

A Thesis entitled

“Uncle Joe”: What Americans Thought of  
Joseph Stalin Before and After World War II

by

Kimberly Hupp

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

The Masters of Liberal Studies

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Advisor: Dr. Michael Jakobson

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A thesis presented on the American public opinion of Josef Stalin before and after World War II beginning with how Russia and Stalin was portrayed in the media before the war began, covering how opinions shifted with major events such as the famine, collectivization, the Great Terror, wartime conferences, the Cold War and McCarthyism.

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*For Sydney*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIPO American Institute of Public Opinion

BIPO British Institute of Public Opinion

CP Crossley, Inc.

CPSU Communist Party of the Soviet Union

CPUSA Communist Party of the United States of America

FOR *Fortune Magazine*

GPU State Political Administration

GULAG Main Administration of Camps

HUAC House Un-American Activities Committee

NKVD People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs

NORC National Opinion Research Center

NYHT *New York Herald Tribune*

OGPU Unified State Political Administration

OMGUS American Military Government—Germany

OPOR Office of Public Opinion Research



## Introduction

The old adage of hindsight being 20/20 is so true. Today we know the truth of Stalin and his regime. We know that he was a bigger monster than Hitler, only without the need for '*Lebensraum*' (added territory deemed necessary to Nazi Germany, for its continued existence or economic well-being). While Stalin did want expansion of the Russian empire, he simply wanted the land that was taken from Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. But before, during and immediately after World War II, what exactly did Americans think of Stalin? Did leaders know the threat that Stalin posed to his own people before World War II? In an age where we get our news instantaneously, it is difficult to fully understand the delays in reporting that once existed. However, in simpler times such as the 1920's, 1930's, 1940's and the 1950's, it would typically take a day or so to get the news out of other countries. Just how did the delays and, in some countries such as the Soviet Union, state censoring affect our perceptions and opinion?

With the Soviet Union being controlled by Joseph Stalin, any news reports were first read and then censored, even completely rewritten. Stalin feared looking bad or weak in the world's eyes. He did not want the "secrets" of the Soviet Union, such as collectivization, the purges, and famines to be realized by anyone, even his own people. He was so convinced that he was right that he would not hear of anything to the contrary.

Walter Duranty, the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who was the Russian correspondent for the *New York Times* for many years, was guilty of misleading the American public about the situation in Russia at that time. He made it seem as if all was well and Russia was a thriving society. One must wonder if this was a deliberate act or an act of self-preservation. Just how many other reports were forced into the same position as Duranty? Foreign journalists stationed in the Soviet Union during that time period knew if anything was written and it rankled the Communist Party, which was ruled by Stalin, his/her press credentials would be revoked and immediately expelled from the country. With all news reports out of Russia being heavily censored, Americans could only base their opinions on what they were reading.

In the 1940's, we were at war with Germany and Japan. Stalin, being burned by Hitler who broke the Non-Aggression Pact of 1939, had joined the Allies in fighting Germany. With many conferences being held, and Roosevelt seeming to trust Stalin, we were given a favorable picture of Stalin himself. He seemed to put on the perfect show when the media was around. Jovial, friendly and trusting were the characteristics he wanted to convey to the rest of the world. There are even reports that Roosevelt had intelligence on Stalin's true nature but chose to ignore it because he thought he could persuade Stalin to change.

During the 1950's, the United States was in fear of anything that could be construed as Communist. Senator Joseph McCarthy led the charge of purging anyone and anything that could possibly be Communist. By this time, America and Russia were in the midst of the Cold War.

While it was more a war of words and rhetoric, utilizing propaganda instead of bullets and bombs, we were terrified that our borders would be breached by the Red Army. From blacklisting celebrities to suing the Army, McCarthy's paranoia struck a nerve in and infected John Q. Public. This irrational fear manifested itself from the rush to build bomb shelters in our backyards to the Civil Defense drills that schools and offices practiced on a regular basis. It was painfully clear what Americans thought of Russia and her leaders during that time.

The subjects discussed, some briefly, herein include Stalin's image in the eyes of the American public before World War II, manipulation of the American people by the media, the relationship between Roosevelt and Stalin, the wartime conferences and their outcomes, the origins of the Cold War, the effects of McCarthyism and the Red Scare, and tracking the shift in American opinion of Stalin before and after World War II. I will be using opinion poll archives, magazine and newspaper articles and other various publications to discuss these topics.

## Chapter 1: In the Beginning

### Russia and Stalin in the Media before World War II

It seems the American public was somewhat interested in Russia, as evidenced by the number of articles in *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The Washington Post* to name a few. A search through *The New York Times'* online archives reveals over 10,000 references to Stalin and/or the Soviet Union between January 1, 1916 and December 31, 1955. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the articles deal mainly with the Russian Revolution, the Provisional Government and the Communist Party. But after Lenin's death, it seems as if Stalin is suddenly everywhere. *Time* ran an article on August 30, 1926 which provided a brief portrait of Stalin. It alludes to him as being seen as some kind of great being by Lenin. The article notes: "Amid the purging flames of revolution, the great Dictator Lenin tested and tempted the Georgian's metal, gave him the prophetic name of Stalin, installed him in the office which he has made the focus of all Russia, the Secretariat of the Communist Party."<sup>1</sup> It would seem the author of the article, who is not listed, was unaware of the true origins of Stalin's name. But the most interesting tidbit is that he was cast in a good light. Not one disparaging word was

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<sup>1</sup> *Time*, August 30, 1926

written about Stalin. Not one mention was made of how he was feared by his comrades and he was building his power base under the nose of Lenin.

According to Leonid Stakhovsky's study, *American Opinion about Russia 1917-1920*, published in 1961, America supported the Provisional Government in early 1917. Major news publications at that time, such as the *Washington Evening Star* and *Literary Digest* sang the praises of Alexander Kerensky and his government. There were hopes that a democracy would be established. On March 16, 1917 the *Evening Star* expressed concern that the revolution would weaken the Russian army to the point of uselessness in the war with Germany, citing infighting as the main reason. The *New York Times* expressed a more optimistic outlook of the situation. This article was hopeful the Duma would be able to heal and strengthen Russia as a whole. The *Evening Star* continued to hold to its cautious course by stating in its March 17, 1917 edition, "Whether Russia can revolutionize itself and while in the throes of transformation effectively fight Germany remains to be seen."<sup>1</sup> The optimism shown by the *New York Times* was echoed, according to Strakhovsky, by other publications such as those printed in Iowa, Texas and Georgia.

The United States only took a week to recognize Kerensky's government as legitimate. The March 23, 1917 edition of the *Washington Evening Star* summed up our nation's sentiment when the editors published an article that stated, "It is the American hope that Russia will hold its new freedom, develop it and through it work out a great national destiny."<sup>2</sup> However, once Lenin seized power, the United States would not recognize the

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<sup>1</sup> *Washington Evening Star*, March 17, 1917, pg. 4

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, March 23, 1917, pg. 6

legitimacy of the Soviet Union until 1933. Even though the Provisional Government was still unstable and in danger of being toppled, the American media played this down as much as possible. It would seem the motivation was to encourage the American public to think that Germany would not get the upper hand in the then raging World War I. In April 1917, the *New York Times* made its position on Lenin and his followers clear. The editorial paints a picture of Lenin as being in league with Germany to ruin Russia's push toward democracy. In this editorial, the *New York Times* writes:

“The Liberal Government in Russia visibly threatened by a formidable counter-revolutionary unrest, which has not yet mobilized into a movement but is skillfully marshaled by German agents. Many of these agents are Russian Socialists...

Meanwhile the Socialists, headed by Lenin, an obvious German agent who was shipped back to Russia by Germany for the purpose, play Germany's hand by glittering catchwords, such as Lenin's 'Dictatorship of the working class and democracy of the army,' and seek to arouse hostility to the United States by representing her as a capitalist country...”<sup>3</sup>

The Washington *Evening Star* mimicked the *New York Times*' previous concern about Lenin on July 24, 1917 by writing “It is definitely charged that Lenin, the Bolshevik agitator and leader...has been acting definitely as a German agent.”<sup>4</sup>

The Bolsheviks were making their intentions known. Their revolutionary movement was picking up steam and creating great worry not only within the Provisional government, but in the United States as well. On July 23, 1917 The Washington *Evening Star* worried that,

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<sup>3</sup> The *New York Times*, April 26, 1917, pg. 12

<sup>4</sup> The Washington *Evening Star*, July 24, 1917, pg. 6

“Russia is again a cause of keen anxiety.”<sup>5</sup> Kerensky had launched another (his third) offensive against Germany only three weeks prior. This was legitimate cause for the *Evening Star*’s concern. The Provisional government was also fighting off the growing Bolshevik threat. This proved worrisome to the American government and our high ranking military officials as they feared the Russian army was being spread too thin and, as a result, tremendously weakened.

On July 24, 1917, the *New York Times* supported a dictatorship for Russia. Despite outlining the weaknesses and shortcomings of the Provisional government, the editorial expressed faith in Kerensky as being the most capable individual for that position. The paper praised Kerensky’s efforts to eradicate socialism by saying, “The infection spread until it was arrested by Kerensky, whose patriotism and noble courage for a moment inspired even the army with a loyal resolve to face the enemy and drive him back.”<sup>6</sup> In the same article, Lenin was once again accused of being a German spy. The article stated, “It has been abundantly proved that German agents were at work to bring about the disaffection among the troops at the front, and among Russians everywhere, especially in Petrograd. Lenine [sic], who under a Government exercising any sort of authority in a rational way would have been deprived of all power to do mischief long ago, has been exposed as a worker for the German cause, and it has countless other workers.”<sup>7</sup>

November 1917 brought dismal news about Russia. On November 7, the *Washington Evening Star* bemoaned: “The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, have seized control of the capital, deposed

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, July 23, 1917, pg. 6

<sup>6</sup> The *New York Times*, July 24, 1917, pg. 6

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, July 24, 1917, pg. 6

Kerensky and arrested some of the ministers, and with the aid of the garrison executed a coup d'état which completely overturns the Provisional government. It is a new revolution. The most serious aspect of the situation is that the new power in Russia declares for 'an immediate just peace,' which indicates that the German intrigue in Petrograd has succeeded.”<sup>8</sup>

By 1919, Lenin had already seized control of Russia and installed the Bolsheviks in all government positions. So mistrusted and hated was Lenin that an article printed in the *New York Times* in April 1919 called for Americans to help all who were fighting against Lenin. In its plea for assistance, this article defined Bolshevism as “the assault of greed, ignorance and brute force upon everything that Americans have learned to hold most sacred. It destroys liberty, property rights, law, order, marriage, the home and education. It is the murder of peace, enlightenment, and progress. Its loot enriches a few black-hearted and red-handed leaders and beggars everyone else.”<sup>9</sup>

In the same edition of the *New York Times*, another article appeared with the headline “Warned Not to Deal with Russian Reds.” It detailed a plea from the State Department that American businesses should not deal with the Bolshevik government. The State Department statement read: “As the Government of the United States has never recognized the Bolshevik regime at Moscow it is deemed proper to warn American business men that any concessions from the Bolshevik authorities probably could be recognized as binding on future Russian Governments.”<sup>10</sup> The tone of the article is clear that the State

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<sup>8</sup> The Washington *Evening Star*, November 8, 1917, pg. 6

<sup>9</sup> The *New York Times*, April 27, 1919, pg. 7

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, April 27, 1919, pg. 7



Department has no idea what the future of Russia holds and it does not want to have any ties to their current or future governments.

The earliest mention of Joseph Stalin in *The New York Times* is on June 15, 1924 in an article by Walter Duranty that summarized the agenda for the Comintern Congress. Stalin was only mentioned once in this article. He, along with Bukharin and Trotsky, was named a Russian Representative. Zinoviev was appointed as President of the “Presidium.” It is a rather unimportant and uneventful piece on the plans of the Communist Party. The next mention of Stalin in *The New York Times* is just as trivial. On November 26, 1924, there is an article which reported on the alienation of Trotsky within the Communist Party. The only reference to Stalin, and his involvement, is a few words that informed the reader that he and Kamenev were the originators of the movement to oust Trotsky. Like the article above, this one made the reader think that Stalin is but a minor player.

