Modernization from the Other Shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic Development

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THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM haunted not just nineteenth-century Europe but most of the world in the twentieth century. The specter of Soviet Communism haunting this century, however, was as much a blueprint for rapid industrialization as an ideology of proletarian revolution, national liberation, or totalitarian control. At the same time, the Soviet specter often bore little resemblance to actually existing circumstances in the Soviet Union itself. In spite of the tremendous costs, including a catastrophic famine in 1932–1933, domestic and foreign commentators widely praised Soviet efforts at economic modernization, especially in the early years of the Five-Year Plans (1928–1937).[1] What American diplomat George F. Kennan termed the "romance of economic development" captivated a wide range of foreign observers of all political persuasions.[2] These interwar observers valued the fruits of rapid industrialization above its costs—even when these costs included not only repression and privation but also starvation. Many Western observers, ranging from fellow-travelers to anticommunists, summed up their balance sheets on the Soviet Five-Year Plans with the frequently repeated canard that the USSR was "starving itself great"—a phrase that appeared well before the devastating 1932–1933 famine. In Europe's colonies, political leaders as well as intellectuals enthusiastically endorsed the Soviet goal of rapid industrialization as a shortcut to economic

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[1] On "bourgeois" professionals' support for the early Five-Year Plans in the USSR, see David R. Shearer, *Industry, State and Society in Stalin's Russia, 1928–1934* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996). On Americans' attractions to the Soviet Union in this era, see Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), esp. chaps. 7–9; Marcello Flores, "The American Attitude toward the First Soviet Five-Year Plan," *Storia nordamericana* 1 (1984): 72–98; and Lewis S. Feuer, "American Travelers to the Soviet Union, 1917–32: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology," *American Quarterly* 14 (Summer 1962): 119–49. More cosmopolitan perspectives are offered in David Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment* (New York, 1973); and Joog Bachmann, *Zwischen Paris und Moskau: Deutsche burgerliche Linksintellektuelle und die stalinistische Sowjetunion, 1933–1939* (Mannheim, 1995).

[2] "Memorandum for the Minister," August 19, 1932, enclosed in Robert Skinner to Secretary of State, August 19, 1932, 861.5017 Living Conditions/510, State Department Decimal File, Record Group 59, U.S. National Archives. (Decimal file documents hereafter referred to as SDDF.)

modernity. Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, drew inspiration for India's planning efforts from the Soviet Union. As early as 1936, he recognized the costs of Soviet industrialization but stressed instead its benefits: despite its "defects, mistakes, and ruthlessness," Nehru wrote, Soviet industrialization is "stumbling occasionally but ever marching forward."[3]

Nehru's later encomium that the Soviet Union beckoned as a "bright and heartening phenomenon in a dark and dismal world" suggests that the enthusiasm for Soviet economic planning was a result of the depression of the 1930s. The economic crisis that shook the global economy heightened the perception of differences between the Western and Soviet economies—and undoubtedly brought more kind words for the latter. But Western interest in Soviet economic policy predated the 1929 Wall Street crash and the widespread acknowledgement (two years later) of a serious economic downturn.[4]

This essay argues that a wide range of interwar Russia experts in the United States, irrespective of their attitude toward the Soviet Union (or toward communism), shared a fervent belief in rapid economic development. These experts, furthermore, deployed longstanding national-character stereotypes in support of their beliefs: claims of Russians' "innate" passivity and conservatism pervaded Western reports on Soviet economic events. Later, faith in economic development combined with national-character stereotypes to contribute to Western misunderstandings of China's Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), which bear eerie similarities to earlier views of the Soviet Five-Year Plans. And in less obvious but nevertheless significant ways, the calculus of ends and means embedded in the sentiment that Russia was "starving itself great" undergirded Western theories of modernization and development in the 1950s and 1960s.

The famine of 1932–1933 looms large in any calculations of the costs of the rapid industrialization in the USSR. Leaving perhaps as many as 8 million dead, the famine devastated the principal breadbaskets of the Soviet Union: Ukraine, the Volga valley, the North Caucasus region, and Kazakhstan.[5] The famine's legacy

[3] Jawaharlal Nehru, introduction to M. R. Masani, *Soviet Sidelights* (1936), rpt. in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi, 1972), 7: 128–29.

[4] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of J. Nehru* (New York, 1941), 230–31. On recognition—in 1931—of the seriousness of the economic downturn, see Christina D. Romer, "The Great Crash and the Onset of the Great Depression," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 105 (August 1990): 597–624. One Moscow-based journalist noted widespread business confidence while on an American lecture tour in 1931; Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (New York, 1937), 399. On the Depression's impacts on global agriculture, see Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley, Calif., 1973), chap. 4; and Vladimir P. Timoshenko, *World Agriculture and the Depression*, *Michigan Business Studies* 5, no. 5 (1933).

On American attractions to Soviet economic organization in this era, see Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment*, chaps. 3–9; and Deborah Fitzgerald, "Blinded by Technology: American Agriculture in the Soviet Union, 1928–1932," *Agricultural History* 70 (Summer 1996): 459–87.

[5] On the demographic impact of the famine, see E. A. Osokina, "Zhertvy goloda 1933 g.—Skol'ko ikh?" *Istoriia SSSR* (1991), no. 5: 18–26; N. A. Ivnitskii, "Golod 1932–33 godov: Kto vinovat?" *Golod 1932–33 godov: Sbornik statei*, Iu. N. Afanas'ev, ed. (Moscow, 1995), 64–65. A summary of early estimates is available in an exceptionally useful bibliographic article: Dana Dalrymple, "The Soviet Famine of 1932–34," *Soviet Studies* 14 (January 1964): 250–84. For the famine in the context of the demographic turmoil of the 1930s, see S. G. Wheatcroft and R. W. Davies, "Population," in *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945*, Davies, Mark Harrison, and Wheatcroft, eds. (Cambridge, 1994), 67–69.

Disease typically accounts for a large share of famine-related deaths; see Amartya Sen, *Poverty and*

exceeded even its gruesome death toll. It marked the final victory of central Soviet authorities over the peasantry.[6] Yet, for decades, only Ukrainian émigré groups devoted significant attention to the famine. In official Soviet histories, meanwhile, the famine remained a "blank spot," described blandly as "difficulties on the grain-requisition front."[7]

What explains this silence? How could such a massive catastrophe provoke only ripples of concern among Western observers? Soviet efforts to cover up the famine come as no great surprise. Yet Western observers, in spite of widespread interest in the Soviet Union, wrote little of the famine. Many explanations for the lack of Western coverage focus on the ideological inclinations of two American journalists who denied the extent of the famine: Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* and Louis Fischer of *The Nation*. Two fellow journalists—William Henry Chamberlin (*Christian Science Monitor* and *Manchester Guardian*) and Eugene Lyons (United Press wire service)—were among the first to blame this pair of reporters. With all the vitriol of ex-believers, Chamberlin and Lyons attributed the lack of news about the famine to what one called "the Stalinist Penetration of America."[8] Writers following Chamberlin and Lyons typically assert that Duranty and Fischer were accomplices in genocide who denied the famine for ideological reasons. Later critics have also made more explicit assertions that Soviet payoffs ensured the reporters' cooperation.[9]

Famines: An Essay on Entitlements (Oxford, 1981), 203–06. For physiological and epidemiological perspectives, see Helen Young, "Nutrition, Disease and Death in Times of Famine," *Disasters* 19 (1995): 94–109; and Ancel Keys, *et al.*, *The Biology of Human Starvation*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis, 1951), 2: 1002–50.

[6] On this point, see especially D'Ann Penner, "The Agrarian 'Strike' of 1932–1933," Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Occasional Papers, no. 269 (1998)—this is the most important English-language work on the causes, course, and consequences of the famine. See also Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (Oxford, 1994); Moshe Lewin, " 'Taking Grain': Soviet Policies of Agricultural Procurement before the War" (1974), and "The Kolkhoz and the Russian *Muzhik*" (1980), both in Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York, 1985); and Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (Oxford, 1996).

[7] Books by Ukrainian émigrés include *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book*, 2 vols. (Detroit, 1953–55); *The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Unknown Holocaust* (Jersey City, N.J., 1983); and Walter Dushnyk, *50 Years Ago: The Famine Holocaust in Ukraine; Terror and Human Misery as Instruments of Soviet Russian Imperialism* (New York, 1983). Distinguished Russian historian I. E. Zelenin applied the term blank spots (*belye piatna*, literally "white spots") specifically to collectivization efforts (1928–33) and the ensuing famine; see Zelenin, "O nekotorykh 'belykh piatnakh' zavershaiushchego etapa sploshnoi kollektivizatsii," *Istoriia SSSR* (1989), no. 2: 3–19.

[8] Eugene Lyons, *The Red Decade: The Stalinist Penetration of America* (1941; rpt. edn., New Rochelle, N.Y., 1971), 122–24. Lyons arrived in Moscow in 1927, fresh from an assignment from TASS, the official Soviet news bureau, and determined to "bore from within" the capitalist system by working for a "bourgeois" news agency. Chamberlin's interest in Russia dated back to a stay in Greenwich Village in the early 1920s, when many Village radicals followed Russian events enthusiastically. The transformation from radical to conservative was common among interwar intellectuals in America; see, for example, John P. Diggins, *Up from Communism: Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual History* (New York, 1975); and, with more *simpatico*, Judy Kutulas, *The Long War: The Intellectual People's Front and Anti-Stalinism, 1930–1940* (Durham, N.C., 1995).

[9] James E. Mace, "The American Press and the Ukrainian Famine," in *Genocide Watch*, Helen Fein, ed. (New Haven, Conn., 1992), 121; Mace, "The Politics of Famine: American Government and Press Response to the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–33," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 3 (1988): 75–94; M. Wayne Morris, *Stalin's Famine and Roosevelt's Recognition of Russia* (Lanham, Md., 1994), 94–95; James William Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, a Case Study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty* (Lanham, 1982), 142, 158.

This ideological critique of famine coverage is typically linked to a political interpretation of the famine itself. Politics infused the émigré Ukrainians' writings on the famine, as well as the first widely read history of the famine, Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow* (1986). These works blamed the famine on politics, typically claiming that Soviet leaders planned the famine to satisfy genocidal desires to punish the Ukrainians for their nationalist aspirations.[10] More recent works on the famine, however, have explained the famine in economic terms, as the final battle in a drawn-out war over grain harvests. Based on masses of newly available materials from both local and central archives, these new writings in no way excuse central government officials. Yet they place less emphasis on advance planning.[11] Such well-researched local studies, primarily by historians in post-Soviet states, have come to shape a new paradigm for understanding the famine.[12] According to this emerging paradigm, the famine marked a major battle in a drawn-out war between the Soviet government and the peasants for control of the grain grown by the peasantry. The government's plans for rapid industrialization required grain for exports (to purchase foreign machinery) and domestic consumption (to feed industrial workers). The impressive evidence unearthed by these scholars demon-

[10] The most widely read work by those arguing genocide is Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford, 1986); see also U.S. Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C., 1988), which was staffed by James E. Mace, who had served as Conquest's "junior collaborator" on *Harvest of Sorrow*; and Conquest, *et al.*, *Man-Made Famine in Ukraine* (Washington, 1984).

[11] My emphasis on economic issues has been informed by Shtefan [Stephan] Merl, "Golod 1932–1933 godov—Genotsid ukraintsev dlia osushchestvleniia politiki rusifikatsii?" *Otechestvennaia istoriia* (1995), no. 1: 49–61; and Stephan Merl, "War die Hungersnot von 1932–1933 eine Folge der Zwangskollektivierung der Landwirtschaft oder wurde sie bewusst im Rahmen der Nationalitataetenpolitik herbeigefuehrt?" *Ukraine: Gegenwart und Geschichte eines neuen Staates*, Guido Hausmann and Andreas Kappeler, eds. (Baden-Baden, 1993). Merl's detailed critiques are in basic agreement with Russia's leading agricultural historian of the Soviet period, Viktor Petrovich Danilov, and his students and colleagues. See, for instance, V. P. Danilov and N. V. Teptsova, "Kollektivizatsiia: Kak eto bylo," *Pravda*, August 26, 1988, and September 15, 1988; Ivnitskii, "Golod 1932–33 godov"; and I. E. Zelenin, N. A. Ivnitskii, V. V. Kondrashin, and E. N. Oskolkov, "O golode 1932–33 godov i ego otsenke na Ukraine," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* (1994), no. 6: 256–62.

Other scholars have explained the famine as the result of poor weather and military needs. See Mark B. Tauger, "The 1932 Harvest and the Famine of 1933," *Slavic Review* 50 (Spring 1991): 70–89; see also the bitter exchange between Conquest and Tauger in *Slavic Review* 51 (Spring 1992): 192–94. Also R. W. Davies, M. B. Tauger, and S. G. Wheatcroft, "Stalin, Grain Stocks, and the Famine of 1932–1933," *Slavic Review* 54 (Fall 1995): 642–57.

[12] The overall scope of the famine is discussed in E. A. Osokina, *Ierarkhiia potrebleniia: O zhizni liudei v usloviiakh stalinskogo snabzheniia 1928–1935 gg.* (Moscow, 1993), chap. 2. On Russia, see V. V. Kondrashin, "Golod 1932–33 godov v derevne Povolzh'ia" (Candidate's dissertation, Institute of Soviet History, Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1991)—summarized in an article with a similar title in *Voprosy istorii* (1991), no. 6: 176–81; E. N. Oskol'kov, *Golod 1932/1933: Khlebozagotovki i golod 1932/33 goda v Severno-kavkaznom krae* (Rostov, 1991); and Penner, "Agrarian 'Strike' of 1932–33." Work on the famine in Ukraine is more voluminous; see especially *Kolektyvizatsiia i holod na Ukraini, 1929–1933: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materiialiv*, H. M. Mykhailychenko and E. P. Shatalina, comps., S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi, *et al.*, eds. (Kiev, 1992); and *Holodomor 1932–33 rr. v Ukraini: Prychyny i naslidky*, S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi, ed. (Kiev, 1995). On Kazakhstan, where the famine was connected with "sedentarization" of nomad groups, see Zh. B. Abylkhozin, M. K. Kozybaev, and M. B. Tatimov, "Kazakhstanskaia tragediia," *Voprosy istorii* (1989), no. 7: 53–71.

Excellent overviews on the peasant war are D'Ann Rose Penner, "Pride, Power and Pitchforks: A Study of Farmer-Party Interactions on the Don, 1920–1928" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1995); Penner, "Stalin and the Ital'ianka of 1932–33 in the Don Region," *Cahiers du monde russe* 39 (1998): 27–67; and Andrea Graziosi, "The Great Soviet Peasant War: Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917–1933," Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies (1996).

strates the importance of both economic and political factors, as well as the extraordinary efforts of the peasants to stand up for their own interests. No similarly compelling evidence exists, by contrast, to support political interpretations focusing on ethnic genocide. The 1932–1933 famine was not a process driven primarily by desires to carry out ethnic genocide. Rather, the catastrophe resulted from the Soviet leadership's larger struggle to transform an agrarian empire into an industrial power.

Contrary to political interpretations of the famine coverage, contemporary accounts often recognized that rapid modernization was a core element of the famine itself. The fact that the famine did not provoke a major response in the West had less to do with individual politics and individual perfidy than with well-worn Western understandings of Russia. Some reputable American newspapers, after all, printed accurate and disturbing reports of the famine. To answer the questions about the weak American response to the famine, then, involves consideration of broader issues than political beliefs alone. Duranty and Fischer used language and conceptual frameworks similar to their accusers'. "National-character" stereotypes, first, led many experts to expect little from the Russian peasants—little, that is, aside from passivity, conservatism, and apathy.[13] Many experts, secondly, expressed their appreciation of the Soviet Union's program to modernize rapidly and develop its long-"backward" economy.[14] Finally, the widespread belief that Russian industrialization would entail high human costs drew on notions of Russian and/or "Asiatic" character traits.[15]

Previously unexamined documents, from both Soviet and American sources,

[13] Especially given the prevalence of ethnic interpretations of this famine, it is worth noting in passing that few of the observers in the 1920s and 1930s distinguished between Ukrainian and Russian "character traits." On Russian stereotypes of the peasantry, see especially Cathy A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late 19th Century Russia* (Oxford, 1993). The origins of Western stereotypes of Russians are beyond the scope of this article—see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif., 1994), for early uses of these categories. Such stereotypes were dominant in late nineteenth-century French scholarship on Russia, scholarship widely read in the United States in both French and English; most influential in the United States were Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, Zenaide A. Ragozin, trans., 2 vols. (New York, 1893–96); and Alfred Rambaud, *The History of Russia from the Earliest Times to 1877*, Leonora B. Lang, trans. (New York, 1878). For these authors in context, see Martha Helms Cooley, "Nineteenth-Century French Historical Research on Russia—Louis Leger, Alfred Rambaud, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu" (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1971). British authors making similar claims were also widely read in the United States: E. B. Lanin [pseud. of E. J. Dillon], *Russian Traits and Terrors: A Faithful Picture of the Russia of To-day* (Boston, 1891); and Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia*, 2 vols. (New York, 1877). On American reception, see Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867–1914* (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), esp. 183–84. Important connections between "racial" stereotypes and development are outlined in Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Man: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Domination* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989).

[14] Once again, the literature on this topic is huge. On Russian visions of economic transformation, see especially Esther Kingston-Mann, *In Search of the True West: Culture, Economics, and Problems of Russian Development* (Princeton, N.J., 1999); George Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861–1930* (Urbana, Ill., 1982). On American notions, see especially John M. Jordan, *Machine-Age Ideology: Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911–1939* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994). Social transformation in the name of modernization is the subject of an ambitious and provocative work that examines key moments of "authoritarian high modernism": James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: Why Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition May Fail* (New Haven, Conn., 1998).

[15] While many historians have noted (primarily in passing) the prevalence of Western claims of Russia's "non-European" or "Asiatic" nature, fewer have explored the political and intellectual implications of these claims; see Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*; Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the*

reveal how much Duranty's and Fischer's writings and activities had in common with those of their principal accusers, Lyons and Chamberlin. The accusers wrote their angriest works, sharply condemning Duranty and Fischer, shortly after their respective breaks with Soviet Communism, coming on the heels of the 1932–1933 famine. Most subsequent attacks on the famine coverage have taken their evidence, tone, and even their book titles from these early works.[16] But all four journalistic protagonists-cum-antagonists (Chamberlin, Duranty, Fischer, and Lyons) invoked stereotypes of Russian character and expressed their belief in economic development. Carefully tracing the actions and private writings of these journalists in 1932 and 1933 necessitates examining a wider range of evidence than the few frequently cited pieces for which each journalist is best known. These materials reveal that Chamberlin and Lyons shared with their nemeses Duranty and Fischer common assumptions about the need for "modernization" as well as notions of Russian "national character." This statement should not in any way exonerate any of the journalists for disingenuous and even dishonest reporting. While Duranty and Fischer have been rightly attacked for their misleading coverage of the famine, the assumptions underlying their articles bore many similarities to those of their critics. Uncovering these common aspects does not free any reporters from blame, but it does allow a consideration of the mental frameworks behind American understandings of the Soviet Union.

BEFORE EXAMINING THE INTELLECTUAL ISSUES shaping reports of the famine, however, more concrete limits on coverage deserve brief mention. The Press Office of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (known by its Russian acronym, NKID) worked assiduously to restrict foreign coverage of Soviet events. The four censors who staffed the Press Office had excellent credentials. They all spoke and read English (as well as French and/or German) well enough to prevent foreign reporters from carrying off many linguistic sleights-of-hand. Censors had to approve every dispatch that journalists wished to telegraph to their home offices. Such direct censorship did not apply to reports sent out by mail, however, and the time-honored tradition of sending letters out of Russia with westward-bound travelers provided yet another avenue to get dispatches to the United States.[17] Yet such maneuvers did not escape the Press Office's powers of surveillance. Thanks to detailed analyses of press reports conducted by Soviet embassies in London, Paris,

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Art of Foreign Policy (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), chap. 1. The literature around Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), is of course relevant here.

[16] Crowl's title (*Angels in Stalin's Paradise*), for instance, is quoted from Lyons, *Red Decade*, 93. S. J. Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty, the New York Times's Man in Moscow* (Oxford, 1990) uses some of the same language, but incorporates much more research and a somewhat more balanced tone than Crowl.

[17] These general comments about Soviet press censorship are based primarily on the materials in the foreign-ministry archive, scattered throughout various collections. Archival staff indicated in the spring of 1995 that the earliest documents in the Press Office collection date only to 1943. Other context comes from the discussions in memoirs and other writings by the office's principal "clientele," Western journalists themselves. A thorough, though dated, list of reporters is available in U.S. Department of State, Division of Library and Reference Services, *American Correspondents and Journalists in Moscow, 1917–1952: A Bibliography of Their Books on the USSR*, Bibliography no. 73 (March 27, 1953).

and Berlin, as well as the "information office" in Washington (not an embassy until 1934), the Press Office staff received summaries of news articles that had not been vetted through their office. If these reports sufficiently concerned the NKID, it intervened either directly or indirectly to discipline the offending journalist. Soviet officials also exploited their contacts with American editors, including those at the *New York Times* and the United Press, to lobby for a different slant on coverage or, on at least one occasion, for a change of reporters.[18] The Press Office could also delay or deny outright a journalist's request for a visa.[19]

In spite of all of these tools to control foreign journalists, however, Westerners spread rumors about an impending famine through Moscow's journalistic community in the summer of 1932. One Harvard political scientist well acquainted with the Moscow-based journalists wrote a friend in the State Department that "there is definite famine" in Ukraine.[20] Other information about rural conditions arrived overseas without first passing through the Moscow colony. German embassy officials reported famine conditions in grain-growing regions of the USSR in the summer of 1932. One published report, based more on Soviet statistics than on firsthand experience, referred to "famine [*Hungersnot*] in the fullest sense of the word" in Ukraine, the Lower Volga, western Siberia, and Kazakhstan.[21] German agricultural attaché Otto Schiller, one of the best-informed foreigners in Moscow, spent much of 1932 touring the Soviet countryside. Traveling with Canadian Andrew Cairns, Schiller detailed the dire conditions in the Soviet countryside in an article that appeared in Germany in February 1933. Cairns's reports reached the British Foreign Office even earlier.[22]

[18] For example, memoranda of conversation with Edwin James of the *New York Times* and Karl A. Bickel of the United Press are in (respectively) Podol'skii diary, November 3, 1930, Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter, AVPRF), fond 0129 (Referantura po SShA), opis' 13, papka 127, delo 319, list'ia 6–7 (hereafter, f./op./pap./d./ll.); Oumansky to NKID Collegium, January 1, 1933, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 16, pap. 128a, d. 335, ll. 21–22. Bickel, the director of the United Press (UP) syndicate, was in Moscow to renegotiate the UP agreement with TASS; see Joe Alex Morris, *Deadline Every Minute: The Story of the United Press* (Garden City, N.J., 1947), 189.

[19] Two prominent cases familiar to the subjects of this article were Paul Scheffer of *Berliner Tageblatt* and freelancer Maurice Hindus. On Scheffer, see Louis Fischer, "The Case of Paul Scheffer," *Nation* 132 (August 31, 1932): 195–96; Scheffer, *Seven Years in Soviet Russia (With a Retrospect)*, Arthur Livingston, trans. (London, 1933), vii–xvi; Bogdanov to Stomoniakov, September 25, 1930, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 13, pap. 127, d. 13, l. 1; and Kagan diary excerpt, July 16, 1932, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 15, pap. 128, d. 328, l. 41. On Hindus, see Gnedin to Oumansky, October 23, 1937, and November 27, 1937; also Astakhov to Oumansky, April 2, 1937—all in AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 20, pap. 133a, del. 342, ll. 5, 20, 24–24ob., 32.

[20] Bruce C. Hopper to Robert F. Kelley, July 24, 1932, in Box 5, Division of East European Affairs Records, State Department Records, Record Group 59, U.S. National Archives; a similar letter appears in Box 35, Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers, Mudd Library, Princeton University.

[21] Otto Auhagen, "Wirtschaftslage der Sowjetunion im Sommer 1932," *Osteuropa* 7 (August 1932): 644–55 (quoted at p. 645). The American "listening post" in Riga reported this article to Washington in Skinner to Secretary of State, November 15, 1932, 861.6131/261, SDDF. Auhagen was a former agricultural adviser at the German embassy in Moscow who left to direct the Osteuropa Institut in Breslau, under whose auspices *Osteuropa* was published; see *Red Economics*, Gerhard Dobbert, ed. (Boston, 1932), iii; Jutta Unser, "'Osteuropa'—Biographie einer Zeitschrift," *Osteuropa* 25 (September 1975): 562–63.

[22] Otto Schiller, "Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion," *Berichte über Landwirstchaft* 79, Sonderheft (1933). The Soviets viewed Schiller's and Auhagen's writings as "impudent and undisguised espionage": Vinograd to D. G. Shtern, n.d., AVPRF, f. 05 (Sekretariat Litvinova), op. 13, pap. 90, d. 14, ll. 87–87ob. Cairns's reports are reprinted in full as Andrew Cairns, *The Soviet Famine, 1932–33: An Eye-witness Account of Conditions in the Spring and Summer of 1932*,

More details about rural conditions reached Moscow in the fall of 1932. One British diplomat reported in late October that Duranty "ha[d] at last awakened to the agricultural situation," blaming the severe problems on shortages of labor and draft-power. The diplomat summarized Duranty's analysis: "There are millions of . . . peasants whom it is fairly safe to leave in want . . . [But] is there no limit to people's endurance?" Yet Duranty did not foresee any organized resistance. His articles typically came across as somewhat sanguine, noting that the USSR was "in better shape than most of the world," in spite of serious supply problems that had sapped "peasant energy and initiative." Even an otherwise celebratory article on the fifteenth anniversary of Bolshevik rule closed with mixed optimism: "Times are hard and will not be easy in the near future." The ultimate victory of "socialist building," though, was assured.[23]

Duranty's later reports took a markedly less optimistic tone about the situation in Russia. At the end of November, he published a six-part series on the food shortage, carried out of Moscow to evade censorship. This series established the parameters for Duranty's subsequent writings on the situation. While he dismissed the predictions of famine ("there is no famine or actual starvation, nor is there likely to be"), Duranty did write of the "great and growing food shortage in town and country alike," which was having "ever graver" effects. Only bread was available in reasonable amounts. Dairy products were never seen. Meat and fish appeared only rarely and in quantities "below the people's wants and probably below their needs." The Russians' capacity for sacrifice, however, would carry them through: "Russians have tightened their belts before to a far greater extent than is likely to be needed this Winter." Duranty seemed impressed with Soviet leaders who were "not in the least trying to minimize [the food shortage's] gravity, its widespread character and its harmful effects" but were not "much alarmed by it." Finally, perhaps to explain his own reluctance to stray from Moscow, Duranty dismissed the need for a foreign observer to tour the villages, "where it commonly happens that disgruntled or disaffected elements talk loudest while others are busy working."[24]

Tony Kuz, ed. (Edmonton, 1989). German information was also available from the consulates in Kiev and Kharkov—see the reports filed in *Der ukrainischer Hunger-Holocaust: Stalins verschwiegener Völkermord 1932/33 an 7 Millionen ukrainischer Bauern im Spiegel geheimgehaltener Akten des deutschen Auswärtigen Amtes*, D. Zlepko, ed. (Sonnenbühl, 1988). Other reports reached Western Europe via the Italian consulates; see Andrea Graziosi, "'Lettres de Kharkov': La famine en Ukraine et dans le Caucase du Nord à travers les rapports des diplomates italiens, 1932–1934," *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique* 30 (1989): 5–106; a selection is also published in U.S. Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine*, appendix 2.

[23] Conversation between William Strang and Walter Duranty, October 31, 1932, in *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933*, Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, and Bohdan S. Kordan, eds. (Kingston, Ont., 1988), 204. On British diplomats' distant attitude toward the famine, see Michael Hughes, *Inside the Enigma: British Officials in Russia, 1900–1939* (London, 1997), 243–45. Walter Duranty, "Soviet in 16th Year; Calm and Hopeful," *New York Times* (hereafter, *NYT*), November 13, 1932; Duranty, "Fifteen Stern Years of Soviet Rule," *NYT Magazine*, November 6, 1932.

[24] Walter Duranty, "All Russia Suffers Shortage of Food," *NYT*, November 25, 1932; Duranty, "Food Shortage Laid to Soviet Peasants," *NYT*, November 26, 1932; Duranty, "Soviet Press Lays Shortages to Foes," *NYT*, November 27, 1932; Duranty, "Soviet Not Alarmed over Food Shortage," *NYT*, November 28, 1932; Duranty, "Soviet Industries Hurt Agriculture," *NYT*, November 29, 1932; Duranty, "Bolsheviki United on Socialist Goal," *NYT*, November 30, 1932.

The series served Duranty well in New York, where editors praised it as "one of the best stories current." Yet it served him less well in Moscow, as a British diplomat reported: "Shortly [after the series appeared], Duranty was visited by emissaries from governing circles here (not from the Censorship Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs but from higher spheres) who reproached him with unfaithfulness . . . [D]id he not realize that the consequences for himself might be serious. Let him take this warning. Duranty, who was to have left for a short visit to Paris that day, put off his departure to wait further developments . . . He affects to think it possible that . . . he may not be allowed to return."[25] Duranty postponed his departure, but left in early December.

Among his other activities in Paris, Duranty spoke to the Travellers Club. An American diplomat in attendance summarized Duranty's views as follows: "The chief reason for his pessimism was the growing seriousness of the food shortage. This he ascribed to difficulties which the Government was having with its scheme of collective farming . . . He described the situation in Russia to-day as comparable to that which existed in Germany during the latter part of the war, when . . . the civil population was living on practically starvation rations." According to internal reports, the Paris speech angered Soviet authorities.[26]

By the end of 1932, then, Duranty had set a pattern for describing the rural crisis. He frequently employed military terminology, implying the need to stay above the fray. He issued critical and pessimistic reports on the food situation accompanied by denials that "famine conditions" existed. This pattern would continue throughout the famine and beyond.

As Walter Duranty published his November series on the food shortage in the Soviet Union, Louis Fischer voiced few worries about Soviet conditions: "I feel as if this were the beginning of the end of a long Soviet winter which has lasted several years. Now the earth commences to smell of spring." Perhaps the new springtime provoked Fischer's allergies, since he left Moscow for an extended American tour—December until the following June. His final article from Moscow called for easing the pressure on Soviet peasants. It also noted a decline in grain collections in the North Caucasus region, blaming "bad organization, slack guidance by party members [and] insufficient loyalty to Moscow's instructions." The problems might extend even farther, as "important grain-growing areas like the Ukraine, North Caucasus, the Volga region and the central black-earth district" had no grain for

[25] Markel to Edwin L. James, November 18, 1932, and November 22, 1932, both on reel 32, Edwin L. James Papers, *New York Times* Archive. William Strang to Laurence Collier, December 6, 1932, in Carynnyk, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 209–10.

[26] Enclosure 1 with Walter Edge to Secretary of State, December 10, 1932, 861.5017 Living Conditions/572, SDDF. The NKID Press Office was already wary of Duranty prior to his Paris trip, presumably because of his articles on the food shortages: Podol'skii to Rozenberg, November 29, 1932, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 15, pap. 128, d. 328, l. 82. A Latvian diplomat in Moscow later reported that Duranty was "no longer regarded as a friend of the Bolsheviks" in the fall of 1932; Felix Cole to Secretary of State, April 8, 1933, 861.5017 Living Conditions/671, SDDF. Duranty frequently compared even the most dire Soviet circumstances favorably to what he saw as a reporter during World War I; see, for instance, "About the Author" in Walter Duranty, *One Life, One Kopeck* (New York, 1937), which records that Duranty's wartime service was "such a baptism of fire that nothing he saw afterwards in the Soviet Union made him turn a hair."

open sale. Fischer thus identified food shortages but only in cryptic phrases containing gross understatements.[27]

Like Fischer, journalist William Henry Chamberlin also left Moscow for an extended trip to the United States, perhaps spurred by the rumors about food shortages. Chamberlin predicted food supply problems for the fall and winter of 1932–1933. In early October, he recommended to his replacement that foreigners should consider hoarding nonperishable food for what promised to be a tough winter.[28] Traveling through London en route to the United States, Chamberlin gave a standing-room-only talk at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The overall tone of the speech was quite positive. Chamberlin lauded the growing strength of the Red Army and criticized those who opposed American recognition of the Soviet Union. He sounded decidedly optimistic about the economic prospects for the Soviet Union: collectivization had exacted a substantial toll but was making progress. In any case, he concluded, it could no longer be reversed. He hesitated to predict the future in the Soviet countryside but suggested that recent Soviet measures with regard to trade and consumer goods would determine the success or failure of the effort. On the other hand, Chamberlin also warned that a "dual agrarian and food crisis" would be costly in human and financial terms. He shrank from calculating the bottom line on the Five-Year Plan's impact: "It is very difficult to make any sort of arithmetical balance sheet of how much happiness and unhappiness this period of violent and great change has brought in Russia." A Soviet report summarized the talk with apparent relief: Chamberlin "behaved entirely favorably for the USSR. In fact, in a few cases he resorted to quite original forms of defense of the USSR." Chamberlin also submitted an article to a British magazine; that article praised the "impressive addition to the national industrial capital" but noted that it "has been purchased at an extremely high price in the standard of living."[29]

By New Year's Day 1933, then, both Chamberlin and Duranty had given mixed reports on Soviet conditions. They both remained optimistic about Soviet industrialization efforts while also describing the costs involved. Fischer, by contrast, expressed nothing but optimism and enthusiasm for the coming year. While talk of a "crisis" appeared in Chamberlin's and Duranty's writings, neither journalist considered the situation a famine per se.

[27] Louis Fischer, "Fifteen Years of the Soviets," *Nation* 135 (November 23, 1932): 495; Fischer, "Stalin Faces the Peasant," *Nation* 136 (January 11, 1933): 39–41.

[28] Diary entry, October 4, 1932, Malcolm Muggeridge Diary, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Chamberlin may have heard from German attaché Otto Schiller, whom he called, in a 1968 interview, one of his four closest friends in Moscow; see Robert H. Myers, "William Henry Chamberlin: His Views of the Soviet Union" (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1973), 54–55. On the speaking tour, see William Henry Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist* (New York, 1940), 154. One biographer speculates that perhaps his "aversion to carnage" led him to leave Moscow: Michael Samerdyke, "Explaining the Soviet Enigma: William Henry Chamberlin and the Soviet Union, 1922–1945" (MA thesis, Ohio University, 1989), 72.

[29] The Royal Institute talk appeared as William H. Chamberlin, "What Is Happening in Russia?" *International Affairs* (London) 12 (March 1933): 187–205. Soviet impressions of the talk seem slightly optimistic in comparison with the published version: "Vypiska iz dnevnika press-attashe polpredstva SSSR v Anglii Tolokonskogo," November 23, 1932, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 15, pap. 128, d. 328, ll. 11–12; and Tolokonskii to Otdel Pechati, December 3, 1932, AVPRF, f. 05, op. 12, pap. 82, d. 15, ll. 99–103. See also Chamberlin, "Impending Change in Russia," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. 139 (January 1, 1933): 10.

Some of the foreign journalists based in Moscow traveled to Central Asia for the opening of the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad extension in 1930. This group includes William Henry Chamberlin (crouching, right of center), Louis Fischer (behind Chamberlin and to the right), and Eugene Lyons (behind and to the right of the man holding a camera). Photo courtesy of Carl and Elizabeth Krumpe.

INDICATIONS OF ACTUAL FAMINE first appeared in the mainstream Western press in early 1933, spurred by two reports from the countryside. One set of reports came from Malcolm Muggeridge, a Briton then working as Chamberlin's substitute for *Manchester Guardian* coverage. Muggeridge arrived in Moscow in the fall of 1932, full of enthusiasm for Soviet ideals. It quickly dissipated. In spite of his dislike of most foreign journalists in Moscow, Muggeridge repeated their national-character clichés. After hearing of starvation in Kiev, for instance, Muggeridge remarked in his diary that "starvation is in the nature of things" for a Russian. He also attempted to use his "Eastern" experiences—in India—to understand Russia. In both places, he wrote, "mere brutality . . . [is] not in and of [itself] a condemnation" of either British colonial or Soviet government policy.[30]

Muggeridge sent reports on famine conditions to the *Manchester Guardian* in early 1933. His first leads on the famine came from an anonymous visitor who deposited articles from provincial newspapers on the reporter's doorstep and also from Dr. Joseph Rosen, an American organizing Jewish agricultural settlements in the USSR. At the end of January, the reporter traveled to Ukraine and the North Caucasus to observe conditions firsthand. The *Manchester Guardian* did not print Muggeridge's dispatches until late March 1933, perhaps because they jarred so

[30] Diary entries for September 16 and 28, 1932, Muggeridge Diary; John Bright-Holmes, introduction, *Like It Was: The Diaries of Malcolm Muggeridge* (London, 1981), 13.

sharply with the newspaper's generally favorable editorial stance toward the USSR. The *Guardian*'s three-part series reported on "famine conditions" in the North Caucasus, conditions that Muggeridge contended would last at least three to five more months. It also described "hunger in the Ukraine" and the author's pessimistic predictions for the future. Muggeridge blamed heavy grain requisitions for the precarious situation: they had left the population with a "characteristic peasant look—half resignation and half cunning." While Western journalists in Moscow may follow attentively the experiment of collectivization, Muggeridge concluded, "for the participants, [it was] often more disagreeable than interesting."[31]

Eugene Lyons set into motion a second set of articles on the famine, this time appearing in American newspapers. His secretary first read of potential problems in the North Caucasus, in a local Soviet newspaper article about a secret-police "rampage" in a village near Rostov. This information set the tone for Lyons's dispatches of January and February 1933, which emphasized the food question and the harshness of government grain demands. Yet Lyons also characterized government repression as a response to peasant laziness. One undated dispatch adopted the Soviet government's viewpoint, applauding improved grain collections, while other dispatches noted the "intense struggle to extract seed grain . . . developing nationwide as the first act of the drama of spring sowing." Lyons reported dire conditions in Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and parts of the Lower Volga, but he maintained optimistically that these conditions were "not typical of the entire country." Soviet economic policy, Lyons wrote later that year, amounted to various efforts to "overcome peasant apathy."[32] Lyons's view of peasant character traits—in which apathy played a central role—thus explained the hardships in the Soviet countryside.

While Lyons apparently did not write a dispatch on the Rostov news item, he did alert two American journalists, William Stoneman of the *Chicago Daily News* and Ralph Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Stoneman and Barnes quickly hired a translator and bought train tickets to Rostov to "view the performance," as Stoneman later worded it.[33] Stoneman's dispatch of February 6 described "virtual

[31] Diary entries, December 1, 1932, January 4 and 11, 1933, Muggeridge Diary. On his trip to the countryside, see Muggeridge to Crozier [his editor at the *Manchester Guardian*], January 14, 1933, cited in Richard Ingrams, *Muggeridge—The Biography* (New York, 1995), 64. The articles were published in the *Manchester Guardian*: "Famine in North Caucasus," March 25, 1933; "Hunger in the Ukraine," March 27, 1933; and "Poor Prospects for Harvest," March 28, 1933. His reports were apparently delayed and toned down (he used the word "mangled") by his editors; see Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the *Times* Couldn't Find," *Commentary* 76 (November 1983): 33. See also Ingrams, *Muggeridge*, 62–69; and David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (London, 1971), 511–13.

[32] Improvement—telegram 24142, folder 4, Box 28, Henry Shapiro Papers, Library of Congress; drama—telegram 10120, folder 7, Box 28; not hopeless—telegram 15134, folder 7, Box 28; apathy—telegram 12152, folder 8, Box 28. Shapiro was Lyons's successor with the United Press syndicate in Moscow. Unfortunately, none of the telegrams in these folders is dated.

[33] This narrative is reconstructed from chap. 5 of Stoneman's autobiography (dated March 1, 1967), Box 1, William Stoneman Papers, Bentley Library, University of Michigan; Stoneman interview with Whitman Bassow, November 10, 1984, Box 2, Whitman Bassow Papers, Library of Congress. Also see Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, 545–46; and Stoneman to Harrison Salisbury, May 16, 1979, cited in Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 202, 235. Stoneman had always taken an interest in rural food supply, ending his first tour in Russia (in 1932) with reflections on localized shortages; see Edward Brodie to Secretary of State, February 24, 1932, 761.00/221, SDDF.

martial law" and increased activity of armed forces in the region despite the lack of collective resistance. He blamed the lack of grain in "one of Russia's richest grain regions" on the central authorities' "taking revenge on the peasants." After a few days of observing conditions in Rostov and environs, the journalists were picked up by the local secret police and shipped back to Moscow. They nevertheless succeeded in smuggling reports to their newspapers. Ralph Barnes's article focused on the terror in the Kuban', mentioning the dire food situation there. Perhaps building on Duranty's November reports, Barnes mentioned "only a limited number of cases of deaths due strictly to starvation" but admitted that there were "many deaths resulting from disease attacking constitutions seriously undermined by lack of sufficient food."[34]

After the first of these accounts appeared in February 1933, senior Soviet officials banned foreigners' travel within the USSR. Foreign journalists learned of the measure at the end of February. While the Press Office was charged with primary enforcement of the new ban, its censors unsuccessfully opposed a blanket prohibition, arguing confidently that they could keep foreigners out of the problem areas without calling attention to the situation by announcing a formal prohibition. In a letter written to Premier Viacheslav Molotov, the censors argued against the travel ban:

> The decision on a new arrangement for foreign correspondents' movement in the territory of the Union [the USSR] without the permission of the militia will without any doubt be interpreted by Moscow-based correspondents, and also by the international press, as the denial of freedom of movement for foreigners/journalists for the purpose of hiding from them the "true situation" in the localities . . .
>
> The negative consequences of a general ban on the free movement of foreign correspondents might be averted if the NKID Press Office, together with some general measures, could in each individual case try to obtain voluntary rejections of this or that trip which is undesirable to us. In precisely this way, two trips to Ukraine by foreign correspondents were recently prevented.[35]

The Press Office staff protested the implementation of a full-fledged prohibition on travel, arguing that they could be just as effective in one-to-one conversations, convincing journalists not to visit afflicted areas without raising suspicions of a new policy.

Soviet officials, however, grossly overestimated their powers of persuasion. Stoneman (one of the two reporters alluded to in the final sentence quoted above) recounted his conversation with a censor in a manner that suggests the censors were heavy-handed, did much to arouse journalists' suspicions, and in no way succeeded in obtaining a "voluntary" change of itinerary from Stoneman. The censor first

[34] William Stoneman, "Russia Clamps Merciless Rule on Peasantry," *Chicago Daily News* [dispatch filed February 6, 1933], found after page 16 of Stoneman's "Autobiography," Box 1, Stoneman Papers. See also Stoneman, "Little Liberty Permitted Foreigner in Kuban Area," *Chicago Daily News*, March 28, 1933; Stoneman, "Communists Find It Easy to Justify Peasant Exile," *Chicago Daily News*, March 30, 1933; Ralph Barnes, "Soviet Terrorizes Famine Region by Night Raids for Hidden Grain," *New York Herald-Tribune*, February 6, 1933. Barnes's high regard for Duranty's work might well suggest that Barnes may have adopted Duranty's argument as his own; see Ralph Barnes to Joseph Barnes [no relation], June 4, 1932, Box 6, Joseph Barnes Papers, Columbia University Library.

[35] "Zapiska otdela pechati, poslannaia t. Molotovu," February 25, 1933, AVPRF, f. 05, op. 13, pap. 90, d. 13, ll. 46–47.

questioned Stoneman's need to visit Ukraine as opposed to some other rural region. He then pleaded with the reporter "as a friend" before finally declaring that "you had better postpone your trip."[36]

News of the travel ban spread quickly through the foreign colony in Moscow. The *New York Times* and other major newspapers, however, printed nothing on either the Stoneman/Barnes reports or the new travel restrictions for foreigners. Duranty, perhaps chastened by his troubles with Soviet authorities in December, changed the focus of his reportage. He shifted toward coverage of political events, stopping on economic conditions only long enough to predict a "decisive struggle on the agrarian front" in the spring. Duranty accentuated the poverty and "backwardness" of Russian peasants, comparing peasants not to farmers but to "farm-cattle" because of their passivity and servile mentality. He also framed the rural conflicts in military terms. "I am inclined to think," he concluded, that the Bolsheviks will defeat the peasants "in the long run, but it won't be easy." By constantly focusing on the future, Duranty did not deny peasants' hardships—in fact, he rather relished them—but he attributed them to peasant character. According to Duranty, the Bolsheviks needed to "swing all the forces in their command into an effort to overcome peasant apathy, individualism, dislike of novel collective methods and the previous mismanagement of collective farms." Prospects for the current harvest were poor, and the food shortage, "already widespread and serious," would only get worse. The picture looked bleak, especially given the peasants' degree of "degeneration and apathy."[37] Like Lyons, Duranty blamed peasant character, primarily apathy, for the problems with collectivization.

Chamberlin, whose November speech in London seemed relatively sanguine, apparently suffered a mood change while at sea. Once in the United States, he emphasized both the rising inequalities and the "food shortage and falling off in agricultural production" that were plaguing Russia. He did, however, find some reason for optimism: the most recent government policies, he believed, would alleviate the food situation.[38] He also published an article in *The New Republic* (a magazine at that time sympathetic to the Soviet cause) describing the Five-Year Plan as a "forced, concentrated drive for high speed industrialization, regardless of the cost to the daily standard of living." The article mentioned both domestic food shortages and rising grain exports. But prospects were good, Chamberlin claimed, because the Soviet leaders had realized that "the process which someone wittily described as 'starving itself great' can be and indeed has been pushed to a point where it is distinctly subject to a law of diminishing returns." In another article, Chamberlin noted the "considerable strides" the USSR had made "toward its goal of becoming a powerful industrial country." In spite of the hardships, especially for those groups targeted by the Soviets, the Five-Year Plan represented "Russia's

[36] "Conversation with Comrade Podolskii, chief Censor of Moscow Foreign office—Tuesday, February 23rd, 1933," Box 1, Stoneman Papers.

[37] Walter Duranty, *Duranty Reports Russia*, selected and arranged by Gustavus Tuckerman, Jr. (New York, 1934), 295 (dispatch dated January 29, 1933) [future citations will be page number (dispatch date)]. Duranty, "Russia's Peasant: The Hub of a Vast Drama," *Duranty Reports Russia*, 265, 274 (February 2, 1933), 304, 306 (February 27, 1933).

[38] "Russia Offers Inducements to Increase Farmer Output," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 21, 1932.

extraordinary contribution to economic history." Chamberlin, like Duranty, described the high costs of Russian collectivization and industrialization but nevertheless endorsed the lessons it offered and the achievements it promised.[39]

While Chamberlin and Fischer remained outside the reach of Soviet censors, Duranty and Lyons continued to report on poor living conditions in the Soviet Union from Moscow, and were thus prevented from explicitly mentioning famine. Duranty headed for another European vacation in early March, however, and filed dispatches not subject to direct Soviet censorship. These reports noted the "gloomy picture" in Ukraine as well as the North Caucasus and Lower Volga regions. The *New York Times* reporter saw a "brighter side." Upon learning of new repressive organs (political departments of Machine-Tractor Stations located throughout the countryside), Duranty extolled them as "the greatest constructive step toward the efficient socialization of agriculture." He blamed a familiar culprit for the food crisis. After one particularly critical assessment of Russian national character, Duranty concluded that "what is wrong with Russian agriculture is chiefly Russians."[40]

Muggeridge's *Manchester Guardian* series was quickly followed by a report on the famine from Gareth Jones. Jones, a Russian-speaking assistant to former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, obtained his information during brief travels through Ukraine. The articles described how starvation and disease had laid waste to whole villages in the region.[41] These reports appeared within days of the stories by Stoneman and Barnes. Perhaps because Jones was not a permanent Moscow correspondent, the NKID singled him out for special treatment. The Press Office enlisted the help of the Moscow regulars in discrediting him. Lyons's version of how Press Office chief Constantine Oumansky recruited the foreign journalists to "throw down Jones" has reached the status of a classic—even a cliché—in writings about famine coverage. As Lyons wrote in *Assignment in Utopia* (1937),

> There was much bargaining in a spirit of gentlemanly give-and-take, under the effulgence of Umansky's [*sic*] gilded smile, before a formula of denial was worked out. We admitted enough to soothe our consciences, but in roundabout phrases that damned Jones as a liar. The filthy business having been disposed of, someone ordered vodka and *zakuski* [snacks], Umansky joined in the celebration and the party did not break up until the early morning hours . . . He had done a big bit for Bolshevik firmness that night.[42]

This text appears in almost every writing on the "famine cover-up" as proof positive of the journalists' craven willingness to serve the Soviets. Yet outside evidence contradicts Lyons's oft-told tale. First, there is some reason to doubt

[39] William H. Chamberlin, "Russia between Two Plans," *New Republic* 74 (February 15, 1933): 7–8; Chamberlin, "Balance Sheet of the Five-Year Plan," *Foreign Affairs* 11 (April 1933): 458, 466.

[40] Duranty, *Duranty Reports Russia*, 310–12 (March 2, 1933). On the political departments, see I. E. Zelenin, "Politotdely MTS—Prodolzhenie politiki 'chrezvychaishchiny' (1933–1934 gg.)," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* (1992), no. 6: 42–61.

[41] "Famine in Russia—Englishman's Story—What He Saw on a Walking Tour," *Manchester Guardian*, March 30, 1933; Edgar Ansel Mowrer, "Russian Famine Now as Great as Starvation of 1921, Says Secretary to Lloyd George," *Chicago Daily News*, March 29, 1933. Jones had worked with the leading British scholar of the Soviet Union, Bernard Pares; see Sir Bernard Pares, *A Wandering Student* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1948), 309–11.

[42] Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, 576. While the Press Office chief's name would today be transliterated as Konstantin Umanskii, he wrote his name as used in the text above.

Lyons's chronology. The meeting with the censors, he reported, took place after Jones's *Manchester Guardian* article appeared—therefore, after March 30, 1933. Lyons follows up his description of the gathering for "Bolshevik firmness" with a description of how each journalist was summoned to the Press Office and told not to leave Moscow without official permission. But Stoneman's account—corroborated by documents from American, British, and Russian archives—indicates that news of the ban circulated in late February.[43] Furthermore, no other Western correspondents—including both Duranty's assistant and Stoneman, who were present in Moscow and were later interviewed about the famine—ever mentioned this party. Lyons himself was rather sketchy on the details when asked about it years later. As his recollections were summarized by one historian,

> Lyons remembers little more about the meeting with Oumansky than the description of it in *Assignment in Utopia*. It was not a "general session" of the foreign correspondents, he recalls, nor did Oumansky have to do more than "hint" as to what should be done. Lyons cannot remember who attended or even more specifically where the meeting was held. He adds, however, that "presumably" Duranty was there.[44]

Whether or not this evening affair took place as Lyons described it, Duranty indeed did "throw down" fellow Briton Jones. In an article that remains a textbook example of double-speak, Duranty criticized Jones's judgment as "somewhat hasty" and based only on minimal travels in Ukraine. (Jones, it might be noted, undertook more travel than Duranty himself.) Duranty's article, published under the headline "Russians Hungry, but Not Starving," cynically noted the number of times that foreigners have prematurely "composed the Soviet Union's epitaph." Duranty derided Jones's most recent epitaph, claiming that Jones had "seen no dead or dying human beings" and therefore had little direct evidence of famine. Duranty did not deny the "deplorable" conditions, but he blamed the problems on the "novelty and mismanagement of collective farming." In a justly infamous paragraph, Duranty then relied on his stock phrase and his usual military analogies: "But—to put it brutally—you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, and the Bolshevist leaders are [like military commanders] ... indifferent to the casualties that may be involved." And a phrase just as infamous if less evocative, Duranty continued with his odd denial: "There is a serious food shortage throughout the country ... There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition ... In short, conditions are definitely bad in certain sections—the Ukraine, North Caucasus, and Lower Volga. The rest of the country is on short rations but nothing worse. These

[43] Sir Esmond Ovey to Foreign Office, March 5, 1933, in Carynnyk, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 215; Sackett to Secretary of State, March 1, 1933, 861.5017 Living Conditions/595, SDDF, rpt. in M. Morris, *Stalin's Famine*, 170–81; "Zapiska otdela pechati, poslannaia t. Molotovu," February 25, 1933, AVPRF, f. 05, op. 13, pap. 90, d. 13, ll. 46–47.

[44] The party is not mentioned in Stoneman's "Autobiography" (Box 1, Stoneman Papers) or in Robin Kincaid's recollections (interview, February 18, 1985, in unnumbered box, Whitman Bassow Papers, Library of Congress). Lyons's later recollections are quoted from Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise*, 161, citing letters from Lyons (June 20, 1977) and from Armand Paul Ginsberg for Lyons (July 2, 1977). Duranty biographer S. J. Taylor shares some of my doubts: *Stalin's Apologist*, 207, 235–36.

conditions are bad, but there is no famine."[45] While the criticisms of Jones included new concepts, Duranty's basic formula (shortages, even malnutrition, but no famine) carried over from his November series.

Fischer, then touring the United States, needed little official encouragement to rail against famine reports. He spent the spring of 1933 campaigning for American diplomatic recognition of the USSR. As rumors of a famine there reached American shores, Fischer vociferously denied the reports. He agreed that Russians were "hungry—desperately hungry" but attributed this to Russia's "turning over from agriculturalism to industrialism." In each city he visited, Fischer flatly denied that mass starvation existed in Russia. Arguing that there were shortages but no famine, Fischer declared in another speech that the Russian peasant would endure such hardships "as long as the fulfillment of his objective is visible to the naked eye, in the form of industrial achievement." Upon his return to Russia later that summer, Fischer's story changed only slightly. His first article from Moscow, entitled "Russia's Last Hard Year," stated, "The first half of 1933 was very difficult indeed. Many people simply did not have sufficient nourishment." Fischer blamed poor weather and the refusal of peasants to harvest the grain, which then rotted in the fields. Government requisitions drained the countryside of food, he admitted, but military needs (a potential conflict with Japan) explained the need for such deadly thoroughness in grain collections.[46]

While Fischer used the threat of war as a justification for hardships, Duranty continued to employ war in a metaphorical sense. Perhaps inspired by the Soviets' own rhetoric, he continued to compare collectivization to a battle between the modernizing Bolsheviks and backward peasants. Off on another vacation in April—this time to Greece—Duranty organized the trip so that he could travel through Ukraine. Gazing out the windows and speaking with peasants at the stations along the way, Duranty concluded that the rumors about a famine were unsubstantiated—always attributed to the next village. Duranty still maintained his optimism for the future: "an end has been made of the muddle and mismanagement of the past two years, and . . . Moscow is taking an interest" in the peasants.[47]

By late spring, Gareth Jones rebutted Duranty in a stinging counterattack. Jones reiterated his assessment of famine conditions, claiming it was based on conversations with numerous foreign diplomats in addition to peasants in more than twenty villages. He also cited Muggeridge's late March series in the *Manchester Guardian* as corroboration. Lashing out against the Moscow-based journalists, Jones called them "masters of euphemism and understatement," thanks to ever-stricter censor-

[45] Walter Duranty, "Russians Hungry, but Not Starving," *NYT*, March 31, 1933. He used the phrase earlier, in a poetic effort: Duranty, "Red Square," *NYT Magazine*, September 18, 1932.

[46] Fischer, *Men and Politics*, 206–09; reports on Fischer's lectures appear in " 'New Deal' Needed for Entire World, Says Visiting Author," *Denver Post*, April 1, 1933, cited in Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise*, 157; "Too Much Freedom Given to Russia's Women, Says Writer," *San Francisco News*, April 11, 1933; and "New Economic Society Coming out of Russia," *Milwaukee Leader*, March 14, 1933, both in Box 60, Louis Fischer Papers, Mudd Library, Princeton University; Fischer, "Russia's Last Hard Year," *Nation* 137 (August 9, 1933): 154.

[47] Duranty, *Duranty Reports Russia*, 313 (April 6, 1933); Walter Duranty, "Soviet Peasants Are More Helpful," *NYT*, May 14, 1933 (dateline Odessa, by mail to Paris, April 26, 1933). On the trip routing, see Duranty to James, n.d. [mid-April 1933?]; and James to Duranty, April 21, 1933, both on reel 32, James Papers; Duranty, *I Write as I Please* (New York, 1935), 61.

ship. The letter closed on a bitter congratulatory note: the Soviets' combination of food distribution policy (so that Moscow remained "well-fed") and censorship had managed to "hide the real Russia."[48]

By June, Duranty pleaded to travel abroad again. Until the midsummer harvest, he told his editor, things in Moscow would be "dull." The *New York Times* editors scotched the trip, so Duranty redirected his complaints to a friend and fellow journalist. As for food supplies, he wrote his friend: "The 'famine' is mostly bunk as I told you except maybe Kazakhstan and the Altai where they wouldn't let you go . . . The [NKID] in particular is rather crotchety about reporters travelling these days." Stuck in Moscow, bored, Duranty returned to one of his favorite themes, Russian suffering. He referred to Bolsheviks as "fanatics [who] do not care about the costs in blood or money." Suffering in Russia, he stressed, was not strictly a Soviet phenomenon: "It is cruel . . . but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is near to cruel Asia, and the proverb 'One Life, One Kopeck' was a century-old expression of human values in Czarist Russia." The article closed with the acknowledgment that "life here is hard and menaced by malnutrition and diseases that arise therefrom," but it once again underlined the ultimate goal justifying these sacrifices: the leadership's "fanatic fervor" for industrialization.[49]

An early August dispatch dealt once more with rumors about the famine. Duranty attributed them to the anti-Bolshevik émigré "rumor factories" in neighboring states. Soviet authorities, Duranty wrote, had inadvertently abetted these factories by adopting an "ostrich policy . . . in trying to hide it [the food shortage] and some of its consequences." Such shortages had taken "a heavy toll of Soviet fortitude and even Soviet lives," reducing the food supply "below what are generally regarded as the minimum requirements." Shortly thereafter, Duranty cabled his editor that, in spite of these persistent rumors, the word "famine" should be avoided in news coverage—in favor of the above formulation about minimum requirements. He maintained his silence about the travel ban. When the *New York Times* published an article about restrictions on travel, it came from the Associated Press rather than the newspaper's own correspondent. Below the AP story, though, Duranty wrote an article, "Famine Report Scorned," praising the new harvest without denying past problems: "Until this harvest the picture was dark enough. The Kremlin had ruthlessly carried through the agrarian revolution of collective farming, and the costs had been heavy for the Russian people, but it looks now as if the revolution is complete because the harvest is really good."[50]

Duranty seemed genuinely confused about the continuation of the travel ban, given the improved conditions. His letter to the foreign editor complained: "The poor goofs [in the NKID Press Office] have chosen this moment, when the harvest

[48] "Mr. Jones Replies" [letter to the editor], *NYT*, May 13, 1933.

[49] Duranty to *New York Times*, June 17, 1933, and James to Arthur Sulzberger, June 17, 1933, both on reel 33, James Papers. Duranty to H. R. Knickerbocker, June 27, 1933, catalogued correspondence, H. R. Knickerbocker Papers, Columbia University Library. Walter Duranty, "Russian Suffering Justified by Reds," *NYT*, July 9, 1933. "One Life, One Kopeck"—the title of Duranty's first novel—is a translation of the phrase *zhizn' kopeika*.

[50] Walter Duranty, "Russian Emigres Push Fight on Reds," *NYT*, August 12, 1933. Duranty to James, August 19, 20, and 22, 1933, James to Duranty, August 22, 1933, all on reel 33, James Papers. "Moscow Doubles Price of Bread" [AP], *NYT*, August 21, 1933; Duranty, "Famine Report Scorned," *NYT*, August 27, 1933.

REALLY IS GOOD, to forbid foreign correspondents to travel." He once again denied that there was a famine per se, "but there was a heavy loss of life and much suffering and now of course is the moment to see and say that things are better. But the [NKID] doesn't seem to understand that." Ignoring Duranty's repeated injunctions against the word "famine," the *New York Times* editors printed articles from Vienna and Berlin that used the word. They even printed one of Duranty's own articles under the headline "Famine Toll Heavy in South Russia." That article continued his usual themes: there was loss of life, not from starvation but from diseases "due to lower resistance"; the death rate was three times higher than normal in Ukraine, North Caucasus, and the Lower Volga—but no "famine" existed.[51]

Poor conditions in the USSR seemed to affect Duranty's mood if not his reporting. He complained to his editors that he had tired of working overseas, especially in Moscow. Duranty distinguished himself from those whose bright future justified present hardships: the USSR "may someday be a paradise for a future generation of Russians, but I am not a future generation, nor, thank God, a Russian." He proposed working only part-time in Moscow, writing primarily feature articles. The *Times* senior editors, all dissatisfied with Duranty's frequent absences from Moscow, were happy to accept this arrangement.[52]

The NKID gave Duranty one last scoop before he stepped down. The Press Office informed him in late August that he could travel through the Ukrainian countryside. Permission to travel, however, did not imply the right to travel freely. The restrictions on his itinerary perplexed Duranty. According to one British diplomat, "Mr. Duranty professed to be much irritated by this action, which he felt had cut the ground from under his feet by obliging him to recognize a ban upon his movements."[53]

Yet Duranty did not mention the restrictions to his editors. He instead boasted that he and AP correspondent Stanley Richardson soon would be taking a trip to Ukraine and the North Caucasus to challenge the "campaign about the alleged famine." The editors received this news enthusiastically, urging him to leave as soon as possible. This trip earned these two reporters no little resentment in the foreign colony—a problem for the NKID as well as for Duranty. As the foreign-policy chief wrote to the head of the secret police:

After foreign correspondents Duranty and Richardson set out, with our permission and your agreement, on their trip to Ukraine, many other foreign correspondents asked for

[51] Duranty to Frederick Birchall, August 23, 1933, reel 63, James Papers. "Cardinal Asks Aid in Russian Famine," *NYT*, August 20, 1933; Birchall, "Famine in Russia Held Equal of 1921," *NYT*, August 25, 1933.

[52] On Duranty's dissatisfaction, see Duranty to James, August 15, 1933, Adolph Ochs Papers, *New York Times* Archive; Duranty to Birchall, August 15, 1933, reel 63, James Papers; and Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York, 1988), 88. His editors' complaints are contained in James to Sulzberger, August 2, 1933, Birchall to James, August 16, 1933, both in personnel files, Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers, *New York Times* Archive; James to Sulzberger, August 23, 1933, reel 63, James Papers; James to Adolph Ochs, September 5, 1933, Ochs Papers. The NKID Press Office was well aware of these tensions; see Podol'skii diary, December 31, 1933, AVPRF, f. 0129, op. 15, pap. 128a, d. 335, l. 16.

[53] Edward Coote to Sir John Simon, September 12, 1933, in Carynnyk, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 307.

permission for trips to the south . . . Since I cannot be up-to-date [*v kurse*] on conditions in the various regions to which the foreign correspondents would like to go, I am asking you to give us your conclusions after weighing all of the circumstances. Personally, it seems to me that the moment has come when we can be more liberal on the issue of foreign correspondents' movements, that is, on the extremely irritating strict application of the rules about their trips outside Moscow.[54]

Once under way, Duranty and Richardson traveled first to Rostov and then Kharkov. Duranty's reports contained the same set of contradictions as his series on food shortages from the previous November. The first report began by asserting, "The use of the word 'famine' in connection with the North Caucasus is a sheer absurdity." After gloating that "even a child can see that this is not famine but abundance," Duranty revised downward his earlier estimate that mortality had tripled. Upon reaching Ukraine, Duranty's evaluation was far more bleak, resorting again to his wartime analogies: the Kremlin "has won the battle with the peasants," although "the cost has been heavy." The whole episode could be summed up briefly, Duranty wrote: "Hunger had broken [Ukrainians'] passive resistance—there in one phrase is the grim story of the Ukrainian Verdun." Here, Duranty wrote more explicitly about the costs: "hard conditions . . . had decimated the peasantry."[55]

In his private conversations, Duranty described the famine's results more graphically. In an oft-cited incident reported by Eugene Lyons, Duranty apparently stopped by Lyons's apartment upon returning from his travels. Lyons recalled,

> He gave us his fresh impressions in brutally frank terms and they added up to a picture of ghastly horror. His estimate of the dead from the famine was the most startling I had as yet heard from anyone.
>
> "But, Walter, you don't mean that literally?" Mrs. McCormick exclaimed.
>
> "Hell I don't—I'm being conservative," he replied, and as if by way of consolation he added his famous truism: "But they're only Russians."

While Lyons did not repeat Duranty's mortality figure in this 1937 recollection, other sources suggest that, upon returning from Ukraine, Duranty estimated that between 7 and 10 million had died "directly or indirectly from lack of food."[56]

William Henry Chamberlin also petitioned to travel into the famine areas in late August, but the NKID Press Office denied his initial request. The *Christian Science Monitor* printed an Associated Press story about this denial, referring to its desire to report on the impact of the food shortage "last winter."[57] Shortly afterward, Chamberlin wrote a casual letter to a friend that explained the travel ban as related

[54] Duranty to James, August 28, 1933, James to Duranty, August 29, 1933, Birchall to James, August 31, 1933, all on reel 33, James Papers. Litvinov to Iagoda, September 13, 1933, AVPRF, f. 05, op. 13, pap. 90, d. 14, l. 73.

[55] Walter Duranty, "Soviet Is Winning Faith of Peasants," *NYT*, September 11, 1933; Duranty, "Abundance Found in North Caucasus," *NYT*, September 16, 1933; Duranty, "Big Soviet Crop Follows Famine," *NYT*, September 16, 1933; Duranty, "Soviet's Progress Marked in a Year," *NYT*, September 21, 1933.

[56] Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, 579–80. "Mrs. McCormick" refers to distinguished *New York Times* foreign correspondent Anne O'Hare McCormick, then visiting the Lyonses. A similar story appears in Malcolm Muggeridge, *Chronicles of Wasted Time* (London, 1972), 1: 254–55; Strang to Simon, September 26, 1933, in Carynnyk, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 310–13.

[57] Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, 154–55; "Soviet Restricts Alien Reports as Food Wanes," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 21, 1933.

to "what has happened rather than . . . what is happening now" in the countryside. He went on in an optimistic tone, predicting that "this year's crop . . . is exceptionally good, and, while there are familiar difficulties in harvesting and transporting it, the signs seem to point to an easier winter. Everything in this world is, of course, highly relative." At the same time, Chamberlin also submitted a signed opinion piece to the *Monitor*, part of an occasional series called "Diary of an Onlooker." Chamberlin reported on contradictory rumors floating around Moscow about the situation in the Soviet countryside. Based on a report from "a foreign agricultural expert with a knowledge of the Russian language and long experience in various parts of the country" (perhaps his friend Otto Schiller?), Chamberlin announced that events in Russia gave "some measure of confirmation to both the optimistic and the pessimistic reports." This unnamed expert "confirmed the prevalent stories of widespread acute distress and hunger in the southern and southeastern parts of the country." Still, Chamberlin optimistically insisted that "there would be some increase in the agricultural production, measured by the extremely low level it touched last year." Better weather fueled Chamberlin's hope for improvement, as did the "fear of hunger" and the effectiveness of new repressive machinery. The section closed with the observation that Muscovites were choosing vacation spots far from Ukraine, in part because of the reports of poor conditions there.[58]

After the Duranty/Richardson trip, Chamberlin finally received permission to travel with his wife through the afflicted regions in late September. Journalist William Stoneman sent the first word back to the States about their travels: "Chamberlin says after a two week trip . . . that 30% of the people in some villages died of typhus & famine. It must have been a ghastly spring in the villages." Stoneman did report one note of optimism, though: central authorities "have plenty [of grain] to support the cities, to replenish the army stores and to give more to the villages." Shortly after returning to Moscow, Chamberlin visited his friend William Strang in the British Embassy. According to Strang, Chamberlin "often asked himself why the population did not flee *en masse* from the famine areas. He could only attribute their immobility to the characteristic Russian passivity of temperament. In the Ukraine he had the impression that the population could find nothing better to do than die as a protest."[59] Chamberlin thus explained the course (if not the cause) of the famine in terms of peasant passivity.

While the *Monitor* did not print Chamberlin's reports from Ukraine, the *Manchester Guardian* ran them as a five-part series under the rubric "The Soviet Countryside: A Tour of Inquiry." The early articles referred to "famine" conditions, and actions that were "no less ruthless than those of war," but also noted the "excellent crop" for 1933 and closed with a familiar statement about Russia as a

[58] Chamberlin to Calvin Hoover, September 25, 1933, Addition to Calvin Hoover Papers, Duke University Archives; William H. Chamberlin, "Diary of an Onlooker in Moscow," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1933.

[59] Stoneman to Samuel Harper, October 12, 1933, Box 18, Samuel Northrop Harper Papers, University of Chicago; Strang to Simon, October 14, 1933, in Carynnyk, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 334. The Chamberlin-Strang friendship (mentioned in a 1968 interview) is reported in Myers, "William Henry Chamberlin," 54–55—though Strang makes no mention of Chamberlin in his memoir, William Strang, *Home and Abroad* (London, 1956).

"land of paradoxes." In the final article, Chamberlin mused about peasant inaction, searching for a "psychological explanation of this curious fatalism." He concluded that "those who died were . . . old-fashioned peasants who simply could not conceive of life without their individual farm." Even though Chamberlin discussed famine conditions openly, his reporting placed ample blame on the peasants' conservatism and recalcitrance.[60]

Reports filed by Duranty and Chamberlin in the autumn of 1933 sounded quite similar. The *New York Times* reporter, for instance, tallied the results of the Five-Year Plan in an article entitled "Russia's Ledger." The costs of industrialization had been "prodigious, not only in lowered standard of living but in human suffering, even in human lives." Yet Duranty did not blame Soviet policy; the fault lay instead with the "innate conservatism of the farmer." Political liberties had been trampled by the "attempt of the Bolsheviks to submerge the individual in the state"—but such should be expected of Russia's political tradition, which so closely resembled the "despotism of Asia." Russian character—in this instance, at both individual and societal levels—explained Russian conditions. Duranty did not dwell on his recent trip, but he did assess Russian suffering as Chamberlin had: the previous year had "tightened the belts of the Russian people to an almost, but not quite, intolerable degree."[61] In reports based on their respective trips through the famine regions, Duranty and Chamberlin both emphasized the human costs. Both remained optimistic that the worst had passed. And, most strikingly, both blamed peasants' hardships on their own passivity as much as on Soviet policy.

In the long run, their travels led Duranty and Chamberlin toward sharply divergent views of the Soviet Union. Chamberlin's trip into the countryside marked the most important event in his once-gradual estrangement from the Soviets. While most of his reports filed before the trip—and even immediately afterward—shared much with Duranty's and Fischer's, Chamberlin subsequently altered his view of collectivization as a result of these travels. Whereas Chamberlin had earlier considered peasant "backwardness" an impediment to collectivization, he later came to believe the opposite, as evidenced by this observation: "It was not the more backward peasants, but the more progressive and well-to-do, who usually showed the greatest resistance to collectivization, and this not because they did not understand what the new policy would portend, but because they understood too well."[62] This view, appearing in his articles and books published in 1934, amounted to a recantation of his earlier ideas.

[60] All *Manchester Guardian*: "Second Agrarian Revolution," October 17, 1933; "Some Cossack Villages," October 18, 1933; "Ukrainian District's Good Harvest," October 19, 1933; "New Russian Agriculture—Two Main Types," October 20, 1933; "Villages around Kiev—Final Impressions," October 21, 1933.

[61] Walter Duranty, "Russia's Ledger: Gain and Cost," *Duranty Reports Russia*, 329–41 (October 1, 1933).

[62] Chamberlin discussed the famine (quoted above) in William Henry Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston, 1934), 76–77. Recollections that place the famine as a central event in Chamberlin's Russian career include Chamberlin, "My Russian Education," in *We Cover the World by Sixteen Foreign Correspondents* (New York, 1937), 238; Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, 143; Chamberlin, *Evolution of a Conservative* (Chicago, 1959), 11. Thanks to D'Ann Penner for stressing the nature of Chamberlin's later views.

Увага! УКРАЇНСЬКА ТРУДЯЩА ГРОМАДО **Увага!**

Заходом відділів Союза Українських Робітничих Організацій

відбудеться

МАСОВЕ ВІЧЕ

в Четвер 28-го Грудня 1933 р.

Початок о год. 7:30 вечером

в Між. Роб. Домі

3014 Yemans Ave. Hamtramck, Mich.

На вічу будуть обговорені і вияснені слідуючі питання:

1.—Причини визнання Союзу Радянських Соціялістичних Республик Америкою і кампанія Білогвардійщини російської і української проти визнання.

2.—Чому українські націоналісти не помамагають потерпівшим від повіді голодуючим селянам на західні Україні, а пропагують голод і людоїдцтво на Радянські Україні?

3.—Причини голоду і злиднів селян на Західні Україні і наша допомога для них.

На віче кличемо всіх що співчувають визвольні боротьбі українських трудящих, за їх соціяльне освободження з лабет польського, румунського і чехословацького капіталізму. На вічу будуть промовляти місцеві і позамісцеві бесідники.

ВСТУП ВІЛЬНИЙ. ВІЧЕВИЙ КОМІТЕТ.

ВИКЛИК НА ДИБАТУ

Окружний Комітет Союзу УРО апелює до членів українських запомогових організацій як Укр. Народного Союзу і Укр. Роб. Союзу: Члени вище згаданих організацій, домагайтися від своїх редакторів **«Свободи» і «Народної Волі»** щоби вони виступили публично в Детройт на дебату. Запевняємо вас що наші редактори з Укр. Щоденних Вістий, на наше домагання можуть явитися. Тягніть Ви своїх! Нехай публично з трибуни доказують про дісний стан положення і голод як на Радянській так і на Західній Україні. За дальшими інформаціями заінтересовані справою зголошуйтися, на адресу окружного секретаря:

Окружний Секретар Союзу У.Р.О. ***4959 Martin Ave. Detroit***

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The Ukrainian Workingmen's Association announced a meeting it was convening in December 1933 to discuss the famine in relation to the commencement of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. From the vertical files in the Reference Library of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, reproduced here with permission.

But in other articles appearing in the months after his harrowing trip through the devastated countryside, Chamberlin still expressed ambivalence about collectivization. After detailing, in one widely circulated article, the destruction wrought by

famine, Chamberlin sounded a note of optimism: the "tenacious vitality [of] the semi-Asiatic peasantry" ensured that "recovery comes more easily than might be the case in a softer country." National character remained a crucial factor in Chamberlin's explanations of Soviet events, even as his political position began to shift. Reviewing a book of Duranty's collected dispatches, furthermore, Chamberlin defended the legitimacy of the *New York Times* reporter's claims: "Duranty consistently takes the line, a perfectly logical and defensible one, that the sufferings which, as he recognizes, have been and are being imposed on the Russian people in the name of socialism, industrialization, and collectivization are of small account by comparison with the bigness of the objectives at which the Soviet leaders are aiming." Similarly, in one 1934 article containing his estimate of 4 million famine-related deaths, Chamberlin repeated his earlier argument that "the poor harvest of 1932 was attributable in some degree to the apathy and discouragement of the peasants."[63]

Unlike Chamberlin or Duranty, Fischer did not write, either publicly or privately, about living conditions through the remainder of 1933. A November letter to a friend promised only that he would give him the "lowdown" when they next met. Fischer's first mention of "the Ukrainian famine of 1933"—in a 1934 article from and about Spain—connected the famine to "prodigious efforts, now already crowned with considerable success, to give the country a new and permanently healthy agrarian base." Fischer did not directly address the "difficulties" of 1933 until well after the fact—in a 1934 *Nation* article, "In Russia Life Grows Easier." Those articles focused on Russia's "bright prospects," and improved supplies of clothing and food in major Soviet cities. These economic improvements had led to a decline in political opposition, which Fischer hoped would lead, in turn, to a curtailment of secret-police activities.[64]

Fischer maintained his general optimism about the Soviet Union through the publication of his *Soviet Journey* in 1935. The book devoted three pages to a discussion of the famine of 1932–1933, in which Fischer described his October travels through Ukraine. He told of food left rotting in the fields as the result of peasants' "passive resistance." Fischer blamed the peasants directly for having "brought the calamity upon themselves," and History itself provided the explanation:

> It was a terrible lesson at a terrific cost. History can be cruel. The Bolsheviks were carrying out a major policy on which the strength and character of their regime depended. The peasants were reacting as normal human beings would. Let no one minimize the sadness of

[63] William Henry Chamberlin, "Ordeal of the Russian Peasantry," *Foreign Affairs* 12 (April 1934): 503, 505; Chamberlin, "The Balance Sheet of the Five-Year Plan," *Foreign Affairs* 11 (April 1933): 458, 466; Chamberlin, "As One Foreign Correspondent to Another," *Christian Science Monitor Magazine*, May 2, 1934. While many critics of Duranty and Fischer have cited the chapter in Chamberlin's *Russia's Iron Age* entitled "The Ordeal of the Russian Peasantry," fewer have cited his article with the same title in *Foreign Affairs*. Although the materials appear to have been written within a month of each other—and many paragraphs appear in both pieces—they differ substantially in tone. The stand-alone article focuses on character traits such as apathy and tenacity far more than the book does. One intermediate argument connects peasant apathy to the economic and extra-economic measures of the Soviet state; see Chamberlin, "Russia without the Benefit of a Censor: Famine Proves Strong Weapon in Soviet Policy," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 1934.

[64] Fischer to Alexander Gumberg, November 5, 1933, folder 2, Box 7, Alexander Gumberg Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. Louis Fischer, "Class War in Spain," *Nation* 138 (April 18, 1934): 437; Fischer, "In Russia Life Grows Easier," *Nation* 138 (June 13, 1934): 667, 668; Fischer, "Moscow Reports Progress," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., 135 (June 1934): 651–57.

the phenomenon. But from the larger point of view the effect was the final entrenchment of collectivization. The peasantry will never again undertake passive resistance.[65]

Like Duranty and Chamberlin, Fischer stressed the positive results ensuing from Bolshevik victory in the countryside and connected the famine to peasant action (or inaction).

The issues resurfaced in 1935, when Chamberlin and Fischer traded blows over their reporting in 1933. After a week-long series on a famine raging in the USSR appeared in Hearst newspapers, Fischer published a rebuttal of these claims in *The Nation*.[66] Fischer, Lyons, and Chamberlin all agreed that there was no famine in Russia in 1935; Lyons, for one, called the Hearst series "patently doctored." But Chamberlin used the occasion to blast Fischer, sarcastically arguing that Fischer's denial of a 1935 famine made no mention of the famine of 1932–1933, which affected (in Chamberlin's words) "Ukraina [*sic*], the North Caucasus, considerable districts of the Lower and Middle Volga, and Turkestan." Claiming that Fischer had yet to make any "single, forthright unequivocal recognition of the famine," Chamberlin accused Fischer of using "misleading euphemistic terms" to describe Soviet events. Fischer's reply to Chamberlin, published in the same issue, defended his treatment of the famine and then turned the tables, accusing Chamberlin of one-sidedness for blaming only the Soviet government. If the famine was "man-made," as Chamberlin had charged, then "the peasants were the men who made it," wrote Fischer.[67]

By the time of this dispute over the famine hoax, the four protagonists had parted ways. While all had started the decade positively inclined (to greater or lesser degrees) toward the Soviets, Lyons and Chamberlin had grown disenchanted with and even disgusted by the "Soviet experiment" by 1935. After the mid-1930s, these latter writers began writing slashing criticisms of both the Soviet Union and its American supporters. Duranty and Fischer quickly became targets, especially for their writings on the famine of 1932–1933. Fischer eventually did reconsider his views about the Soviet Union, writing about his new perspective with more thoughtfulness and considerably less acid than Lyons and Chamberlin had. Fischer's essay in the widely read *The God That Failed* (1949) attributed the famine to "Bolshevik haste and dogmatism." Reflecting on his fifteen years of enthusiastic support for the USSR, Fischer concluded that he had been "glorifying steel and kilowatts and forgetting the human being."[68] Duranty, unlike the others, never recanted his earlier views outright. Later writings mentioned the famine, calling it

[65] Louis Fischer, *Soviet Journey* (New York, 1935), 174, 108, 170–72 (on famine). The trip through Ukraine is described in Fischer, "Soviet Progress and Poverty," *Nation* 135 (December 7, 1932): 552–55.

[66] The articles appeared under the byline "Thomas Walker" in the *New York Evening Journal*, February 18, 19, 21, 25, and 27, 1935, as cited in Dalrymple, "Soviet Famine of 1932–1934," 256 n. 46. Louis Fischer, "Hearst's Russian 'Famine,'" *Nation* 140 (March 13, 1935): 296–97.

[67] William Henry Chamberlin, "The Ukrainian Famine" [letter to the editor], *Nation* 140 (May 29, 1935): 629; Fischer, "Louis Fischer's Interpretation" [reply], *ibid.*, 629–30; Lyons, *Red Decade*, 141. See also Freda Kirchwey's letters to Fischer, March 14 and 22, 1935, and June 1935, folder 168, