The Russian Review* 25, no. 1 (1966): 54-76.

Nash, Gerald D. "The Census of 1890 and the Closing of the Frontier." *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 71, No. 3 (1980): 98-100.

Olšáková, Doubravka. *In the Name of the Great Work: Stalin's Plan for the Transformation of Nature and its Impact in Eastern Europe*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016.

Palmer, Scott W. *Dictatorship of the Air: Aviation Culture and the Fate of Modern Russia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Pells, Richard H. *Radical Visions and American Dreams; Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Péteri, György. *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Series in Russian and East European Studies. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.

Petrone, Karen. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Plamper, Jan. *The Stalin Cult*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

Powaski, Ronald E. *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Priestland, David. *Stalinism and the Politics of Mobilization Ideas, Power, and Terror in Inter-War Russia*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Randall, Amy E. *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Rendle, Matthew. "Revolutionary Tribunals and the Origins of Terror in Early Soviet Russia." *Historical Research* 84 (2011): 693-721.
- Roberts, David. *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Ruben, Nancy. *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004.
- Ruddy, T. Michael. *The Cautious Diplomat: Charles E. Bohlen and the Soviet Union, 1929-1969*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986.
- Sanborn, Joshua A. *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011.
- Schild, Georg. *Between Ideology and Realpolitik: Woodrow Wilson and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Schlögel, Karl., and Livingstone, Rodney. *Moscow, 1937*. Cambridge, England ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012.
- Shaw, Denis J. B. "Mastering Nature through Science: Soviet Geographers and the Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature, 1948-53," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 93 No. 1 (2015): 120-146.
- Shmanske, Stephen. "News as a Public Good: Cooperative Ownership, Price Commitments, and the Success of the Associated Press. (history of Wire News Services)." *Business History Review* 60 (1986): 55-80.
- Siegelbaum, Lewis H. *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Siegelbaum, Lewis H., ed. *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Silberstein-Loeb, Jonathan. "Exclusivity and Cooperation in the Supply of News: The Example of the Associated Press, 1893-1945." *Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 3 (2012): 466-98.
- Silberstein-Loeb, Jonathan. *The International Distribution of News The Associated Press, Press*

- Association, and Reuters, 1848-1947*. Cambridge Studies in the Emergence of Global Enterprise. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Silva, David A. "Alternative Media Portrayals of the Soviet Union and the Cold War from 1929–1933: The Boston Globe, Chicago Defender, Catholic World and Catholic Worker during the Great Depression and American-Soviet Recognition." MA thesis, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2010.
- Slezkine, Yuri. "From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938." *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (1992): 52-76.
- Slotkin, Richard. "Nostalgia and Progress: Theodore Roosevelt's Myth of the Frontier." *American Quarterly* 33, No. 5 (1981): 608-637.
- Stettinius, Edward R. *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference*. London: Cape, 1950.
- Stites, Richard. "Trial as Theatre in the Russian Revolution." *Theatre Research International* 23, no. 1 (1998): 7–13.
- Strukov, Vlad, and Goscilo, Helena, eds. *Russian Aviation, Space Flight, and Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Sutton, Antony C. *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development, 1917 to 1930*. Stanford: Stanford University, 1968.
- Swift, Anthony. "The Soviet World of Tomorrow at the New York World' Fair, 1939." *The Russian Review* 57 (1998): 364-379.
- Taylor, Sally J. *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty The New York Time's Man in Moscow*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Thelen, David P. *Robert M. La Follette and the Insurgent Spirit*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Therborn, Göran. "Entangled Modernities." *European Journal of Social Theory* 6, 3 (2003): 293-305.
- Thurston, Robert W. *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Tucker, Robert C. *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality*. New York: Norton, 1973.
- Tucker, Robert C. and Cohen, Stephen F., ed. *The Great Purge Trial*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965.

Tzouliadis, Tim. *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2008.

Ullman, Richard H. "The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941." *World Politics* 9, no. 2 (1957): 220-239.

Wawruck-Hemmett, Ruth. "The Great Interpreter Walter Duranty's View of the Soviet Union, 1921-1949." Order No. ML54841, MA thesis, University of Manitoba (Canada), 1989.

Weaver, Larry Allen. "Joseph E. Davies and the American Mission to Moscow, 1936-1938." Order No. 9907290, PhD diss., Indiana University, 1998.

Whitewood, Peter. *The Red Army and the Great Terror Stalin's Purge of the Soviet Military*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2015.

Wilkins, Mira, and Frank Ernest Hill. *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents*. Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1964.

Wood, Elizabeth. *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.