

## ABSTRACT

The Development of Soviet Tourism and Its Impact on U.S. Recognition of the U.S.S.R.

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While most major powers had recognized the Soviet Union by the mid-1920s, the United States refused largely out of opposition to the revolutionary activities of the Third International. How did the U.S. finally reconcile with the USSR? It was a gradual process, developing alongside and in interaction with the development of Soviet tourism. Famine relief committees opened the door to unofficial diplomatic relations, providing the incentive, mechanics, and leadership for the later emerging cultural diplomatic societies. These societies, especially VOKS, allowed for an American-Soviet exchange in art, literature and science and developed the tools later used by Intourist, the Soviet travel bureau. The creation of Intourist brought tens of thousands of American citizens each year to see the social, cultural, and economic progress of the Soviet Union, its “superiority though success.” Stalin was correct in his assumption that this new approach to propaganda would be capable of affecting American public opinion and influencing the U.S. path to recognition.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON U.S.  
RECOGNITION OF THE U.S.S.R.

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By  
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First and foremost, I must wholeheartedly thank my thesis director, Dr. Julie deGraffenried. I began my undergraduate years at Baylor University hoping to one day be a doctor. As I struggled with this career path in the second semester of my freshman year, I decided to take one of her Russian history classes, “Russian History Since 1861.” Neither before nor since have I attended a course that so passionately inspired my desire to learn, that was so equally challenging and entertaining. That class finalized my decision to become a History major. Her example as a professor is the one I will look to when I, God-willing, earn my Ph. D and teach Russian History in the future.

As a junior, I returned to Dr. deGraffenried and requested that she supervise my thesis project. She encouraged me while demanding excellence, meeting with me in moments of both excitement and tears. Baylor University is very fortunate to count this professor as a member of its faculty. She has made a huge impact on my life.

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## Introduction

### *Walter Duranty*

Walter Duranty was living in Paris when World War I began. He witnessed the horrors of war – the devastation and the waste – but he was not a soldier. Instead, in 1918, Duranty took the position of Paris correspondent to the *New York Times*.

Confident British wit and a keen sense for the winds of political change made him an engaging and effective correspondent. He so impressed the *New York Times* that when the Soviet government opened its borders to the foreign press as part of the Riga Agreement of 1921, they made him their Moscow correspondent. He entered the Soviet Union during the Famine of 1921

The impact that World War I had on his beliefs and general perception of the world influenced the way he viewed the Soviet experiment. He admitted in his memoir *I Write as I Please* (1935) that the war had hardened him, crushing his long-held ideals.<sup>1</sup> He admitted too that he entered the Soviet Union with a negative preconception of Bolshevik rule, but that his views began to change as he realized the magnitude of the oppression under which the Russian masses had lived for so many centuries under czarist rule: “I found that the Soviet leaders were in the main altruists – fanatical altruists, if you like – honestly trying to make a disciplined and self-respecting nation out of this horde of newly liberated slaves.”<sup>2</sup> Duranty’s experience of World War I – whose “cost was worse

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Duranty, *I Write as I Please* (Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2007), 8, 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

and greater and the result in terms of human hope or happiness...completely nil”<sup>3</sup> – combined with his newfound belief that the Soviet leaders were working towards a better future allowed him to later forgive many of the injustices perpetuated by the regime, particularly under Stalin.

Walter Duranty interviewed Joseph Stalin twice over the years he reported from Moscow: once in 1930 and again in 1933. In the 1930 interview, he asked Stalin what he thought about the United States’ continued refusal to grant the Soviet Union official diplomatic recognition. Stalin replied that the U.S. government knew that the Soviets were ready and willing to settle old debts, but that this was not the true point of impasse. Duranty asked if the primary obstacle to recognition was Soviet revolutionary propaganda, to which Stalin replied that propaganda “doesn’t do anything,”<sup>4</sup> that mere words do not effect real change.

Instead, Stalin explained, there existed a better form of propaganda more effective than words: “We show *visiting foreigners* and the whole world that Socialist production is possible and is growing and will succeed. Whether they like it or not, Socialist economics will develop and exist for them in turn to study. That is propaganda, too – but there is nothing to be done about it.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Stalin Sees Capitalists Drifting Surely to War; Puzzled by Our Attitude: Cites Need for Markets Strong Powers Will Crush Weaker, Then Turn on Each Other, He Holds. Calls League Impotent and Asserts the Versailles Settlement Cannot Last--Says Russia Is for Peace. Wonders What We Fear It Is Not Propaganda, He Says, and Not Debts, Which Soviet Would Pay. Holds This Crisis Worst. Says War Is Inevitable. Stalin Sees World Drifting to War Holds They Can Co-Exist. Denies Words Cause Revolts.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 1, 1930), accessed September 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnew.yorktimes/docview/98540324/abstract/1408882CE8277E89DF9/2?accountid=7014>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



### *My Research Question*

I desired to measure the impact of the development of Soviet tourism and the hosting of guests on the battle for U.S. recognition.

### *My Method*

Little has been written on the topic of tourism in the USSR save for the extensive work of Michael David-Fox, to whose research I am indebted. His book, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union: 1921-1941*, published only last year, is the primary authority on VOKS and the early years of Intourist.

In order to gain greater insight into the impact that Soviet tourism had on American public opinion, I utilized the ProQuest database for the *New York Times* (1851-2009). I was able to analyze the debates for and against recognition – in the context of domestic and foreign events – while looking for reports of experiences abroad in the USSR, particularly under the auspices of one of my two key organizations. I analyzed every article from 1928-1933 which referenced either Soviet tourism or recognition. Out of 5,367 articles generated by the key phrase “Soviet Union,” 311 articles mentioned or featured these topics, sometimes even together. Out of 311 articles, 105 were written about tourism to the Soviet Union, while 206 were written on recognition of the Soviet government. (I categorized those articles that referred to both tourism and recognition as “recognition-related articles,” as they contained arguments for and against recognition and were compared alongside the other recognition arguments.)

In total, I read 855 of the 5,367 articles listed from 1928-1933, an average of twelve articles per month. Therefore, 544 of those 855 articles were used to provide context – an understanding of what information was available to the American public about different areas of Soviet life, how the information was presented (positively or negatively, objectively or in a clearly biased manner), which topics were of special interest, how domestic and international events influenced American opinion of the Soviet Union, and so on.

Along with the *New York Times* articles, I utilized American travelogues as well as documents issued by Intourist to American travel agencies. From advertisements for theatre festivals to 700-page “pocket guides” to the USSR, I was able to examine how the Soviets presented themselves to prospective American visitors. These documents also helped me to understand in greater detail the inner workings of Soviet tourism and how the program developed over time.

### *Overview*

Chapter One – Lenin and NEP: 1921-1924 – features the Soviet adoption of a foreign policy of “peaceful coexistence and inevitable war.” Famine relief committees created in response to the Famine of 1921 opened the door to unofficial diplomatic relations with the United States in the early 1920s, providing the incentive, mechanics, and leadership for the later emerging cultural diplomatic societies, especially VOKS. This connection was reinforced by Ol’ga Kameneva, who chaired *Posledgol* followed by the Committee on Foreign Aid (KZP), which acted as a bridge to the United Information Bureau (OBI) – the precursor to the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (VOKS).

Chapter Two – Post-Lenin and NEP: 1925-1927 – details the creation and activities of VOKS, the overarching cultural diplomatic society. In this period, VOKS hosted hundreds of visitors and conducted exchanges of cultural and scientific material and experts between the Soviet Union and the West. The tools and practices developed for hosting visitors established by VOKS would later be adopted and expanded by Intourist upon its creation in 1929.

Chapter Three – Stalin and Recognition: Part One: 1928-1930 – details the rise of Stalin to power in 1928. His revolution from above – rapid industrialization, collectivization, and the Cultural Revolution – resulted in a new foreign policy, VOKS’ fall and Intourist’s rise. Instead of “peaceful coexistence and inevitable war,” Stalin emphasized “superiority through success.” In order to gain recognition by the United States – meaning long-term credits and increased trade to fund his First Five-Year Plan – Stalin had to convince the American public of Soviet goodwill, as well as its ability to offer a safe investment for American business. Tourists and visitors would see Soviet success and carry that message home.

Chapter Four – Stalin and Recognition: Part Two: 1931-1933 – traces the impact that Soviet tourism had on the pro- and anti- recognition debates among American representatives, scholars, and regular citizens. These debates were impacted by changes in the international and domestic context, particularly the Great Depression, the global depression, the rise of Germany and Japan, and the eventual election of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

*My Thesis*

Both Soviet tourism and the American path to recognition were rooted in the Famine of 1921 and its famine relief committees; developed as these committees morphed into cultural diplomatic societies; and heavily influenced each other after Stalin created Intourist with the hope that tourism and the hosting of guests might win public opinion to the cause of recognition by spreading the message of Soviet “superiority through success.” By humanizing the Soviet government and its citizens while providing first-hand testimony contradicting oppositionist arguments – especially in 1931 in the panic over a possible “Red trade menace” – American tourists and guests of the Soviet Union acted as witnesses in recognition’s case, discrediting the opposition until it finally fell apart.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Lenin and NEP: 1921-1924

#### *The Famine of 1921: Causes*

The Bolshevik Revolution ushered in a new era for Russia and much of Eastern Europe, a cloudy and confounding period that left the West wondering what could possibly be going on beyond those borders. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk turned that wonder into angry resentment, as did Soviet repudiation of Russia's debts and its insistence on undermining foreign governments with its blatant revolutionary propaganda. Containing the tide of Bolshevism quickly became one of America's new global aims, just as containing the tide of communism would later consume the Cold War years. Yet, some Westerners saw the plight of the Russian people and desired to help. After all, Bolshevism was seen by many as the result of hunger and economic despair, and the Revolution as, in Hoover's words, a mere "food riot."<sup>1</sup> Others, especially American businessmen, saw economic opportunity in Russia and believed the United States' recognition of Bolshevik rule would be beneficial to American interests.

Thus, the Soviet Union began its quest for formal foreign recognition. Some countries, such as Germany, would recognize Bolshevik rule before Lenin's death in 1924. Others, particularly the United States, would hold out until the 1930s. This meant that the Party needed to develop alternative channels for foreign diplomacy if the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 32.

Union was to survive as a nation until the day when all nations would fall away following world revolution. Surprisingly, the first channel would develop in the Famine of 1921.

Famines, usually caused by drought and bad harvest, had always been a part of Russian peasant life. This time new factors, some state-sponsored, turned what would have been a regular occurrence into a situation so disastrous, the U.S. government would allocate nearly fifty million dollars to alleviate the human suffering of a country whose government it refused to recognize.<sup>2</sup>

The situation was grim. According to the 1922 League of Nations report, the peasants demonstrated an unwillingness to sow even before grain requisitioning was widely practiced. World War I and the October Revolution left the countryside wanting for men and horses, farm equipment, and an international market due to foreign boycotts and blockades. This, combined with the aftereffects of Lenin's Decree on Land (October 26, 1917), resulted in small plots of acreage being cultivated inefficiently and archaically. The situation in the cities was so poor (i.e. food shortages, strikes, lack of money, bartering) that the home market for agricultural products was miniscule as well.<sup>3</sup>

The Civil War further exacerbated these problems. Both the Red and White Armies resorted to grain requisitioning to feed their troops and, in the case of the Reds, urban workers too. The peasants fought back in two primary ways. Some peasants – who, as said, were already lacking incentive to farm – began producing only enough food to feed their families. They knew anything more would be taken from them. The more

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921-1923* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1974), 6.

militant types, on the other hand, decided to fight both the Red and White Armies and were called the Greens.

How did the Soviet Government respond to these two groups? First, it claimed that some of the peasants who had turned to subsistence farming were actually hoarding their surplus grain to hide it from the government. These saboteurs, whether they existed or not, were deemed “kulaks,” a title which officially indicated that one was a rich peasant (and therefore an oppressor of poor peasants) who was cheating the government, but could also denote that one merely voiced opposition to Bolshevik policy. Being labeled a kulak led to disenfranchisement, deportation, and even death, although deportation and executions became much more popular during Stalin’s “dekulakization” campaign in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Regarding the Greens, Lenin wrote about their handling in a note to a Red Army commissar during the Civil War: “Under the guise of “Greens” (and we will pin it on them later) we shall go forward for ten-twenty versts and hang the kulaks, priests and landowners. Bounty: 100,000 roubles for each man hanged.”<sup>4</sup>

### *The Famine of 1921: Bolshevik Response*

#### *Denial*

Lenin realized much too late the damage that grain requisitioning had wrought in the countryside: “The peculiarity of ‘war communism’ was that we actually took from the peasant his entire surplus, and, sometimes we too not only the surplus but part of his

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986), 50–51.

necessary supply...”<sup>5</sup> With the institution of the New Economic Policy, a combination of small-scale capitalism and large-scale socialism, the infamous collecting squads were replaced with a moderate tax. This, unfortunately, did nothing to help those peasants who were already eating bark, leaves, and grass to survive.<sup>6</sup> Some would even resort to consuming human corpses: the local city government in Samara, for example, discovered ten butcher shops selling human flesh and forced them to close.<sup>7</sup> On June 26, 1921, the famine was officially acknowledged in a *Pravda* article, claiming that twenty-five million people were likely doomed to starvation. This figure would later be raised to thirty-five million and then lowered to the more probable figure of thirteen to sixteen million.<sup>8</sup> On July 23, 1921, the Central Committee admitted that there was nothing it could do.

That a devastating famine was developing was no surprise to the new regime. Reports had been coming in as early as 1920 describing deteriorating conditions in the countryside, particularly in the Volga region. So why, then, did the government refuse to publically recognize the famine until the summer of 1921? It was primarily a matter of political risk. As proved to be true, announcing the full danger of the famine to the world would openly display the Bolshevik regime’s vulnerability. Not only would this be humiliating, but it might also encourage renewed foreign intervention in Soviet affairs with the aim of counterrevolution. On the other hand, continuing to minimize the extent

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<sup>5</sup> Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921-1923*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 27.



of the devastation would only perpetuate further devastation.<sup>9</sup> Peasants fled their plots in panic, land abandoned. Agriculture screeched to a halt, while even the workers began to question the capabilities of their Red leaders as food shortages increased. Either option – asking for help or brushing the situation under the rug – could result in a politically unstable position.

*Action: Domestic Famine Relief Committees*

Earlier in July of 1921, a group of bourgeois intellectuals led by writer Maxim Gorky – including a number of well-known anti-Bolsheviks, as a matter of fact – were allowed to form the All-Russian Famine Relief Committee. Lenin did not expect this committee to do anything productive, but he gave it the appearance of power:

It was empowered to acquire any supplies necessary from domestic or foreign sources, to establish public works projects, to form a network of relief bodies, to solicit and collect donations in Russia or from abroad without interference, to issue books, pamphlets, newspapers and bulletins, to convene conferences on any matters relevant to the famine, and to enjoy full cooperation from state agencies while being immune from normal state supervision.<sup>10</sup>

This autonomy and power had been granted on paper, but the committee soon realized both its weakness and vulnerability. This tension, or contradiction, between official and literal authority would consistently plague organizations throughout Soviet rule.

Why did Lenin allow these bourgeois non-sympathizers to meet at all? He felt that those on the committee “were the only people in the country who were capable of eliciting foreign assistance but who lacked the domestic popularity to exploit the

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<sup>9</sup> Charles M. Edmondson, “The Politics of Hunger: The Soviet Response to Famine, 1921,” *Soviet Studies* 29, no. 4 (1977): 507.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 514.

famine politically.”<sup>11</sup> Somewhat contradictorily, he also expressed little faith in their ability to get anything done, good or bad. As a safeguard, Lenin placed a Communist cell within the committee to keep an eye on their activities. Confusingly, Lev Kamenev – Moscow party boss, longtime friend of Lenin and later victim of Stalin’s Terror – would serve as both chairman of this bourgeois committee *and* as chairman of the Party’s official famine relief committee, the Central Commission for Aid to the Starving, or *Pomgol*.<sup>12</sup> This commission was “singularly unimpressive”<sup>13</sup> and inefficient, “functioning chiefly as a fundraising agency.”<sup>14</sup> Kamenev’s lack of time to devote to either committee, being overburdened with state affairs, likely undermined its efficacy.

#### *Appeal: Foreign Famine Relief Committees*

While Gorky’s committee only survived until August 27, it made one huge contribution to famine relief and to what would become the Soviet Union’s first alternative channel to conventional diplomacy in an era of non-recognition.<sup>15</sup> On July 13, 1921, Gorky made his appeal, “To All the Honest People,” for aid to the starving people of Russia. Herbert Hoover, who at the time was the U.S. Secretary of Commerce under President Harding and the head of the American Relief Administration (ARA), was given official permission to answer the call.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Edmondson, “The Politics of Hunger,” 514.

<sup>14</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 85.

<sup>15</sup> Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 24.

Lenin regarded Hoover's willingness to help with suspicion. This was not without reason. Rumors abounded in the West that the Bolshevik regime was teetering on the edge of collapse. Furthermore, during the Civil War, America had supplied weapons and manpower to assist the White Army in their fight against the new Red regime. There was even talk among a few U.S. officials about assisting the rebels in the Kronstadt Revolt.<sup>16</sup> Hoover assured Lenin, though, that politics should and would not have a place in humanitarian aid.

### *The Famine of 1921: The American Relief Administration*

#### *Creation and Motivations*

Whether or not Hoover believed politics should influence humanitarian aid, they did in this case. As early as the summer of 1918, Woodrow Wilson and his cabinet debated the establishment of a "Russian Relief Commission" as a way to stem the tide of Bolshevism. Armed intervention had failed during the Russian Civil War, and continued attempts would be politically risky. If Bolshevism truly was the result of hunger and economic despair, food could prove to be more effective than guns.<sup>17</sup> Wilson presented this idea to Congress on January 10, 1919, when he claimed that "Bolshevism is steadily advancing westward...and is poisoning Germany. It cannot be stopped by force but it can be stopped by food."<sup>18</sup> Congress agreed to appropriate \$100 million for European aid – not for Russia, but for the surrounding countries decimated during WWI – that would

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<sup>16</sup> Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Edmondson, "The Politics of Hunger," 509.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 510.

be distributed by the newly created American Relief Administration (ARA). By June 28, the ARA had completed its wartime task and faced dissolution. Three days later, however, Hoover created the American Relief Administration European Children's Fund (the A.R.A.E.C.F.). This was understood by all to be the ARA reborn as a private, or quasi-private, organization.<sup>19</sup>

Hoover's (and America's) desire to provide aid to the Soviet Union was motivated by more than the desire to watch it fall. Humanitarianism certainly motivated Americans from across the political and religious spectrum. Food relief packages – \$10 for 49 pounds of flour, 25 pounds of rice, 10 pounds of sugar, 10 pounds of cooking fats, 3 pounds of tea and 20 one pound cans of milk<sup>20</sup> – purchased by individual American citizens totaled \$6 million by the end the famine.<sup>21</sup>

A sluggish economy motivated others. With the end of World War I came unemployment and a shrunken market. Internationally, many countries ceased buying American grain and other foodstuffs because their economies were in shambles (which was one of the reasons the ARA was created in the first place). Farmers possessed too many crops and too little profit, which forced them to limit their purchase of manufactured products. A decline in industrial production followed and, consequently, unemployment. Providing the Russians with food aid allowed the U.S. to “unload America's sizeable agricultural surpluses”<sup>22</sup> while helping the Russians overcome

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<sup>19</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>21</sup> Edmondson, “The Politics of Hunger,” 55.

<sup>22</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*, 32.

starvation. Furthermore, with the alleviation of despairing conditions, perhaps Bolshevism would lose its appeal.

### *Stipulations for Aid*

Before Hoover agreed to lead the ARA into Russia, he informed the Soviet leaders that the U.S. Government required the expatriation of those Americans who were arrested and imprisoned as spies during and after the revolution. Some of these prisoners were, in fact, spies, such as the “*Baltimore Sun*’s Marguerite Harrison, an agent for U.S. Military Intelligence.”<sup>23</sup> The Soviets agreed, allowing seven prisoners to return home. (Interestingly, Walter Duranty reported in August of 1921 that those released prisoners felt the regime was more likely to face overthrow because of the confusing retreat of the NEP rather than the famine conditions.)<sup>24</sup> While Hoover initially communicated with the Soviets through Gorky and the All-Russian American Relief Committee, he quickly shifted his focus to working more directly with the government itself. Lenin dissolved the committee, as it had served its purpose, and arrested its members for a variety of crimes, such as “railing” against and attempting to undermine Bolshevik rule.<sup>25</sup>

Kamenev and Hoover agreed on meeting in Riga, the capital of Latvia and ARA’s Baltic base, to discuss how the ARA would conduct its famine relief in the Soviet Union.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>24</sup> 1921 Walter Duranty, “American Captives, Ragged and Hungry, Safe Out of Russia: Six Reach Reval, Capital of Esthonia, and Are Being Cared For There. Chaff Red Border Guards Starving Masses, They Say, May Overthrow Soviet--Litvinoff Gives Pledges. Allies to Fight Famine Decide to Form International Relief Committee--Hoover to Start Aid At Once. Chaffed Bolshevik Sentries. Keely Directs Red Factory. Litvinoff Meets Hoover Agent. American Captives Safe Out of Russia,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 11, 1921), 1, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98410429/abstract/13CA3267E0F901A30/20?accountid=7014> (accessed March 6, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief*, 75.

Walter Lyman Brown, Hoover's chief of European operations, represented the ARA while Maxim Litvinov, assistant People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, represented the Bolshevik government. Negotiations began on August 10<sup>th</sup> and lasted ten days. Many matters of contention arose from Hoover's basic assumption that the ARA could operate in the Soviet Union under the same terms as it had in other countries – countries with much different geographical, social and political environments.

First, Hoover wanted the ARA to have complete freedom in who it hired – American or Russian – and in where it could operate. Even without their suspicions regarding American intent, Soviet officials rarely provided anyone complete freedom in decision-making. Second, Hoover desired immunity to search and seizure of his men, their offices and living quarters, as well as freedom from arrest and deportation. Litvinov claimed that the Soviet government had every right to kick out foreigners who threatened the regime – a right that every *recognized* government holds –, and that without the right to search and seizure, the ARA men could be smuggling in contraband right under the government's nose.<sup>26</sup>

These two issues were eventually resolved through compromise, although the hardliners in the Soviet government were hardly satisfied. The Riga Agreement allowed the ARA to operate wherever it liked, but specified that the ARA's focus was to be on the Volga region.<sup>27</sup> The government agreed to grant immunity to the ARA personnel from *personal* search and seizure, but not of their offices or living quarters. However, the Soviets were required to have strong evidence suggesting a violation of the agreement

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<sup>26</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 39–40.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

before conducting a search, and the search had to be conducted in the presence of an ARA official. Furthermore, if the Soviet official came out empty-handed, he would be punished. Regarding arrests, the Soviets could appeal to the ARA with evidence of American foul play, leaving it to the ARA to remove that official from duty.<sup>28</sup>

The most contentious issue concerned the ARA's established practice of creating independent local food committees to administer its foreign aid. Under regular circumstances, this seemed like a good idea. The number of Americans present in the foreign country was limited, the population practiced self-help, and extraction was smooth and efficient when the time came to pull out. The Soviet Union, however, was a different environment from what the ARA had experienced in the recent past. The word "independent" was quickly being purged from the Russian dictionary. The composition of these local committees was also of great concern to the Soviet government. Brown claimed that the ARA "would fill its committees with 'neutral' individuals and feed in a 'nonpartisan' matter."<sup>29</sup> Litvinov scoffed at this, knowing the difficulty in attempting to conduct anything apolitically in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he was not a blind fool. He saw the potential of famine relief just as clearly as Wilson, Hoover, and Congress did: "Gentlemen, food is a weapon."<sup>30</sup>

Further stipulations enumerated in the Riga Agreement included the following: that the Soviet government would pay for all loading, transportation, storage and distribution of food from the moment it arrived at Soviet port; that relief was to be

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 41.

directed at children; that food would remain property of the ARA until distributed and was to be distributed in the name of the ARA; that the Soviet government would provide the kitchens, fuel, and bear all necessary costs included in food preparation; that communications and personal transportation equipment were to be made available free of charge to the ARA; and that the ARA was not to engage in any political or commercial activity whatsoever.<sup>31</sup> The Riga Agreement was signed on August 20, 1921.

### *Observations, Experiences, and Challenges*

Many of the men who traveled to Russia to serve in the ARA served as soldiers in World War I. Some decided that they were not ready to leave behind the glamour of Western Europe and the exoticism of the East. Many “veteran” ARA men – those who worked in countries like Belgium or Czechoslovakia after the war – jumped at the chance to experience what they would later call Bololand.<sup>32</sup> The first ARA men to enter Bololand, or land of the Bolsheviks, traveled to the cities on the assumption that the famine would be worst there, far away from the fertile, food-producing countryside. In Moscow and Petrograd, the Americans saw, first, that Bolshevik rule was not synonymous with anarchy, as many officials back home had conveyed. Law and order existed and was practiced.<sup>33</sup> They also observed the rebirth of small-scale capitalism, as the transition from “war communism” to NEP occurred before their very eyes: “Russian and foreign witnesses record with remarkable unanimity the sudden appearance in the spring and summer of 1921 of pastry shops, as if on every block, catering to the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 745.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 58.



formidable Russian sweet tooth.”<sup>34</sup> After sending a few small parties of Americans into the countryside to investigate rural conditions, the ARA realized it had misunderstood the character of the crisis and quickly moved out of the cities into rural lands of unimaginable starvation.

These Americans returned home scarred from the horrific things they had witnessed in the Russian countryside. Bread made primarily out of grass or acorns gave many peasants swollen edema stomachs that contrasted hauntingly with their skin-and-bones figures. Other food options included “straw from roofs of peasant huts ground into powder and baked, wood ground into sawdust, cattle dung, and the bones from decaying carcasses.”<sup>35</sup> Children’s homes overflowed with hundreds of starving new orphans. Houses meant for sixty held six hundred.<sup>36</sup> Speedy distribution was vital to prevent millions of deaths and mass flight from the Volga.

As the Americans faced new and greater challenges, Colonel Haskell, the man in charge on the ground, petitioned Kamenev incessantly for a meeting so that issues regarding transportation, personnel and unwarranted arrests could be discussed. Again and again, Kamenev seemed “far too busy tending to affairs at the center of Soviet politics,”<sup>37</sup> “apparently too busy with political matters to grant ARA officials with an audience,”<sup>38</sup> and “was indeed, as reported, busier than usual with administrative duties.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 156.

As the party boss of Moscow, he already had too much to do. The Soviet government often overwhelmed its best and brightest with so many tasks that he or she eventually lost all usefulness.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps this is why Ol'ga Davydova Kameneva, Kamenev's wife, led the successor committee to *Pomgol* called *Posledgol*, the Central Commission for the Consequences of Famine.