“Stalin Emerges as the ‘Dictator’ of Russia” proclaimed *The New York Times* on August 29, 1926, just two years after barely mentioning him. The article told of how Stalin had risen to his position of power as Lenin’s heir. Quite interesting, though, is the way Stalin was described in this article. He was presented as courageous, tenacious, and plain. The article also conveyed his years as a revolutionary and his arrests as a result, his escape from exile was told as a heroic tale. In discussing Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev, the article made it seem as if they were ruthless and power hungry and that Stalin was the innocent. There is no mention of the cruel, merciless nature Stalin possessed. In reading this article, the reader gets the sense that Stalin only wanted to take care of the Russian people. There was no mention of his infamous paranoia or his desire for ‘socialism in one country.’ Yet,

on November 5, 1926, *The New York Times* ran an article that gave America a glimpse into Stalin's psyche. The article informed the reader that Stalin, frustrated by the slow progress of socialism in Russia, told the Communist Party he believed that America would soon replace England "as the head of the imperialistic States and as dominating the world." This piece differs from the earlier ones as it showed his mistrust of the United States. Clearly, two vastly different articles written within two months of each other.

On July 6, 1931, the *New York Times* ran an article outlining a new plan that Stalin was introducing as a way to help the Russian economy. In an "about face," Stalin actually called for unequal pay, contrary to Communist ideology, and individual responsibility. The focus of this policy moved away from agriculture and was set squarely on industry. According to this article, Stalin had six points of focus for the new plan:

"Readjustment of wages to make the scale commensurate with the type of labor performed; the halt of workers from shifting from one place to another to improve their living conditions.

"Remedy of the growing labor shortage by attracting more peasants to industries as agriculture progresses toward mechanization.

"Improvement of the organization of labor in industry in order to distribute the proper strength among factories and to end 'irresponsible' methods.

"To have a working class develop its own 'intelligentsia' of such skilled workers as engineers and technicians.

“To change the policy toward specialists of the old order to attract more of them to industry.

“To increase the interior sources of industry and develop the piece-work system.”<sup>11</sup>

This article drew a comparison between American business practices and Stalin’s ideas. It seemed to be almost giddy in the belief that Stalin is changing, giving the American public the same hope.

In 1932, Stalin announced a second Five Year Plan, a year before the first one, announced in 1928, was set to be fulfilled. In a special section of the *New York Times* in April 1932, an article detailing the new plan was published. According to the article, the first plan was “fundamentally, a means of socialization, not merely the socialization of industry and commerce—and of agriculture, a far more difficult problem—but a moral socialization as well. Curiously enough, the aspect of the plan most pertinently obvious to Americans (that is, the regulation of production and consumption over a term of years), hardly presented itself to the Bolsheviki, except...as one of the principles of their Marxist creed.”<sup>12</sup> The Second Five Year Plan was “aimed principally at improving the living standard and comforts of the population.”<sup>13</sup> There was an attempt to make the American public understand, and possibly even sympathize with, the Russian people.

In explaining the differences and aims of the plans, an analogy of the American army was used. Duranty said that the First Five Year Plan was, essentially, a “training” plan in order

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<sup>11</sup> The *New York Times*, July 6, 1931, pg. 2

<sup>12</sup> The *New York Times*, April 17, 1932, pg. SM1

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* April 17, 1932, pg. SM1

to retrain the Russian people in their thinking and ways of life. This training was likened to what is “familiar to several million Americans, of army training, when they were forced by inflexible authority to do a whole lot of things which they had never done before, but which had been ordained by the authority with a definite and practical purpose. The fact that they were doing these things as volunteers...or as drafted me against their will, ceased to have any importance once they began doing them.”<sup>14</sup> Notice there was no mention of terror as a form of “encouragement” to get the Russian people to follow the plan.

*Time* ran an article on January 9, 1933 which discussed the end of and results of the First Five Year Plan. Even though Stalin announced the goals laid out had been met in four years instead of five, *Time*'s article illustrated some of the actual short comings of the plan, “In 1932 the Plan called for pig iron at an average rate of 25,000 tons per day. Actual production is 17,000 tons...In oil she has mounted from third place to second, in cold from sixth to third, in machine building from fourth to second, in production of electric energy from eight to third—yet in none of these categories except oil has Russia fulfilled her Plan.”<sup>15</sup>

*Time*'s article also detailed Stalin's new measures in getting the peasants to comply with the plan. To summarize these tactics:

1. A factory worker was required to show his food card at his place of employment and could only continue receiving food from there as long as he kept the job there;

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, April 17, 1932, pg. SM1

<sup>15</sup> *Time*, January 9, 1933

2. Everyone in every city needed to report to the GPU and have a valid reason for being in that city; and
3. Stalin would end requisitioning objectives based on the variable size of the crops harvested. The new objectives that he introduced set the requisitioning goals based on the size of the farm. Under this new law, the peasant has a chance to do better as any excess crops could be sold at market for a profit.

The measures obviously did not work. History shows that millions of peasants suffered and died from starvation. In a *Letter to the Editor*, published in the *New York Times* on October 23, 1934, Mr. Emil Hladky related a first hand detailed account of the famine in the Soviet Union. In this letter, he also exposed the fraud that is being perpetrated by the *New York Times* and another one of their writers, Harold Denny. Mr. Hladky's letter started out with, "Harold Denny's articles during the past two weeks on Soviet Russia would tend to leave the impression upon the casual reader that there is no real danger of starvation in the Soviet Union. To say that this is misleading would be putting the matter mildly."<sup>16</sup> Mr. Hladky suggested that Mr. Denny was being misled by the Soviets and was only touring the collectives, not the private farms. "The real plight of these individuals has been carefully concealed from Mr. Denny."<sup>17</sup> Mr. Hladky referred to an article written by Mr. Denny that outlined the new measures instituted by Stalin. He wrote of the taxes that were being levied against the peasants on their crops. He also wrote that any collective that sabotaged its harvest would be assessed double taxes, even though there would have been less crops available. The final measure Mr. Hladky wrote about was the arbitrary measure

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<sup>16</sup> The *New York Times*, October 23, 1934, pg. 18

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, October 23, 1934, pg. 18

of assessing taxes. The authorities were permitted to raise taxes by 50 percent in areas that had a higher than normal harvest. “Can any one state that this is not a deliberate plan of starvation”<sup>18</sup> queried Mr. Hladky. “There is starvation in the Ukraine and Russia and there will be a real hunger this Winter”<sup>19</sup> stated the writer. At least there was one reader of the *New York Times* who saw through the sham and tried to set the record straight about the rampant hunger in the Soviet Union.

On December 1, 1934, the Great Terror was conceived. The catalyst for the launch of this frightening campaign was the murder of the charismatic and extremely influential Sergei Kirov. Kirov, whose star was quickly rising, had successfully opposed Stalin on several occasions. At the 1934 Party Congress, Kirov was up for Central Committee membership. In their votes, the delegates only issued 3 negative votes from them. Stalin drew 292 negative votes. Not surprisingly, Stalin saw this as a clear threat to his power and regime. Afterward, Stalin promoted Kirov to work in Moscow but continually delayed his transfer from Leningrad. He assigned bodyguards to Kirov during this time.

Sometime in the last months of 1934, Stalin ordered the NKVD to find an assassin to take care of Kirov. Genrikh Yagoda, head of the NKVD at that time, appointed Vania Zaporozhets to find that assassin. As luck would have it, someone who knew someone who knew Leonid Nikolaev informed the NKVD that Nikolaev was extremely disgruntled about being expelled from the Communist Party and was hungry for revenge; any high level Party officer would do. According to Alexander Orlov, the NKVD passed along money and loaded weapon to Nikolaev by way of his friend who had informed on him.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, October 23, 1934, pg. 18

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, October 23, 1934, pg. 18

After an initial assassination attempt that failed on October 15, 1934, Nikolaev tried again....this time with success.

On December 17, 1934, *Time* ran an article about the unleashing of Stalin's wrath over Kirov's murder. "Last week Josef Stalin resorted to more drastic Bolshevik Terror, terror in its purest form. Because a member of the Soviet Politbureau or Red Big Ten had been assassinated, Soviet firing squads last week mowed down 66 Russians, one a woman, who were not accused of anything to do with Assassin Leonid Nikolaev or his crime,"<sup>20</sup> wrote the author.

Using Kirov's assassination as an attempt to discredit anyone who stood against him, Stalin began purging the Communist Party. According to a *Time* article, Stalin used Kirov's assassination to justify the executions of 14 prisoners. "Last week the 14 accused at Leningrad were all young men in their 20's and 30's, Russians who have grown to manhood under the Red Flag, they were accused broadly of a major plot to assassinate not only 'Dear Friend Sergei' but the chief leaders of the Government, including Stalin. If such young me, all but one members of the Party at the time of their arrest, think Stalin should be assassinated, the inference of Red disillusionment is potent."<sup>21</sup> Further on in the article, the author wrote, "Next thing Russia knew, the 14 tried at Leningrad had been taken out and shot before their sentence was announced. The Government stated that they had been denied legal defense to the last. The order to shoot was signed by famed Judge Ulrich who has been signing death warrants in batches these last few weeks during Stalin's

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<sup>20</sup> *Time*, December 17, 1934

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, January 7, 1935

campaign of ‘pure terror.’”<sup>22</sup> Even more interesting is the statement, “Under pretext of avenging Kirov, Stalin was able to have shot 117 Russians whom he considered dangerous. If so devious and Oriental a maneuver were in prospect, it would entail steps similar to those taken: 1) The course of Soviet Justice was distorted by a special decree depriving the accused of counsel; 2) for the first time a major Soviet trial of world interest was not broadcast or otherwise advertised and correspondents were not present.”<sup>23</sup>

In a May 1935 *New York Times* article, Harold Denny told of the increase in government control in Russia. “The sense of spying and repression hangs over foreigners no less than over natives”<sup>24</sup> reported Denny. He continued, “The repression and spying would be less distasteful to a Westerner if he could believe they were temporary emergency policies which in the not too distant future would be dispensed with.”<sup>25</sup>

In 1936, Kamenev and Zinoviev were arrested and tried for being in league with Trotsky to assassinate Stalin and other top Party leaders. They were also accused and tried for conspiracy in Kirov’s murder in December 1934. According to reports published in the *New York Times*, “Direct responsibility for the assassination of Sergei Mironovitch Kiroff, colleague of Joseph Stalin, was attributed to Mr. Trotsky, Leon Kameneff and Gregory Zinovieff.”<sup>26</sup> In this article, we found out that “Both Mr. Kameneff and Mr. Zinovieff now are serving ten-year prison sentences for counter-revolutionary activities coincident with

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<sup>22</sup> *Time*, January 7, 1935

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, January 7, 1935

<sup>24</sup> The *New York Times*, May 5, 1935, pg. SM11

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, May 5, 1935, pg. SM11

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, August 15, 1936, pg. 1



the assassination of Mr. Kiroff.”<sup>27</sup> Toward the end of this article, the author stated that, “Kameneff and Zinovieff were among a group sentenced to prison terms in secret trials early in 1935, following which the Stalin regime abolished the Society of Old Bolsheviki, the collaborators of Lenin, and began a systematic purge of the Communist Party.”<sup>28</sup>

The next day, the *New York Times* ran another article about the trials and informed the American public that Zinoviev and Kamenev were expected to be executed after being found guilty of complicity in the plots to assassinate Kirov, Stalin and other top Party leaders. Allegedly “Zinovieff and Kameneff made abject confessions of these charges.”<sup>29</sup> They are even made to sound as if they are still a danger while imprisoned. Harold Denny wrote, “So far as is known there is no accusation that Zinovieff and Kameneff hatched a new plot while in prison.”<sup>30</sup> What was not written was that both men, and the others who were accused of the same crime, were either tortured, threatened or, as is more likely, both tortured and threatened, in order to gain these confessions. It was not uncommon for people to confess after long sessions that involved sleep deprivation, food and water deprivation, and physical and mental torture. However, the NKVD, which replaced the OGPU in 1934, were not known for being forthcoming with their interrogation techniques even though they weren’t exactly unknown to the public.

1936 and 1937 saw the massive purge of the Red Army. Thousands of officers were dismissed from their posts on Stalin’s orders. The charge: conspiracy. Stalin believed the military was planning a coup to topple his regime. He also believed the Red Army had

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<sup>27</sup> The *New York Times*, August 15, 1936, pg. 1

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, August 15, 1936, pg. 2

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, August 16, 1936, pg. 1

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, August 16, 1936, pg. 1

been infiltrated by German spies. One of the most notable victims of this purge was Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky. He was a brilliant theorist and unfortunately, believed to be a threat to Stalin much like Kirov was....a political rival. By 1937, almost 10% of the 114,300+ Red Army officers had been dismissed from their posts. By the end of the Red Army purge, 30,000+ officers had been executed. The slaughter and dismissal of tens of thousands experience military commanders weakened the infrastructure of the Red Army. High ranking officials were replaced with those who had little to no experience and/or training. There are even reports that one military academy was forced to graduate their cadets one year early to fill the vast vacancies. But the damage had been done. During the war with Finland in the winter of 1940, the Red Army failed miserably.

