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David Perry

**PROGRESS REPORT
(600 words minimum)**

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New sources (comment, please, on the source base): I have expanded my collection of Moscow Daily News. At the time of the seminar I only had issues ranging from 1933-1938. I now have 1930-1932. I have also included some additional secondary sources, which at this point will primarily be used for background information.
State of art (incl. new sources): There has been an increase in the number of works published in recent years regarding Westerners living or travelling to the Soviet Union. However, I think that the approach I am taking is different from most of the works previously written, as they focus heavily on individual's lives or the lives of a small number. I will be writing about an entire population, through the lens of an institution (The Moscow Daily News) which was tasked with writing and publishing news stories by, for, and about said population.
Changes in theory & methodology (why): I have decided to do a deeper analysis of the articles in Moscow Daily News which were copied and translated from Pravda for American readers. I am doing this in order to get a better understanding of the Soviet gaze and the pressures placed on American immigrants to conform to Soviet standards and social norms.
New theory & methodology (if): No new theory or methodology.
Proposed structure of dissertation: My dissertation will contain:

An introduction, in which I will give a brief background of the historical factors which led Americans to move to work and live in the Soviet Union, an analysis of the field and current literature, my research questions and thesis, and an explanation of the structure of the paper.

A profile of the American Immigrant Population

A section in which I discuss the intellectual and conceptual points of departure between American and Soviet society, discussions of individualism, collectivism, rationalization, and revolution will all be featured in this section..

An analysis of representations of American immigrants presented by Moscow News, including the tropes they use and the purpose behind the narrative the paper attempts to construct.

A conclusion

Changes in expected outcomes (why):

No changes in expected outcomes, have yet to complete my reading of all the issues of Moscow Daily News. As my paper is one of historical inquiry, I am trying to prevent myself from developing too rigid a notion of how the power dynamics between Soviet society and the State and the American immigrant community affected the community's behavior and methods of self-representation. Doing so before completing my reading of the primary sources may lead me to lean too heavily on preconceived notions regarding the role that the State played in the every day lives of those living in the Soviet Union.

Cooperation with your supervisor (does it work?):

My supervisor and I work very well together. During the Winter Term, we discussed my dissertation regularly, and he commented on my progress, answered questions and provided feedback. He has been very helpful in shaping my dissertation while also allowing me to pursue what interests me about the topic.

Troubles you face:

I am concerned that the sheer amount of information at my disposal, especially now that I have visited the New York Public Library archives and received an additional three years of articles, will be too much to read through and thoroughly analyze in the time frame available to me. I have already written my introduction but I believe it will be a challenge getting everything written that I want to get written by the deadline. However, I am optimistic because my problem stems from having too much information at my disposal, which is a better problem to have than the alternative of having too little. I do not think it will be impossible to finish the project by the due date.

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**STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND:
AMERICAN LIVES UNDER THE SOVIET GAZE**

Masters Thesis

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Abstract:

This paper aims to shed light on the lives of American immigrants living in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, while also discussing the role that state propaganda, presented through English-language periodicals such as *Moscow News*, played within the immigrant community. This paper focused primarily on the role of the paper as a tool for the re-education of American immigrants, as well as its establishment of a normative framework for the immigrant community through its representations of American's contributing to the Soviet experiments. Finally, this paper emphasizes the role of representation in constructing a narrative of American immigrant loyalty to the Soviet state and project of building socialism.

Keywords:

Americans, Immigrants, Soviet Union, Representation, Propaganda, Moscow News, Media

Range of Thesis:

78 pages, 21,467 words

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague - 01 May 2018

David Perry

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Perry', written in a cursive style.

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1. Introduction

During the 1930s the United States and world economy underwent a transformation so profound that it reversed a trend of global migration that had lasted for over two hundred years, contradicting the fundamental narrative of the United States' founding and purpose. As a result of the Great Depression, individuals began leaving the "new world" in search of work for the first time since the Americas were discovered and colonized by European powers. Many of them were recent immigrants simply returning to the countries of their birth. Some of these migrants, however, had been born and raised in the United States, they and their families had known no other home for several generations.¹ In their exodus east, to the Soviet Union, they represented a novel and altogether unique demographic category: the American immigrant community abroad. While other examples of Americans living outside of the United States exist, such as the members of the "lost generation" who settled in Paris in the 1920s, the American immigrant community in the Soviet Union was much larger, much more diverse, and, in a number of cases, intent on making the Soviet Union a permanent home in which to raise their families and contribute to the developing Soviet society.

In the opening of his memoir, John Scott, an American worker who travelled to the city of Magnitogorsk in the Soviet Union to live and work as a welder for the Soviet government, writes about the unfulfilled promise of the oft-cited "American Dream." His words reflect the sentiments of many young Americans during the early years of the 1930s. He writes, "I left the University of Wisconsin in 1931 to find myself in an America sadly dislocated, an America offering few opportunities for young energy and enthusiasm... There were no jobs to be had. Something

¹ Tim Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken: an American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia* (Penguin Books, 2009), 2.

seemed to be wrong with America.”² For Scott, the son of American communists Scott and Nellie Nearing, the cure for what he described as the “basic ills of our American civilization” could be found in Soviet Russia and procured through participation in the grand project of building communism.³

While Scott’s economic motivations for immigrating were widely shared by the newly settled American residents of the Soviet Union, his political leanings, like those of his parents, were not. Many of them, despite their enthusiasm for the opportunities made available to them in the Soviet Union, remained apolitical and apathetic to conversations regarding the politics of the capitalist American system or Soviet communism were common.⁴ Reasons for leaving their home country were, as they always are, as varied as the number of immigrants who made the journey. Several hundred African-Americans made the Soviet Union their home in hopes of finding refuge from the racism and discrimination so entrenched in American society.⁵ Women also emigrated in large numbers, looking for the chance to more fully participate in public life, as opportunities to work and thrive outside of the domestic sphere were still denied to them in a country that had granted them the right to vote only a decade earlier.⁶ Regardless of their aims, one thing united the members of this Soviet-American immigrant community – the belief that the communist system and Soviet state was both equipped and willing to address their individual concerns, in a way that the American government was not.

² John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia’s City of Steel* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 2.

⁵ Ann M. Simmons, “In Russia, Early African American Migrants Found the Good Life,” *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Nov. 2014, www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-c1-black-russian-americans-20141119-story.html.

⁶ Julia L. Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 3.

Those Americans who were able to make the journey to the Soviet Union found themselves entering into a society undergoing a fundamental shift, even when taking into consideration the rapid changes taking place since the Russian Revolution of 1917. With Josef Stalin's policy of collectivization, the last traces of private ownership were swept away as the State strengthened its hold on the Soviet economy.⁷ This would have a profound effect on the American immigrants, some of whom went to work on collective farms, who had never known any relationship between those in control of the means of production and labor that was not predicated on capitalist concepts such as the private sphere and market competition. One of the most important changes to the Soviet economy engineered by Stalin was the introduction of the five-year plans, the details of which were highly discussed even in the United States. The English translation of *New Russia's Primer: The Story of the Five Year Plan* was one of the most popular non-fiction titles amongst American readers throughout the 1930s.⁸ Growing enthusiasm for exceeding the production quotas laid out in the plans, buoyed by public recognition of hardworking laborers as seen in the Stakhanovite movement, helped to integrate American immigrants into Soviet society by giving them an opportunity to prove their worth to the country that had taken them in and, at least initially, made an enthusiastic effort to integrate them.⁹ The 1936 Soviet Constitution, hailed at the time for expanding democratic value and norms and guaranteeing the right to both work and leisure in addition to provisions for healthcare, education, housing, gave hope to many immigrants who had left prior to Roosevelt's New Deal, that the

⁷ Arnd Bauerkamper and Constantin Iordachi, *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Eastern Europe: Entanglements and Transnational Comparisons*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 7-9.

⁸ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 5.

⁹ *Moscow News*, "'Shock Brigade Day' Starts Swifter Drive," (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

Soviet government would look after their needs and proactively defend their rights as residents and contributors to the Soviet project.¹⁰

American assimilation into the Soviet project during this period was aided by the establishment of cultural institutions for English speaking westerners. *Moscow News*, a weekly periodical founded by and printed for American immigrants not only in Moscow, but around the entire Soviet Union, was founded in 1930 and served as the longest running English-language newspaper in Russia, closing its doors in 2014. In the 1930s, the paper served the important function of proving Americans with information necessary to easing their transition to the new, Communist society of the Soviet Union, including news about services aimed at their community and policies that affected them at work in Soviet factories and on collective farms. It also contained human-interest pieces and local and international news coverage, including stories on the economic situation in the United States. Most importantly, in the minds of the socialist writers and editors of the paper at least, *Moscow News* aimed to provide Americans with the ideological and intellectual framework they would need to fully participate in and contribute to Soviet life. The paper, though a tool of Soviet propaganda from the outset, was ultimately taken over by the Soviet state. In the mid to late-1930s, many of its early contributors were killed or fled the country as the Soviet Union began its purge of any resident, citizen or foreigner, believed to be a threat to Stalin's power or vision for the future of the country. Ultimately, *Moscow News*, similar to the American immigrant community in the Soviet Union that it served, fell victim to its own blind idealism and unwillingness to heed the warnings of the coming political repression that had been present since its establishment.

The scholarly community stands to gain a great deal in looking closer at sources such as *Moscow News*, not only because of its ability to shed light on the way that media is used as a tool

¹⁰ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 5.

of social control, but also because it provides a glimpse into the daily lives and experiences of American immigrants at this time, a unique group which has received relatively little scholarly attention. The fact that the paper was rigorously censored and influenced by the Soviet state's policy objectives can be seen as an advantage to attempts at recreating the past, whose daily activities were performed under the gaze of the increasingly oppressive Soviet state. In order to better understand the lives of American immigrants living in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, as well as the political pressures placed on them by the Soviet state, this paper aims to address the following questions regarding their experiences, and will make use of *Moscow News* and other primary and secondary sources in answering them. First, I am interested in outlining the social and economic situations that immigrants found themselves in and that led to their decisions to emigrate from the United States. I am also interested in creating a profile of the population, including information on who comprised the community's members and how the transition to life in the Soviet Union affected them differently. I am also interested in exploring the conceptual and ideological vocabulary present in the community's discourse, as well as how *Moscow News* aimed to instruct American immigrants about concepts that were used in both the United States and Soviet Union, but with drastically different usage and interpretations. Finally, I aim to interrogate the way that the paper represented the lives of the American immigrants, in order to better understand the ways in which external pressures placed on paper, from within the community as well as from Soviet society and the state, affected the coverage that American readers were exposed to during their brief time in the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, I will argue, *Moscow News* aimed to fulfill three distinct but interconnected goals. The first was the re-education of the American immigrant community on notions such as individualism and collectivism, rationalization, and revolution, which were important concepts in

both American and Soviet contexts. *Moscow News* also aimed to provide a normative framework for American immigrants, by providing examples of how the immigrants should think and behave in order to comply with the norms of Soviet culture and society. Lastly, the paper aimed to place American specialists and workers living in the Soviet Union within the scheme of the state's economic pursuits in such a way so as to prove not only the value of American contributions to, among other projects, the Five Year Plans, but also their loyalty to the state and its communist foundations.

In attempting to answer these questions, the use of certain concepts from cultural theory can be illuminating. The concept of gaze, developed by writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault and expanded upon by theorists Laura Mulvey and E. Anne Kaplan, can contribute a great deal to an understanding not only of what life in the Soviet Union for foreign-born individuals residing there, but also the way the Soviet society and the State altered the way in which immigrants behaved and represented both themselves and their community to the outside world. Scholars use the term gaze to describe the ways in which the act of observation alone can alter the behavior of those under observation¹¹. The social pressures exerted upon individuals or groups who know that their actions are being scrutinized, by the State or society, groups within society, or even by individuals, according to these authors, serves to mold the way that the observed choose to represent themselves.¹² This occurs for a number of reasons, such as attempts on the part of the observed to meet or exceed, or even subvert, the expectations of the observer. In situations where the power dynamics between observer and observed lead to performative means

¹¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, (New York: Routledge).

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Vintage Books).

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, (New York: Oxford University Press), 833-44.

E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking For the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze*, (New York: Routledge).

¹²Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 195-228.

of expression and representation, questions of the true nature or inner lives of historical actors, be they individuals or groups, become difficult, if not impossible, to answer. However, an emphasis on how these representations, by individuals within a particular community, are constructed and the social stimuli that drive them can help us to better comprehend and explain their actions.

In periodicals such as the *Moscow News*, which also published articles translated from their original Russian in newspapers such as Pravda, insight can be gleaned from the messaging that American journalists, along with the Soviet authorities who oversaw their work, crafted for the American immigrant community's consumption. For American-born immigrants in the Soviet Union, as it does in many other times and social contexts, representation of their community through media served as a normative framework, outlining the expectations that Soviet society and politically active members of the immigrant community had for them by providing models for how to think and act in their new social and cultural setting. Equally important, representations of Americans during this time show the image that the American writers and editors of *Moscow News* wished to project to the curious Soviet citizen and watchful Soviet State. Thus, periodicals such as *Moscow News* can provide one of the most useful lenses through which to explore the relationship between the observer, namely the Soviet government and society at large, and the Americans immigrants at which their observation was directed.

Secondary sources that focus on the Soviet-American immigrant community during the 1930s are few in number. Tim Tzouliadis' *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia* takes a journalistic approach to describing the history and fate of the American community in the Stalin-era Soviet Union.¹³ While utilizing a large number of primary sources, his work focuses on the lives of a small number of individuals in an effort to make broader claims about the lives of American immigrants in this time and place. *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet*

¹³ Tim Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*.

Dream by Julie L. Mickenberg, also focuses on the lives of individuals, captured primarily in letters and memoirs, in order to describe American women's experiences in the Soviet Union.¹⁴ While texts from numerous individuals and even English-language publications such as *Moscow News* have served to support their theses, an in-depth analysis focusing on the news media circulated in American immigrant communities in the Soviet Union has not been conducted. I believe that a less individualized and more holistic approach to understanding the various social forces at play within the immigrant community, through an analysis of print media which a large number of its members were regularly exposed, will help add to a reconstruction of the past in this area which has been initiated by these two authors.

