Letting “Mad Dogs” Lie: Anglo-American Journalism and the First Moscow Trial, 1936

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Presented for the Partial Requirements

Necessary for a Master of Arts Degree (History) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec

March 2018

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: Letting "Mad Dogs" Lie: Anglo-American Journalism and the First Moscow Trial, 1936

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts, History

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

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There have been many scholarly efforts covering the period in the Soviet Union known as the Great Terror; most often these writings tried to contextualize and understand the inner working of the regime or its people. The present work shifts this lens, since it seeks to uncover how Anglo-American audiences grappled with one significant event from that era: the 1936 Trial of the Sixteen, the first of Stalin's major show trials. As the Old Bolsheviks were led to the slaughter, people in the West received a myriad of information concerning this very public spectacle. A lack of functional newspaper scrutiny as the event took place, combined with the charged rhetoric of politicized post-trial publications, ultimately ensured that no outlet offered information about the trial beyond the apparent legitimacy that it gave to their specific causes. The trial itself therefore became more than the prosecution of sixteen individuals, as the entire affair allowed interested parties to manipulate the overall meaning to suit causes or ideologies that were either in favor of or completely against the current Soviet regime. Such an undertaking necessarily includes close readings of both works on the Terror and journalistic approaches to the period in order to demonstrate the conclusions of this thesis. In focusing on a single event, there is hope that some light can be shed on the larger problems associated with the spread of information across the globe during this significant period.

Acknowledgements

It almost feels as if writing these acknowledgements is more difficult than the academic work to follow. I am trying to figure out how to put into words the gratitude I feel for those who have helped me along this path. Countless family members, friends, colleagues, and professors were involved in molding me into the individual I am today, and for that they all have my thanks. I only regret I do not have the space to express proper appreciation for each one of them. Special thanks go to Dr. Alison Rowley, whose guidance and words of wisdom kept me focused and well-prepared. It was truly an honour to work with her on this project. Finally, I need to thank my mother, Patrice Mitchell, for being a constant and unmovable pillar of support, even if she does not always understand exactly what I am working on, or why. Without her, none of this would be possible, and it is to her that I dedicate my thesis.

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A Note on Terminology

In the transliteration from Russian to English, many of the studies utilized in this thesis opt for different styles. In order to maintain a sense of consistency, the names and locations will follow a similar Library of Congress (LOC) system to that featured in J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov's *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. As such, the following section was lifted from that publication:

> In final position:
>
> ii in the LOC system becomes y (Trotsky, not Trotskii)
>
> iia = ia (Izvestia, not Izvestiia)
>
> nyi= ny (Nagorny, not Nagornyi)
>
> In initial position:
>
> E = Ye (Yezhov, not Ezhov)
>
> Ia = Ya (Yaroslavsky, not Iaroslavsky)
>
> Iu = Yu (Yudin, not Iudin)*

Similarly, several names have been anglicized for easier reading, most notably Joseph Stalin, as opposed to Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin. However, any newspaper articles with different spellings have been left as they were originally published.

* J. 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), xix.

Introduction: The Importance of the News

The lightning fast speed at which information spreads is taken for granted in the modern world. Thanks to technological advances in recent years, the world appears smaller than ever, readily accessible with the click of a button or the touch of a screen. As a result, there is easy access to news information of practically any conceivable variety, as it literally exists at our fingertips. A realistic problem then falls to choosing from among the countless available sources in order to stay informed. These modern conveniences are not inherently negative, and any debates concerning such matters can be left to those willing to undertake them. Leaving aside moralistic judgments surrounding the idea of information overload allows for an examination of the mechanisms and sources that offer forth the quick and ready access to the news itself. In contemporary times, that field is open to nearly anyone able to publish, post, or stream their stories. Even private citizens can now co-exist with massive media empires, offering their take on the news via a myriad of available options: television, radio, social media sites, online news sources, blogs, podcasts, live streams, and even print media, which continues to labour on despite the competition from these modern means of communication. But it was not always this easy to obtain information about disparate parts of the world.

Before the Internet, before 24-hour news stations, even before the rise of radio, the world invariably seemed like a much larger place. While foreign correspondents had to work differently than they do today, these eras do share a commonality: speed – something that cannot be separated from the spread of information. Whoever got the news the fastest could sell it before the rest, so speed became crucial as journalism evolved into a profitable industry. To quote John Maxwell Hamilton, “the market value of news – and newspapers – was increasingly

tied to how *new* the news was."[1] Spending too much time writing or researching a story meant that you could lose out to rivals who printed the information faster than you, all of which related to the business model that informed journalism as soon as the first foreign correspondents appeared in earnest during the mid-19th century.[2] Such a statement holds true to this day, as modern technology allows for constant updates, which in turn helps explain why instances of misinformation are relayed to audiences, either purposefully or accidentally.

This brief foray into the potential uncertainties and dangers associated with contemporary news coverage might seem odd in a work that will focus on the volatile and violent years of the interwar Soviet Union. However, it is the very instability of that time which requires an appreciation of the many converging avenues that surround the topic. One major news event covered by Anglo-American journalists was the infamous 1936 "Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre."[3] The first of the Soviet Moscow Trials, also known as the Trial of the Sixteen and the First Moscow Trial, occurred when sixteen individuals were tried and executed for murder, treason, and assassination attempts. Some of these defendants were longstanding members of the Bolshevik party; in other words, men with ties to the party's origins, the 1917 Revolution, and the establishment of the Soviet regime. The accused included Grigory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, Ivan Smirnov, Grigory Yevdokimov, Ivan Bakayev, and others.[4] Perhaps most importantly, the charges against them were also completely fabricated, with the defendants being the ones to volunteer the confessions that led to their deaths. In order to understand how news information about this event was gathered, circulated, and subsequently

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[1] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign News Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2009), 54-55. Italics in the original.
[2] Although some may consider the title "correspondent" as different from "reporter" or "journalist," these terms will be used synonymously for all intents and purposes throughout this work.
[3] Although there remains a major focus on Anglo-American sources in the current study, they are oftentimes designated as "Western," which is not an effort to establish an all-encompassing approach.
[4] See Appendix 1 for a full list of the defendants.

interpreted (or misinterpreted), a solid grasp of the processes in place is necessary.[5] The crossover of history and journalism provides a distinct approach to this difficult subject matter which speaks to the intense human misery that arose throughout this period. This research will offer a blended mix of sources on the Great Terror (which reached its most violent stages in the years 1937-1938), since that body of work includes accounts by the journalists and diplomats who witnessed and offered forth their interpretations of the trial. Their works also enable us to understand the means by which the news of events in Moscow traveled and was made available to ordinary citizens around the world. If tensions abounded between the East and the West even before the outset of the Cold War, the First Moscow Trial acts as a specific instance on which to concentrate our understanding of the spread of information at the time.

A small aside on the subject matter itself is needed, as it is obvious that more than one major news event took place in the Soviet Union in the tumultuous 1930s. The choice of focusing on this specific case is not to imply that this trial was more important than those that came before or after, or that the fates of sixteen individuals deserve more consideration than the millions affected by Stalinist policies.[6] Instead, the public nature of the show trial allows for a concentration on the crossover between history and journalism, based on the coverage of the trial itself. Since the Trial of the Sixteen was the first major show trial that resulted in the deaths of Old Bolsheviks, as well as its close proximity to the most brutal period of the Great Terror, it can act as a worthwhile case on which to center an analysis of the era. Using this moment is also

[5] Throughout this work, the Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre will also be referred to as the First Moscow Trial and the Trial of the Sixteen to avoid repetition. Similarly, the period in question will often be referred to as the Terror.

[6] Show trials became a mainstay of Soviet life as the regime established itself in the 1920s. By the 1930s, they were practically commonplace. See, among others, Julie Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial: Early Soviet Courts on Stage and Screen* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000); Elizabeth A. Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); and William Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Trials and the Construction of Mortal Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, eds. Sarah Davies and James Harris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 226-248.

important due to the changes in opinion inspired by the Terror, not the least of which concerned the possible arrest or execution of Americans living in the USSR.[7] This effort does not seek to undermine works on the everyday Soviet citizen who suffered immensely during the Terror, and such publications deserve praise for researching such a demanding facet of Soviet history. At the same time, being dragged into debates on the legitimacy of certain academic undertakings over others contributes next to nothing in terms of furthering our knowledge of a particularly uncertain historical period. If the Western media of the era focused on events such as show trials over potential alternatives, that knowledge offers contemporary researchers insight into what was deemed important or "newsworthy." In turn, connecting the East and the West through media is one means of avoiding a strict nation-centric focus that cannot account for the intricacies of foreign relations in a world growing smaller than ever before. As a result, my work will be deliberately transnational in focus.

It is important that one never forgets the more ominous possibilities associated with journalism and its correspondents. Harold J. Laski writes that "there is an unconscious deception in reporting, as well as a conscious deception; which of the two is responsible for the greater amount of false judgments is difficult to say."[8] The notion that reporters have their own agendas seems to undermine the relationship between the free press and an informed public. As one delves into the many publications of the 1930s, it remains imperative to consider the correspondents as individuals with their own biases, who were in no way above writing their stories with a specific purpose in mind, and who wanted to keep their prestigious positions no matter the cost. In turn, the editors and owners of the news outlets also influenced the content of

[7] David S. Fogelsong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire:" The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80.
[8] Harold J. Laski, "Introduction," in Robert W. Desmond, *The Press and World Affairs* (New Haven and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1937), xxiii.

their publications based on their own beliefs, and values. Even beyond journalists, there were many others who attempted to use these news stories to influence public opinion for their own ends. Finally, consumers made decisions (consciously or unconsciously) about sources and the institutions to which they subscribed. While purposefully false reporting was rare (but not unheard of), to this day there remains a potential danger in accepting what certain publications offer forth without a critical eye, or else individuals risk avoiding any news that does not conform to their own preconceptions on the subject matter.

As the Soviet Union grew into an established and recognized nation, the world necessarily began to take notice. The many alternatives to American or European viewpoints that exist today were not as readily available in the 1930s. As such, a focus on the West (and particularly on American and British sources) in this context is less about reinforcing an already dominant perspective than it is about examining how that perspective shaped issues throughout the period in question. It was Stephen Kotkin, in his influential work *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, who remarked on the potential impact of the Soviet Union on the rest of the world; he noted that "few scholars have taken up, even in general terms, the influence of the USSR on Western Europe and the United States."[9] As representatives of the major world powers at the time, American and European reporters wielded considerable influence, especially in light of the vastly different (and limited) media landscape. The 1930s also offer insight into both the beginning and the end of stages in the history of journalism, as the "golden age of foreign correspondence" flourished during the interwar years.[10] It is through all of these seemingly separate, yet often converging, avenues that we will now travel.

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[9] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 392, n. 88.
[10] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 2.

1 – Historiography: Understanding the Landscape of Historical Writing on the Soviet 1930s*

Academic works on the Soviet Union, and the Great Terror in particular, have been an actively published subject for decades. Reforms in the Gorbachev era allowed limited Western access to previously hidden archives, thereby widening the scope for researchers who were intent on pursuing new approaches to Soviet history.[11] But it was the 1991 fall of the USSR that allowed for the massive influx of new publications, and made the past seventy-four years of Soviet rule more of an open field of study than ever before. The number of publications that followed was astounding, offering up dynamic interpretations and reconsiderations of the Soviet Union that were never before possible.[12] New approaches to culture and resistance moved into the forefront of analyses about the 1930s, although the Great Terror remained an area of significant interest.[13] Despite the access to archival documents and data, an issue concerning these efforts remains pertinent. Simply put, many scholarly works on the Great Terror regard the era within a purely Soviet context. While it is no doubt important, even necessary in early stages, to consider such a period in terms of its effects on Soviet citizens, this internal focus leaves a void in understanding how events from that period went beyond the confines of one, albeit large, nation. Stating the transnational possibilities associated with studies on the Terror does not diminish its established and tragic effects on the Soviet people. Instead, demonstrating how such

* It is important to note at this moment that there are little to no Russian language texts used for this work, unless previously translated. Aside from the author's lack of proficiency in the language, there remains a plethora of work on the Soviet Union from Western sources, and a Western (or Anglo-American) consideration necessarily dominates the focus of the overall piece.

[11] Donald J. Raleigh, "Doing Soviet History: The Impact of the Archival Revolution," *The Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (2002), 16-19.

[12] The openness allowed for scholars to consider means of improving a system that was inaccessible only several years before. See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Increasing Reference Access to Post-1991 Russian Archives," *Slavic Review* 56, no. 4 (1997): 718-759. For an interesting analysis of the Russian archives throughout history, see Jan Plamper, Archival Revolution or Illusion? Historicizing The Russian Archives and Our Work in Them, *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge, 51, no. 1 (2003), 57-69.

[13] Hiroaki Kuromiya, "Accounting for the Great Terror," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge, 53, no. 1 (2005), 86-87. See also Mark Von Hagen, "The Archival Gold Rush and Historical Agendas in the Post-Soviet Era," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 1 (1993), 96-100.

deadly repression, which developed in a single country, was understood beyond national borders offers the opportunity to trace how such a devastating period was interpreted and considered by people in a different area of the world. In terms of the scholarship concerning the 1930s, there were three distinct phases, set chronologically, that still oftentimes converged with one another.

The first phase reveals Western criticism of the Soviet Union, which flourished during the Cold War period. Commonly fitting under the umbrella term of the "totalitarian" model, these works focused on the idea of Joseph Stalin as dictator and sole power leading the Soviet Union. Disregarding the ideological nuances between East and West, this model considers Soviet society through a top-down view that necessarily discounts the autonomy of ordinary citizens by emphasizing the role of a leader who pushed forth an agenda of terror on the helpless populace.[14] The notion of an ongoing and distinct threat to Western capitalism posed by this alternative system flourished even after the death of the Soviet Union's most notable dictator.[15]

Perhaps the most significant work arising from the totalitarian paradigm was Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties*. First published in 1968, it became a mainstay in Soviet historical studies and was revised and re-published on numerous occasions, with the author claiming that many credited him with coining the term "Great Terror."[16] Conquest completely backed the idea of Stalin's total authority, detailing his rise to power after Vladimir Lenin's death (namely the defeat of both Stalin's Leftist and Rightist rivals in the 1920s), with the Terror considered as an inevitability based on the Soviet system and its leader.[17] While attempting to widen the purview of the Terror to focus on high estimates of the number of

[14] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," *History and Theory* 46, no. 4 (2007), 80.
[15] David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66; and Adam B. Ulam, "The New Face of Soviet Totalitarianism," *World Politics* 12, no. 3 (1960), 391, 399-400.
[16] Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), vii. For an example of this phenomenon, see Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 140.
[17] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 3, 7-12, 15-19.

victims,[18] significant space was devoted to major events surrounding the Terror, such as the death of Sergei Kirov and the Moscow Trials. Kirov was a popular Bolshevik official who was assassinated on December 1, 1934. The following days and months saw a tightening restriction on Soviet laws, allowing for the arrest, trial, and execution without the right of appeal of Soviet citizens accused of terrorism. Calling it the "crime of the century" for all the subsequent harm done as a result, Conquest lays the blame for the actual assassination at Stalin's feet.[19] When considering the Moscow Trials, he systematically denies the show trials' validity by deconstructing the processes involved in the sentencing of the defendants. In terms of the Trial of the Sixteen, these processes concerned the lack of substantial material evidence aside from the confessions of the accused.[20] The show trials figured prominently, but not exclusively, in Conquest's analysis of the larger Soviet system.

The Great Terror, like other works from its time, was published before the possibility of gaining significant access to Soviet documents and archives.[21] Aside from the sources scholars could actually access, Conquest made use of émigré memoirs and the like; however, he almost totally dismissed Soviet-sanctioned publications, which he considered "worthless" due to the "falsification" of such documents.[22] A further point is that some general statements by Conquest leave much to the imagination of the reader, especially in terms of connections to the West. In detailing the courtroom atmosphere, he focuses on the approximately thirty foreign journalists without mentioning many of their identities. Similarly, he considers the Moscow Trials as

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[18] Conquest argues that a total number of deaths associated with the Terror can never be known, but estimates that it can be no less than fifteen million people. See Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, xvi.
[19] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 37 ("crime of the century"). The entire affair is covered, and Conquest's opinions made clear, between pages 37-52.
[20] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 107. The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center is covered in detail between pages 78-109.
[21] The Smolensk Archive was used for these purposes. It housed Soviet documents taken by the Germans in World War Two, which in turn fell into American hands after the conflict. Merle Fainsod also made use of these limited documents in *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).
[22] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, xiv.

moments "which shook the entire world," without offering further insight as to the meaning behind such a statement.[23] One of the instances when Conquest considers the West in relation to the Soviet Union is a lament about the difficulties in transmitting word of an event such as the Terror to a Western audience.[24] The vagueness of such proclamations does little to advance an appreciation for any concrete effects of the Moscow Trials beyond the Soviet Union; instead, it offered firm grounding for an anti-Soviet paradigm that persisted during this stage of historical writing. In pushing for Western ideals – such as "freedom of judgment and freedom of the press" – in the Soviet world, the author exemplifies the mentality of the Cold War era by attributing Western values to a foreign nation.[25] The importance of Conquest's work lies more in its durability than in either its theoretical underpinnings or the vehemence of the overall argument.

Beginning with *The Great Terror* is not to claim that there were no precedents concerning the totalitarian model,[26] but it is imperative to consider the connection between this first phase (in which Conquest's work is perhaps the best known example) and the mentality surrounding the Cold War. Totalitarianism as a theory also received support from within the Soviet Union, through the works of Roy A. Medvedev. After the publication of his voluminous *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (1971), Medvedev followed up with *On Stalin and Stalinism* (1979), in which he continued to focus almost exclusively on Stalin and "his epoch."[27] In taking a Marxist perspective, he offered an alternative frame of reference to

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[23] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 91, 109 ("which shook the entire world").
[24] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 250-251.
[25] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 463.
[26] For example, see Nathan Leites and Elsa Bernaut, *Ritual of Liquidation: the Case of the Moscow Trials* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1954); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); and Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, *Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party: A Study in the Technology of Power* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959). A small aside, Conquest later called his use of the term "totalitarianism" as "descriptive" more than a "model," though such distinctions seem reactionary more than anything. See Robert Conquest, "Academe and the Soviet Myth," *National Interest* 31 (Spring, 1993), 95. See also Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 328.
[27] Roy A. Medvedev, *On Stalin and Stalinism*, trans. Ellen de Kadt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), ix.

Conquest, while still subscribing to the same paradigm, in which Stalin remained the focal point. Medvedev's work was published both in the Soviet Union and (in a translated version) in the West, although its connection to the popular totalitarian model may account for its wide scope during the Cold War.

Despite this apparent support from within the USSR, the broader, pre-existing tensions between the capitalist West and communist East were exacerbated in the years after the Second World War. Such an atmosphere allowed for a polarization of the "us against them" mentality, leaving little room for deviation.[28] In turn, the use of publications by those who escaped the Soviet regime had a particular resonance, since they offered first-hand accounts that could lend support to totalitarian claims.[29] Some of the best known works include Walter Krivitsky's *In Stalin's Secret Service* (1939), Alexander Barmine's *One Who Survived* (1945), Victor Kravchenko's *I Chose Freedom* (1946), and Alexander Orlov's *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes* (1954). Many of the memoirs emphasized a line of ideological failings based on Stalinist totalitarianism.[30] These apparent justifications for their writing allowed scholars during this period to offer forth comparisons between the Soviet Union and other totalitarian systems, most notably Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.[31] Indeed, Conquest makes the striking assertion that there was a degree of admiration from Stalin for the Nazi dictator, at least in terms of how he dealt with political opponents.[32] These types of connections further supported the totalitarian paradigm, as sharing similarities with the Nazis was a definitive means of ensuring continued

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[28] Lynne Viola, "The Cold War in American Soviet Historiography and the End of the Soviet Union," *The Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (2002), 25-26.
[29] E.H. Carr was criticized for not utilizing émigré sources in his series *A History of Soviet Russia* (first published in 1950), an indication of their rising prominence. See Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 85, n. 24.
[30] Jay Bergman, "The Memoirs of Soviet Defectors: Are They a Reliable Source about the Soviet Union?" *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 31, no. 1 (1989), 9-10, 19. See also Kevin McDermott, "Archives, Power and the 'Cultural Turn': Reflections on Stalin and Stalinism." *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 2004), 6.
[31] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 80.
[32] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 65.

animosity between the people in the West (as the targeted audience of English-language scholarship) and the Soviet Union. Even if their publications occurred well after the establishment of the totalitarian model, *The Great Terror* and similar undertakings offered seemingly comprehensive evidence, justifying the Cold War mentality from which it was produced.

The internalized focus of the totalitarian model (necessitated through its consideration of dictator control as all-encompassing) was not above reproach, as seen in works such as E.H. Carr's *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (1973). Based on a series of lectures given over two decades earlier, Carr looks to how the Soviet Union affected the West, all within an optimistic (to the degree that some might consider naive) perspective on postwar unity.[33] Carr offers early insight of the Soviet Union in a more transnational context. Even though he focuses on Western nations (specifically Great Britain) instead of a wider array of affected countries, such a narrow focus is more of an indication of the times, similar to writings in the interwar era.

As the Cold War progressed into the late 1960s and 1970s, a desire to consider Soviet history in a new light led to the second stage of historical writing, that of the "revisionists."[34] Moving away from authoritarian politics into the realms of social history, revisionists offered a redirected focus and a "new cohort of historians" who moved from a top-down to a bottom-up view of society.[35] While not all-encompassing,[36] revisionists looked to elements of Soviet society

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[33] E.H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1973), vii-ix, 112-113.
[34] McDermott, "Archives, Power, and the 'Cultural Turn,'" 6-7; and Robert C. Tucker, "The Stalin Period as an Historical Problem," *The Russian Review* 46, no. 4 (1987), 424-425. Tucker indicates that political scientists were moving away from totalitarianism before historians.
[35] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "New Perspectives on Stalinism," *The Russian Review* 45, no. 4 (1986), 35 ("new cohort of historians"). For further examples of this shift, see Tucker, "The Stalin Period," 426; Wendy Z. Goldman, *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin: The Social Dynamics of Repression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7-8; and Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Constructing Stalinism: Changing Western and Soviet Perspectives," in *The Stalin Phenomenon*, ed. Alec Nove (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993), 82-83.
[36] Some Sovietologists took exception to the apparently overarching wave of revisionism being synonymous with social history, as well as taking issue with the consideration of the Soviet social history being necessarily linked to

that had been ignored in the past, instead of singling out Stalin and the political elite. These elements included moments throughout the Terror that had the power to change the surrounding landscape. Another criticism covered by revisionists was the connection between the totalitarian academic industry and Western government funding (American in particular), which seemed to undermine the overall credibility of all parties by engaging in a cycle where the research supported the system and the system continued funding the research.[37] During this period, there was still no significant access to the Soviet archives, but that did not slow efforts to undermine what revisionists understood as the firmly established, but significantly flawed, totalitarian model.