Harold Denny wrote of the arrests of Tukhachevsky and 3 other high ranking military officials. Despite Stalin's own paranoia of a planned military coup, either real or imagined, many military leaders did not believe one existed. Wrote Denny, "Able foreign military experts of several countries are skeptical of anything hinting at a coup with the army. To support their skepticism they point out that Red Army leaders such as General Tukhachevsky have not been Communist theoreticians, as we many who have done down in disgrace in recent months. Thy have been military men occupied with technical duties and perhaps ever too neglectful of party politics."<sup>31</sup> Bold were these statements because they obviously challenge the veracity of Soviet press releases.

In a "special cable" that was published in the *New York Times*, the concern of other European countries over the dismissal and arrests of the Red Army commanders was

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<sup>31</sup> The *New York Times*, June 10, 1937, pg. 1

expressed. “Diplomatic observers in Europe are mystified by the new Soviet punitive measures in connection with the purge of the administrative and economic system of ‘Trotskyist and anti-State enemies,’ who, it is alleged have contributed largely to non-fulfillment of industrial plans.”<sup>32</sup> It continued with, “Newspapers here are saying in headlines that the ‘Soviet riddle sets Europe guessing’ and that although the answer appears to be that the human element has failed in industry, the reason for the dismissal of the army chiefs remain unexplained.”<sup>33</sup>

The sheer number of victims of Stalin’s purges should have warranted thousands of articles exposing the atrocities. However, there was no mention; possibly because of the intense secrecy of the Government and Stalin. According to Robert Conquest in “The Great Terror”, published in 1968, the estimated number of victims were:

Approximately 7 million arrested between 1937 and 1938

Approximately 1 million executed

Approximately 2 million died in the work camps

Approximately 1 million people were in prison in late 1938

Approximately 8 million were in the work camps in late 1938

In 1990, Conquest made some revisions to those numbers based on new information:

Approximately 8 million arrested between 1937 and 1938

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<sup>32</sup> The *New York Times*, June 10, 1937, pg. 7

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, June 10, 1937, pg. 7

Approximately 1 million executed (no change)

Approximately 2.6 to 2.7 million died in the work camps

Approximately 1 million people were in prison in late 1938 (no change)

Approximately 7 million were in the work camps in late 1938

An accurate number of victims will never be known since most records were falsified and/or never existed. There is even speculation that many records were destroyed immediately following Stalin's death.

### The Lies the Media Told Us

In November 1928, the *New York Times* picked up an article that originally ran in a White Russian newspaper. The subject of the article was Boris Bazhanov. Bazhanov had been Stalin's aide from 1923 to 1925. During this time with Stalin, Bazhanov witnessed many historic events. It was through his notes that one of the biggest mysteries in Bolshevik history: the reason Trotsky refused to succeed Lenin. According to Bazhanov's notes, it was because Trotsky felt that his religion, Judaism, would hurt the newly formed Soviet government. Trotsky believed that he would hurt the cause, even though Lenin thought him worthy of being his heir.

In the 1928 article, Bazhanov gave a very telling insight into Stalin's meteoric rise to power. Of this rise, Bazhanov said, "It is generally thought...that in order to have attained his supreme position Stalin must be an extremely capable and talented man. It is not so.

He is illiterate and knows nothing of Marxian tenets...”<sup>34</sup> In this same article, Bazhanov enlightens us to the balance of power that existed at that time in Russia by saying “that the Soviets had completely lost their power as well as the Polit Bureau, and that the government of Russia was completely concentrated in the hand of one man—Stalin.”<sup>35</sup>

Being that Stalin was paranoid and apt to “purge” anyone who he saw as a threat to his power, it is surprising that Bazhanov would have been so bold as to grant such an interview that disparages Stalin. However, when one finds out that Bazhanov defected to Iran on January 1, 1928, it becomes clear that he felt safe from harm. Later he was granted asylum in France, where he lived until he passed away in January 1983. Bazhanov defected because he had become dissatisfied with communism and no longer wanted any part of it. He would be the first, and only, of Stalin’s aides to turn his back on the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, Bazhanov was the target of a hit, more than likely ordered by Stalin.

Vladislav Krasnov wrote *Soviet Defectors: The KGB Wanted List* in 1985. In his final chapter, he includes a remark from Bazhanov regarding Marxism: “You know, as I do, that our civilization stands on the edge of an abyss...Those who seek to destroy it put forth an ideal. This ideal [of communism] has been proven false by the experience of the last sixty years...the problem of bringing freedom back to Russia is not insoluble...the youth of Russia no longer believe in the system, despite the fact that they have known nothing else.

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<sup>34</sup> The *New York Times*, November 28, 1928, pg. 3

<sup>35</sup> The *New York Times*, November 28, 1928, pg. 3

I the West [develops its] confidence and unity, [it] can win the battle for our civilization and set humanity on the true path to progress, not the twisted path of Marxism.”<sup>36</sup>

In 1929, Stalin began brutally enforcing his policy of collectivization. Under the guise of lessening the burden of the 1927-1928 grain shortage, Stalin implemented forced requisitioning, a throw back to Lenin’s war communism. On July 8, 1929, Walter Duranty, giving a brief history on collectivization, tells American readers that much is riding on the upcoming harvest. He makes us believe that the *kolhozy* is an idea that seems to be happily accepted by the Russians and that it is working for them. “This year it was realized that the collective farming system had something to offer—tractors, machinery, modern instructors, cleansed seed, fertilizers and the reduction of taxes. The Spring sowing, though delayed by the weather and begun under the pessimistic impression of a partial failure in the Winter grain supply, received a terrific impetus from the centre.”<sup>37</sup> Duranty, unintentionally or by design, misleads the American public. He fails to convey the peasants had no choice in the matter. Those who resisted were arrested, exiled or shot. The process of collectivization was not easy, nor was it accepted by all.

Walter Duranty held the position of the Moscow correspondent for the *New York Times* for many years. He was the leading voice and authority on all things Russia. His articles on the First Five Year Plan earned him the highly coveted Pulitzer Prize. Turns out that Stalin’s genocidal plans were in full force, right under Duranty’s nose yet there were only minor mentions of purges. And the articles that did mention the purges minimized not only

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<sup>36</sup> *Soviet Defectors: The KGB Wanted List*, Vladislav Krasnov, pg. 11-12

<sup>37</sup> The *New York Times*, July 8, 1929, pg. 5

the scope but the breadth of the terror. Why would Duranty deliberately lie to the American public about such horrors? How could he, in good conscience, know the truth then make the conscious decision to turn a blind eye?

With the opening of the Soviet archives, historians now know that millions, approximately 20,000,000+, people died because of Stalinist policies such as collectivization and the purges. Duranty had the gall to declare that the purges didn't exist and that Russia was a paradise for laborers. Just as appalling are the articles in which Duranty declared there was no famine in Russia even though it has been well documented. One would question whether he actually got into the provinces to witness the conditions first hand or if he just took it on "good authority" from a Kremlin insider.

While many other journalists are probably just as guilty of the same falsehoods about the conditions in Russia (i.e. famine and terror), Walter Duranty was extremely well known and respected at that time. His work garnered him the Pulitzer Prize; work that was essentially built on lies and inaccuracies. With the Pulitzer Prize committee investigating Duranty and trying to decide whether or not his prize should be revoked over 70 years later, he should be held to a higher standard. Given the oppressive control that Stalin had on the media, it could be that Duranty was protecting his position, and more than likely his life, by writing only what the government wanted him to write. Or it could be that he eventually bought into the lies of the Soviet government. But given his background before he broke into journalism, his motives should be suspect.

Millions of Russian peasants starved to death during the years of 1928 and 1936. Unfortunately, most Americans were completely unaware of the dire situation in Russia

and the Soviet Union. But Duranty, who was charged with accurately reporting such conditions, chose to lie and tell Americans that the situation was a work of fiction. In March 1933, Duranty had the gall to write "...to put it brutally—you can't make an omlette [sic] without breaking a few eggs, and the Bolshevik leaders are just as indifferent to the casualties that may be involved in their drive toward socialization..."<sup>38</sup> He tries to legitimize his statements by presenting his "research" methods: "I have inquired in Soviet commissariats and in foreign embassies with their network of consuls, and I have tabulated information from Britons working as specialist and from my personal connections, Russian and foreign...All seems to me to be more trustworthy than I could get by a brief trip through any one area. The Soviet Union is too big to permit a hasty study, and it is the foreign correspondent's job to present a whole picture, not a part of it."<sup>39</sup> Toward the end of the article, he reiterates his position on the famine by writing "...conditions are definitely bad in certain sections—the Ukraine, North Caucasus and Lower Volga...These conditions are bad, but there is no famine."<sup>40</sup>

In May 1933, Duranty repeated his earlier assertions that the famine in Russia was a work of fiction. In this particular article he stated, "...though conditions are terribly hard there is no sign of real famine conditions or that people are dying in the streets, as is reported in Moscow. The mortality figures jumped during the Winter, and there is always a concomitant of undernourishment in Russia, but it is not epidemic, a fact that is confirmed by resident foreigners."<sup>41</sup> As stated in his March 31 article, Mr. Duranty never went out

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<sup>38</sup> The *New York Times*, March 31, 1933, pg. 13

<sup>39</sup> The *New York Times*, March 31, 1933, pg. 13

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, March 31, 1933, pg. 13

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, May 14, 1933, pg. 18



into the countryside to investigate the true situation. In the May 1933 article, Mr. Duranty also wrote briefly about the collectives. He wrote, “It is significant that local newspapers of Odessa, Kiev and other Ukrainian towns along the railroad all report a large new influx of individual peasants into the collectives, which is confirmed here not only by a member of the Presiding Council of the Odessa Provincial Government, but by peasants with whom the writer has talked.”<sup>42</sup>

In September 1933, Mr. Duranty wrote an article about collectivization. In the opening paragraph of the article, he wrote “The writer has just completed a 200-mile auto trip through the heart of the Ukraine and can say positively that the harvest is splendid and all talk of famine now is ridiculous.”<sup>43</sup> Given the article he wrote in March 1933 in which he stated that Russia was too vast in order to even pull off such a thing, it is ironic, almost hypocritical, that he decided to do this. Of his travels he reports, “The populace, from the babies to old folks, looks health and well-nourished.”<sup>44</sup> He also said of the peasants’ attitudes of collectivization as a policy, “One thing, however, is sure—the peasants have accepted collectivization and are willingly obeying the Kremlin’s orders.”<sup>45</sup> It is clear; knowing what historians know now, that the peasants with whom he spoke must have been coerced, as was the rule of the day.

Why would Duranty deliberately mislead the United States, and the whole world, about the conditions in Russia? According to Dennis Behrandt of *The New American*, he traces the origins of Duranty’s deception back to 1921 when the *New York Times* sent him to Riga,

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, May 14, 1933, pg. 18

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, September 18, 1933, pg. 8

<sup>44</sup> *The New York Times*, September 18, 1933, pg. 8

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, September 18, 1933, pg. 8

Latvia. The American Relief Association would send the requested aid to the region on one condition...foreign journalists would be permitted to report from Russia. Once in Latvia, Duranty was instructed to apply for a visa for entry into Russia. However, he was denied “because of his anti-Soviet bias.”<sup>46</sup> In an effort to gain entry, Duranty authored a “propaganda” piece about Lenin’s NEP. In this article, Duranty deliberately omitted the failures of Communism. The article gained Duranty favor with the Soviet government and he was granted his visa. This new attitude of “pro-Communism” continued once he settled into Russia. In January 1923, Duranty published an article that praised Stalin. The article implies that Stalin is a better leader than Lenin and that the Soviet Union is thriving only because of Stalin and his mental acuity.

After a few years as the *New York Times*’ leading correspondent on all things Russia, Walter Duranty was living the high life, so to speak. The Pulitzer Prize that he was awarded in 1931 allowed him much prestige. And at the pinnacle of the famine and its resulting casualties, Duranty was living with his mistress in comfort. Also during this time, Duranty was working overtime to make the public believe that the “de-kulakization” did not exist. He knew the truth but chose to continue the lie. According to Duranty’s own admission to A.W. Klieforth at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Germany “...the New York Times, the most powerful, most respected news organization in the United States, served as a Soviet mouthpiece.”<sup>47</sup>

It was no secret that Stalin controlled the media in addition to every other aspect of Russia. As we know from an article referenced earlier in this section, Stalin had a firm grip on the

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<sup>46</sup> The *New American*, Vol. 19, Issue 18, September 8, 203, pg. 14

<sup>47</sup> The *New American*, Vol. 19, Issue 18, September 8, 203, pg. 14

media well before Kirov's assassination. According to *Time*, most journalists knew this as well. In their January 7, 1935 article about the trial of Leonid Nicolaev, the writer stated, "Not wishing to displease Josef Stalin, not a single foreign correspondent turned up in Leningrad last week to try to cover the trial of the assassin of the Dictator's 'Dear Friend Sergei' Kirov."<sup>48</sup> Later in the same article, the author informed the readers, "Government press releases supplied the only details. Nicolaev was said to have laughed at his judges, perhaps hysterical after nearly a month under third degree. Another accused conspirator, said the Government, fainted dead away."<sup>49</sup> It would seem that the author of this article was familiar with the "interrogation" techniques of the GPU. And it is almost implied that the absurdity of the statement that Nicolaev laughed at the judges was very clear to the journalist.