Kameneva is a very interesting Soviet character, one who would have a strong impact on alternative diplomacy up until the 1930s. While related to two of the most well-known men in the Party – as Lev Kamenev's wife and Leon Trotsky's sister – information about her life and Party career is surprisingly difficult to find. We know that she and her husband joined the Communist Party in 1902.<sup>41</sup> We also know that in February 1917, she hosted Stalin – who was finishing his last four-year exile sentence in Siberia – in her parlor while also in exile with her husband in Achinsk. Anatoly Baikolav, a fellow exile, described her as “pretty but vain and capricious.”<sup>42</sup> She complained about Stalin smoking too much in the salon; he courteously ignored her. We will return to her story later.

Without a doubt, Russia's railway system presented the greatest obstacle to food distribution. By 1921, only one-third of the tracks in European Russia remained in working order, and even those lines showed damage and decay.<sup>43</sup> It did not help that

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985), 187.

<sup>41</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Young Stalin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 303.

<sup>43</sup> Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 148–149.

many of the soldiers during the Civil War took to completely destroying railway cars as they found them. This obstacle would loom even larger in 1922. On December 22, 1921, the U.S. Congress agreed to appropriate the leftover funds from the U.S. Grain Corporation – around \$20 million – in order to purchase American surplus corn to send to the Soviet Union. This helped American farmers while providing much needed food to the Russian people.<sup>44</sup> Eight days later, the Soviets agreed to appropriate \$10 million in gold to buy American seed. Congress allowed this exception to the U.S. embargo on Soviet gold, as it showed that the Soviet government was making its best effort to provide for its own people.<sup>45</sup>

### *Success and Withdrawal*

At its height, the ARA fed 10,500,000 Russians a day. This was done with, at the most, 199 American aid workers in Russia at a time.<sup>46</sup> Food and seed were not its only contributions, however. The ARA established sanitation in children's homes and in kitchens, provided medical care, revitalized the railway system, and even employed "corn gangs,"<sup>47</sup> groups of locals employed in public works projects in exchange for a corn ration. In the early months of 1922, the ARA began planning for its extraction. Its task had been accomplished.

The ARA decided it would remain in Russia until the harvest of 1923. The program would slowly be reduced and the administration gradually turned over to the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 142–145.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 170.

Soviet government.<sup>48</sup> The final episode of American famine relief before extraction was, to the ARA's surprise and anger, the announcement by Soviet officials in July 1922 that the coming harvest was healthy enough to allow for the restoration of grain exportation. Colonel Haskell promptly called for a meeting with Kamenev, asking him to explain the Soviet government's decision. Kamenev argued that if the Soviet government refrained from exporting grain for much longer, they would have no other way to bring in revenue for new farm and industrial machinery to reconstruct their broken economy. Besides, the grain being exported was not what had been donated by the U.S., but that which was being collected from the peasants (those outside of the famine's reach) through a food tax. Ending on a sour note, Hoover angrily refused to expand relief to adults or apply for more funds.<sup>49</sup> By mid-July, the ARA finally returned home.

### *Legacy of the Famine Relief Committees*

The United States did not officially recognize the Soviet Union until 1933. The Famine of 1921 provided an alternative channel for diplomacy through these famine relief commissions – the All-Russian Famine Relief Committee, the American Relief Administration (ARA), the Central Commission for Relief of the Starving (*Pomgol*), and the Central Commission for the Consequences of Famine (*Posledgol*) – through which both countries became more familiar with each other. The Soviets lifted the embargo on the foreign press. Many reporters established themselves within the USSR, providing the outside world with greater clarity on Soviet political, economical and social progress for

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 174–178.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 186–190.

years to come while dispelling old rumors. Government diplomats and officials on one side began to learn the other's lingo, and vice versa. The ARA men themselves even began to urge the United States to recognize the new regime, many "not out of love for the Bolos but rather as a way to move them in the direction of further economic and political moderation and eventually, in the best possible world, unwitting political self-extinction."<sup>50</sup>

Just because many of the ARA men supported Soviet recognition did not mean, though, that they respected the Russian people or the Soviet system. Many viewed the people as backward, ignorant, dirty, fatalist, and inferior, and the government as defective and ineffective. The Soviets recognized through their first alternative channel to official diplomacy – the famine relief committees – that a new alternative channel must be developed, one that would improve the Soviet image among foreigners at home or while visiting the USSR.<sup>51</sup>

From *Pomgol* and *Posledgol* emerged the Committee on Foreign Aid, also known as KZP in 1923. This organization inherited many things from its famine relief predecessors. Kameneva, who led *Posledgol*, chaired KZP as well. Many of those who had worked on the famine relief committees joined her. KZP provides the connection between two periods – Lenin and NEP (1921-1924) and post-Lenin and NEP (1925-1927). KZP still focused on aid, but it sought this aid from "friends" of the Soviet Union in the West whom it contacted through representatives and quickly developing friendship societies. Not only that, it "began to monitor foreign press coverage, launched a

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>51</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 33.

successful international book exchange and the photographic agency Russ-Foto, and began arranging international exhibitions and international tours.”<sup>52</sup>

KZP’s orientation towards the foreign bourgeois intelligentsia would be both successful and fatal for cultural societies in the coming years. The two organizations of the following chapter – OBI (United Information Bureau, a branch of the KZP) and VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad) – later inherited KZP’s approach. In the second half of the 1920s, the quest for formal foreign recognition remained, but cultural diplomacy – exchanging people, publications and ideas in science, literature and the arts – provided a new alternative channel.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 33–34.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Post-Lenin and NEP: 1925-1927

#### *OBI: The Precursor to VOKS*

##### *The Global Context*

Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not carry out the Revolution with a back-up plan in mind. Skeptics within the party worried that the world was not yet ripe for communism; but Lenin believed that the moment had come and, in fact, could be slipping away. In the early morning of October 25, 1917, the Bolsheviks seized the Winter Palace, fully expecting that the Russian Revolution would soon spark workers' uprisings across the globe, culminating in a unified rise of the proletariat and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The only other option was that the Revolution – or revolutions – would be suppressed by the imperialist powers and the rise of communism delayed.

By the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, both imperialist intervention and global revolution had clearly failed.<sup>1</sup> The Bolsheviks faced a domestic and international situation for which they had not prepared, for no preparation had been thought necessary. As described in Chapter One, war, famine, and the policy of “war communism” had left the country in shambles. The new government could not feed its people and was gradually losing control. Lenin chose to lead the country in a retreat – politically and economically.

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 13–14.

Replacing communism “cold turkey,” Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), a mixed system of large-scale socialism (i.e., the nationalization of major industries) and small-scale capitalism. For most Western countries, the NEP signaled that the Soviet Union was beginning to turn from its barbaric ways back toward “civilized” rule. Persia and Afghanistan had recognized the Soviet Union before the Tenth Party Congress, but only one month earlier. Turkey and Poland signed treaties of mutual recognition during the congress, and – the same day the Soviets officially announced the NEP on March 21, 1921 – Great Britain agreed to a commercial treaty. Other Great (and lesser) Powers followed: Germany in May, Norway in September, Italy and Austria in December, Sweden the following February, and Czechoslovakia in June.<sup>2</sup>

How could the Bolsheviks reconcile these emerging diplomatic relations with the overarching goal of world revolution? Jon Jacobson described the new policy as “peaceful coexistence and inevitable war.”<sup>3</sup> Faith in Marx had not faltered. Preparation would continue. However, the Bolsheviks realized that, for the Soviet state to survive, it needed official recognition by other world powers by which to trade and gain technical assistance in order to rebuild their technologically backwards, physically devastated country.<sup>4</sup> Survival of the state was now the greatest objective: “Soviet Russia no longer depended on ‘world revolution’; ‘world revolution’ depended on the Soviet Union.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvia R. Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia; the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 36.



The idea of inevitable war did not sit well with the United States, especially as it implied that revolutionary propaganda would continue to filter across the American border. While many Western countries signed treaties with the Soviet Union, the United States remained distant, claiming that until the Soviets discontinued the Third International, reassumed Tsarist Russia's debts, and compensated for nationalized American property, no recognition would take place. Another factor, though, sheds light on America's unique stance: the Roaring Twenties.

World War I devastated the European continent as millions died and empires disintegrated. The United States, on the other hand, experienced economic growth, a labor boom, and became the largest creditor nation in the world. Many thousands of American soldiers died, but the numbers were comparatively low as the U.S. entered the war not long before its end. After the war, Britain and France owed the United States nearly \$10 billion in war debts, which the money-minded Republican Congress refused to reduce or forgive. Germany owed \$33 billion in reparations to be split among the Allied powers. While Europe experienced disillusion and economic hardship, the United States lived in increasing extravagance.

### *Birth and Function of OBI*

Olga Kameneva's Committee on Foreign Aid (KZP) continued to seek aid from bourgeois Western "friends" of the Soviet Union throughout 1923. Kameneva realized, though, that these friends could serve a much greater purpose than merely famine relief. In December 1923, the United Information Bureau of the Commission on Foreign Aid (OBI) was created, having "grown in spite of having 'no official positions, no budget, using the apparatus of the Commission [on Foreign Aid] and funds directed toward food

supply aid.”<sup>6</sup> Essentially, leftover funding for KZP was redirected to the newly created OBI. In this way, the first alternative channel of diplomacy in a period of non-recognition helped to create the second alternative channel: cultural diplomatic societies.

According to a 1924 document, OBI was to disseminate “propaganda among the foreign intelligentsia, with the goal of acquainting it with the cultural achievements and the work of the Soviet Republic.”<sup>7</sup> It operated as a branch of KZP under the All-Union Central Executive Committee (TsIK)<sup>8</sup> and was officially unaffiliated with the Soviet Government. Diplomats stationed in foreign embassies around the world usually served as its representatives, although most cultural exchanges occurred between OBI and the already emerging branches of the Society of Friends of New Russia (*Obshchestvo друзей novoi Rossii*), often called Societies of Friends or Cultural Rapprochement Societies. Their history and function will be addressed later in this chapter.

### *Birth and Function of VOKS*

Kameneva and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) quickly began to push the idea of creating a more formal, expanded organization to replace OBI. Much debate centered around its status: openly official or unofficial, or secretly official – a front organization. To attract non-party sympathizers, they decided that connections to the Soviet government could not be made visible. However, Kameneva repeated again and again that in order for the replacement of OBI to possess greater influence, the State

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Gross Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together: Germany And Russia Between the Wars* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), 110.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>8</sup> Michael David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public’: VOKS, International Travel and Party: Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period,” *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 23.

must provide funding. They decided to create “a fictively non-governmental Soviet analogue to the already existing societies abroad,”<sup>9</sup> one that could generate large support from foreign intelligentsia without being labeled subversive or revolutionary.

The All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (*Vsesoyuznoye obschestvo kul'turnykh svyazey s zagranitsey*), commonly called VOKS, was created in 1925 and became responsible for inviting and hosting hundreds of Western intellectuals, “both eminent and rank-and-file, Communist and non-Communist,”<sup>10</sup> to the Soviet Union. Internally, the society functioned as a hierarchy. At the top sat the chairperson, followed by heads of department, officers in charge (or *referenty*), and interpreter/guides. The different departments, or sectors, focused on particular countries (i.e., the Anglo-American Sector and the Romance Sector) or on specific tasks, such as the Bureau for the Reception of Visitors. Like OBI, VOKS also employed representatives who doubled as diplomats in Soviet embassies.<sup>11</sup>

Externally, VOKS had “no single bureaucratic protector”<sup>12</sup> and was “somewhat of an orphan in the Soviet bureaucratic hierarchy.”<sup>13</sup> The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) appeared to have the greatest supervisory role over VOKS, but the Comintern, the secret police (OGPU), and even the Central Committee (by the 1930s) wielded their influence. This ambiguous external hierarchy created complications for VOKS,

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<sup>9</sup> Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together*, 112.

<sup>10</sup> Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-40: From Red Square to the Left Bank*, BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European Studies; 31; Variation: BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European Studies; 31. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007), 92.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>12</sup> Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together*, 113.

<sup>13</sup> David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public,’” 11.

particularly in regards to its aims. The NKID was naturally focused on establishing stable diplomatic relations, the Comintern on propagating revolutionary ideas, and the secret police on maintaining internal security (which was often perceived as threatened by foreigners).<sup>14</sup> Kameneva strove to keep these different influences in check so that VOKS might not be merely used for short-term political goals and therefore lose its effectiveness in exchanging cultural and scientific information.

Kameneva and the NKID oriented VOKS towards the foreign bourgeois intelligentsia: scientists, professors, but particularly writers because they were, in Kameneva's words, "the rudder of public opinion abroad."<sup>15</sup> Most of these intellectuals were not party members, but either fellow-travelers or convenient bedfellows. A fellow-traveler sympathized with the Communist cause, but at a distance. He did "not recommend world revolution: he prefer[red] 'socialism in one country' – but not his own," for his disillusionment with Western values and systems was "less radical, less total, less uncompromising."<sup>16</sup> Convenient bedfellows, on the other hand, did not support the regime ideologically, but understood that a *quid pro quo* arrangement could be established between them and VOKS.

VOKS relationship with three different German organizations provides a vivid example of the different types of intelligentsia with whom VOKS interacted. Leftist sympathizers composed the German Society of Friends – the first of those friendship societies abroad established in June 1923 during the OBI years. Secondly, the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia*, 172.

<sup>15</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Foreigners Observed: Moscow Visitors In The 1930s Under The Gaze Of Their Soviet Guides," *Russian History* 35, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 216.

<sup>16</sup> David Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism*, Rev. (New Haven: Yale University Press,, 1988), 4,6–7.

*Gesellschaft* – a “pre-existing organization of influential non-leftists that had a strong interest in reaching out to Kameneva’s VOKS in the early 1920s”<sup>17</sup> – introduced many Germany policy-makers to VOKS. Finally and most interestingly, VOKS interacted with an organization called Arplan, composed of far-right nationalists and future Nazi Party members. These men flocked to the Soviets not out of sympathy for communist ideology, but out of support for any anti-Western country in a post-Versailles world.

Different higher-ups urged Kameneva to reorient VOKS away from the Society of Friends – whose members, being primarily writers and professionals, possessed less power to influence foreign policy – towards Arplan or the *Gesellschaft*, but she fought to keep VOKS focused at least in part on the Society of Friends. She recognized that VOKS was in constant danger of suspicion for its concentration on the bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat, even though this focus had been approved at VOKS’s creation. Further deviating from leftist sympathizers could prove fatal to her career or to VOKS’s existence.

An Intourist pocket-guide to the USSR provides an insightful summary of VOKS’s aims at home and abroad: (1) *to exhibit* abroad progress in socialist construction, especially in areas of science, literature, drama, music and art, (2) *to acquaint* foreign countries with the new socialist forms of life and labor, (3) *to introduce* into the USSR achievements of advanced foreign countries, and (4) *to establish* permanent cooperation between cultural movements, scientific and cultural institutions, and individuals abroad.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Solomon, *Doing Medicine Together*, 130–131.

<sup>18</sup> L. A. Block and Inturist, “A Pocket Guide to the Soviet Union” (Vneshtorgisdat, 1932), 602.

I would, however, add one more aim to its list: (5) *to host* foreign scholars, scientists, and cultural figures.

VOKS carried out these aims through its interactions with the Societies of Friends, which served as “outposts of Soviet culture and politics abroad.”<sup>19</sup> VOKS’s relationship with these societies was sensitive because it could only intervene in their affairs subtly: “VOKS’s relations... [were] not intrusive enough to warrant them being called ‘fronts’; however, VOKS was involved with their operations, tried to influence them and, in some cases, did indeed fund them.”<sup>20</sup> For example, the French Society of Friends was created at the urging of Kameneva, who wrote letters to those men who later founded the organization. She attended its inaugural meeting in 1927 and kept tabs on its activity, often complaining that little was being done. The archives indicate that insiders were placed inside these societies so that, if the society fell into trouble (financial, political, etc.), VOKS could move to rectify the situation.<sup>21</sup> VOKS’s interference was not aimed at total control, but at ensuring continued activity and cooperation.

VOKS acquainted the West with Soviet cultural and material progress through the organization of book exchanges, musical and theatrical performances, lectures, and photo and art exhibitions.<sup>22</sup> It also provided the foreign press with news material, worked to get Soviet works published in the West, and sponsored international exhibitions and those Soviet intellectuals who desired to attend them: “VOKS was a clearing house for

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<sup>19</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 89.

<sup>20</sup> Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-40*, 97.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 39.

invitations from abroad for Soviet citizens to participate in international exhibitions, conferences, exchanges, and projects of scientific co-operation.”<sup>23</sup> What is particularly interesting, though, are the interactions VOKS had with guests of the Soviet Union.

#### *VOKS-Visitor Interactions: the 1920s*

Many Western intellectuals returned from their 1920s visits to the USSR sounding high praises – unbelievably high in the face of child homelessness, food shortages, kulak oppression and rumors of forced labor. Ludmila Stern claims that “Western intellectuals constructed the cultural myth of the Soviet Union,” that they were both “subject to this myth and helped promote it.”<sup>24</sup> Evidence suggests that Western visitors did, in fact, remain silent or lie about the things they had seen, but for many different reasons and motivations underneath a shared predisposition towards the Soviet system.

Some of VOKS’ guests saw in the Soviet experiment the fulfillment of a personal hope or desire. Whether concerned with cooperative labor, gender equality, free health care, prison reform, or sexual liberation, these intellectuals were able to look past deficiencies within the Soviet system if their particular issue was addressed or their hope fulfilled. Conversely, these individuals were easily and irreparably disappointed if their issue was ignored or remained unchanged.<sup>25</sup> Andre Gidé, famous French writer, is a perfect example. He heaped praise on the Soviet system for its rejection of traditional

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<sup>23</sup> David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public,’” 20.

<sup>24</sup> Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-40*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921-1941*, 4, 246; Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 104.

family values and its tolerance towards homosexuality. Stalin's reversal of this policy in a 1934 law against homosexuality reversed Gide's support: "'Deplorable and unsatisfactory as the state of affairs in the Soviet Union is, I would have remained silent if I could have been assured of any faint progress toward something better.'" <sup>26</sup> Had his personal desire been fulfilled, Gide would have likely self-censored.

Others filtered what they saw on their travels by "reading the present in light of the future, to value present achievement more highly for what it was about to become." <sup>27</sup> They assigned anything backwards, dirty, inefficient, or seemingly immoral to the czarist past. The slightest sign of socialist progress gave them hope. These visitors felt justified in leaving out unsavory details when asked to report on the USSR because they believed that all negative features would soon fall away.

Some saw Soviet deficiencies, particularly violence, as excusable and even essential in a time of revolutionary upheaval. The ends justify the means – especially if the end is a society free of oppression, greed, materialism, and disillusionment. Even Henri Barbusse, a French novelist and self-proclaimed pacifist argued that "the men in Moscow were right if indeed they did so, to maintain by force for the past three years, the dictatorship of Reason. Every revolution imposes a constitution by force." <sup>28</sup> Evidently, the French Revolution and the violence that accompanied it impacted Western intellectuals, perhaps even more so the French, in their approval of Bolshevik oppression.

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<sup>26</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 267.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>28</sup> Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-40*, 13.



Utopian predisposition strongly influenced Western intellectuals' perceptions of the Soviet experiment, but so did three other factors unrelated to ideology: desire for personal recognition, faith in generalization, and language vulnerability.

Writers and artists were especially vulnerable to the flatteries given them by the Soviet government and people: "the writer's life, after all, is a constant striving after recognition not only for himself but also for what he takes his work to represent."<sup>29</sup> Praise boosted their egos while publishing deals thickened their wallets. How were they to discredit a system which had so greatly benefited them?

Some intellectuals failed to realize that one example does not necessarily represent all examples within a country. After seeing two or three schools, a prison, a few apartment complexes and a hospital, guests believed that they now understood the entire institutional organization of the Soviet Union: "The day has certainly passed when one could be an armchair expert in a regional field of interest, but the day has not yet arrived when people realize that expertness is something more than being a firsthand witness."<sup>30</sup> This level of generalization might seem outrageous, but one must only listen to friends or family today to witness the same claim of "expertness" regarding a country's culture after only a weeklong cruise.

Finally, many visitors to the USSR did not speak a word of Russian! For the Soviets, this was hugely beneficial in that it allowed them to better steer guests towards the right places and conclusions. A waitress, train passenger, or taxi driver was often

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<sup>29</sup> Cate, *The Fellow-Travelers*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia*, 8.

unable to convey his or her dissatisfaction with the new system, for the interpreter would never convey such negativity to a foreign guest.

Some of the methods used by VOKS to present Soviet life have been alluded to, but I will now explain them in greater detail. In order to prevent foreign visitors from seeing only dismal cities and bare shelves, VOKS utilized models and showcases to convince their guests that socialist progress was both extensive and continuous. Models were not artificial sites. Instead, they included those hospitals, schools, theatres, workers' apartments, communes, and prisons that were currently in the best shape, but not necessarily representative throughout the provinces: "At one end of the scale, Soviet authorities showed the best they had and urged their guests to generalize from those unrepresentative conditions."<sup>31</sup>

Showcases, or modern "Potemkin villages" – originally fictive sites designed by G.A. Potemkin to convince Catherine the Great that her colonization policy had been executed –<sup>32</sup> could be superficial or intensive. Oftentimes, the Soviets did not erect a complete façade: they removed beggars and homeless children from the street; coached peasants or workers on what to say to a foreigner; or ordered a "reducing [of] food costs or the opening up [of] some new service for Russian workers"<sup>33</sup> before a guest passed through a city.

At other times, the Soviets employed intense deception, particularly through the replacement of peasant farmers or prisoners with GPU men:

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 152.

A former Belgian consul who had remained in the Soviet Union after the Revolution witnessed the preparations made to receive the British Trade Union delegation at Rostov in 1924: several hundred workmen at one of the major plants who were considered politically unreliable were given a vacation while GPU men replaced them.<sup>34</sup>

The Bolshevo Commune proved a particularly popular showcase as well. The secret police opened the commune in 1924, largely in response to the overwhelming number of homeless, delinquent children who roamed the city streets – nearly seven million by the early 1920s. This became especially problematic as more visitors traveled to the USSR, especially in Moscow.

The Bolshevo Commune served as an example of rehabilitation – “of socialism writ small”<sup>35</sup> – and a counter to claims of GPU brutality and Soviet oppression. The Bolshevo children lived on a lush former estate without guards or fences, where they were trained as craftsmen with promising prospects for the future. Only with the opening of Soviet archives did scholars discover the degree to which horizontal supervision by the youth, group punishment, wages, and the promise of a clean criminal record upon graduation influenced the children to behave as if labor alone had transformed their lives.<sup>36</sup>

VOKS tried to direct visitors to these models and showcases while assuring them that they could travel where they wished. Visitors’ itineraries were overwhelmed with events, tours, and banquets so that there was little time to wander off course. Many expressed annoyance at being hurried and, if persistent enough, could convince their

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>35</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 159.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 158–163.

guide to take them to the person or place they desired “because further obstructiveness might produce a worse impression than the hidden object.”<sup>37</sup> Foreigners certainly possessed more freedom in the 1920s than in the 1930s, especially if they spoke Russian or had Russian family ties.<sup>38</sup>

### *Travelogues: 1920s and VOKS*

Samuel Harper and Theodore Dreiser both traveled to the Soviet Union in this period. Harper was a Russian-speaking traveler focused on research while Dreiser was a fellow-sympathizer without Russian-speaking capabilities. Their differences in background, personality, and intent provide two unique interactions with the VOKS in the 1920s.

Samuel Harper, a former Russian Studies professor at the University of Chicago, had been traveling to Russia since 1904. Amazingly, he witnessed the revolutionary activities of 1905 – including Bloody Sunday, when Tsar Nicholas II ordered his soldiers to fire upon a nonviolent crowd of demonstrators and then declared his forgiveness for their protests – and of 1917.

In 1926, Harper returned to the USSR to study and evaluate the state of Soviet society since the Bolshevik Revolution. Upon arrival, he and Maurice Hindus, another Russian-speaking intellectual, began working with VOKS to arrange visits to institutions, interviews with officials, and other itinerary items.<sup>39</sup> They outlined their program with Olga Kameneva and proceeded to travel about the capital. Harper quickly noticed that

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<sup>37</sup> Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia*, 119.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 115–119.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel N. Harper and Paul V. Harper, *The Russia I Believe In: The Memoirs of Samuel N. Harper: 1902-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 143.

VOKS arranged for GPU men to tail visitors at all times: “Waiters in hotels, as well as the interpreters assigned to foreigners by the Cultural Relations Society [VOKS], were said to be agents of the G.P.U.”<sup>40</sup>

Fortunately, because he and Hindus spoke Russian, they were able to travel throughout the provinces without VOKS’s approval, something they would find more difficult in the 1930s. They spoke with many people whose lives the State was beginning to tolerate less and less into the late 1920s: taxi drivers, priests, shopkeepers, etc. Many citizens expressed hope in “the splendid plans for the future,”<sup>41</sup> even if they currently lacked work or lived in cramped conditions.

Overall, Harper seemed satisfied with VOKS’s performance during his 1926 trip. VOKS arranged many of his interviews and visits and did not complain when he and Hindus took short trips of their own. Harper uniquely benefited from having already established connections within both Czarist and Soviet society, giving him much leeway in what he said and did. He smartly voiced one complaint, however, regarding VOKS’s efficiency: “we had soon found that it was a social experiment and not a business enterprise that was being conducted.”<sup>42</sup>

While Samuel Harper did not take extensive notes on his interactions with VOKS during the 1920s, Theodore Dreiser did. He was an American realist writer who, more than twenty years before the Bolshevik Revolution, publically voiced his support for a Russian socialist state:

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 177.

Russia would make the most delightful socialist community if the Emperor could be suddenly done away with and the people as suddenly educated. The Government controlling everything, it would only be necessary to transfer the control to the people's choice and you would have a kind of Utopia. The thing might be worked out inversely and a fine socialistic community transformed into the most despotic form of government, with the reigns all in one man's hands, but that would not be likely to happen where people have once gained any kind of intellectual status. – *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (January 3, 1893)<sup>43</sup>

Oddly, he himself was not a socialist, claiming to be an individualist at heart. Perhaps we could best describe him as a fellow-traveler, one who approved of communism in Russia, but not in his own country. On the other hand, he predicted that the whole world would eventually follow in Russia's footsteps. Regardless, VOKS deemed him both sufficiently sympathetic and influential to invite him to see the USSR.

On October 3, 1927, the International Workers Aid invited Dreiser – and nearly fifteen hundred other Western intellectuals – to attend the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. Dreiser responded skeptically, claiming that he would only attend if allowed to travel throughout the country and see the “real, unofficial Russia.”<sup>44</sup> Mr. Biedenkapp, the head of the International Workers Aid, assured him that his trip would be fully paid for by the Soviet government and that he could travel where he wished. Dreiser accepted the invitation and quickly began preparing for the trip, for he would be leaving in nine days.