In *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (1979), Sheila Fitzpatrick considers Soviet history through this new social lens, looking towards the evolving nature of education established in the early USSR, especially in terms its connection to "upward social mobility" of the non-elite.[38] While not directly related to the Terror, her work offered an indication of a changing atmosphere within the field of Soviet studies, especially with respect to the lack of political motivations surrounding the scholarly work itself. While still analyzing how elites affected society, the entire social stratum was now up for consideration.[39] In terms of overt responses to the totalitarian approach, it was J. Arch Getty's *Origins of the Great Purges* (1985) that considered the interwar period in a new light (and the Terror in particular). He focused on "evaluating structural, institutional, and ideological factors" with the use of "documentary evidence" wherever possible, although admitting to being forced to rely on speculation to some

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the state. See William Chase, "Social History and Revisionism of the Stalinist Era," *The Russian Review* 46, no. 4 (1987): 382-385; and Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 286-287.

[37] Fitzpatrick, "New Perspectives on Stalinism," 357; Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 80-81; and Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 5-9.

[38] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 3-4, 16-17 ("upward social mobility").

[39] A premiere example of this shift can be seen (even in the title) in Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

degree.[40] He specifically mentions Conquest and Medvedev, undercutting their reliance on memoirs (especially those listed above) and underground dissident accounts (often biased due to the fact they were smuggled to and printed in the West). Since the authors of many of the memoirs were not active in the upper echelons of the Party, their second- or third-hand accounts were less reliable sources than scholars of the totalitarianism view suggested. Getty took issue with the overall lack of critical analysis, as the goals for those writing the memoirs were never questioned (specifically in that they were defectors trying to sell a story).[41] In terms of the First Moscow Trial, Getty claimed that the event constituted "the end rather than the beginning of something," meaning that instead of a concentrated effort to begin a systemic purge, the trial seemed rather contained. The entire affair seemed to be full of contradictions, stops and starts, and uncertain moments.[42] At this time, even moves into the lower echelons of Soviet society could seemingly not overcome the need to comprehend or discuss the Moscow Trials.

The attack on the totalitarian model did not go unanswered. Instead of collaboration, there were serious tensions between proponents of the two models, especially as it pertained to the 1930s (even more than to other periods).[43] Revisionists considered their rivals as "Cold Warriors" with political motivations and government money obstructing their judgment, whereas those in the totalitarian school saw the revisionists as "whitewashers" who legitimized Stalin and the Soviet regime by removing blame from those deemed responsible for mass violence.[44] Perhaps as a retort to such arguments, Getty claimed that Stalin still held primary moral responsibility for the Terror. However, it was not that the role of dictator was questioned, but there was a growing consideration that the Communist Party was not as all-encompassing as

[40] J, Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), vii.
[41] Getty, *Origins*, 4-5, 211-213, 222, n. 12.
[42] Getty, *Origins*, 123-127.
[43] Viola, "The Cold War in American Soviet Historiography," 25-26, see also n. 2.
[44] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 81.

previously thought, and that alternate approaches to understanding the period's complexities were necessary.[45] This common goal did not result in academic cohesion even amongst the so-called revisionist scholars, who still subscribed to different fields within history.[46] Still, the revisionist model gained support as the 1980s progressed, becoming the mainstay based on the amount of work produced and the rising interest in social (as opposed to political) history. An interesting note is that this acceptance did not translate from the academic to the public sphere, as many still related the violence of the period to the actions of Stalin alone.[47]

The move to a general acceptance of the broader revisionist model by scholars connects with the next stage in Western writing of Soviet history, what is referred to as "post-revisionism." The rise of the post-revisionists coincided with a move in the late 1980s towards examining cultural history, made even more important as the 1991 fall of the USSR allowed increased access to the Soviet archives. This trend followed a larger movement in the wider historical community, in that cultural considerations such as ideology could be understood through its construction by society's innumerable elements, not only the elite. For those interested in the Soviet Union, both top-down and bottom-up views were problematic, as power relations move through many levels in society in order to function (and not strictly in a single direction). However, a major difference from the earlier historiographical shift is that post-revisionists were significantly less heated in their debates than the practitioners of the totalitarian and revisionist models.[48]

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[45] Getty, *Origins*, 5-9.
[46] For an example of this lack of cohesion in terms of Fitzpatrick's work, see Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 299-300, 304-305. See also 305-308, where Engerman notes that scholars such as Getty remained primarily concerned with political history, despite his inclusion in Fitzpatrick's generalized revisionist school. For proof of this consideration, see J. Arch Getty, "The Politics of Stalinism," in *The Stalin Phenomenon*, ed. Alec Nove (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993): 100-151, where his entire chapter reflects an ongoing interest in Soviet political history.
[47] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 79.
[48] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 87-88.

Even if experts in the field were not always in unison, a partial opening of the archives meant a significant increase in Western publications concerning the Soviet Union. Many revisionist scholars continued their efforts, working alongside a new group of academics intent on uncovering alternative means of regarding the Soviet period, and the 1930s were not exempt from their attention. Fitzpatrick and Getty continued to publish books, as these new documents allowed them to delve further into the Terror and its larger effects in more detail.[49] Although many sources became available, it was Kevin McDermott who noted that despite the "archival gold rush," there were few major revelations uncovered, such as the truth behind Kirov's death or a journal written by Stalin detailing his mindset. This discovery (or lack thereof) propelled researchers to consider different approaches to Soviet history, including degrees of support for or resistance to the regime. It remains important to note that the archives did indicate Stalin's hands-on approach in certain matters, which means that there is little chance of separating him from the period completely. In turn, the power dynamics within the Soviet bureaucracy offer a new avenue in which to direct research.[50]

As such, the 1990s led to numerous developments away from the previous models. An important example of this ongoing phenomenon was Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (1995), in which the scholar lays out problems with both paradigms: while considering the totalitarianism approach as overly simplistic in its efforts to understand the Soviet Union, revisionists do little more than consider the chaotic nature of the period without offering a viable means of replacing the model they undermined. Taking this account further, the "middle ground" between these two models focuses on *why* the Terror occurred, instead of

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[49] See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
[50] McDermott, "Archives, Power, and the 'Cultural Turn,'" 7-9 ("archival gold rush"), 15-16.

considering *how* it managed to take place at all.[51] It seemed impossible to avoid consideration of past debates, even as new approaches were becoming the mainstay, as if not only acknowledging, but overcoming past scholarship was a necessity in establishing oneself in the academic field.

In *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-1941* (1997), Sarah Davies considers the old debates to have overloaded the spectrum, so that alternate opinions to either model have been largely ignored. She advocates an approach that considers the voices that have been lost or silenced in the past, especially those caught up in the larger processes of moving throughout the Party bureaucracy.[52] One of the major difficulties of accessing so many sources is that the entire landscape is clouded, and there can be few concrete answers at times. Davies shows that while dissent existed against Stalinist directives to control public opinion, others were completely taken in by the regime's efforts.[53] However, just as works showing dissent of the Soviet population undermined the totalitarianism model, instances where potential revisionist "whitewashing" concerns also became evident. Robert Thurston's *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941* (1996) undercuts the totalitarianism view as "irrelevant" due to the idea that efforts to exert total control would lead to unforeseen problems for the regime itself.[54] In terms of the show trials, Thurston considers the small degrees of truth (such as the existence of an oppositionist bloc) within the fabricated charges as a means of exonerating Stalin of "plotting a campaign against the nation." Instead, he was being reactive to the events

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[51] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 284-285. In terms of the totalitarian model, Kotkin mentions Conquest specifically; for the revisionists, he mentions Getty.
[52] Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinions in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-6.
[53] Davies, *Popular Opinion*, 183-184. Davies was not alone in these less than concrete findings, see Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 252-253.
[54] Robert Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), xvi-xviii.

and legitimate threats occurring around him.[55] By minimizing the guilt of Stalin to such a high degree and claiming that most citizens were loyal to the regime, Davies considers works such as Thurston's to be the extremist version of revisionism.[56] Clearly, access to the Soviet archives did not result in total academic cohesion, although conflicts seemed less impassioned than before.

Revisionist and post-revisionist historians continued to lead the debate, despite the revisionist approach apparently becoming the mainstay. However, these cultural movements in historical research did not mean that totalitarianism was completely forgotten. Moving against post-revisionism became a viable means of approaching Soviet historical writing, again based on the seemingly inevitable blowback against the commonly accepted historiography.[57] Aside from the public, some historians also continued to include Stalin as the focus of their work. Oleg V. Khlevniuk's *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle* (2009) operates on this trend, regarding the period through an understanding of the political relations between Stalin and the Party elite. While other historians may have moved onto social or cultural approaches, Khlevniuk uses Soviet sources to push the idea of Stalin's power being "imposed from above," rather than a consideration from below.[58] Despite the different eras in which they published their respective works, Khlevniuk appears to be associated with Conquest and the totalitarian model.[59] It also seems as though studies in political history (and the Moscow Trials) remain an area of interest, despite a move towards the cultural, transnational, or even the emotional sphere.[60]

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[55] Thurston, *Life and Terror*, 27-28, 57-58 ("plotting"), 227.
[56] Davies, *Popular Opinion*, 5-6.
[57] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 87-88, n. 35.
[58] Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 246-250.
[59] Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 2-4; J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 9-10. At the same time, it must be noted that Khlevniuk claims to hold a strong working relationship with the noted revisionist Sheila Fitzpatrick. See Khlevniuk, *Master of the House*, x.
[60] For an example of this shifting focus, see the forum entitled "Emotional Turn? Feelings in Russian History and Culture," in *Slavic Review* 68, no. 2 (Summer, 2009), 229-334. For an overview of the rising trend of transnational history, see Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

The many complexities concerning the Western historiographical treatment of the Soviet Terror can hardly be contained in this short overview, but suffice it to say that there were numerous personal, societal, and ideological differences coinciding with the evolving trends in historical writing. Sheila Fitzpatrick, a prominent member of the revisionist school, argues that the real causes of breaking with the totalitarian model (and even the later shifts to post-revisionism) were more the result of generational over ideological adjustments, with younger scholars opting to take a different route than their predecessors.[61] If the new generation of scholars coincided with changing historical trends, then the longevity of these historiographical debates within the field indicate ongoing conflicts concerning the degree to which academic legitimacy is gauged, regardless of the subject matter under consideration. The ongoing controversies surrounding academic approaches to the 1930s and the Terror demonstrate that the personal opinions of the scholars themselves seem to indicate the tone of their approach, even in terms of considering their predecessors. Proving them wrong may have been more important than offering a new means of understanding the period.

Separated from the rigidity of historical works, publications on journalism during these decades also deserve a degree of consideration, especially since news coverage necessarily figures in the spread of information across national borders. Reporters often do not have the "formal training" of historians, but are instead required to gain practical experience on the job. The diverging opinions of reporters posted to the same country and writing on the same event indicate the existence of correspondents' personal biases and the impossibility of uniformity.[62] The differences between historical writing and journalism notwithstanding, those who write

[61] Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," 90. See also Robert C. Tucker, "The Dictator and Totalitarianism," *World Politics* 17, no. 4 (July, 1965): 555-583.
[62] Serge Schmemann, "Looking Forward: The Future of Foreign Correspondence," in *Foreign Correspondence*, eds. John Maxwell Hamilton and Regina G. Lawrence (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 133-134.

about the latter field were frequently journalists themselves.[63] Their familiarity and experience allows for important insight that outsiders might not fully grasp, including the methodological complexities of foreign correspondence. At the same time, a potential problem of such writing is the style itself, as journalism is meant to be accessible to a wider audience, a motive perhaps not shared by historical works. However, efforts to weave a narrative do not immediately disqualify journalistic endeavors from their importance in terms of historical scholarship.

Even if journalists are the main contributors to the larger field of foreign correspondence and journalism studies, there are different methods through which they can center their work. Aside from actual newspaper articles from the era, two methods seem to be the most common. The first is memoirs, where correspondents recount their personal experiences relating to a specific period or surrounding a major event. Western correspondents sent to Moscow could relate their less filtered interpretations to audiences through such personal works, whereas newspaper articles require editor approval and must submit to the collective will of their targeted audience. While memoirs can add to the wider understanding of a period, there is an inevitable delay between their eventual publication (sometimes even decades later) and the event itself. This delay means that memoirs cannot wholly contribute to how an event was relayed to an audience at the time, only how the correspondent recalled (or chose to recall) their feelings about that event.[64] An example relevant to the interwar period and some of the first foreign correspondents in Moscow was that several journalists who had experienced years within the confines of the Soviet system only published their own memoirs upon leaving the nation

[63] Such an assertion is true over time in relation to books concerning the interwar years and beyond, many of which will figure prominently in this work. See Robert W. Desmond, John Hohenberg, Whitman Bassow, Regina G. Lawrence, and John Maxwell Hamilton.

[64] Getty's mistrust of Soviet-era memoirs can also be lent to correspondent memoirs, at least in the sense that they were written with a specific audience in mind. See note 41.

altogether.[65] While such works may shed light on how the period was understood in hindsight, in actuality they appear less journalistic and more experiential. The authors have their own reasons for voicing their opinions in such a manner; these choices remain an important factor to consider in utilizing their work in relation to major historical moments, in which they were participants.

The second means of relaying journalistic endeavors to the public was offering a more substantive history of journalism within a specific nation or a period of time. While not necessitating that a journalist authors such an effort, they oftentimes seem to lead the charge in many instances. The choice to take the reins may be based on the perception that others place more significance on the press's shortcomings than the methods behind actual news gathering.[66] Regardless, these works have a broader scope that necessarily leaves out historical complexities in order to cover the methods allowing for foreign correspondents' work. Publications concerning the history of journalism also seem to offer advice concerning the "proper" behavior of reporters in the field, or even to lament on the current progression of journalism as a whole.[67] In issuing what can be construed as a defense of the entire profession, there sometimes exists an inherent disregard in covering its failures. The methodological approach itself therefore stands as a major hurdle, as efforts to justify an entire profession (made even more apparent due to contemporary shifts in technology) take precedence over details that journalists in particular can develop concerning their experiences in relation to the larger historical trends.

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[65] These correspondents include Walter Duranty, Anna Louise Strong, Eugene Lyons, and William Henry Chamberlin.

[66] John Maxwell Hamilton and Regina G. Lawrence, "Introduction: Foreign Correspondence," in *Foreign Correspondence*, eds. John Maxwell Hamilton and Regina G. Lawrence (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

[67] Robert W. Desmond, *The Press and World Affairs* (New Haven and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1937), 372-374; Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988), 356; John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 322-323; and Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 459.

A case where both of the above methods converge is Whitman Bassow's *Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (1988). Moving across Soviet history, Bassow intertwines the experiences of other Western correspondents with his own, based on his time spent in the Soviet Union. Despite the inclusion of useful information (which will be considered in further detail below), one of the major issues remains the complete omission of the Great Terror. Bassow shifts from 1934 to the outset of World War II as if little of interest occurred in the interim.[68] Such glaring discrepancies do little to offer readers a glimpse inside the gathering and distribution of news during one of the USSR's most violent and uncertain periods. While perhaps a necessary sacrifice in order to cover the entire span of the Soviet Union, there remains much to be desired in terms of describing a particularly important era. This void cannot be overlooked, especially with respect to works that attempt to uncover specifics concerning the Terror.

Despite larger historiographical trends, the common aspect of the majority of publications concerning the Soviet Union in the 1930s remains a distinct focus on the internal aspects of the Terror and its effects on the Soviet population (and, at times, how they affected the Terror). In terms of journalistic works, they tend to feature the correspondents more so than their subject matter. This trend may arise from the journalists themselves authoring many of these works, or possibly an effort to avoid the stigma of tedium associated with historical writing. Such approaches are in no way unsound; indeed, they offer distinct and important means of detailing the period. However, their specific and often nation-centric focuses can leave the reader without a firm grasp of the intricacies in terms of how the rest of the world was offered the means of understanding the Soviet Union at a specific point in time. The necessity of these efforts to

[68] A similar silence can be seen in Murray Seeger's *Discovering Russia: 200 Years of American Journalism* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005), where the author reduces the period of 1934-1938 to four pages (pp. 306-310).

justify their approach in regard to those which preceded it also stands as a deficit to the overall body of work. A starting point for such an effort is comprehending how information circulated and actually passed from the Moscow correspondents to their Western audiences. The choice of the First Moscow Trial remains to center this work on a manageable, yet still significantly covered, event. Owing to its position as the first major show trial of the Old Bolsheviks, as well as its proximity to the most violent years of the Terror, there is a distinct opportunity to shed light on an oft-considered historical moment from a new perspective.

2 – Reporting Practices in the Early Soviet Union, and the Rise of the Show Trial

Despite their infamy, the Moscow Trials were not the first instances of Soviet show trials, a phenomenon which pre-dates the origins of the state altogether. In the pre-revolutionary period, show trials, and even the presence of American or British reporters, were featured in the political landscape. Undoubtedly, the establishment of the Soviet Union changed this dynamic, although the connection remained between the evolution of show trials as an institutional mainstay and the presence of Western (American and British included) correspondents in the USSR. Such trials were by no means relegated to the USSR alone, as other European nations would utilize the same procedures during the period. The convergence between show trials and foreign correspondents arises from the basic idea that what occurred in the show trials needed to be relayed to the wider public in order for the events to properly serve their function in terms of establishing a distinct threat against the regime (made real through the trial itself).[69] As the Soviet media was controlled by its government, foreign correspondents in the USSR aided in spreading word of these threats by transmitting these lessons to an audience abroad. Before such an argument can be made, however, some context concerning these two seemingly distinct industries is necessary.

In 1856, the major European news agencies (Havas in France, Reuters in Britain, and Wolff in Germany, all named for their founders) formed a cartel to solidify their control in the global dissemination of the news. By creating an oligopoly to and for the spread of information, their ability to influence public opinion was established – a fact even their respective governments could not ignore.[70] The American equivalent lagged behind, with the Associated Press (AP) being relegated to the continental United States while the other agencies divided the

[69] William Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Trials and the Construction of Mortal Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, eds. Sarah Davies and James Harris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 230.
[70] John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 10, 24-25.

world into zones wherein they exerted full control over the spread of news. However, as the twentieth century began, the AP became a growing institution, setting up offices around the globe. This period also saw the emergence of journalism as a profitable business, where speed became the primary goal, even more so than professional and principled content.[71] These European and American organizations continued to dominate the field for years to come, especially as British and US news agencies were the few able to escape total government oversight.[72]

The rise of the transatlantic news cable in the mid- to late 19th century drastically changed both the media and physical landscapes of the world, as previous delays associated with foreign news-gathering became less prevalent.[73] However, these developments allowed the problem of cost to replace previous worries about speed. A striking example is the *New York Tribune*'s first transatlantic cable, sent in 1866 and comprised of forty-nine words, which cost approximately two hundred dollars to send. Cost was then an obvious downside to the emphasis on speed, which was enough to dissuade some publishers from pursuing international stories, especially those whose readers had a diminishing interest in foreign affairs.[74] All the same, "foreign specials," namely foreign correspondents who reported for a single newspaper, began to appear during this period. The technological advances of previous years made their jobs easier, although

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[71] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign News Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2009), 55-56.
[72] Robert W. Desmond, *The Press and World Affairs* (New Haven and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1937), 10-11.
[73] Replacing steamships and other such services in the spread of information, the transatlantic cable was laid out by August 17, 1856. The first message was sent from Queen Victoria to President James Buchanan, although the cable itself failed the following day. It was only eight years later that the transatlantic cable became a reliable method of sending information across the ocean, thereby drastically reducing the time needed to send messages from days to hours. See Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence*, 10-11.
[74] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 124-126, 586, n. 439. American interest in foreign affairs increased in times of war or crisis.

cost was again a contributing factor in how they reported their stories.[75] Despite this constraint, the "specials" enjoyed a freedom of which domestic reporters could only dream, at times resulting in opinions which could differ greatly from those held by their editors or publishers.[76] As such, there were likely some ongoing in-house clashes, as the distance between headquarters and correspondents in the field made oversight a major issue. Once agencies began to favor their business interests over journalistic integrity, the news became more of a "commodity instead of a public trust."[77] Newspapers therefore operated along a line of thinking that highlighted business practices. Correspondents in Russia made the existence of these problems painfully obvious, since reporters could not obtain permanent status under the tsarist regime, so there was a high degree of turnover in terms of the correspondents themselves. The Associated Press actually set up a Russian office in 1904, which helped to lighten the enforcement of censorship for all news agencies operating during Tsar Nicholas II's reign, but even that did not entirely solve these overlapping journalistic difficulties.[78]

The First World War necessitated an increase in the number of foreign journalists sent to Europe to cover the conflict, while also indicating the degree of control various governments still held over their respective press organs. Although wire costs remained high, the desire for constant wartime updates eclipsed these concerns, indicating how costs could be ignored if the right story came along.[79] State-backed censorship was commonplace, going so far as to disallow non-Allied reporters from entering certain countries during the first years of the war. When the

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[75] Desmond describes the language of "cablese," in which reporters mastered shortening the cable as much as possible, by removing grammatical articles or combining words. See Desmond, *The Press and World Affairs*, 75-76.
[76] Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence*, 13-14. Karl Marx was one such special correspondent in this early period, working for the New York *Tribune* from 1852-1862.
[77] Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence*, 25.
[78] Murray Seeger, *Discovering Russia: 200 Years of American Journalism* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005), 209, 214-215.
[79] *The New York Times* allowed for a "'double urgent' message rate," which allowed certain stories to be printed the same day as the event occurred. See Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence*, 113.

United States did join the Allies, reporters entering France were then forced to make a personal pledge to the French army. Moreover, the American Expeditionary Force also set rules in place for correspondents, and censored stories that had the potential to undermine the security or capabilities of the American armed forces.[80] They even mandated that publishers provide a bond of ten thousand dollars for their respective reporters; the total amount would be lost if the correspondent failed to follow the rules in place. Before being transmitted by cable, all news stories had to be approved by the official censor, a concept which many American reporters found difficult to accept. The war itself brought to light a growing hostility against government censorship, leading to efforts to avoid these restrictions whenever possible. One example of attempts to circumvent these censors was utilizing a code known to the editor, but not the censor, in order to cover an otherwise unmentionable story. Still, not all correspondents got away with such plans. For example, the *New York World*'s Heywood Broun published a story on American supply shortages, and was promptly sent home; the bond put up by his publisher was lost in the process.[81] This degree of censorship was a preview of what was to come once reporters were allowed into the Soviet Union, although correspondents continued to make efforts to bypass such regulations.