Was Duranty the only one to perpetuate these horrible lies? No. But was he one of the most respected journalists at the time, who was also considered to be the leading authority on such matters? Yes. He had a responsibility to tell the truth. Given his popularity and fame, there is little chance that he would have "disappeared" or been arrested had the truth been written. Yes, he would have been expelled and more than likely replaced with someone less scrupulous who would have been willing to continue lying to the public. But the truth would have been out there. And with his clout, possibly there would have been some kind of investigation by international relief agencies.

In a paradoxical twist, the *New York Times*'s own Harold Denny did write an article which discussed some of the repression in Russia at the time. "The press, radio, cinema, theatre

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<sup>48</sup> *Time*, January 7, 1935

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, January 7, 1935

and the educational system are all rigidly controlled. And should the Soviet citizen express unorthodox political views they may bring him very bad luck”<sup>50</sup> relayed Denny. He further observed, “Foreign residents, especially members of the diplomatic corps and newspaper correspondents, in whose acts and thought the Soviet authorities are especially interested, assume that their sayings and doings and goings and comings are observed and noted. They are so certain that their telephone calls are listened to that no one discusses anything private over the wire.”<sup>51</sup> Denny could be seen as being just as guilty as Duranty and other foreign journalists in writing favorable pieces about the Soviet government and Russia. This is one article that exemplifies that it was possible to get a critical article out of Russia and have it printed in the West.

In June 1937, the *New York Times* ran a lengthy article authored by Harold Denny in which he discussed the arrest of several Red Army Marshals and Generals. Denny wrote “The Soviet Government exerts such complete control over news at its source that it is utterly impossible to confirm rumors such as those current now. Experience here, however, enables one to judge much by the tone of the official press—by phrases used and, perhaps, best of all by the omissions. And the tone it used now certainly does not discourage the belief that momentous events are occurring behind the scenes.”<sup>52</sup>

Interestingly, an article appears in the *New York Times* on June 10, 1937, sent via “special cable” but no author listed, that makes a very blunt statement about the state of Russian politics by stating “If it is really the case that in the army, in the fleet, in industry, in the

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<sup>50</sup> The *New York Times*, May 5, 1935 pg. SM11

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, May 5, 1935 pg. SM11

<sup>52</sup> The *New York Times*, June 10, 1937, pg. 1

police, in party organizations and in the Communist International scores of trusted comrades in high and responsible posts have been acting as paid spies and saboteurs for foreign powers, then, Russia after hard on twenty years of Bolshevik rule must be more corrupt and more debased than any Stat in history—incredibly so.”<sup>53</sup>

Four days later, on June 14, 1937, the *New York Times* published an article written by Anne O’Hare McCormick about the elimination of Red Army Marshals. She expressed an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that was enveloping foreign correspondents in Russia. All were clamoring for answers to the purge of the Red Army. She wrote, “And the whole point of the grim story unfolding in the U.S.S.R. is that the facts on which to form a judgment are not available.”<sup>54</sup> Quite clearly, American journalists in Russia were very aware of the situation. There were even those, such as Ms. McCormick and Harold Denny, who defied the Soviets and wrote articles depicting the truth as closely as possible...whether or not the Soviet Union and the Government were cast in a favorable light. On June 24, 1937, Harold Denny wrote of the purges, “The purge in the Communist party far overshadows the one whereby Stalin rid himself of oppositionists at the finish of his victory over Trotsky.”<sup>55</sup>

There were journalists who printed the truth of the situation in Russia. But others, like Walter Duranty, did not. They could not have been blind to the starvation, suffering and fear that had swallowed Russian society. We may never know if Duranty deliberately

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, June 10, 1937, pg. 7

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, June 14, 1937, pg. 22

<sup>55</sup> The *New York Times*, June 24, 1937, pg. 1

printed those lies so he could curry favors from the Government or if he did so to protect himself and his position within the Soviet Union.

## American Opinion of Stalin and Russia before World War II

With all the media reports and the omissions and manipulations of the facts, it is a wonder that Americans knew what was going on at all. Just what did Americans think of Russia and her leaders before World War II? How aware were they of the events and situations in Russia? There are a plethora of organizations that measure public opinion on almost any topic, from A to Z. In this section, I will be dealing solely with American opinions on topics that are related to Russia and her involvement in world affairs before World War II.

In early 1937, the AIPO did a survey for American public opinion on totalitarianism. Below are a few results from that study:

“Have you paid any attention to articles on Fascism and Communism?

“Yes 41%                      No 47%                      No Opinion 12%

“If you had to choose between Fascism and Communism, which would you choose?

Asked of 41% of the total sample who had paid attention to articles on Fascism and Communism.

“Fascism 17%                      Communism 11%                      No Opinion 13%”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 869

From the results, it would seem that Americans either had incorrect perceptions or an incomplete understanding of the tenets of each ideology. In June 1938, and again in January 1939, the AIPO again asked which form of government, Fascism or Communism, the respondents would prefer. Below are the results of the follow up studies:

“If you had to choose between Fascism and Communism, which would you choose?”

“June 21, 1938:

“Fascism 24% Communism 24% No answer or no opinion 52%

“January 20, 1939:

“Fascism 25% Communism 24% No answer or no opinion 50% Neither 1%”<sup>57</sup>

In June 1937, the American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) polled participants about World War I. The questions related to Russia asked were:

“Do you consider any nation or nations chiefly guilty of causing the World War?”

“Yes 45% No 30% No opinion 25%

“45% of a national sample who said they considered that one or more nations were guilty of causing the first World War were asked: Which?”

“Germany 77%

“France 5%

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 869

“Great Britain 5%

“Russia 3%

“Austria 4%

“All others 6%

100% of those who blamed a nation<sup>58</sup>

Surprising is the lack of specific mention of the United States as being an aggressor. Also surprising is that Americans placed more blame on Germany, France, Great Britain and Austria than they do Russia for causing World War I. At this point in history, we had only recognized the Soviet Union as a legitimate government four years prior whereas we had cordial diplomatic ties with Great Britain and France.

The following month, the AIPO conducted yet another survey of American opinion. This time, they asked participants the following question:

“If you had to choose, which kind of government would you prefer to live under: the kind in Germany or the kind in Russia?

“Germany 33%

“Russia 21%

“No Opinion 22%

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<sup>58</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 202



“Don’t Know About Them 24%”<sup>59</sup>

In June 1938, the AIPO asked “Which do you think is worse, Communism or Fascism?”<sup>60</sup> Of those asked, 31% said Communism was the worst, 22% said Fascism was the worst, and 47% said they had no opinion. In February 1939, the AIPO asked participants “Which do you think is the greater danger to America—the Communists living in this country or the Nazis living in this country?”<sup>61</sup> 32% believed that Communists were a danger, 29 said that Nazis were a danger, 4% believed that both were dangers, 1% felt that neither presented any danger, and 34% had no opinion on the subject. The results were interesting, although it is difficult to imagine that any participants felt any real threat from Communism or Fascism in this country. Both ideologies were abstract concepts that were the politics of countries on another continent. America still possessed an isolationist attitude at this point in history.

In comparing Stalin and Hitler, and of the effects that perception may have had on American opinions of both leaders, Ralph Levering wrote “Joseph Stalin may well have stood for equally bad or even worse things, but he was a kitten compared to the German tiger in his ability as well as his apparent aspiration to upset the international status quo.”<sup>62</sup> Levering also points out that in mid-1939, American attitudes toward Russian ideology, as compared to Germany, took on three varying kinds. The first was apathy. America was still feeling the effects of the Great Depression and was holding its collective breath in hopes that another recession was not coming. Most Americans were too focused on the

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<sup>59</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 869

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 869

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 869

<sup>62</sup> *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, Ralph Levering, pg. 16

events at home to really care about the matters of foreign countries. The second variation was a position held by many conservatives in Congress, Nazism was born out of Communism. However, the liberals, who held the third varying attitude, believed that the differences between Communism and Nazism were too great and therefore could not co-exist.

According to Benjamin Alpers, “American understandings of dictatorship were rooted in interpretations of events abroad especially in Europe.”<sup>63</sup> In looking at history, and specifically at Russia, most of the European dictatorships have always had leaders who were shrouded in mystery. The only notable exception is *Il Duce*, Benito Mussolini. Mussolini’s ego would not permit him to pass up an interview during which he would talk only about himself and his own accomplishments. But Stalin and Hitler were very secretive. Any press releases about them, and indeed their respective regimes, were prepared so that they would not look bad in the eyes of the world.

Alpers also explains how the term “dictatorship” began to have a negative connotation in the United States. He writes, “In the early years of the Great Depression, dictatorship was an important political fantasy for a heterogeneous group of Americans. Although most Americans were not attracted to dictatorship, for some it seemed necessary in light of the socioeconomic crisis, either as a permanent, more efficient solution to the problems of modern life or, in the classical sense, as a temporary measure to put democracy back on course.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Roosevelt’s presidency was viewed by many as a potential dictatorship, especially when he was elected for an unprecedented fourth term in office. It was only in

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<sup>63</sup> *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, Benjamin Alpers, pg. 2

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, Benjamin Alpers, pg. 3

the latter half of the 1930's that "dictatorship became the evil against which nearly everyone in American political life struggled."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, Benjamin Alpers, pg. 3

## Chapter II: Russia Becomes an Ally

### Russia Betrayed: Hitler Breaks the Non-Aggression Pact

In 1934, Stalin pursued the policy of Collective Security. It was then that Stalin realized that Nazism was a threat to Russia. He aimed to build an Eastern European alliance to protect Russia's western borders. However, this plan hit a snag. Poland refused to agree to such an alliance. But he was able to establish relations with the United States. In September of the same year, Russia joined the League of Nations. Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet ambassador to the US, used the League of Nations to articulate and communicate Stalin's wishes for peace, collective security and disarmament. However, when the League was unable to stop Italy from invading Ethiopia, its failure as a peacekeeping body was once again apparent.

In 1935, the Comintern espoused the Popular Front policy. At the Seventh Congress in July-August of that year, the Comintern "announced that all 'progressive forces' (workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and intelligentsia) should cooperate against fascism..."<sup>1</sup> Communists, socialist and liberals were all ordered to work together. In 1936, collective security failed and Germany blatantly defied the Versailles Treaty and invaded the

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<sup>1</sup> *Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century*, David MacKenzie and Michael Curran, pg. 218

Rhineland. In doing so, the invasion shattered the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935. At this point in time, Stalin realized he could not count on the West to fight Nazi aggression. When the West was apathetic toward the Spanish Civil War, he grew even more suspicious and distrustful of the West. Stalin provided military aid to Spain to fight off Franco and his fascists. In 1937, he stopped most aid to Spain and began purging the Communist Party.

In 1939, the West and Germany both courted Stalin for Russia's support in the war. France and England extended a guarantee to protect Poland and Romania, but did so too late. By this time, Stalin held out little hope they could be counted on to fight Hitler. In his speech at the Eighteenth Party Congress, Stalin accused "the West of trying to provoke a Soviet-German conflict..."<sup>2</sup> We now know that Germany was already negotiating with Russia at this point. Hitler was planning to invade Poland and was looking to get an agreement in place with Stalin before doing so.