The primary sources I will analyze in order to address these questions will be articles published in *Moscow News* between 1930 and 1934. These dates represent the period in which American's played the strongest role in the editorial decisions of *Moscow News*, before the Soviet State inserted itself fully into the paper's daily operations and decisions on coverage. I will also make use of memoirs and other first person accounts written by the immigrants themselves. These will include the memoirs of John Scott, Robert Robinson, and Anna Louise Strong, among others. Robinson's memoir provides important insights into the experiences of African-American immigrants within the community and is useful for understanding the ways that both American and Soviet policies affected immigrants differently. Excerpts from Strong's memoir, found in Mickenberg's *American Girls in Red Russia*, provides equally useful information about American women's lives in the immigration. Strong's writings also help to illuminate the ways that politically active Americans with communist sympathies fared, as opposed to the more strictly economic migrants who composed the majority of the community.¹⁵ These first person accounts

¹⁴ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*.

¹⁵ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 196-199.

will be used primarily to construct a profile of the community and add needed texture to the analysis of the *Moscow News*. I will also make use of drawings and photographs, among other other visual representations, in order to demonstrate how the paper employed both visual and written representations of American immigrants in the construction of a particular narrative of American life in the Soviet Union.

The structure of this paper following this introduction will begin with the previously mentioned profile of the immigrant community, as well as one of the *Moscow News*. Information from this chapter will be drawn primarily from secondary resources, and will be used to provide historical background for the analysis I will be conducting in later chapters. This will be followed by an examination of the ways in which the paper was used to re-educate American immigrants on certain concepts of cultural and economic importance in both the United States and in the Soviet Union, though understood differently in each respective context. Finally, I will provide analysis of American journalists' representations of the American immigrant community in *Moscow News* during the first half of the 1930s, followed by a conclusion in which I will draw upon the information included in the previous three sections to address the areas of research I have previously outlined.

The method of primary source analysis that I will be using to conduct this research, most commonly used in historical scholarship, is similar in many respects to grounded theory in the social sciences. As this method is both qualitative and inductive in nature, I have engaged in deep reading of the issues of *Moscow News* published during the time period I have outlined and in order to identify patterns in the way that certain concepts and the language used to describe American living in Soviet Union are used, while also looking to see how these patterns change over time. In explaining these patterns, I will rely heavily on direct quotes from the primary

sources under analysis in order to illustrate my findings. In my third chapter, on the role of *Moscow News* in the re-education of American immigrants, I will be relying on a conceptual historical approach, developed by members of the Cambridge School of intellectual history including Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock and continued by historians such as Reinhart Koselleck, focusing on the way that the terms in question were used in different contexts, for my purposes those of the United States and Soviet Union in the 1930s, to draw comparisons between the politically, socially, and culturally based use of these concepts and to establish clear understanding of how the writers and editors of *Moscow News* employed them in their writing.¹⁶ My final chapter will move away from conceptual history and focus on the rhetoric used in order to craft a narrative of the American experience in the Soviet Union, as well as American contributions to the Soviet project.

2. The State of the Unions: American life in the United States and Soviet Union

2.1 America in the 1930s

The 1929 Stock Market Crash in the United States ushered in the decade long Great Depression, an economic crisis that spread across the world and crippled nearly every national economy, with the exception of the Soviet Union.¹⁷ In America, at the time one of the world's newest and most dynamic economic powers, savings evaporated overnight, incomes plummeted, and hundreds of thousands were forced from their homes. At the outset of the 1930s a quarter of America's workforce was unemployed, a dramatic increase over the three percent unemployment rate at the close of the previous decade.¹⁸ Upwards of 300,000 American teenagers were living on the road and millions of American men and women lived as itinerant workers, squatting or living

¹⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Mark Harrison, "National Income," in *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union 1913-1945*, eds. Robert Davies, Mark Harrison, S.G. Wheatcroft, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38.

¹⁸ Ben Bernanke and Robert Frank, *Principles of Macroeconomics*, (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 98.

in temporary housing they built with their own hands on the outskirts of both urban and agricultural centers.¹⁹ The effect of the crisis on individual and family health, stability, and prosperity led many to reconsider the validity of a government structure and economic model that could allow for, and even cause, such widespread human suffering.²⁰

The Communist Party of the United States of America, formed in 1919, was the inheritor of the organized socialist movement in the United States.²¹ Despite an initial drop in CPUSA membership in the early years of the Great Depression, the result of Josef Stalin's decision to cut ties with socialist parties in the West, American interest in the Soviet experiment was piqued by the relatively small affect that the global economic downturn had had on communist Russia. By the end of the 1930s, the Communist Party boasted more than 55,000 members, a small but diverse sampling of American society.²² In an article titled, "Babbitt and Son Go Red," published in *The New Outlook* in August 1934, journalist Martin Sommers describes his interactions with American Communists at a series of meetings and rallies organized by the CPUSA. Sommers writes of his surprise when he discovered that America's Communist Party includes not only the young and working class, but wealthier, white-collar professionals as well. When asking a well-paid corporate lawyer how he came to serve as the Vice-Chairman of the Manhattan chapter of CPUSA, the man replied, "I've been both a Republican and a Democrat and today I think that the only thing you can decently be is a Communist."²³

¹⁹ David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel, "Youth, Work, and Schooling in the Great Depression," *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 5, no. 4, (1985): 489.

Nels Anderson, *On Hobos and Homelessness*, ed. Raffaele Rauty (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 99.

²⁰ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 4.

²¹ Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States: From the Depression to World War II*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 43.

Martin Sommers, "Babbitt and Son Go Red," August 1934, 18.

²³ Sommers, "Babbitt and Son," 18.

Aspirations of a Soviet-style Communist revolution in the United States were described in detail by William Z. Foster, the chairman of the CPUSA in his book *Towards Soviet America*. The book, which described the socialist rise to power in Soviet Russia as well as what he perceived to be the failings of American social-democrats and liberals (which he dubbed “social fascists,” borrowing the term used by Stalin to describe moderate leftists in the capitalist economies of Western Europe and the United States) to adequately address the needs of the working class, a criticism which the CPUSA would use to label policies such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal as half-measures meant to pacify the American proletariat, in service to those with control over the means of production. Foster concluded his work by calling for a Communist takeover of the United States and outlining what he believed a socialist America would look like.²⁴ Works such as this reinforced anti-communist attitudes in the United States that began during the Red Scare of 1917-1920. These sentiments continued to run deep in the collective American psyche after the hysteria of the First Red Scare had passed. Articles ran in American periodicals during the 1930s decrying the “Trojan Horse Policy of Communism in America,” and drawing ominous parallels between the CPUSA in the United States and the Bolshevik Party in the years leading up to the Russian Revolutions of 1917.²⁵ The argument that the CPUSA was, similar to the Bolshevik Party in 1917, relatively small yet ultimately intent on taking control of the levers of power and overthrowing the government stoked anxieties about the Communists “living among us.”²⁶ Despite the rise in popularity of the CPUSA and its political platform, doubts over the possibility of transforming the United States into a communist utopia led many Americans to look to Soviet Russia for answers. For the first time in America’s history, a number of its citizens, themselves the descendants of immigrants from across the Atlantic,

²⁴ William Z. Foster, *Towards Soviet America*, (New York: Coward-McCann, 1932).

²⁵ “The Trojan Horse Policy of Communism in America,” *Click Magazine*, September 1939, 42.

²⁶ “The Trojan Horse Policy,” 42.

began to think about the social and economic opportunities available to them in a strange and new country coming to prominence on Europe's eastern edge.

Positive media coverage of Soviet Russia's growing economy, along with stories of the entrepreneurial Americans making the most of the opportunities created by Stalin's first Five Year Plan, began circulating in the United States even before the stock market crash in October 1929. This coverage was instrumental in generating interest in the prospects of living and working in the Soviet Union to even those outside of communist circles in America. A series of articles in *The Business Week*, published between September and December 1929, detailed the problems and potential gains of a planned economy and confidently proclaimed that there were "better prospects for American business in Russia than in any other country."²⁷ While news of the economic prospects must certainly have piqued the interests of the average American citizen, business leaders in the United States were some of the first to take advantage of the Soviet Union's need for skilled labor, mechanization, and industrialization. Orders for American-manufactured oil refining and farming equipment were placed, and contracts were signed with designers and builders of industrial plants for massive public works projects such as the Dneiperostroi Hydroelectric Station, the "largest power dam in the world" at the time, and a Ford automobile plant on the outskirts of Nizhni-Novgorod, complete with homes for the workers and their families, "public services... warehouses, office buildings, schools, laundries, clubs, restaurants, library and stadium."²⁸ In the first of its articles on the subject of Russia's desire for American goods and labor, *The Business Week* announced that, "To create a body of skilled mechanics to carry on these projects, the Soviet government is inviting specialists to come to

²⁷ "Soviet Russia's Five-Year Plan as Seen Across the Atlantic," *The Annals of Collective Economy*, 6, no. 1 (1930): 109.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

Russia and teach in the government operated plants and schools and is sending young workers into many and varied industrial organizations abroad to learn foreign methods.”²⁹

The migration did not occur without some encouragement and facilitation from the Soviet government itself. *Amerikanskaia Torgovlia*, known in the United States as the AMTORG Trading Corporation, was, while not officially an arm of the Soviet bureaucracy, directed by the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Trade and was responsible for facilitating the purchase of American goods for import to the Soviet Union. In 1931 alone over one hundred thousand Americans filed applications with AMTORG for a program that awarded short-term work visas for Americans with experience in engineering, manufacturing, or factory work. Over ten thousand of these applications were accepted.³⁰ Pessimistic about the state of the American job market, most of the immigrants on these short-term contacts aimed extend their stay, if not make it permanent. Many of those who had not been awarded an AMTORG contract made the journey on their own, confident that they would find jobs in short order following their arrival.³¹

Depictions of the Soviet Union’s unique socio-political and economic organization brought hope to many, as America’s economic crisis rapidly grew, that the suffering that had befallen many a family was a temporary state, and the cure could be purchased for the cost of a visa application, a ticket on trans-Atlantic ocean liner, and a train ride. In an impassioned speech on American national radio, George Bernard Shaw, the famous British playwright and noted socialist, cited the Soviet project as a balm for the wounded spirits of the proletarian class in America and Western Europe, announcing that “...there is hope everywhere in Russia because these evils are retreating before the spread of Communism as steadily as they are advancing upon us before the last desperate struggle of our bankrupt Capitalism to stave off its inevitable

²⁹ Ibid., 96.

³⁰ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 6.

³¹ Ibid., 14.

doom.”³² With endorsements such as these in mind, thousands of Americans and their families sold what little they had to fund their journey. Some who had money left over invested in goods and equipment to help them once they arrived. One group of families pooled their money to buy tractors and other farming equipment for the collective farm they were assigned to live on. “Others,” writes Tim Tzouliadis in his book *The Forsaken*, “donated their entire life savings to the state, supposing that they would no longer need money in the new Russia.”³³

Finding work was far from the only thing that American’s sought by moving to the Soviet Union. Many American women grew increasingly frustrated by the difficulties they faced, which were exacerbated by the Great Depression, due to their gender. Women in America workplaces earned significantly less than men performing the same job, and those who had not been forced out of their jobs in order to create opportunities for their male peers were relegated to low-income work in the domestic realm or factories. Virtually no social programs existed to support widows, divorced women, or single mothers, leaving many women trapped in a state of impoverishment.³⁴ Many American women were intrigued by feminist ideas found in the writings of Russian revolutionaries such as Nikolai Chernyshevskii and Alexandra Kollontai, and sought the gender equality and opportunities for social advancement denied to them in the United States and which the Soviet Union claimed to provide.³⁵ In her book on the lives of American women in the Soviet Union, Julia L. Mickenberg writes that, “If the Russian Revolution gave conservatives their most enduring bogeyman, it offered others, including many feminists, tremendous hope.”³⁶ For many women within the progressive movement in the United States, which had granted women the right

³² Ibid., 10.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Susan Ware, “Women and the Great Depression,” The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, accessed 4 February 2018, <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/great-depression/essays/women-and-great-depression>.

³⁵ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 6-9.

³⁶ Ibid., 7.

to vote in 1920 after nearly one hundred years of fighting by women's suffrage activists, the Russian provisional government's policy of universal suffrage, continued under the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution, pointed towards Soviet Russia as a place where policies which advanced women's social and political rights would face less resistance. Indeed, this seemed to be the case, as Mickenberg explains, "Women gained property rights, barriers to women's education and professional development were officially eliminated, and women were promised equal pay for equal work."³⁷ The 1918 Soviet Code on Marriage, the Family, and Guardianship, which removed obstacles women faced in seeking divorce and provided for paid maternity leave regardless of marital status "constituted nothing less than the most progressive family legislation the world had ever seen," and represented a major leap forward for women's equality.³⁸

African-Americans, too, sought to escape the social forces that oppressed them in America, specifically the racism and bigotry that was both institutionalized and fundamental to social relations in every region of the United States. Despite the abolition of slavery codified in the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution seventy years prior, in 1865, laws throughout the country (in addition to language included in the Thirteenth Amendment itself) actively disenfranchised African-Americans and aimed to make it impossible for them to recover or integrate, economically or socially, into society at large. Official policies of segregation in southern states, known as "Jim Crow" laws, prohibited African-Americans from sharing public transportation and facilities, including restaurants, restrooms, and, famously, even water fountains. Schools segregation under these laws also aimed to disadvantage black Americans in favor of white ones, as schools for African-Americans, despite the official segregationist line of being "separate but equal," were universally underfunded and underserved by local

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

administrations.³⁹ In addition to these laws, attitudes towards black Americans in the United States were largely negative, particularly in the American South, where racial violence surged during the early years of the 1930s.⁴⁰ Even in regions outside of the American South, African-Americans were suffered higher unemployment and poverty rates during the Great Depression than any other demographic group. “In some Northern cities,” the United States Library of Congress notes, “whites called for blacks to be fired from any jobs as long as there were whites out of work.”⁴¹

The Soviet Union, as the first nation in the world to be founded upon Marxist principles, espoused a policy of anti-racism at its founding, in line with Marx’s writings which closely tied racism to the capitalist system. Highlighting Lenin’s own language regarding “oppressed nationalities,” Soviet propaganda, often featuring black and white workers marching arm in arm, routinely criticized the United States and other Western countries for their lack of racial equality and called for black workers from around the world to immigrate to the Soviet Union or support the socialist cause at home.⁴² The 1936 Soviet Constitution codified equal recognition and rights, which it specified included on the basis of race, unlike the equal protection clause in the United States Constitution.⁴³ With these considerations in mind, those African-Americans who could afford the journey or were sponsored by Soviet factories joined in the American pilgrimage to the

³⁹ Jim Crow Laws and Racial Segregation,” Social Welfare History Project, accessed 7 February 2018, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/civil-war-reconstruction/jim-crow-laws-andracial-segregation>.