The later 19th century saw many political, social, and economic changes across the globe. Even during this period, which saw journalism undergo heavy adjustments, Russia under the tsars was no stranger to the concept of show trials. Well before the 1917 October Revolution led to Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks seizing power, Tsar Alexander II's 1864 legal reforms guaranteed the accused, among other rights, a trial by jury. While not the purpose intended by the tsarist regime, these trials offered revolutionary defendants a platform from which to spread

[80] S.J. Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty, the New York Times's Man in Moscow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 44.
[81] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 144-145.

their message to a wide audience, and gave the public a glimpse of ongoing dissent against the political system. It is no wonder that such trials were often used by revolutionaries to voice their grievances with the state, and to outline its weaknesses. They could also increase their own credibility as arbiters of change in the public's eye, which was especially important as these revolutionaries claimed to represent the interests of the people.[82] Perhaps the major difference between these tsarist trials and those conducted by the Soviet regime was the actual guilt of many of those accused under the tsars, as well as the express lack of political motivation (or awareness) on the part of the state. Julie A. Cassiday, whose work on the Soviet show trials links them to their theatrical roots, notes the difficulty in comprehending how the tsarist courts were seemingly blind to the opportunity afforded to the accused to become martyrs for their causes.[83]

After the October Revolution and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk removed the nation, now led by the Bolsheviks, from the First World War, the new ruling party was in a less-than-secure state of power. All previous courts were formally discontinued, with local efforts and "revolutionary tribunals" replacing the old regime's judiciary measures.[84] However, the decision was made early on to continue the pre-revolutionary tradition of show trials, though they were now meant to appeal to the broader "revolutionary conscience" for guidance.[85] Although Tsar Nicholas II had been out of power since February 1917, there was talk of putting the former ruler on trial for all the world to see. Obviously, such plans never came to fruition, as the tsar and his family met their grisly end without a trial. Still, some members of the provisional government

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[82] Julie Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial: Early Soviet Courts on Stage and Screen* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 28-31.
[83] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 31-32.
[84] Matthew Rendle, "How Revolutionary was Revolutionary Justice? Legal Culture in Russia across the Revolutionary Divide," in *Rethinking the Russian Revolution as Historical Divide*, eds. Matthias Newman and Andy Willimott (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 46.
[85] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 37-38. For an overview of early Soviet show trials, see Elizabeth Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-36.

were put through this new court system; they included the minister of public welfare Countess Sofia Panina. American reporters, such as Bessie Beatty of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, were there to witness these first Soviet show trials. Overall, they proved to be rather disorganized events, despite a higher degree of involvement from the audience. If the guilty verdict was always assured before the outset, then trials in this early period were different from those to follow since they lacked the confessions and incessant self-abasement of the defendants. As Soviet show trials continued throughout the interwar period, such aspects would become commonplace. Another major difference stems from these early trials' improvisational tone, as well from the diversity of the audience's reactions.[86] Future proceedings would require a higher degree of state control in order to fulfill their intended purposes, but there would be no shortage of future trials. Even as these supposedly "revolutionary" means were put in place by the new regime, the Bolsheviks would never completely change their legal system from the pre-revolutionary days, resulting in a mix of seemingly disparate laws and courts that were, at times, quite difficult to follow.[87]

During the October Revolution, foreign reporters were not given access to the necessary cable services to send their stories abroad. Their efforts were further hampered by the fact that censors and clerks from the old and new regimes refused to work together. Even John Reed of the New York-based *Call*, who was sympathetic to the Soviet cause, could not send out his story on the revolution until November 15 – more than a week after the Bolshevik takeover.[88] Reed's connection to the Soviets became apparent all the same, and his monumental book, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, became a necessary read for Western correspondents planning to brave the

[86] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 38-42.
[87] Rendle, "How Revolutionary was Revolutionary Justice?" 65-66.
[88] Reed was also working for other left-leaning papers, such as *Masses* and *Seven Arts*. See Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence*, 105.

uncertainties of this new nation. The intimacy he developed with the Bolshevik leaders grew out of his own political views,[89] and such biases would continue to affect reporting for years to come. Despite Reed's journalistic efforts, the book itself was only published in March 1919, well after the described events took place. This kind of delay in the transmission of information would continue throughout the interwar years, meaning that efforts to stay informed of events in the USSR were hampered by the lack of reliable and timely accounts. Trustworthiness and speed were again at odds, an ongoing phenomenon in terms of spreading news of this important country to the West. The October Revolution, the end of Russian involvement in the First World War, and the ensuing civil war period led to rising tensions with the West, none of which would soon diminish.

The Russian Civil War (which lasted from 1917 until 1922) saw a tightening of restrictions on foreign journalists, especially those who had been critical of the Bolsheviks in the past. One such reporter was Walter Duranty, who was born in Britain but worked for *The New York Times*. Cutting his teeth in France during the First World War, Duranty was not always as ardently pro-Soviet as he is often remembered. Many of his early works on Russia were less than encouraging, highlighting the apparent dangers associated with the nation.[90] Like many other reporters, he was not permitted into Russia at first; he was forced to work out of Riga. The lack of proximity to the events in question indicated the difficulties in reporting on the Soviet Union; there was an overreliance on speculation, as well as indirect and biased testimony, in order to

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[89] Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988), 21-22, 31.

[90] See, among other examples Walter Duranty, Special Cable to *The New York Times*, "Menace to the World by Reds is Seen," *The New York Times* (Dec. 30, 1918), 1, in which he dismisses Bolshevik goals and claims they use terror to force former tsarist officials to work for them; Walter Duranty, Special Cable to *The New York Times*, "Bolshevist Russia like a Wasp's Nest" *The New York Times* (Jan. 25, 1919), 2, where he undercuts Soviet ideology as all-encompassing; and Walter Duranty, Special Cable to *The New York Times*, "American Tells of Capture by Reds," *The New York Times* (Jan. 1, 1921), 7, in which he describes the ongoing "ignorance" of Bolshevik leaders.

write the news.[91] On top of that, *The New York Times* came under fire due to a scathing report of its spreading misinformation on the Russian Revolution, especially in terms of predicting the regime's downfall. Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz's "A Test of the News" asserted that news coverage in Russia was "a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see."[92] This public condemnation of the paper's practices was likely a major concern, one which needed to be addressed in the coming years. Clearly, the lack of reliable information about Russia was an issue that *The New York Times*, as well as other papers of strong repute, needed to remedy.

It was the famine resulting from the civil war that eventually (and reluctantly) opened Russia's doors to Western correspondents. Certainly, journalists had managed to make their way into the nation over the previous months and years, most notably Marguerite E. Harrison of the *Baltimore Sun*. Harrison became a willing spy for the US military's Intelligence Department, and she made her own way into a conflict-stricken Russia in 1920.[93] However, the majority of journalists were not willing to risk their lives by blindly trekking into the country and hoping for the best. The situation changed when the Soviet government admitted to needing help in feeding its starving citizens. As one of the conditions for obtaining foreign aid, Western correspondents were allowed entrance in order to report on the overall distribution of food. These first reporters included: Walter Duranty (*The New York Times*), James Howe (Associated Press), Percy Noel (*Philadelphia Ledger*), Floyd Gibbons and George Seldes (*Chicago Tribune*), Frances McCullough (*New York Herald-Tribune*), and Sam and Bella Spewack (*New York World*), among others. Most of these individuals did not speak Russian when they first arrived in August, 1921. While Duranty wrote a piece on the Soviet New Economic Policy that may have changed

[91] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 34; Seeger, *Discovering Russia*, 224.
[92] Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, "A Test of the News," *The New Republic* XXIII, no. 296 (Aug. 4, 1920), 3.
[93] Harrison was eventually found out by the Cheka, but she agreed to inform on other Americans for them (while claiming she only gave them useless information). Other early correspondents included Michael Farbman (*Chicago Daily News*), Griffin Barry (*London Daily Herald*), and John Clayton (*Chicago Tribune*). See Seeger, *Discovering Russia*, 224-228, 232.

the Bolsheviks' view of him, it was Gibbons who took the most proactive approach to gain early admittance to the Volga region that was affected by the famine.[94] Based on a bluff that centered on him flying a plane into Russia, Gibbons was given access days before his competitors. However, his triumph was nearly undercut by troubles with the wire service, namely the lack of accessibility for an English-speaking reporter in Russia. To ensure he continued to outmaneuver his rivals, the intrepid reporter found the nearest telegraph office and had the staff change "each Latin character to its closest Cyrillic equivalent" before sending the wire to Moscow, where his colleague Seldes was waiting to re-transmit the story abroad.[95] While the other reporters waited for transport from Moscow to the Volga area, Gibbons's exclusive access angered their editors, who needed to license his stories from the *Chicago Tribune* in order to stay current during this early period.[96]

Despite Soviet claims that censorship did not exist in the USSR, the reality was that it proved to be a major hurdle for Western journalists. Censors were employed by the Soviet Press Department, whose job requirement included curtailing any work deemed potentially harmful to the USSR's interests. While censors may have claimed to allow "facts" to pass (only cutting "interpretation"), any criticism of the regime seemed to meet the censor's pen, or in some cases, scissors.[97] In particular, the American correspondents were not accustomed to the heavy hand of the state infringing on their writing. Before stories could be cabled abroad, a censor needed to sign off on the copy, with failure to comply with this rule resulting in possible expulsion from

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[94] Walter Duranty, *I Write As I Please* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 105-106. Duranty described a "group of a dozen American correspondents" entering the USSR.

[95] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 37-40, 44-45 ("each Latin character..."). It was First Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov, who would later play a prominent role in the United States' recognition of the Soviet Union, who allowed Gibbons into the country before the rest of the reporters.

[96] Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 98-99, 101-102. Between Aug. 24 and Sept. 11, *The New York Times* published eight articles by Gibbons, at times even displaying his work on the front page, though each article came with the byline "Copyright, 1921, by the Chicago Tribune Co.," following the correspondent's name.

[97] Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 107-109 ("facts," "interpretation"). George Seldes met with a censor named Kogan, who literally took scissors to Seldes's copy. See Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 52.

the USSR. These procedures, combined with an ignorance of most things Russian on the parts of the correspondents themselves, made the work difficult, leaving some Westerners to take matters into their own hands.[98]

The most obvious way to avoid the challenges of Soviet censorship involved sending interpretive articles outside the Soviet Union to be cabled to home offices. Aside from finding willing travelers to carry the stories outside the USSR, some early correspondents took to using the diplomatic pouch of the American Relief Administration, from which news stories barely disguised as letters would be cabled to editors in Europe or America. However, this plan backfired when Soviet officials responded to the rumor that the pouch was being used for smuggling goods by arresting the courier and happening upon the reporters' stories. As a result, Seldes, Noel, McCullough, and the Spewacks were expelled from the Soviet Union in 1923; it was an incident which showed the seriousness of not adhering to the rules in place.[99] The threat of expulsion made real had the power to affect how reporters acted upon taking their position, as being a correspondent in Moscow was a premium placement that could turn a reporter into a household name back home, especially due to the escalation of real or perceived threats during the interwar period.[100] Since the loss of that position may have also resulted in loss of employment, then there was a definite motivation in not straying from the status quo set in place by the Soviet government, which was a phenomenon that may have been internalized by Western reporters. With many of his rivals now expelled, Duranty took his place as the senior foreign correspondent in the Soviet Union, a role that he would occupy until his replacement arrived in 1934. Despite his controversial legacy (owing to his coverage of the 1932-1933 famine), Duranty

[98] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 49-51.
[99] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 52-54; and Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 267-268, 276.
[100] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 195.

remains a central figure since he and other correspondents were exposed to numerous show trials throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Show trials in the Soviet Union provided Western reporters with a public spectacle to transmit to readers back home. At the same time, there was never any doubt in the minds of Bolshevik leaders as to the necessity of using these trials in order to instruct the Soviet masses.[101] Building on its tsarist foundations, the Soviet government would, over time, take a firmer hand in ensuring the trials educated the populace. However, there was a degree of, for lack of a better term, 'trial and error' concerning the entire process, especially in terms of spreading each trial's calculated message.[102] Over the following years, the Soviet government solidified its use of show trials as political tools, while continuing to see that each trial acted as an important journalistic event for Western correspondents. Some of the major Soviet show trials preceding the later Moscow Trials were: the Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries (1922), the Shakhty Trial (1928), the Industrial Party Trial (1930), the Trial of the Mensheviks (1931), and the Metro-Vickers Trial (1933). While other trials no doubt occurred, both in Moscow and in the often-overlooked periphery regions of the USSR's expansive landscape, those listed above served as precursors to the later Moscow Trials owing to their notoriety and extensive foreign press coverage. Similarly, the trial following the Reichstag fire in Germany also bears some interesting connections to the Moscow Trials, not the least of which was the unexpected outcome; it shows that the Soviets were not alone in attempts to utilize legal proceedings to convey a specific message. While covering each trial in its entirety would occupy far too much space, several distinct moments deserve further consideration in order to demonstrate the ongoing issues in communicating the meaning of the trials to American and British audiences.

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[101] Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin, Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 439-440.
[102] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 42.

The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) saw the Bolsheviks hold a defeated political group accountable for the nation's major post-civil war problems, such as famine and lack of international recognition.[103] It would not be the last time that the Soviets would scapegoat a specific group in order to cover for the larger socioeconomic issues plaguing the nation.[104] The proceedings, led by Prosecutor General Nikolai Krylenko, acted as a continuation of previous traditions, as the Soviet government was still attempting to perfect its use of the show trial. Even though the Soviets made efforts to publically condemn the SRs, the thirty-four defendants utilized established pre-revolutionary methods to essentially turn the trial into an opportunity to denounce their accusers. Despite their own political motivations, the Bolsheviks fell into the same position as Russia's old rulers, giving their intended targets a platform to condemn the established system itself.[105] However, a major difference from previous trials was the role designated for the audience. Spectators for the actual proceedings were specifically chosen from lists indicating their allegiance to the regime, in order to promote a consensus that would translate from the trial to the general public. Aside from that, the growing technological changes in terms of mass media affected Soviet citizens as they did those in the West, at least in terms of allowing wider exposure to the news. The resulting (and apparently spontaneous) reactions – including thousands marching through Red Square demanding death for the accused – indicated the degree to which Soviet citizens internalized the trial.[106] An interesting note was that, at the time, Western reporters condemned the trial's "farcical indictments," commenting that the trial was more based on indicating Bolshevik power to its own people than on actually seeking

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[103] Marc Jansen, *A Show Trial Under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922*, trans. Jean Sanders (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), 20. Jansen's book also provides important historical context between the deteriorating relationship between two of Russia's best-known revolutionary groups: the Bolsheviks and the SRs.

[104] Vadim Z. Rogovin, *Stalin's Terror of 1937-1938: Political Genocide in the USSR*, trans. Frederick S. Choate (Oak Park: Mehring Books, 2009), 83-84.

[105] Jansen, *A Show Trial Under Lenin*, 57; Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 47-49.

[106] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*,, 44-47; Rendle, "How Revolutionary was Revolutionary Justice?" 61-62.

justice.[107] Aside from possible anti-Soviet bias, such pronouncements from the foreign press likely resulted from the defiant actions of the defendants, as well as indicating a loosening of censorship in the early Soviet period. As ever, the delay between the events themselves and their publication in certain Western presses remained a concern. Although less prevalent than before, the trial began on June 8, and *The New York Times* only published the story two days later.[108] While still appearing on the front page of the paper, the delay between the event and its transmission remained evident, despite the technological improvements made since the turn of the century.

Despite the significant shortcomings of this early show trial, at least in terms of transmitting an intended message to an audience, Soviet officials would learn from such mistakes in terms of planning for future trials, although such planning could never fully account for all possible contingencies.[109] In 1928, the Shakhty Trial offered another look at a Soviet show trial, though the political sphere had altered a great deal in the interim period. Falling after the infighting among the Bolshevik elite that arose in the wake of Vladimir Lenin's death, this trial marked the first major instance of Soviet legal proceedings relayed to the public after Joseph Stalin took control of the Soviet Union. It also stands as the first trial to utilize "counterrevolutionary intent" as a means for indictment.[110] Ongoing Soviet fears concerning foreign powers, which had not completely evaporated after the civil war, meant that show trials would no longer be limited to Soviet citizens; here five German engineers numbered among the

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[107] Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Soviet Chiefs Stage Anti-Treason Show Trial," *The New York Times* (Jun. 22, 1922), 3.
[108] Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Defy Soviet Court in Treason Trial," *The New York Times* (Jun. 10, 1922), 1, 5. The same was true of the march mentioned in the previous note, which occurred two days before it was published in the newspaper.
[109] Rendle, "How Revolutionary was Revolutionary Justice?" 63.
[110] Wood, *Performing Justice*, 193.

defendants.[111] However, the most important development was the use of confessions. While revolutionaries tried under the tsars, as well as the SRs only several years before, may have admitted their guilt (and were in many cases actually guilty), the Shakhty Affair transformed the show trial's meaning and message: confessions became a necessity to indicate culpability. Although it was not completely unanimous, over ninety percent of the accused Soviet and German engineers admitted, during the trial, their guilt in sabotaging the USSR's coal industry. An aspect of self-incrimination became a mainstay in selling the trials' validity at home and abroad. However, this acquiescence by most of the defendants did not mean total cohesion, as there were moments when some recanted their confessions in the courtroom.[112] Since the early proceedings saw numerous defendants proclaiming their innocence, these ongoing changes indicated a rather confusing atmosphere for Western correspondents.[113]

Although the Shakhty Trial opened proceedings on May 18, 1928, the initial journalistic emphasis concerning the trial's intrigue did not persist over its two-month duration. The opening day saw newspapers such as *The New York Times* publish the story on the front page, but that enthusiasm did not return until the court's decision was reached on July 5, 1928; the interim period saw the story relegated to the paper's later pages.[114] Western reporters did not know what to make of the entire trial, as confessions to this degree were no doubt confusing and difficult to undermine at the time. The language used by the Soviet press was also quite venomous, referring to the accused as "wreckers, vermin, insects, germs, [and] human garbage."[115] As a result of this

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[111] James Harris, *The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 96.
[112] Wood, *Performing Justice*, 195; Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 112-115.
[113] Walter Duranty, Wireless to The New York Times, "Score Plead Guilty in 'Engineers' Plot," *The New York Times* (May 12, 1928), 6.
[114] See Walter Duranty, Wireless to The New York Times, "Grim Soviet Court Opens Trial of 52," *The New York Times* (May 19, 1928), 1, 4, and The Associated Press, "11 Sentenced to Die in Don Coal Trial," *The New York Times* (Jul. 6, 1928), 1, 15. None of the articles in between these dates concerning the Shakhty Trial made the front page.
[115] Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial*, 119. See also Wood, *Performing Justice*, 193-194.

trial and the changes to the roles of the defendants (now shown as complicit to the regime's wishes), the Shakhty trial was a major turning point concerning the use of show trials in the Soviet political arena; consequently, it set the stage for the trials to come.[116] In terms of American coverage, reports were often published the following day, indicating the end of major delays stemming from technology, though not from censorship.

The Metro-Vickers Trial in 1933 was an especially important moment leading up to the later Moscow Trials, as six British engineers employed by the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Export Company (along with twelve Russian defendants) were accused of wrecking Soviet power stations.[117] The event built on the trends raised by the previous Stalinist show trials, and the prosecution was now led by Andrei Vyshinsky, who would feature so prominently in the later Moscow Trials. This time around, the proceedings were aimed at establishing a major foreign threat against the state – one that explained away its economic shortcomings.[118] Even before the trial began, Britain responded by halting trade talks with the USSR. As the controversy unfolded, diplomatic relations between the two nations would continue to weaken.[119] However, one of the more intriguing aspects of the trial coverage was the indication of how Western correspondents obtained their information. Being confined to Moscow, if not by law then by convenience, the Soviet newspapers *Izvestia* and *Pravda* offered Western reporters the primary means of information gathering. An ongoing phenomenon, based around the number of journalists who did not speak the language, reading these papers (through an interpreter) offered a glimpse into what

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[116] Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxiii.
[117] One of the chief defendants, Allan Monkhouse, described his ordeal at the hands of the Soviet state in his memoirs. See Allan Monkhouse, *Moscow, 1911-1933 (Russia Observed)* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1970, orig. 1934), chaps. 21-22, pp. 268-311.
[118] Gordon Morrell, *Britain Confronts the Stalin Revolution : Anglo-Soviet Relations and the Metro-Vickers Crisis* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1995), 113-114.
[119] Charles A. Selden, Wireless to The New York Times, "Britain Suspends Soviet Trade Talks," *The New York Times* (Mar. 21, 1933), 1, 1.

the Soviet government deemed pertinent to print.[120] The obvious problem of such a method of news gathering was the total control the Soviet government exerted over the two publications, meaning that the lack of actual reporting remained a major issue.

More so than in the previous trials, or even those to come, the Metro-Vickers Trial likely put Western reporters into a predicament. Stuck behind Soviet censorship, the Western world was being provoked as never before, so viewing the capitalist-communist divide without bias was likely a difficult task.[121] The court proceedings also went somewhat differently, as the defendants sought legal counsel, and five of the six British engineers pled not guilty to the charges.[122] Even the initial outlier would soon dispute his guilty plea, which was given based on a fear of the Soviet secret police (at this point named the OGPU).[123] As a result, the response by British audiences could not help but be tainted by claims of undue pressure on prisoners. Such a repudiation also undermines the power that the Soviets held over the show trials, especially with the First Moscow Trial fast approaching. Even though the Metro-Vickers Trial itself only lasted one week, there were daily updates in *The New York Times*, which oftentimes ran the story on the front page. The prominence of the coverage indicated that the choice of defendants could affect the manner in which the trial was covered and consigned within the newspaper itself. Even though the Soviet prosecutor maintained that the individuals were the targets, not the company or Britain itself, such a statement was difficult to consider at the time.[124] However, British reporters sent to Russia for the explicit purpose of covering the proceedings did not necessarily side with

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[120] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 64-65. For an example of this phenomenon, see Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Britons Guilty Says Soviet Press," *The New York Times* (Mar. 27, 1933), 9.
[121] Morrell, *Britain Confronts the Stalin Revolution*, 177. For an example in the press, see Walter Duranty, Wireless to The New York Times, "Trial in Moscow Offers Contrasts," *The New York Times* (Apr.. 16, 1933), E1.
[122] Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Briton Confesses at Moscow Trial; Five Deny Guilt," *The New York Times* (Apr. 13, 1933), 1, 9.
[123] Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Briton Repudiates 'Confession' as a Spy at Trial in Moscow," *The New York Times* (Apr. 14, 1933), 1, 10.
[124] Morrell, *Britain Confronts the Stalin Revolution*, 171-172. For an example, see Ralph Barnes, "Soviet Mercy for 6 Britons is Implied by Prosecutor," *New York Herald Tribune* (Apr. 17, 1933), 1.

their countrymen.[125] Truly an odd case, the Metro-Vickers Trial resulted in the convictions of several defendants, although none were executed.[126] Such an outcome (despite the guilty verdict) would not recur in later trials.

Another example of a show trial outcome that Soviet officials would have liked to avoid in their country resulted from the Reichstag fire in Nazi Germany. On February 27, 1933, the German parliamentary building was set ablaze. Communists were blamed for the fire, and those beginnings of an alleged conspiracy to start a communist revolution in Germany resulted in a tightening of Hitler's tenuous grasp on power. Although a supposed Dutch communist, Marinus Van der Lubbe, was initially the only individual arrested for the crime, the circle soon widened to include Ernst Torgler, the leader of the German communists, as well as Georgy Dimitrov, who would later head the Communist International, as well as two other Bulgarian communists.[127] In a similar fashion to the early Soviet cases, the resulting show trial of these five defendants did not unfold according to plan, all under the eyes of Western journalists.