On August 23, 1939, the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union was officially ratified. Stalin firmly believed that this agreement had guaranteed Russia would not be invaded by Hitler. It also encouraged Hitler to attack Poland. The pact promised neutrality if either party was attacked by a third party. As part of this pact, Russia was bound to supply Germany with raw materials and, as a result, became economically dependent on Germany. There were secret protocols to the treaty. They were:

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<sup>2</sup> *Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century*, David MacKenzie and Michael Curran, pg. 219

“1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States...the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of Germany and the USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

“2. In the event of a territorial and political arrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San. The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only definitely determined in the course of further political developments...”<sup>1</sup>

G.E.R. Gedye authored an article that was printed in the *New York Times* on September 1, 1939 recounting Molotov’s speech about the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact. Of this speech, Mr. Gedye said, “Mr. Molotoff’s speech left the impression that the Soviet’s decision to sever relations with the Western democracies had been taken reluctantly after considerable snubbing, contrasted with assiduous courting by the Germans.”<sup>2</sup> According to Gedye, Molotoff explained that “the Soviet Union stood for mutual non-interference in internal affairs between States. It followed the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence of socialist and capitalist countries.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century*, David MacKenzie and Michael Curran, pg. 223

<sup>2</sup> The *New York Times*, September 1, 1939, pg. 8

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, September 1, 1939, pg. 8

Molotov's justification for the pact with Germany, according to Gedye, was that "history...showed that the peoples of the Soviet Union and Germany had suffered mutual hostility and needed a treaty of peace. The difference in their ideologies and political systems should not cause hostile political relations any more than with other capitalist States. Only enemies of the Soviet Union fermented hostility between the Soviet Union and Germany."<sup>4</sup> Molotov also parroted Stalin's comments made at the Eighteenth Party Congress by saying, "Those attacking the pact are enemies of both the Soviet Union and Germany, seeking to provoke trouble between them."<sup>5</sup>

Two months later, the *New York Times* printed an article regarding Stalin's belief that the Allies were to blame for World War II. He raged against France and England, saying they had rejected Germany's olive branch and Soviet attempts to end the war early. The article incorporated a statement, issued by Stalin that had been printed in *Pravda*. The statement is as follows:

"First, it was not Germany who attacked France and England, but France and England who attacked Germany, thus assuming responsibility for the present war.

"Second, after the outbreak of hostilities Germany addressed France and England with peace proposals while the Soviet Union openly supported Germany's peace proposals because it believed and continues to believe that the earliest termination of the war would fundamentally alleviate the position of all countries and nations.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, September 1, 1939, pg. 8

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, September 1, 1939, pg. 8

“Third, the ruling circles of England and France rudely declined both Germany’s peace proposals and the attempts of the Soviet Union to attain the earliest termination of the war.”<sup>6</sup>

The Non-Aggression Pact surprised the international community. Both the Soviet Union and Germany had two diametrically opposed political ideologies and a long standing mutual hatred of one another. According to Geoffrey Roberts in his book *The Unholy Alliance*, “A more concrete picture of Soviet-German trade is given by the following figures of raw materials supplied to Germany between January 1940 and June 1941:

“1.5 million tons of grain

“100,000 tons of cotton

“2 million tons of petroleum products

“1.5 million tons of timber

“140,000 tons of manganese

“26,000 tons of chromium”<sup>7</sup>

When compared to the materials that the Soviet Union received from Germany, it is clear there is a discrepancy, with Germany receiving a greater bounty. But, as Roberts points

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<sup>6</sup> The *New York Times*, November 30, 1939, pg. 7

<sup>7</sup> *The Unholy Alliance*, Geoffrey Roberts, pg 176



out, “it is ...very difficult to weigh up the economic value of raw materials relative to manufactures, particularly in the absence of any detailed inventory of the manufactures.”<sup>8</sup>

David E. Murphy in his book *What Stalin Knew*, presented a very plausible theory as well. Murphy wrote of Stalin’s reason for signing the treaty, “Actually, Stalin’s underlying motivation for the 1939 treaty was to render the German conquest of Poland inevitable. This, he hoped would result in a major conflict between Germany and Poland’s allies, France and Great Britain.”<sup>9</sup>

One area that did not benefit from this agreement was military cooperation. Russian pleas for armaments from Germany went unfulfilled. They needed hulls for their submarines, 3 in all. They only received the hull for one of them. They did not fare any better when requesting aircraft. They only received 10 combat aircraft from the Germans. The Germans did manage to supply tanks, ammunition, and other artillery, but there is no evidence of the final numbers. Despite all the broken promises, the Soviets did allow German ships to dock at Murmansk.

In his book, *Mein Kampf*, published years before, Hitler clearly stated his intention to invade Russia and claim it for *lebensraum* for the German people. One of his justifications of this was that the Communists and Bolsheviks were filled with Jews. So, it should not have been a surprise to learn that Hitler began planning this invasion of Russia in December 1940, even though it was not executed until June 22, 1941. On December 18, 1940, Hitler signed the directive for what was called “Operation Barbarossa” with an

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Geoffrey Roberts, pg 177

<sup>9</sup> *What Stalin Knew*, David E. Murphy, pg. 245

original date for the invasion being set at May 15, 1941. Hitler expected to be victorious in only a few short months and was unprepared for the harshness of the Russian winters. German soldiers possessed inadequate clothing and supplies. Many would freeze or starve to death. Hitler's fervent belief that Russia would not put up much of a fight would prove to be his downfall.

Despite warnings of a negative economic impact on Germany, Hitler, determined to march on Russia, was still able to see benefits for Germany. If he could defeat Russia quickly, German soldiers could finally return to the labor force. He also realized that the Ukraine was a good source of agriculture and oil. And finally, not only would he succeed in isolating the Allies, he would have a plethora of Russians he would use as slave labor to help bolster the Germany economy.

Stalin had severely weakened the Red Army beginning in 1936 when he purged the military of almost 30,000 members, a number that included almost all of his generals. This left Russia vulnerable to an attack by Germany. Additionally, Stalin had reliable intelligence from one of his many spies, Dr. Richard Sorge, that Hitler was amassing troops on the borders and a plan to invade was in place. However, much like Roosevelt chose to ignore his intelligence on Stalin, Stalin ignored the intelligence presented to him on the impending attack. As a result, the Red Army was ill prepared to fend off the earliest hours of the attack. Roberts offers up a theory on Stalin's lack of action on this intelligence. "The most popular explanation for Stalin's catastrophic misreading of the situation is that it was a combination of psychological and institutional factors..."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Unholy Alliance*, Geoffrey Roberts, pg 211

Hitler had underestimated Stalin and Russia. Because of Stalin's Five Year Plans, Russia experienced an era of rapid industrialization and an increase in the production of military equipment. As the war waged on, the Red Army grew stronger. Even though Germany had the numerical advantage over Russia, the Red Army possessed more weaponry and had immediate access to tanks, whereas the German Army was forced to wait for additional tanks and weapons to arrive from Germany. As an example, the Red Army had 23,106 tanks in use versus the 3,350 tanks the German Army had spread out over the region. Two of the major disadvantages the Red Army possessed were that their artillery units had no way of moving guns to regions that needed them the most and a severe shortage of ammunition. Some statistics show that only one out of every 10 guns the Red Army possessed actually had ammunition and if someone was killed in action, the person next to him was expected to pick up the gun and continue fighting.

The *New York Times* printed an article on June 23, 1941 that told of the invasion. The tone of this article is interesting in that it is somewhat mocking, at times jubilant over the invasion. Buried on page 16, the writer painted a most unflattering and inaccurate picture of Stalin, "To appease him [Hitler], Stalin had broken the so called 'democratic front' which Russia itself had sponsored; he betrayed the international Communist movement of which he was the leader; he had groveled in the Nazi dirt at Hitler's feet. Small good it did him."<sup>11</sup> The author also commented on the moral implications of Stalin's actions. "Equally clear is the moral of Stalin's own double-dealing. He had broken faith with his potential allies, France and Britain. He had deliberately give Hitler the signal to start this

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<sup>11</sup> The *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, pg. 16

war in 1939, by promising a hands-off attitude toward Poland.”<sup>12</sup> Toward the end of the article, the author’s derision for both regimes became extremely clear. “This is not time for idle satisfaction in the news that two violent totalitarian regimes, both of which are detestable to us, are now engaged in the pleasant process of destroying one another.”<sup>13</sup> The comments would be repulsive if the author wasn’t merely channeling public sentiment at that time.

Six days later, the *New York Times* printed another article about the German invasion of Russia. Edwin James wrote about how Hitler had violated yet another agreement and struck at Russia, Germany’s economic trade partner for the last two years. James commented on the surprise of the timing of the attack, and speculated on what Germany stood to gain in its defeat of Russia. “It is fair enough to call the German campaign against Russia sensational. Few expected it yet, although many had believed that eventually Russia would be a target of the ambition of the dictator of the Third Reich. The land of the Soviets offers enormous booty. There are the rich grain fields of the Ukraine and, further on, there are the copious oil fields of Batum and Baku.”<sup>14</sup>

## Wartime Conferences

During the Soviet counteroffensive during 1943 and 1945, tensions between Russia and the West were growing. Each side was afraid the other would make a separate peace, even though no evidence existed to fuel that fear. The more ground gained by the Soviets only

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<sup>12</sup> The *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, pg. 16

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, June 23, 1941, pg. 16

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, June 29, 1941, pg. E3

toughened Stalin's attitude. At this point, it was clear that Stalin's war ambitions were to keep the communist regime and the Soviet frontiers in tact and to remain in total control. While the Soviet Union was part of the formation of the United Nations in 1942, Stalin had no intentions of accepting democratic ideals. He would not make any major concessions to other countries.

This section is going to deal with the three most well known conferences of World War II: Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. Within each section, I will discuss the goals, agendas and achievements of each conference as well as the impact on the political relations between each attending country.

## Tehran

The conference in Tehran was the first wartime conference in which all "Big Three", the US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, had attended at the same time. Taking place at the Soviet embassy in Tehran November 28, 1943 and December 1, 1943, the main point on the agenda was the establishment of a second front in Europe. The conference also included a separate agreement to recognize Iran's independence. Robert Conquest wrote of Roosevelt's feelings toward Stalin upon meeting him for the first time at Tehran, "This was Roosevelt's first encounter with Stalin, and it is hard to see why Stalin summed him up as a pick pocket...Roosevelt had formed the impression that Stalin was 'get-at-able', by which he meant that personal persuasion would induce him to change his mind."<sup>15</sup> But what of Churchill's opinion of Stalin? According to Edvard Radzinsky, "Churchill knew very well

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<sup>15</sup> *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, Robert Conquest, pg. 262

that Stalin could not be trusted, and he tried to act in the way they both [Roosevelt and Churchill] both favored.”<sup>16</sup>

Before the conference, Roosevelt made several concessions to Stalin in order to make the conference happen. One of the concessions was the location of the conference itself. Roosevelt and Churchill preferred a Mediterranean location. However Stalin, being afraid to fly, preferred to stay close to home and take a train to the conference. So, Roosevelt was willing to give that to him.

Several plans were agreed upon and made during the session at Tehran. Some of the conclusions were:

1. Yugoslavia should be given military aid.
2. Woo Turkey to join the Allied forces by the year’s end.
3. Russia would assist Turkey if needed.
4. Military staff of each respective country needed to maintain frequent contact with each other.
5. Great Britain and the United States promised to send troops to Western Europe in Spring 1944.
6. Poland’s borders would be along the Curzon Line and the Oder and Neisse Rivers.
7. There was a tentative agreement to a United Nations organization.

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<sup>16</sup> *Stalin...*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 498

8. Russia agreed to battle Japan once Germany was defeated.
9. The Axis powers would be split up and controlled by the Big Three after the war.

Stalin agreed to cooperate with the United States and Great Britain on the above outlined points. However, it would be on his terms. Conquest commented on those terms, “As to the results of Tehran, the Western powers now in effect agreed to Stalin’s frontiers...Stalin got ‘exactly what he wanted’, while Great Britain and the United States had a few vague promises in exchange.”<sup>17</sup>

As to what the specific demands were, Stalin insisted that Churchill and Roosevelt espouse Stalin’s regime and his supporters in Yugoslavia. He also insisted that they permit him control of the borders between Poland and the Soviet Union. They acquiesced. They also agreed to allow Stalin to set up puppet regimes throughout Eastern Europe. Radzinsky summed up the truth of the controlling interests of the Axis powers after defeat, “The percentages—the idea that the Boss would accept anything less than one hundred percent authority—were a comic fiction.”<sup>18</sup>

It was during the Tehran conference that Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill discussed Operation Overlord, aka “D-Day.” They spent several days trying to decide when it should be, who should be in charge of the Allied troops, and where it should all begin.

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<sup>17</sup> *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, Robert Conquest, pg. 263

<sup>18</sup> *Stalin...*, Edward Radzinsky, pg. 497

## Yalta

The next meeting of the “Big Three” was at Livadia Palace in Yalta on February 4, 1945 through February 11, 1945. This would be the final meeting for Roosevelt, who died two months after the end of this conference. All three leaders came into this meeting with their own agendas. Roosevelt wanted Soviet assistance in invading Japan and had hoped he could get Stalin to agree to participate in the United Nations. Churchill wanted free elections and democracy in Eastern Europe (he was alone in this demand). Stalin insisted on a Soviet sphere of political influence in Eastern Europe. Together they worked on a plan to govern Germany after the war ended. Stalin believed he had the upper hand in the discussions and thought he could dictate the course of the conference.

Before Stalin went into Yalta, there was a cloud over his head. After the fall of Poland, 20,000+ Polish officers were arrested and imprisoned on Russian soil. Keeping so many enemies in Russia worried Stalin. He ordered most of them to be executed. He released about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of them. Poles began inquiring about their loved ones who had served in the Polish military but had seemed to vanish. The Polish Government in Exile in London demanded an answer to the missing officers’ whereabouts. Stalin told them that the missing men had run away at the early stages of the war. Still not believing his version of events, the Polish government in exile pushed for more. Stalin, in the presence of a Polish ambassador, rang up Beria and Molotov to ask if all of the prisoners had been released. They answered yes. However, this deception would come back to haunt Stalin.

During the German occupation of Poland, the Germany army discovered mass graves in the Katyn forest. The graves contained the bodies of the “missing” Polish officers. They had



been shot, most multiple times in the head and neck. Upon hearing about the discovery, Stalin was quick to blame the Germans and "...of course accused Hitler of a grotesque provocation."<sup>19</sup> Once caught, Stalin retracted his statement. He said the prisoners had been sent to Smolensk to work on construction projects in that area. To complete the lie, set up a special investigative committee to look into what really happened. Of course, the committee members were all Stalin loyalists and unsurprisingly, issued a finding that supported Stalin's version of events. Upon receiving the committee's report, "Roosevelt and Churchill had to take their ally's word."<sup>20</sup>

Stalin agreed to enter into the war against Japan under one condition—America had to recognize Mongolia's independence as well as Soviet interest in Manchurian railways. Roosevelt agreed to this condition. However, it was a decision that many Americans believed gave Stalin a green light to expand Russia's influence to China and Japan. Eventually, Stalin would violate the agreements in order to form the Soviet bloc.

The main goals of Yalta were the following:

1. Germany's unconditional surrender was a priority; it would be divided into four occupied zones after the war.
2. Germany would be demilitarized and denazified.
3. German reparations would be made in part by forced labor of Nazi soldiers
4. Reparation council would be located in Russia

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<sup>19</sup> *Stalin...*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 498

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 498

5. Nazi war criminals would be captured and stand trial for their crimes.

The meeting seemed to have ended on a good note. The leaders believed they had achieved success in the agreements made. Roosevelt left “convinced that there would be peaceful relations ‘as far into the future as any of us could imagine’.”<sup>21</sup> How did Stalin achieve his goals? There are some who believe that “When the Big Three met again at Yalta, in February 1945, it is sometimes believed that Stalin achieved his aims in part because a Soviet spy was present in the American delegation in the form of Alger Hiss...”<sup>22</sup>

But that wouldn’t last. Once the conference ended, “Stalin reverted to, or rather continued, his old ways. He deeply offended the Americans by refusing to allow them to send officers into Poland to look after American prisoners of war released by the Soviet advance.”<sup>23</sup>

Stalin did not stop there. According to Conquest, “He soon infuriated Roosevelt with a barrage of accusations that the West was conducting secret negotiations with the Germans, intending to use them against the USSR.”<sup>24</sup> Finally, Roosevelt had had enough of Stalin and his deceptions. His lies were too late realized, though as “...only a few days before his death, he said in private, ‘We can’t do business with Stalin. He has broken every one of the promises made at Yalta.’”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, Robert Conquest, pg. 264

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, Robert Conquest, pg. 264

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, Robert Conquest, pg. 264

<sup>24</sup> *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, Robert Conquest, pg. 265

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, Robert Conquest, pg. 265

## Potsdam

Held July 16, 1945 through August 2, 1945, this would be the final Western-Soviet meetings. With Roosevelt's death in April 1945, he was replaced by the new President of the United States, Harry Truman. And while Churchill attended the opening days of the conference, he was called back to London to take part in the general election, which he lost to Clement Attlee. Attlee returned to Potsdam to continue the conference with the other leaders.

Before Potsdam, Averill Harriman met with President Truman to give him some valuable information on Stalin. He had "informed Truman that Stalin attached importance to aid from the Allies, that he needed to rebuild his ruined country, and that consequently pressure could be brought to bear on him at Potsdam."<sup>26</sup> But it turned out to be incorrect information. Stalin "not only did not want help from the Allies, he was eager to party company with them."<sup>27</sup>

The goals of this conference pertained to the occupation of Germany, and the prospects of Poland. During the discussion of the occupation of Germany, several things were accomplished...demilitarization, democratization, decentralization and the zones of occupation. It was also determined that any industry that had military applications, such as shipyard and aircraft factories, would be destroyed. When it came to Poland, Stalin was firm in his demands. He wanted the West to recognize Soviet control of Poland as legitimate and he wanted Polish nationals in the British Army to be permitted to return to

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<sup>26</sup> *Stalin...*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 510

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 511

Poland. However, according to Radzinsky “Truman and Churchill in a joint demarche had stood firm for a democratic Poland.”<sup>28</sup>

Stalin had decided to see just how much he could get out of the Allies. He was shrewd in his methods. “Stalin had won every round. He had done so as in the past by contriving, at least part of the time, to be likeable. He played the card of Russia’s titanic battles to press for concessions from the West. In fact, he overplayed it, thought the West usually forgave him.”<sup>29</sup>

In the end, Stalin felt victorious with his gains at Potsdam. “...while making ‘concessions’ when pushing and abandoning various implausible claims to territory in Allied or neutral hands...Stalin in effect secured his position in Eastern Europe.”<sup>30</sup> As a typical con man, Stalin was done trying to work with the Allies. The ruse was not unnoticed. Conquest wrote, “...it was now that revulsion began to set in on the part of his Western colleagues. Truman found him impressive, good-natured, polite and willing to listen to views straightforwardly put. But Truman decided at once that the Soviet Union should not be allowed to occupy any part of Japan.”<sup>31</sup>

Potsdam was significant in that Truman told Stalin of the A-bomb. After a successful testing in the Nevada desert during the conference, Truman decided to inform the Soviet leader of a powerful new weapon the US had developed and tested. Of course, Stalin was not very surprised. He had been receiving regular intelligence from Soviet spies regarding

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<sup>28</sup> *Stalin...*, Edvard Radzinsky, pg. 510

<sup>29</sup> *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, Robert Conquest, pg. 268

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, Robert Conquest, pg. 267

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, Robert Conquest, pg. 267

the bomb. “With such a devastating weapon, Truman no longer needed Stalin in the Far East, and Allied discussions became distinctly frosty with Truman, Stalin and Churchill met at Potsdam...”<sup>32</sup>

## What Americans Thought of Stalin during World War II

1939 was a year of surprises for the United States, as well as the rest of the world, when Russia and German signed a treaty with each other. Americans had a hostile reaction to this event. When Russia invaded Finland, the American opinion of Russia deteriorated. According to Levering, “If Stalin and Molotov had stayed up nights during the fall of 1939 thinking of ways to antagonize Americans, they could hardly have found a more successful one than the attack on Finland. Many Americans thought that Finland was a noble outpost of democracy In Europe; they did not realize that in recent years many of its leaders had developed pronounced profascist tendencies.”<sup>33</sup> This attitude was apparent in a Gallup poll that was conducted in December 1939. He found a profound acrimony toward Russia and American supporters of Russia. Additionally, he found that 99% of those involved in this poll preferred Finland to win the battle with Russia.

In 1940, *Time* named Stalin their Man of the Year, not because he was a great man who did great things. He was named as such “because it seemed to be one of those years when evil triumphed over good. In *Time*’s opinion, Stalin had ‘matched himself with Adolf Hitler as the world’s most hated man.”<sup>34</sup> How shocking it must have been for American readers to

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<sup>32</sup> *A History of Modern Russia*, Robert Service, pgs. 272-273

<sup>33</sup> *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, Ralph Levering, pg. 32

<sup>34</sup> *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, Ralph Levering, pg. 35

see this. After all, not only did Americans hate Stalin because he outlawed religion and personal property in Russia, but he had forced Europe even deeper into the war by signing the agreement with Hitler.

In July 1940, a year before Russia was attacked by Germany, *Fortune* asked participants in a survey, “Which one of these comes closest to what you think the government should do about Communist sympathizers? Nazi sympathizers?” The results were interesting. 16.6% of the respondents believed that we should keep track of Communist sympathizers’ activities so they could be arrested if necessary and 13.1% believed the same should be done for Nazi sympathizers. 32.9% responded that the Communists should be prevented from organizing and agitating and 28.2% responded the same about Nazis. By far, the most interesting result is that 37.8% of the respondents said they think Communist sympathizers should be jailed or deported. Almost half, 46.1% to be exact believed that Nazi sympathizers should be deported or jailed. It would have been interesting to see if any of the results would have changed to the same set of question after Germany invaded Russia and after the end of the war.

In October 1941, just four short months after Germany invaded Russia, *Fortune* posed the question, “Which one of the following statements most nearly describes your present feelings about the Russian and German governments?”<sup>35</sup> 4.6% of the respondents answered that they believed the Russian government was worse than that in Germany. 35.1% answered they were equally wicked while 35% said that, given the choices, Russia was a

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<sup>35</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 870

little better than Germany and 8.5% of those responding said that they thought the Russian government was a lot better than Germany.

Another question posed to *Fortune* readers in October 1941 was, “Regardless of how you feel toward Russia, which of these policies do you think we should pursue toward her now?”<sup>36</sup> 51.4% of respondents thought the United States should work with Russia and provide aid in a concerted effort to defeat Germany. 13.5 % thought the United States should adopt a “hands off” policy and provide nothing to Russia. 21.9% believed we join Russia and England in fighting Hitler. 13.2% had no opinion on the subject.

There is little variance in American opinions about Stalin and the Soviet Union between the end of 1939 and the German invasion in June 1941. “The changes that occurred were largely favorable. But even these resulted not from any friendly overtures by either Russia or the United States, but rather from the fact that Russia largely disappeared from the public spotlight as well as for the obvious reason that attitudes could hardly have become more unfavorable than they were at the end of 1939.”<sup>37</sup>

On June 22, 1941, Churchill’s speech on Great Britain’s position on the invasion of Russia was broadcast on the radio. He described the attack and called Hitler a bloodthirsty monster. In his speech, he also denied any connection to Communism, stating that he had been against it for over 20 years. He did, however, say that he had compassion for the Russian soldiers who were willing to sacrifice their lives to protect and defend their country. He pleaded with the United States to join Great Britain in fighting against the

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<sup>36</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 961

<sup>37</sup> *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, Ralph Levering, pg. 35

Nazis. But “most Americans were still unwilling to heed Churchill’s plea to jump into the battle against Hitler, but undoubtedly were moved by his words...”<sup>38</sup>

When asked by Gallup who they would like to win the war between Germany and Russia, 72% of the respondents indicated Russia, 4% indicated Germany, 17% didn’t care and 7% had no opinion on the subject. When asked who they *thought* would win, 47% said Germany, whereas only 22% responded Russia. According to the same Gallup poll, 21% believed that the United States should have entered the war immediately. “By early June 1941...Americans have concluded by the overwhelming margin of eighteen to one that they would like to see the Soviet Union defeat Nazi Germany.”<sup>39</sup>

In February 1942, *Fortune* asked the same question it originally asked in October 1941, “Regardless of how you feel toward Russia, which of these policies do you think we should pursue toward her now?”<sup>40</sup> The responses were a little different this time around. 4.4% of the respondents believed the United States should have stopped assisting Russia; the percentages fell 9.5% from the October 1941 poll. 43.2% felt we should work with Russia and provide any aid needed to defeat the Axis powers; 8.2% lower than October 1941. 41.1% responded that we should treat Russia as full partner; up from 21.9% from the previous October.

In April 1943, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) asked a cross section of Americans, “What would you say is the main thing that might cause trouble between the

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<sup>38</sup> *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, Ralph Levering, pg. 40

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, Ralph Levering, pg. 50

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 961



United States and Russia after the war?”<sup>41</sup> 26% of the respondents said that the difference in politics would prove to be troublesome. 13% said they thought that Russia’s demands for additional territory would be a potential source of trouble for the two countries.