⁴⁰“Race During the Great Depression,” Library of Congress, accessed 12 February 2018, www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/depwwii/race.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² G. Klutits, *USSR is the Shock Brigade of the International Proletariat*, The Wayland Rudd Collection, Poster, 1931.

V.B. Koretsky, *Greetings to the Fighters of Fascism!*, The Wayland Rudd Collection, Poster, 1937.

G. Klutits, *USSR is the Shock Brigade of the International Proletariat*, The Wayland Rudd Collection, Poster, 1931.

(See Appendices A-B)

⁴³ Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Article 123, 1936.

Soviet Union in hopes of finding the peace and stability which had been denied to them in the United States on account of their race.

American immigrants to the Soviet Union represented a varied cross-section of American society at the beginning of the 1930s. In addition to gender and racial diversity, education and work skills varied among the immigrants. Engineers, skilled laborers, farmers, teachers, journalists, among a host of others were welcomed into a Soviet workforce hungry to meet the needs of the rapidly modernizing country.⁴⁴ The immigrants also came from all over the Union's forty-eight states. Densely populated cities on the East and West coasts, in addition to the heavy industrial centers in the American heartland, such as Detroit, where attitudes towards Communism were more accepting, represented the most likely points of origin for Americans who would eventually emigrate. However, residents of America's more rural areas were also intrigued by the opportunities for work in Soviet Russia. From agricultural communities in Kansas to mining towns in the deserts of Arizona, the latter being a then sparsely populated state that had achieved statehood less than two decades prior to this period, in 1912, tales of workers answering the call to journey across the Atlantic and begin a new life in Soviet Russia reached journalists desks, and were published for readers across America, generating further interest in the small but growing wave of American emigration.⁴⁵

2.2 Starting Over in the Soviet Union

Few immigrants knew what to expect in terms of cultural differences or living under a government system so different from the one they knew in America. Upon arrival in the Soviet Union, most immigrants from the United States were compelled to give up their American passports to Soviet customs officials.⁴⁶ Ultimately, it was considered a small price to pay for the

⁴⁴ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 48

opportunity to make a home for themselves in “a land where poverty is general and hope is boundless,” especially when considering the alternative in the United States, where they had been “idle in a land of plenty and despair.”⁴⁷ For workers such as Robert Robinson, who were brought over on contracts awarded by AMTORG, their introduction to life in the Soviet Union was made easier by the trade agency, which put them up in hotels, arranged tours of historical sites, provided information about cultural norms and practices (in addition to Marxist principles) and assisted them with housing and food until their work placement began.⁴⁸

Many immigrants, however, traveled to the Soviet Union on tourist visas and looked for work after their arrival. The strain caused by this influx led the Soviet government to publish an “official edict... that in the future all tourists must carry a roundtrip ticket and would no longer be handed jobs,” not due to a lack of available work but because, “there was simply not enough space to house them all. Moscow and all the major Russian cities were horrendously overcrowded.”⁴⁹ As a result, many found themselves travelling to the far reaches of the Soviet Union’s territory, where plans to build “socialist cities” of the future meant more space to accommodate foreign workers, though not at nearly the same level of comfort as those afforded opportunities in places like the capital and Leningrad. The city of Magnitogorsk stands as a testament to this project. The rapid transformation of this small mining town into an important, industrial metropolis, modeled after the American cities of Gary, Indiana and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, was billed as a wildly successful proof-of-concept of Stalin’s Five Year Plans. As the local populace, the majority of whom were ex-peasants, lacked industrial skills or factory

⁴⁷ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 13.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *Red on Black*, 37-53.

⁴⁹ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 14.

experience, American expertise was, at the time, seen as a vital component of this success.⁵⁰

American designers and engineers flocked to the city, alongside lower-skilled American and other foreign workers, to ensure that this herculean task was achieved. The work was difficult, particularly for Russian and American workers without specialized certifications and skills, as the growing pains caused by the Soviet Union's policies to rapidly modernize the country forced many to labor under unsafe conditions. This, along with a general scarcity of food and other amenities, were accepted by many of the Americans living there as the cost of building a more just society. Some, however, grew aggravated with the lack of amenities, the inability to communicate with those at home in the United States, the "red tape", and the brutal weather. Differences in treatment, services, and food allowances between American specialists and their unskilled counterparts enflamed class tensions, and caused many to leave the Soviet Union altogether, highlighting the fact that, despite attempts to build a classless society, inequality abounded even under Communist rule.⁵¹

American women also faced inequality, due to their gender, despite the Soviet Union's seemingly progressive attitudes. Julia Mickenberg describes the sexism they faced in the workplace, especially from American men whose concepts of women's role in society had evolved little since leaving the United States. She quotes Eugene Lyons, a correspondent for United Press International and contributor to the *Moscow News*, who, despite working for a paper run largely by women, harbored misogynist views of his female peers in the immigrant community. "British and American ladies with triple chins and overwhelming bosoms, having tried and discarded other spiritual diversions, now 'found' Bolshevism,"⁵² he claimed, clearly

⁵⁰ Alan M. Ball, *Imagining America: Influence and Images in Twentieth-Century Russia*, (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 129-130.

⁵¹ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 186.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 126.

denigrating both their motivations and their commitment to the socialist movement. American women did achieve a higher level of status and entered into careers that would have been off limits to them in the United States. Women such as Anna Louise Strong and Millie Bennett, among other editors and correspondents for the *Moscow News*, not only claimed job titles that only men would have had back home, but were responsible for the information and messaging informing the entire American immigrant community across the Soviet Union. Strong, however, despite founding *Moscow News*, was forced to take the subordinate role of managing editor. Her male colleague, a Russian man by the name of B. S. Vasutin, was placed at the top of the paper's masthead as Editor-in-Chief.⁵³ Ultimately, neither their positions nor the policies of the Soviet Union, which largely denied the existence of gender discrimination and sexism in their new, classless society, could provide them with the equality or genuine respect that they sought.

Robert Robinson, in his memoir *Black on Red: My 44 Years Inside the Soviet Union*, provides a unique perspective on life as a black man living in the Soviet Union's American immigrant community. As at the Ford Motor Company as a toolmaker in Detroit, Michigan, Robinson was invited to the Soviet Union on a one-year contract following a visit from Soviet officials to the factory at which he worked.⁵⁴ In the Soviet Union, he quickly rose through the professional ranks. He notes that, "In the United States of the 1930s, I never would have been allowed to become a mechanical engineer, because of my race. I never would have won the respect of my professional peers. I never would have been offered a job that challenged my creative urges.... In Moscow I was given the opportunity to achieve all of these things."⁵⁵

His life there was made more difficult, in part, by the intense racism that existed within the American immigrant community. The white men who he had travelled to the Soviet Union

⁵³ Ibid., 170.

⁵⁴ Robert Robinson, *Black on Red: My 44 Years Inside the Soviet Union* (Acropolis Books, 1988), 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 15.

with refused to room with him, and threats against his life were made on more than one occasion after arriving in Stalingrad. One night, as he walked homed, two white Americans attempted to murder him. He fought back, injuring one, and managed to escape. After being questioned by the police, Robinson was allowed to go home. News of the attack spread, and the Stalingrad newspaper published an extensive retelling of the incident, along with a warning to those Americans who would “export their “social poison” to Russia.⁵⁶ Robinson quickly became a celebrity, with rallies at his factory held in support of him. The trial of the two men who attacked gained national attention. In its aftermath, he was even elected to the Moscow Soviet.⁵⁷ However, Robinson attributes many of these opportunities not to the lack of racism in Soviet Russia, but to the optics of having a black man working and thriving in the Soviet Union in contrast to the institutionalized racism of Western, capitalist countries. He goes on to say that, while racism did not “officially exist” in the Soviet Union, he could, “...never, ever get used to the racism in the Soviet Union. It continually tested my patience and assaulted my sense of self-worth. Because the Russian people pride themselves on being free of prejudice, their racism is more virulent than any I encountered in the United States...”⁵⁸ Throughout his memoir he describes both casual and overt racism directed towards him by Russians, who he claimed, “think of blacks as even worse” than Asian and other “non-European” minorities who were native to the lands of the Soviet Union.⁵⁹

Despite some of the tensions and inequalities that existed between American immigrants, on the basis of gender and race, but also geographical location and access to goods and services, most Americans worked closely with each other to strengthen both the internal cohesion and the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 70-71.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

visibility of their community. Americans were proactive in establishing cultural institutions to aide in the transition to life in Soviet Russia. English-language schools were established for the children of immigrants (Russian language courses were provided for the immigrants by, among others, The Moscow Technical School for Foreign Languages), along with workers clubs and restaurants where jazz music and approximations of American-style food could be enjoyed alongside Russian staples and drinks accompanied by conversation in the immigrants' native tongue.⁶⁰ The Foreign Workers Club on Herten Street served a vital need within the Moscow-based American immigrant community. It, along with the *Moscow News*, the only English-language newspaper in the Soviet Union, provided immigrants with information about support and services for Americans in Moscow, as well as events ranging from "educational excursions, boat trips, and, of course, a little music and dancing."⁶¹ Sports leagues became a popular outlet for American workers, especially in larger cities such as Moscow and Novgorod. American baseball, played in Gorky Park, became a spectacle regularly enjoyed by American and Soviet citizens alike. It grew so popular that the Soviet Supreme Council of Physical Culture adopted it as one of the "national sports" of the Soviet Union.⁶² It was within spaces such as this that the cultural exchange between Soviet citizens and American immigrants were most celebrated and, sometimes, contested. In *The Forsaken*, Tim Tzouliadis recounts an anecdote about a baseball game organized by the American Foreign Workers Club in which American and Russian players argued over the ideological foundations of "stealing" bases, which the Russians argued was "a plainly capitalistic aberration."⁶³ While education, food, and sport were easier to access for American immigrants in the Soviet Union's urban centers, other creature comforts, such as books

⁶⁰ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 14.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 16.

⁶³ Ibid.

and magazines from the United States, were harder to come by even in places like Moscow. The International Book-Store on Kuznetsky Most, “Moscow’s liveliest shopping district,” was frequented by foreign residents searching for American literature to soothe their homesickness.⁶⁴ In the Russia’s more rural areas and in Siberia, finding comforts from home was virtually impossible.

Most importantly, perhaps, for fostering a sense of community and helping Americans assimilate into life in the Soviet Union was the *Moscow News*, which published a weekly newspaper for Americans and other English-speaking foreign residents. The opening of the *Moscow News* offices, just prior to the publication of its inaugural issue in October 1931, were accompanied by a great deal of fanfare, and interest in working in an office comprised almost entirely of Westerners was high. The front-page article of its first issue reads:

Offers of help also arrived almost hourly. *Moscow News* is perhaps the only institution in the Soviet Union which has had no ‘labor crisis.’ We have uncovered an unsuspected reserve of folks willing to work... We unearthed American and English students who want to do cartoons or assemble photographs. We discovered how varied is the English-speaking world of Moscow. In less than a week we had not only a *Moscow Staff*, with economic and world news specialists, feature writers, and plain reporters, but also a Kharkov representative and good leads for representatives in Stalingrad, Leningrad, Alma Ata, Irkutsk, and elsewhere.⁶⁵

While based in Moscow, the paper had subscribers across the country and even outside of it. Russian cultural institutions and societies, leftist political parties, and business groups in the West turned to the *Moscow News* for information on the internal affairs of the Soviet State and messaging from its leaders.⁶⁶ Founded by Anna Louise Strong, a prominent American communist, the paper’s editorial board and writing staff contained both British and American journalists. It also included stories from Soviet periodicals, mostly from the official newspaper of the

⁶⁴ *Moscow News*, “Around Moscow,” (Moscow, USSR), 25 October 1930.

⁶⁵ *Moscow News*, “First English Newspaper Starts in Moscow,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

⁶⁶ *Moscow News*, “Greetings from Far Scattered Friends,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

Communist Party, *Pravda*, which were translated into English.⁶⁷ *Moscow News* quickly became the dominant English-language source in the Soviet Union for information on domestic and international events, tailored to meet the needs of the Americans who consumed it. In its early years, the paper provided Americans with information regarding sports teams back home, profiles of community members or groups, and even published the occasional poem or joke submitted by their readers. The paper also worked to promote the Soviet State's interests by announcing newly developed policies, publishing the speeches of Party leaders, and providing information about internal developments such as the progress of the Five Year Plans. The paper's founders and the Soviet government were in agreement on the crucial role that the paper would play in assimilating Western immigrants and bringing them into the fold of Soviet society. This was plainly stated on the front page of the first issue, beside an illustration of factories under construction and towering skyscrapers that read "Soviet Power Plus American – Technique Will Build Socialism."⁶⁸ The article stated:

What the Russian industries expect of the paper was outlined by Vasutin, vice chairman of the Planning Bureau of the Supreme Council of National Economy and "responsible editor" of *Moscow News*. "The fulfillment of the Five Year Plan" he said, "demands hundreds of new foreign specialists. It is absolutely necessary to organize the social opinion of these English and American specialists. They must not come and go, leaving no trace either on Russia or on themselves."⁶⁹

These words would prove ironic, as the belief in the beneficial nature of Western-born foreign workers evaporated by the latter half of the decade and the State actively sought to wipe all trace of their existence from Soviet society. In his memoir, Robert Robinson characterized his experience with these purges as coming in two waves. The first, taking place between 1933 and 1935, constituted a "massive government scheme to reorder society" and targeted those who had

⁶⁷ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 183.

⁶⁸ *Moscow News*, "Soviet Power Plus American Technique Will Build Socialism," (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930. (See Appendix C)

⁶⁹ *Moscow News*, "First English Newspaper Starts in Moscow," (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

served as specialists and engineers under the Tsar.⁷⁰ “Most of the czarist engineers were rounded up... There were arrests, show trials, and secret trials. Many were innocents were executed immediately; others were banished to Siberia.”⁷¹ Many of his Russian friends and co-workers in Stalingrad disappeared during this period, as “The purges caused morale to plummet and indifference to set in.”⁷²

During the second wave, beginning in 1936, the increasing desire of the State to seek out and extinguish counter-revolution and “enemies of the people” from within quickly turned against foreigners from the West, the epicenter of the capitalist system, which, they proclaimed, sought their utter destruction.⁷³ Early signs that the authoritarian Soviet government’s promises of work, equality, and freedom for American immigrants would be broken had been dismissed. The seizure of American passports had gone largely unquestioned and proved to be fatal for those who had given them up. Robinson’s memoir provides an important look into the experiences American immigrants faced during this period. He wrote, “During the purges I never undressed until 4:00 A.M., fearing the awful pounding of the secret police on my door.”⁷⁴ Despite being arrested and questioned in 1943, after the height of the purges had passed, Robinson managed to avoid the harsh punishments that many Westerners faced.⁷⁵

By the time that word of the purges reached the American community, inaction on behalf of the U.S. State Department, who refused to reissue the passports, turned to tragedy as Americans seeking refuge at the United States Embassy were rounded up by the NKVD and faced

⁷⁰ Robinson, *Black on Red*, 71.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

imprisonment or execution.⁷⁶ The English-language schools for American children who had once proudly stood among the ranks of young Pioneers, along with the clubs and bars where American workers gathered in Moscow and other urban centers quickly disappeared. The *Moscow News* survived the purge, but the majority of the journalists who had worked for the paper in the beginning were replaced by the end of the decade as the Soviet state took control of the paper. The Foreign Editor, a British communist by the name of Rose Cohen, was shot arrested and shot in November 1937.⁷⁷ She joined many others Westerners, buried in unmarked graves, who had been accused of spying for their home governments and denied legal representation or witnesses for their defense. Not all of the American immigrants living in the Soviet Union died such unceremonious deaths at the hands of the secret police. Some fled, while others were convicted of crimes against the State and interned in the system of Gulags scattered throughout Siberia and the Russian Far East.⁷⁸ By the end of the 1930s, however, the American immigrant community, as a measurable group, had disappeared from the Soviet Union. Their dreams of making a new life for themselves, in a country that valued equality and solidarity with workers such as themselves, had been extinguished.

3. Engineers of American Souls: *Moscow News* and the Re-education of the American Immigrant Community

For a country with political, economic, and social structures founded on the ideological principles of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet state deemed it imperative to ensure that those living within and contributing to Soviet life adhered to these principles not only in action but also in thought. American immigrants and other foreign workers were seen as a vital component to the

⁷⁶ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 90-91.

⁷⁷ Francis Beckett, *Stalin's British Victims*, (Routledge, 2015), 1.

⁷⁸ Robinson, *Black on Red*, 14.

Soviet Unions drive towards rapid industrialization and modernization.⁷⁹ The fact that the United States of America was founded upon a fundamentally different ideology, classical liberalism, and functioned under completely different concepts of political economy meant that the re-education of the American immigrants and the “organizing of social opinion” were crucial to both their assimilation into Soviet society and the fulfillment of the Soviet Union’s economic goals, outlined in Stalin’s Five Year Plans.⁸⁰ This re-education was accomplished in part through formal education, in Soviet universities but also in schools where the children of American workers were taught history through a Communist lens and memorized Marx and Lenin’s theories alongside mathematical facts and scientific laws.⁸¹ The integration of immigrant workers into factory or workplace councils, already seen as a necessary for sufficiently politicizing Soviet citizens, also ensured that those with little or no knowledge of the ideology were provided with both Communist messaging as well as opportunities to participate in political life.⁸² The “Red Corners” found in Soviet apartments, schools, offices, and other buildings, which were outfitted with pictures of Lenin or Stalin and bookshelves of propagandist literature, ensured that no one, citizen or immigrant, lacked information or opportunities to learn about Communist fundamentals.⁸³

News and other forms of media, however, proved to be one of the easiest and most effective ways of ensuring that the State’s messaging made its way into the hands (and minds) of American immigrants living in the Soviet Union. State-produced periodicals, such as the illustrated, English-language magazines *Sovietland* and *U.S.S.R. in Construction*, were published

⁷⁹ *Moscow News*, “First English Newspaper Starts in Moscow,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 17.

⁸² *Moscow News*, “Foreigners Can Be Elected In the Soviet Elections,” (Moscow, USSR), 15 October 1930.

⁸³ *Moscow News*, “Once Again The Question of Forced Labor,” (Moscow, USSR), 21 February 1931.

throughout the Soviet period.⁸⁴ Complete with art and advertisements for Soviet goods, the magazines also contained human-interest pieces and profiles of cities, schools, and other institutions throughout the Soviet Union. The journalists producing these articles were largely, if not exclusively, Soviet citizens, and editorial control was firmly in the hands of the Soviet bureaucracy. *Moscow News* differed, to some degree and for the first few years of its publication, in this respect. While the paper's editors and chief contributors were firmly committed to the cause of building socialism and saw the paper as a means towards achieving that end, disagreements did arise as to how best to accomplish this goal. Anna Louise Strong, the paper's founder and managing editor, envisioned a newspaper that addressed the concerns of the American immigrant community, through publishing letters to the editor and their responses, as well as captured their interest. Art, humor, current events, foreign affairs, and sports coverage were all critical to building and maintaining a loyal readership. A focus on the American immigrants within the paper, including profiles of American workers groups, their struggles, and their accomplishments, was seen as essential to creating and fostering a civic-minded and engaged community. That the paper was American run and creatively independent was also important to Strong, who believed that this would prove to skeptical readers that their coverage was not only legitimate, but crafted by people who understood their lived experience in the Soviet Union.⁸⁵

Ultimately, Strong's plans failed, and the paper, which was unable to support itself from subscriptions alone, received government funding and an increasing level amount of editorial oversight.⁸⁶ Despite attempts to prevent the paper from becoming "a Communist organ full of

⁸⁴ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 28.

Moscow News, "USSR In Construction" Advertisement, (Moscow, USSR), 7 November 1933.

⁸⁵ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 164.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

heavy-handed Bolshevik jargon,” internal and external pressures eventually transformed the paper into a state-run news source.⁸⁷ Stories about Americans and the institutions they created disappeared from the paper. Despite the disagreements over what the paper should ultimately look like, *Moscow News* served as a valuable platform for attempts, by both its editors and Soviet bureaucrats, at re-educating American immigrants in the ways of Soviet life and Communist values throughout its publication and both before and after this transformation. Ideological concepts such as class struggle and the role of the State in citizens’ lives were worked into the coverage of the weekly paper. Debates over the roles of individuals versus that of the collective, fundamental to even a basic understanding of Marx and Lenin’s theories, were introduced in ways both subtle and overt. While the long term effects of the paper on American attitudes and opinions is impossible to determine, due to the near complete eradication of the immigrant community in the final years of the 1930s, Americans, who were largely adrift in a new and very different culture from their own, readily consumed these messages, as they appeared alongside and within articles designed to bring a sense of normalcy to their uprooted and difficult lives.

3.1 On Individualism and the Collective

Debates surrounding the roles of individuals and groups, as both historical actors and as claimants of rights within a society, are one of historical importance to both classical liberalism and Marxism. In liberal intellectual circles, these deliberations have had proponents on both sides. In the Twentieth century in particular, according to political philosopher Gerald F. Gaus, “liberalism was beset by controversies between, on the one hand, those broadly identified as ‘individualists’ and, on the other, ‘collectivists’, ‘communitarians’ or ‘organicists’.”⁸⁸ In the eyes of acclaimed liberal thinker Jeremy Bentham, “the community is a fictitious body, composed of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 169.

⁸⁸ Gerland F. Gaus, “Ideological Dominance through Philosophical Confusion,” in *Reassessing Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freedman (New York: Routledge, 2001), 15.

individual persons who are considered as constituting its members.”⁸⁹ Gaus goes on to say that for “individualists such as Bentham, ‘community’ is simply a name we use to describe the actions, traits and interactions of individuals, who alone are real.”⁹⁰ Liberal collectivists influenced by idealist philosophy, such as D.G. Ritchie, were skeptical of the underlying assumptions of this argument, and “rejected the ideas that society is simply a ‘heap’ of individuals, insisting that it is more akin to an organism, with complex internal life.”⁹¹ This debate is far less contentious among Marxist philosophers and politicians. For Marx, who claimed that economic and social classes were fundamental to the capitalist system, “the class in its turn achieves an independent existence over against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of existence predestined, and hence have their position in life and their personal development assigned to them by their class, become subsumed under it.”⁹² According to this theory, the liberation of the oppressed individual can only come via its acknowledgment of the dominance of the class structure and, though the collective action of the working class, the struggle against those classes that exploit them. This theory had profound effects on the way that the Soviet Union approached its entire political, economic, and social structure. The pre-eminent role of the working class as a group in achieving the Soviet Union’s revolutionary aims was present in all aspects of Soviet governance, from criminal justice to economic planning and, despite the eventual rise of Stalin’s Cult of Personality, the structure of its political bodies at all levels.⁹³

The unique place that the individual, and the related concept of individualism, holds in the American imagination stands in stark contrast to Soviet conceptions of the individual and its role

⁸⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Germany Ideology*, (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 82.

⁹³ John Reed, “The Structure of the Soviet State” *The Liberator*, November 1918, 12-28.

Harold J. Berman, “American and Soviet Perspectives on Human Rights,” *Worldview Magazine*, November 1979, 16.

vis-à-vis the collective or group. The literary trope of the self-made man, beginning with nothing and building powerful business empires through sheer force of will and an optimistic perseverance, has always pervaded American literature and film.⁹⁴ The same trope has been used by American political figures, who have claimed the story as their own and have long championed the self-made man as the driving force behind the United States' economy. The same was true in the 1930s, as then President Herbert Hoover, a self-made millionaire who did indeed come from modest beginnings, proclaimed that the "rugged individualism" of Americans would bring the United States out of its economic crisis and end the Great Depression.⁹⁵ Even for those who opposed Hoover and his policies, the concept of the individual played an important rhetorical role in American society. His successor and the author of the New Deal economic policy, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was careful to reference the positive role of the individual when discussing the collective rights and destiny of the American people, claiming "...in spite of the great importance in our national life of the efforts and ingenuity of unusual individuals, the people in the mass have inevitably helped to make large fortunes possible."⁹⁶ Disabusing American immigrants of their beliefs regarding the power of individuals and the importance of individual rights, especially for those not already versed in Marxist ideology, in favor of the Soviet Union's messaging regarding collective rights and the proletarian struggle, was a difficult, though necessary, task, with noticeable effects on news writing and coverage in *Moscow News*.

The writers of *Moscow News* incorporated references to the notion of individualism from the outset of the paper's publication, carefully reconstructing the concept for an American audience, for whom the term had historically been used to denote positive characteristics, such as

⁹⁴ Julie Levinson, *The American Success Myth on Film*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), 12-20.

⁹⁵ Arthur W. McMahon, "Third Session of the Seventy-First Congress," (speech, Washington D.C. 1 December 1930) in *The American Political Science Review*, 25, no. 4 (Nov., 1931), 932-955

⁹⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Message to Congress on Tax Revision," (speech, Washington D.C., 19 June 1935), *The American Presidency Project*, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15088.

self-reliance, independence, and freedom, in contrast to dependency, submissiveness, and, in the extreme, enslavement. In 1930 alone, which only covered the final three months of the year, over a dozen references to the idea were made. The stance of the Soviet government and the approach by the paper was that individualism was a term used by capitalists and imperialists to veil their class-based oppression of the proletariat, and that references to the individual in the West were used by these groups as a way to continue the exploitation of the working class and maintain their bondage to the capitalist system. The paper utilized several rhetorical strategies for introducing the Soviet stance on individualism to their readers.

Logical appeals were made through the publication of statistics regarding the growth of the Soviet economy and the role that collective farms and “shock brigades” had in this growth.⁹⁷ These two institutions were closely tied to the Soviet conception of collective action. The shock brigades, billed as an organic development arising from the intellectual re-birth of Soviet workers in the time since the revolution, reimagined the concept of competition within the Soviet Union. Instead of competition between individuals for individual gain or recognition, shock brigades organized workers into groups, collectively working to exceed the quotas outlined under the Five Year Plan, or to finish them ahead of schedule.⁹⁸ In an article describing speeches given by two minor speakers at the Congress of the Soviets in 1931, *Moscow News* quoted described a rhetorical exchange provided by one of the speakers, a worker identified only as Markevich, who said, “What are the incentives to work in the Soviet Union, where personal fortunes are impossible? To men of energy, who like to see their work expand, the answer is simple: - the incentives here are greater than in any other land.”⁹⁹ The policy of collectivization embodied a

⁹⁷ *Moscow News*, “‘Shock Brigade Day’ Starts Swifter Drive,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

⁹⁸ *Moscow News*, “500,000 Farmers Take Up System of Shock Work,” (Moscow, USSR), 10 January 1933.

⁹⁹ *Moscow News*, “Two Men at the Congress,” (Moscow, USSR), 15 March 1931.

similar ideological framework, though with a considerably more mixed popular reception.

Moscow News enthusiastically described the benefits of collectivization and tied individualism to distinctly negative traits in an article written in October 1930.

As this year's harvest in the Soviet Union is the most historic harvest that has ever occurred since prehistoric man cast grain on the soil for food, its celebration will arouse deep and wide-spread recognition of the fact that agriculture, the last stronghold of backwardness, isolation, and individualism, has now in a single year entered upon the path of large-scale collective operation.¹⁰⁰

Rhetorical appeals to readers' emotions and sense of justice were also used by *Moscow News*, which used poetic language and metaphor to reorient their audience's conceptions of individualism. In describing the efficiency of the collective farms, in their coverage the modern agricultural practices utilized by the farms, *Moscow News* described the application of newly developed chemical agents to destroy weeds and pests, which drained the soil of its nutrients and devoured the worker's hard-earned yields "like the useless individuals used to suck the strength out of the peasantry."¹⁰¹

The use of ethos-based persuasion was also an important tool in the newspaper's attempts to reorient the debate surrounding individualism and collectivism. Excerpts from the works of Soviet writers and intellectuals such as Maxim Gorky, as well as Soviet political leaders Stalin and Bukharin, were prominently featured in the paper alongside those of Westerners, such as the famous American author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*, John Reed, and made frequent references to these concepts.¹⁰² Gorky, in an article titled "To the Humanists" published in December 1930, castigated Westerners for what he saw as a contradictory association between

¹⁰⁰ *Moscow News*, "The Day of Collectivization," (Moscow, USSR), 20 October 1930.

¹⁰¹ *Moscow News*, "Two Men at the Congress," (Moscow, USSR), 15 March, 1931.

¹⁰² John Reed, "Ten Days that Shook the World," excerpt, *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 5 November 1930.

humanism and the rights of the individual.¹⁰³ A series of articles on Marxist philosophy written by a contributor identified as Professor B. Colman in 1933, discussed the need for Soviet scientists to join in the cause of building socialism. Colman portrayed the field of science as historically being used as tool for individual gain and self-aggrandizement and called for it to be transformed into a means of promoting the needs of the working class.¹⁰⁴ This article was accompanied by numerous other pieces that called for a reorganizing of all aspects of culture in the Soviet Union, from science to the fine arts and literature, based, *Moscow News* reported, on the accrual of personal prestige at the expense of the collective good. The message behind these articles was clear – the need for considering the collective over the individual, and for recognizing the role of class as the basic social unit, extended beyond economic realms of industry and agriculture to all areas of human thought and activity.

3.2 On Rationalization and the Planned Economy

The concept of rationalization in economics, which can be summarized as the process by which the economy is made to conform to certain rules, by governments and based on the principles of reason, in order to ensure its proper functioning, played an important role in both liberal countries and communist states throughout the 1900s. As with the concepts of individualism and collectivism, rationalization has divided the opinions of liberal thinkers. According to Gaus, “Liberalism has a core commitment to rationality,” which, “while drawing on the Enlightenment’s faith in reason, also is informed by a skepticism about – or at least a cautious attitude towards – the powers of human reason.”¹⁰⁵ Many liberal thinkers, such as Karl Popper,

¹⁰³ Maxim Gorky, “To the Humanists,” *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 22 December 1930.

¹⁰⁴ B. Colman, “Science and the Class Struggle,” *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 5 September 1933.

¹⁰⁵ Gaus, “Ideological Dominance through Philosophical Confusion” 20.

have criticized the “highly rationalistic philosophies of, among others, Plato and Marx.”¹⁰⁶ For these critics, societies and national economies are too complex to impose adequate controls. Others, such as John Dewey, a prominent public intellectual in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, have noted the importance of “intelligence and experimental control” in the structuring of a society and its economic activity, dissatisfied with the idea of relying on improvisation to address crises as they arise.¹⁰⁷ Despite these debates, liberal thinkers have generally stopped far short of the “hyperrationalist” approaches to political economy seen advocated by socialist or communist thinkers and politicians.

Marx did not often use the term itself in his writings, though the concept clearly influenced his thinking. Max Weber, whose work was also highly critical of capitalism, was one of the first to use the term and expand upon its historical basis and effects in the modern era. Weber wrote about the increasing rate at which capitalist societies becomes concerned with efficiency, predictability, calculability, and, importantly for his theories, dehumanization.¹⁰⁸ Soviet leaders were quite taken with the concept of rationalization. Terms such as “Socialist planning” and “Socialist organizing,” stand-ins for rationalization, were used in the 1930s to describe policies such as Collectivization and the Five Year Plans, but also changes to the calendar and educational curriculum for the purpose of supporting the Soviet Union’s economic ambitions.¹⁰⁹ For the Soviet Union, complete rationalization and oversight of a planned economy was key to their attempts to modernize and industrialize the country and to overtake the Capitalist countries of the West in terms of economic growth and stability.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁸ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons).

¹⁰⁹ *Moscow News*, “Calendar Changes Fourth Time,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

During the 1920s and in the early years of the 1930s in the United States, the government took a largely hands-off approach to social and economic involvement and regulation. President Hoover argued throughout his administration, even in the deepest years of the Great Depression, that humanitarian efforts and direct relief aimed at the poor would have a damaging effect on the initiative of the American workers and that the national economy would be brought out of the crisis by the self-correcting nature of the free market.¹¹⁰ Widespread disapproval of Hoover's policies would cost him the presidency in November 1932. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was elected by a dramatic margin in both the popular and electoral vote, ushered in a series of federal reforms and regulations, known as the New Deal, to address the social and economic damage the country had endured since 1929. The federal work programs under the new deal aimed to address the immediate need of lowering the unemployment rate through work relief programs while also introducing policies and regulations aimed at protecting America's working class.¹¹¹

In the eyes of Soviet State, the notion of rationalization, notably the Soviet government's control over economic planning and all productive industries in the country, was one that many American workers needed to be informed of in order to acclimate to the differences of the Soviet system. In an article titled "Help for Stalingrad Americans", the paper quotes a resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party "whose orders are binding not only on governmental bodies, but on industry and trade unions as well" which recognized the difficulty that many Americans faced in adjusting to "the Russian situation."¹¹² The resolution called for "More clubs, literature, motion pictures, and more explanation to the Americans of what the Five

¹¹⁰ Herbert Hoover, "Direct Relief or Distress: Pressure for Direct Personal Federal Relief or Doles," in *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover – The Great Depression*, (New York: The MacMillan Company), 54.

¹¹¹ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1933-1945," Library of Congress, accessed 18 February 2018, www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/depwii/newdeal.

¹¹² *Moscow News*, "Help for Stalingrad Americans," (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

Year Plan is about.”¹¹³ It was essential that the American immigrant community, seen as an important addition to the overall project of modernization due to their high level of technical skills in industry, was made aware its place within the Soviet Unions overall plans, as well as encouraged and incentivized to fulfill and even exceed the expectations of the Soviet government and production quotas of the Five Year Plan.

Collectivization and the Five Year Plan are two of the most prolific topics covered in *Moscow News* issues throughout the 1930s. Every edition, with the exception of a special issue covering important trials taking place in the first few months of the paper’s publication, contains numerous articles on the progress of the Soviet economy and the important role of state planning in achieving it. Statistics as well as stories of various shock brigades and speeches by prominent political figures calling Soviet citizens and immigrants alike to action are included on nearly every page. Eager to encourage Americans’ enthusiasm for the new economic project, the paper published a story titled, “Americans Form Shock Brigade” in its inaugural issue. The article covers eight American specialists in a Tractor Factory in the city of Stalingrad, who formed the group and challenged Russian and fellow Americans in other shops at the factory to “socialist competition”. Quoted in the article, the head of the brigade stated, “We consider it absolutely necessary to help this tractor plant more swiftly begin mass production, by making full use of the methods of American plants, and teaching them to our Russian comrades.”¹¹⁴ American contributions to the economic project underway in the Soviet Union was further emphasized in a story published in September 1933, which stated that “New buildings are adopting the American system of framing, plastering and lathing. Already 15 barracks, seven two-story houses and one

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ *Moscow News*, “Americans Form Shock Brigade,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

large hotel are being plastered according to American methods.”¹¹⁵ The writers and editors of *Moscow News* were intent on showing the fulfillment of the aims laid out by the paper in its first issue – the American immigrant community was leaving their mark on the rapidly developing Soviet society.

In addition to promoting American techniques, the paper also includes important references to rational planning and the implementation of a scientific, modern approach in fields long reliant on “traditional” and “backwards” methods. A photo series entitled “Modern Cotton Culture Supplants Old Methods”, published by *Moscow News* in August 1933, presents images of a bountiful cotton harvest throughout the Central Asian region, attributing the yields to the modernization of farming techniques.¹¹⁶ An article appearing only a month later, titled “From Feudalism to Collective Farming”, recounts the impressions of the author, Charles Ashleigh, during his travels through the North Caucasus. He wrote:

This area of the North Caucasus where I have spent the last three or four days traveling extensively by automobile, was, only a few years ago, inhabited by a people just emerging from feudalism, and under the domination of Kabardine princes, nobles, and mullahs, who served as instruments for the Russian tsarist power... Now these people are engaged in large-scale socialized agriculture, living harmoniously with their neighbors of Russian or Balkarian nationality, their only enemies the adverse forces of nature and those elements which, by self-interest and habit, would wish to see restored the system which has now been supplanted. But both these adversaries – drought and kulak – are being driven backward as the tide of organized production and socialist science and education advances.¹¹⁷

Another important message born out in *Moscow News* coverage was the purpose behind the rationalization of the economy, which, according to Soviet leaders, was based on the socialist principle of empowering the proletariat. *Moscow News* coverage aimed to showcase the contrast

¹¹⁵ *Moscow News*, “Commune ‘Cement’ Introduces New Methods,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 September 1933.

¹¹⁶ *Moscow News*, “Modern Cotton Culture Supplants Old Methods,” (Moscow, USSR), 15 August 1933. (See Appendix D).

¹¹⁷ Charles Ashleigh, “From Feudalism to Collective Farming,” *Moscow News* (Moscow, USSR), 10 September 1933.

between the Soviet Union and capitalist countries, where, they claimed, economic crises and the accompanying high rates of unemployment allowed the bourgeoisie to take advantage of the increasingly desperate working class.¹¹⁸ A statement in the paper by J. Flerovsky, a member of the Board of the Commissariat of Labor, reads:

Our great socialist achievements are planned, socialist organisation of labor and the possibilities of planning labor in national economy. They lead to further increases in speed and guarantee the stability of socialist construction. The socialist system of economy has by numerous and brilliant examples of its organisation of labor demonstrated its superiority... That is the most important point of the issue. No amount of lying sensational slander directed against the U.S.S.R. will affect the love and devotion of the international proletariat to the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹

This quote shows the importance that the State attached to tying the concepts of economic planning and worker's empowerment together. *Moscow News*, as the primary source of information available to English speaking residents of the Soviet Union, provided one of the most direct ways of promoting this message to the American immigrant community.

3.3 On Revolution and Its Protectors

The American and October Revolutions provide an interesting comparison for examining the concept of revolution through the eyes of the American immigrants of the Soviet Union. Many scholars continue to debate the applicability of the term 'revolutionary' to the war of independence fought by the American colonies against the British Empire in the latter half of the 1700s. The American Revolution did not fundamentally alter the social order or economic system of the former American colonies, despite replacing the political institutions governing the territory. This fact has led to debate amongst historians as to whether or not the American insurrection against British rule can be considered a radical movement in the way that other

¹¹⁸ Maxim Gorky, "About A Certain Legend," *Moscow News* (Moscow, USSR), 12 March 1931.

¹¹⁹ *Moscow News*, "Labor in the USSR," (Moscow, USSR), 27 January 1931.

revolutions tend to be.¹²⁰ Despite this, the American Revolution was, and continues to be, an important rhetorical tool in American political discourse, and has been called upon throughout the United States' history in order to bolster support for military conflicts, political policies, and social, economic, and governmental institutions. The use of the term revolution has allowed American intellectual and political elites throughout the country's history to claim that the ideological foundations of the State, those of Enlightenment and liberal values, were a leap forward in Western political organization and thought that provided its citizens with a unique way of life, based upon democratic ideals such as personal liberty and egalitarianism.¹²¹

The October Revolution in Russia was both similar and different in ways that are important to understanding the experiences of American immigrants in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet case, the revolution did provide radically different social, economic, and political frameworks to the former territory of the Russian Empire. Founded upon an emerging ideology which promoted the concepts of freedom and equality, though through and for the benefit of the working class, the Soviet Union dedicated considerable resources to ensuring that the revolution and its benefits to both Soviet citizens and the international proletarian movement were constantly promoted through the State's propaganda.

For those responsible for the re-education of the Americans in the Soviet Union, including *Moscow News*, providing historical information regarding the revolution along with commentary on specific events from a Marxist-Leninist perspective was important to contextualizing aspects of the social and political order in which the immigrants found themselves. Articles looking back on the revolution ran throughout the year, but were most concentrated on and around the

¹²⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, (New York: Knopf, Inc.), 3.

¹²¹ Gordon S. Wood, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 23, no. 1 (January 1966), 3-32.

anniversary of the October Revolution each year. Underlining this point, Anna Louise Strong wrote in an article published on the thirteenth anniversary of the Revolution in 1930:

One misses the entire point of all the Soviet Union's financial, commercial and industrial policies and the inner meaning of all her labor regulations and cultural strivings, unless one understands from the beginning that those in charge of all the enterprises look upon themselves as "building socialism", a state of collectively owned and managed production and distribution in which there is not exploitation of man by man. This was the purpose behind the October Revolution of 1917, and it has never changed or wavered in the slightest degree since then.¹²²

The article goes on to describe four phases of the Socialist Revolution, from the period of worker's control to War Communism, the New Economic Policy, and ending with the Five Year Plans, making clear links between the State's then current policies and the efforts of the American workers to the events of 1917.

Stories and excerpts from American writers such as Albert Rhys Williams and John Reed were also printed for consumption by Americans to explain the complex events of 1917 from a perspective in a manner of speaking familiar to the paper's readers.¹²³ In the case of Reed, a profile on his life, covering his time in both the United States and Soviet Union, gave the Americans immigrants a hero of the revolution all their own. Descriptions of his life in the article paint a romantic picture of a man standing up to the forces of imperialism in his own country for the sake of the international proletariat. In a quote from the article describing his arrest and subsequent trial for anti-militarism, Reed, when asked if he would pledge his allegiance to the "stars and stripes... defiantly declared that he could honor only the Red Flag of the Socialist Revolution, which alone was worth fighting for."¹²⁴ The article's goes on to describe the

¹²² Anna Louise Strong, "Thirteen Years of Building Socialism Progresses with Unchanging Purpose Conditioned by Four Major Epochs," *Moscow News* (Moscow, USSR), 5 November 1930.

¹²³ Albert Rhys Williams, "How October Revolution Came To Be," *Moscow News* (Moscow, USSR), 5 November 1930.

¹²⁴ Boris Reinstein, "John Reed – American Revolutionary," *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 5 November 1930.

American journalist as a man who, despite not speaking Russian, “showed a much keener understanding of the Russian revolution than many professional revolutionists.”¹²⁵ References to Reed, an important way of connecting the immigrant community to the Revolution on an emotional level, occur many times throughout the paper’s run, including extensive coverage of a collective farm that bore his name and was the pride of the American workers who volunteered to travel to it to work during harvest seasons.¹²⁶

Another critical aspect of the paper’s coverage was describing the State’s role in safeguarding the gains made by the Russian Revolution. Lenin’s depiction of the Bolshevik party as the “vanguard of the proletariat,” in his influential work *What is to be Done?*, introduced the idea that the revolution would survive only through the efforts of a revolutionary vanguard party, established to awaken the class consciousness of the workers and provide intellectual and logistical support to the movement.¹²⁷ Following the revolution’s success and the subsequent establishment of the Bolsheviks as the single party of the new communist state, the job of maintaining and protecting of the revolution, still besieged by enemies from within the state as well as the imperialist powers around the world, fell to the Soviet government. The Soviet justice system was primarily tasked with defending the State from those who would seek to commit crimes against it in an attempt to subvert the revolution, the inverse of the American system the immigrants were used to, in which one of the primary focuses of the Constitution and its judicial enforcement has long been portrayed as protecting the individual from overreach by the State.¹²⁸ The paper routinely covered stories of “wreckers” from within the Soviet Union, described as individuals and groups trying to topple the Soviet system at the behest of white emigrants and

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ *Moscow News*, “Volunteers Aid Harvest On John Reed Farm,” (Moscow, USSR), 20 July 1933.

¹²⁷ Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House), 347-53

¹²⁸ Albert H. Robbins, “The Soviet Legal System,” *American Bar Association Journal*, 19, no. 11 (November 1933), 657.

foreign governments.¹²⁹ One of the most notable cases was that of the Torgprom Industrial Party. The Industrial Party consisted of Soviet scientists and economists, characterized as members of the “old intelligentsia,” accused of plotting a coup to overthrow the Soviet government.¹³⁰ The show trial, which was the first of its kind in the period following the New Economic Policy, was covered extensively by *Moscow News*, which published “Special Trial Supplement” issues to update the American immigrant community on the trial’s progress and included transcriptions of court testimony. The paper also covered public reactions to the trial and the alleged actions of the Industrial Party’s leadership, writing:

...the trial of the eight ringleaders of the Torgprom Industrial Party accused of attempting to sabotage Soviet industry and paving the way for foreign intervention was marked by tremendous demonstrations of workers in every city of the Soviet Union who made this an occasion for manifesting their unanimous support of the Soviet Government, and their determination to defend it against all internal and external enemies.¹³¹

News about the trials was carefully curated by *Moscow News*, emphasizing discussions between the coup’s plotters as to whether a monarchy, republic, or military dictatorship should rule Russia after the defeat of the Soviet government. Other information, such as inconsistencies in the case against the Industrial Party leaders, was omitted from its coverage. Leonid Ramzin, a thermal engineer and one of the eight defendants, was famously accused of collaborating with émigré Pavel Ryabushinsky in 1928, despite Ryabushinsky’s death four years prior in 1924.¹³² The Trial concluded on December 7th 1930, at which time five of the defendants were given death sentences, though these were later commuted to prison terms. Leonid Ramzin was amnestied in 1932, and went on to receive numerous awards from the Soviet government, including the Stalin Prize in 1943, the Order of Lenin, and the Order of the Red Banner of Labor. His rehabilitation

¹²⁹ *Moscow News*, “Sabotage By Wreckers Foreign Intervention,” (Moscow, USSR), 16 November 1930.

¹³⁰ *Moscow News*, “Trial of Wreckers Starts,” (Moscow, USSR), 27 November 1930.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, (Harper and Row), 632.

was used to promote the ability of the Soviet government to turn the enemies of the revolution into its most ardent protectors.¹³³

4. Through a Glass Darkly: Representations of American Immigrants in the Pages of *Moscow News*

In addition to re-educating American immigrants on norms and concepts important to integrating into Soviet life, *Moscow News* performed other functions besides delivering hard news. These functions were driven by both the needs of its readers and the pressures of publishing within the tightly controlled Soviet state. The representation of Americans and their “unique” qualities, contributions, and perspectives aimed to place American workers within the broader context of the Soviet Union’s attempts to build a new society and encourage them to meet, and even exceed, Soviet expectations of foreign workers. This was necessary due to the skepticism with which many Americans, particularly those who had traveled to the Soviet Union for non-political reasons, approached Russian and Soviet culture. A quote highlighted in Tim Tzouliadis’ *The Forsaken* demonstrates this skepticism, stating that:

Unsurprisingly many of the American engineers, in particular, complained that their children were turning a little too ‘Red’ ... An Associated Press reporter, Charlie Nutter, was somewhat disturbed when his young son Jimmy, who had consistently refused to say a single word, broke his silence one day by pointing a chubby finger at the picture on the front page of the newspaper. ‘Eta Stalin!’ little Jimmy Nutter gurgled in Russian with a smile, to the horror of his father, who immediately announced: ‘We’re going home! I’m going to raise my kid to be an American!’¹³⁴

For many of the immigrants, who in the expansive territory United States had limited interaction with non-Americans or foreign cultures or, if they did, maintained a privileged status over them, overcoming tendencies of cultural chauvinism was a difficult task.¹³⁵ Thus, representations of

¹³³ Peter Julicher, *Enemies of the People Under the Soviets: A History of Repression and its Consequences*, (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc.), 105

¹³⁴ Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken*, 17.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39-42.

Americans within the immigrant community of the Soviet Union in the pages of *Moscow News* addressed the need for Americans to feel positively distinct while also contributing to the sense that the special role of foreign workers meant that their presence was more meaningful than simply putting bread on the table and roofs over their heads.

Representation of American immigrants also served an important function for the acceptance of Americans by the Soviet citizens they worked alongside, many of whom harbored their own negative attitudes towards the community.¹³⁶ The weight of the Soviet gaze was clearly felt by the writers and editors of *Moscow News*. Though the majority of Soviet citizens did not read the English-language paper due to language barriers, enough of them did to prompt to Anna Louise Strong, when remarking on the challenges of publishing the English-language newspaper, to say that “The chief one would be to write stuff that would really suit the Americans, without making the Russians who read it too mad.”¹³⁷ The sense of resentment towards American workers, who generally received higher pay along with better food and accommodation than their Soviet counterparts, affected the paper’s operations as well as its news coverage. In *American Girls in Red Russia*, Julia Mickenberg explains how the salaries of the paper’s staff matched those of Russian journalists, writing, “Strong refused to get more than the party maximum, and she convinced the entire staff to take the same ‘shock brigade pledge.’ ‘We were sick of the way Russians thought Americans only wanted dollars; we were going to be a noble bunch. We would show these communists who treated us as bought-and-paid-for outsiders that we were as good as they.’”¹³⁸ In addition to stories focused on American immigrants’ accomplishments and overall progress in assimilating into Soviet society, *Moscow News* regularly published statements from

¹³⁶ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 170.

¹³⁷ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 169.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

Soviet leaders and American workers that condemned negative sentiments and attacks, by word or deed, against the Americans who were actively contributing to the proletarian cause.¹³⁹

The relationship between *Moscow News* and the Soviet government, which reviewed and approved the content of the paper since its founding, also helps to show the significance of publishing stories that promoted the American immigrant community and portrayed them as dedicated to the Soviet project. The fact that so many Americans had come to the Soviet Union only to see their economic needs, and not political or ideological dreams, fulfilled, was not lost on Soviet elites, who increasingly questioned their loyalty to the State, who called for “unreliable, unstable, and alien elements” to be purged from the Soviet Union even prior to the formal campaign against foreign workers began in the latter half of the decade.¹⁴⁰ The ways in which *Moscow News* addressed the lives of American workers in the United States and, importantly, the policies and actions of the United States government, also aimed to reassure Soviet leaders of the allegiance of the immigrant community to the State and to communist ideology. Since the Soviet state’s founding, following the October Revolution of 1917, the United States government had stood in staunch opposition to the Communist Party’s claim to power. Despite pressure from American business leaders to formally recognize the Soviet state and open diplomatic ties between the United States and Soviet governments, which the United States did in 1933, laws limiting trade with the Soviet Union were proposed by the United States Congress in 1931.¹⁴¹ At the same time, critical coverage of the country’s laws, economic policies, and the rights of its citizens began to proliferate in American newspapers, quickly replacing the once steady stream media praise for Russia’s social and economic progress. Amid heightening tensions between the

¹³⁹ *Moscow News*, “Stalingrad Executive Asks For More Cooperation With American Specialists,” (Moscow, USSR), 10 October 1930.

¹⁴⁰ *Moscow News*, “On Purging the Party,” (Moscow, USSR), 20 January 1933.

¹⁴¹ *Moscow News*, “American Business Leaders Ask Soviet Union Recognition,” (Moscow, USSR), 7 December 1930.

two countries, *Moscow News* aimed to make clear distinctions in the paper between the United States government and its working class citizens, and to highlight the American immigrant community's rejection of their home government's policies and the increasingly negative portrayal of their host country in the American press.¹⁴²

The portrayal of the Americans, both in the Soviet Union and at home, by *Moscow News* highlights the delicate balance the newspaper had to strike between serving its readers and the demands of the Soviet government. Julia Mickenberg describes the struggles that *Moscow News* reporters faced in juggling the true consequences of the Soviet Union's policies, for Americans and Soviet citizens alike, with the need to promote the Communist Party's approved messaging, in order to save the paper, their jobs, and their own livelihoods. She writes, "Exaggerating the success of this program while minimizing its failures and human costs was apparently the price one paid to succeed as a reporter on the *Moscow News*."¹⁴³ These failures included many of the policies that the paper was expected to cover regularly, such as the famines and myriad deaths, estimated at upwards of 14.5 million, associated with the policy of collectivization.¹⁴⁴ Instead of downplaying the actual costs in human lives or limiting coverage of the drawbacks to collectivization, *Moscow News* continuously championed the policy for feeding the masses and ensuring their economic security. The use of the paper as an instrument of Soviet propaganda weighed on American journalists working in the Soviet Union, who believed in the importance of protecting both the immigrant community as well as the ideals behind the revolutionary Soviet experiment, amidst the increasing dangers that the Soviet state posed to both.

¹⁴² *Moscow News*, "Twenty Million Face Dire Need in U.S.A.," (Moscow, USSR), 7 December 1930.

¹⁴³ Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia*, 199.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

4.1 The Normative Role of Representations of American Workers in *Moscow News*

In its descriptions of the American experience in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, *Moscow News* often utilized language that spoke to integral aspects of American identity, notably the “pioneering spirit” of the American people. The purpose of this was to help American immigrants to associate their arrival in the new, unfamiliar society of the Soviet Union with a fundamental aspect of the American narrative. By referencing the struggles that American settlers faced and overcame in the early years of the Republic, the paper encouraged the immigrant community to view their participation in the Soviet experiment as similar to the settlement of the new world. One American worker, whose letter to the paper was published on the front page of *Moscow News*’ inaugural issue, called upon the community to demonstrate how they could “rough it as their own forefathers did in their pioneering days.”¹⁴⁵ He goes on to note one thing that the American immigrant community in the Soviet Union had at its disposal that their forerunners did not, namely the organization and ideology of the Soviet state and its support for the working class. He wrote, “...we do it on a bigger scale and single plan through mighty millions organized for the common good.”¹⁴⁶ An illustration on the cover of the May Day issue of *Moscow News* in 1933 shows an American worker, in overalls and waving a flat cap, walking into the sun, towards smokestacks and skyscrapers labeled “USSR.” Behind him are the easily recognizable U.S. Capitol building and churches with tall crosses affixed to their roofs, enveloped in shadows.¹⁴⁷ Employing the metaphor of setting out for a new world, free from the oppression they faced in the old one, was a familiar and attractive image for American readers, and appropriated to encourage many of them to travel to places less populated by Western immigrants. An article published in November 1930 entitled “Americans Pioneer In The Ukraine

¹⁴⁵ Bill Shatoff, “An ‘Assignment’ from Bill Shatoff,” *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 5 October, 1930.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Frey Ellis, “Towards The New World,” *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 1 May 1933. (See Appendix E).

And They Like It” made use of this symbolism, but also contrasted the hardships faced by early American pioneers with the amenities afforded to the Soviet Union’s American immigrants. A Detroit native quoted in the article claimed, “We get everything – clothes, tobacco, food, room, amusement, everything without money, for everything belongs to the Commune, and the Commune belongs to us.”¹⁴⁸ For these Americans, living and working in the still newly established Soviet Union allowed them to engage in an authentic pioneer experience, though without many of the steep costs incurred by those who attempted it in previous centuries during America’s westward expansion.

Moscow News’ use of the pioneer metaphor was clever, as the Five Year Plan and attempts to complete it ahead of schedule required an enormous amount of effort on behalf of workers in every sector of the Soviet economy. The paper was eager to highlight the enthusiasm and usefulness of American workers in achieving these ends. Importantly, the paper frequently portrayed Americans participating in “socialist competition” as uninterested in the personal financial gains that could be made from working in the Soviet Union. Stories of American workers giving up their holidays to volunteer on collective farms during the harvest season supported this narrative, as did profiles of individual American workers that discussed their motivations for coming to the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁹ The story of an American shoemaker published in March 1932 recounts the struggle he faced in the United States, where public knowledge of his Communist political leanings led to financial ruin. However, his reason for coming to the Soviet Union, as described in the article, was the opportunity to teach his methods to “the young workers” of the Soviet Union, which he described as his most important contribution to building

¹⁴⁸ *Moscow News*, “Americans Pioneer in the Ukraine And They Like It,” (Moscow, USSR), 21 November 1930.

¹⁴⁹ *Moscow News*, “Foreigners Give Holidays To Work On American Farm,” (Moscow, USSR), 10 June 1933.

socialism.¹⁵⁰ Profiles such as this demonstrate the normative role the paper played through its representation of the American immigrants, many of whom did not share the same devotion to Communism or the Soviet state as those featured by *Moscow News*. The writers of the paper also portrayed the immigrants as eager to contribute not only their time and expertise, but their personal financial resources as well, in order to ensure the prosperity of the Soviet Union and the success of the Five Year Plans. One immigrant, a Refrigerator Engineer living in Hladstroy whose letter was published on the front page of the paper in December 1930, donated his money directly to the State, and encouraged other American immigrants to do so as well. He wrote:

Americans are looked upon as dyed in the wool “materialists.” We have a great opportunity now to prove the contrary. Let all of us Americans working for this great country and for progress, as an answer to the invasion program, make a sacrifice and donate as much as we can to the collection for the defence of the U.S.S.R. I therefore give for this collection \$60 in American currency and 490 RBLS. and I sincerely hope that more of us will take a good grip into their pockets hoping that we from “God’s Country” will not be the last in the collection.¹⁵¹

Calls to action such as this, in the form of letters or quoted in articles, were used regularly by the paper to encourage the community to increase their output, join “shock brigades,” and take part in local political organizing. The paper, in turn, frequently depicted the community as going above and beyond what was asked of them in these calls to action, eager to portray the American immigrant community as one of the driving factors behind the acceleration of the Five Year Plan.¹⁵²

Some of the most important contributions Americans made to Soviet society and the economy, according to the paper, were inventions and creative solutions to the problems facing modernization of the country. This fed into another narrative prevalent in American discourse and

¹⁵⁰ *Moscow News*, “American Builds Socialism With Shoe Leather,” (Moscow, USSR), 3 March 1932.

¹⁵¹ Arthur E. Williams, “From an American Engineer,” *Moscow News* (Moscow, USSR), 27 December 1930.

¹⁵² *Moscow News*, “Americans Form Shock Brigade,” (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

identity, the spirit of American innovation. Using this language allowed *Moscow News* to create another metric by which American workers could assess their place in the Soviet system, as well as a model to aspire to. A profile of several foreign workers and their contributions, published in November 1933, highlighted several Americans for revolutionizing the working methods in their factories and their industries as a whole. The article stated:

In yet another basic industry of the Soviet Union a foreign specialist has achieved great victories. Howard J. MacDonald came to the Soviet Union from America five years ago, in the capacity of consultant in the non-ferrous mining industry... MacDonald's contribution to the socialist construction is most striking in the amount of savings it effected [*sic*]. On one ore bed alone, an economy of 57 million rubles was effected [*sic*] through the adoption of his proposals... In 1932 he was awarded a premium of 15,000 rubles and made director of all mining in the Soviet non-ferrous metal industry. Ordzhonikidze, Peoples Commissar of Heavy Industry, praised him highly for his work and ordered all mines to adopt his methods. MacDonald has proven himself a worker and fighter equal to conquering difficulties.¹⁵³

In addition to the numerous stories of American introducing working methods developed in the United States to the Soviet Union's various economic sectors, *Moscow News* relied heavily on stories of American workers developing entirely new tools and techniques for use in Soviet industry. An article titled "24-Year Old U.S. Youth Makes Lightning in Soviet Laboratory" tells the story of Maurice Newman, who developed designs for a "10 Million Volt Generator," a significant improvement on the Soviet Union's 500,000-volt generators. "When an All-Union Red Board is set up in honor of the people who are helping to conquer this stronghold of Nature," the article reads, "Maurice Newman's name will certainly be on it."¹⁵⁴ In the Soviet Union, the paper argued, the inventive nature of Americans was able to thrive and, unlike in the United States where increases in efficiency were used to further exploit the proletariat, was leveraged for the benefit of the working class.

¹⁵³ *Moscow News*, "The Role of Foreign Workers and Specialists in Socialist Construction," (Moscow, USSR), 7 November 1933.

¹⁵⁴ *Moscow News*, "24-Year Old U.S. Youth Makes Lightning in Soviet Laboratory," (Moscow, USSR), 13 December 1933.

Despite *Moscow News*' attempts to construct a narrative that portrayed the lives of American workers in the Soviet Union as idyllic and free from the exploitation and alienation that plagued them in the capitalist West, the paper ultimately had to recognize the frustrations that many Americans felt with regard to the Soviet bureaucracy. *Moscow News* acknowledged these grievances, and published stories detailing specific instances in which American attempts to improve certain processes or implement new methods were hindered by red tape and disregard for American specialists' suggestions.¹⁵⁵ However, the paper leveraged the "unique" practice of socialist self-criticism to reframe Americans' complaints, showing them as active participants in this process and thus valued members of Soviet society. By representing Americans in this way, they worked not only able to put a positive spin on the problems faced by American immigrant workers, but also to reinforce a sense of belonging to and ownership of an economic system controlled, as the official messaging of the Soviet Union claimed, by members of the proletariat such as themselves.¹⁵⁶

While the vast majority of the paper's depictions of American immigrants painted the community in a positive light, exceptions to this rule also show how *Moscow News* used its representation as a normative framework, aimed at aligning the behaviors of the community's members with the standards and expectations of Soviet society at large. According to one letter published in *Moscow News* on April 8, 1932, addressed to "U.S. Specialists Who Are Snobs", the American immigrant community had developed a reputation among many for being rude, demanding, and unwilling to fraternize with their Soviet colleagues. This, unsurprisingly, served to exacerbate the growing discord between the immigrant community and locals, who earned a fraction of what the Americans brought to the Soviet Union on short-term contracts were paid and

¹⁵⁵ A. Koppel, "Specialists Fight Against Red Tape," (Moscow, USSR), 25 February 1933.

¹⁵⁶ *Moscow News*, "First English Newspaper Starts in Moscow," (Moscow, USSR), 5 October 1930.

whose housing and food were both of considerably lower quality.¹⁵⁷ The letter, from an American woman living in Magnitogorsk named Pauline Rose, read:

As an American, understanding America and the American people, I speak of them – and say that those who have come here with the idea that because they are highly paid, they are better than the others, are sadly ignorant, bigoted, lacking in all that makes real culture. Let them sit up and take notice, study their Russian neighbors, and learn what real hospitality, cordiality, culture, mean.¹⁵⁸

The letter was followed by a short response from the paper's editors, condemning the actions of those described in the letter and stating, "...we all have no doubt the majority of the English-speaking specialists and workers would join heartily in that condemnation. Hospitality, cordiality, and culture will develop naturally when workers, foreign or Russian, get together amicably in their social life just as they work together in production."¹⁵⁹ Instances in which the paper drew attention to disharmony between Americans living in the Soviet Union and those around them, it should be noted, were rare. More commonly, the paper published articles that aimed to dissolve the boundaries between the two groups entirely, in the name of proletarian internationalism. A noteworthy entry in a *Moscow News* article series called "Moscow Mike Tells Us", published not long after the aforementioned letter and titled "Why Foreigners Here Are Not Foreigners",

¹⁵⁷ Robert Robinson, author of *Red on Black: My 44 Years in the Soviet Union*, understood the differences between immigrants and citizens well. After growing anger in the United States over his election to the Moscow Soviet, and the use of his image by Soviet propagandists, he was ordered by the State Department to return home. Afraid of the consequences of returning to a country where he had been demonized by the press and castigated in speeches made by national politicians in Congress, he reluctantly applied for Soviet citizenship. Upon his naturalization, he no longer had access to the lunch hall that the Americans dined in at the factory where he worked, which served higher quality meals in larger portions, nor was he able to use the superior machinery or tools provided for his former compatriots. An article in *Moscow News* titled, "We Get the Best" further reinforces the fact that these inequalities existed between foreign and Soviet workers. Though the article was initially intended to highlight the Soviet government's high regard for American and other foreign workers in the hope that this would translate to increased enthusiasm, it ultimately illustrated the poor living and working conditions that many Soviet citizens had to contend with, and the privileged status that allowed many Americans to remain blissfully unaware of this fact.

¹⁵⁸ Pauline Rose, "U.S. Specialists Who Are Snobs," *Moscow News*, (Moscow, USSR), 8 April 1933.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

recounts a (surely fictional) conversation that the article's author, the eponymous "Moscow Mike", had with an American worker he met on the streets of Moscow. In it, the man says:

It ain't that we foreign-speakin' workers wants to have our own separate clubs an' we ain't allowed to, as the capitalist papers hints. It's that we don't want to be separated from our Russian-speakin' comrades – why should we? An' for my part, if any English-speakin' feller was to suggest that we segregate ourselves in little nationalistic groups, apart from our Russian-speakin' pals – why, I'd suggest, on my part, that he get down to takin' a little lesson or two on solidarity. We foreigners who've come here to work an' assist buildin' socialism has got a change of one o' the greatest experiences a man can have – to help build up a workers' State an' industry, free from exploitation of man by man. [sic]¹⁶⁰

The examples provided by the letter and the "Moscow Mike" story, and the fact that the latter was published the week after the criticism it addressed were written about in the paper, demonstrate the ways in which *Moscow News*' representation of Americans served, in many cases, a distinctly normative function. By alerting its readers to the ways in which they were not living up to the standards expected of them by members of Soviet society, and others within the immigrant community, and providing examples of attitudes and behaviors to exemplify, *Moscow News* became a tool for the Americans' re-education not only on the concepts and ideas which served as the basis for Soviet life, but also a promoter of the specific behaviors and ways of living which would help American integration into life in the Soviet Union and prove to their Soviet peers that they were equal partners in the building of socialism and the creation of a new world.

4.2 Demonstrating Loyalty Through Representations of American Immigrants

The brief period in which the Soviet Union received positive media reception in the United States ended not long after the initial wave of American immigrants arrived in the Soviet Union. As anti-communist sentiments ran deep in the American subconscious, attempts from United States government officials to limit trade and credit to the Soviet Union increased, despite

¹⁶⁰ *Moscow News*, "Why Foreigners Here Are Not Foreigners." (Moscow, USSR), 13 April 1932.

increasing calls from American business leaders to improve relations between the two countries.¹⁶¹ A story published in *Moscow News* in February 1931 highlighted the disagreements between those in the United States aiming to put both political and economic pressure on the Soviet state and those who saw financial opportunity in the Soviet Union's push to rapidly modernize and industrialize its economy. The story read, "House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee has opened hearings for the purpose of considering the Bill introduced by Congressman Kendall, a Republican from Pennsylvania, seeking an embargo on Soviet goods under the pretext of excluding products of forced and convict labor."¹⁶² The President of the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce, the story continues, testified before Congress in an attempt to dissuade legislators from supporting policies that would damage ties with the Soviet Union and further disrupt the American economy.

The Soviet government's reaction to legislative attempts in the United States to enact a "blockade" of Soviet goods and restrict exports to the country were exacerbated by reports covered in American newspapers which claimed that the Soviet government was manipulating the prices of goods such as wheat and manganese in an attempt to bolster the Soviet Union's economic standing in international markets. *Moscow News* characterized these claims, made by members of the Hoover administration, namely the Secretary of Agriculture Arthur M. Hyde, as a "red herring," shifting the blame from President Hoover's failing economic policies and inability to counteract the effects of the Great Depression to the Soviet Union.¹⁶³ United States government officials also accused the Soviet government of enacting policies of "forced labor." These reports were initially published in 1931 by the head of the Special Committee to Investigate Communist

¹⁶¹ *Moscow News*, "U.S. Businessman Pleads For Soviet Recognition," (Moscow, USSR), 16 January 31.

¹⁶² *Moscow News*, "American Reactionaries Continue Attack on Soviet-American Trade," (Moscow, USSR), 6 February 1931.

¹⁶³ *Moscow News*, "Anti-Soviet Attack, Red Herring Hoover 'Playing Politics', According To World," (Moscow, USSR), 15 October 1930.

Activities in the United States, Hamilton Fish III. The interpretation proposed by Fish and supported by the American Press was that these policies were instrumental to the Soviet government's calculations for the completion of the Five Year Plans, which could not succeed without compelling citizens' to work to achieve them.¹⁶⁴

Countering these accusations was clearly vital to the Soviet government, and the paper accordingly devoted dozens of stories to supporting the Soviet government's official messaging. *Moscow News* published transcripts of speeches from Soviet leaders, who characterized the accusations of market manipulation and forced labor as attempts by Western capitalists to undermine to Soviet project, out of fear that its success would lead to a socialist revolution in the United States.¹⁶⁵ The tensions between the United States and Soviet governments during this period provided *Moscow News* with a unique opportunity to demonstrate the loyalty of American immigrants to both communist ideology and the Soviet state. By representing the American immigrant community as united in their support for the Soviet Unions policies, the paper also attempted to encourage American workers to publicly rejection of anti-Soviet rhetoric coming from the United States. In February 1931, *Moscow News* published an open letter from twenty-three engineers, workers, and specialists that read:

We are at present living and participating in the industrial life of the Soviet Union, and are constantly in close contact with the workers and specialists of factories, offices and institutions of the Soviet Union. Not one of the undersigned has witnesses any socalled [*sic*] "forces labor" in any branch of Soviet industry. The Russian workers, on the contrary, have organized themselves into shock-brigades and are engaging in socialist competition to improve production. This is to our mind a sign of enthusiasm and freedom on the job. In no other country do the workers give themselves so whole-heartedly to the solution of the problems confronting them. In protesting against this new campaign of lies concerning "forced labor" in the U.S.S.R, we call upon all foreign engineers, specialists

¹⁶⁴ *Moscow News*, "Fish Committee Issues Report Attacking USSR," (Moscow, USSR), 27 January 1931.

¹⁶⁵ *Moscow News*, "At The Sixth Congress of Soviets," (Moscow, USSR), 12 March 1931.

and workers here to join us in our protest and demand that the press of our respective countries put an end to their libellous [*sic*] and shameful campaign.¹⁶⁶

Subsequently, in a letter from the editor published in March 1931, the paper called for any “American engineer or specialist” to write in and denounce the claims made in the Fish Report. One such message, published alongside others beneath this call to action, criticized what the writer claimed was the hypocritical stance of the United States on slavery. The unnamed author of the letter wrote, “To claim that ‘forced labor’ exists in a country where labor is especially revered is calumny of the worst sort. And who is it that is raising the rumpus? The very slave-owners themselves from whom one would expect the least noise on such a question as forced labor.”¹⁶⁷

Another article, published in April 1931, titled “Mechanics Receive Honorable Mention For Repairing Machinery In Record Time”, expands upon this line of thinking. In it, a specialist residing in Siszranski responds to the accusations made in the American press by stating, “It certainly is disgusting to read accounts of the Fish Committee reports in American newspapers. And all this talk about ‘compulsory labor.’ There’s plenty of compulsory labor in the United States. Or what do you call it when a man, qualified to earn \$10 a day at his trade has to work for \$2 a day at unskilled labor to keep from starving? That seems plenty compulsory to me.”¹⁶⁸

Moscow News added to this narrative with near continuous coverage of the plight of American workers in the United States. Stories published in February 1931 cited erroneous claims by U.S. Senator T.H. Caraway that over one thousand people were dying of starvation daily, and emphasized the President Hoover’s opposition to government relief efforts to demonstrate the

¹⁶⁶ *Moscow News*, “Open Letter to All Foreign Specialists and Workers in the U.S.S.R.,” (Moscow, USSR), 1 February 1931.

¹⁶⁷ *Moscow News*, “The Truth About Forced Labor,” (Moscow, USSR), 3 March 1931.

¹⁶⁸ *Moscow News*, “Mechanics Receive Honorable Mentions For Repairing Machinery in Record Time,” (Moscow, USSR), 2 April 1931.

lack of political will on behalf of the government to protect working families and also the lack of political power held by the working class.¹⁶⁹

Representation of American immigrants by *Moscow News* portrayed their allegiance to the Soviet state by deed as well as by word. Reports of the increasingly dire situation in the United States were contrasted by the paper in their coverage of Soviet-American immigrants celebrating the Soviet state and its message of empowerment for the working class. The dedication of American immigrants was shown in stories and photo series depicting American workers groups marching in Soviet parades on the anniversary of the October Revolution and on May Day.¹⁷⁰ More importantly, the paper provided stories of American workers directly supporting the Soviet government through its state-issued loans. Quoting from the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*, *Moscow News* described the internal loan program as “striking proof of the possibilities of the proletarian state to advance the country of the victorious proletariat along the lines of economic and cultural development, and to build up a classless society, without oppressive loans from abroad.”¹⁷¹ The article goes on to outline that the loan was for raising the living standards of Soviet workers and peasants, by building “factories and mills, state farms and machine-tractor stations, tractors and combines, schools and hospitals, modern restaurants and day nurseries.”¹⁷² A story titled “Foreigners Rush to Aid Loan Drive”, and many others like it, argued the important role that Americans played in the program’s success, stating, “Foreign workers and specialists will not stand aside in this campaign. We are glad to be able to show our appreciation to the government

¹⁶⁹ *Moscow News*, “One Thousand Persons Dying of Starvation Daily in U.S.,” (Moscow, USSR), 16 February 1931.

Moscow News, “Collective Farms Surpass Expectations,” (Moscow, USSR), 25 March 1931.

¹⁷⁰ *Moscow News*, “Builders of Socialism,” (Moscow, USSR), 1 May 1933. (See Appendix F).

¹⁷¹ *Moscow News*, “Constructive Aims of New Loan Expressed by Press,” (Moscow, USSR), May 20 1933.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

for which we are now working.” *Moscow News* depicted American immigrants as eager to pledge “100 per cent of a month’s salary,” to the loan, “and in many cases, a great deal more.”¹⁷³

For the most dedicated and loyal among the American immigrant community, the paper publicized, the opportunity for foreign workers to vote and even run in Soviet elections allowed them to give back to the country in ways not normally available to them. Under the Soviet Constitution, the paper wrote in October 1930, the right to vote depended not on place of birth or citizenship, but “solely on where you work.”¹⁷⁴ Additionally, according to the paper, the opportunities extended beyond local politics. “Theoretically,” *Moscow News* wrote, “there is nothing to prevent his being elected on up to the All Union Congress of Soviets.”¹⁷⁵ *Moscow News* published helpful feedback for Americans interested in running, answer questions about the logistics of running for office in a country where English was not widely spoken. “To the editor’s question whether such a man would not have to know Russian, the informant rejoined: ‘How so? I attended a Daghestan [sic] Congress of Soviets where 200 languages and dialects were represented... We are quire used to interpreters in our Congresses. And it is easy to get an interpreter for English.’”¹⁷⁶ The paper was eager to see Americans serve in local soviets and regularly encouraged readers to convince their fellow foreign workers to vote and run for office. *Moscow News* described American participation in the Soviet elections on an annual basis, and often announced their successful bids to become deputies of rural and city soviets. The paper’s coverage, in November 1934, of “Americans Elected to Office” explains the value of having Americans serve as elected representatives in factories and local administrative councils, for both the immigrant community as well as the Soviet Union as a whole.

¹⁷³ *Moscow News*, “Foreigners Rush to Aid Loan Drive,” (Moscow, USSR), 20 May 1933.

¹⁷⁴ *Moscow News*, “Foreigners Can Be Elected In the Soviet Elections,” (Moscow, USSR), 15 October 1930.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Demands are published urging greater attention to the realization of workers' rationalization proposals, to the improvement of worker's apartments, restaurants, Red Corners, schools and nurseries... On the basis of these instructions the deputies will know exactly what the workers on the bench expect of them as their representative to the Soviet. In every plant, large or small, the foreign worker has his voice in the elections. In Leningrad at the great Red Putilov Plant they have pledged themselves to turn out a 12,000 kw turbine 20 days ahead of schedule in honor of the Seventh Congress of Soviets... Foreigners of the Max Holz Precision Machinery Plant, in the same city, have entered a series of socialist competitions to raise their qualifications and their productivity before the opening of the congress.¹⁷⁷

In addition to showing the enthusiasm of the American immigrant community for Soviet governance, for many it represented an opportunity that would have been, in effect, unavailable to them in the United States, the paper also emphasized the popularity of the American candidates. *Moscow News* noted that in the case of M. Kotsebuk and Celisa Seltzer-Ukrainetz, elected to village soviets in December 1934, they received the highest shares of the vote in their respective races.¹⁷⁸

Coverage of a resolution regarding the 1931 elections, adopted by American workers and specialists at the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, eloquently displays the commitment to Soviet governance and values that the paper desired to showcase. An excerpt from the resolution reads:

During this soviet election we will utilize our international right granted to us by the Soviet Constitution in expressing our solidarity with the Soviet proletariat. We will do everything possible in drawing the masses into participation in this election. We urge all the other foreign workers and specialists now working in the U.S.S.R. to do the same... Long live the solidarity of the international proletariat. Long live the Soviet Union – the torch of the oppressed of the world. Forward to the Five-year plan in four years!¹⁷⁹

Whether pronouncements such as this were fabricated or authentic, and whether they derived from a small section of the community or were more widely felt, the messaging that *Moscow News* conveyed in their published works show the importance that representing the American

¹⁷⁷ *Moscow News*, "Americans Elected to Office," (Moscow, USSR), 29 November 1934.

¹⁷⁸ *Moscow News*, "Foreign Workers in the Soviet Elections," (Moscow, USSR), 6 December 1934.

¹⁷⁹ *Moscow News*, "Resolution Adopted by American Workers and Specialists Employed in the Stalingrad Tractor Plant on Soviet Elections," (Moscow, USSR), 16 January 1931.

immigrant community in a positive, constructive light had for the writers and editors of the paper. This messaging, when viewed from the perspective of the tragedy that would befall the community during the second wave of purges in 1936, underscores the fact that Soviet leaders, themselves versed in the usage of mass media to shift optics and construct narratives beneficial to their aims, were ultimately unconvinced by the image the paper presented, or considered the costs of destroying the community were outweighed by the benefits to their ultimate plans for the future of the Soviet Union.

5. Conclusion

The unique political, social, and economic realities facing American in the years of the Great Depression resulted in the formation of a unique population, one not seen before or since in the annals of American history – the American immigrant community abroad. These immigrants, who settled in the USSR, were drawn by the prospect of economic stability, social equality, and, for many, adventure, awaiting them in the Soviet Union. Upon arrival, the immigrants established American cultural institutions to ease their transition to Soviet life. Among these were schools, sports, leagues, and clubs, but also newspapers such as *Moscow News*, which for many of them provided their only source of information about what was going on in the country or the outside world.

Moscow News served as an important tool in the Soviet Union's overall attempts to re-educate the immigrant community and to bring them into ideological alignment with the state. While some of those within the immigrant community were dedicated communists prior to travelling to the Soviet Union, the majority emigrated from the United States for economic reasons and was uninterested in the political and ideological disputes between their home and host countries. These attempts at re-education took various forms, but a focus on concepts familiar to

Americans were an important part of *Moscow News*'s coverage. Notions such as individualism, rationalization, and revolution, familiar to Americans in one form or another through the country's political rhetoric and cultural discourse, were discussed often and in such a way as to reorient the immigrant's way of thinking to align with the Marxist foundations of the Soviet state and particularly the interpretation of those theories under Stalinist rule. As shown in the chapter three, the paper utilized traditional rhetorical appeals in order to ensure that its messaging was presented most effectively.

Another important role played by *Moscow News* was that of normative framework. The paper frequently presented representations of American immigrants in the Soviet Union in an attempt to modify the behavior of community members, much like their focus on concepts aimed to modify their thinking. By providing a standard for Americans to aspire to, and regularly discussing the spiritual rewards for those living within the framework outlined by the paper, *Moscow News* served the needs of Soviet elites by implementing within the community soft forms of social influence and control. The paper cleverly used tropes it knew would appeal to American readers in the construction of this normative framework, including the "pioneering American spirit" and that of the "enterprising American." By using these tropes, familiar to any American due to the level of their cultural significance, the paper aimed to appropriate imagery utilized in the United States, largely for the benefit of its social and economic system, but apply it to the specific social and cultural contexts that the American immigrant community of the Soviet Union found itself in during this period.

Representations of American immigrants in *Moscow News* were not, however, used solely for purpose of realigning American's views for the benefit of the Soviet state. Images of the American immigrant community in the Soviet Union were also constructed with the aim of

protecting the immigrants from the Soviet government, which grew increasingly skeptical of foreigners within its borders and moved to purge, along with many others seen as disloyal, them from Soviet society. These representations constructed a narrative meant to showcase the loyalty of the American immigrants to the state, and demonstrate the beneficial role that they played in the Soviet economy, Soviet culture, and even the Soviet political apparatus. Much of this was accomplished by the paper through representations of the immigrant community as fully rejecting accusations made by Western governments and media against the Soviet Union. Presenting Americans as loyal dedicated to building socialism was also attempted by showing the level of integration into the Soviet system by Americans, through participation in political processes and investment in the Soviet economy through state sponsored loan programs.

The American immigrant community in the Soviet Union of the 1930s ultimately failed to leave a mark on the culture and society of Moscow or any of the other regions of Soviet territory that they inhabited. The strength of the Soviet state's campaign against foreigners, among others, ensured that what influence they had during their brief time in the Soviet Union was erased or appropriated as being Soviet in origin. Remnants of their time in the Soviet Union exist, however, in the pages of periodicals like *Moscow News*, which served to document their lives and experiences, even if with considerable bias and only in part. While the paper was primarily a tool of Soviet propaganda, it is useful for understanding the needs and interests of the Soviet state and journalists who wrote *Moscow News*, and to see how those needs were translated into the media consumed by the average Soviet-American immigrant.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B



Appendix C



Appendix D

Modern Cotton Culture Supplants Old Methods



A FINE CROP on the Akhshablagov collective farm near Tashkent. Collectivization and new production have greatly increased yields.



ABOVE—COTTON HARVESTERS of the Yuzvskiy collective in Yangi-yul, Uzbekistan, having their pick weighed and recorded in their work books.



RIGHT—CLEANING COTTON at the Yuzvskiy collective farm in Fergana. This brigade of older men was one of the fastest.



OLD METHODS but new tools, Tashkenters, a shock worker, is plucking by hand on a Fergana collective.

BELOW—MUSKIEV Turman vacuum picker in use on the Fakhro-Aral State Farm in Kazakhstan.



ANNA AT CHOPKIN OGLU, a member of the Akhshablagov collective farm, Turkmenistan.



TAJIKISTAN, at "the roof of the world," is an important cotton growing region. This is the Yakhshablagov farm.

Editor-in-Chief: N. N. BORKHIN

Восстановитель (№) 195. «Мир» № 1248. 22. 24. Селекция Овощных, 2. 2.

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Appendix E

Moscow Daily News

SPECIAL MAY DAY EDITION

Third Year No. 22 May 1, 1928

Editorial Office, Moscow, USSR, Petrosski Peretzok 8

Price: 5 cents, 10 kopeks



By Fred Ellis

TOWARDS THE NEW WORLD

Appendix F

16

MOSCOW DAILY NEWS (Weekly Edition)

May 1, 1933

BUILDERS OF SOCIALISM

Moscow Shock Brigaders

American Udamniks of Commune Cement Gorki (right)

AMERICAN PIONEER GROUP

COMMUNE CEMENT GORKI

RUSSIAN AND FOREIGN WORKERS, the collective farmers and the youth of the USSR unite on May Day in celebration of victories and in dedication to new struggles for the establishment of a classless socialist society, under the leadership of the Communist Party headed by Stalin

THAT PROSPERITY SMILE—Their collective farm in Moscow Province is making good progress towards realizing Stalin's slogan that every collective farmer should be well-to-do