Unlike the speed which typified Soviet show trials, the Reichstag fire trial took place over approximately three months, from September 21, 1933 to December 23, 1933. Based on the fact that the defendants were considered as communists, the German prosecution may have been overconfident in their assured victory. However, due to international pressure, the court was forced to endure the defence of the accused, made famous by Dimitrov himself, who incessantly berated and argued with the prosecution, even going toe-to-toe with Hermann Goering.[128] Dimitrov became a media darling in his own right, using the trial as a medium to defend

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[125] See A.J. Cummings, *The Moscow Trial* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933),11-12, 287. The author questioned the reactionary and aggressive attitude of the British government, seemingly believing the trial's validity.
[126] For more information on the trial proceedings and subsequent disputes, see Morrell, *Britain Confronts the Stalin Revolution*, chapters 5-6.
[127] Louis L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich* (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1998), 286-287; and John Gunther, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1940), 42-44. Van der Lubbe was apparently never even a member of the communist party. See Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 44.
[128] Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 46-47.

communism as an ideology and denounce the entire proceedings as "false, biased, and brutal."[129] He appeared as somewhat of a fighter for justice to Western readers, and his "brilliant gallantry" was likely one of the primary reasons for the court's decision; in the end, all defendants except for Van der Lubbe were acquitted, and the release of the majority of the accused cannot be the intended result of any show trial.[130] The world took note, and the trial suffered for it, at least in terms of the intentions of those in power.

These precursors to the Moscow Trials of the 1930s were important in terms of establishing the criteria for the defendants, the audience, and the Western press corps, but a small aside on the 1932-1933 Soviet famine is needed. A result of the intense Soviet drive to collectivize agriculture (embarked upon in order to fund the government's nation-wide industrialization plan), this period has been ably covered by numerous scholars.[131] However, in terms of Western journalists in Moscow, this moment stands as a major failure in terms of broadcasting reliable information to their readers back home, owing to complacency and even outright deception.

Concealing the famine offers an indication of the importance of show trials in the minds of journalists and their newspapers. While he was not the only reporter to do so, Gareth Jones of the Manchester *Guardian* made the decision to tour the regions affected by the famine in March

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[129] Otto D. Tolishcus, Wireless to The New York Times, "Bulgarian Angers Reich Fire Judge," *The New York Times* (Sept. 24, 1933), 1, 35; and Otto D. Tolishcus, Wireless to The New York Times, "Accused Denounce Reich Fire Inquiry," *The New York Times* (Sept. 28, 1933), 16 ("false, biased...").

[130] Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 46. Although Van der Lubbe was executed for his role, he was not considered by some to be able to carry out such a plot by himself. See Snyder, *Encyclopedia*, 288-289 and Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 44.

[131] See Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); R.W. Davies and S.G. Wheatcroft, *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia, vol. 5. The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Lubomyr Luciuk, *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2008). See also Lubomyr Luciuk, ed., *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty`s Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2004) for a more politically focused work that condemns Duranty's role in concealing the famine from Western eyes.

1933.[132] After witnessing widespread starvation and death, Jones returned home and reported his findings. According to UP correspondent Eugene Lyons's memoir *Assignment in Utopia*, Konstantin Umansky, the head of the Soviet Press Department, met with the Moscow correspondents, a group which included both Lyons and Duranty (the latter having won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in 1932). Under threat of losing access to the upcoming Metro-Vickers Trial, the reporters agreed to repudiate Jones's claims.[133] This agreement occurred despite the assembled newsmen knowing of both the famine's severity and the loss of life outside of the capital. While it is unknown if they conferred with their editors before coming to such a decision, they apparently brought out food and drink afterwards, as if to celebrate.[134] While Lyons was quick to condemn Duranty, despite also choosing to follow the scheme, his memory of that important event wavered over time, to the point of not even being certain of Duranty's attendance when he was pressed at a later date.[135] Another uncertainty surrounding his account is the lack of confirmation by other journalists who were supposedly present. This suspect situation aside, Duranty's overt claims against a famine during this period cannot be disputed, indicating how misinforming the public for personal gain or even simple convenience was none too difficult.

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[132] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 68-69. William R. Stoneman (*Chicago Daily News*) and Ralph W. Barnes (*New York Herald Tribune*) had passed through the area earlier without the government's permission. After two weeks, they were found, arrested, and sent back to Moscow. Their stories were printed in their respective papers after being smuggled out of the country, leading to a travel ban into the affected areas. Interestingly enough, the two reporters were not expelled from the country. See Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 67; and Seeger, *Discovering Russia*, 282-284.

[133] Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), 575-576.

[134] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 68-71; Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, 576. For Duranty's dismissal of Jones's claims, see Walter Duranty, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Russians Hungry But Not Starving," *The New York Times* (Mar. 13, 1933), 13. For Jones's response, see Gareth Jones, "Mr. Jones Responds," *The New York Times* (May 13, 1933), 12. Despite the (delayed) response, it is important to note that both articles were relegated to later pages of the newspaper, indicating it to be less pressing news.

[135] 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* (Lanham and London: University Press of America, Inc., 1982), 160-161.

Aside from morally condemning the lack of effort on the part of many correspondents to inform the world of the crisis, another important issue arises – namely, the fact that foreign reporters themselves were relegated to Moscow. Despite the Soviet Union's size, it was not until 1976 that an American reporter was based outside of the Soviet capital.[136] Even if the majority of "newsworthy" events occurred within Moscow, this short-sightedness on the part of the correspondents reveals an inherent flaw in their journalistic standards, especially in terms of informing their readers of major events occurring abroad. Based on its devastating end result, the 1932-1933 famine stands as a prime example of this phenomenon, where adhering to the status quo potentially impaired possible efforts to intervene and save lives.

Overall, it seems as though the public spectacle associated with the upcoming Metro-Vickers Trial became more important than covering the famine in any meaningful capacity. Even if the trials themselves were denounced by many in the press corps, that outlook apparently did not detract from the need to cover the proceedings. As a result, the Soviets had discovered another means of controlling the words of the West's so-called "free press." Even as technology made the transmission of the news faster, with stories being cabled for the following morning's paper back home,[137] there remained blatant obstacles to sending out truthful and accurate news accounts. Together, these early Soviet show trials created the foundations on which the upcoming Moscow Trials would stand, in terms of how the court system, the defendants, and Soviet population were taught to react, as well as concerning how Anglo-American correspondents and their audiences allocated their attention.

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[136] Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents*, 19. The reporter was Emil Sveilis, who worked for the United Press.
[137] See Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 178, which describes how a cable could be sent "via a Danish line from Moscow through London and into New York. The Moscow deadline was 2:00 a.m., just in time for the early edition of *The New York Times*."

3 – Covering the First Moscow Trial

The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre has often been subjected to scrutiny in Western scholarship. Efforts have been made to connect the trial (and those that came before and after) to the overall deplorable nature of the Stalinist regime, and especially to the dictator himself.[138] It seems as though describing the purge trials became so commonplace in such works that, over time, they stood as a testament of the Soviet Union's larger social, cultural, or moral deficiencies, with Stalin presented as guiding the entire process through his paranoia and bloodlust. Without attempting to minimize the leader's role in orchestrating the Moscow Trials, these concerns were not the only topic of interest while the trials themselves were taking place; instead, reporters chose to focus on the daily proceedings, rather than stretch their analyses and consider the more far-reaching implications of the event.[139] Since the fall of the USSR, scholars have been able to make extensive use of Soviet archival documents, yet the manner in which American and British journalists perceived and presented the trial while it occurred is rarely explored in these new studies. In order to make sense of the First Moscow Trial, debates in the late interwar era concerning on the trial's legitimacy often included comparisons to the West from both supporters and detractors. For the Moscow correspondents, the overall focus was less on Stalin's guiding hand than on the court processes and daily occurrences as the six-day public spectacle progressed. Interwar audiences were treated to the event's pageantry, and any writings that looked to connect the trials to the regime's ineptitude necessarily arose from the writers' speculation, despite any possible validity of their statements. Amidst all the conflicting sources

[138] See Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 464; J. 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), 256; William Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Trials and the Construction of Mortal Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, eds. Sarah Davies and James Harris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 234-237; and Nathan Leites and Elsa Bernaut. *Ritual of Liquidation: The Case of the Moscow Trials* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1954), 13-15.
[139] Jacob Heilbrunn, "The New York Times and the Moscow Show Trials," *World Affairs* 153, no. 3 (1991), 98.

of information, it seems highly unlikely that any conclusions drawn during the trial could be known for certain, especially for readers half the world away. As such, a reliance on the words of the limited number of journalists present posed some unavoidable issues for those seeking to stay informed about developments in the Soviet Union.[140]

The persecution of the Old Bolshevik defendants at the First Moscow Trial was not altogether unexpected (at least in hindsight).[141] After the death of Vladimir Lenin, Stalin moved to the highest echelons of Soviet power by maintaining alliances with, and subsequently turning against, other prominent Bolshevik leaders; many of these leaders later became victims in the Moscow Trials. Stalin first began working with the Left Oppositionists Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev to undermine Leon Trotsky during the newly formed power vacuum. After successfully isolating Trotsky, Stalin broke with his former associates to ally with the Right Opposition, and by October 1926, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky had been removed from the Politburo (the body that actually governed the Soviet Union). After the Leftists' defeat, Zinoviev and Kamenev capitulated and denounced their own actions, which offered a preview of their willingness to publically debase themselves. In 1928, Trotsky was exiled from Moscow and by February 1929, he was expelled from the Soviet Union altogether. Wasting little time, Stalin then moved against the Rightists, namely Nikolai Bukharin, Alexei Rykov, and Mikhail Tomsky. With the removal of Rightists from positions of influence during the First Five-Year Plan, their defeat by 1930 solidified Stalin's position as the dominant leader of the USSR.[142] While they

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[140] See Appendix 2 for a list of Western correspondents found to be in the Soviet Union around the time of the First Moscow Trial.

[141] Western reporters understood the term "Old Bolshevik" as designating individuals who "were once high among [the Soviet Union's] rulers." See Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Ex-Soviet Leaders Likely To Die For Plot," *The New York Times* (Aug. 16, 1936), 1, 10. Scholars utilize the term to indicate those people who were early members of the Bolshevik Party, as well as being amongst Lenin's closest comrades-in-arms.

[142] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 7-19; Wendy Z. Goldman, *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin: The Social Dynamics of Repression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47-49. These brief overviews are further detailed throughout Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin, Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* (New

would not completely disappear from view, the defeated Bolshevik leaders would never return to their former levels of power, and at times they were expelled from the Communist Party altogether.[143] However, their moves against Stalin during his own rise to prominence would not be forgotten, as these instances later became the historical corroboration of their guilt in the accounts of some Western reporters.

As noted above, the death of Sergei Kirov in 1934 paved the way for changes in the Soviet courts system, wherein the accused could be found guilty and executed without the right of appeal. While the assassination itself garnered some attention in the press, it was really the resulting executions and supposed plots that gained significant traction. Within two days of the initial report of Kirov's murder, many "White Guards" were arrested and tried for their alleged connections to the event. The detailed Western reporting indicates that the Soviets were making no efforts to hide their actions, including the end of appeals for death sentences.[144] While certain reporters diligently adopted the Soviet government's rhetoric in their stories, others took a different tone and used the mass executions to "enlighten" their readers about the perceived backwardness of the USSR.[145] Such harsh tones could only contribute to the overall conflicting viewpoints that emerged regarding the burgeoning nation in the years before the Terror began.

York: Penguin Press, 2014), Part III, chapters 10-14. While somewhat confusing, notions of "Left" and "Right" within the Soviet Union had little to do with contemporary designations on the political spectrum, more in the degree to which adherents supported various Communist policies, usually economic in nature.

[143] See for example, "Stalin Fights to Hold Power," United Press dispatch to *The Washington Post* (Oct. 12, 1932), 6, in which Zinoviev and Kamenev were expelled for "alleged anti-party and counter-revolutionary activities." They would be re-admitted and expelled on numerous occasions after Stalin's rise to power.

[144] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Soviet Arrests 71 in War on 'Terror,'" *The New York Times* (Dec. 4, 1934), 1, 15; Our Own Correspondent, "New Red Terror," *The Times* [London] (Dec. 4, 1934), 13. The latter report came from Riga, likely because either the London *Times*'s anti-Soviet stance led the Soviets to disallow them from send a correspondent into the Soviet Union itself, or because they chose not to themselves.

[145] In particular, the London *Times* used the executions to compare the Soviets to the Nazis, bringing the regimes together as a means of extolling the virtues of the "civilized European." See the editorial "A Russian on Terrorism," *The Times* [London] (Dec. 12, 1934), 15. This vehemence may connect to the ongoing tensions in the wake of the Metro-Vickers Trial.

The aftermath of the Kirov assassination reverberated in the presses as 1935 began, although perhaps nothing was more shocking than the report of Zinoviev and Kamenev's complicity, along with that of many others, in Kirov's death.[146] After their arrests, there was no initial show trial for these former Bolshevik leaders (as foreign press were prohibited from attending the closed proceedings), but the intrigue associated with their involvement could not be ignored. The court handed down no death sentences, as the state deemed that the Old Bolsheviks merely contributed to a political atmosphere that led to Kirov's death, rather than actually plotting his murder. In this instance, Zinoviev and Kamenev pled guilty to the charges.[147] Harold Denny, who had replaced Walter Duranty as *The New York Times*'s primary Moscow correspondent, did note that the ninety-seven individuals affected by this ruling were all involved in the "Trotsky-Zinovieff opposition."[148] Such a comment concerning oppositionists' roles in the USSR could create a conspiratorial tone surrounding the event, likely increasing the uncertainties of Western readers attempting to understand the complexities of the situation. The large number of those affected by this ruling, beyond Zinoviev and Kamenev, also indicates the widening net – in which many could become ensnared – of the Soviet state. However, the Western focus remained on the Old Bolsheviks instead of these unnamed individuals, which was a trend that would continue into the following years. The various trials, exiles, and executions in the aftermath of Kirov's death did not end the drive against supposed counterrevolutionaries, and

[146] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Ex-Leaders Tried by Soviet in Plot," *The New York Times* (Jan. 16, 1935), 1, 14.
[147] "2 Noted Reds Now on Trial," Associated Press Cable, *The Globe* (Jan.. 16, 1935), 1.
[148] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Zinovieff and 18 Get Prison Terms," *The New York Times* (Jan. 16, 1935), 2.

there was an increase in arrests for such crimes throughout 1935.[149] This period would set the foundations for the larger government-sanctioned operations to come in subsequent years.[150]

While journalists may have provided Western readers with the bulk of their news about the Soviet regime, the press corps was not the sole means of spreading information abroad. Communist parties existed in all major European and North American nations (though Germany had all but wiped out communist forces after the Reichstag fire), and the mid-1930s saw a move towards a strong unified approach between them. As such, an increased Soviet presence in the global sphere led to the re-emergence of the Communist International (Comintern) as a ready advocate for the Stalinist government, despite a perceived distance between the two organs. The Comintern even went so far as to send out telegrams of approval to its offices around the world following the mass of executions of those deemed responsible for Kirov's assassination.[151] This connection meant that the various international Communist Parties based their stances (concerning events such as show trials) on reactions emanating from Moscow, where the Comintern was headquartered. An ongoing phenomenon even into the Moscow Trials, such vocal and widespread proclamations could also contribute to a growing ideological divide around the globe, despite the more inclusive outward approach of the Comintern after 1934.[152] Such polarizing views between these groups were not wholly new, but would be exacerbated in the wake of the First Moscow Trial.

As for the Anglo-American journalists themselves, the period immediately preceding the Trial of the Sixteen saw the publication of more than just newspaper articles; specifically there

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[149] Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 156.
[150] Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 131.
[151] Fridrikh I. Firsov, "Dimitrov, the Comintern and Stalinist Repression," in *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, eds. Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 57.
[152] Alexander Dallin and F.I. Firsov, *Dimitrov and Stalin, 1934-1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives*, trans. Vadim A. Staklo (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 10-12.

was a rise in memoirs and other lengthy accounts of time spent in the Soviet Union. Upon leaving the USSR's censorship-laden landscape, there was a newfound freedom for reporters in writing of their experiences abroad. Western readers also provided an interested audience willing to read an array of works that explored life in the Soviet Union. Walter Duranty's *I Write As I Please*, Anna Louise Strong's *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American*, Eugene Lyons's *Moscow Carrousel*, and William Henry Chamberlin's *Russia's Iron Age* all provided insights into the daily life within a foreign nation. These particular authors had spent considerable amounts of time in the Soviet Union as reporters (several having been present from its earliest days), and they offered a great deal of firsthand knowledge.[153] Although their views were far from uniform, their Western upbringings offered a distinct contrast from the landscape in the USSR that was reflected in their writings.

The books themselves offered several interesting interpretations of an alien and developing nation. Perhaps the most famous, Duranty's work came about as he increasingly worked outside of the Soviet Union. Although technically employed by *The New York Times* until 1940, his articles appeared less frequently after 1934. *I Write As I Please* provided an altogether positive look at the Soviet Union; it relied on Duranty's own efforts as a journalist as the main source for denoting the nation's importance. While covering its stark differences with the Western world, Duranty also described the fall of Zinoviev and Kamenev during the rise of Stalin.[154] However, it seemed as though the veteran journalist was primarily focused on establishing his own credibility and mettle, although the book did offer a deal of insight into the Soviet world. Taking a more direct approach, Strong made no efforts to hide her appreciation of

[153] While Duranty, Strong, and Chamberlin had all established themselves in the USSR by 1922, Lyons arrived somewhat later in 1928.
[154] Duranty, *I Write As I Please* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 125, 164, 328-329. Zinoviev and Kamenev are covered (briefly) on pp. 262-264.

Soviet virtues, while also alluding to a secretive society that was difficult for outsiders, and especially journalists, to access.[155] Even though she worked in the USSR for years and advocated for the communist cause, there seemed to be an insurmountable distance to overcome, even for those who internalized Soviet ideology. Although both Lyons and Chamberlin had begun their careers as hopeful concerning the Soviet Union's future, they became disenchanted during their years spent as journalists within the nation itself.[156] While Lyons was more or less neutral in this publication, it was Chamberlin who adopted a more negative outlook. He focused on the poor standard of living for many Soviet citizens, despite the industrialization drive, as well as on the inability of journalists to report or even comment about certain events.[157] For some who were initially sympathetic towards the Soviet regime, these works were less than exemplary in their outlooks. The timing of their publications, all appearing in print before the outset of the Great Terror, means that they cannot offer firsthand knowledge on the Terror itself, nor on the First Moscow Trial. However, the manner in which these correspondents explained daily life in the Soviet Union to their readers, most often in stark contrast to Western experiences, mirrors the way they framed the nation as a whole. A possible reason may have been to offer context for their readers, specifically a means to visualize such a different culture, but such a style indicates the limitations of the content published by Western writers.

After professing their guilt in January 1935, Zinoviev and Kamenev fell off the Western press's radar, receiving little serious mention until they re-emerged at the beginning of the First

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[155] Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American* (Seattle: Seal Press, 1979, originally 1935), 100-101, 180-181, 406-407.
[156] Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988), 85-87; and Murray Seeger, *Discovering Russia: 200 Years of American Journalism* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005), 298.
[157] William Henry Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 3-4, 349-350, 378-379. Lyons was more critical in *Assignment in Utopia*, published two years later, where he described his own changing perspective after six years in Moscow. See especially Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), Books 3 and 4.

Moscow Trial over eighteen months later. They were not, however, overlooked by the Soviet government. The interim period saw a move towards a larger trial, one which would charge the defendants with far more heinous crimes than mere "indirect association" with Kirov's assassination. The NKVD, the state security apparatus that had changed its title from the OGPU in July 1934, led the action against counterrevolutionary elements. By June 1935, Nikolai Yezhov, recently elected to the USSR's Central Committee and future leader of the NKVD, brought forth a far more serious case against Zinoviev and Kamenev. He charged that the two Old Bolsheviks were part of a wide conspiracy in the Kremlin which aimed to murder Soviet leaders, and accused them of "direct involvement" in the death of Kirov.[158] While not initially accepted by the rest of the Soviet government, Yezhov's enthusiasm for a trial against the Zinovievites, as well as the Trotskyites, continued to gain momentum. In his search for elements involved in the Kremlin Plot of 1935, Yezhov and the NKVD apparently uncovered conspiracies targeting Stalin and made connections to supporters of Zinoviev (most notably Kamenev). Yezhov's efforts to persecute the Old Bolsheviks became more apparent throughout 1935 and into 1936. Interrogations began to connect former oppositionists to larger terrorist conspiracies orchestrated by both Trotskyites and Zinovievites (terms used to denote the supporters of both men).[159] It was actually the rumors of assassination plots against many prominent Soviet leaders that would develop into the major charge of the First Moscow Trial, although Kirov's murder was presented as the only successful undertaking.[160] In the end, it was Stalin himself who apparently spurred on Yezhov during this period, taking an explicit interest in the day-to-day

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[158] Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 63-65.
[159] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 76-85. For more on Ezhov's efforts during this period, see Document 37 in Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 161-166.
[160] Wladislaw Hedeler, "Ezhov's Scenario for the Great Terror and the Falsified Record of the Third Moscow Trial," in *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, eds. Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 50-51.

NKVD operations and actively issuing orders.[161] The dictator's motives for such conspiracies, including the Moscow Trials, remain a significant topic of speculation, but are beyond the purview of this work. However, one of the main takeaways is that many of these domestic actions were taken within the context of the ongoing conflict between Stalin and the now-exiled former commander of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky's expulsion from the USSR years earlier had in no way diminished his desire to undermine the Stalinist state, nor, in turn, slowed the state's efforts to silence Trotsky. Throughout his exile, Trotsky would make numerous claims of the regime's inevitable demise. When such statements were printed in the American press, they were mostly connected to Stalin's political failings, and at times given in the words of Trotsky himself.[162] Western newspapers took note, and published articles concerning the intertwined histories of, as well as the ideological divide separating, the two men.[163] This ongoing threat to Stalin's authority likely affected the manner in which he and his cohort acted in the months leading up to the Trial of the Sixteen. Continued uncertainties and fears concerning tense domestic problems and deteriorating international situations all factored into how the Soviet government reacted to real or perceived dissent within its own ranks.[164] These developments connected with Trotsky's refusal to back down from his position led to his disparagement in the Soviet press, which became more of a mainstay as time progressed. If individuals were not wholly defined by their political ideologies

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[161] Khlevniuk, *Master of the House*, 141-143. The Kremlin Plot saw many accused of planning terrorist actions against Soviet leaders, a charge which became increasingly common in the lead up to the First Moscow Trial.
[162] See Wireless to the New York Times, "Trotsky Sees Reds Moving to Failure," *The New York Times* (Jul 7, 1930), 7; Priscilla Ring, "Trotzky Sees No Turning in Soviet Course," *The Washington Post* (Jul. 19, 1931), 1, 4; The Associated Press, "Stalin Tottering, Trotsky Declares," *The New York Times* (Feb. 27, 1932), 9; and Leon Trotsky, "Trotsky Sees Stalin Shaken By His Attacks on His Policies," *The New York Times* (May 8, 1932), XX4.
[163] Our Riga Correspondent, "The Soviet Dictator," *The Times* [London] (Jun. 24, 1930), 15; "Stalin Grip Secure, Observers Believe," *The Washington Post* (Nov. 23, 1930), M16; and Anita Brenner, "Stalin and Trotsky: The Duel Goes On," *The New York Times Magazine* (Jan. 13, 1935), SM2, 13. The latter remains a particularly poignant and nuanced article, indicating an increased awareness of Soviet history and contemporary politics.
[164] James Harris, *The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 117-120, 125-126.

when the Soviet Union was first established, by the mid-1930s, one's past political allegiance or even personal connections could certainly return to haunt them, often with deadly consequences. Former oppositionists like Zinoviev, Kamenev, and especially Trotsky, became easy targets for caricature and vilification well before they were put on trial.[165] On the ground level, this phenomenon was experienced through Western eyes as well, with major changes to Soviet society becoming more apparent as the Terror progressed.[166] The real difficulty remained in expressing this changing atmosphere to Western readers, especially since there was practically no warning for the coming trial by the correspondents.

If Western correspondents were not blind to the conflict between Stalin and Trotsky, many of the other inner workings of the Soviet state remained beyond their vision. The state's decision-making while moving towards the Trial of the Sixteen, though haphazard, was not covered in any meaningful capacity by the Anglo-American press corps, meaning that their readers were equally ill-informed that such a trial was on the horizon. *The New York Times* published reports on a myriad of topics in the USSR during this period, from articles on divorce proceedings to rising tensions with Japan to educating peasants on the science behind a solar eclipse.[167] While such topics obviously offered American readers some indication of daily life in the USSR, there was no mention of ongoing conspiracy plots involving the Old Bolsheviks who would soon act as the prominent defendants in the most sensational Soviet show trial to date. The worsening international environment (especially surrounding the rise of the Nazis in Germany) meant that the Soviet Union was not the sole foreign power under scrutiny in the Western press,

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[165] Igal Halfin, *Intimate Enemies: Demonizing the Bolshevik Opposition, 1918-1928* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 31. See pp. 271-283 for examples of oppositionists' portrayals in the Soviet press.
[166] Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 42-44.
[167] See Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Russian on Trial for Easy Divorces," *The New York Times* (June 20, 1935), 21; Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Soviet Sees Peril in Tokyo Uprising," *The New York Times* (Feb. 27, 1936), 1, 15; and Special Cable to The New York Times, "Soviet's Leaders to Exploit Eclipse," *The New York Times* (Mar. 26, 1936), 15.

but the failure to prepare readers for an event such as the First Moscow Trial – an event that Western correspondents would publicize internationally – indicates a real deficiency in their work. In the months before the announcement of the trial, there was little written about Zinoviev and Kamenev, the two most well-known defendants, except an occasional reference to their arrests the previous year. As such, the announcement of the trial on August 14, 1936 could not help but act as a shocking story; it ran on the front pages of numerous North American newspapers.[168] The absence of stories on major Soviet conspiracies or arrests in the prior months only added to the sense that the trial seemingly materialized out of nowhere. There was little time to devote to such concerns, as the entire trial was completed only eleven days after its initial mention in Western newspapers.

In actuality, the Soviet government did not initiate this trial out of nowhere. Away from the eyes of Western correspondents, the previous months had seen an increase in NKVD activities preparing for just such an event. The case truly gained footing at the beginning of 1936, when an alleged former Trotskyite, Valentin Olberg, began implicating other Trotskyites (and eventually Zinovievites) in a wider conspiracy. There continues to be a great deal of intrigue surrounding Olberg and his role as the first defendant to confess in the Trial of the Sixteen. Some have made the claim that he was an NKVD agent, although that did not save him in the end.[169] Regardless of his possible complicity in the affair, Olberg's confession set in motion the preparations for the trial, moving it from an investigation into a single act to one of a wider conspiracy that involved sixteen men (as well as incorporating Trotsky and his son in

[168] See "Soviet Bigwigs Held for Plot; Blame Trotzky," *The Winnipeg Tribune* (Aug. 14, 1936), 1; The United Press, "Plot by Trotzky Alleged," *The St. Louis Star and Times* (Aug. 14, 1936), 1; "Say Stalin Target for Death Plot," *The Times* [Louisiana] (Aug. 15, 1936), 1; "Soviet Indicates 16 as a Terror Band Guided by Trotsky," *The New York Times* (Aug. 15, 1936), 1, 2; and "Soviet Blocks Revolt Terror, Calls Trotzky Plot's Author," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 15, 1936), 1, among many others over the two-day period.
[169] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 80-81.

absentia).[170] Despite his importance, Western correspondents never gave any indication that Olberg was even on their radar, with their newspapers making no mention of him until the announcement of the trial.

The NKVD was fully prepared for the First Moscow Trial by July 1936; all those involved had procured the necessary self-incrimination, as every defendant, to some degree, confessed to their supposed crimes against the Soviet state. As opposed to the high-standing charges of treason that affected many citizens (and would be the norm in the later trials), these defendants' crimes centered on the successful assassination of Sergei Kirov in 1934, as well as the attempted murder of other key Soviet leaders, including Stalin himself.[171] In late July 1936, a secret letter circulated in the Central Committee of the USSR; it was entitled "Concerning the terroristic activity of the Trotskyist-Zinoivievist counterrevolutionary bloc." Building on their indirect complicity from January 1935, these new charges were far more serious, since they claimed that Zinoviev and his followers worked with Trotskyite agents in their assassination plots. While Yezhov penned the letter, it was Stalin who guided his hand, rewrote sections, and prepared both the confessions and the final verdicts of the trial.[172] At an earlier date, it was even Stalin who had moved to increase the total number of defendants from twelve to sixteen.[173]

The turnover rate of Western journalists in Moscow (an issue with foreign correspondents in general) also seemed to affect recollections of outcomes in past show trials; as in previous trials, there were articles published in the Western press concerning the expectations of harsh

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[170] Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 247-248. See also n. 1 on page 247, in which the authors refute Conquest's statement of Olberg's complicity, stating that no evidence has been offered to prove he was an NKVD informant.

[171] The other Soviet leaders included Kliment Voroshilov, Lazar Kaganovich, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, Andrei Zhdanov, Stanislav Kossior, and Pavel Postyshev. Stalin's close associate, Vyacheslav Molotov, was not included in this list or in the transcript, possibly indicating the dictator's displeasure with him at the time. See Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 90-91, and Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 69-70. Ordzhonikidze would die in 1937, likely by his own hand, while Kossior and Postyshev were both purged in 1939.

[172] Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 250-256. See Document 73, pp. 250-255.

[173] Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 72.

sentences against the accused.[174] In this instance, the rhetoric actually proved to be true, while also creating sensational headlines. However, even though foreign correspondents jumped at the chance to report on the First Moscow Trial, their efforts did not always result in flawless reporting. For example, American press reports were often rife with spelling errors concerning the names of the defendants.[175] On occasion, some newspapers omitted the lesser known defendants entirely from their stories, as there was little context to be offered about these obscure individuals, especially when compared to Zinoviev and Kamenev's extensive histories within the Party and the establishment of the USSR.[176]

It may seem harsh to seemingly deride members of the Western press for not foreseeing the Trial of the Sixteen, as the Soviet government's secrecy undoubtedly made it all but impossible to gain the necessary information to do so. This lack of awareness is less an indictment of the journalists themselves (with many likely dissatisfied with their situation) as it is a demonstration of the shortcomings of the system which they upheld. The degree of limitation and censorship in the Soviet Union created an atmosphere in which individuals who were involved in the creation of a new nation less than two decades earlier could be found guilty of crimes so outrageous as to nearly defy logic. However, moments such as the First Moscow Trial highlight Western reporting in a different manner, namely the degree to which the free press can meaningfully contribute to an informed public. The calm period between Kirov's death and the beginning of the trial gave little indication of the spectacle to come, either in terms of the trial itself or the looming Great Terror. While perhaps not a new phenomenon, the coming violence would prove to be of significant interest of the Western world, even after the USSR's collapse.

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[174] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Ex-Leaders Are Likely to Die for 'Terror Plot,'" *The New York Times* (Aug. 16, 1935), 1, 10.
[175] For an example, see "Soviet Indicates 16 as a Terror Band Guided by Trotsky," *The New York Times* (Aug. 15, 1936), 1, 2; and "Soviets Charge Nazis with Aiding in Revolt Plot," *The Salt Lake Tribune* (Aug. 16, 1936), 1.
[176] Norman B. Deuel, "Sixteen Russians on Trial in Plot to Murder Stalin," *Times Herald* (Aug. 19, 1936), 1.

The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre (as it came to be known) took place from August 19 to 24, 1936. Held in the October Hall of Moscow's Trade Union House, it was presided over by the President of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, Vasily Ulrich, who had served in such a capacity during earlier show trials. Unlike the previous, secretive trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev, members of the public and journalists were now invited to the viewing gallery. The hall was not particularly large; it was able to fit approximately 150 Soviet citizens and 30 foreigners (including correspondents and diplomats).[177] Offering an interesting perspective, Harold Denny reported, before the trial began, that the dramatic elements amplified by show trials would be absent from the proceedings, since the guilty verdict was already certain.[178] Such an opinion shows an evolving understanding of Soviet show trials, even by those not there to witness the antecedent proceedings. However, this view did not stop Denny and others from submitting daily reports of the trial once it got underway.

Journalists who covered the First Moscow Trial followed the path of their predecessors, offering commentary focused almost entirely on the manner in which the trial progressed. Correspondents chose to lay out the defendants' admissions of guilt for all their audiences to read. Returning to the original articles they produced offers perhaps the most significant indication of problems in terms of the reporting itself: North American newspapers were dominated by articles from the United Press (UP) and the Associated Press (AP). The two news wire organizations would eventually sell their copyrighted works to publications across the globe, but they were focused on North American audiences at this time.[179] Their pieces often ran

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[177] Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 91.
[178] "Topics of the Times," *The New York Times* (Aug. 19, 1936), 20.
[179] Both the AP and the UP would soon expand their services, as the cartel set up by Reuters–Havas–Wolff was already crumbling. Although the AP had joined the three powerhouse news agencies in 1918, Wolff's closure in 1933 had created more competition to provide news to the world, which would continue to develop as the decade progressed. See Kuldip R. Rampal, "The Collection and Flow of News," in *Global Journalism: Survey of International Communication* (3rd ed.), ed. John Merrill (New York: Longman Publishers USA, 1995), 40. It is also

without bylines, meaning they were not attached to the name or reputation of any journalist, but instead read like an omniscient author was presenting the story. Such articles are, as a result, referenced only by their titles by historians when using them in their work. In recounting the first day of the trial, reporters simply laid out the narrative that was presented in court: formerly prominent communists and their followers had set up an elaborate conspiracy to assassinate current Bolshevik leaders, succeeding only with Kirov. There was some commentary on this "perfectly incredible story," but such concerns were quickly set aside owing to the defendants' collective desire to implicate themselves.[180] Aside from this willingness to confess their apparent complicity, correspondents reported on the defendants' stoic and calm demeanor as they surely moved towards their own executions, as well as on the wider conspiracy connections with Trotsky and the German Gestapo. Beyond these revelations, one of the defendants, the Trotskyite I.I. Reingold, also linked Karl Radek to these conspiracies in his testimony.[181] If the Soviet leadership had offered this fantastic series of events to foreign reporters through the creation of the trial, the same leadership was already planning for the next Moscow Trial, where Radek would be front and center as one of its primary defendants.

The correspondents would continue to cover events as they unfolded throughout the duration of the trial. Over the first three days, their articles described the prosecution's cross-examination of the defendants and witnesses, while the final three days offered plenty of space to quote State Prosecutor Vyshinsky as he demonized the accused (who were also allowed to make

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important to note that the copyrighted articles could be somewhat modified to fit the column space available in individual newspapers.

[180] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "16 in Soviet Admit 2 Plots To Kill Stalin and Others," *The New York Times* (Aug. 20, 1936), 1, 5.

[181] Norman P. Deuel (UP), "Soviet Officials Accused of Plot," *The Times* [Indiana] (Aug. 20, 1936), 9; "16 Confess to Plot to Murder Stalin," *The Baltimore Sun* (Aug. 20, 1936), 13; "16 Vied for 'Honor' of Shooting Stalin," *Globe* (Aug. 20, 1936), 4; "16 Guilty of Plot to 'Purge' Soviets," *The Philadelphia Ledger* (Aug. 20, 1936), 13; and Denny, "16 in Soviet Admit 2 Plots," (Aug. 20, 1936), 1, 5. A response from Trotsky was included in some publications, although not on the front page, see "Trotsky Says, 'Humbug,' of Moscow Trial," *The New York Times* (Aug. 20, 1936), 5.

final pleas). The trial also featured morning and evening sessions, meaning that depending on their publication schedule, some newspapers could offer information on proceedings from the same day (although waiting until the next day could offer time for a more detailed article). It was during the second day of the trial that Zinoviev and Kamenev took the stand. As the two most prominent of the accused physically present in the hall (due to Trotsky's absence), their testimony was necessary in order to properly demonstrate the validity of the charges, or at least the government's ability to make them appear that way. Despite their longstanding histories in the Party and the Soviet government, both Zinoviev and Kamenev freely admitted their efforts to bring about Stalin's downfall and take control of the Soviet Union. Correspondents diligently published their confessions, but offered nearly no critical investigation of possible motives behind their claims; instead, the accused were often simply taken at their word. Moving away from past show trials, many of which saw defendants deny their guilt when on the witness stand, there were no such recantations during the testimonies of Zinoviev or Kamenev. The newspaper articles gave no indication that the two most prominent defendants were telling anything but the honest truth when recounting plots to murder their former allies and seize control of the nation.[182]

As Olberg and Reingold spun their tales of conspiracy and betrayal, Zinoviev and Kamenev made no efforts to deny their guilt; indeed, the trial must have seemed to be going off without a hitch by the Soviet leadership's standards. However, there was still some resistance to be found in Ivan Smirnov, formerly of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet of the National Economy. He did not recant on a previous confession, but refuted several of the claims

[182] "Plot to Set Up Fascist Rule in Russia is Bared," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1. Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Trotsky is Called Real Conspirator in Anti-Soviet Plot," *The New York Times* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1, 11; and "Dramatic Tale of Efforts to Change Nation," *The Mexia Weekly Herald* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1.

against him, specifically surrounding his inclusion in the more violent aspects of the plot. In response, it was not only the prosecutor and judges who derided his protestations, but the other defendants as well. It was also noted that the trial was unlike those typically experienced in an American courtroom, as the majority of the defendants were not attempting to proclaim their innocence, but seemingly making every effort to ensure their own conviction.[183] Utilizing comparisons with Western courts provided reporters with a means of making sense of the Soviet experience for their explicitly Western audiences.

Despite articles detailing the trial and the demeanors of its defendants, doubts as to its overall validity were raised, though never in a prominent fashion. *The New York Times* included mention of the "fantasy" that was the First Moscow Trial, wherein the unnamed author undermines both the proceedings and Harold Denny's reporting, but the piece was buried in the paper's later pages.[184] Denny's more neutral front page coverage could not be balanced out by a small, unaccredited article hidden within the confines of the newspaper. The dramatic moments offered by the trial seemingly made for great news, and, when combined with the difficulties in arguing against the newspaper's own reporter on the scene, there was little to be done with such misgivings. There was also no consensus about the trial among the Western correspondents, as elements such as Zinoviev's claims concerning Trotsky's role in the conspiracy were displayed as either active or passive depending on the personal opinions of the individual writers.[185] Such conflicting articles could only add to the confusing nature of the trial and its explanation abroad.

As Zinoviev and Kamenev had both concluded their testimonies, the following day offered less to entice readers. Although articles continued to flow, they did not appear as

[183] Denny, "Trotsky is Called Real Conspirator," (Aug. 21, 1936), 1, 11.
[184] "Conspirators' Olympic," *The New York Times* (Aug. 21, 1936), 14.
[185] Although the United Press suggested Trotsky as a passive conspirator according to the accused, the Associated Press indicated that the other defendants claimed Trotsky held a much more prominent role. See "Plot to Set Up Fascist Rule," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1 (from the AP), against "Dramatic Tale," *The Mexia Weekly Herald* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1 (from the UP).

frequently on the front pages. In actuality, the intrigue was far from over. Aside from Radek, other Old Bolsheviks were included in the defendants' statements, leading to further inquiry on the part of Western reporters. Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky, Stalin's former Rightist allies, were now being investigated for supposed links to the conspiracy. There was some acknowledgement that many of those indicated had been prominent leaders of the Soviet Union, but little developed on that front, and the news articles conveyed seemingly no signals that further trials were to come.[186] These new details aside, the trial progressed into the third day with some fantastic developments. Stories of secret codes hidden in classic novels, clandestine meetings held in foreign hotels, and further connections to Nazi Germany added to the overall atmosphere of intrigue. Contradictory answers given by the defendants resulted in their derision by the prosecution and the audience, which was a method perfected during previous trials, rather than in a sense that their testimonies had been fabricated.[187] *The Washington Post* did include a small piece undercutting the sequence of events (just as its competitor *The New York Times* had the previous day); the article questioned the degree to which the defendants refused to actually defend themselves, but no author was credited with the piece.[188] While such articles may serve to create a confusing picture for readers, there is little to suggest newspaper editors held them in high esteem, especially since they were relegated to the newspapers' later pages. The better known and apparently reputable Associated Press continued to report on the trial as if it were completely sincere within the same newspaper issue. There was also the matter of the

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[186] Harold Denny, Special to The New York Times, "6 Soviet Leaders Now Under Inquiry," *The New York Times* (Aug. 22, 1936), 3. Georgy Piatakov and Nikolai Uglanov were also mentioned in the article; neither would survive many years beyond this point.

[187] "Reveal Code Used by Trotzky Forces," *Marshfield News-Herald* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1, 4; and "Soviet Judges Laugh at 'Dime Novel' Plotters," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 22, 1936), 7. The novel was *The Arabian Nights*, but the actual code was "forgotten" by the defendant Holtzman.

[188] "Behind the Soviet Trial," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 22, 1936), 6. A similar kind of editorial can be seen in "Another Soviet 'Trial,'" *The Decatur Herald* (Aug 22, 1936), 4, which wrote that the only chance for the defendants to escape with their lives was to fully admit their guilt.

"indispensible evidence" mentioned in the article,[189] which misled readers as there was no substantial or damning proof aside from the defendants' own testimonies.

The fourth day of the trial had some breaking news directly related to the previous several days of reporting: the suicide of Mikhail Tomsky on August 22, 1936. After his implication in the conspiracy plots laid out by the defendants of the Trial of the Sixteen, he chose to take his own life rather than being subjected to the treatment that was soon to plague his colleagues. Tellingly, there was no real investigation of his motivations beyond mention of his connection to the ongoing conspiracy investigations.[190] Problems within the story were rampant: the Associated Press article (when printed in *The New York Times*) indicated Tomsky was a decade older than his actual age, a misprint that seemingly went unnoticed; in a similar vein, the United Press report utilized the Soviet government newspaper *Pravda*, a rather dubious source, to support its claims about Tomsky's demeanor.[191]

Tomsky's suicide was not the only news of the day, as there was also a chance for State Prosecutor Vyshinsky to orate to the audience on the moral failings of the defendants. "Mad dogs [who] must be shot" was the phrase that appeared again and again in newspapers, likely as it made for a poignant tagline. The defendants were also portrayed as more emotional than before, with some even being said to have cried as they expressed no desire for mercy from the court.[192] Harold Denny did pen an interesting article which labelled Zinoviev and Kamenev as "pawns," with Trotsky as the main target of the Soviet government. In doing so, he reinvigorated previous

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[189] "Behind the Soviet Trial," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 22, 1936), 6.
[190] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Bolshevik Linked to Plot Ends Life," *The New York Times* (Aug. 23, 1936), 1, 7; and "Soviet Aid Kills Self as Plotters Implicate Him," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 23, 1936), 2.
[191] See "Tomsky Once in Ruling Group," *The New York Times* (Aug. 23, 1936), 7; and "Soviet Aid [sic] Kills Self," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 23, 1936), 2.
[192] Denny, "Bolshevik Linked to Plot Ends Life," *The New York Times* (Aug. 23, 1936), 1, 7; "Russian Soviet Demands Death of the Plotters," *The Nebraska State Journal* (Aug. 23, 1936), 1, 3; and Charles P. Nutter, "16 Plotters to Face Soviet Firing Squad," *Eau Claire Leader* (Aug. 23, 1936), 1, 2.

notions which viewed the antagonism between Stalin and Trotsky as a battle of paramount importance. However, through this continued focus on the Bolshevik elite, there was no indication of the far more widespread purge to come – one which would spread far further than the former oppositionists who fought against Stalin during his rise to power.[193]

There seemed to be a general consensus that reporters chose to skip writing about the defendants' final pleas in order to focus on the decision of the court: guilty verdicts for all the defendants, with their executions by firing squad set to be carried out within three days. The sixteen men were also given the right to appeal their sentences before the executions. Few correspondents indicated any real surprise by the court's verdict, which took only eight hours of deliberation to be reached, as they had always maintained that such a decision was inevitable in their writings on the trial. Interestingly, the reporters also omitted writing on the second to last day of the trial and move right into the court's verdict. Every defendant accepted the decision, with the exception of Smirnov, even offering speeches affirming their acceptance of their fates; only two of the accused asked for clemency (V. Olberg and N. Lurye), with the rest accepting their sentences without hesitation. One telling description of their collective attitudes, especially those offered by Zinoviev and Kamenev, was that they were "painfully embarrassing." Reporters also described the Soviet public's anticipation of the trial's end, with many in Moscow remaining updated on the proceedings, mirroring the actions seen in earlier show trials.

In terms of resistance to the charges, the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour and Socialist International, among others, had made appeals seeking mercy for the defendants. Correspondents noted there was little chance such an effort would have ever been successful, since the decision to execute the accused was planned beforehand, and such appeals

[193] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Trials Dramatize Soviet Struggles," *The New York Times* (Aug. 23, 1936), E5.

could only strengthen the Soviet government's resolve. The end of such a dramatic trial, called "the most notable in the history of the Soviet Union and perhaps the most important political trial ever held anywhere," did not result in any unexpected sensations beyond the complete willingness of the defendants to ensure their own guilt.[194] The Moscow correspondents had been conditioned into understanding these trials as contained events; they did not foresee the wider and more deadly implications that would soon follow. As in previous show trials, the verdict was understood as unavoidable from the outset. However, what came next was far more shocking.

The Trial of the Sixteen was not held to the same standards as trials conducted in other instances, as it was not subjected to the post-Kirov decree that ended the right to appeal a given sentence. Since that appeal still remained for the defendants, it may have seemed likely that the saga would continue, as previous trials had not led to the deaths of many defendants, even upon being found guilty.[195] That was not to be the case here. The following day, August 25, many newspapers published news that the Soviet government had carried out the death sentences after an immediate denial of the defendants' appeals. Confusion was rampant as to why the usual seventy-two hour timeframe was ignored, but in the end did not really result in more than a day's worth of news; now that the defendants were dead, the public spectacle was over.[196] The death of the accused, however, indicated a massive shift from previous trials, where those found guilty were often jailed or deported, but this development was seemingly lost on Western correspondents, again indicating a failure to understand the moment's deeper significance.

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[194] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Soviet Sentences 16 to Die in Plot to Kill Red Leaders," *The New York Times* (Aug. 24, 1936), 1, 3 ("the most notable..."); "16 Ordered Shot for Soviet Plot," *The Baltimore Sun* (Aug. 24, 1936), 1; and "Soviet Court Votes Death to 16 Plotters," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 24, 1936), 1, 31 ("painfully embarrassing," "highlight").

[195] Denny "Soviet Sentences 16 To Die," *The New York Times* (Aug. 24, 1936), 1, 3.

[196]; Norman P. Deuel, "Usual 72 Hours Delay is Denied Foes of Stalin," *Belvidere Daily Republican* (Aug. 25, 1936), 1; Charles P. Nutter, "16 Plotters Shot Down by Soviet Squad," *The Oakland Tribune* (Aug. 25, 1936), 1; and "Russia Executes Sixteen in Anti-Soviet Plot," *The New York Times* (Aug. 25, 1936), 3.

Instead, it was Leon Trotsky's refusal to stay quiet in the face of the charges laid against him that now offered reporters a developing story they deemed to be worth covering. Trotsky's response that he was ready to face these allegations allowed for an extension of the spectacle for the time being.[197] Trotsky's efforts would eventually result in an inquiry led by the Dewey Commission, which took place in Mexico the following year. Harold Denny, one of the most consistent reporters of the First Moscow Trial, looked to maintain the intriguing saga by reporting on Trotsky's words, although he still utilized *Izvestia* and *Pravda* as his sources of information.[198] Soon enough, he and his counterparts would move on to different stories, and the entire affair would slowly fade, at least until the next trial.

It remains difficult to believe that this entire trial took place over less than a single week, although of course it necessitated a significantly longer period of planning. However, that planning was not known to the correspondents (and seemingly not sought out), and therefore not to readers abroad; hence, the trial was presented as though it sprang out of nowhere. If front page coverage within newspapers indicates the importance allocated to major events, then the First Moscow Trial was given ample opportunity to capture readers' attention. *The New York Times* published front page stories on four of the trial's six total days, with commentary of some kind every day.[199] That a major newspaper would devote such significant space to the trial's coverage indicates the significance associated with the entire affair, or at least an awareness that its readers would be interested in the topic. Such front page coverage was not limited to major outlets like

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[197] "Trotzky Aiming at Revenge over Execution of 16," *The Winnipeg Tribune* (Aug. 25, 1936), 1; "Trotsky's Comment," *The Times* [London] (Aug. 25, 1936), 10; and Norman B. Deuel, "Plotters against Stalin Regime Die by Firing Squad," *The Daily Courier* (Au. 25, 1936), 1.

[198] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Workers Approve Sentences," *The New York Times* (Aug. 25, 1936), 3. Using such sources continued to indicate the limitations of the reporters in the USSR.

[199] These front page articles were noted above: Denny, "16 in Soviet Admit 2 Plots," *The New York Times* (Aug. 20, 1936), 1, 5; Denny, "Trotsky Called Real Conspirator," *The New York Times* (Aug. 21, 1936), 1, 11; Denny, "Bolshevik Linked in Plot Ends Life," *The New York Times* (Aug. 23, 1936), 1, 7; Denny, "Soviet Sentences 16 to Die," *The New York Times* (Aug. 24, 1936), 1, 3.

The New York Times, as other newspapers followed suit. After the conclusion of the trial, the remaining parts of the story fell off the front page. For instance, Denny's report on the trial's fallout in an international context, appearing a mere five days after reporting on the defendants' executions, was relegated to a review section deep in the issue's contents. While continuing to accept the trial at face value, this article also marked one of the final times that the First Moscow Trial was referred to at all in the publication.[200] Similar trends followed in many other newspapers, with references to the accused and the trial decreasing significantly and rapidly, despite the frenzy of the preceding week. In the end, the First Moscow Trial managed to disappear from the Western news cycle nearly as quickly as it had appeared.

As mentioned above, while major American newspapers, perhaps most notably *The New York Times*, could afford special reporters stationed around the globe, many smaller regional or local papers needed to purchase these articles or reports from other news services. While Denny worked exclusively for *The New York Times*, editors from newspapers with fewer financial means were forced to find coverage of such major stories elsewhere; the United Press or the Associated Press were two of the most prominent organizations such newspapers could use in order to stay relevant on international events. In covering events for the UP, Norman B. Deuel's words appeared in newspapers all around the United States, including such disparate newspapers as Oregon's *Bend Bulletin*, Pennsylvania's *Evening Times*, and New York's *Times Herald*, among others. His primary competitor, Charles P. Nutter of the AP, would see his words in Alton, Illinois's *Alton Evening Telegraph*, Oakland's *Oakland Tribune*, and Indiana's *Indiana Gazette*, among others. A common difficulty involved in utilizing these press services was that one had to trust in the correspondents' reporting; there was simply no way for smaller papers to

[200] Harold Denny, Special Cable to The New York Times, "Russians Defend Executions," *The New York Times* (Aug. 30, 1936), E5.

verify their contents. For better or worse, the reach of such a journalist, who worked for an international news agency that sold its copyrighted works to others, could be extensive. Even newspapers that boasted syndicated news operations of their own had the option of utilizing these news association services' reports when they were deemed appropriate or necessary.[201]

The United States-based news agencies certainly seemed to have strong control over the spread of information during the First Moscow Trial, if not the larger interwar period. Canadian newspapers such as Toronto's *Globe* (precursor to *The Globe and Mail*), Ottawa's *Ottawa Journal*, Winnipeg's *Winnipeg Tribune*, and Nanaimo's *Nanaimo Daily News* were forced to make use of copyrighted Associated Press articles. On August 20, the latter three of these newspapers used identical material on their own front pages, albeit with different titles.[202] The following day, *The Globe* relayed on the same information in a more drawn out article, with the quotations and conclusions as essentially equivalent (although the AP was not given mention).[203] In Britain, the London-based *Times* did not follow the same course as its American and Canadian counterparts, as the newspaper seemingly refused to give the trial front page access at all. Since the paper did not have a correspondent in Moscow to cover the trial, its editors were forced to use articles supplied by Reuters or the London Press Exchange.[204] The tense situation between the major European powers in the interwar period may explain the difference between coverage for the British *Times* and North American papers. The distinction was made evident through the *Times*'s continued use of correspondents in Riga instead of those actually residing in Moscow

[201] Using *The New York Times* as an example, see "Trotsky Says, 'Humbug,' of Moscow Trial" *The New York Times* (Aug. 20, 1936), 5; and "Zinovieff Accepts Full Guilt," *The New York Times* (Aug. 21, 1936), 11. Both were stories that originated from the Associated Press.
[202] "Fascist Regime Objective of Trotsky Terrorist Plot Soviet Leader Declares, *The Winnipeg Tribune* (Aug. 20, 1936), 1; "Plotted to Launch Soviet Russia on Road to Fascism, *The Ottawa Journal* (Aug. 20, 1936), 1; and Charles P. Nutter, "Fascism Goal of Zinovieff," *Nanaimo Daily News* (Aug. 20, 1936), 1. The work was only attributed to the AP's Charles Nutter in the *Nanaimo Daily News*.
[203] "Fascism Rule Planned by Russian Terrorists," *The Globe* (Aug. 21, 1936), 4.
[204] From Our Own Correspondent (Reuter), "Soviet State Trial," *The Times* [London] (Aug. 20, 1936), 12; and From Our Own Correspondent (Exchange), "More Arrests in Russia," *The Times* [London] (Aug. 21, 1936), 10.

and who were actually witnessing the trial firsthand. There was an ongoing delay in their timing of their coverage; for instance, publication of the verdict came one day later than the North American newspapers. News even reached Australia, which seemingly took its cues from London (specifically from the *Daily Telegraph*), although there was little sustained attention offered to the stories, at least far less than found in North America.[205]

What is particularly startling in a close analysis of the contemporary news accounts is that the majority of stories in North America came from only a handful of sources. Few reporters seemingly attended the First Moscow Trial. As the story unfolded, many articles in American newspapers were supplied by either the United Press or the Associated Press; at times, these were attributed to either Deuel or Nutter, but this was far from a common occurrence. Due to the consolidated and powerful reach of these two news services, many newspapers were forced to print the same articles as their competitors. They simply could not afford to send their own reporters to Moscow. Even major newspapers like *The New York Times* or *The Chicago Daily Tribune* made use of these news agencies, whose reach now began to challenge their European counterparts.[206] An ongoing difficulty when historians try to assess responsibility for spreading the news was that reporters were often not credited by name when articles from the United Press, the Associated Press, or Reuters appeared in newspapers.[207] In other words, the views of individual correspondents were eclipsed by the editorial line established by the larger press services they represented. As such, the increasing competitive business interests behind the spread of the news continued to dominate the landscape. This condensed field also meant that the factual errors of one correspondent could be replicated in many newspapers and spread to

[205] "Soviet Trial," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Aug. 25, 1936), 12; and "Terrorists Guilty," *The Age* (Aug. 25, 1936), 11.
[206] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign News Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2009), 194.
[207] Several examples can be seen in notes 163, 168, 175, 182, 185, 188, 191, 197, 202, and 204, which include mention of articles written by those news wire services.

countless readers across North America, or even beyond. More than simply blaming the reporters themselves for the shortcomings of their work, a study of coverage concerning the First Moscow Trial offers a greater understanding of how this media landscape offered people access to the news (if not the complete picture), and how it left "original news-gathering" by the wayside.[208]

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Moscow Trials hold such an influential position in the study of Soviet history, at least in its earlier days, was that the Western world was seemingly blind to their origins. Our current understandings of the Soviet government's inner workings aside, the preparation for the public spectacle that was the First Moscow Trial did little to alter the correspondents' approaches to reporting the event. In the end, there was only an increase in the international confusion surrounding the trial and, indeed, the entirety of Soviet political life. The previous show trials could not have prepared foreign audiences for the degree to which the Stalinist government would soon turn on its own people, and the nature of the news cycle, where stories can disappear in an instant, did little to help matters.

Targeting the Old Bolsheviks at this juncture may not have been the motivating force behind the more widespread purges to come, but the public spectacle and ongoing conspiracies set in place did pave the way for future trials. The failure of Western reporters to really breach the Soviet sphere of secrecy both compliments the Soviet system and condemns the correspondents' efforts; it demonstrates a reactive approach to spreading information to readers back home. The lack of indication in Anglo-American presses that the First Moscow Trial would occur at all did little to halt their correspondents from leading the charge to cover the proceedings once they were announced. In terms of Soviet show trials, foreign correspondents chose to view the spectacle in a supposedly neutral manner, and their articles could even appear on the prestigious front page. The shortcomings of the Western press corps in terms of truly

[208] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 55.

understanding the Soviet Union and its inner workings remained beyond the reporters' consideration. However, Western correspondents were not the only ones interested in spreading their insights into the trial and its verdict, as the coming months would come to show.

4 – The Aftermath, or: How the West Was (Left) Wondering

In terms of the positioning Anglo-American newspapers within the grand scheme of spreading information, it is important to note that the degree to which individual publications can affect public opinion is not wholly known. Despite their "elite" status, even newspapers such as *The New York Times* can never enjoy complete readership across the United States. In turn, local papers have a different problem, since they are forced to utilize news wire services that provide what can now be understood as woefully limited and insufficient coverage of certain major international events, at least in terms of offering any meaningful scrutiny.[209] The fairly short news cycle surrounding the events of the First Moscow Trial did not end the string of controversies that arose after the verdict was carried out. Aside from the newspapers already discussed in this work, other mediums existed to ensure the ongoing issues were not forgotten as quickly. Foregoing the immediacy of newspaper coverage, these alternative means were undertaken in order to sway public opinion surrounding the trial in the following weeks and months; such efforts continued even as the Soviet Union moved towards more show trials. Aside from books or magazine articles, these pieces often appeared in pamphlet form, and therefore offered more space to formulate an argument than a newspaper article alone. Their publication also served as a means of income for both publishing houses and authors.[210] Such works had the potential to reach a wide readership, as well as have greater longevity than an article in a daily newspaper. Considering these publications, which appeared in the aftermath of the trial, can shed

[209] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign News Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2009), 8.
[210] For example, D.N. Pritt's *At the Moscow Trial* (New York: "Soviet Russia Today," 1937) cost five cents, Sam Darcy's *An Eye-Witness at the Wreckers' Trial* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1937) cost ten cents, the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky's *World Voices on the Moscow Trials: A Compilation from the Labour and Liberal Press of the World* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1936) cost fifteen cents, and Francis Heisler's *The First Two Moscow Trials: Why?* (Chicago: Socialist Party USA, 1937) cost twenty-five cents.

light on the continuing saga of the conflicting sources of information that existed for Western audiences.

At this moment, it is necessary to note that similar difficulties exist between utilizing newspapers articles and the contents of pamphlets or magazines; namely, the degree to which they really affected public perception. The mere publication of such works does not equate to a definite weight or influence emanating from their pages. It is not altogether realistic to assume massive readership concerning a single event such as a trial in a foreign nation, or even a wide audience beyond those who already subscribed to a particular ideological opinion. However, it would also be a disservice to completely ignore the reality of their existence, which in itself indicates an ongoing (and oftentimes volatile) debate surrounding the trial and its verdict. There are many potential uses for such types of sources, although it remains imperative to be aware of the dangers associated with subscribing these individual voices to popular opinion. As such, their use has the power to inform and even to complicate the landscape surrounding the shaping of Western public opinion in the aftermath of the First Moscow Trial.

The Soviet government persisted in advocating for its version of the proceedings internationally. The Comintern, now with Georgy Dimitrov at its head, stood ready and willing to spread the Stalinist interpretation of the trial; its Executive Committee (ECCI) immediately sent messages to the Communist Parties in both Britain and France. The ECCI wanted to ensure they followed the chosen version of events, while maintaining a heightened awareness of the necessity to battle Trotskyism in all its forms (especially considering how subscribing to that ideology was now equated to fascism). The explicit need to mention that members of the foreign press were allowed to view the trial itself was a major indication of the trial's increasing international context, and foreign CPs were ordered to "inform public opinion as broadly as

possible."[211] As opposed to the reactionary position of the Nazis in the wake of the Reichstag fire trial, or even the preceding show trials in the USSR itself, the Soviet regime made certain to get ahead on directing public opinion in this instance.[212] The Trial of the Sixteen was therefore far from a self-contained event, especially as foreign correspondents were used in order to spread word of the proceedings and its overall verdict. Earl Browder, head of the Communist Party of the United States, received instructions to publish responses to the trial in the pro-Soviet *Daily Worker*, as well as "all [other] Communist press."[213] While the Comintern's efforts may have bolstered the confidence of its Western subsidiaries, the same cannot be said for international socialist groups (such as the Labour and Socialist International) As such, these rising differences of opinion resulted in a more combative environment and a somewhat isolated Moscow.[214] An important note is that two defendants of the trial, Fritz David and Moses Lurye, worked for the Comintern at certain points in their careers. Hence, the zeal with which the ECCI pushed the Stalinist interpretation of the trial to the international CPs may well have been to undercut any suspicions against the organization as a whole.[215]

Perhaps the most important document to appear in the wake of the trial was the report of the court proceedings, which was entitled "The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre." While larger than a standard pamphlet, the publication stood as a record of the trial's events, and it was the Soviet government itself (via the People's Commissariat of Justice) that initiated the document's publication, condoning its circulation at home and abroad. Shortly after

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[211] William Chase, *Enemy Within the Gates? The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934-1939* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 158-161. Sent to Harry Pollitt in Britain and Maurice Thorez in France, the letter was entitled "A letter from the ECCI Secretariat to the leaders of the British and French CPs regarding the conclusion of the August 1936 trial and the upcoming Brussels Peace Conference, 2 August, 1936."
[212] For an example of the reactionary Nazi position that tried to sweep its failures aside, see "Kin of Dimitroff Forbidden to Talk," *The New York Times* (Feb. 11, 1934), 7.
[213] Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates?*, 147-148. Several of the responses in question were published by Karl Radek and Georgy Piatakov, who would feature prominently in the upcoming Second Moscow Trial.
[214] Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates?*, 161-162.
[215] Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates?*, 147.

the trial's end, the world had access to a series of translated versions, including English, which clearly laid out the charges of terrorism and the assassination efforts undertaken by the accused.[216] The overall distribution efforts indicated how the Soviet government still demanded the establishment of a common interpretation of the trial. Overall, much of the content mirrored the more cursory newspaper coverage during the trial itself; the sections of the report were divided between the trial sessions, just as journalists offered reports of each day's events. These pages covered many of the same instances and moments as the foreign correspondents, albeit in greater detail. Perhaps the most striking example is State Prosecutor Vyshinsky's fiery proclamation that the "dogs gone mad be shot–every one of them" retained its prominence as the final words of his speech.[217] Such a turn of phrase was evidently too much for either Soviet publishers or Western reporters to ignore.

A particularly interesting aspect of the report was the amount of space designated to the final pleas of the defendants. The prosecution was given significantly more pages overall in which to lay out the alleged conspiracies undertaken by the accused, who apparently made little (if any) effort to deny their guilt.[218] There is no real indication of the particular mannerisms of the individual defendants as they responded to questions or offered their final pleas; instead, the document offered more of a summary of the events rather than a transcription of the entire affair. In the end, the declarations of the defendants that were included served only to further incriminate them. Based on the report alone, the verdict could hardly be questioned; the guilt of all sixteen men was laid out for the world to see and left little to the imagination in terms of

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[216] *Report of Court Proceedings: The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre. Heard before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, August 19-24, 1936* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967, original Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the USSR, 1936), 11.
[217] *Report of Court Proceedings*, 164.
[218] The last pleas of all sixteen defendants were succinctly summarized and relegated to a mere eight pages at the end of the document. See *Report of Court Proceedings*, pp. 165-173.

nuance or doubt.[219] Based on this knowledge, those who would eventually publish reactions against the court proceedings would oftentimes focus on the manner in which the defendants acted as the trial unfolded, as opposed to focusing on the content of their words alone.

Despite its frequent use in scholarly works concerning the Moscow Trials, the report was not a verbatim transcript, but rather quotations taken from the trial (as opposed to a reproduction of the entire proceedings).[220] This fact is somewhat clear in the document itself, although the possibility of altering the trial account could pass unnoticed. There is also the indisputable notion that the specific mannerisms of the defendants are lost within the pages of such a report; the accused are given almost no voice beyond words that incriminated them in a widespread conspiracy. The abridged nature of the defendants' final pleas indicates the minimal capacity that was given to their words. Another potential impact of the report was the possibility offered in terms of circumventing any detracting statements from third parties intent on denouncing the trial as a whole. There was obviously no indication in the report that torture or any such means were used to garner the confessions; by a contemporary understanding, the report simply offers an indication of the Soviet government's level of fear as it sought desperately to control the resulting interpretations. The trial therefore acted to showcase the results of the defendants' alleged crimes to both national and international audiences.[221] While there were no protests within the USSR, owing perhaps to fear and Party discipline, the reach of the Soviet government

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[219] *Report of Court Proceedings*, 178-180.
[220] William Chase, "Stalin as Producer: The Moscow Trials and the Construction of Mortal Threats," in *Stalin: A New History*, eds. Sarah Davies and James Harris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 232. The format was changed (for unknown reasons) in the later two Moscow Trials, resulting in the publication of transcripts. The titles were *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, January 23-30, 1937 (*Moscow, 1937) and *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." Heard before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U. S. S. R, Moscow, March 2- 13, 1938*. (Moscow, 1938).
[221] Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, 77-78, 80-81.

could not readily extend beyond its borders.[222] One way to alleviate this pressure was to rely on the Western observers who were allowed access to the trial. Soviet leaders must have been satisfied with that plan when some who were actually present at the trial accepted the proceedings and the ultimate verdict as a certainty.

One of the most prominent individuals fanning the flames of controversy was Denis Nowell Pritt, a British Member of Parliament and barrister. Pritt turned away from his Conservative roots by joining the Labour Party in 1918, by his own definition moving "from right to left."[223] Also a prominent lawyer, he was voted into Parliament in late 1935. In August, 1936, he found himself in the Soviet Union in time for the First Moscow Trial. By his account, his arrival and the commencement of what he refers to as the "Zinoviev trial" was nothing more than a coincidence. Not believing that it would cause such controversy, he later claimed to have originally planned not to attend, only doing so at the behest of his wife. Even obtaining a ticket supposedly proved to be an ordeal. Upon speaking to the journalists present at the trial, he concluded that most felt as he did, specifically that the trial was fair and that the defendants were guilty (even though their coverage was politically inclined to undermine that viewpoint). Indeed, it was in response to the British press reports that Pritt undertook work on *The Zinoviev Trial*, a pamphlet in which he planned to "combat the [ongoing] slander campaign" against the USSR.[224] Building on the cables he sent to the *London News Chronicle* as the trial took place, this work

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[222] J. 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), 260.

[223] See the title of his multi-volume autobiography, D.N. Pritt, *The Autobiography of D.N. Pritt, Part One: From Right to Left* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965). One of the most prominent cases Pritt undertook was the defense of Ho Chi Minh against French efforts to extradite the communist leader from Hong Kong in 1931. Although Pritt never saw open court, he was part of the deal that eventually resulted in Ho's release. See Pritt, *From Right to Left*, 137-138.

[224] Pritt, *From Right to Left*, 108-113.

would prove to be a major influence to both those who supported and those who stood in opposition to the show trial through its unwavering adherence to the Soviet line of thought.[225]

Within *The Zinoviev Trial*'s pages, Pritt defends the overall proceedings and the court's verdict. His most explicit argument centers on the confessions of the defendants as elements of the utmost importance in establishing their guilt. He utilizes considerable space laying out the argument that the defendants were made aware of the strong case against them and they subsequently chose to admit their guilt instead of fighting for a lost cause. Through a comparison of the Soviet and British legal systems, the author attempts to show to the reader that openly confessing to such transgressions was not an uncommon occurrence. In his opinion, there was nothing that indicated increased measures (such as torture) were used to garner the confessions.[226] Pritt bases a good deal of his insight on his own experiences, mentioning his previous connections with Soviet police officials and the fact that he actually witnessed the trial itself. By his own account, the defendants could not have lied, or he would have recognized such an act during the trial. While admitting the incredibly personal nature of his understanding of the trial, Pritt chooses not to discount his own observations.[227] His high degree of confidence in his own opinions gives the resulting pamphlet a platform on which to reinforce his position, albeit based on the individual and biased beliefs of one man (although it does not claim otherwise). It must be said that such a quality was not solely limited to Pritt's work, as detractors of the trial followed a similar path, likely due to the secretive nature of the Soviet government.

Pritt employs a rather sardonic style throughout his work, often asking rhetorical or sarcastic questions of the reader. However, there are moments in which he appears more affected

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[225] See American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, *World Voices on the Moscow Trials: A Compilation from the Labour and Liberal Press of the World* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1936), 43. The footnote on the same page indicates that Pritt's writings were also reprinted in the New York-based *Daily Worker*.
[226] D.N. Pritt, *The Zinoviev Trial* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1936), 5-12.
[227] Pritt, *The Zinoviev Trial*, 11-15, 20.

by the controversies surrounding the trial. He aims specific criticism at the telegram sent by the Labour and Socialist International (successor of the Second International) and the International Federation of Trade Unions. The message was sent to the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and attempted to ensure the trial was held in a proper manner and that the defendants had access to counsel, among other provisions. Pritt appears to have taken personal offense to the telegram and moves away from his previous style into a spirited and somewhat emotional defense of the entire Soviet legal system.[228] Instead of emphasizing the trial in question, he used its proceedings as a means of indicating his support for the entire Soviet Union. As such, Pritt's primary focus was broader than a single trial, which may account for his choice not to list all the defendants, as he opted instead to remain focused on the most well-known of the accused.[229]

Aside from his unrelenting defence of the trial, a major point of interest concerns how Pritt claims that the sudden rush to defend the Old Bolshevik defendants on trial was "a little comic," in the sense that those who did so would have readily smeared those same defendants if it suited their goal of undercutting the USSR's reputation.[230] While the entire pamphlet works to justify the First Moscow Trial, there is some validity in such a statement. The trial was made into more than an effort to judge sixteen individuals; it grew into a defense or condemnation of the entire Soviet Union. The hypocrisy of those individuals who now chose to adamantly defend the accused (after never having done so in the past) does seem somewhat comical in retrospect.

Pritt's position as both a barrister and an MP deserves at least a measure of respect in terms of his ability to influence an audience, especially one not familiar with the Soviet legal system. He also attended the trial, thereby lending his words somewhat more credence than those

[228] Pritt, *The Zinoviev Trial*, 27-29, 31-35.
[229] Those defendants were Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bakayev, and Yevdokimov, as well as several mentions of both Smirnov and Holtzman (and the latter only in terms of his denial of certain aspects of the charges against him).
[230] Pritt, *The Zinoviev Trial*, 4.

who judged the proceedings from afar. By his own account, *The Zinoviev Trial* was translated into many languages over the following year, in a similar fashion to the trial transcript. It was republished in the United States in 1937, under the title *At the Moscow Trial* with no clear changes to its contents (although the new title again signified the importance of physically attending the trial). Pritt's contributions would continue and consistently lend themselves to the pro-Soviet narrative.[231] However, any hope that the matter would be closed upon the pamphlet's publication were proven futile, with hotly contested debate continuing for years afterwards.[232] Numerous pamphlets with starkly opposing views soon appeared in circulation, indicating the ongoing controversy surrounding the trial. Altogether, these efforts complicated the overall landscape, especially for readers who were not so emotionally invested in the establishment of a grand and indisputable narrative.

The Communist Party of Great Britain soon financed its own response to the trial. Penned by W.G. Shepherd, the pamphlet completely conformed to the position of the Soviet government, defending the trial and verdict, as well as claiming that the defendants' (and especially Trotsky's) lack of confidence in the revolutionary spirit of the masses was the reason for their traitorous ways.[233] Such a publication exemplifies the extent of Pritt's influence, as Shepherd defers to the MP and barrister's knowledge of Soviet law in lieu of offering his own interpretation. There was also a much more visceral tone to the work than in Pritt's response; Shepherd seemed to relish the opportunity to denigrate the defendants, despite all having been executed by this point. Despite his indignation, one moment of note involves the author mistaking the name of one of the defendants, perhaps due to the hasty efforts to ensure rapid

[231] For example, see D.N. Pritt and Pat Sloan, *The Moscow Trial was Fair* (London: Russia Today, 1936-1937). While a short publication, Pritt's three-page contribution was offered first, even though Sloan (a member of the CPGB) would offer significantly more background on the trial, again indicating the prominence attached to Pritt himself.
[232] Pritt, *From Right to Left*, 114-115.
[233] W.G. Shepherd, *The Moscow Trial* (London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1936), 15-16.

publication.[234] The pamphlet also offers a slight addition to Pritt's cryptic reference to the sudden repute some members of the British press offered to men such as Zinoviev and Kamenev. Shepherd considers this new outlook as another means to promote an anti-Soviet position, and maintains that the defendants were once lumped into the same group as Stalin. He charged that these opposing elements were using the trial in order to support their previously established positions against the Soviet Union,[235] all the while committing himself to the exact same outlook based on his support for the USSR. Overall, the short pamphlet seemed to fit perfectly with the outlook adopted by the Comintern, which was disseminated among the many Communist Parties spread across the world.

There was no lack for contrasting views that attempted to quickly respond to the First Moscow Trial; the authors of such works believed that the proceedings were a conspiracy set up by the Stalinist government. The Austrian socialist Friedrich Adler, mentioned in Pritt's work (by his actions and not by his name),[236] soon published his own response to the trial. Entitled *The Witchcraft Trial in Moscow*, Adler's pamphlet singled out numerous elements that he felt merited intense scrutiny and criticism. However, Adler adopts a stricter tone and immediately called the published report of the proceedings a "propaganda pamphlet." The author attempts to distance both himself and his organization from the politics of the defendants, most notably Zinoviev and Trotsky, by citing ideological differences spanning over the preceding decades.[237]

As Secretary of the Labour and Socialist International, he provided a view that greatly opposed that of an individual that had attacked the organization's efforts, namely D.N. Pritt.

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[234] Shepherd, *The Moscow Trial*, 6-10. He referred to the defendant Valentin Olberg as "Fritz Olberg," within the same paragraph as a mention of the defendant Fritz David. See p. 8. Pritt's work with Sloan stands as another example of deferring to the barrister's knowledge of the Soviet legal system. See note 231.
[235] Shepherd, *The Moscow Trial*, 10-11.
[236] Pritt, *From Right to Left*, 114.
[237] Friedrich Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial in Moscow* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1936), 3-5 ("propaganda pamphlet"), 30.

While perhaps reacting to Pritt's criticism about suddenly altered opinions concerning the accused, there is no indication that Adler glorifies Zinoviev and the other defendants or attempts to portray them as heroic martyrs. Such a connection to Pritt is not assumed, as the author spends a considerable portion of the pamphlet responding to *The Zinoviev Trial* in detail. Adler does not consider that merely witnessing the trial in person is enough to support claims of its legitimacy. In particular, he raises concerns about what are considered to be problematic comparisons between Soviet and British courts, as well as the validity of the given confessions. Adler believes that an entire defense that considers the confessions as legitimate falls apart if even one falsehood is uncovered. In this case, that falsehood concerns the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen, where the accused Holtzman supposedly met Trotsky's son Lev Sedov in 1932. However, the hotel itself had been demolished in 1917, and was never rebuilt, obviously making such a meeting impossible.[238] By demonstrating such a clear falsehood in the testimony of one of the defendants, Adler attempts to demonstrate the weak nature of both the case and those who defend the whole trial.

There was an interesting connection between Adler and the Soviet purge trials, which featured attempted assassinations among the defendants' alleged list of crimes, as he had carried out the assassination of Austrian Minister-President Count Karl Von Stürgkh in 1916 (as a protest to the Von Stürgkh's actions at the time). Although Adler was eventually amnestied after the First World War, he considered his use of terroristic violence as a justified reaction. However, his justification of terrorism is not extended to the USSR, which means that he does not support the alleged actions of the defendants. At the same time, he continues to condemn the proceedings of the First Moscow Trial.[239] Thus, he is in the rather engaging position of

[238] Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial*, 13-14, 21-23.
[239] Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial*, 32-33.

disparaging the trial, but not the socialist nation as a whole. Adler makes significant use of historical context in order to demonstrate the legal failings within the Soviet Union to the reader, as well as to indicate that the Labour and Socialist International provides a viable alternative. Citing earlier show trials, he claims that there was never really any evidence provided by the prosecution to indicate the guilt of the accused, and that the prosecution solely relied on the use of confessions.[240] Overall, it seems as though the pamphlet was designed as more of a reactionary defense of the telegram the organization had sent to Moscow during the trial, although it included serious research that was used to discredit the proceedings. However, there is a call for the use of proper measures in political trials and a sustained effort against fascism, the practices of which Adler connects to those within the Soviet Union. While he does admit the success of the USSR under Stalin in terms of ending capitalism and mobilizing workers, he also refuses to stop criticizing the shortcomings in terms of individual freedom.[241] The existence of a socialist nation that was also a growing global power may have accounted for Adler's refusal to wholly discount the Soviet structure, as he remains primarily fixated upon the failings of its legal system. His efforts in regard to undercutting the trial, but not the entire Soviet Union under Stalin, were not shared by all.

The American Marxist theorist Max Shachtman also published a response to the First Moscow Trial. As both a critic of Stalin and associate of Trotsky, Shachtman uses his work, entitled *Behind the Moscow Trial*, as a means of attacking the verdict and, by extension, the whole Soviet system. He differs in that regard from Adler, who claimed not to have "any particular sympathy" for Trotsky.[242] While initially noting the alarming speed from the trial's announcement in the press to its verdict being carried out, he soon transitions into his major

[240] Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial*, 9-12.
[241] Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial*, 34-35.
[242] Adler, *The Witchcraft Trial*, 5.

claim that the First Moscow Trial "was the result of the biggest frame-up known in history."[243] While such a statement may seem ostentatious, it sets the tone for the dramatic conspiracy Shachtman outlines throughout the publication; however, unlike the conspiracy laid at the defendants' feet, the narrative in this instance focuses on how the accused Old Bolsheviks were set up as scapegoats in service to the Soviet government. The trial acted as a way to ensure Stalin remained in power, since it served to bolster his standing in both national and international contexts.[244] Shachtman systematically moves through the proceedings, citing the complete lack of damning evidence, as well as the many contradictions offered forth in terms of specific timing and conspiracy plots laid out by the defendants, despite the abridged nature of available records. He also comes to the defense of Trotsky, who was the ultimate "target of the trial," and discounts the efforts of the defendants to vilify the exiled revolutionary.[245] There is no explicit mention of Shachtman's connection to Trotsky, whom he had known for years before the initial publication of *Behind the Moscow Trial*.

Shachtman offers significant space to consider questions about the incredible nature of the accusations and the alleged goals of the conspiracy. In one of the more prominent examples, he demands to know how individuals with decades spent fighting for the socialist cause could suddenly reverse their ideologies to such a degree that they would then support both fascism and terrorism.[246] The author's effort in this regard, aside from offering a dramatic condemnation of the entire affair, undercuts the Soviet goal of creating a grand narrative in which the defendants' guilt is beyond question. Aside from advocating this alternative perspective, Shachtman also sows the seeds of wider conspiracy by claiming that rational people simply could not believe the

[243] Max Shachtman, *Behind the Moscow Trial* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1936), 7-9.
[244] Shachtman, *Behind the Moscow Trial*, 115-119.
[245] Shachtman, *Behind the Moscow Trial*, 23-25, 66-67.
[246] Shachtman, *Behind the Moscow Trial*, 14-15.

confessions, as well as by suggesting the idea that the lesser-known defendants were planted by the NKVD in order to ensure the success of the trial.[247] In other words, while denying the conspiracy laid out by the trial report, Shachtman instead weaves one of his own design. The clash of such starkly opposing forces as the supporters and detractors of the trial only continued to offer a disjointed narrative of the entire affair.

While socialist authors, either connected to or disassociated from Trotsky, made efforts to offer an actual analysis of the trial, as opposed to a journalistic summary of events, their conclusions were also steeped in personal biases against the Stalinist system. While they may have denoted major differences between earlier Soviet show trials and the First Moscow Trial, the proceedings themselves became less important than the larger issues they could then be made to represent. As a result, the First Moscow Trial proved to be a means to a different end, namely the discounting of the current Soviet regime, either in part or in whole. The international nature of the trial served to strengthen its uses as evidence of their overall lack of support for the Soviet Union's current course; the fates of sixteen men were only made so critically important because it served their purpose of criticizing the state. While their mistrust of major aspects of the USSR and the trial itself may have been merited, the facts raised by international pundits were lost amidst biased arguments and an intense need to prove a malicious intent on the parts of Soviet authorities. Even if individuals such as Adler and Shachtman disagreed on certain issues, they both considered the defendants' confessions as proof of a conspiracy, though not the one publicized during the trial itself; such a reaction was practically the mirror opposite of the

[247] Shachtman, *Behind the Moscow Trial*, 47-53, 86-88. Shachtman further details the alleged Trotsky emissaries, which included Olberg, Berman-Yurin, David, and both Luryes from among the defendants. See pp. 89-115. Robert Conquest would share the same misgiving in his work. See Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98.

terroristic plot as understood by Pritt or Shepherd, who felt that the confessions proved guilt beyond any shadow of a doubt. No one argued that a conspiracy did not exist.

Lev Sedov also authored a response to the trial, and few publications could boast a more outright connection to Trotsky. Despite receiving less press than Trotsky, Sedov was named in absentia at the First Moscow Trial, having been exiled from the Soviet Union at the same time as his father in 1929. Unlike Shachtman's work, which makes little mention of the author's connection to Trotsky, Sedov proudly proclaims himself as Trotsky's son, both on the pamphlet's cover and within its contents. Published in French in October 1936, *The Red Book on the Moscow Trial* only received an English translation decades later. Initially covering the historical backdrop of the USSR, Sedov soon moves into an analysis of the trial itself, where Trotsky is again named as the "principal defendant."[248] There is a constant condemnation of the Stalinist regime, whose leaders are often compared to the Thermidorians (former allies of Maximilien Robespierre, who eventually denounced him in 1794, leading to his death).[249] Such a dramatic connection is not made without a specific intent, as Sedov establishes a relationship, credited to his father, between the Soviet state and the regime that arose after the French Revolution.[250] The author was purposefully utilizing his work to link the current direction of the Soviet Union to its general failure to enhance the lives of its workers in a different, yet still relatable, context.

When it came to dissecting the trial itself, Sedov focused on the contradictory statements given by the defendants over the course of the event. While also noting the now-destroyed Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen, he remained fixated on undercutting Stalin by proclaiming the rise of

[248] Leon Sedov, *The Red Book on the Moscow Trial* (New York: New Park Publications, Inc., 1980, originally Paris, 1936), 4.
[249] Sedov, *The Red Book*, 1,6, 37, 105, among others.
[250] Sedov, *The Red Book*, 113, note 1. See also Chapter 5, "The Soviet Thermidor," in Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*: *What is the Soviet Union and Where is It Going?* trans. Max Eastman (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1937).

socialist forces in opposition to the current regime.[251] He goes on to question the revolutionary record of State Prosecutor Vyshinsky, especially with regards to his Menshevik past. Sedov argues that Vyshinsky actively prosecutes Old Bolsheviks because he lacks the true Bolshevik spirit. However, according to Sedov, Vyshinsky is merely a symptom of the toxic atmosphere created by Stalin, and only one of many who will follow the same path.[252] Since the right of appeal was abolished in the wake of Kirov's death, he considered that appeals were left available as an incentive for the defendants to follow the script and ultimately avoid death. As Anglo-American journalists were rather confused by the speed with which the defendants were executed, this option offered an explanation that filled previously undetermined elements of the story. This effort also fits into Sedov's goal of alerting "Western public opinion" concerning the significance of the trial.[253] In a similar fashion to the socialists who sided with Trotsky in the wake of the trial, Sedov could not have known for certain that all of his claims – most notably that the defendants expected to be allowed to live by offering their full confessions – were true. Sedov was obviously not privy to the inner workings of the Soviet government at the time, meaning that such conclusions necessarily remain outside of his purview. By presenting such an unverifiable opinion as fact, it misleads the reader in a manner similar to the Soviet efforts that the author himself attempts to subvert.

As the English translation of Sedov's work only appeared decades after the Russian and French originals, there is little to suggest that *The Red Book* could have reached a wide English-speaking audience in 1936. However, the influence of Sedov's research and words on Trotsky's own work could not be ignored; indeed, by Trotsky's own admission, many of his most famous books deserved to have his son credited as co-author. As such, Sedov made sure his work stood

[251] Sedov, *The Red Book*, 9, 77, 112.
[252] Sedov, *The Red Book*, 100-102.
[253] Sedov, *The Red Book*, 104-105, 110 ("Western public opinion").

as a defense of his father, in turn offering Trotsky the courage to stand and fight the wave of malice set against him (which was reignited by the trial), especially in the face of a constant threat of assassination.[254] Sedov would not survive for long after the publication of *The Red Book*, as he died in 1938 from complications resulting from an appendectomy. The mysterious circumstances surrounding his death have never been fully resolved, with some sources claiming that he was the victim of an NKVD assassination.[255] The truth may remain unknown, but Sedov's contribution to the widening dissent against the First Moscow Trial cannot be ignored.

Indeed, the defense of Leon Trotsky became an issue of paramount importance, as he had been limited in his ability to present a response by the Norwegian government that hosted him. Less than two months after the end of the trial, the Provisional Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky was established in Britain with the explicit goal of clearing Trotsky of the charges laid against him. There was, however, not a great deal that the Trotskyist faction in Britain could do in order to build support; perhaps owing to the rise of the Nazis, the contentious political landscape in Britain meant moves in league with Trotsky did not receive tremendous approval.[256] The various socialist political groups in Britain were also not unified in their reactions, which ranged from outright criticism (by the Independent Labour Party) to uncertainty (by the Socialist League, of which D.N. Pritt was a former member).[257] The Communist Party of Great Britain obviously followed the rhetoric of the Comintern, supporting the trial and the verdict. As a result, it was in the United States that Trotskyists truly found a domain in which to thrive.

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[254] Sedov, *The Red Book*, ix-x. These works included *My Life* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1930, originally *Moia Zhizn'*, Berlin, 1930); three volumes of *The History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1932, originally *Istoriia Russkoi Revoliutsii* in two volumes, Berlin, 1931 and 1933); and *The Revolution Betrayed*.

[255] The preface to the English translation of Sedov's *The Red Book* claims his death resulted from a "vile medical murder" (xi), although no proof aside from conspiratorial opinions are offered concerning the matter.

[256] Robert J. Alexander, *International Trotskyism, 1929-1985: A Documented Analysis of the Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 450-451.

[257] Paul Corthorn, *In the Shadow of the Dictators: The British left in the 1930s* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 96-99.

Even before the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky was fully established, there was a quick publication response to the trial, where reports and articles from mostly Trotskyist writers were brought together. By late 1936, *World Voices on the Moscow Trials* had combined works from British, German, and French authors, all translated into English, ultimately in an effort to indicate the unified atmosphere of those in support of Trotsky. The heated conflict between D.N. Pritt and Friedrich Adler was reprinted in part, albeit without the context that gave more authority to their claims. Such an absence was especially obvious with respect to Adler's pamphlet, as no mention was included concerning his disassociation from Trotsky.[258] The majority of the articles form a more united front wherein the authors, sometimes named and sometimes not, deride the weaknesses of the charges against the defendants, or the lack of evidence aside from their own confessions. Again, these are many of the same claims that others had previously considered, but the context in which they were published was very different. The pamphlet was issued with a specific purpose, chiefly concerned with establishing a basis of support for Trotsky in order to simplify his inevitable defense against the charges.[259] The decision to include pieces by potential opinion makers without the context that may have affected their credibility, as well as the choice to include few dissenting opinions, should indicate the biased nature of their efforts. Such a claim is not to imply that publications by individuals such as Pritt or Adler were less biased in their approaches, merely that the Committee continued to perpetuate the trend wherein only one side of the argument was offered serious consideration.

The conflicting views emanating from these publications indicate the global atmosphere that existed in the late interwar era. Each author had their own reasons for trying to influence public opinion, with their justifications and arguments often conflicting with one another (at

[258] American Committee, *World Voices*, 39-45.
[259] American Committee, *World Voices*, 5-6.

times even surpassing ideology completely and becoming personal). There were many such cases during this period. One example was Louis Fischer, who arrived in the USSR in 1922, eventually acting as a reporter for the American magazine *The Nation*. He followed in Walter Duranty's footsteps by thoroughly advocating for the Soviet regime. Although Fischer maintained certain personal uncertainties concerning developments in the Soviet Union, those would not manifest in his work, which eventually culminated in a denial of the 1933 famine.[260] Despite neither Fischer nor Duranty actually attending the Trial of the Sixteen (as Fischer was busy covering the Spanish Civil War at the time and Duranty was out of the country), both men adopted the Soviet view of the verdict as their own. However, while Duranty claimed that the execution of the defendants proved their guilt, Fischer was inwardly less certain, although he continued to vocalize his support of the regime. He apparently held hopes that the Stalin Constitution (adopted in December 1936) would bring about democracy, and that trials were perhaps necessary to create a better future.[261] Evidently, those hopes would prove futile, and Fischer noticed a significant difference upon his later return to Moscow in 1938. He eventually broke away from the Soviet Union after the 1939 nonaggression pact with Germany; Fischer's works then admitted his efforts in falsifying the apparent prosperity he witnessed as time passed.[262] These later acknowledgements of his own complicity do not erase his constant efforts to endorse the Soviet Union's actions, regardless of his hopes for democracy in the USSR.

Publications on the trial continued into the following year. The German playwright Lion Feuchtwanger also offered his take on the changing social landscape within the USSR. While concerning himself with the positive aspects of everyday life for Soviet citizens, he also regarded

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[260] 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* (Lanham and London: University Press of America, Inc., 1982), 141-143, 182.
[261] Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise*, 186-188, 191-192. See Duranty's *The Kremlin and the People* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., 1941) for his account of later Soviet trials.
[262] Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise*, 190-192.

the First Moscow Trial as the catalyst for a problematic international situation. Given his status as a popular writer, he was given special treatment during his trip to the USSR, even meeting with Stalin in the months after the trial's end. As Feuchtwanger expressed his uncertainties concerning the proceedings, the Soviet leader responded with an affirmation of the existence of a grand conspiracy, citing the lack of documentary evidence as a classic example of the conspirators refusing to leave a paper trail. The author's clear admiration for Stalin seemed to curtail further dispute, even though the international reactions to the trial had left him questioning the overall veracity of the charges. Perhaps to curtail his doubts, Feuchtwanger was soon invited to attend the Second Moscow Trial (in January 1937). It was during these proceedings that all of his doubts seemed to disappear; he even went so far as to claim that if the defendants were lying, he questioned "what truth is."[263] In his description of the Second Moscow Trial, Feuchtwanger, on the basis of his own observations, mirrored some comments once again championed by D.N. Pritt, including an explanation for the lack of evidence and claiming that torture could not have been used to garner the confessions.[264] Attending the trial in person added a significant weight to the author's claims, and made sure that his book merited an English translation and publication, by the same publishing house as Pritt's own response to the trial: Victor Gollancz, Ltd. In this instance, the publisher may have wished to emphasize a particular interpretation of the trial, even as more show trials were beginning to take place. In the end, Feuchtwanger's initial uncertainties became secondary to signifying the overall success of a socialist nation.

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[263] Lion Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937: A Visit Described for My Friends*, trans. Irene Josephy (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1937), 127-128, 133-135 ("what truth is").

[264] Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937*, 143-144, 151-153. The author claimed that all necessary and damning evidence had already been presented, so the trial only needed to focus on the defendants' confessions. Later on, Feuchtwanger does offer some residual uncertainty over the need to make such trials public, but resolved that the increasing international tensions necessitated such an assertive reaction. See pp. 161-163.

The controversial debate between the viewpoints of different authors, all seeking to use the trial as proof of their own positions, continued as the Great Terror began in earnest. Sam Darcy, a prominent American communist leader, wrote a pamphlet on the Second Moscow Trial. Since he was working for the Comintern at the time, Darcy was able to witness the proceedings. As a member of the Communist Party of the United States of America, Darcy's opinions coincided with those of the prosecution. He made certain to ensure that he pointed out both the longstanding nature of the defendants' terroristic conspiracies and the continued use of confessions as viable evidence. His major claims concerned Trotsky, and he even went so far as to call for extreme action to be taken in order to "eliminate" the exiled revolutionary.[265] He continued the established trend of show trial supporters who were actually witnesses at the proceedings, meaning he did not rely on second-hand accounts to support his argument.

Ongoing attention was paid to the Moscow Trials by their detractors as well. Francis Heisler, a Hungarian-born lawyer working in the United States, held off the initial publication run of a pamphlet concerning the First Moscow Trial due to the upcoming second trial. After the close of those proceedings, he re-titled his work *The First Two Moscow Trials: Why?*, although it must be said that the first trial remained the primary focus of the pamphlet. Heisler offered a fairly interesting perspective, given that he was a socialist and believed in the necessity of the USSR, but wanted to try and understand why the trials took place. As such, there was less overt hostility in his words than in those by some of his contemporaries. However, Heisler's immediate dismissal of so-called "bourgeois newspapers" for not having enough knowledge of the "factors" involved in the trials does indicate a position that seems to avoid an all-inclusive approach in offering information to his audience.[266] Heisler was ultimately adamant that the

[265] Darcy, *An Eye-Witness at the Wreckers' Trial*, 21-30, 60-63 ("eliminate").
[266] Heisler, *The First Two Moscow Trials*, 1-3.

contradictions in the testimony of the defendants can raise serious doubts about the trial's overall validity. In terms of the evidence itself, the author remains confused how such a weak offering ended in such a violent verdict, as the lack of conspiratorial documents is not indicative of a conspiracy.[267] Heisler's legal background meant that he could have offered a counter-argument to Pritt, although the English barrister's name does not appear in this particular pamphlet. As such, Heisler's views highlight the diverging outlooks of the Third International (headed by the Comintern) and the Labour and Socialist International. Even though the author firmly opposed the show trials, he remained supportive of possibilities represented by the Soviet Union.[268]

There were many others who openly opposed or supported the verdict of the First Moscow Trial, as well as the successive show trials during the Great Terror. The public nature of these spectacles allowed for a wide and international audience to offer its responses and opinions on the verdicts, as they were far more documented than the changing dynamics affecting the Soviet masses during the Terror. Robert Conquest, in a fiery section of his *Great Terror*, named many Western individuals who openly supported the Moscow Trials (including Pritt, Duranty, and Feuchtwanger, among many others).[269] The atmosphere in the West allowed for a greater range of public opinion to coexist (albeit not amicably), and fueled a large number of works that directly responded to the ongoing controversy. As opposed to the state sponsorship of a single all-encompassing opinion, the possibility existed for numerous conflicting views to face off in the public sphere. However, that freedom also meant that it was nearly impossible to access unbiased information about specific events, since the ideological stances were so deeply rooted in the many judgments surrounding the trial. Many of the accounts ranged far beyond the

[267] Heisler, *The First Two Moscow Trials*, 9-10, 17-19, 31-34.
[268] Heisler, *The First Two Moscow Trials*, 162, 171.
[269] For his list, see Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 466-470. He also included a shorter list of those who spoke against the show trials, including Friedrich Adler and the Dewey Commission.

courtroom proceedings that led to the deaths of sixteen men. The ultimate meaning of the trial became more significant than the event itself, and necessarily fluctuated as individual writers attempted to influence public opinion.

The aftermath of the First Moscow Trial evidently resulted in a cavalcade of publications, each with the intent of swaying the audiences to their side. Even those that may have agreed on certain issues were never in complete unity, which indicates that the trial itself became secondary to what individual authors believed it represented to them or their causes. While the degree of their success might remain unknown, the efforts of these authors cannot be completely overlooked. As the months continued, the desire to control public sentiment increased, especially with the emergence of more show trials. Many of those implicated by the testimonies in the Trial of the Sixteen would stand as defendants in the later trials, including formerly prominent officials such as Karl Radek, Georgy Piatakov, Grigory Sokolnikov (who were all among the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial); Marshall Mikhail Tukhachevsky (who was tried in secret); and eventually Nikolai Bukharin, Alexei Rykov, and Genrikh Yagoda (all of whom were among the defendants of the Third Moscow Trial). Yagoda headed the NKVD during the First Moscow Trial several years earlier, so his presence indicated that members of the secret police were no longer above reproach. There is little to suggest that the controversies surrounding the initial Moscow Trial would not be replicated for later show trials, although further research concerning the Western landscape is needed.[270] However, as the situation in Europe deteriorated, and the threat of global war once again loomed, the specific trials may well have lost their prominent place on the front pages of newspapers and the frenzied enthusiasm of many writers may have diminished. As the current work does not extend that far, all that remains to be said is

[270] Some of the most popular works concerning the show trials were actually pieces of fiction, such as Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1941), which detailed the inner thoughts of an Old Bolshevik now held accountable for fantastic crimes he did not commit.

that the Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre provided interested parties with plenty of opportunities to offer their own conclusions concerning the trial, its legitimacy, and its ultimate significance.

It remains difficult to prove the degree to which any of the works discussed in this chapter actually influenced public perceptions at the time. Individuals such as Adler and Pritt may have acknowledged each other's arguments, but that recognition only led to a more resolute approach to their own ideas. Mainstream newspapers had a wide reach but lacked any firm analysis, while the more biased publications issued after the fact refused to consider conflicting viewpoints. If anyone cared enough to gather all the disparate sources concerning the trial, there would be no cohesive narrative of the event; what mattered more was whether an individual author either supported or opposed the Soviet Union (or landed somewhere in between). The existence of a single narrative or interpretation is not the desired result, nor is it being advocated for in the current study. However, the ability to be informed regarding a trial given significant prominence was marred by the countless conflicting interpretations that now enveloped the landscape and were readily accessible (for a price). These given meanings were influenced by individual biases, and the need to fit the story into larger political or ideological frameworks was the primary objective. In the end, the trial and execution of sixteen men in the Soviet Union was not the most important information as news of the trial spread to the West. The entire affair became a tool for those advancing ideological positions that were given a deeper significance after the verdict had already been carried out. Even though the trial lasted less than one week, the resulting controversies raged for a significantly longer period of time, arguably until the fall of the Soviet Union.

Conclusion – The Meaning Behind Ascribing Meaning

The difficulties in terms of spreading information about the Soviet Union by no means ended after the judges in the First Moscow Trial handed down their decision. The correspondents and opinion makers discussed in this work did not end their conflicts with this trial alone; they necessarily moved on, especially after the Stalinist regime did not fall and even conducted further show trials for the remainder of the late 1930s. When global war once again broke out, the priorities of all parties changed out of necessity. However, even the Allied victory and the end of the Second World War did little to change the atmosphere of secrecy in the Soviet Union. In the postwar environment, Western correspondents faced a new challenge and no longer met their Soviet censors face to face; instead, they merely passed their stories through a green curtain and silently awaited judgment. Although there were no doubt continued complaints, just as in the interwar period, Soviet officials responded to such mild agitations by interfering with the import of correspondents' food supplies from Finland.[271] This back-and-forth between the two sides likely continued throughout the rest of the Soviet Union's existence.

Newspapers played a significant role in recounting the First Moscow Trial to an international audience. Aside from these sources, radio broadcasts offered an alternative means of spreading the news to the world, although they have not been readily considered here. Radio had been a viable means of communication since the end of the First World War, but its uses in terms of spreading the news throughout the United States were curtailed by a concerned newspaper industry. Roadblocks were set in place in the early 1930s to ensure the continued dominance of newspapers, which sold stories to radio companies and prevented them from gathering news on their own. It was actually the 1938 Anschluss – and not earlier developments

[271] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign News Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2009), 280.

in Moscow – that provided broadcasting companies like CBS with an opportunity to finally prove their worth. As the Germans annexed Austria, correspondents provided live on-air updates, which allowed for fresh perspectives without the delays attributed to newspapers.[272] Clearly, the world was changing, and such changes did not extend to technology alone.

Other opportunities existed for those wishing to circulate certain viewpoints as time passed. United States Ambassador Joseph Davies would provide a particularly polarizing depiction of the USSR. Beginning his appointment in November 1936, he would witness the Second and Third Moscow Trials. His stark insistence on the veracity of these trials would be shaped by the Western (and especially American) press corps, with whom he conversed deeply and often.[273] His resulting publication, *Mission to Moscow*, would eventually be turned into a notorious Hollywood film in 1943, at a time when collaboration between the United States and the USSR was of paramount importance due to the war. The meaning behind the trials again seemed to be manipulated in order to fit into a larger ideological position. Charles E. Bohlen, who was an aide at the United States Embassy under Davies, before later becoming ambassador himself, would later recount the enormous ignorance of Davies when it came to understanding the Soviet Union.[274]

Back in 1937, the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky sponsored the "Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials in the aftermath of the Second Moscow Trial."[275] The resulting organization was commonly known as the Dewey Commission (named for its chairman, John Dewey) and the investigation was held in Mexico, where Trotsky was staying at the time. After several months of testimony and

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[272] Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*, 284-289.
[273] Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1945, orig. 1941), 42-43, 180-181.
[274] Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 44-45.
[275] The Second Moscow Trial was known as the Parallel Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Center and took place from January 23 to January 30, 1937.

investigation, the Dewey Commission eventually found that Trotsky and Sedov were not guilty of the charges laid against them in the Moscow Trials, offering numerous points to justify their verdict. The Dewey Commission published its findings in the frankly titled *Not Guilty*.[276] The controversy surrounding Trotsky's defense, and even his eventual acquittal by their standards did not save him in the end, as he was killed by an NKVD assassin in 1940. The Moscow Trials resulted in a significant number of documents aimed at defending or persecuting the man who was perhaps the most notorious target despite having never stood trial in a Soviet courtroom. However, the effects of the Dewey Commission were not altogether widespread, and few put much confidence in Trotsky's defense.[277]

As Stalin stood as an overarching figure throughout the trials (not sitting front and center, but never too far removed), his death in 1953 may well have ushered in some form of closure. However, Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, was not willing to completely erase the complicated events of the 1930s. In his infamous "Secret Speech" at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, Khrushchev exonerated some of the Party members who had been purged during the period. Despite opening the doors towards the rehabilitation of such victims, this amnesty was not extended to all, and the defendants of the First Moscow Trial were lumped into the group of "enemies of Leninism," and therefore were not eligible for redemption. Although Khrushchev mentioned the past mistakes of Zinoviev and Kamenev did not necessarily mean that they should have been shot, he still did not pardon them.[278] As a result, the legacy of the Moscow Trials continued to incite controversy whenever

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[276] John Dewey et al. *Not Guilty: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials* (New York: Monad Press, 1972, originally 1937), xxi-xxiii. There were controversies surrounding the Dewey Commission as well, with one member, Carleton Beals, suddenly resigning his position partway through the inquiry.
[277] Jacob Heilbrunn, "The New York Times and the Moscow Show Trials," *World Affairs* 153, no. 3 (1991), 98-99.
[278] "Khrushchev's De-Stalinization Speech, February 24-25. 1956," in Basil Dmytryshyn, *USSR: A Concise History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984), 530-533.

they were mentioned within the USSR; such a statement was true in relation to the defendants executed after the Trial of the Sixteen, and especially so when it came to Trotsky. Even nearly twenty years later, Khrushchev's continued insistence of a Trotskyite conspiracy stands as evidence of a desire to maintain a conspiratorial tone, and a refusal to face the past.

As the Cold War began, the ongoing uncertainties concerning the Moscow Trials within the Soviet Union extended somewhat to the West. Not all Soviet supporters followed Eugene Lyons, William Henry Chamberlin, and Louis Fischer in turning away from the USSR. D.N. Pritt maintained his "favourable impression" of the First Moscow Trial even upon writing his autobiography years later. He also attempted to utilize the views of Joseph Davies as evidence of his astute nature in perceiving the trials, although the controversy surrounding the American ambassador seemed to elude Pritt.[279] In a similar vein, Walter Duranty never fully rescinded his rather positive view of the Soviet Union. As opposed to Pritt, whose connection to the Soviets seemed ideological, Duranty seemed more concerned with the practicalities of supporting the USSR over potential alternatives such as Nazi Germany.[280]

The individual viewpoints of those who contributed to this contentious atmosphere aside, the spread of information surrounding the First Moscow Trial developed based on a lack of resources to process the information for Western audiences, as well as under the veil of the personal biases of the authors themselves. The result was a rather stagnant initial run through from the newspaper industry, which used the show trial in order to create publicity, but offered no meaningful consideration of the trial beyond what the correspondents were told. However, once the story ran its course and the defendants were executed, there was an immediate shift away from the trial and towards fresh newsworthy articles, which was not especially difficult in

[279] D.N. Pritt, *The Autobiography of D.N. Pritt, Part One: From Right to Left* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), 110-111.
[280] Walter Duranty, *I Write As I Please* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1944), 218-219, 223.

the fraught environment of interwar Europe. In the aftermath of the trial, the entire affair became a demonstration of one's total support for or opposition to the Soviet regime, depending on the standpoints of the individual authors. These authors often manipulated the verdict to fit into their predetermined ideological views concerning the direction of a burgeoning world power. While such an exploitation may have had little influence on those already entrenched in those political positions, it did little to offer Western audiences a means of understanding this particular event beyond these limiting points of view.

Aside from widening the "Western" lens, an interesting addition to this study would be a consideration of how sources changed over time, especially as more Soviet show trials took place over the following two years. Did newspapers continue to relay the standpoint of the prosecution without delving into the contextual nuances surrounding the trial? Did individuals and organizations attempt to utilize the trials as a means to support or oppose a political position after the fact, thereby altering the overall significance of the trials to fit into their own, previously established, views? The Trial of the Sixteen was a unique situation in that it was the first of the major Soviet show trials that resulted in the deaths of several Old Bolsheviks, but those that followed can offer further insight into how the trials developed in Western media outlets and other publications. Since Western correspondents were so integral in spreading news of the proceedings abroad, analyzing if their views concerning these public spectacles changed over time would be a worthwhile addition to our current understanding of how the Western world perceived the Soviet Union during the period, or at least how they were informed about it.

There is a difference in the spread of the news as it is understood today. As opposed to the lack of resources (in terms of potential costs and limited journalists) within the news industry, modern news has developed into a myriad of different possible sources. Radio,

television, innumerable online services, and even newspapers continue to offer a platform for interested parties to remain informed on stories from around a world made smaller than ever before. However, the same biases can still pervade each story, making it difficult to see events beyond the meanings attached to them upon their publication. At the same time, the constant influx of news makes it all but impossible to be informed about everything, which forces subscribers to choose between what they want to know about, which was likely always the case. Perhaps the most important aspect of this entire study is that it remains up to individual readers or viewers to determine the trustworthy nature of a source. Mindless acceptance of the endless conflicting viewpoints is not a viable option, so the onus remains on audiences in order to truly remain informed in the most responsible manner.

As a final note, Khrushchev's refusal to dredge up the past and exonerate the Old Bolsheviks was not the end of their story. As part of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the *glasnost* era, both Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev were finally declared not guilty in 1988, more than fifty years after their executions. While not formally reinstated into the Communist Party, the two were found to be innocent of their supposed crimes during the First Moscow Trial; indeed, the entire trial was said to be falsified, indicating a major turn in the Soviet Union's own relationship with its complicated past. As the Soviet Union met its end several years later, it might be said that it was better late than never. Western correspondents in Moscow were sure to report on the story, albeit without the fanfare that surrounded the Soviet show trials decades earlier.[281] There was little to sustain the attention of audiences beyond a single article, which merely noted the story without really exploring the subject further. However, there was enough intrigue to consider the story as front page news – if only for a day.

[281] Bill Keller, Special to The New York Times, "Stalin Victims Vindicated," *The New York Times* (June 14, 1988), A1, A10. Based on this article, it seems as though the less notable defendants were once again swept aside.

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Appendix 1 –

The Sixteen Defendants in the Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre

(as ordered in the indictment)

Although Leon Trotsky and Leon Sedov figured heavily into the trial, they were not included in the original indictment among the sixteen accused present at the proceedings.

1. G.E. Zinoviev: Member of the Bolshevik Party since its 1903 inception, original member of the Politburo, chairman of the Leningrad Soviet, first chairman of the Comintern Executive from 1919-1926, close associate to Vladimir Lenin.
2. L.B. Kamenev: Member of the Bolshevik Party since its 1903 inception, original member of the first Politburo, Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, acted as chairman of the Politburo throughout 1923, close associate to Vladimir Lenin (edited some of his publications.
3. G.E. Yevdokimov: Early member of the Bolshevik Party, deputy chairman of the Leningrad Soviet, member of the Central Committee.
4. I.N. Smirnov: Early member of the Bolshevik Party, fought on the Eastern Front in the Russian Civil War, deputy chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the National Economy (of the RSFSR), member of the Central Committee.
5. I.P. Bakayev: Early member of the Bolshevik Party, active in the Russian Civil War, headed the GPU in Leningrad, member of the Central Committee.
6. V.A. Ter-Vaganyan: Leader within the Armenian Communist Party, wrote many political works concerning Marxism.

7. S.V. Mrachovsky: Early member of the Bolshevik Party, military leader during the Russian Civil War and beyond.
8. E.A. Dreitzer: Fought in the Russian Civil War, a decorated war hero.
9. E.S. Holtzman: Connection to Zinoviev, little other information exists on this defendant.
10. I.I. Reingold: Connection to Zinoviev, little other information exists on this defendant.
11. R.V. Pikel: Connection to Zinoviev, little other information exists on this defendant.
12. V.P. Olberg: Little information exists on this defendant, generally considered as the first defendant to offer evidence against others, suspected NKVD agent.
13. K.B. Berman-Yurin: Joined the German Communist Party in 1923, acting on its regional directorate, emigrated to the USSR in 1933.
14. Fritz David (I.I. Kruglyansky): Moved to Germany in 1926 to join its Communist Party, published several books, moved back to USSR in 1933.
15. M. Lurye: Historian, member of the German Communist Party from 1922, spread propaganda, worked for the Comintern from 1933-1934.
16. N. Lurye: Physician, member of the German Communist Party in 1925, emigrated to the USSR in 1932.

Appendix 2 – Meeting the Moscow Correspondents

Foreign Correspondents present around the time of the First Moscow Trial:

- Anna Louise Strong (Press representative for the Communist Party of the USA and the International News Service from 1921 on): No clear indication she witnessed the trial.
- Charles Nutter (Associated Press, 1936-1937): Attended and wrote on the First Moscow Trial, then covered the Spanish Civil War from 1937-1938.
- Donald Day (*The Chicago Daily Tribune*): His anti-Communist stance made it so he was not granted a visa into the USSR, thereby staying in Riga and not witnessing the trial.
- Harold Denny (*The New York Times*, 1934-1939): Took over from Walter Duranty, witnessed and covered the First and Third Moscow Trials in substantial detail.
- Joseph H. Baird (United Press): Wrote on the post-Kirov purges in 1935 for UP and was published in the Washington Post on August 15, 1936, did not witness the trial.
- Joseph Phillips (*The New York Herald Tribune*): Spent time in Paris, London, Rome, Moscow from 1927-1937, presumed to have been there in 1936 since he was claimed by US Ambassador Joseph Davies in *Mission to Moscow* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1941) as accustomed to Russia, before leaving in 1937.
- Louis Fischer (*The Nation*, 1923-1938): Did not witness the trial, covering the Spanish Civil War at the time, initially very supportive of the Soviet regime, a view which would change over time.
- Norman Deuel (United Press): Attended and wrote on the First Moscow Trial published in US newspapers (see *The Times Herald*), later covered the Third Moscow Trial.
- Spencer Williams (multiple papers, 1929-1940): Seemed to work on economic matters, wrote for Fairchild Publications, the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Daily Herald*, and the Columbia Broadcasting System, as well as representing the Chamber of Commerce.

- Walter Duranty (*The New York Times*, 1921-1936, continued on as Special Correspondent for the NYT until 1940): Did not witness the trial, yet still briefly wrote on it (See *The New York Times* August 17, 1936), did cover later show trials. An adamant supporter of the Soviet regime, he would publish a great deal on his time in the USSR, but would not act as a journalist after parting with *The New York Times* in 1940.

Transferred out of Moscow before the trial:

- Eugene Lyons (United Press, 1928-1934): Worked for the Soviet news agency TASS before beginning his stint with UP, would move away from his Soviet leanings during his time in the country. He would publish numerous works concerned with the effects of Soviet ideology.
- Floyd Gibbons (*The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1921): First Western reporter in Moscow, gone long before the First Moscow Trial.
- Francis McCullough (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1921-1923): One of the core group of the first Western correspondents in Moscow, expelled in 1923 for using the American Relief Administration diplomatic pouch to smuggle out articles.
- Gareth Jones (Western Mail, only really covered the Soviet Union surrounding the famine, 1932): Vilified by the other Western correspondents for his realistic depiction of the 1932-1933 famine.
- George Seldes (*The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1921-1923): One of the core group of the first Western correspondents in Moscow, expelled in 1923 for using the American Relief Administration diplomatic pouch to smuggle out articles, moved to work in Italy and Mexico. Would later become a freelance reporter and remain a significant journalistic force for years.
- James Howe (Associated Press, worked in Moscow, London, Paris, Berlin, and more from 1921-1934): One of the core group of the first Western correspondents in Moscow, not expelled with the rest, but not entirely clear when he left Moscow.

- Percy Noel (*Philadelphia Ledger*, 1921-1923): One of the core group of the first Western correspondents in Moscow, expelled in 1923 for using the American Relief Administration diplomatic pouch to smuggle out articles.
- Ralph Barnes (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1931-1935): Wrote on the famine, later transferred to Germany.
- Sam and Bella Spewack (Sam for *The New York World*, Bella for socialist/pacifist newspapers like the New York-based *Call*, 1921-1923): Two of the core group of the first Western correspondents in Moscow, expelled in 1923 for using the American Relief Administration diplomatic pouch to smuggle out articles, continued as journalists until they went back to New York to write screenplays.
- William Henry Chamberlin (*The Christian Science Monitor* and the *Manchester Guardian*, 1922-1934): Witnessed the famine, and although initially supportive of the Soviet regime, he would soon begin to harbor serious doubts, afterwards transferred to Germany.

<u>Came to Moscow not long after the First Moscow Trial:</u>

- Demaree Bess (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 1937): Mentioned by Davies in *Mission to Moscow* as being in Moscow in 1937, but not specifically in Davies's coverage of the trials.
- Henry Shapiro (United Press, 1937-1973, off period from 1954-1955): Only arrived in Moscow in 1937.
- Joseph Fels Barnes (*New York Herald Tribune*, was in Moscow, Berlin, and New York from 1934-1938): Mentioned by Davies in *Mission to Moscow* as presented there in 1937-1938.
- Richard Massock (Associated Press, 1937-1938): Mentioned by Davies in *Mission to Moscow* as being present in 1937-1938.