By the war’s end, it seemed inevitable that Russia and the United States would turn on each other. The ideological battle that ensued would span five decades. But before the end of the war, there seemed to be a bit of optimism left in the US for a more cordial relationship with Russia. In January 1945, *Fortune* asked “Thinking back for a moment to our relations with Russia a few years before the war, do you think that we shall get along better with Russia in the future than we did in the past, not so well, or about the same?”<sup>42</sup> 48.3% of those who responded said they believed the US and Russia would definitely get along better. 22% thought the opposite and 20.1% thought the relationship would stay the same. In March 1945, the AIPO asked what Americans thought we would gain from Russia. 33% thought we would gain a trade relationship with Russia, 15% thought we would gain the friendship of Russia, while 21% voiced distrust of Russia. The same March AIPO survey also asked Americans what we had to fear from Russia. 19% felt that the political ideas of Russia were a threat to us. 12% thought that the domination of Europe was a valid fear, 14% feared Russia would start a war with us and 29% believed that we had nothing to fear because Russia would never cooperate with us.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 962

<sup>42</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 962

## Chapter III: The Cold War: Where Did It

### All Go Wrong?

#### The Origins of the Cold War

There are some who believe the origins of the Cold War are firmly rooted in World War I. Others believe it took hold in 1947. The distrust of Russia, one of the main causes of the Cold War, goes back to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In 1917, the Russian Revolution takes place. One of Lenin's first acts was to negotiate peace with Germany, one which gave Germany a large section of territory in Western Europe. In 1918, the Allies intervened in the Russian Civil War. They assisted the White Army, but to no avail. The Bolsheviks were victorious. Because of the Allied involvement, Russia not longer trusted the Western powers. Throughout the years, relations between the two countries would be strained and tenuous, at best.

In September 1945, Igor Gouzenko, a cipher clerk for the Soviet embassy in Canada, defected to the West. When he made the decision to do so, he walked out of the Soviet embassy with a briefcase containing over 100 documents about Soviet espionage efforts in the West. He first went to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. No one there believed what he had to say. He

next approached the *Ottawa Journal* but the night editor there was not interested and told Gouzenko to go to the Department of Justice. He did but no one was on duty at night. He went home and gathered his family. His neighbor across the hall hid them, as he feared for his family's safety.

When he finally found someone who would take him seriously and review the evidence he had, the results were the arrests of 39 Canadians suspected of being Soviet spies and 18 convictions. A Royal Commission of Inquiry informed other countries, such as the United States and Great Britain, as to what was happening. These countries were warned that Soviet spies had likely infiltrated their governments as well. Gouzenko proved invaluable in assisting with multiple espionage investigations. He helped to expose numerous Soviet agents worldwide. By this time, Americans were already anti-Communist and this whole affair did nothing to quell those fears. If anything, it intensified them.

Because of the tremendous amount of respect earned by the Red Army and Russia, communism was highly popular immediately following World War II. Great Britain and the United States were concerned by this popularity. They were afraid that communist party victories would lead to sweeping political changes in Western Europe. In 1946, in an effort to contain the spread of communism, the United States and Great Britain made efforts to consolidate Germany under Western rule. That ambition only caused the Soviet Union to tighten its grip and expand its reach by creating satellite governments. Stalin was using communism to control half of Europe by now.

In 1947, the civil war in Greece was raging. Stalin kept his promise to Churchill and did not intervene. However, Albania and Yugoslavia had their own ideas. They went against Stalin and sent aid to the National Popular Liberation Army; The British retaliated by sending aid to the royalist Greek troops. But being nearly bankrupt, the British government could not maintain such a commitment. The Brits withdrew from Greece and Turkey, leaving them vulnerable to the forces of communism. Truman stepped in to keep the communists from winning in Greece and Turkey. So, on March 12, 1947, Truman personally addressed Congress, asking for \$400 million in aid to battle the spread of the dreaded disease, Communism. Congress almost unanimously voted to approve the aid Truman, known as the Truman Doctrine, had requested. The president's impassioned speech had a strong effect on the American people. Already staunchly anti-communist and anti-Soviet Union, the United States took a stand and made a commitment to fight communism.

On June 5, 1947, following in the footsteps of President Truman, Secretary of State George Marshall introduced the European Recovery Plan, also called the Marshall Plan. The goals of this plan was for the United States to aid in the rebuilding and strengthening of the Allied countries of Western Europe, while continuing its fight against the spread of Communism. The Soviet Union was offered aid under the Marshall Plan, but refused it. Stalin forbade all countries of the Soviet Union from participating in the Marshall Plan as well.

In an article that was printed in the *Saturday Evening Post* on July 14, 1951, Stewart Alsop wrote that he had interviewed the Secretary General of the Czech Foreign Office, Arnhost

Heidrich. Heidrich detailed a meeting he had with Stalin regarding the Marshall Plan. In this meeting, Stalin was telling the Czech delegation what he believed the intentions of the United States were. “You must understand...what the Americans intend with this Marshall Plan. The Americans are determined not to allow the Western European powers to become mortally weakened. They are determined, on the contrary, to renew the strength of the European powers.”<sup>1</sup> Stalin believed there were two main aims for the Marshall Plan: 1. We wanted to strengthen our economy because we knew that another depression was coming (proven to be untrue) and 2. We wanted to dominate Western Europe.

According to Heidrich, Stalin continued with this train of thought by revealing a plot to destroy America. Per Heidrich’s recollection, Stalin said, “Our first task must be to tear down the power positions of the United States in both Europe and Asia. Once this is done, England and France will be too weak to resist the pressure.”<sup>2</sup> Stalin’s theory that the Soviet Union could broaden her reach throughout Europe was based on three closely held beliefs. The first was that the United States was facing an impending depression. The second was that if our power could be contained in the Western hemisphere, England and France would be powerless to fight off Soviet advances. The third was that the American government could be destroyed without exciting American opinion. However, all three of Stalin’s beliefs were wrong.

The United States State Department published *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* in January 1948. This

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<sup>1</sup> The *Saturday Evening Post*, July 14, 1951, pg. 106

<sup>2</sup> The *Saturday Evening Post*, July 14, 1951, pg. 106

publication caused our relationship with the Soviet Union to deteriorate even further. Used were documents that were found in the German Foreign Offices in Nazi Germany that detailed Nazi-Soviet discussions of the Non-Aggression Pact and its secret protocol that would carve up Eastern Europe and the possibility of Russia joining the Axis powers. One month later, the Soviet Union struck back with its own publication, *Falsifiers of History*. Ironically, this publication had been heavily edited and re-written by Stalin himself. It did not repudiate the evidence in the State Department's publication. Instead, it hurled accusations at the West, saying the West was liable for the outbreak of World War II. This publication blamed the West for helping to increase Nazi armaments and encouraging Hitler's expansionist tendencies. Not surprisingly, Stalin made no mention, either to confirm, deny or defend, of the proposal that the Soviets were asked to join the Axis powers.

The next big step in containment was the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. It was born of the European fears of resurgence in Soviet aggression. Stalin was viewed as being as dangerous as Hitler and needed to be stopped. Western Europe needed assurances that the United States would protect it from aggression during its economic recovery. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, was the driving force of NATO's creation. And on April 4, 1949, the American Treaty was signed. The two main features of the treaty were that the United States made a firm promise to defend and safeguard Europe and reaffirmed its commitment of protection.

The American public accepted NATO. It was seen as a way to participate in world affairs and fiercely oppose Soviet power. Americans believed that NATO would provide some

type of collective security. NATO also meant that the United States would no longer take an isolationist stance in European matters. Now, both American and European affairs were linked.

There was a downside to NATO. The United States was the only one in any position to provide armed assistance. With extensive foreign commitments and dwindling territory, Great Britain and France were unable to actively participate for several years. West Germany's military presence was almost non-existent. But what helped in the 1940's and the 1950's was the American nuclear weapons. They helped stave off Soviet attacks because of the stalemate that our respective arsenals created.

The alliance of Western powers only served to yet again escalate the Cold War. Many historians believe that NATO was a gross over-reaction to perceived Soviet aggression. There exists little evidence that Stalin plotted to invade Western Europe. NATO only intensified already unrealistic fears of the West in the Soviet minds, resulting in extremely high tension within the international community.

As the rivalry and mistrust between the United States and Russia grew, both countries began to bulk up their militaries. After World War II, the United States wanted military reforms. The two goals that existed were the unification of our armed forces and a need for new institutions for their coordination. These goals led to the creation of the National Security Act.

Initially refused by Truman in 1950, NSC-68 was based on the assertion that the Soviets were trying to impose absolute authority over the entire world and the United States had to

stand up to them. In simple terms, this Act meant no more appeasement and no more isolation. The Act argued for U.S. military buildup as a way to fight off communism as a whole, not just the Soviet Union. The policies underscored in this Act were that of military might over diplomacy. It also outlined the creation of a military that could defend the West and allied areas, provide and protect a mobilization base, conduct offensive operations, defend and maintain communication and provide aid to allies. Truman finally approved the NSC-68 in 1951.

## The Red Scare

The first Red Scare in American started sometime during World War I. Fears and tensions built up during this time because of the violence attributed to the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution. Many Americans feared a Bolshevik revolution would happen on our soil, threatening to rip apart the fabric of the values of our society such as religion and marriage. Xenophobia in America was at an all time high during this time. There was a rash of factory strikes. The media called the strikes criminal and accused the organizers of plotting against the government. The Sedition Act of 1918 was one of the major pieces of legislation passed as a result of this domestic unrest.

In 1919, a plot to mail over thirty bombs to wealthy, prominent business men was discovered. JD Rockefeller, JP Chase and Attorney General Mitchell Palmer were just three of the alleged targets. A man was able to break into Palmer's house and detonate a bomb. Palmer was unhurt, but the bomber was killed in the blast. Following the bombing of Attorney General Palmer's house, Palmer instituted the "Palmer Raids." These were



mass arrests of immigrants suspected of being leftists who would also be deported to their home countries. In two years, an estimated 4,000 to 10,000 people were arrested.

A young J. Edgar Hoover was appointed to oversee this operation. Per Hoover's directive, prisoners were interrogated without benefit of counsel and bails were set exorbitantly high. And, ironically, much like the GPU, many of the detainees were subjected to physical violence during their arrest and interrogation. At first, the arrests were welcomed and highly praised in the press. But eventually the arrests began drawing sharp criticism. A group of twelve powerful attorneys issued a report that stated these arrests had violated the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Eighth Amendment rights of the prisoners. Shortly after the release of this report, Palmer issued a dire warning that a massive revolutionary plot to usurp our government would be initiated on May 1, 1920. When no such attempt came to fruition, Palmer was ridiculed and it cost him his Presidential bid. A review of the evidence against those arrested and deported found that only about 600 of them were justified.

The second Red Scare coincided with the heightened fears in American after the end of World War II. These fears were brought on by Russian espionage, the Berlin Blockade, the Korea War and the Chinese Civil War. These fears spawned blacklisting, deportations, and red-baiting of suspected Communists. At the end of the 1940's, there were several affairs that riveted the public and increased their fears of a Soviet nuclear attack on America. The trial, conviction and execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg for espionage, the Soviet achievement of an atomic bomb and the "Iron Curtain" that fell on Eastern Europe are a few of the most memorable.

The American people also feared the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). During their testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), ex-CPUSA members Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley told of Soviet spies and Communist sympathizers who had successfully infiltrated the American government and its agencies during and after World War II. Their testimonies were used as evidence of active Soviet infiltration.

The HUAC, originally formed in 1938 and named the Dies Committee, after Rep. Martin Dies, investigated activities of a variety of groups, including American Nazis during the war. Communism soon became its focus, first investigating the Federal Theater Project for communist activities in 1938. A major step forward for the HUAC was the 1948 investigation of Alger Hiss. The investigation resulted in Hiss' conviction of perjury. It also convinced a lot of Americans of the usefulness and necessity of such committees in order to root out Communist subterfuge. However, the HUAC's darkest hour had yet to arrive. And arrive it did in October 1947 when it began an assault on Hollywood.

Screenwriters, directors, producers, actors and other in the entertainment industry were targeted. The HUAC claimed its only intention was to ascertain if Communists had been covertly putting propaganda in U.S. movies. Ten people who appeared on the HUAC's witness list refused to answer if they were current or former members of the Communist Party. They refused to answer citing it was a violation of their First Amendment rights. Congressional contempt proceedings began against them in the House of Representatives. But their refusal to answer did not stop the UHAC.

Political pressure increased significantly on Hollywood to prove that it was truly anti-Communist. It worked. On November 17, 1947, the Screen Actors Guild passed a vote that required its officers sign a non-Communist pledge. On November 25, 1947, the House of Representatives passed a vote to issue citations against the ten entertainers who refused to answer questions, now known as the “Hollywood Ten.” The next day, the MPAA president released a statement saying the ten would not be employed until they cleared themselves of the contempt charges and signed sworn statements that they were not Communists. This was officially the first Hollywood blacklist.



Fig. 3-1 Image of cover of *Red Channels*, a pamphlet-style book issued by the journal *Counterattack* in 1950  
**Source:** Authentic History Center

In 1948, the persecution of Hollywood intensified. The HUAC continued its search for Communists in Hollywood, but failed to find any evidence to support its claim. However,

that did not stop organizations such as the American Legion, from continually adding names to the Hollywood Blacklist. Some of the names on this list are surprising. Examples of the names are Aaron Copland, Jose Ferrer, Burl Ives, Dorothy Parker, Edward G. Robinson, Zero Mostel, Pete Seeger, Artie Shaw, Henry Morgan and Orson Welles. The list was extensive. So much so that it seemed the whole of the entertainment industry was on it at one time or another. In 1950, the list grew yet again, this time adding names such as Barbara Bel Geddes, Eddie Albert, Sir Richard Attenborough, Kim Hunter, and Charlie Chaplin.

## McCarthyism

On February 9, 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy delivered a speech in Wheeling, WV that would unleash a new level of persecution in this country. During this speech, he held up a piece of paper claiming it contained the names of over 200 State Department employees who were Communists. He vowed to fight them and keep them from destroying our country. This speech would garner a mountain of media coverage and would send his political star rising. But soon he would be accused of revising the numbers continually. In a telegram he sent to Truman regarding this matter, he changed the totals to 57.

Because of the inconsistencies in his claims, he went before the Senate and yet again changed the number to 81. He spent five hours reading each case from a list that he had most likely farmed from a three year old list; called the "Lee list." He would not reveal the source of the list he was using. During his epic recitation, he took liberties with the

information by presenting hearsay as facts. This enraged many in the Democratic Party and they looked forward to using his own words to discredit him.

A political cartoonist for the Washington Post, Herbert Block, coined the term “McCarthyism”. The cartoon appeared in the paper on March 29, 1950. Its original intention was to mock McCarthy and his beliefs. Unfortunately, it only seemed to further McCarthy’s cause and unite those who believed in him. McCarthyism had a loyal base of supporters such as the American Legion.



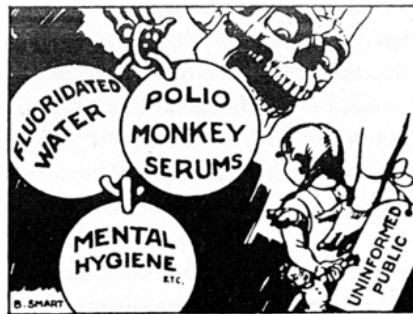
Fig. 3-2 Editorial cartoonist Herbert Block created the term “McCarthyism” in this cartoon which was printed in the Washington Post on March 29, 1950

One group of supporters was radical anti-communist women’s organizations, for instance the Minute Women of the U.S.A. Thousands upon thousands of homemakers were organized into patriotic clubs and directed endeavors to locate and stamp out Communist subterfuge. These far-right extremists were not alone in their support for McCarthyism. The support base was an alliance of many who felt distressed. They were united in their

opposition for such things as welfare programs, efforts to reduce disparities among social classes in the United States, and their opposition in the United Nations.

One focal point of McCarthyism was that of public health services such as vaccinations, mental health care and fluoridation of the tap water. All of these provisions were seen as Communist plots to poison us or destroy our government. This view led to many heated debates and clashes between “McCarthyites” and those who supported the public health programs.

### At the Sign of THE UNHOLY THREE



Are you willing to PUT IN PAWN to the UNHOLY THREE, all of the material, mental and spiritual resources of this GREAT REPUBLIC?

#### FLUORIDATED WATER

1—Water containing Fluorine (rat poison—no antidote) is already the only water in many of our army camps, making it very easy for saboteurs to wipe out an entire camp personnel. If this happens, every citizen will be at the mercy of the enemy—already within our gates.

#### POLIO SERUM

2—Polio Serum, it is reported, has already killed and maimed children; its future effect on minds and bodies cannot be gauged. This vaccine drive is the entering wedge for nation-wide socialized medicine, by the U.S. Public Health Service, (heavily infiltrated by Russian-born doctors, according to Congressman Clare Hoffman.) In enemy hands it can destroy a whole generation.

#### MENTAL HYGIENE

3—Mental Hygiene is a subtle and diabolical plan of the enemy to transform a free and intelligent people into a cringing horde of zombies.

Rabbi Spitz in the American Hebrew, March 1, 1946: "American Jews must come to grips with our contemporary anti Semites; we must fill our insane asylums with anti-Semitic lunatics."

**FIGHT COMMUNISTIC WORLD GOVERNMENT by destroying THE UNHOLY THREE!!! It is later than you think!**

KEEP AMERICA COMMITTEE  
Box 2094, Los Angeles 54, Calif. H. W. Curtiss, Secy. May 16, 1955

Fig. 3-3 "At the Sign of the UNHOLY THREE", flier issued by the Keep America Committee, May 16, 1955.

By the mid-1950's, McCarthyism was losing its momentum. One event that helped the decline of such an ugly era was the Army-McCarthy hearings. In late 1953, he decided to

take on the US Army. He began investigating the Army Signal Corps but was unsuccessful in finding any indication of espionage. But he wouldn't let that deter him in his delusional quest. His next target was Dr. Irving Peress, a dentist from New York. He was accused of being a member of the American Labor Party, a left-wing organization. Because Peress refused to answer questions regarding his political beliefs and affiliations on a loyalty form, he was given a discharge within 90 days. McCarthy immediately subpoenaed Peress to testify before his subcommittee. Once there, Peress refused to answer any of McCarthy's questions, using the Fifth Amendment as his reason. McCarthy was infuriated. He sent a scathing telegram to Robert Stevens, Secretary of the Army and demanded that Peress be court-martialed. General Ralph Zwicker granted Peress' request that his discharge be effective immediately, further infuriating McCarthy.

McCarthy then turned his venom on Zwicker, a decorated World War II hero. This caused an outrage in the press, military, veterans, and both political parties. But more dangerously for McCarthy, he upset President Eisenhower. Stevens ordered Zwicker not to return to the hearings. McCarthy, along with several other Republican senators, had a lunch with Stevens in an attempt to calm the turbulent waters between them. The lunch resulted in Stevens signing a document that gave in to most of McCarthy's demands, humiliating Stevens. A couple of months later, under the direction of the Eisenhower Administration, the Army launched an attack against McCarthy by charging him for issues not related to his hostile behavior.

In 1954, the Army accused McCarthy, and his main counsel Roy Cohn, for attempting to pressure the Army into giving preferential treatment to a friend of Cohn's, David Schine.

McCarthy screamed that this was a simple retaliatory move designed to save face for Stevens. For 36 days, the hearing dragged on, being televised for the entire nation to watch. The committee did determine that McCarthy did nothing wrong but that Roy Cohn was the guilty one. The exposure due to the hearing severely damaged McCarthy's popularity. At this point, many Republicans saw McCarthy as a liability to the party.

Just like the victims of Stalin, it is difficult to accurately determine just how many people McCarthyism adversely affected. Thousands of people lost their jobs because of unfounded accusations. Hundreds of people lost their freedom. Often, employers would fire employees just for being subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. The persecution even extended to those who were suspected of being homosexuals. Ironic considering that McCarthy was once accused of that himself and J. Edgar Hoover had a live in boyfriend. If a person was suspected of being a homosexual, he/she was also suspected of being involved in espionage. This particular suspicion caused thousands of individuals to be harassed and unable to gain employment. A stigma would follow them.

## American Opinion of the Soviet Union after World War II

In September 1945, just a few months after the end of World War II, *Fortune* asked readers "Would you describe Russia as a peace-loving nation, willing to fight only if she thinks she has to defend herself, or as an aggressive nation that would start a war to get something she wants?"<sup>3</sup> The results were very close. 38.6% of the respondents said they believed Russia

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 500



was a peace-loving country. 37.8% believed Russia was aggressive. 8.4% believed that Russia had the tendency to be both peaceful and aggressive.

In the same *Fortune* poll, participants were asked “Which of these things have you liked about Russia and which haven’t you like so well?”<sup>4</sup> 18% liked the way she handled her diplomacy, while 42.6% didn’t. 66.9% liked her management of military campaigns and only 4.2% did not. 16.1% approved of the way she deals with the legal rights of the Russian citizens, but 24.1% disapproved. The results were only critical of a couple of key points.

In a March 1946 poll, the AIPO asked “If the Russian government were prepared, do you think it would go to war to get what it wants?”<sup>5</sup> A resounding 65% said yes, while 25% didn’t believe she would. In the same poll, the AIPO asked, “Do you think the United States is being too soft or too tough on its policy toward Russia?”<sup>6</sup> 60% believed the US was being too soft on Russia, while only 3% thought the US government was too tough on Russia.

In June of the same year, the AIPO asked, “For the next ten years which do you think America should fear more—Fascism or Communism?”<sup>7</sup> 57% of the participants indicated Communism while only 20% believed that Fascism was a more realistic fear. It is evident that tensions about the Soviet Union are rising in America by this point.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 765

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 765

<sup>6</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 963

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 870

In August 1946, the AIPO asked participants “Do you think countries under the capitalistic system and countries under the communistic system can get along peacefully?”<sup>8</sup> 35% of the participants answered yes, while 49% answered no. Not surprising considering the anti-communist sentiment in the United States at this time was ramping up and Americans were highly suspicious of the Soviet Union.

The AIPO, in September 1946, asked, “Are your feelings toward Russia more friendly or less friendly than they were a year ago?”<sup>9</sup> Here is where we can actually feel the anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiment that was growing in American society. 62% of the participants said their feelings were less friendly toward Russia while a miniscule 2% said they were more friendly. Three months later, in December 1946, the AIPO asked the same question, only substituting the time frame of six months for one year. 48% responded that their feelings were the same as they were six months ago. 13% said they were more friendly and 32% same they were less friendly.

In NORC’s September 1946 poll, participants were asked, “Do you think our government is telling us enough about what is going on between Russia and the United States, or should it tell us more?”<sup>10</sup> 29% thought we were being told enough while 60% thought we should be told more. The same poll asked, “Do you think the present disagreements between Russia and the United States are serious enough to consider going to war about, or aren’t they that serious?”<sup>11</sup> 68% said they did not believe our disagreements were serious enough

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 376

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 962

<sup>10</sup> *American Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 963

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 964

to go to war over while 17% wanted to see us go to war with Russia. To go along with the previous question, participants were also asked, “In the disagreements between Russia and the United States, do you think one of the countries is entirely to blame, or do you think both countries have something to do with the misunderstanding?”<sup>12</sup> 74% said they thought both countries bore the blame and 17% believed only one country was to blame. However, the results do not indicate which specific country is to blame.

1946 was a period of growing fears in the United States. The HUAC had not even begun its full-scale persecution of the entertainment industry and McCarthy had not begun his war on the government. Some of the answers here are surprising. Although, it would be interesting to see how the answers to the same questions would change every six months from 1945 to 1954.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, Mildred Strunk, pg. 964

## Conclusion

Beginning with America's intervention in the Russian Civil War, we had maintained a very contentious relationship with each other. The refusal to recognize the Soviet Union as legitimate in Lenin's lifetime kept the relations icy at best. With Russia being such a closed, secretive society, especially after the rise of Stalin, Americans have had a sense of fear and mistrust of the Soviet Union.

With public opinion being so important to everyone from a product marketer to politicians, it is not surprising they want to keep track of them and try to influence them to their advantage by using the media. Throughout this paper, it is easy to see just how the media is used to further agendas, be it Stalin's or McCarthy's. The shift in opinions can be tracked through the biases and shifting attitudes in the print media. The accuracy of the reports from American journalists in Russia is questionable at best. Between the deliberate lies of Walter Duranty and others, and the complete control over the media by Stalin, it is no wonder our opinions were more than likely skewed or confused.

The signing of the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany in 1939 sent shockwaves through the world, especially here in the United States. The writing was on the wall and Stalin's intentions were clear. He wanted to carve up Eastern Europe and reclaim what the Brest-Litvosk Treaty took from Russia in 1918. However, many saw the expansionist desires that Hitler possessed.

With the breaking of the treaty by Hitler, American regained hope that the Soviet Union was turning a corner and ready to become a democracy, even though she retained isolationist sentiments. Stalin's manipulation of Roosevelt and Churchill produced results that were almost unimaginable at that time. Americans were not pleased with Roosevelt over some of the concessions and agreements he made to Stalin.

After the war ended, and Stalin had received everything he wanted from the West in concessions, the Cold War seemed to exist almost over night, even though it was rooted in the early days of the twentieth century. With all of the reports of defectors having evidence that our government had been infiltrated by Soviet spies in an all out effort to destroy our way of life, it's no wonder peoples' opinions were hostile and pessimistic about Russia and her leader. In the end, it was all about just co-existing. However, when you analyze the numbers and the polls, it's clear that there was much healing to do before that would happen.

With the passage of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, tensions and suspicions between the US and the Soviet Union continued to rise. Both plans, aimed at containing the spread of Communism throughout the whole of Europe incensed Stalin. With the Gouzenko Affair and the espionage trials of those such as the Rosenbergs, Americans were on edge. The fear of a nuclear strike by Russia was weighing heavy on everyone's mind even though the presence of nuclear arsenals in both Russia and United States guaranteed a stalemate.

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