In addition to Trevis, his VOKS-assigned guide, and Dr. Sophia Davidovskaya, his VOKS-assigned doctor (for his bronchitis), Dreiser hired Ruth Epperson Kennell, an American expatriate, as his personal secretary to accompany him during his stay.

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<sup>43</sup> Theodore Dreiser, Thomas P. Riggio, and James L. W. West, *Dreiser's Russian Diary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

Throughout the trip, Kennell's allegiance would be torn between Dreiser, her eventual lover and friend, and the Soviet government. After the trip, she turned in a large portion of Dreiser's diary – which had been partly written in his hand and partly transcribed by her – to VOKS.

Upon arrival in the USSR, Dreiser was fascinated and somewhat amused with the bands, speeches, and festivities arranged in his honor. He began exploring Moscow and was unimpressed with its shabby shops and poor restaurants. However, he enjoyed the tours of the peasant guest houses, the workers' clubs, and the museums. Free legal and medical care greatly pleased him, as did the visible improvement of the prisons from czarist years. To the Soviets' dismay, he berated the state of the new workers' apartments, claiming that ten to fifteen people within a three-room residence was simply ridiculous: "And the wretched taste of most of them...gave one the mood of a slum – or a Pennsylvania mining village under the rankest tyranny of capitalism."<sup>45</sup>

Dreiser often puzzled at how VOKS could be "over alive with a sense of obligation"<sup>46</sup> at one moment, but completely forget about him at the next. This lack of efficiency was somewhat inherent in Soviet organizations, but in this case Dreiser's problems resulted largely from a lack of communication between the groups handling his travel arrangements:

Since coming here I had been dissatisfied with the complete indifference of the Society of Cultural Relations [Vox] (which extended the invitation for the Soviet Government) to my presence here. Many affairs had occurred to which I was not invited – and worse – because of some quarrel between the Society and Madam Kameneva, its head, and Biedenkaap – and his International Workers Aid – also a

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 60.

Soviet Agency, I was being ignored. Even the promised tour of Russia – agreed upon between me & Biedenkopf, was in question.<sup>47</sup>

Apparently, both groups assumed that the other was taking care of Dreiser's affairs.

Particularly interesting are Dreiser's comments on equality and the waning days of the NEP. While attending an opera in Leningrad, he claimed to have witnessed "'NEP' and the bourgeoisie in full bloom"<sup>48</sup> On the streets of Moscow he observed "beggars in the street; and pretentious men & women who know no more of equality or 'comrade' than ever the world has known since ever it began."<sup>49</sup> He began to wonder about this lack of equality, about its persistence in Soviet society. During an interview with Nikolai Bukharin, Politburo member and chief editor of *Pravda*, Dreiser suggested that Russia's dictatorship of the proletariat was in reality an intellectual tyranny: "But that the right of the superior brain to the superior directing and ruling position has been done away with I question."<sup>50</sup> Bukharin insisted that both the peasants and the workers understood Marxist ideology; that they were led, not driven; and that he was no more important than a street cleaner. Dreiser was not convinced.

Dreiser continued to experience the ups and downs of VOKS's attention: "I am entirely surrounded by VOX-men...I do not know their names – but they provide cars, arrange interviews & tours. Come & get you at the proper hour, usher you in & out of cars & so forth. It would be easy for a fool to get a false impression of his importance."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 146–147.



He enjoyed being pampered, but did not feel that VOKS provided him with enough time to explore everyday life in the city.

All praises and complaints were overshadowed by the showdown that took place between Kameneva and Dreiser over the second half of his trip. Kameneva told him that it would not be possible for VOKS to pay for his trip into the provinces. He replied that Biedenkapp had promised him a fully funded trip and that, if she wanted to say otherwise, he would use the money VOKS had left to return home. Kameneva then argued that Dreiser had agreed to pay his fare to and from the USSR. To this he replied that VOKS and Kameneva could go to hell.<sup>52</sup>

Fortunately, VOKS eventually agreed to pay for all expenses except for Dreiser's personal secretary. He enjoyed traveling far into the Soviet republics, where the cities and people bore more charm and liveliness than the capital. Nonetheless, the dirt, bugs, unpalatable food and unsanitary conditions drove him crazy. Ready to return home, VOKS added insult to injury by forgetting to provide him with an exit visa. He returned to America after a week's delay.

### *Conclusion*

VOKS clearly suffered from inefficiency, lack of clear communication between departments, over-bureaucratization, and cultural misunderstandings. Itineraries were over-scheduled and guides overbearing, although this was deemed necessary to prevent visitors from drawing the wrong conclusions about Soviet society.

Yet, for all its faults, VOKS successfully hosted hundreds of intellectuals who later returned home and wrote positively of their experiences in the USSR. Through the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 192–195.

Societies of Friends, cultural and scientific information continued to travel from East to West and back again, providing an alternative avenue to official diplomacy as official diplomatic relations emerged.

Joseph Stalin's emergence as the new leader of the party radically changed VOKS's orientation, importance, and eventually spelled its demise. In the next chapter, the quest for formal foreign recognition intensifies, leading to the creation of a new tourist organization.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Stalin and Recognition, Part One: 1928-1930

#### *Stalin's Revolution from Above*

##### *Power Consolidated*

Following Vladimir Lenin's death in 1924, a power and a policy struggle waged within the Politburo over the future direction of the Party. Leon Trotsky led the Left Opposition. He called for continued revolutionary zeal, as well as an end to the New Economic Policy in exchange for collectivization of agriculture in order to fund rapid industrialization. Stalin, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev represented the Right Opposition. They argued that what Trotsky was advocating was essentially a return to "war communism," which had devastated the countryside and contributed to the Famine of 1921.

Defeated, Trotsky reemerged in 1925 with Zinoviev and Kamenev now on his side. They represented the same agenda, but called for an end to the ban on factions within the Party as well. However, they failed to foresee the danger of personally attacking Stalin, who had been building a loyal base of support within the party apparatus since his appointment to General Secretary in 1922. Stalin removed all three men from the Politburo and later had Trotsky exiled.

By 1928, Stalin consolidated power and was ready to carry out his revolution from above: rapid industrialization, collectivization, and a revolution of culture. This

would be conducted at a speed and on a scale unheard of in the history of mankind. It would attract the attention of the entire world – including the United States.

### *VOKS Purged and the Rise of Intourist*

Ol'ga Kameneva always knew that VOKS' orientation towards the foreign intellectual bourgeoisie made it vulnerable to attack from the hardliners of the Party, even if it provided a useful service that bettered opinion of the Soviet Union abroad. In what came to be known as the Cultural Revolution, Stalin revived the rhetoric of class struggle and capitalist encirclement, attacking any group associated with the bourgeoisie or foreigners. VOKS, unfortunately, displayed both of these characteristics. The society was purged and Kameneva sacked. VOKS continued to operate into the 1950s, but by the 1930s it was overshadowed by a new organization – Intourist.<sup>1</sup>

Created in March 1929, Intourist was a joint-stock company designed to conduct foreign tourism, thereby raising needed money for the state.<sup>2</sup> According to an advertising pamphlet from 1930, Intourist “is to render all facilities to the stranger travelling in Russia, to supply him with comfortable accommodation, to place interpreters and guides as well as all literature and material required at his disposal. The ‘Intourist’ will also plan out tours, and make the necessary arrangements respecting them.”<sup>3</sup> These arrangements included selling railway, steamer and plane tickets for getting to and from the USSR,

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<sup>1</sup> David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 189,322.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 175–177.

<sup>3</sup> “Party to USSR” (Intourist, State Tourist Company, 1930), 8.

issuing tourist visas, and providing hotel and meal accommodations throughout one's trip.<sup>4</sup>

By 1933, the American tourist could choose from fifteen different itineraries ranging from five to thirty-one days, with the option of travelling in "first," "tourist," or "special class." While Intourist certainly emphasized the industrial giants and other developments of the Five-Year Plan on their tours, they also featured the natural wonders and cultural heritage of the Soviet Union, especially as the visitor traveled further into the southern and far-eastern republics.

Special group tours were also made available for lawyers, physicians, teachers and journalists so that they might observe their professions in the Soviet context.<sup>5</sup> For example, a doctor could visit Soviet "hospitals, health resorts, sanatoriums, dispensaries, maternity homes, sanitation centres, the Institutes for the Protection of Mother and Child, the Institute for the Scientific Management of Health Resorts, Children's townlets, and confer with leading Soviet physicians."<sup>6</sup> Intourist prepared options for both pleasure-seeking and research-interested guests, knowing that every visitor would return home with a positive or negative opinion of the Soviet Union.

#### *Foreign Policy: The New Method and Message*

As world revolution had not materialized by the early 1920s, it was necessary for the Soviet government to establish some sort of foreign policy to guide relations with the outside world. The Party developed a two-part policy of "peaceful coexistence and

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<sup>4</sup> Block and Inturist, "A Pocket Guide to the Soviet Union," 582.

<sup>5</sup> Intourist, "Seeing the Soviet Union" (Intourist, 1933), 38,41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 38.

inevitable war.” How could the Soviets conduct “peaceful coexistence” with the United States if it refused to recognize their government? The famine relief committees – particularly Hoover’s ARA – had opened the door to unofficial diplomatic relations in the early 1920s, providing the incentive, mechanics, and leadership for the later emerging cultural diplomatic societies. The cultural diplomatic societies allowed for an American-Soviet exchange in the areas of art, literature and science. Nevertheless, by 1928, the Soviets needed an *economic* exchange for the success of the Five-Year Plan.

The Third International, however, remained a sticking point between the USSR and the capitalist West. Through it, the Soviets carried out the second half of their foreign policy, preaching and supporting world revolution through propaganda, the creation of party cells abroad, and sometimes even funding. The United States loudly protested this subversive activity; most officials refused to even consider recognition of the Soviet Union as long as the Third International worked to overthrow the American government.

Stalin therefore adjusted the second half of Soviet foreign policy, that of “inevitable war.” Two factors largely motivated this decision. First and foremost, Stalin desired strong trade relations with the West. Secondly, he sought international respect for both his leadership and the Soviet government. International conferences and conventions flourished throughout the 1920s and 1930s, aimed at outlawing war, disarmament, economic non-aggression, and the possibility of a European Union. Stalin wanted the Soviet Union to have an influence in these proceedings, meaning it needed to appear respectable and worthy of an equal say.

In order to adjust “inevitable war,” Stalin altered both the message and the method of Soviet foreign propaganda. The old message proclaimed world revolution and

the incompatibility of communism and capitalism. The new message was this: “superiority through success.” Success of the Five-Year Plan would represent the success of communism and the Soviet system over capitalism and the American system. *This is not to say that Stalin abandoned Marxist doctrine, or that the old message disappeared completely.* On the contrary, the old message was still very present domestically. Internationally, it was present but muffled, dominated by the new message.

How would this message be presented to the capitalist West? Walter Duranty described “the feeling that each one of them [American visitors] is a sort of potential missionary to carry to the world tidings that the Soviet Union is an up and coming progressive country instead of the hell and mud and blood its adversaries contend.”<sup>7</sup> Tourists and guests would serve as the new method with which to spread Soviet propaganda – “superiority through success” – to the capitalist West.

### *1928-1929: Rise of Soviet tourism, Recognition considered*

#### *Background*

For the Soviet Union, the early 1920s was defined by the Famine of 1921, the adoption of the New Economic Policy (1921-1928), and the subsequent flourishing of small-scale capitalism. After Lenin’s death, the Politburo power struggle centered on how to handle the two “Scissors Crises” of 1923 and 1927, characterized by rising industrial and falling agricultural prices, along with the subsequent withholding of grain by the peasants. The Politburo responded to the first crisis by lowering industrial prices and

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<sup>7</sup> Walter Duranty Times, “Shaw, in Russia on 75th Birthday, Lauds Reds; Says British, Too, Will Abolish the Nobility: Shaw Praises Reds at Fete in Moscow Soviet Proud of Visitors. Lady Astor Sees Differently. 1,000 American Visitors. Shaw Dozes at Horse Races.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 27, 1931), 2.

continuing the NEP policy. In 1928, Stalin chose to handle the second crisis differently. He declared “Extraordinary Measures:” banning the markets, collecting the grain forcibly by armed attachment, and labeling all who resisted as saboteurs. Stalin’s Great Break, the First-Five Year Plan, and the Cultural Revolution meant overwhelming changes for the Soviet Union as the 1920s came to a close.

The United States, on the other hand, was experiencing the greatest economic boom in its history thus far. Mass production of consumer goods and the rise of installment buying plans brought what had previously been luxuries to the average American family. The modern American economy emerged with jazz, flappers, mad men, and conservative Republican presidents.

### *Rise of world tourism*

In May 1928, Bunice Fuller Barnard wrote an article in the *New York Times* titled “The Swelling Tide of Foreign Travel.” Tourism, he reported, was up 30 percent from the peak pre-war year of 1913 and 50 percent from the final pre-war year. What caused this spike? One might hypothesize that the vitality of the American economy encouraged greater foreign travel. Yet, these travelers were, on average, poorer and younger than those who traveled before World War I.<sup>8</sup>

Unintentionally, the new U.S. immigration restriction laws expanded tourism into a worldwide industry. When immigrants were flowing to America by the hundreds of thousands, about a third as many returned home each year. The United States’ near-ban

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<sup>8</sup> Bunice Fuller Barnard, “The Swelling Tide of Foreign Travel: Americans Who Were Seldom Seen in Europe Before the War Now Make an Annual Trek Across the Atlantic,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 6, 1928), sec. The New York Times Magazine, 1.



on immigration resulted in a huge reduction of bodies to fill the steerage of trans-Atlantic ships. Instead of letting that space go to waste, “some genius projected the idea of scrubbing up some of the third-class cabins for tourists of limited means.”<sup>9</sup> The wealthy continued to travel to Europe “first-class,” of course, but they were soon outnumbered by the average American who now had the means to see the world for himself.<sup>10</sup>

As tourism for the masses expanded, study abroad programs developed as well: “A new industry has blossomed into prosperity, taking students abroad at a cheap rate, with college lecturers, hostesses and organized entertainment every day of the way.”<sup>11</sup> Europe, whose experience with American visitors had largely been with the wealthier class, needed to quickly adjust its accommodations to fit a wider diversity of incomes, interests, and lengths of stay. Travel agencies emerged – “even Soviet Russia opens a travel bureau.”<sup>12</sup>

### *Rise of Soviet tourism*

Soviet tourism, to be conducted by Intourist, had its foundations in VOKS. Intourist employed the same tools and tactics used by VOKS to guide visitors towards the best (and often unrepresentative) features of Soviet society on an even greater scale. Likewise, many of VOKS’ inefficiencies and habitual errors – like over-scheduling of guests and over-bearing guides – would carry over to the new travel bureau as well.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Two primary reasons influenced Stalin's decision to create Intourist. First, the Soviet Union sought to attract Americans for the same reason every other European country welcomed them – money: “Already American tourists spend annually some \$650,000,000 in Europe. In France alone they spend over \$200,000,000, a sum greater than the ordinary exports of France to the United States.”<sup>13</sup> Tourism, therefore, could provide a steady flow of hard, foreign currency to the USSR, which had little to export in the way of manufactured products and less to export in the way of agricultural products than in the past. Greater foreign trade would fund a large part of Stalin's Five-Year Plan, but tourism could certainly help. The second reason, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, was that tourism provided the Soviets with a pathway for its new message, “superiority through success.”

## 1928

*Context.* The year 1928 marked the beginning of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan, as well as the final year before VOKS' purge and the rise of Intourist. The election of Herbert Hoover as President of the United States renewed Soviet hopes for recognition. In a speech reported in *The New York Times* on December 11, 1928, Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Minister, expressed recognition hopes and added that the Soviet Union “[has] not forgotten the generous help America gave in the dark days of famine through the A.R.A. (American Relief Administration), whose chief is now President-elect Hoover.”<sup>14</sup> While Hoover had no intentions of recognizing the Soviet Union, he did

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Duranty, “Litvinoff Voices Recognition Hopes: Says Russia Remembers ‘Generous’ Aid Administered By Hoover During Famine. Gratified by Rising Trade. Acting Foreign Minister Asserts in

significantly soften American policy toward its government by allowing for trade – albeit without long-term credits – something neither President Harding nor President Coolidge had permitted.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout 1928, two Soviet-related topics dominated the *New York Times*: the Shakhty Trial and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. In March, the secret police arrested fifty-three “bourgeois specialists” for sabotaging production in the Don Bass region. Among the arrested workers were three German engineers hired to aid in the construction of electrical plants.<sup>16</sup> A show trial followed, which many reported as such. Some believed the witnesses had been coached “for the purpose of convicting Germany, through responsible agents, of plotting to overthrow the Communist regime in Russia;”<sup>17</sup> some saw them as scapegoats for industrial failures; while a few continued to believe the engineers had actually been guilty.<sup>18</sup>

On July 6, the judge sentenced the majority of the workers to death or imprisonment. Of the Germans, two were acquitted, while the other received a

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Speech That It Would Triple Under Normal Relations.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 11, 1928), 1, accessed September 7, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104370804/abstract/1405F4733641E49627F/18?accountid=7014>.

<sup>15</sup> Research Director Foreign Polity Association Raymond Leslie Buell, “Our Recognition of Russia: Arguments for and Against: Recent Events, Observers Believe, Presage the Opening of Diplomatic Relations Between America and the Soviets,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 16, 1933), sec. Special Features Science, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, “Berlin Breaks Off Russian Parleys: Drops Trade Treaty Action Until Arrest of Germans Is explained. is Ready to Go Further meanwhile Moscow Refuses to Grant any Special Treatment to The imprisoned Engineers. Prompt Action Is Urged. May Recall Other Engineers.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 16, 1928), 1.

<sup>17</sup> “Emigres Skeptical on Shahkta Trial: Call the Sensational Scenes in Moscow Parts of a Play Aimed to Discredit Germany. A Similar Case Is Cited. Account of Experiences Alleged to Have Been Undergone by a Lett in Russia Considered as Evidence. Says He ‘Stayed for Information.’ Says He Had a ‘Last Chance.’,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 3, 1928), sec. Editorial, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Times, “Berlin Breaks Off Russian Parleys”; “Emigres Skeptical On Shahkta Trial.”

conditional sentence of one year imprisonment. These convictions led to a few small-scale protests in the United States against abuses of human rights, but the case was quickly forgotten. However, the timing of the entire episode was quite incomprehensible, as the Soviets and Germans had been working on a commercial treaty when the arrests were made.<sup>19</sup>

The second popular topic of 1928 concerned the international conventions leading to and following the first major signings of the Kellogg-Briand Pact – designed to “outlaw war” in favor of international cooperation and negotiation. The USSR’s desire to participate in such a peaceable endeavor surprised foreigners who expected to hear the Soviet call for world revolution. Yet, this move corresponded to Stalin’s adjustment of Soviet foreign policy. Furthermore, he understood that the success of the Five-Year Plan depended on global peace, for another world war would lay waste to any industrial or agricultural progress the Soviets had made thus far.

Nevertheless, Western powers – particularly England, France, and the United States – were somewhat reluctant to invite the Soviet Union to join the treaty. This angered the Soviet government, especially after the announcement that new nations could not join the pact until the original participants had debated and ratified all clauses – thereby shutting new members out of the discussion. The Soviets began to play the role of defender of the marginalized, claiming that “the nations will be divided into two original categories...The clean will be the participants in the compact and the unclean the non-participants – South America, Spain, Turkey, Scandinavia, the Baltic countries and

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Don Engineers Hear Fate Undismayed: Surrounded by Guards, They Stand up Boldly as Sentences Are Slowly Read. Movie Camera Clicks on Arc Lights Flash Vivid Rays as Judges Enter Court at Midnight, Eight Hours Late. Prisoners Stand Firm. ‘There Is No Appeal.’ Russian Societies Here Protest.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 7, 1928), sec. Business Opportunities, 1.

Lithuania.”<sup>20</sup> This move towards a leadership role in international politics would continue into the 1930s in tandem with anger over the Versailles Treaty.

Tensions also arose throughout the 1928 meetings as the Soviet Union and the United States came into indirect contact. For example, if the American representative saw the Soviet representative, how was he to respond? Ignore him? Create polite conversation, but no more? Non-recognition was becoming increasingly awkward in these settings. Therefore, these attempts at international solutions to global problems which brought world powers together – those in the League, outside of the League, and the unrecognized – had a positive influence on speeding the American path toward Soviet recognition.

*Tourism.* As described earlier, Western and Eastern European countries began opening their doors to the growing flood of American tourists in the late 1920s. Walter Duranty reported in March 1928 that 15,000 tourists were expected to travel to the USSR that summer, including “3,000 rich tourists from South America on round-the-world cruises...and upward of 2,000 young North Americans on student tours.”<sup>21</sup> Visitors arrived in business, women, and worker delegations; as scientific or literary guests; and as curious professionals or adventurous individuals looking to see the Soviet experiment firsthand.

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<sup>20</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, “Says Peace Treaty Is Barred to Russia: Soviet Organ So Interprets Kellogg on Formality of Adhesion by Non-Signatories. Cites 8-Hour Day Compact. Talks of Years Elapsing Perhaps Before Other Powers Can Join In War Renunciation. Says Access to Documents Is Denied. May Adhere After Treaty Is Signed.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 16, 1928), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Walter Duranty By Wireless to The New York Times, “Moscow Expects 15,000 Tourists: Prepares Also to Welcome the Ameer of Afghanistan to Soviet Soil. But Hotels Are Scarce Some Have Strange Histories-- ‘House of Detention’ a Paradise for Criminals.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 4, 1928), sec. Editorial, 1, accessed September 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/docview/104310625/abstract/1405555B5E673B196F6/95?accountid=7014>.

Twelve articles on Soviet tourism appeared in the *New York Times* in 1928, five of which contained travel experiences, two explicitly mentioning VOKS. At this time, however, it can be assumed that VOKS was involved to some degree in every visitor's trip, as it was the only organization overseeing foreign travel at the time. What kind of reaction did American visitors have to the Soviet Union and its progress? What areas of Soviet life peaked visitor interest?

Upon invitation by VOKS, Professor John Dewey of Columbia University led a group of thirty educators and their wives on a trip to the USSR in July 1928. Their schedules filled to the brim, their only disappointment was that Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov – famous for his study of conditioned reflexes – refused to leave his dacha in order to meet with them. Nonetheless, the visitors were pleased with their stay and found that Russia was “so much better, happier and more prosperous than we expected.”<sup>22</sup>

In August, a group of American businessmen took a short trip to the USSR. Although they denied business motivations for their travels, the length of the trip (only a few days) suggested otherwise. Excitingly (because information on her life is so scarce), Mr. Collins was interviewed by none other than Ol'ga Kameneva, the soon-to-be ex-President of VOKS. He recounted for her his dreary preconceptions of the Soviet Union, now corrected after seeing the country firsthand:

He said he expected to see a country where people were arrested for having too many clothes, where cameras were not allowed, which all printed matter was seized, where living in hotels cost \$25 a day, where 20,000 homeless children swarmed the streets of the capital, assaulting, robbing and killing pedestrians and

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<sup>22</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Fantastic ‘Clubs’ in Soviet Russia: Weird Mysticism Persists as Under the Czar, Moscow Paper Reveals. Rasputin Is Outdone. Tourist Travel from the United States and Other Lands Is on the Increase. Cosmic Academy of Science. American Tourist Invasion.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 15, 1928), sec. News-Editorial, 1, accessed September 6, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104361703/abstract/1405616F0D31A017426/101?accountid=7014>.

forcing all patrons of the restaurants to leave them a share of food. He continued: “Though I have been only twenty-four hours in Moscow I already have seen enough to realize that the current American idea of Russia is utterly inaccurate.”<sup>23</sup>

This informed Kameneva, and therefore the Soviet government, that American public opinion was still largely based on inflated rumors, but visitors could correct these misconceptions with the “facts” – whether they be showcase or reality.

Senator Elinor Thomas, Democrat of Oklahoma, traveled to the USSR in August as well. He spent two weeks in Leningrad and Moscow, in which he claimed no specific motive for travel other than the desire to become better informed on conditions abroad. He too had expected chaos, but instead found a stable and functioning system. The scale of Soviet accomplishments over such a short period of time amazed him, leading him to urge U.S. recognition for the sake of trade: “I am convinced that American business is losing millions of dollars every year through lack of direct relations with Russia.”<sup>24</sup>

In December, Professor W. P. Montague of Columbia University traveled to the USSR in order to study marriage and divorce in the communist state. For example, any woman who bore a child out of wedlock would now receive the same economic benefits and inheritance from the father as his legitimate children. Furthermore, a divorce could be carried out by a single party, with merely a postcard and a stamp. In all this, he saw Russia as the scientist’s playground, “a social laboratory for the world.”<sup>25</sup> For its value as

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<sup>23</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, “Russia ‘Falls Down’ on Krassin Story: Arctic Exploit, While Revealing Heroism, Shows Woeful State of Soviet Journalism. Foreign Writers Stumped. Nowhere Could They Get ‘Human Interest’ Data--Japanese Theatre Charms Moscow. No Sense of Human Interest Touch New Industrial Loan. American Business Visitors.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 5, 1928), sec. Editorial, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, “Senator Thomas Finds Russia Is Prosperous: Urges Recognition of the Soviet Union, Deploring American Loss of Trade.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 22, 1928), 1.

a social experiment alone, he advocated that the United States recognize the Soviet Union.

Finally, Bernard Edelhertz, publisher of *The American Hebrew*, traveled to the USSR in December. He described in the most detail his experiences and provided the only mixed view of Soviet progress based on his observations. That he spoke Russian and had made a previous visit in Czarist days set him further apart from the other visitors, especially as those characteristics provided him with greater freedom of movement during his trip.

What were the positives? He believed that the majority of the Russian people were better off than they had been before the Revolution, that they were happier and making great cultural strides. He agreed with President Kalinin, who during a private conversation requested that “you Americans...not apply your criteria of great comfort, efficiency and high standard of living when judging struggling Russia. Your aim in America is to reach the point where the family would have an automobile. In Russia all we aim for is to see that every man has a shirt.”<sup>26</sup> Edelhertz appreciated the proliferation of libraries and newspapers, the support given to the unemployed, the medical care provided to the peasants, and the great steps taken towards the emancipation of women.

However, prostitution, child homelessness, police terror, and the chaos, graft and red tape

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<sup>25</sup> “Sees Value in Test of Trial Marriages: Dr. W.P. Montague of Columbia Finds Russia Engaged In ‘Tremendous Experiment.’ Tells How Plan Works. Divorce at Will of Either Party And Alimony Lasts Six Months, Says Professor, Back from Tour.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 2, 1928), sec. Second News Section, 1, accessed September 7, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104397341/abstract/1405EACEF3C72240FB6/89?accountid=7014>.

<sup>26</sup> Bernard Edelhertz Photograph from Prece-Cliche, “Daily Life in Russia Studied at First Hand: In the Streets of Moscow Inferior Materials Used. The Religion of the People. The Crowd on the Quay.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 30, 1928), sec. Special Features, 1, accessed September 7, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104355093/abstract/1405F4733641E49627F/33?accountid=7014>.



of the economic system did not pass by unseen. His outlook towards the Soviet Union remained positive, but he recognized the Soviets had a great deal left to accomplish.

Looking at these experiences alongside the other brief reports from this period, one finds that those who traveled to the Soviet Union in 1928 came back with overwhelmingly good impressions. Many expected chaos, but instead found determination to move the country forward and to better the lives of the people. One notices, however, that most trips were very short and limited largely to Moscow and Leningrad, thereby allowing VOKS' guides to more easily show the visitors what the Soviets would like them to see. Furthermore, no one reportedly questioned what they were shown except Edelhertz, who ensured his readers that he had been "utterly unhampered in [his] work."<sup>27</sup> All in all, 1928 was a year of moderate-level reporting on tourism, composed of brief, superficial, and positive trips.

*Recognition.* Twenty-five articles addressed U.S recognition of the Soviet Union in 1928. Out of these twenty-five, seven were positive, four were negative, and one was mixed. Adding the split article equally to each side, the ratio of positive to negative arguments for U.S. recognition was 8-5 for 1928. Six of the remaining thirteen articles reported Soviet hopes for recognition, while seven objectively updated the public on recognition's status.

What were the arguments for recognition in 1928, and who was making them? On the American side, the main incentive for recognition was increased trade,<sup>28</sup> with the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Krock Special to The New York Times By Arthur Krock, "Path Is Smoothed For M'donald Visit: Republicans Pledge Welcome to British Premier If He Precedes Debt Mission. Soviet Relations Studied Roosevelt Recognition Formula Said to Ask Assurances on Debts and Propaganda. Path

country's value as a social experiment<sup>29</sup> coming in second. These arguments were made by the two visitors described previously (Senator Thomas and Professor Montague) as well as by Henry Ford.<sup>30</sup> The Soviets also called for recognition in hopes of increased trade, but they equally desired diplomatic relations in order to prevent continued misunderstandings and rumors about the Soviet state.

Matthew Woll of the Civic Federation and the American Federation of Labor was the main opponent to recognition in 1928. He listed three reasons, shared by others, barring America from recognizing the Soviet Union: the Third International,<sup>31</sup> bad faith,<sup>32</sup>

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Is Smoothed For M'donald Visit," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 15, 1933), accessed September 29, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100761780/abstract/140CF7530F569E7F84D/33?accountid=7014>; Walter Duranty By Wireless to The New York Times, "Talk of Ford Favor Thrills Moscow: Story from Here That He Favors Recognition of Soviet Starts Furor. Time Is a Critical One Government Is Fearing a Crisis with Both Peasants And City Dwellers.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 17, 1928), accessed September 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/docview/104662950/abstract/1405555B5E673B196F6/68?accountid=7014>; Times, "Senator Thomas Finds Russia Is Prosperous."

<sup>29</sup> "Sees Value In Test Of Trial Marriages."

<sup>30</sup> Walter Duranty By Wireless to The New York Times, "Talk of Ford Favor Thrills Moscow: Story from Here That He Favors Recognition of Soviet Starts Furor. Time Is a Critical One Government Is Fearing a Crisis with Both Peasants And City Dwellers.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 17, 1928), 1, accessed September 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/docview/104662950/abstract/1405555B5E673B196F6/68?accountid=7014>.

<sup>31</sup> "Soviet Recognition Debated at Church: Member of Recent Trade Union Delegation to Russia Opposes Action--Lawyer Favors It," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 2, 1928), accessed September 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/docview/104692771/abstract/1405555B5E673B196F6/1?accountid=7014>; "Says Our Trade Aids Moscow's Schemes: Civic Federation Asks Business to Quit Giving Credits That Help Finance Propaganda. Sees Threat to America Invites American-Russian Chamber to a Conference, Promising to Reveal Its Evidence. Renews Its Earlier Plea. Asks for a Conference.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 16, 1928), accessed September 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/docview/104681953/abstract/1405555B5E673B196F6/18?accountid=7014>; "Calls Communism Unions' Worst Foe: Hugh Frayne, in Labor Day Message, Warns Workers Against Movement. Few Strikes In Past Year Ralph A: Easley Scores Business Men Who Want United States to Recognize Russia. Easley Attacks Communism. Tells of Labor Bank's Success.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 3, 1928); "Finds Recognition of Russia Opposed: Woll Writes Coolidge That Civic Federation Sounded 'Public Opinion' on Subject. Attacks Culture Society. 'Operates Under Moscow Orders,' Labor Man Charges--Denounces 'Propaganda,'" *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 17, 1928), sec. Business & Finance.

<sup>32</sup> Special to The New York Times, "Mrs. Catt Doubts Abolition of War: World Parliament to Define Belligerency Urged by Her at Social Science Session. Senate 'Timidity' Assailed Eagleton of N.y.u.

or a lack of confidence in the ability or willingness of the Soviet Union to pay its debts or compensate American property, and the general nature of the regime, which was currently “unfit”<sup>33</sup> to associate with civilized nations. Of these three factors, the Third International was the only reason which appeared in all of the four negative articles and was clearly stressed as the most heinous action being carried out by the Soviet Union.

1929

*Context.* The Soviet Five-Year Plan entered its second year in 1929. Stalin’s Cultural Revolution continued to inject the class struggle into nearly every area of Soviet life – education, music, art, religion and industry. The “bourgeois specialists” – whose existence had been tolerated in exchange for their desperately needed skills – were tolerated no longer. In order to replace these skilled managers, Stalin initiated a huge push in education on both the primary and university level. Affirmative action favored the children of peasants and workers in educational opportunities, while coursework shifted from traditional to practical, labor-related subjects. An attack on traditional authority, a “proletarianization” of the arts... All of these changes accompanied rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, changing the political, social and industrial landscape of the USSR.

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and Jessup of Columbia Find Upper House Jealous for Prerogatives. Our Arbitration Defended S.b. Axtell at Philadelphia Meeting Questions the Wisdom of Recognizing Soviet. Says Nation Was Peace Pioneer. Eagleton Criticizes Senate. Editor Finds Leaders Ignorant. Russian Situation Canvassed. Mrs. Catt Holds War Inevitable. Peace ‘Negative or War.’” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 13, 1928), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104361428/abstract/141BF1F98415CB202FD/16?accountid=7014>; Times, “Senator Thomas Finds Russia Is Prosperous.”

<sup>33</sup> Times, “Mrs. Catt Doubts Abolition Of War.”

The United States continued to enjoy its post-war prosperity, unaware of the approaching economic cliff. As business and industry flourished into the late-1920s, consumer production kept pace. However, by late 1927, the American people stopped purchasing while factories continued producing. A bubble developed, hidden by the stock market and overconfident, unsafe investments. In November, the stock market would crash, and the glitz and glam of the “Roaring Twenties” would give way to the worst depression in American history.

Two Soviet-related topics made repeated headlines in 1929: the fall of Leon Trotsky and the Chinese Eastern Railway conflict. Trotsky’s episode began with Stalin’s ironic adoption of some of the very ideas for which he had been expelled from the Party and later exiled. Stalin then conducted an intense drive against “Trotskyist opposition,” arresting and banishing his supporters into the late 1920s. This drive culminated – at least in the American press – in a wave of denunciations against Trotsky, who had recently published a number of anti-Stalinist articles in the capitalist press. Soviet workers deemed him a traitor, sell-out, and enemy of the proletariat. This greatly exasperated Walter Duranty, who watched as Soviet citizens venomously attacked Trotsky’s reputation for articles they had never read and could not have read, as they had not been translated and published in the Soviet Union:

A few days ago I talked with a Communist of good standing and stainless proletarian origin, who attacked M. Trotsky with unmeasured vigor. “Have you read his articles?” I asked  
“No, but I have read Yaroslavsky’s pamphlet – isn’t that enough?” he countered.  
“Did any of your comrades read Trotsky’s articles?” I pursued.  
“No, they are not available here, but we know he is a traitor.”  
So that’s that.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Moscow Resumes Attack on Trotsky: Yaroslavsky Urges Boycott on Followers but Fails to Answer Exile’s Charges. Germany Refuses Shelter

Stalin made it clear though this episode that the ban on factions was permanent and that the Party line – as he articulated it – was law.

The biggest news story of 1929, however, was the Chinese Eastern Railway conflict. On May 27, the Chinese conducted raids on the Soviet consulate in Manchuria, in which they allegedly discovered Communist propaganda as well as evidence of meddling in internal affairs in order to prevent a unified, strong China. They threatened to break official relations with the Soviet government unless it agreed to the “retrocession of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Chinese authority and to dissolution of the labor union of that railway,”<sup>35</sup> which the Soviets had no intention of doing.

Two months later, the Chinese carried out a “railway coup” in which they fired Russian officials and seized the telephone and telegraph lines. The Soviets responded by mobilizing troops on the border.<sup>36</sup> China and the USSR remained in a state of near war for the last six months of 1929 – raiding, posturing, and taking civilian captives. On

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Cabinet Agrees to Bar the Former Soviet War Lord, Mueller Opposing Admittance. Attacks, but Hadn't Read Him. Explains the Reason. Denies Exiling Thousands. Reich Declines to Admit Him.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 23, 1929), 1.

<sup>35</sup> “Nanking Considers Break with Russia: Immediate Withdrawal of Chinese Representatives Is Urged At Conference of Officials. Return of Railway Sought. Chinese Eastern Said to Be Source of Red Funds--Seized Papers. Link Feng with Soviet. Relations Declared Already Broken. Alleged Red Activities Revealed.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 13, 1929), 1, accessed September 9, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104960897/abstract/1406A3E4E3E46A03748/91?accountid=7014>.

<sup>36</sup> “Manchuria in Panic Over Rail Seizure: Chinese Ousting of Soviet Officials of Eastern Road Starts Riots and Fighting. Tokio Sees Crisis Near. Blow at Reds, It Is Feared, May Lead to Confiscation Of Japanese Rail Lines Also. Exciting Scenes in Manchuria. Release of Prisoners Demanded. Manchuria in Panic Over Rail Seizure Follows Peking Meeting. New Phase in Long Struggle. Moscow Silent on Reports. Main Trans-Siberian Artery.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 12, 1929), 1.

November 28, the Soviets reported that China was ready to accept Soviet terms: a return to the pre-conflict status quo and the release of all captives.<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Stimson sent a note to both countries reminding them that they had agreed to “outlaw war” under the Kellogg-Briand Pact and should resolve the situation peaceably. This outraged the Soviets, as negotiations towards peace had been underway for some time. No one, they claimed, had designated America to be the policing force of the treaty. Furthermore, the Soviets were exasperated “that the United States, which, by its own desire, does not have any official relations with the Soviet Union, should find it possible to give the Soviet Government advice and directions.”<sup>38</sup> The Soviets continued to bluster against the United States as Stimson praised the Kellogg-Briand Treaty’s first success in preventing war.<sup>39</sup> The Chinese Eastern Railway conflict finally drew to a close three days after the arrival of Stimson’s letter.

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<sup>37</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Moscow Reports Manchuria Yields: Mukden Agrees to Soviet Terms for Return to Status Quo on Chinese Eastern. Fighting Believed Ended. Tokio Hears Reds Have Withdrawn Troops--Chang’s Envoy Confers with Nanking Leader. Litvinoff States Terms. Troops Believed Withdrawn. Conference in Nanking. History of Dispute.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 28, 1929), 1, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104834120/abstract/1406E246DF21A8B2700/91?accountid=7014>.

<sup>38</sup> “Soviet Cannot See Stimson Note as a Friendly Act: Litvinoff’s Answer Charges ‘Unjustifiable Pressure’ and Expresses ‘Amazement.’ Resents ‘Interference.’ Washington Astonished by the Sharp Reply--Stimson at First Gratified by Responses. Text of Russian Note. Holds Stimson Note Not a Friendly Act. Charges Chinese Illegality. Say We Were Unjustified. Stimson Declines to Comment. Few Small Powers to Join. Reasons for Berlin’s Attitude. Italy’s Reply Favorable. Threat Read into Our Stand. Japan Fears for Parleys. Stimson Move Seen as Endangering Direct Sino-Soviet Efforts. Nanking Prepares Answer.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 4, 1929), 1, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104703118/abstract/1406E8AD44873380FFC/8?accountid=7014>.

<sup>39</sup> “Stimson Feels Pact Forced Soviet Peace: Secretary Points to Agreement Signed at Mukden, Saying Incident Is Closed. Will Not Reply to Russia Geneva Considers Result Blow to Pact, Holding League More Fitted for Such Moves. Developments in Chinese Clash. Stimson Considers Matter Closed. Peace Settlement Gratifies. Text of Agreement. Stimson Feels Pact Was Means of Peace Tsai Yields the Point. Effect of Peace Move.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 6, 1929), 1.

*Tourism*. Eighteen articles on Soviet tourism and the hosting of guests were published in the *New York Times* in 1929. Six of the eighteen covered the experiences of an unofficial American delegation of nearly one hundred professionals (businessmen, financiers, lawyers, engineers, and newspaper editors) who attended a four-week tour of the Soviet Union. The delegation travelled under the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce and the American Express company; however, once in the USSR, their trip was conducted by none other than Intourist. An article published on July 18<sup>th</sup> described the group sightseeing by car in Moscow under the “Soviet Tourist Society,”<sup>40</sup> the first time Intourist was mentioned in the *New York Times*.

Rather humorous was Intourist’s pre-departure instruction that the women should “leave behind their silks and satins, evening gowns and other finery, which have no place in the proletarian republic, while the men were requested not to introduce such bourgeois accoutrements as top hats, canes, and evening dress.”<sup>41</sup> Yet, when the visitors arrived, they were treated to more luxury than most Russians saw in a lifetime:

Spacious mahogany-finished sleeping cars, remaining from the Czarist regime, were provided for the journey to the capital. Equipped with electric fans, ice, water coolers, and shower baths, the accommodations brought expressions of approval. The Americans were invited by their Russian hosts to partake [in] as much vodka and caviar as they liked.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Special Cable to The New York Times, “Soviet Entertains American Tourists: Sleeping Cars of Czarist Days Bring Men and Women to the Russian Capital. No Examination at Border. Unlimited Vodka and Caviar Provided for Month’s Tour of Socialist Republics. Largest Group of Its Kind. Offered Vodka and Caviar. Luxuries Are Not Taxed.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 18, 1929), 1, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104947196/abstract/1406A3E4E3E46A03748/134?accountid=7014>.

<sup>41</sup> Special Cable to The New York Times, “99 Americans Begin Soviet Study Trip: Business Men, Financiers and Women Tourists Leave Berlin on Special Train. Will Get News by Radio Russian Promoters Warn Travelers to Leave Behind Evening Gowns, Top Hats and Canes. Will Visit Industrial Centres.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 16, 1929), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Times, “Soviet Entertains American Tourists,” 1.

For this luxury, each visitor paid \$1000. They toured Moscow and Leningrad by car, the Volga by boat, the North Caucasus by train, and much more. Many, in fact, felt they had almost done too much.<sup>43</sup>

After the tour, what impressions of the Soviet Union did the visitors present to Americans back home? Their reactions were split. On the subjects of culture and health, reactions were very positive. Russians seemed healthy, happy and content with their government. The system of clubs, parks, and crèches impressed many visitors, as well as the level of care the Soviets provided for children. For example, one woman commented that “nowhere else in the world did the State pay such attention to the growing generation.”<sup>44</sup> Many were impressed as well by the support provided for the arts.<sup>45</sup>

Regarding the economy and political atmosphere, visitors were less impressed. Some businessmen and engineers doubted the feasibility of the Five-Year Plan.<sup>46</sup> One man – the only visitor to report an extremely negative experience to the *New York Times* – denounced heavy-handed anti-capitalist propaganda and the secret police, claiming that

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<sup>43</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “British Stand Stirs Moscow to Anger: Phrase of ‘Preliminary Conditions’ to Recognition. Rouses Heated Replies in Soviet Press. Harvest Hopes Improve Record Yield Predicted in Ukraine--Kremlin Officials ‘Cleanse’ Red Advocates College. Harvest Prospects Improve. Tiflis Wants Americans. to Irrigate Turkestan Steppe. Moscow Advocates Banned. Savich Signs Contract.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 14, 1929), sec. Editorial, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104718656/abstract/1406A3E4E3E46A03748/126?accountid=7014>; Times, “99 Americans Begin Soviet Study Trip”; Times, “Soviet Entertains American Tourists.”

<sup>44</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Soviet Efficiency Impresses Visitors: American Business Men, However, Express Doubts of Feasibility of Five-Years’ Plan.--Fear Burden on Country--Banker Points Out That Payment for Foreign Purchases Must Depend on Meager Exports. Five Years’ Plan Questioned. Exports for Foreign Purchases. Soviet Efficiency Impresses Visitors,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 18, 1929), sec. Editorial, 1, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104943054/abstract/1406A3E4E3E46A03748/195?accountid=7014>.

<sup>45</sup> Times, “Soviet Entertains American Tourists”; Times, “Soviet Efficiency Impresses Visitors.”

<sup>46</sup> Times, “Soviet Efficiency Impresses Visitors,” 1.



many of the workers lived in a state of terror. He found Moscow and Leningrad to be grey and dull but Southern Russia much more appealing.<sup>47</sup>

The visitors, as a whole, enjoyed the trip and appreciated Intourist's efforts to make them comfortable. Over-scheduling proved the travel bureau's only vice. When they returned to the United States, someone polled each individual as to (1) whether they would support recognition, with or without conditions and (2) whether or not the USSR offered a safe investment, with or without recognition. Only one-third of the unofficial delegation favored unqualified recognition, while two-thirds would support it if certain conditions were met: 86 percent required guarantees against propaganda by the Third International; 83 percent required compensation for American property; 67 percent required payment of Provisional Government debts; and 55 percent required payment of Czarist debts. These reservations were the same listed by recognition opponents in 1928 and would remain among the core objections to recognition until 1933. Did the visitors believe that the Soviet Union provided a safe investment? Surprisingly, recognition made little difference in the visitors' confidence. Half of the delegation felt the Soviet Union could provide investment security with recognition, falling to 43 percent without.<sup>48</sup>

Twelve articles unrelated to the unofficial American delegation appeared in 1929, some of which merely mentioned the presence of tourists at Soviet events. Three articles

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<sup>47</sup> "Russians Stared at Evening Clothes: B.W. Griscom Gives Sidelights on Visits to Queer Corners in Land of Soviets. Police Ever Watching Every One Seems Poor and 'Pep' Is Lacking, He Found-Government Encourages Art. Secret Police Always Watching. Impressed by 'Drabness.' Visited Anti-Religious Museum. Government Encourages Art.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 22, 1929), sec. Second News Section, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104780278/abstract/1406CC6EFED3421D68D/28?acountid=7014>.

<sup>48</sup> "Tourists Are Divided on Soviet Recognition: Poll Taken Among Members of American Party Shows 66 2-3 Per Cent Demand Conditions," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 17, 1929), sec. Social News.

reported activities of VOKS within America and the Soviet Union. The most interesting report was an April article which described the possibility for American citizens to travel to the Soviet Union, visit the VOKS' home office, and apply for a postcard divorce costing a mere 15 cents! How was this possible? A federal judge ruled that "civil contracts, such as marriage performed according to Russian law, would hold good in the United States despite the absence of diplomatic recognition."<sup>49</sup> This ruling was based on the precedent of civil contracts signed under the Confederacy being recognized by the Federal Government, even after the Confederacy's defeat.<sup>50</sup>

Another fascinating article described how the best item an American visitor could bring on his visit to the USSR was, in fact, a letter written by Senator William Borah, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a vocal supporter of recognition. Armed with Borah's signature, a visitor was likely to gain greater access to the people and places he desired to see. At the time of this article, the senator was contacted on almost a daily basis by American tourists hoping for such a letter.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, two young visitors – Miss Mary Cogswell and Mrs. Mabel Ingalls, niece of J.P. Morgan – managed to gain special access to the Soviet Union not only without a Borah letter, but also without a Soviet visa! They had been running late to join the unofficial American delegation from Berlin, so they decided to simply show up at the

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<sup>49</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, "15-Cent Russian Divorce Open to Foreigners; Can Get One in 20 Minutes by Flying Trip," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 16, 1929), 1, accessed September 9, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/105031903/abstract/1406A3E4E3E46A03748/16?accountid=7014>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "Letters from Borah Potent in Russia: Visitors from Here Find They Open Way More Than Any Other Endorsement.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 29, 1929), sec. Radio, 1.

border and explain the situation. These happy-go-lucky girls crossed the Soviet border without paying the customary fee; traveled “without money, tickets, or knowledge of the language;”<sup>52</sup> were arrested once for taking pictures but quickly released; and were robbed on a train, only to have courteous Soviet men wipe their tears with their handkerchiefs. Stories of unsupervised travel would appear now and then during the formative years of Soviet tourism; however, as Intourist gained experience in hosting foreigners, they made these kinds of adventures nearly impossible by the mid-1930s.

The last article concerned Maxim Litvinov and his view of increasing American tourism. Aware of American misgivings towards the Soviet Union, Litvinov understood the importance of positively influencing American public opinion if recognition was to be gained. He, like Stalin, saw how tourism could bring about this necessary change in public opinion:

The change in relations to which I refer is chiefly due to the increasing extent to which representatives of the financial, commercial, industrial and intellectual world of America have visited our union of late years, and have had the opportunity of convincing themselves personally of the absurdity of the fairy tales spread abroad regarding our Soviet State and giving America entirely false ideas for so many years. It may safely be asserted that 99 per cent of the opinions of Americans returning from the Soviet Union are extremely favorable to us.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times By Walter Duranty, “2 New York Women Beg Way in Russia: Mrs. Mabel Ingalls, Morgan’s Niece, and Mary Cogswell Are Robbed on Train. Traveled Caucasus Alone. Reach Moscow on Borrowed Money After an Adventurous Trip Through the Wilds. 2 New York Women Beg Way in Russia. Benefactor Also Robbed. Mistaken for Osetians. Planned to Climb Mt. Ararat. Visiting Card Was Passport,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 13, 1929), 1.

<sup>53</sup> “Litvinoff Cheerful Over Trade with US: Full Tent of Soviet Commissar’s Report on American Relations Reflects Optimism. Sees a Growing Accord Economic Exchanges, He Tells Moscow Congress, Could Be Trebled Under Normal Association. American Visits to Russia. British Attitude Criticized,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 3, 1929), sec. Editorial, 1, accessed September 8, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104799169/abstract/14064D326B47AFDB1C4/42?accountid=7014>.

While his 99 percent approval rating was certainly inflated, Litvinov argues that which I am trying to demonstrate – that American tourists influenced changes in American-Soviet relations, culminating in U.S. recognition of the USSR.

*Recognition.* Twenty-four articles addressed U.S recognition of the Soviet Union in 1929. Out of these twenty-four, five were positive, five were negative, and three were mixed. Adding the split article equally to each side, the ratio of positive to negative arguments for U.S. recognition was 8-8 for 1929. Four of the remaining eleven articles reported Soviet views toward recognition, while the other seven objectively updated the public on recognition's status.

What were the arguments for recognition in 1929, and who was making them? On the American side, the Barnard College Representative Assembly, Colonel Hugh L. Cooper (chief engineer over the Dnieperstroy Dam in the Ukraine), and Senator William Borah provided the strongest arguments. Increased trade<sup>54</sup> did not tower as the primary incentive for recognition as it had in 1928, but shared the top spot with two others. One was the stability<sup>55</sup> of the Soviet Government. It was clear that the regime, stable for more than a decade, would continue to exist and therefore needed to be recognized. The second

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<sup>54</sup> "Tell Of Increases In American Saving: Bankers Report Rise in Deposits Through Club System at Parley of Association Group. Business Called Pacifist Chatham Phenix Official Declares 'Hardest-Headed' Men Now See Calamity in Wars. Business Is Called Pacifist.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 22, 1929); Raymond Leslie Buell, "Britain's Renewal of Diplomatic Ties Will Provide Another Test of the Moscow Regime's Ability to Live With Other Nations--America's Unchanging Policy Marked by Expanding Commerce: Soviet's Diplomatic Service. Russia's Oil Exports. Communism in India. American Business Contacts. Senator Borah's Argument.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 7, 1929), sec. Special Features.

<sup>55</sup> "Urges Soviet Recognition.: Barnard College Assembly Sends Resolution to Hoover.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 9, 1929), accessed September 7, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/105133600/abstract/1405FC5D3E077CD74F7/10?accountid=7014>; "Tell Of Increases In American Saving."

reason proposed that recognition would promote world peace<sup>56</sup> in an atmosphere of increasing aggression and suspicion.

Less common reasons included that the majority of world powers had already recognized the Soviet Union,<sup>57</sup> good faith,<sup>58</sup> or confidence that the Soviets could and were willing to pay their debts and compensate for property; and empathy for revolutionary governments,<sup>59</sup> as the United States was also the product of revolution. The Soviets, on the other hand, reiterated the two reasons of increased trade and prevention of misunderstanding and rumor.

Matthew Woll, Hamilton Fish, Jr. (member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs), Mrs. Hoover and the Daughters of the American Revolution and members of the American Jewish Congress were the strongest opponents of recognition in 1929. As in 1928, the Third International<sup>60</sup> loomed as the largest obstacle to recognition. The

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<sup>56</sup> Richard V. Oulahan Special to The New York Times, "Moses Blocks Vote On Peace Treaty; Reed Condemns It: Borah Vainly Seeks Limit on Debate to Get Ratification by Monday. Farm Bill Real Motive Filibuster on Treaty and Cruiser Program Is Expected From Extra Session Foes. Reed Attacks Pacifists 'At Whose Heart Are the Cannons of Bermuda Aimed?' He Asks the Senate. One Senator Blocks Progress. Reed Assails Pacifists. Position of Moses and Reed. Moses Blocks Vote On Peace Treaty Senator Reed's Speech. Refers to Locarno and League. Calls Treaty a 'Trojan Horse.', " *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 12, 1929); "Tell Of Increases In American Saving."

<sup>57</sup> "Urges Soviet Recognition."

<sup>58</sup> Buell, "Britain's Renewal of Diplomatic Ties Will Provide Another Test of the Moscow Regime's Ability to Live With Other Nations--America's Unchanging Policy Marked by Expanding Commerce."

<sup>59</sup> Special to The New York Times, "Soviet Is Attacked by Organized Labor: Matthew Woll Urges Stimson to Continue Policy of Nonrecognition of Russia. New Campaign Is Hinted Memorandum Assails Reported Activity of Foreign Policy Association on Behalf of Moscow.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 4, 1929), accessed September 8, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/105030612/abstract/14064D326B47AFDB1C4/73?accountid=7014>.

<sup>60</sup> From a Staff Correspondent of The New York Times, "Labor Expunges Tribute To Dewey: Some Federation Delegates Say Columbia Professor Has Endorsed Sovietism. Ban On Brookwood Voted 'Corporation Propaganda' in Schools Attacked--Officers Re-Elected at Closing Session. Says

government also continued to be “unfit”<sup>61</sup> to associate with civilized nations and was accused of religious persecution.<sup>62</sup>

### *Summary of 1928-1929*

In 1928, twelve articles were published on tourism while twenty-five were published on recognition. The ratio of positive to negative arguments concerning recognition was 8-5. Increased trade was the biggest incentive and the Third International the greatest obstacle. American visitors’ reports on the Soviet Union were overwhelming positive, although superficial.

In 1929, eighteen articles were published on tourism while twenty-four were published on recognition. The ratio of positive to negative arguments was 8-8. The Third International remained the biggest obstacle, but increased trade – though still on top – had diminished in importance from the previous year. American visitors’ reports – a third of which described the unofficial delegation – were mixed. The Soviets had made positive strides in the areas of culture and health; however, Americans were not yet convinced that Stalin’s Five-Year Plan was viable. Secret police activity and domestic propaganda were also unpopular.

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Dewey Will Understand. Only One Dissenting Vote.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 29, 1928), accessed September 7, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/104399918/abstract/1405EACEF3C72240FB6/86?accountid=7014>; “Jewish Congress Assails Soviets: Authorizes Committee to Make Protest Against Suppression of Religion in Russia. Fish Denounces Policy Representative Says Communists Sow Seeds of Atheism--Rabbi Wise Would End Silence. Fish Assails Soviets. Jewish Congress to Fight Policy.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 9, 1929).

<sup>61</sup> Times, “Soviet Is Attacked By Organized Labor.”

<sup>62</sup> “Jewish Congress Assails Soviets.”

Why did opposition to recognition increase in 1929, and why did the desire for increased trade no longer register as strongly? First, we must look at the international context. In 1928, the Soviet Union seemed desirous for peace in its successful attempt to become a member of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty. Conversely, many feared the Soviet Union would go to war with China in 1929, which would have broken the anti-war treaty. This development might have adversely affected American public opinion towards the Soviet Union.

Second, we must look at America's domestic context. The American economy did not fall off the hidden economic cliff until November 1929. Faith in capitalism was still very strong. The average American was not interested in the Soviet economic system because there was no reason to consider an alternative to the free market. The incentive of increased trade, furthermore, was weak as the American economy flourished, or seemed to at least. Finally, if increased trade was one of the possible boons of recognition, the unofficial delegation's report discouraged the idea that the Soviet Union offered a safe investment.

### *1930: Tourism, Recognition, and the American Economy Crash*

#### *Background*

In 1930, the Great Depression hit the United States. Between 1928 and 1933, the American GDP would fall by more than half with unemployment reaching 30 percent. President Hoover failed to recognize that this economic crisis was different from those of the American past. Capitalism produces highs and lows. Hoover waited for the system to re-set as those presidents before him had done. What he did not realize was that the Great

Depression was magnified by both the international situation – debts, reparations, and tariffs – and the unprecedented domestic carelessness and greed in business. The Great Depression, furthermore, was not limited to the United States. This depression went global.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, appeared untouched by the Western economic crisis. This perceived state of immunity positively affected American public opinion of the Soviet Union in 1931 and 1932, but this is not found in 1930. Why? I believe, based on Soviet-related headlines in the *New York Times*, that this period of intense negativity towards the Soviet government resulted from both international outrage against increased religious persecution as well as American attempts at using the USSR as a scapegoat for its economic woes.

### *Religious Persecution*

Stalin's Cultural Revolution continued into the early 1930s. As stated before, one element of this revolution was an attack on traditional authority. In 1930, Stalin initiated a vigorous campaign against religion. What he did not expect, though, was the magnitude of the international protest that followed.

In February, the Pope denounced Soviet religious persecution by issuing an official interdiction against the USSR. The president of the French Protestant Federation claimed that “the Soviet was trying to exterminate religion by means of prison, exile and death,”<sup>63</sup> and that a new Nero threatened religion across the globe.<sup>64</sup> In the U.S., the

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<sup>63</sup> Special Cable to The New York Times, “Pope’s Interdiction Stirs British Press: Denunciation of Soviet Seen as Most Dramatic Since General Strike. Tory Organ Approves It But Communist Party Paper Calls It ‘Most Violently Criminal Document’ Issued by Church. French Protestants Assail Russia.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 10, 1930), accessed September 12, 2013, <http://>



American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities sent a resolution to President Hoover requesting that recognition be strictly opposed until these “persecutions that have shocked the moral sense of the civilized world”<sup>65</sup> had ceased. The Lutheran World Convention called on the 81,000,000 Lutherans worldwide to protest and pray on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, while the American Jewish Congress and the National Council of the Episcopal Church issued their declarations of protest as well.<sup>66</sup>

Stalin quickly realized that religion was one area he could not touch, at least not so forcefully. On March 16, Duranty reported that the Party blamed “overzealous comrades”<sup>67</sup> for the forcible closing of churches and excesses. The following month, Easter services proceeded with little molestation, and workers were even allowed the day off to celebrate.<sup>68</sup>

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search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99084222/abstract/1407872E046765C1E7B/86?accountid=7014.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Hoover’s Aid Asked to Protect Religion from Soviet Attack: American Committee on Rights Wants Recognition Withheld Till Safeguards Are Fixed. Lutheran Prayer Day Set 81,000,000 Throughout World to Join in Supplication March 2 --National Body in Protest. Jewish Group Also Acts American Congress Pledges Help in Putting down the ‘Unspeakable Repressions’ in Russia. Lutherans Urged to Pray. Jewish Congress Protests. Hoover’s Aid Asked to Protect Religion Letter to President Hoover. See ‘Primary Human Right.’ Copies to Be Sent Abroad. Dr. Morehead’s Message. Seek Strong Public Opinion. Represented in the Council Are:,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 19, 1930), accessed September 12, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98990667/abstract/1407872E046765C1E7B/105?accountid=7014>.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Moscow Bars Coercion Against Churches And Peasants and Will Punish Offenders,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 16, 1930).

<sup>68</sup> “Soviet Permits Easter Observance: Christians Throughout Russia Mark Holidays, Though Public Sales Are Restricted. Atheists Remain Quiet but Seek to Divert Workers-- Unions Adopt Some of the Religious Holidays.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 19, 1930), accessed September 13, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98992707/abstract/1407E9B8A9B4E6959F/146?accountid=7014>.

### *Economic Scapegoat*

Some attempts were made in the first year of the Great Depression to present the USSR as a scapegoat for American economic woes. Matthew Woll began by accusing the Soviet Union of forced labor and calling for a complete ban on all Soviet trade. He also accused the Soviet government of “dumping grain” (flooding the world market with cheap grain to purposely undercut prices), thereby “making foreign workers and farmers just as much the victims of its exploitation as are the Russian people.”<sup>69</sup> He even went so far as to argue that the success of the Five-Year Plan would force all capitalist governments to adopt the Soviet system, as no country would be capable of competing economically with an enslaved “nation of robots.”<sup>70</sup> The Soviets, however, denied these accusations by pointing out that the Soviet Union’s “total exports are comparatively insignificant in world trade and could not be the cause of the universal fall in prices.”<sup>71</sup> Soviet high officials also commented that if the United States did not want Soviet business, they would take it elsewhere.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> “Labor Moves to Bar All Soviet Products from Nation by 1932: Woll Group of 500,000 Workers Opens Drive for Embargo to Guard Unions Here. Leader Explains Dangers to Press Tariff Ban, Said to Be Aired at Russia, on Goods Produced by Forced Labor. A.f. of L. Aid to Be Sought Argument Is That Soviet 5 Year Plan Puts Employes on Low Wages and Ends Their Freedom of Action. Plan Attack on Soviet System. Fears Blow to Labor Here. Would Aid Rusian Workers. Sees Trade Unions Menaced Tariff Law Aids Fight. Cites Three Advantages. Speaks Only for Labor.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 28, 1930), accessed September 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98946057/abstract/1408793AAFC7FC23E64/8?accountid=7014>.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Soviet to Combat All Bans on Trade: Izvestia Warns That Growing Market Will Be Closed to Nations Barring Products. Editorials Less Violent Newspapers Also Cease to Sound War-Fear Note, Indicating Confidence in Strength of Red Army. Stress Warning to Others. Omissions Also Are Important.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, October 22, 1930), accessed September 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98798725/abstract/140881A87D079BE8520/43?accountid=7014>.

<sup>72</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Soviet Papers Urge Relations With Us:

Other attempts at making the USSR an economic scapegoat were carried out by the Fish Committee, “created recently by the House with authority to go into all forms of communist activities and all agitation for the overthrow of the republican form of government by violence.”<sup>73</sup> Fish’s accusations and tactics closely resembled those of Joseph McCarthy during the Cold War years of the 1950s. For example, he claimed that the Soviets were infiltrating the U.S. Army and Navy, as well as American schools. Drastic resolutions emerged from this committee the following year.<sup>74</sup>

### *Tourism*

Only nine articles on Soviet tourism were published in the *New York Times* in 1930, down 50 percent from the previous year. However, a lack of information on tourism does not necessarily imply less tourism. In fact, one of the nine articles stated that Americans not only made up two-thirds of all tourists to the Soviet Union through 1928 and 1929 – eighty percent of them businessmen – but that another 15,000 were predicted to visit in 1930. That number also indicates that American tourism to the Soviet

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Pravda, Although Discounting Need of Recognition, Calls for Normal Diplomacy. Defends ‘Dumping’ Here Calls It Russian ‘Internal Affair’-- Economic Life Implies Nation Can Do Without Our Aid. ‘Why Go Crazy About America?,’” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 13, 1930), accessed September 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98861474/abstract/14087CD8F33256FCCCF/49?accountid=7014>.

<sup>73</sup> Special to The New York Times, “Green Says Reds Under Mine Unions: Federation Chief Tells House Committee Soviet Aims at Revolution Here. Lists Organizations Here They Were Formed, He Says, by Moscow and Are Directed from There. Says Moscow Sets the Task. Sees Intent to Split Unions.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 13, 1930), sec. Lost and Found, Radio, accessed September 14, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98681855/abstract/14082691564B79394E/100?accountid=7014>.

<sup>74</sup> “Congress Red Quest Shifts Here Today: Propaganda in Schools to Be First Subject of the Inquiry-- O’shea and Others to Be Heard. Fish Plans Drastic Action All Aliens Guilty of Subversive Activities Will Be Deported, He Declares. Amtorg to Be Scrutinized Whalen and Woll Charges Will Be Heard--Bogdanov May Reply-- Search to Be for Facts. Trade Union Data to Be Given. Says Details Are Sought. Fish Issues Statement. School Inquiry Comes First.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 15, 1930), accessed September 14, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98870623/abstract/14083DBD60E6052C20A/43?accountid=7014>.

Union had grown significantly since 1928, as Soviet officials had predicted that 15,000 tourists total would visit the Soviet Union, not just from the United States.<sup>75</sup>

Two articles detailed the experiences of three Americans who traveled to the USSR in 1930. Dr. James G. McDonald of the Foreign Policy Association had visited the Soviet Union before, in 1927 and 1929. On this trip, he did not like what he saw, listing secret police terror, party purges, increased pressure on private business, and shortages as evidence that the Soviet Union was heading in the wrong direction.<sup>76</sup>

Dr. Mildred Fairchild of the American-Russian Institute and Dr. Susan Kingsbury of Bryn Mawr College experienced (or at least claimed to experience) a very different Soviet Union than the one presented by Dr. MacDonald. Their motive for travel was to study women workers in the Communist state. After a five- month tour, they concluded that the USSR had made great progress which could only be compared to the Russian past, rather than to the American present. Furthermore, they declared that the Soviet system was founded on “sound economic principles,” with no shortcomings mentioned.<sup>77</sup>

The other six articles covered a motley of topics. For example, thanks to tourists, news correspondents and engineers, American words had infiltrated the Russian language, such as “foxtrotirovat” (to foxtrot).<sup>78</sup> Visitors could also now visit exotic

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<sup>75</sup> Times, “Moscow Expects 15,000 Tourists.”

<sup>76</sup> 1931 Henry Wales. Copyright, “Tells Of News Trip Over All Of Russia: Henry Wales Covered 12,000 Miles in Soviet to Write Series of Newspaper Articles. Always Traveled Alone Says He Desired to Get First Hand Information and to Avoid the Official Point of View. Sought to Silence Criticism. Visited a Kulak Camp. Notes Apathy of Peasants.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 5, 1931).

<sup>77</sup> “Sees Progress in Russia.: Dr. Mildred Fairchild Back from Study of Women Workers.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 11, 1930), accessed September 14, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98884787/citation/14083DBD60E6052C20A/29?accountid=7014>.

Samarkand or enjoy the Moscow derby. The most successful jockey, in fact, was an American whose father had once kept the horses for the czar.<sup>79</sup> The tourism-related articles of 1930 provided bits and pieces of information, but no clear picture of Soviet life. This was to change in the following years.

### *Recognition*

Twenty-seven articles addressed U.S recognition of the Soviet Union in 1930. Out of these twenty-seven, six were positive, ten were negative, and two were mixed. Therefore, the ratio of positive to negative arguments for U.S. recognition was 8-12 for 1930, the first and only year from 1928-1933 when opposition to recognition outweighed support. Three of the remaining nine articles reported Soviet views toward recognition, while the other six objectively updated the public on recognition's status.

What were the arguments for recognition in 1930? Increased trade<sup>80</sup> returned to the position of top incentive, followed closely by world peace.<sup>81</sup> Other reasons included

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<sup>78</sup> Albert Parry, "New Russia Borrows Words from America: In Strange Forms Familiar Terms Appear in Speech and Writing: 'Amerikanizatzia' and 'Fordizatzia' Are Popular, While Smugglers Are Known as 'Bootleggeri' 'Bootleggeri' in Russia. the 'Krossword' Arrives.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 19, 1930), sec. Special Features, accessed November 16, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99058391/abstract/141C6D68FAE2CF052D0/2?accountid=7014>.

<sup>79</sup> The Associated Press, "Caton Best Jockey on Russian Tracks: Cleveland Rider Wins Sixth Derby and Scores 100th Victory of Season at Moscow," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 22, 1930), sec. Sports, accessed November 16, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98978865/abstract/141C6D68FAE2CF052D0/5?accountid=7014>; Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, "Golden Samarkhand Full of Mysteries: Sheer Romance and Marvellous Legends Abound in Ancient Capital of Tamerlane. Legends in Abundance. Isaac Joins Famous Crew. the Mysteries of Golden Samarkand and Relics of Tamerlane the Builder Bibi Khanoum's Monument. Stand for the Koran.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 18, 1930), sec. Editorial.

<sup>80</sup> "Timothy Healy Dies In His Sleep At 64: Was Former President of International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers. Noted Trade Union Leader He Opposed Gompers on Attitude of A. F. of L. Toward Recognition of Soviet Russia. Was Labor Leader for Generation. Delegate to World Conference.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 21, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99058391/abstract/141C6D68FAE2CF052D0/2?accountid=7014>.

stability,<sup>82</sup> good faith,<sup>83</sup> communist sympathy,<sup>84</sup> and the belief that the Third International was not a threat.<sup>85</sup>

Arguments against recognition were no longer reserved to Matthew Woll. Those religious organizations listed earlier now openly opposed recognition due to religious persecution. New opponents, especially Hamilton Fish, brought charges of dumping and

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proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98876042/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/23?accountid=7014; Louis Stark Special to The New York Times, "Soviet Recognition Urged by Cravath: He Calls Regime Responsible and Enduring-Asks Parley for World Economic Stability. for a 'Morrow' as Envoy Adjusting of Mutual Claims, Gas in Mexico, Is Proposed by Lawyer at Politics Institute. No Approval of Bolshevism. Focus on Soviet Foreign Relations. Bogdanov Hits Trade Hindrances. Denies 'Unfair Competition.' Dual Role Ascribed to Red Chiefs. Red Influences in the Far East. Soviet Censorship and Criticism.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 3, 1930), accessed September 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98884065/abstract/14087CD8F33256FCCCF/12?accountid=7014>; "Urges Recognition Of Soviet Regime: Writer in September Current History Holds Aloofness Hurts Our Trade. Spargo Disputes Stand Alexander Legge and Lester J. Dickinson Review Year's Work of Farm Board. Survey Farm Board's Work. The Senate and Treaty-Making.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 24, 1930); Edwin L. James, "The Week In Europe: All Eyes Upon Geneva: Kellogg To Be Judge Former Secretary of State Will Be Elected to World Court Within Few Days. Empire Conference Nears Imperial Experts Meet Sept. 15 and Prime Ministers on Sept. 30. Will Europe Federate? Some British Problems. Coste and Lindbergh Senator Wheeler on Russia. Chang Hsueh-Liang Speaks. When the Tide Turns.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 7, 1930), sec. Educational; "Sermons Of Thanks Appeal For Peace: Need for World Court Action and Remedies for Idleness Stressed in Pulpits. America Urged To Lead Holmes Calls on Hoover to Take Initiative in World Reforms-- Spiritual Outlook Asked. World Court Action Urged. Views Distress As Lesson. Dr. Fosdick Urges Gravity. Demands Preventive for Distress.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 28, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98790250/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/39?accountid=7014>; "Labor Group Urges Soviet Recognition: Progressive Action Wing Votes Sympathy With 'Planned Economy Experiment.' Asked As Business Policy Woll's Plan to Exclude All Russian Goods Viewed as 'Tantamount to Declaration of War.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 8, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98806448/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/41?accountid=7014>.

<sup>81</sup> "Urge Friendliness In Soviet Protests: 10 of Faculty and 67 Students at Union Seminary Deplore Church Declarations. Find Them Unchristian Also See Political Implications in Them--Recognition of Russia by All Nations Urged.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 7, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98670162/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/9?accountid=7014>; "Timothy Healy Dies In His Sleep At 64"; "Sermons Of Thanks Appeal For Peace."

<sup>82</sup> Times, "Soviet Recognition Urged By Cravath."

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> "Labor Group Urges Soviet Recognition."

<sup>85</sup> Times, "Soviet Recognition Urged By Cravath."

forced labor. While the Third International<sup>86</sup> remained the biggest obstacle, it was closely followed by religious persecution,<sup>87</sup> the accusation against the Soviets of acting as a “Red trade menace,”<sup>88</sup> bad faith,<sup>89</sup> and the idea that American businessmen were sacrificing

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<sup>86</sup> “Demands Congress Sift Red Riots Here: Woll Charges The Amtorg Is the Link Between Moscow and American Communists. Urges A Trade Embargo Condemns Business Men Who Trade With Soviets--Says Government Needs Funds for Inquiry. Say Woll Seeks War on Soviet.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 4, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98572811/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/8?accountid=7014>; “Woll Lays Red Riots Here To World Plot Of Soviet; Stalin For Curb In Russia: Manifesto Is Cited Here Big Outbreak Is Set for Thursday, Labor Chief Warns in Open Letter. Finds Jobless Exploited Repeats Charge, Once Denied, That Foster Has \$1,250,000 to Stir Spirit of Revolt. Red Groups Clash In City Meeting of Ousted Lovestone Faction Ends in Melee--Dynamite Stolen in Bronx. Red Factions in Clash Here. Sees Plight of Jobless Exploited. Letter Quotes Manifesto. Says Reds Pose as A.F. of L. Units Text of Manifesto. Appeals to Congress. Would Ignore Outbreaks.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 3, 1930), accessed September 12, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98699701/abstract/1407872E046765C1E7B/157?accountid=7014>; “Woll Says Amtorg, In Federal Favor, Plots Revolution: Laxity on Visas Has Enabled Reds to Gain Rapidly Here, He Tells Fish Committee. Warns Business Of Peril Labor Leader Holds It Builds a Frankenstein Monster by Trade With Soviet. Terrorism Is Charged Police Inspector Asserts Knives and Clubs Are Used by Communists to Coerce City’s Workers. Sees Officials Duped by Reds. Woll Says Amtorg Plots Revolution Fish Opposes Secret Police. Gompers Data Introduced. Urges Active Defense,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 18, 1930), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98557671/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/21?accountid=7014>; “Easley Urges Union For Soviet Boycott: Civic Federation Head Suggests World Economic Body to Block Russia’s ‘Game.’ Fears Moscow 5-Year Plan Need for Joint Military Action Is Hinted at in Letter Censuring Cravath and His Sympathizers. Would Checkmate Russia’s ‘Game.’ Quotes Communist Program.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 31, 1930).

<sup>87</sup> “Hoover’s Aid Asked To Protect Religion From Soviet Attack”; Charles C. Edmunds, “Moscow’s Reply To The Pope In Line With Expectations: It Is Called ‘Customary Sweeping Denial of Persecution,’ by Father Walsh, Who Writes Of Move Against Christianity,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 23, 1930), sec. Editorial, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98992774/citation/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/6?accountid=7014>; “Faiths Here Unite To Decry Red Drive: Mass Meeting Held at Opera House Under Heavy Guard Following Bomb Threats. Credit Boycott Proposed Woll Wants All Nations to Act --Father E.A. Walsh Says Soviet Martyrs Clergy. 2,000 Attend Meeting. Cardinal and Bishop Absent. Faiths Here Unite To Decry Red Drive Martyrdom of Celergy Cited. Woll Sees Creed of Hate. Walsh Tells of Methods. Says Radio Is Used in Drive.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 26, 1930).

<sup>88</sup> “Woll Says Amtorg, In Federal Favor, Plots Revolution”; John H. Hazelton R. W. C. Edmund Oliver Austin Charles Nevers Holmes Stanley F. Morse Cox Henry Edward Warner Henry D. Bakerj B. Braila John Mcfarlane Howie J. Yearwood F. E. Grant, “Letters To The Editor From Times Readers: Holds Ratification Method Is At Discretion Of Congress Mr. Hazelton Brings Other Arguments to Support His Contention Children Should Be Warned As To A City Investigation Arcturus With Us. Excerpts From Letters Crisis May Settle Itself Permitting Wheat Market to Take Its Course Would Eliminate High-Cost Growers The Passport Nuisance Cost of Document Itself Should Not Be Confused With Visa Charges Proposing A Real Holiday. Our Loss Of Russian Business Not Viewed As A Calamity No Need to Take Serious Credit Risks to Build Enduring Prosperity Here National Sanity Needed One Believes We Are Overestimating Importance of the ‘Red Menace’ Scotland’s Literary Shrine Another View Of Communism

American principles<sup>90</sup> for personal profit. Others continued to argue that the Soviet Government was “unfit.”<sup>91</sup> Finally, one opponent argued that loss of Soviet trade was a matter of long-term credits, not recognition. Therefore, recognition would not increase trade.<sup>92</sup>

### *Conclusion*

By 1928, Stalin had consolidated power and begun conducting his revolution from above: rapid industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and the Cultural Revolution. This new program – especially the Five-Year Plan – depended on the successful development of strong trade relations with the West, particularly the technologically-advanced United States. President Herbert Hoover softened American policy towards the Soviet Union by permitting trade relations for the first time, but a lack of long-term credits meant increasing limitations on that trade as the Great (and global) Depression worsened from one year to the next.

The Soviets argued that recognition by the United States would both increase trade and prevent continued misunderstanding between them. The U.S. non-recognition

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It’s A Good Trick.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 20, 1930), sec. Editorial; “Easley Urges Union For Soviet Boycott.”

<sup>89</sup> Grant, “Letters To The Editor From Times Readers”; “Calls Roosevelt Unfair To Wilson: Bainbridge Colby, in Current History, Says ‘Inferiority Complex’ Inspired Attacks. Miss Mayo Doubts Gandhi Article Questions Sincerity of Indian Leader’s Policy on ‘Untouchables’--Many Topics Discussed. A Really American Literature. Soviet’s Bill of Damages. Various Topics Discussed.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 27, 1930), sec. Second News Section, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/98874723/abstract/141BFA4EAE1FCAA272/24?accountid=7014>; “Urges Recognition Of Soviet Regime.”

<sup>90</sup> “Demands Congress Sift Red Riots Here”; “Faiths Here Unite To Decry Red Drive”; “Woll Says Amtorg, In Federal Favor, Plots Revolution.”

<sup>91</sup> “Faiths Here Unite To Decry Red Drive”; “Easley Urges Union For Soviet Boycott.”

<sup>92</sup> Grant, “Letters To The Editor From Times Readers.”



policy was also becoming increasingly untenable as major powers held global conferences to discuss and provide solutions to international problems of military and economic aggression. A country representing nearly 145 million people could not be left out of these discussions, nor could the United States.

Stalin realized that the American government would never consider recognition if the Third International's activities were not minimized and foreign propaganda adjusted. The creation of Intourist – corresponding to the rise of tourism worldwide – allowed many thousands of American citizens each year to see the social, cultural, and economic progress of the Soviet Union, its “superiority through success.” This new message would then be carried back to the United States in the observations and experiences of these tourists and guests, capable of affecting American public opinion and influencing the U.S. path to recognition.

From 1928-1929, American tourists gave the impression that the Soviet Union was making huge strides in the areas of health and culture. The people they observed appeared happy and healthy as the Soviets provided them with libraries, clubs, recreational facilities, parks, free medical care and free education. Tourists professed doubts, however, that the Five-Year Plan was feasible and the Soviet economic system viable. One must remember, though, the American domestic context: the “Roaring Twenties” continued. The economy was still flourishing. No one knew that the bubble was about to burst. In the next and final chapter, I will show how the Great Depression challenged American (and Western) faith in unbridled capitalism, leading many to look to the Soviet Union and ask, “Why aren’t you suffering, too?”

From 1928-1929, support for recognition remained fairly static, falling slightly in 1929 due (at least to some extent) to the Chinese Eastern Railway incident, the strength of the American economy, and the claims by half of the unofficial American delegation that the Soviet Union did not offer a safe investment, even with recognition. Again, the Great Depression influenced American opinion. Once the initial backlash against the Soviet Union wore off in mid-1931, American confidence in the Soviet Union as a safe *and necessary* investment grew.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Stalin and Recognition, Part Two: 1931-1933

#### *Background*

##### *Global Context: Rising Fascist Threat*

*Japan.* Japan's rise to prominence on the international stage was dramatic and unexpected for the West. In the 1850s, after more than two hundred years of self-imposed isolation, Japan began its path towards modernization. By the 1890s, the country had achieved national unity, industrialization, a powerful navy, and was beginning to colonize. In short, Japan leaped from being a feudal island in the Pacific to an imperial power in less than fifty years.

Japanese expansion was both the victim and victor of historical timing. By the time the country amassed enough power to expand, most of Asia and the Pacific had already been colonized by the West. Nonetheless, Japan professed to need a buffer zone of colonial holdings for both security and economic reasons. The country not only lacked resources with which to support its newly industrialized economy, but also required economic markets "found most easily in protected colonial territories from which foreign competition could most efficiently be driven."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Japan proceeded cautiously in its expansionism, aware of the danger of treading on Western toes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Peattie, "The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus and Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 45, accessed November 3, 2013, <http://universitypublishingonline.org.ezproxy.baylor.edu/cambridge/histories/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9781139055109&cid=CBO9781139055109A010>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 217–219.

In the 1920s, however, a group of Japanese militarists became increasingly unsatisfied with this cautious expansionist approach and began plotting a military coup. Here, historical timing proved favorable to Japanese expansion. Domestically, economic depression, revelations of political corruption, and perceived weakness in foreign policy had soured the Japanese people on their government. Internationally, Western Powers – also hit by the global depression – seemed unlikely to protest more radical Japanese advances.

On September 18, 1931, a group of Kwantung Army officers planted a bomb on the South Manchurian Railway in order to frame the Chinese and invade. The Chinese appealed to the United States under the Nine Power Treaty, invoking the agreement to discipline any member who violated Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Hoover – focused on the Great Depression – deferred that appeal to the League of Nations, which took more than a year to investigate and concluded that the Japanese were, in fact, guilty of aggression. No Western Power, however, was willing to devote the time, money or men to punishing the Japanese. Clearly, though, a new power threatened world order.<sup>3</sup>

*Germany.* Along with Japan and the United States, Germany began its climb to imperial status in the second half of the nineteenth century after national unification in 1871. Unlike Japan and the U.S., however, it found itself on the losing side of World War I. The reparation payments decided at Versailles – \$33 billion to be split among the Allies – crippled the German economy: between 1922 and 1924, the currency collapsed and

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<sup>3</sup> Ikuhiko Hata and Alvin D. Coox, “Continental Expansion, 1905–1941,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus and Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 13–30, accessed November 3, 2013, <http://universitypublishingonline.org.ezproxy.baylor.edu/cambridge/histories/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9781139055109&cid=CBO9781139055109A011>.

national savings dried up. Hopes of an economic recovery, thanks in part to short-term American loans,<sup>4</sup> disappeared with the arrival of the Great and global depression.

Unemployment and disillusionment rose rapidly.

Adolf Hitler and his Nationalist Socialist (Nazi) Party – which had won less than 3 percent of the parliamentary vote in 1928 – won a staggering 38 percent in the 1932 election.<sup>5</sup> The following year, Hitler legally ascended to the position of Chancellor of Germany, his popularity founded on a dual-platform of revenge against the injustices of the Versailles Treaty – the War Guilt Clause, loss of territory, and reparations – and his racist Aryan ideology. By 1933, both Japan and Germany left the League of Nations, a sign of things to come.

### *1931-1932: Peak of Soviet Tourism, Recognition Debated*

#### *1931*

*Context.* In the United States, the Great Depression worsened as President Hoover's limited remedial attempts failed to produce a positive effect on the economy. Unprecedented tariffs – designed to protect American business – only forced other countries to raise equally protectionist walls. Tens of thousands of American businesses went bankrupt, and American faith in capitalism faltered. As the Soviets declared the Five-Year Plan would be completed in four years, the West began to debate the benefits of a planned economy as well as the need for social justice and welfare.

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Wiskemann, "The Aftermath of the First World War," in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, ed. C. L. Mowat and C. L. Mowat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 5, accessed November 4, 2013, <http://universitypublishingonline.org/ezproxy.baylor.edu/cambridge/histories/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9781139055888&cid=CBO9781139055888A024>.

<sup>5</sup> William Brustein and Marit Berntson, "Interwar Fascist Popularity in Europe and the Default of the Left," *European Sociological Review* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 160.

The two biggest news stories of 1931 concerned the “Red trade menace” and Soviet influence surrounding the Pan-European Convention. The accusatory depiction of the Soviet Union as a “Red trade menace” persisted throughout the early months of 1931, leading some to suggest a partial or total embargo on Soviet trade. For example, the Fish Committee adopted a resolution in January calling for (1) a bureau of investigation “with full authority to search out, scrutinize and keep under constant supervision the Communist organization in this country,”<sup>6</sup> (2) a complete ban on Soviet trade, (3) and a ban on the Communist and Worker’s Party of America until all aims for revolution were renounced. In addition, Fish proposed the deportation of all alien Communists in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

Those who supported an embargo believed that the Soviet capacity to “dump” depended on forced labor – usually in reference to labor camps, but also to the conditions of the Soviet population in general. Reports surfaced describing work camps in the North, where thousands of prisoners living in cramped barracks worked for “‘pittance’ pay” and died of exhaustion, disease, or execution.<sup>8</sup> Walter Duranty repeatedly addressed these

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<sup>6</sup> “Fish Will Demand Deportation of Reds as Menace to Nation: House Inquiry Head Also Reveals Here Congress Will Be Asked for Law to Curb Propaganda. Report to Be Made Jan. 17 Anti-Communist Meeting Asks Outlawry of the Party and a Ban on Soviet Trade. Capitalist Reforms Urged Representative Says Abuses Must Be Remedied If System Survives --Meeting Guarded by Police. Committee’s Recommendations. Resolution Proposed. Fish Will Demand Deporting of Reds Urges Reforms in Capitalism. Fish Assails Trade with Russia. Wants Red Party Outlawed.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 10, 1931), accessed September 21, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99509532/abstract?accountid=7014>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Marcus A. Tollett Special Cable to The New York Times, “Soviet Holds 662,200 in Penal Camp Toil, OGPU Chief Reveals: Fugitive Secret Police Official Tells in Finland of Horrors of Forced Labor. 72,000 Died Last Winter Men Blinded by Lack of Proper Food Are Shot for Straying from Paths, He Charges. Many Tasks Undertaken 73,285 Women and 18,932 Girls and Boys Are Listed Among Last Year’s Prisoners. Convict Camps Described. 72,000 Casualties Last Winter. Soviet Has 662,200 in Penal Camp Toil,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 31, 1931), 200, accessed September 21, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99504822/citation/140>

reports, explaining that “exile is still one of the principal ‘means of government’ in Soviet Russia, as it was under the Czars,”<sup>9</sup> and that it existed on multiple levels corresponding to the government’s aim: punishment, quarantine, colonization, or labor. Duranty estimated, based on Soviet reports, that one million people had been sent to labor camps by 1930, but the question remained as to whether those citizens, reportedly receiving free housing, food, and a reduced wage, were performing “forced” or “slave” labor. Duranty argued that, regardless of one’s final judgment, the percentage of total production contributed by these workers was not sufficient to warrant an embargo.<sup>10</sup>

Surprisingly, reports of forced labor did not create the same level of public outcry as had Stalin’s anti-religious campaign of 1930. In fact, Americans only denounced forced labor within the context of Soviet dumping capabilities, which were blown fantastically out of proportion in the press. The doomsday predictions ranged from dramatic to frankly comical: forced labor “enabled the Soviet to destroy ‘all possibility of competition abroad;’”<sup>11</sup> American trade and technical assistance were helping the USSR

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A6F87A5C4B22FF9A/18?accountid=7014; Special to The New York Times, “Bill Asks Embargo on 5 Soviet Products: Manganese, Grain, Meat, Eggs and Sugar Are Named in House Measure,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 6, 1931), accessed September 16, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99550054/citation/14089D63D09362C3106/21?accountid=7014>.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Million Are Held in Russian Camps, 200,000 in Forests: Classed as ‘Exiles,’ They Are Driven to Hard Labor on Order to Work or Starve. Punished as Anti-Social Kulaks and Other Opponents of Moscow Regime Among Them --Lesser Criminals Included. Fish Moves for an Inquiry Representative Asks Stimson to Send Agents to Russia to Investigate. Second Aim Is Development. Million Are Held in Russian Camps 2,000,000 Are in ‘Exile.’ Soviet Refuses to Issue Denials. Says We Need the Trade. Money Too Much Needed at Home. Fish for Sending Agents. He Writes Stimson Asking Inquiry in Russia on Convict Made Goods,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 3, 1931).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Times, “Bill Asks Embargo On 5 Soviet Products.”

“to create a Frankenstein”<sup>12</sup> which would bring about our own destruction; and “upon the defeat of the five-year plan...depends the continuity of the American scheme of things.”<sup>13</sup>

The American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, in a letter to President Hoover, suggested that still more than the American way of life was at stake:

It holds that ‘this unfair and destructive competition is on a basis against which the American worker, farmer and industry can never compete unless we are willing to lower our standards of living to those of the conscripted victims of Communist dictatorship, forgo our freedom, our religion and our government and adopt the ruthless gospel of communism...We believe that, given five more years with the continued aid of American technicians, methods and machinery, the destruction of civilization is certain.’<sup>14</sup>

While few Americans feared for civilization itself, many did worry about the success of the Five-Year Plan.

A growing number of Americans began contradicting these apocalyptic statements and, by May, outnumbered accusers in the press. Of nine published defenders, five had visited the Soviet Union, four were senators, and one was a special news correspondent to the *Christian Science Monitor*. The senators focused on the strengths of the American system, expressing confidence that it could and should compete with its Soviet counterpart in order to demonstrate its superiority. Senator Bronson M. Cutting,

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<sup>12</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged by Cutting: Senator Sees No Danger to Our Institutions in Contacts with Russia. Woll Argues Against It Labor Leader Takes Sharp Issue with Speaker at Republican Club’s Luncheon Discussion. Calls Soviet a Stable Government. Woll Takes Opposite View. Sees Power in Peasants. Writer Holds Destiny of Soviet Depends on That Class.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 1, 1931), accessed September 21, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99475943/abstract/140A6F87A5C4B22FF9A/20?accountid=7014>.

<sup>13</sup> “Asks Legion to Fight Soviet Five-Year Plan: Dr. J.j. Tigert in Tampa Address Calls It a ‘Menace’ to American Economic Life.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 12, 1931), sec. Second News Section.

<sup>14</sup> “52 Groups Demand Soviet Trade Ban: Patriotic Coalition Calls On Hoover To Speed Embargo By Congress Before Wednesday. Would Deport Alien Reds It Sees American Technicians Helping Build A ‘Frankenstein Dedicated To Our Destruction.’,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 2, 1931), Accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99458957/abstract/140ABA3DCD7436DEA6C/107?accountid=7014>.



for example, believed that even “if I am mistaken and Communism should prove its superiority in the open market it deserves to win out, and by the clash of these theories it is at least possible that some new social order may arise superior in essence and detail to either one.”<sup>15</sup> Senators William Borah and Burton Wheeler articulated the same confidence, desiring both trade relations and recognition of the USSR.<sup>16</sup>

Visitors, on the other hand, focused on the weaknesses of the Soviet economic system. Louis Fischer pointed out that “Russian trade generally amount[s] to only 2 per cent of the total foreign trade in the world.”<sup>17</sup> This trade could not reach epic proportions, visitors explained, until the Soviets learned how to use their newly built factories,<sup>18</sup> developed light industry to satisfy the home market,<sup>19</sup> fixed what had been constructed haphazardly, and carried out another fifty years of five-year plans to

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<sup>15</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting.”

<sup>16</sup> Special to The New York Times, “Borah Ridicules Our Soviet Policy: Says We Need Trade European Nations Are Now Seeking With Russia. Doubtful On Disarmament Senator Approves Stimson’s Latin American Policy on Interview Broadcast by Radio.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 27, 1931), accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99087982/abstract/140B30F01A960221991/97?accountid=7014>; “Wheeler Sees Hope in a Soviet Market: Senator Says Russian Trade Would Provide a Cure for Employment Here. ‘Super-Patriots’ Assailed Industrial Democracy League Hears Talk on Effect of Five-Year Plan on American Economics. Sees Unemployment Paradox. Tells of Soviet Wheat ‘Imports.’,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 8, 1931), accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99393805/abstract/140ABC849C25658BE35/22?accountid=7014>.

<sup>17</sup> William MacDonald, “An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia: Mr. Fischer Presents a Summary of Pros and Cons and Decides the Pros Have It,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 10, 1931), sec. The New York Times Book Review, accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99358699/abstract/140B30F01A960221991/15?accountid=7014>.

<sup>18</sup> “Russia as Trade Rival Called Minor Menace: Maurice Hindus Says It Cannot Compete Until It Learns to Use Its New Factories.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 29, 1931), sec. Sports.

<sup>19</sup> “American Predicts Success for Soviet: Student of Russian Experiment Corroborates in Book Claims of Red Leaders. Lists Chief Achievements W.H. Chamberlin Scouts Fear of Dumping--Cites Enormity of the Domestic Market.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 22, 1931), sec. Amusements, Books.

complete modernization.<sup>20</sup> The USSR simply did not yet have the capabilities to cause a global economic meltdown, nor would it for decades.

What was the Soviet Government's reaction to these allegations? It accused American officials of creating a scapegoat designed to "distract public attention from the economic depression and throw blame on the 'Red menace.'"<sup>21</sup> They pointed fingers, asking how the United States could decry Soviet forced labor when blacks and immigrants were exploited at home and "natives on American owned plantations in the Philippines, West Africa, and South America"<sup>22</sup> were exploited abroad. Finally, the Soviets bitterly reminded the United States of its non-recognition policy, which, *Izvestia* argued, made requests to study its internal conditions all the more insulting:

To oppose recognition of the Soviet Union and simultaneously to demand official investigation of conditions existing in said union – that is literally a skyscraper of impudence... When Mr. Fish asks the American Government to demand the right of investigation of our lumber camps we can only reply: "Take your feet off the table, Mr. Representative, you are not in your own home."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> G. E. R. Gedye Wireless to The New York Times, "Holmes Sees Soviet Injured by Success: New York Pastor Says After Arrival in Vienna from Tour That Plan Saps Vitality. Praises Vast Progress but Asserts 50 More Years of 5-Year Programs Are Needed to Achieve Goal. Reports Church Is Dead Believes a New Religion Is Already Arising for Which Communist God Will Be Created. Population Shows Improvement. Everything Else Sacrificed. Found None for Czarism. No Incentive to Save Money.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 13, 1931).

<sup>21</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, "Reds Voice Scorn for the Fish Report: Soviet Press Scores Findings as Impudent, Biased and a Complete Failure. Bitter on 'Forced Labor' *Izvestia* Cannot Reconcile Our Opposing Recognition and Demanding Investigation. Reaction Not One of Fear Note of Pride Is Detected at The Seriousness with Which We Now Treat 'Red Menace.' Charge Bias from Start. Comment of Pravda.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 21, 1931), accessed September 21, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99510652/abstract/140A6B7895A426A76E2/35?accountid=7014>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

The United States did not need to apply an embargo, the Soviets declared. They would just take their trade someplace else. By July, accusations of dumping and forced labor had disappeared entirely.

The second hot topic of 1931 related to the growing influence of the Soviet Union on the international stage. As European countries aligned more sharply on either side of the Versailles Treaty, the Soviets cultivated stronger ties with Germany, Italy, Turkey and those other nations of the dissatisfied opposition.

On January 14, the Soviet government sent a note to the attendees of the future disarmament convention, in which it proposed that the president of the conference, as well as its location, be limited to those countries which possessed normal relations with all nations involved. Not coincidentally, the letter was made public the day before the first session of the Pan-European Convention in Geneva, whose president was French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand and to which the Soviets had not been invited.<sup>24</sup>

The following month, the commission sent invitations to the Soviet Union, Turkey and Iceland to attend the convention, although it was made clear that their participation would be limited. Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov responded with confusion as to how “one group of European States should take it upon itself to decide to the admission or non-admission of another group of European States into a community

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<sup>24</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Soviet Asks Change in Arms Parley Plan: Would Restrict Chairmanship to Citizens of Countries Which Recognize Russia. Sends Note to 8 Nations Soviet Indicates Holding of Parley in Switzerland Wouldbe Objectionable. Would Restrict Choice. Moscow Demands Friendly President Plan Aims at Switzerland.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 15, 1931).

calling itself Pan-European.”<sup>25</sup> Why were some countries being treated as second-class members of the global community? How would this promote peace?

Then, something unexpected happened. In an article titled “Soviet Startles Geneva,” the author described how representatives of twenty-seven capitalist countries listened for more than an hour as Litvinov diagnosed the world economic crisis and offered prescriptions for peace. He believed that post-war conditions – reparations, war debts, and humiliation – had encouraged both economic and military aggression in the form of high tariffs and ever-increasing armaments. Furthermore, aggression between capitalist and communist countries was daily adding greater economic strain to world relations. This environment of suspicion, misunderstanding, and non-cooperation had to be pacified. He advocated for “economic non-aggression pacts” to complement the already existing military non-aggression pacts, including the Kellogg-Briand Treaty.

Litvinov made it clear that the Soviet Union was not rejecting the Marxist tenet of inevitable struggle between capitalism and communism. He explained, though, that this struggle did not need to be violent or hostile:

The question is whether this struggle and development will be allowed to follow a natural process or whether both systems will have recourse to mutually hostile measures which can have no decisive influence in the outcome of the struggle but will turn out to be two-edged weapons.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Soviet Questions Pan-Europe Plan: Accepting Bid to Join Parley, Litvinoff Reserves Right to Define Attitude. Asks Statement of Aims Foreign Commissar Wants to Know Whether Europe Is to Be Divided or United.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 10, 1931).

<sup>26</sup> Lansing Warren Special Cable to The New York Times, “Soviet Startles Geneva: Proposes Capitalist and Communist States Make Non-Aggression Pledge. Litvinoff Is Conciliatory Denying Dumping, He Urges Vote Not to Sell Goods Abroad Cheaper Than at Home. Says Russia Helps Others He Stresses to European Union Commission the Great Imports of His Country. Urges Non-Aggression Pact. Blames War for Crisis. Russia Offers Economic Pact Text of Litvinoff’s Proposal. Denies Dumping by Soviet. Gives Sugar Sale Figures. Pleads for Economic Peace.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 19, 1931), accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99351780/abstract/140B30F01A960221991/50?accountid=7014>.

No one expected that the strongest appeal for peace would come from the very nation which pined for world revolution. Yet, as Litvinov explained, the Soviet Union had every reason to avoid war at the present time. Industrialization and the Five-Year Plan depended on peaceful trade. The Soviets could not understand charges of “dumping” because the very economic system which the U.S. claimed the Soviet Union desired to destroy was the same economic system in which the Soviet Union participated.

In fact, Soviet participation in that system was helping – not hurting – the global depression. Litvinov pointed out that the Soviet Union currently purchased “50 to 75 per cent of the total exports of certain branches of the machine industry in Germany, Austria, England, and Poland,”<sup>27</sup> as well as 53.5 percent of American tractor production. Tariffs and embargos were sabotaging the global economy, not Soviet dumping. While Litvinov’s “economic non-aggression pact” proposal met with sufficient interest to be assigned to a special committee for review, it was later shelved until January.<sup>28</sup>

One other event which occurred at Geneva must be addressed, for it demonstrated America’s increasingly untenable policy of non-recognition. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, a narcotics pact was signed at the Pan-European Convention by a number of European countries and the United States, but not by the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the United States made a point to include two reservations (among six) which ensured that an American signature

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; Special Cable to The New York Times, “Soviet Wins Point On Economic Peace: European Commission at Geneva Decides to Take Up Plan After League Meets. Britain Opposes Proposal Litvinoff Gives a Luncheon to Delegates of the Nations Which Recognize Russia. Britain Wanted Slower Course. Continues Work in League,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 6, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99307621/abstract/140B8396A756EF4C9FC/14?accountid=7014>; Special Cable to The New York Times, “To Shelve Litvinoff Plea.: Pan-Europe Commission Body Objects to Non-Aggression Pact,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 5, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99241260/citation/140B8A712F67D57881/11?accountid=7014>.

did not give recognition or contractually bind the United States to any unrecognized party.

These two reservations created much confusion. If the United States and the USSR would not be contractually obligated to each other under the narcotics pact, were they contractually obligated to avoid war under the Kellogg-Briand Treaty? If not, why did Stimson admonish the USSR and China to act in accordance with said treaty in the Chinese Eastern Railway incident in 1930? If so, did that signature in Paris recognize the Soviet Union, as no reservations had been made? Many began to question the continuation of the U.S. policy of non-recognition due to the complications it created for what seemed like little practical advantage.

*Tourism.* Twenty-eight articles appeared in the *New York Times* in 1931 – more than twice the number published in 1928, ten more than in 1929, and three times as many as were published in 1930. Nineteen out of twenty-eight articles were included in multiple-segment specials covering the visits of Henry Wales, Paris correspondent to the *Chicago Tribune*; General William M. Haskell, chief of the ARA from 1921-1923; George Bernard Shaw, famous Irish playwright; and Ella Winter, a journalist.

Henry Wales wrote a series of articles for the *Chicago Tribune* covering his visit to the Soviet Union in 1931, five of which were published in the *New York Times* as well. His first report, in which he described his arrival in Moscow, was mildly positive. Having made a previous visit in 1928, Wales remarked that Moscow looked practically the same, although missing the characteristics of the NEP era. State stores and cooperatives had replaced private shops; fruit stalls and cigarette peddlers no longer lined the streets. The

absence of both street vendors and queues made him wonder if “perhaps less misery is evident now”<sup>29</sup> than when he visited three years before.

Wales’ second report took a mildly negative tone. He saw obvious food, clothing, hotel and fuel shortages, although anything could be acquired with *blat* (“pull,” or connections). The fuel shortage concerned him most: it was winter, but the government forbade all hotels from heating rooms over 53 degrees Fahrenheit. He did concede that the new restaurant in his hotel was nice – with decent food, an orchestra and dancing at night. Food prices, though, had tripled since his visit in 1928, and one currently paid more for vodka in Moscow than at a fine restaurant in Paris.<sup>30</sup>

His third and fourth articles were short and topical. In the third, Wales described a new feature of the Moscow landscape: skyscrapers. Concrete, glass and steel provided a modern look. However, the arrival of winter had stalled construction on both skyscrapers and housing for the time being.<sup>31</sup> His fourth report covered women’s fashion and cosmetics. He detailed how Soviet women continued to dress in the fashion of the 1920s – with short skirts; short overcoats; and short, bobbed hair – because shorter things

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<sup>29</sup> 1931 Henry Wales. Copyright, “Changes in Moscow Are Few in 3 Years: But Returning Newspaper Man Finds Absence of Queues, Vendors and Waifs. Private Shops Also Gone No Traces of Rumored Revolts Are to Be Seen--Americans Are Treated Cordially. Finds Few Changes in Moscow. No More Cigarette Sellers. Porter Is Democratic. Poorly Clad at 12 Below Zero.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 8, 1931), accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99392986/abstract/140ABC849C25658BE35/21?accountid=7014>.

<sup>30</sup> Henry Wales Special to The Chicago Tribune, “Visitor in Moscow Finds Life Rigorous: ‘Pull’ Required to Get a Room in Hotel Whose Firemen Vie for Fuel-Saving Prizes. Food Is Scarce and High Newspaper Man Pays \$1.75 for Ham and Eggs--Wine Prices Put Our Bootleggers to Shame. Only Three Hotels for Visitors. ‘Pull’ Got \$15-a-Day Room. Modest Meal with Tip \$5.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 10, 1931), accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99384512/abstract/140ABC849C25658BE35/33?accountid=7014>.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Wales Special to The Chicago Tribune, “13-Story Building Erected in Moscow. Highest Structure in Soviet Capital Will Be Occupied By OGPU, Secret Police. Others Are Being Erected. But Marshy Land Cuts Height of New Government Offices to 11 Floors Instead of 15.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 14, 1931).

required less material and, therefore, less money. Most women found it impossible to find cosmetic items, as they were luxuries and almost never imported. The hairdressing industry, though, proved one of the few private industries which continued to flourish post-NEP.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, having returned home, Henry Wales released a highly negative article summarizing his trip. He assured the reader that during the four months of his 12,000 mile-wide journey, he traveled completely alone “in order to silence any criticism that [he] was led blindly and shown only sights on display, favorable to the existing regime, and steered away from such spectacles which the authorities might prefer to keep hidden.”<sup>33</sup> (He qualified this later, however, as he did take *American* translators with him on a few side trips.) Having traveled without a guide, he discovered things normally hidden by the regime, including a kulak camp “carefully concealed in Kuzni Chika Church.”<sup>34</sup> He portrayed both the factories and the collective farms as collective failures. Hungry, fatalist peasants refused to work and dead livestock dotted the countryside. He then dedicated a large portion of the article to a description of the hungry and homeless he found in the South:

Through the southern districts I saw the horde of tramps, bums and child waifs, homeless men and boys, thousands of them only 11 and 12 years old, and a few girls on their annual migration from the warmth of the south to the larger communities in the north, now that the rigors of Winter have passed. Barefooted,

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<sup>32</sup> Henry Wales Special to The Chicago Tribune, “Economy Dictates Fashions in Russia: Short Skirts, Worn Despite the Cold, Save Millions of Yards of Goods. Cosmetics Also Short but Hair Dressing Is Largest Private Business in Soviet Union --Cloche Hats in Style. Wear Felt Snow Boots. All Wear Short Overcoats,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 15, 1931), sec. Second News Section, accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99379147/abstract/140ABC849C25658BE35/44?accountid=7014>.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Wales. Copyright, “Tells of News Trip Over All of Russia.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



ragged, black and filthy, with long, matted hair and beards, covered with vermin, polluting the atmosphere with the stench of their unwashed bodies, drawn, haggard, gaunt and famishing, these monsters walked the streets and towns, fighting with the dogs in the street and the ominous, clumsy crows for a morsel of carrion thrown away.<sup>35</sup>

All Soviet attempts at progress had failed, it seemed. Only the OGPU, ironically, received any level of praise for being helpful and well-mannered when needed.

Why was Wales' last report strikingly more negative than the others? It is probable that Wales initially described the Soviet Union in mildly negative terms because he knew his articles (like all news correspondents') had to pass the Soviet censors. Once home, he could write as he pleased. With that in mind, Wales still seems to have sensationalized his report to some degree. That he – a news correspondent naturally competing for the best story – did not go into *any* detail about the kulak camp that he reportedly discovered seems unbelievable at a time when high officials in the United States were accusing the Soviet Union of forced labor. Such a first-hand description would have been “reporter gold.” Instead, he provided a long, caricaturized description of a crowd of homeless “monsters.”<sup>36</sup> Regardless of the level of embellishment Wales did or did not employ in his final article, he left Americans with a very negative conclusion on Soviet progress.

Two articles covered the visit of General William M. Haskell, the former chief of the ARA from 1921-1923. He worked in the Soviet Union during the Famine of 1921, when Lenin was still the head of the Party. He then returned in 1926, as members of the Politburo struggled for power, NEP flourished, and VOKS began to expand its work at

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

home and abroad. On this trip, with his previous observations in mind, Haskell aimed to evaluate the progress of the Five-Year Plan.

In both of his articles, Haskell presented a mixed view of Soviet progress. His positive observations related primarily to the happiness and advancement of the Russian people themselves: “There is no gainsaying the fact that the life of the worker today is better than it was before the revolution. In the old days a worker had nothing cultural in his barren life, and relied on vodka to drown his misery. Today vodka is by no means non-existent, but there are other things to attract him.”<sup>37</sup> The workers seemed genuinely enthusiastic about their role in the construction of the Soviet state, while the majority of peasants went along willingly out of indifference. This enthusiasm morphed the “haphazard effort” Haskell had observed in the 1920s into a “purposeful energy”<sup>38</sup> aimed at the success of the Five-Year Plan, which, in his opinion, was a “practical reality.”<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, Haskell observed many industrial shortcomings. He could not ignore the exorbitant levels of waste and inefficiency in the factories, especially the newer plants. A particular task took two to three times the number of workers – and still

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<sup>37</sup> William N. Haskell Photo by Major General William N. Haskell, “The Worker Under the Goad of the Five-Year Plan: The Life, Attitude and Efficiency of the Russian Laborer as Observed by General Haskell on a Visit to the Factories in Which the Nation, by New Methods, Seeks to Effect Its Industrial Transformation Russian-American Contrasts. a Soviet Factory Hand. Many Men on One Job. Development of Executives. Visit to an Office. the Handling of Machines. Conditions in Factories. a Round of Inspection. Can Efficiency Be Attained? Obstacles to Success. Life of the Worker. Attitude Is Favorable. Dining Halls and Clubs.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 5, 1931), sec. Special Features, accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99312104/abstract/140B51223AD5DFD9160/13?accountid=7014>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> William N. Haskell Press Cliche, “Russia’s Five-Year Plan: Its World Meaning: General Haskell, Viewing the Nation Working at Forced Draught, Believes Her Exports Will Decline When Machinery Imports Have Ended and Her New Industries Devote Themselves to Home Needs What Prompted the Plan the Economic Battle Line. The Autostroy Project. World’s Greatest Power Plant. Activity at Kharkov. the Chances of Success. Labor and Materials. Attitude of the People. the Time of Completion. Effects on the World. Blow to American Trade. Future Adjustments.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 28, 1931), sec. Special Features.

two to three times the time – to complete as in the United States. Safety standards were inadequate; workers lacked a proper diet; too many parts broke; and the hiring of foreign skilled labor cost the Soviet Union too much money. Furthermore, workers and peasants had little incentive to work harder when high prices gave them little purchasing power.

Nevertheless, Haskell believed that the positives outweighed the negatives. He argued that such high levels of waste and inefficiency should be expected in a country of 150,000,000 people, the majority of whom had no prior education. Sure, the Russian worker lacked the “sense of independence, freedom and dignity inherent in the American laborer,”<sup>40</sup> but he was no longer a slave. He now had hope in a brighter future in which he played an integral part.

Haskell also addressed American accusations of Soviet military and economic aggression. He believed the Soviets *were conducting* an aggressive war, but this was not against the West. Instead, the Soviet Union was engaged in a “five-year battle against her own backwardness.”<sup>41</sup> Soviet officials desired nothing more than the avoidance of actual warfare and the development of strong trade relations with the West.

In July 1931, Gozidat (the Soviet State Publishing House) and the Society of Soviet Writers invited Irish playwright George Barnard Shaw to visit the USSR. When explaining later his eagerness to make the trip, he declared that he accepted the invitation “not to learn something I did not know but to reply to those who say I have not seen what I told them: ‘Yes I have, and I know they will win.’”<sup>42</sup> Shaw clearly entered the Soviet

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<sup>40</sup> Haskell, “The Worker Under The Goad Of The Five-Year Plan.”

<sup>41</sup> Cliche, “Russia’s Five-Year Plan.”

<sup>42</sup> Times, “Shaw, in Russia on 75th Birthday, Lauds Reds; Says British, Too, Will Abolish the Nobility.”

Union with no intention of changing his preconceived views, regardless of what he observed. Fortunately, he traveled with a small British posse, including Lady Astor, who provided a contrasting viewpoint throughout the trip.

What aspects of Soviet society troubled Lady Astor, and what gave her hope? She regretted the sacrilegious, materialistic character of society. She felt annoyed when guides suggested what she ought to think or told her what they thought she wanted to hear. She disliked the absence of free speech and oppositional parties, to which Shaw replied that “at least they are free from the illusion of democracy.”<sup>43</sup> While the level of attention paid to education, health, and welfare gave her hope, she could not ignore the “plight of the ‘former people’”<sup>44</sup> whom the regime no longer tolerated.

Shaw, on the other hand, enjoyed all aspects of their ten-day trip: the mausoleum and Kremlin visit, the Moscow Park of Rest and Culture, the opera at the Bolshoi, and the Moscow Derby. From the very start, he refused to provide reporters with specific opinions or judgments on what he saw so that he might take in as much as possible. Even after returning to England, he refused to offer specifics, for he “had seen so much.”<sup>45</sup> He needed time to gather his thoughts and, later, write them down for the world.

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<sup>43</sup> Walter Duranty Special Cable to The New York Times, “Shaw in Moscow Warmly Greeted: Welcomed by Authors and Band at Station--Won’t Comment on Soviet for a Week. Elevator He Is in Jams He Says He Was a Marxist ‘before Lenin Was Born’--Lady Astor Hails Capitalism, Shocking Hosts. Shaw Greeted Waitresses. Lustily Cheered by Crowds.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 22, 1931).

<sup>44</sup> Times, “Shaw, in Russia on 75th Birthday, Lauds Reds; Says British, Too, Will Abolish the Nobility,” 7.

<sup>45</sup> Special Cable to The New York Times, “Shaw Urges World to Imitate Soviet: British Author on Return to England Advises Young Men to Go to Russia. to Write His Impressions Welcoming Him to Russia, Litvinoff Said Moscow Adopted Ideas Wherever They Originated. Litvinoff’s Welcome to Shaw.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 3, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99171265/abstract/140B7E97EB662B9F8EF/16?accountid=7014>.

He did, however, find time to make a special radio broadcast to America (“you dear old boobs”<sup>46</sup>) on October 11, in which he gave his unchanged opinions of the Soviet Union in comparison to the West. America was wrong; the Soviet Union was right. America had failed due to “lazy abandonment of public interests to private selfishness and vulgar ambition;” the Soviet Union had succeeded in providing an “atmosphere of such hope and security for the poorest as has never before been seen in a civilized country.”<sup>47</sup> Americans, though, were familiar with these common lines of Soviet sympathizers. Shaw, so far, had offered nothing new.

He was just warming up. On more than one occasion, Shaw claimed that Lenin had followed *his* example in reading Marx and congratulated the Soviets on implementing *his* proposals. He praised their policy of “painless” execution of all persons who fail to justify their continued existence by contributing to the collective good. He warned rich Americans desirous to profit personally off the Soviet market and resources to stay home:

If you take that line in Russia you will soon get rich, but when this fact comes on to the notice of the income tax authorities they will ask the Ogpu...to inquire into your wealth and methods... You will be allowed to vindicate your American business principles and your belief in the individualism and self-help to the full 100 per cent. You will not be bullied, nor argued with, nor inconvenienced in any way. All that will happen to you is that when you have made yourself quite clear, you will suddenly find yourself in the next world, if there be a next world. If not, you will simply have ceased to exist, and your relatives will be politely informed

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<sup>46</sup> “Shaw Twits America on Reds’ ‘Prosperity’: In London Broadcast He Says We Are ‘Boobs,’ Blind to Benefits of Communism. He Taunts the President Says Hoover Fed Millions in War, but Cannot Feed His Own People in Peace Time. Holds Russia Leads All ‘Stalin’s Ship of State Is Only Big One Not Tapping Out S O S on Its Wireless,’ He Declares. Text of Shaw’s Address. Says Russia Would Break Gangs. Recalls His 1914 Views. Predicts Honors for Lenin Here. Warns Visitors to Russia. Tells What Happens to the Rich. Russia Not a ‘Paradise’,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, October 12, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99256531/abstract/140B87AED2F68A26EED/43?accountid=7014>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

that they need have no anxiety about you as you are not coming home any more...All it means is that the Russian putty has been shaped to believe that idiots are better dead.<sup>48</sup>

Shaw's aim seemed less to win converts to the Soviet cause than to shock and disturb.

An American tourist wrote an article for the *New York Times* in direct response to Shaw's broadcast claims, commenting that he traveled for eighteen days "without a passport on the pretense of being a common seaman,"<sup>49</sup> while Shaw spent only ten days in the country *as a guest*. He saw the real Russia – the police terror, the cheapness of human life, and the false propaganda – and concluded that the unemployed in the U.S. lived better lives than even the highest officials in Russia.<sup>50</sup> Shaw admitted that the Soviets had not yet achieved paradise, but he had no doubts that they had chosen the correct path.

Ella Winter traveled to the Soviet Union in order to provide the American reader with first-hand, detailed, and rather objective views of specific areas of Soviet life. I say rather objective because she presented only what she saw and heard, not her direct opinion of those things; however, all four articles are undeniably positive.

In her first article, Winter described a Soviet rehabilitation colony in which criminals were not punished, but rather "taught trades and a new slant on life."<sup>51</sup> The

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Tourist Says Shaw Is Wrong on Soviet: New Yorker Who Roamed Long Among Masses Found Them in a Deplorable State. Recalls Police Tyranny G.h. McCulley Asserts Unemployed Here Are Better Off Than the Privileged Classes of Russia. Found Propaganda Revolting.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, October 14, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99278567/abstract/140B87AED2F68A26EED/47?accountid=7014>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

OGPU founded this colony some two hours outside of Moscow in 1924. By 1931, it contained one thousand men and women in their late teens and twenties learning to manufacture sporting goods, of all things. The director explained how in the first year, the individual was confined to the property, receiving a low wage to cover basic necessities along with free medical care and education. By the second year, all restrictions were dropped. Prisoners could marry within or outside of the colony; take two-week paid vacations; and utilize the clubs, theatre, cinema, crèches, and schools at their disposal. She commented on the health and general happiness of the prisoners, unwatched by guards and free of prison cells and fences. According to the director, conditions were so good that “thieves have come here and given themselves up and others have taken up crime in order to be brought here.”<sup>52</sup> Winter neither praised, questioned, nor criticized. She only reported.

In her second article, Winter interviewed American engineers employed in Russia. She found that they fell into three categories: the sympathetic, the out-of-work, and the adventurous. Many described the Soviet Union as a new frontier, much like the unsettled American West: “At home the pioneering is all done; it’s a matter of routine now; but here they are still in our era of ’49!”<sup>53</sup> These engineers had gained a good

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<sup>51</sup> Ella Winter, “Reforming the Russian Youth: In a ‘Rehabilitation Colony’ Near Moscow, Inmates Do Not Find Life so Hard,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 15, 1931), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99136457/abstract/140ABA3DCD7436DEA6C/50?accountid=7014>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ella Winter, “Our Engineers Find Romance in Russia: Hard Work Is Their Lot, but in a New Industrial Land They Enjoy the American Tradition of Pioneering Our Busy Engineers in Russia Hard Work Is Their Lot, but They Enjoy the Old American Tradition of Pioneering Museum of Viking Life,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 10, 1931), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99351797/abstract/140B30F01A960221991/16?accountid=7014>.

reputation with the Russian workers, and vice versa. Two things, though, annoyed the American: that “the simplest question on almost any matter seems to necessitate full discussion,”<sup>54</sup> and the maltreatment of machinery. Many understood, however, that the Russian peasant could not simply evolve into a twentieth century worker over night. Winter’s third article addressed the Soviet government’s campaign to accelerate this evolution by bringing military methods, terms, and ideas into the factory, particularly through the use of “shock brigades.”<sup>55</sup>

Winter’s final article focused on children and the “wandering exhibition.” Instead of being dragged by adults to museums with hundreds of names, dates, and paintings in glass cases, Soviet children could participate in the hands-on development, arrangement, and explanation of the exhibits in these traveling museums. Of course, the exhibits featured labor-related subjects and Marxist undertones:

The first exhibit in this magic museum is called ‘Times and Books’...there in miniature is a perfect drawing room of 1776; a little boy in a beautiful Mozart costume sitting at a table with his tutor, a book open before him, while in the doorway stands the varlet, also a small boy in cook’s cap and apron, watching his luckier superior being bored by his lesson. Above the window in a little stand are the books that were read in that generation...obviously very expensive; something that only a few aristocrats could afford...For the fourth and last scene that now comes to view represents a large, light and airy children’s reading room, the shelves stacked with suitable books; the little readers, children of the workers and peasants now at last freed, sitting in comfortable chairs reading the best literature the world has to offer...the well-illustrated, cheap, paper-covered books that are within every child’s reach and that cover all subjects that can possibly interest any child.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ella Winter, “Soviet ‘Shock Troops’ Speed up Industry: A Soviet ‘Shock Brigade’ Called to Load Seed,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 2, 1931), sec. Special Features, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99164301/abstract/140B7E97EB662B9F8EF/14?accountid=7014>.

<sup>56</sup> Ella Winter, “A Museum Visits Children in Russia: Wandering Exhibit, Keyed to the Young Minds, Goes to School, Factory and Playgrounds. Interests Get Full Play Freedom to Satisfy Curiosity Is



While Winter does not come across as an ardent supporter of the Soviet cause, her sympathy for the socialist experiment is evident in this article, as well as the other three. It would be interesting to know if she thought that the rehabilitation colony she visited was a showcase (or at least unrepresentative of the Soviet system as a whole). What matters, though, is not what she believed but what the American reader believed after reading these engaging, positive articles on life in the Soviet Union.

What other tourism-related articles appeared in 1931? Intourist announced new Arctic tours and forty-day trips through Turkestan.<sup>57</sup> Study-abroad programs continued to grow, with 25-30,000 students expected to travel to Europe over the summer. (The author wondered how many of those students were going to see the Soviet experiment firsthand.)<sup>58</sup> Both a workers' delegation as well as a group of twenty journalism students from University of Missouri planned to visit the USSR that year. The workers' delegation later declared that the Soviets were making "splendid headway"<sup>59</sup> and planned to make a national tour of the United States.

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Held a Valuable Educational Asset of the Exhibit. a Mechanical Exhibit. Views of Industry.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 29, 1931), sec. Education.

<sup>57</sup> “Soviet Icebreaker Starts Arctic Tour: Three Americans, Including Two New York Women, Among the Passengers. Nobile to Seek the Italia Graf Zeppelin Is Expected to Meet Ship Near Franz-Josef Land and Bring Mail. Expects to Meet Graf Zeppelin. Due to Return Aug. 25.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 20, 1931), accessed September 24, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99170211/abstract/140B643B7CCC3B1E0B/77?accountid=7014>; “Offers Tour in Turkestan: Soviet Bureau Will Conduct ‘Rail Caravan’ from Leningrad.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 12, 1931), sec. Sports.

<sup>58</sup> Geneva Photo Courtesy The Open Road Eunice Fuller Barnard Photo Courtesy The Open Road. Photo From Botssonas, “Pursuing Knowledge the World Over: By Ship, Train and Bus Our Collegians Tour Abroad in the Proper Study of Mankind Pursuing Knowledge All the World Over by Steamship and Train and Motor Bus Our Collegians Go Touring Afield in the Study of Mankind That Is Presented by Man,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 26, 1931), sec. The New York Times Magazine.

Two visitors provided single accounts of their journeys, both coming away with mixed, but still positive views. The first visitor's identity remains unclear. He claimed that it is "worth making a trip to Russia just for the thrill of going back out to Europe again"<sup>60</sup> because of shortage and transportation issues. That said, he did not feel unsafe or hungry during his stay there. He ended by emphasizing that the USSR was neither a military nor an economic threat, as the Five-Year Plan was only the first of many steps towards full modernization.

Pastor John Haynes Holmes of Community Church of New York was the other visitor. He had made a previous trip in the famine year of 1922, giving him a better perspective on the progress the Soviets had made. In his opinion, the Russian people appeared much happier, comfortable and enthusiastic than a decade before. Even the older peasant generation who demonstrated "the bitterest hostility to collectivism"<sup>61</sup> preferred the Soviet Government to that of the czars. Transportation had improved somewhat as well. However, living conditions remained appalling, kulaks faced unwarranted oppression, and shortages removed any incentive to make or save money as there was nothing to buy. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union was moving forward; the negatives could be overcome. Holmes urged Americans to understand that the Soviets do not want war and that "on completion of the Five-Year Plan Russia will have to start

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<sup>59</sup> "Workers, Back, Report Soviet Output at Peak: Plants Turning Out Maximum, Says Leader of Delegation That Toured Russia," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 24, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99205069/abstract/140B8A712F67D57881/141?accountid=7014>.

<sup>60</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, "Trip Out of Russia Brings Contrasts: European Cities Offer Striking Scenes of Plenty After Stay in Soviet Union. The Trains Run on Time While Those in Russia Break down and Are Old--Both Sides Hold Wild Fears of Each Other. Transportation Contrasts. Like Two Boys at War," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 22, 1931), sec. Editorial.

<sup>61</sup> Times, "Holmes Sees Soviet Injured By Success."

further five-year plans for the next fifty years in order to finish the stupendous task of modernizing and collectivizing the State.”<sup>62</sup>

The number and character of tourism-related articles changed dramatically from those written in the three preceding years. Multi-segment descriptions of one visitor’s journey allowed for greater description of more areas of Soviet life. Winter’s articles, especially, allowed the American reader to see that the Soviets were, in fact, not so different from Americans.

*Recognition.* Twenty-five articles addressed U.S recognition of the Soviet Union in 1931. Out of these twenty-five, eight were positive, five were negative, and two were mixed. Adding the split articles equally to each side, the ratio of positive to negative arguments for U.S. recognition was 10-7 for 1931. One of the remaining ten articles reported Soviet views toward recognition, while the other seven objectively updated the public on recognition’s status.

In 1931, the reasons for and against recognition increased in complexity and really began to reflect the domestic and international context of the new decade. Economic and military security became the supreme focus of both groups, powerful enough to knock the Third International from top spot in the opponents’ arguments. For supporters, the importance of trade shot up like never before, in two ways: half of those who addressed trade stressed how recognition would lead to its increased trade,<sup>63</sup> while

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting”; “Wheeler Sees Hope In A Soviet Market”; Macdonald, “An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia”; Times, “Borah Ridicules Our Soviet Policy”; Special Cable to The New York Times, “Calls Our Policy On Russia Foolish: Representative Rainey, in Cairo After Trip Through Soviet Union, Urges Recognition. Holds Regime A Success Illinois Democrat Denies Our Trade Is Menaced--Says We Force Russia to Export Goods. America Sets Standard.

the other half argued for trade by discrediting the “Red trade menace” accusations.<sup>64</sup> World peace<sup>65</sup> remained high as well, followed by stability,<sup>66</sup> the Third International as a non-threat,<sup>67</sup> good faith,<sup>68</sup> the need for an embassy to protect American lives and property,<sup>69</sup> and a suggestion that the U.S. could include a non-interference clause regarding Soviet involvement in American internal affairs.<sup>70</sup> Three supporters also pointed to the hypocrisy of refusing to recognize the Soviet Government for human

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Says Our Money Is Used.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 6, 1931), accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99299441/abstract/140B8396A756EF4C9FC/13?accountid=7014>.

<sup>64</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting”; “Wheeler Sees Hope in A Soviet Market”; Macdonald, “An Advocate Of The Case For Recognition Of Russia”; Times, “Borah Ridicules Our Soviet Policy”; Times, “Holmes Sees Soviet Injured By Success.”

<sup>65</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting”; MacDonald, “An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia”; Times, “Holmes Sees Soviet Injured By Success”; Louis Stark Special to The New York Times, “French Stand Held Arms Parley Peril: McDonald at Williamstown Predicts Demands on Germany Will Cause Postponement. Simonds Sees ‘War’ On Paris, Substituting Money for Men, Has Again Conquered the Reich, He Declares. Thomas For Ending Debts He Urges Complete Disarmament and Soviet Recognition as Peace Essentials. Progress Called ‘Pitifully Small.’ Thousands Under War Conditions. Money Substituted for Men. Foreshadows New Era in War. Simonds Says We Are in the ‘War.’ German Speaker Optimistic.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 1, 1931), sec. Religious.

<sup>66</sup> “Pershing Honored By Economic Club: General Interrupts Work to Attend Discussion Here of Russian Problem. Woll Warns Of Red Peril Fish Predicts a Powerful Demand in Congress for Action to End Dumping of Goods. Fish Denounces Dumping. Woll Scores Red Dictatorship.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 28, 1931), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99486563/abstract/141C0AA6F6B28115E/4?accountid=7014>; “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting.”

<sup>67</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting”; Times, “Borah Ridicules Our Soviet Policy.”

<sup>68</sup> MacDonald, “An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia”; Times, “Calls Our Policy On Russia Foolish.”

<sup>69</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting.”

<sup>70</sup> MacDonald, “An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia.”

rights' abuses after recognizing despots throughout American history, including the czars.<sup>71</sup>

For opponents, trade had become the focus as well. The "Red Trade Menace"<sup>72</sup> was the biggest obstacle to recognition, followed closely by the Third International<sup>73</sup> and less closely by a sacrificing of American principles,<sup>74</sup> The Soviet government continued to be "unfit,"<sup>75</sup> "amoral,"<sup>76</sup> and was accused of bad faith<sup>77</sup> and denying its citizens

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<sup>71</sup> "Pershing Honored By Economic Club"; "Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting"; MacDonald, "An Advocate of the Case for Recognition of Russia."

<sup>72</sup> "Fish Will Demand Deportation Of Reds As Menace To Nation"; "Pershing Honored By Economic Club"; "Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting"; "Asks Legion To Fight Soviet Five-Year Plan"; "100 Named By Woll For Fight On Reds: Committee of Civic Federation to Work With Other Nations in Anti-Soviet Movement. World Boycott Proposed Prominent Men and Women Aid Effort to End Propaganda for Government's Overthrow. 5,000 Oppose Recognition Root Heads Group Backing Drive on Subversive Program and Asking Compensation for Seizures. Would Boycott Soviet Goods. Calls for World Action. Members of the Committee.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 6, 1931), sec. Business & Finance, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99323726/abstract/141C0AA6F6B28115E/30?accountid=7014>.

<sup>73</sup> t. Thomas Kenyon David Greenwald Francis Ralston Welsh Delie Lyman Porter Arthur J. Klein Geo S. Robinson, "Letters to the Editor: Not Bound Together. No Reason Seen for Not Separating Debts and Reparations. No Place For Democracy. Mr. Woll's Proposal for Industry Is Not Approved. Flaws In An Argument. Recognition of Russia Has No Place in Pacifist Views. Justice Ellsworth's Portrait. Information for Motorists. Replacing Potter's Field.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 20, 1931); "Fish Will Demand Deportation Of Reds As Menace To Nation"; "Pershing Honored By Economic Club"; "100 Named By Woll For Fight On Reds."

<sup>74</sup> Robinson, "Letters To The Editor"; "Fish Will Demand Deportation Of Reds As Menace To Nation."

<sup>75</sup> "100 Named By Woll For Fight On Reds."

<sup>76</sup> "Menace Of Russia.: Conflict of Economic Systems Noted by M. Theunis. By Georges Theunis, Former Premier of Belgium, and Retiring President of the International Chamber of Commerce. Favors Freer Trade. Debts and Politics. Principle of Prosperity. Evils of Bolshevism. Conflicting Systems. Hoped for Discussion.," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 10, 1931), sec. Education, accessed September 22, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99349876/abstract/140AD77E7D15363E1A6/39?accountid=7014>.

<sup>77</sup> "100 Named By Woll For Fight On Reds."

personal liberties.<sup>78</sup> One person again argued that recognition would not increase American trade; it was a matter of long-term credits.<sup>79</sup>

*Summary.* Treating Shaw and Lady Astor as separate viewpoints on the same trip, the seven visitors' final judgments ranged like so: one hyper-positive (Shaw), four positive-mixed (Haskell, Holmes, Winter and unnamed visitor), one negative-mixed (Lady Astor), and one hyper-negative (Wales). Within the positive-mixed category – the most shared view – three visitors directly addressed the “Red trade menace” accusation and agreed that the Soviet Union posed neither a military nor an economic threat to the United States. The First Five-Year Plan, they explained, was only the first *of many steps* towards modernization. Rather than directly refuting the Red specter argument, Winter indirectly undermined it in her description of both the rehabilitation colony and Soviet workers, contradicting accusations of forced labor and industrial superiority.

While Wales had nothing positive to say in his final assessment, he also did not provide evidence supporting the rise of a Communist menace. In fact, he declared the entire economy – both industrialization and collectivization – to be a total failure. Lady Astor only commented on social and political issues, leaving opponents with Shaw. Out of all seven visitors, oppositionists could only possibly use Shaw's final assessment as support for their case. However, it is doubtful that anyone would use his observations as a reference after he addressed Americans as “dear old boobs” and condoned the use of firing squad on any person not contributing enough to society.

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<sup>78</sup> “Soviet Recognition Is Urged By Cutting.”

<sup>79</sup> “Pershing Honored By Economic Club.”

The development of Soviet tourism was not the sole influence which accomplished U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, but it was a powerful, contributing influence. Those visitors who had witnessed first-hand the scale and scope of Soviet progress were aware of the pro- and anti-recognition arguments. Most of them made a point to provide evidence supporting one side or the other. They gave American readers reason to believe the Soviets were not dumping, did not practice forced labor (at least on a grand scale), had many years of modernization ahead of them, and represented an unlimited market to whoever grabbed it first.

*1932*

*Tourism.* Twenty-four tourism-related articles were published in 1932. Out of these twenty-four, eleven covered the travels of teachers, doctors, farmers, and other professionals. Within these articles, one notices a clear shift of focus from the previous year. Instead of industrialization and the Five-Year Plan, eight out of eleven of these articles focused on health, education, and the arts, particularly in relation to children.

Two articles covered Professor Julian Huxley's participation in a special medical tour organized by VOKS in the summer of 1931. Like Professor Montague in 1928, Huxley saw the Soviet Union as a gigantic scientific experiment, where theories could be practically tested on a previously unimaginable scale due to its thoroughly planned system. As he toured the country, he admired the healthy, youthful Russians playing tennis, volleyball and swimming:

But it was the people bathing who caught my attention. Almost all were deeply bronzed with the sun, and the great majority were of very fine physique. Little sign of surplus fat but no sign whatever of undernourishment. Many of the girls

wore just trunks and a brassiere. None of our willowy, boyish figures – solid, robust, healthy, they swam and sunbathed and enjoyed themselves.<sup>80</sup>

While he recognized that a number of hurdles persisted in the medical field – especially the horrific lack of hygiene among the people – he believed that the Soviet Union could not be judged for where it currently was, but instead where it was going: “It is ‘today a transition between a medieval past and a communist future, a compromise between chaos and a plan, a mixture of expedience and principle.’”<sup>81</sup>

Jessica Smith’s focus was not on health, but on children’s education. She described in great detail the Soviet pre-school and kindergarten systems, whose programs consisted of four broad points: (1) “the actual participation of children in building their own lives,” (2) “emphasis on socially useful labor,” (3) the establishment of the closest possible connections with contemporary life, and (4) the study of nature and the development of a materialistic outlook of the world.”<sup>82</sup> Traditional subjects like math, science and literature were neither ignored nor taught as separate subjects, but were instead incorporated into learning activities (i.e., gardening, raising rabbits or chickens,

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<sup>80</sup> Professor Julian Huxley, “Russia, the Planned State, as Viewed by a Scientist: After Visiting the Country, Julian Huxley Says Its Governmental Task Must Be Regarded as a Great Experiment Making Steady Progress Toward Its Objectives and Bound to Influence the World,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 3, 1932), sec. Special Features Automobiles Aviation Radio Science Resorts Travel Steamships Society Art, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99781702/abstract/140BD6BC86471FC1303/17?accountid=7014>.

<sup>81</sup> R. L. Duffus, “As a Scientist Sees Soviet Russia: Julian Huxley Records His Impressions of a State Where Science Is Supreme a Scientist Among the Soviets. by Julian Huxley. 142 Pp. New York: Harper & Brothers. \$1.50.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 21, 1932), sec. The New York Times Book Review, accessed September 27, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99682000/abstract/140C259181016C79855/56?accountid=7014>.

<sup>82</sup> Jessica Smith, “The Child Learns at Play in Russia: Pre-School Years Are Spent at Supervised Games and Tasks in State Institutions. a Day in a Kindergarten Youngsters Learn About Nature in Own Gardens and the Incidents of Daily Life Serve as Lessons.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 3, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Education Watch Tower Letter To Editor, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99761948/abstract/140BC9B34033BC7D9B6/8?accountid=7014>.



visiting factories, etc.) She recognized that the school she visited was one of the better representations in Soviet society, but was impressed nonetheless. The children seemed enthusiastic and active in their learning.

Choosing the longest itinerary then offered by Intourist, Percival P. Baxter, former governor of Maine, journeyed 7000 miles over thirty-four days across the Soviet Union. The journey itself impressed him as he traveled comfortably from the exotic, oriental Far East to the subtropical cities around the Black Sea and finally to the famous capital cities in the West. The people he met lacked neither energy nor enthusiasm, nor did he detect any signs of distress. He especially appreciated the work being done in the areas of health and education: “The work being done for women and children is no less impressive than the hygienic and educational campaigns for adults as well as youngsters.”<sup>83</sup> After a month of travel, he had nothing negative to say.

Thomas Campbell, a mass production farmer hired in 1928 as an agricultural specialist, returned as a tourist in 1932. He emphasized the unlimited nature of the Soviet market, and how trade between both countries would undoubtedly help to cure the ills of American overproduction. He believed that the Soviet Union’s extreme qualities would mellow out over time, especially as they were no longer trying to convert the world to communism. Finally, he urged the West to see that the Soviets – who do not want war – would only become a menace if “violently opposed by the rest of the world, and improperly directed by selfish and ambitious leadership.”<sup>84</sup> If backed into a corner, he

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<sup>83</sup> Wireless to The New York Times, “Ex-Gov. Baxter Impressed by Soviet Progress; Sees Rebirth Everywhere on 7,000-Mile Trip,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 8, 1932), accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99732624/abstract/140BFB771A37372D9DA/18?accountid=7014>.

predicted with sad accuracy that the Soviet Union might form a coalition with outcast Germany and move to dominate Europe.

Elmer Rice, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, visited the Soviet Union for two months to study its three categories of theatre: post-revolutionary, pre-revolutionary and foreign. Besides personally hating the works of Meyerhold, he was surprised and pleased by the huge variety and quality that characterized Russian theatre, even within the bounds of censorship. Coming from “an America of dark theatres, unemployed actors, despairing authors, [and] meager and apathetic audiences,”<sup>85</sup> the enthusiasm and energy of the Russian artist and observer made a deep impression. Here, he thought, was another example of how the Soviets were raising the cultural level of the Russian people from their former slavery to ignorance.<sup>86</sup>

Sir Arthur Newsholme, former chief of the British Public Health Service, and John A. Kingsbury of the Milbank Memorial Fund of New York toured the Soviet Union for six weeks in order to observe “a public and medical supervision campaign on a

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<sup>84</sup> “Urges Us to Fight for Russian Trade: T.D. Campbell of Montana Warns Europe Is Usurping Biggest Market of United States. Tells of Meeting Stalin Soviets No Longer Seek to Impose Communism on Other Nations, Agriculturist Writes,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 13, 1932), sec. Social News Books, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99655334/abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/3?accountid=7014>.

<sup>85</sup> Elmer Rice, “A Playwright Visits Russia: Far From Times Square, the Author of ‘Street Scene’ Finds That The Soviet Stage Is Healthy, Diversified and Flourishing and That Its Production Methods Are Versatile,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, August 28, 1932), sec. Drama Screen Music Hotels And Restaurants Radio Fashions Shoppers Columns The Dance, accessed September 27, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100533828/abstract/140C299BA514163B157/16?accountid=7014>.

<sup>86</sup> Elmer Rice, “As a Playwright Sees Russia: This Is the Second of Two Articles by Mr. Rice. In the First, Which Was Printed Last Sunday, He Told of the State of the Theatre in Russia and Described Some of the Operatic, Foreign and Pre-Revolutionary productions. As A Pulitzer Prize Playwright Sees Russia,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 4, 1932), sec. Drama Screen Music Hotels And Restaurants Music Fashions Art Shoppers Columns The Dance, accessed November 13, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100495771/abstract/141B67593266B7439F4/2?accountid=7014>.

gigantic scale, the scope and depth of which far exceed anything the world has previously known.”<sup>87</sup> They found that great progress had been made, especially in relation to worker, mother and child care. Of particular interest were the crèches which allowed women to work during the day without their children falling into neglect. Hygiene campaigns had greatly lowered disease and continued to do so.

Mr. Williams-Ellis, an English architect, travelled to the USSR to study its innovations in architecture. Soviet planning greatly impressed him – how towns were designed with the interests of particular people and particular trades in mind, never without the accompanying schools, crèches, and clubs. He was less impressed, however, by Soviet architecture, with its “poor workmanship and deplorable lack of finish.”<sup>88</sup> Even so, he willingly conceded that the grey cement blocks provided some refreshment next to the gaudy attempts of Czarist architecture and would develop over time into something more pleasant to the eyes.

Professor Harry Ward of the Union Theological Seminary and chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union gave a speech to two hundred people at a welcome-home luncheon after his visit to the USSR. Rather than a dictator, Stalin was, in fact, a man of the people: “He is close to the common people...and he senses what, in between the too

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<sup>87</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Soviet Wins Praise for Health Service: Sir Arthur Newsholme and John A. Kingsbury of New York Tell of Survey. Find Wide Immunization Observers, at First Puzzled by New Terminology, Discover Aim Is to Unify Problems.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 11, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Foreign Correspondence Watch Tower Letters To Editor, accessed September 27, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100494942/abstract/140C6BCA6E2743E561A/26?accountid=7014>.

<sup>88</sup> Clough Williams-Ellis, “Russia Fits Architecture to Her Plan: Art She Has Reduced to Engineering, and She Puts Utility in First Place Architecture in the Russian Plan the Art Has Been Reduced to Engineering, with Utility Occupying First Place,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, January 31, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed November 16, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99766182/abstract/141C73617B445009B7D/5?accountid=7014>.

fast pace of the lefts and the too-slow pace of the rights, will go over.”<sup>89</sup> He argued too that the liberties of the people – as well as their involvement in their own government – were increasing alongside economic development. As long as the regime did not feel threatened by external war or internal economic collapse, this trajectory would continue.

Finally, Carveth Wells, an explorer and lecturer, revived the oppositionist arguments of 1931. Deeming Russia “the greatest menace to the world,”<sup>90</sup> he accused American businessmen and engineers for helping the Soviets to create a Frankenstein aimed at destruction of the West. Traveling with his wife, he persistently refused to join the organized tours, “which showed only what the Soviets wanted outsiders to see.”<sup>91</sup> Soviet officials eventually grew tired of trying to persuade him and let the couple travel on their own, although still under watch. Wells concluded after his journey that everything in the Soviet Union was, in fact, “kaput” – out of order.

Just as Ella Winter had written topical, descriptive pieces throughout 1931, Margaret Bourke-White, a photojournalist, wrote six pieces covering women, children’s education, entertainment, workers, and the collective farm.

In her article on women, Bourke-White compared the early Soviet woman to her 1930s counterpart, and the 1930s Soviet woman with her American counterpart. In the first years following the revolution, the Soviet woman spurned all trappings of

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<sup>89</sup> “Stalin Not a Dictator, Prof. Ward Declares: Educator, Back from Russia, Says Masses Have Increasing Share in Control.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, October 9, 1932), accessed September 27, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100477337/abstract/140C6BCA6E2743E561A/95?accountid=7014>.

<sup>90</sup> “Calls Soviet Union Greatest Menace: Carveth Wells, Explorer, Back from Visit to Russia, Says People Are Deluded. Found Everything Awry American Reports That the Word ‘Kaput,’ Meaning Out of Order, Is in Constant Use.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, September 11, 1932), accessed September 27, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100493789/abstract/140C6BCA6E2743E561A/23?accountid=7014>.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

femininity: “She not only wanted to be a worker – she wanted to look like one. And, with the swagger which is still characteristic of cocky Communist youth, she tried to look as masculine as possible. She was rough in manners and in dress...a boy’s cap at an insolent angle on the side of her head.”<sup>92</sup> In present day, however, an interest in beauty and fashion had reemerged. The Soviet woman dreamed of dressing in the clothes and silk stockings of her American or European counterpart, whom she observed in fashion magazines (if and when she could find them) or from visitors to her country. However, luxuries were not included in the Five-Year Plan. For now, she would have to be inventive.

In her second article, Bourke-White claimed that now was the “heyday of the child”<sup>93</sup> in the Soviet Union. The Soviet government understood that socialist success depended on this future generation, who must be healthy, happy and educated in labor and communist doctrine. Parents received advice on diet, tooth-brushing, proper living conditions and clothing for their children. Universal education – beginning its first year – was designed with the idea that children would play a large role in directing their own education. Their teachers then expected them to take what they learned at school and bring it into their homes so that they might teach – and even chastise! – their parents. Nevertheless, Bourke-White observed that, even with the oddities, children’s education in the Soviet Union was actually quite similar to the American educational system.

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<sup>92</sup> Margaret Bourke-White, “Silk Stockings in the Five-Year Plan: Despite the Soviet Drive and the New Order of Things, Russia’s Women Are Still Feminine,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, February 14, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine.

<sup>93</sup> Margaret Bourke-White, “Making Communists of Soviet Children: How the Russian State Trains Them to Take Their Place as Sovereigns of the New Order,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 6, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99733358/abstract/140BF4FAD1E540C661F/17?accountid=7014>.

Her third article described the enthusiasm of Russian peasants and workers towards the arts that had once been only a luxury of the rich. The opera, the theatre, and the circus were always full of “an audience very different from that at our opera in New York...No white shirt front, not a pair of bare shoulders, no shimmering wraps. Instead, one sees an audience of workers: a press operator, her head in a red kerchief; a plasterer, his clothes dusted with lime.”<sup>94</sup> Sure, every production covered the same range of labor-related topics, but it was entertainment. And it applied to them.

Her fourth and fifth articles regarded Soviet workers, the fourth specifically those at the Magnitogorsk plant. In the Soviet Union, if one had the choice to be the worker or the boss in a factory, one would be wise to choose the worker. This was not because the boss was necessarily treated badly, but because his higher position made him more likely to get fired. The Soviet worker was rarely fired, for he was too valuable a commodity. Furthermore, when production went awry, those higher up bore the blame.

Lack of skilled labor provided the greatest obstacle to production. Wasted time was almost a greater detriment than wasted parts, but both derived from the fact that most workers were former peasants to whom a drill press, for instance, was “a curious and wonderful thing to them, something to be talked about, eulogized and marveled over.”<sup>95</sup>

Other times, haphazard planning led to the creation of plants without the creation of

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<sup>94</sup> Margaret Bourke-White, “Nothing Bore the Russian Audience: At Opera, Play and Political Meeting the People Are Invariably Intense, Eager and Stirred to Emotion,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 13, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed November 16, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99701182/abstract/141C73617B445009B7D/7?accountid=7014>.

<sup>95</sup> Margaret Rourke-White, “Where The Worker Can Drop The Boss: In Soviet Russia the Man Behind the Machine Is More Important Than the Man Who Directs His Operations Where The Worker Is Boss In Soviet Russia the Man Behind the Machine Is More Important Than His Supervisor,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 27, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99641113/abstract/140BFA645D5E8B261C/8?accountid=7014>.

proper roads to reach them.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, Bourke-White observed enthusiasm among the workers, for they had faith that they were helping to build a better future.

In her last article, Bourke-White visited a half-collectivized village in the foothills of the Ural Mountains, where peasants utilized a mix of horses, camels and a single tractor to farm their land. She observed a Young Pioneers meeting, where children discussed the progress of their poultry campaign. She saw peasant wonderment towards the new village radio: ““One small man might get in that little place, yes. But how can a whole band hide in that box?”” The peasants enjoyed music, singing especially as they worked. The women made soup during the day and attended literacy classes at the Worker and Peasants’ Club at night.

Most interesting, though, was the town meeting which sparked a generational standoff. Mischa, a son of one of the peasants who studied in Moscow, began telling the villagers of life in the capital – the parks, clubs, crèches, and so on. He said that because their village had joined the collective movement, they would soon too have a nursery with doctors and nurses to care for the children so that the women could work. This provoked the older women, offended that he thought nurses without children might know more about raising them than actual, seasoned mothers. He replied that these nurses had been educated in science and medicine. This provoked a reaction from an old man that well encapsulates peasant antipathy towards collectivization at the time:

“Studied! Studied!” shouts a white-bearded man from the crowd. “Your people in Moscow have studied how to make us bow our heads in misery. I plowed my own plot for fifty years, and now it has been put into the collective where young boys

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<sup>96</sup> Margaret Bourke-White, “A Day’s Work for the Five-Year Plan: Inspired by Slogans, Tea and Talk, the Russian Peasant Toils and Dreams of World Revolution and Bath Tubs,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 22, 1932), sec. The New York Times Magazine, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99693979/abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/142?accountid=7014>.

who have ‘studied’ are trying to tell me how to work my own land. I saved my kopeks from every pood of rye until I could buy myself a horse, and now my horse must be taken into the collective.”<sup>97</sup>

The youth, frustrated, lamented that peasants continued to resist science – capable of changing their lives for the better – in order to hold on to archaic traditions and superstition.

Six remaining articles on tourism were published in 1932. For example, the Soviet Union invited a number of American workers to attend May Day and a six week tour.<sup>98</sup> Two twenty-year-olds from rich Atlanta families took a rather difficult auto trip through the Soviet Union in order to observe social conditions. The majority of the article detailed their troubles (i.e., getting stuck in the mud, running out of gas, and so on) instead of focusing on their observations.

Finally, Walter Duranty discussed a curious phenomenon. Especially as unemployment rose in the West, the Soviets encouraged workers to come to the USSR where unemployment did not exist. How ironic, then, was the foreign immigration problem that began to plague the Soviet Union in 1932. One thousand foreigners a week were buying one-way tickets from Intourist, but then settling down! The Soviets had simply not prepared for this. “Superiority through success” might be compromised if Western visitors began to see the realities of Soviet life: “A lot of foreigners, especially from the United States will not be content with our food and housing conditions, which

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “Americans Go to Russia.: Seven of Workers’ Group Leave Berlin for Moscow.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 28, 1932), accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99741276/citation/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/53?accountid=7014>.



will cause trouble.”<sup>99</sup> Soviet foreign policy depended on the continued perception that life in the Soviet Union was better than life in a country under capitalism.

*Recognition.* Twenty articles addressed U.S recognition of the Soviet Union in 1932. Out of these twenty, twelve were positive, one was negative, and none was mixed. Adding the split article equally to each side, the ratio of positive to negative arguments for U.S. recognition was 13-1 for 1932. Five of the remaining seven articles reported Soviet views toward recognition, while the other two objectively updated the public on recognition’s status.

Both sides’ arguments show just how definitively the “Red trade menace” theory had been debunked – by senators, by visitors, and by Litvinov at Geneva. In fact, the opposition had been severely weakened. Only one negative article was published for 1932, and it did not even mention the “Red trade menace.” Tried and true Matthew Woll listed the Third International and the sacrificing of principles and left it at that.<sup>100</sup> For the supporters of recognition, increased trade<sup>101</sup> gained increasing momentum. Stability<sup>102</sup> fell

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<sup>99</sup> Walter Duranty Wireless to The New York Times, “Immigration Now an Issue in Soviet: Workers Entering on Tourist Visas Found Often to Have One-Way Tickets Only. Five-Year Plan Is Upset No Provision Made for Influx from Outside -- Regulation of Entry Likely in Near Future.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 14, 1932).

<sup>100</sup> Special to The New York Times, “Tumulty Criticizes President On Gold: He Credits Federal Reserve Act of Wilson Administration With Saving Us in Crisis. Sees ‘Sabotage’ Campaign Some Hail Recovery While Others Warn of Perils From Democrats, He Says at Rockville, Md.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, October 15, 1932), accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99794488/abstract/141C11957CB3D6FB425/47?accountid=7014>.

<sup>101</sup> Special to The New York Times, “Garment Workers Assail The Soviet: Resolution at Philadelphia Demands Political Liberty, but Urges Recognition by Us.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 11, 1932), sec. Business Opportunities Resorts, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99696932/abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/102?accountid=7014>; “A World in Compartments.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 15, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Education Watch Tower Letters To Editor, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99701660/>

far behind, as did good faith,<sup>103</sup> peace,<sup>104</sup> hypocrisy,<sup>105</sup> and the claim that the Soviet Union was not a “Red trade menace.”<sup>106</sup>

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abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/111?accountid=7014; Special to The New York Times, “Trade With Russia Urged By Stewart: Jersey Democratic Candidate for Senate Sees Economic Aid in Recognition of Soviet.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 17, 1932), accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99657448/abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/118?accountid=7014>; Robin Kinkead Wireless to The New York Times, “Soviet Recognition By Us Is Predicted: Americans in Moscow Say Russians No Longer Can Be Considered Vandals. Offer Trade Reasons Believe That Reds Will Satisfy Our Claims -- Point Out That They Have Met Obligations.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, May 29, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Education Watch Tower Letters To Editor, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/100563638/abstract/140C07E62DE3543C8AC/160?accountid=7014>; 1932 Copyright, “Gives Soviet A Plan To Win Recognition: Colonel Pope Believed to Have Won Favor in Moscow for American Observer Idea. Consults High Officials New York Industrialist Plans to Renew Discussions on Return to Washington. Attitude There Is Aloof Indications Are That Administration Considers Neither Recognition Nor Plan for Commissioner.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 6, 1932), accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99661112/abstract/140C206B80912FCA63C/93?accountid=7014>; Robin Kinkead Wireless to The New York Times, “Roosevelt To Get Soviet Trade Plea: Dr. Alcan Hirsch Returning Here to Ask His Support for Recognition Movement. He Scores Our Policy Chemical Engineer Says United States Is Ignoring a Great and Safe Market.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 24, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Foreign Correspondence Watch Tower Letters To Editors, accessed September 26, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99558294/abstract/140C21BC725306DA0F5/133?accountid=7014>; Special to The New York Times, “Democrats Expect Soviet Recognition: Swanson Predicts Action for Trade Treaty Early in Roosevelt Regime. Ratification Held Likely T.J. Walsh and Borah Envisage Commercial Benefits of ‘Incalculable Value.’ Democrats Expect Soviet Recognition,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 4, 1932), accessed September 28, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99555849/abstract/140C77A191C24E09CFB/57?accountid=7014>; “Says Soviet Plans To Double Orders: But Market for U.S. Products Depends on Trading Changes, Amtorg Head States. More Machinery Needed Exporters Are Told England Seeks Another Pact -- S.C. Lamport Urges Recognition.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, December 7, 1932), sec. Commodities Business, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/99772482/abstract/141C11957CB3D6FB425/56?accountid=7014>.

<sup>102</sup> Times, “Roosevelt To Get Soviet Trade Plea”; Times, “Democrats Expect Soviet Recognition.”

<sup>103</sup> Times, “Roosevelt To Get Soviet Trade Plea.”

<sup>104</sup> Arthur Krock Special To The New York Times, “The Week In America; Political Events Lead: Eyes On 2 Primaries Democrats on Edge Over the Roosevelt-Smith Contests in Keystone and Bay States. Wets, Drys Stir Capital Hoover Has Way on Omnibus Economy and Consolidation -- Wall Street Shorts on Carpet.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, April 24, 1932), sec. Week End Cables Education Watch Tower Letter To Editor.

<sup>105</sup> Times, “Trade With Russia Urged By Stewart.”

<sup>106</sup> Times, “Soviet Recognition By Us Is Predicted.”

## *Conclusion*

The Great Depression shook American faith in capitalism. It was now a cold, ticking time bomb – unfettered and too capable of extremes. The Soviet system, on the other hand, was planned and moving forward. Unemployment did not exist. Workers, mothers, and children received free education, health care, and even paid vacations. Before Americans could turn to the Soviet system with interest, however, many lashed out. They wanted someone else to blame for the economic downturn, so they claimed that, in the pursuit of world revolution, the Soviets had begun actively undermining the capitalist system through flooding the market with their products of slave labor.

This, however, was not Stalin's policy in the early 1930s. The capitalist economic system and the communist economic system were intertwined. Americans and Soviets needed each other. Once the "Red Trade Menace" theory fell apart, the opposition too lost its momentum. Who, then, was responsible for the theory's demise? Certainly the Soviets argued their case well, especially Litvinov at Geneva. Senators and news correspondents played their part. I would argue, though, that those tourists and visitors who went to the Soviet Union and brought back evidence of Soviet innocence issued a direct blow at the oppositionist arguments to recognition.

## CONCLUSION

Many factors, particularly those related to insuring global security and economic recovery, made U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union possible at the end of 1933. One factor, however, might have thrown a wrench in Soviet recognition hopes: the Famine of 1932-1933.

While the Famine of 1921 had been exacerbated by grain requisitioning, few scholars deemed it man-made. The Famine of 1932-1933, on the other hand, was rooted in Stalin's collectivization policies and impossibly high grain quotas. When it became clear that somewhere between five and eight million peasants faced starvation in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus, the Soviet State closed the borders to prevent mass flight and banned tours of these areas by foreign newspaper correspondents. Grain exports continued to the West, even when the amount exported could have saved a large portion of lives lost:

Had Moscow stopped all grain exports and released all strategic grain revenues, the available 2.6 million tons of grain, under optimal conditions of distribution, might have saved up to 7.8 million lives, which was the approximate number of actual deaths from the 1932-1933 famine. (In fact, however, much grain was stolen or spoilt.) Of course, Moscow did not release the grain reserves... Its priority was not feeding hungry peasants, but feeding the workers and soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Stalin was not about to admit to those closet Right Oppositionists within the Politburo that his breakneck tempo had failed, at least in this case. He was not about to surrender the Soviet Union's favorable international position, either. The USSR was

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<sup>1</sup> Hiroaki Kuromiya, "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Reconsidered," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 4 (2008): 3.

enjoying a peak in its popularity abroad as Litvinov urged peace at Geneva and Soviet progress contrasted with the still dismal state of Western, capitalist economies.

Walter Duranty, too, could not watch passively as the chance for American recognition risked slipping away. Franklin D. Roosevelt had just been elected and favored recognition. American visitors had finally convinced the American public that the Soviet Union was not a “Red trade menace” and that communism was not so barbaric, especially as the Great Depression revealed capitalism’s more brutal characteristics. The international context – particularly increased military aggression by Germany and Japan – urged cooperation between the U.S. and USSR. Finally, Americans suffered from overproduction while the Soviets were looking to buy. In 1933, out of eighty-five articles on recognition, 90% of supportive articles listed increased trade. The time was right.

A famine opened the door to U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, and a famine nearly closed it. If the American public or the U.S. government had discovered that Stalin’s policies had not only created a devastating famine, but that he was also trying to cover it up at the expense of millions of lives, support for recognition might have faltered. Duranty recognized this possibility; therefore, he categorically denied that the famine existed. Each witness that came forward, he discredited. The peasants might have been hungry – they might even have been dying from diseases related to malnutrition – but there was no famine. After being granted permission to travel through the “alleged” starving regions in September 1933, he confirmed for Americans that the reports of famine had been mere exaggerations designed to undermine confidence in the Soviet regime:

This result justifies the optimism expressed to me by local authorities during my September trip through the Ukraine and North Caucasus – optimism that

contrasted so strikingly with the famine stories then current in Berlin, Riga, Vienna, and other places, where elements hostile to the Soviet were making an eleventh-hour attempt to avert American recognition by picturing the Soviet Union as a land of ruin and despair.<sup>2</sup>

While Duranty was not the only American news correspondent who suppressed (to varying degrees) facts about the famine, he was the primary authority on the Soviet Union at the time; therefore, his opinion held much more weight than the others.

Furthermore, most reporters suppressed the news because the Soviet censors required that they do so. As evidenced in the above quote, Duranty had other motivations as well.

After Duranty conducted his second interview with Stalin on Christmas Day, 1933 – less than a month after Soviet recognition – Stalin made sure to tell him that “You have done a good job in your reporting of the U.S.S.R.”<sup>3</sup>

Both Soviet tourism and the U.S. path to recognition found their roots in the Famine of 1921 and the famine relief committees. For the U.S., these committees allowed Americans and Soviets to communicate in an era of non-recognition. For the Soviets, these committees demonstrated the need for a better Soviet image abroad. Ol’ga Kameneva literally bridged the first alternative pathways to official diplomacy with the second, turning KZP – which sought famine aid from foreign bourgeois intellectuals – into OBI and then VOKS, which conducted cultural and scientific exchange with foreign bourgeois intellectuals.

VOKS then developed the tools and tactics for hosting guests which would be used by Intourist in the 1930s. American businessmen, educators, doctors, scientists,

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Duranty, Gustavus Tuckerman Jr, and Alexander Woolcott, *Duranty Reports Russia* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 324.

<sup>3</sup> Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn, *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933: Genocide by Other Means* (Shevchenko Scientific Society, USA, n.d.), 31.

students, senators, farmers, and engineers all traveled to the Soviet Union to see for themselves the progress that the Soviet Union had made and returned home to serve as witnesses in the debate over Soviet recognition. Stalin's shift of Soviet foreign policy from "peaceful coexistence and inevitable war" to "superiority through success" had paid off. Success was an effective, non-subversive form of propaganda, and tourists brought it home willingly.

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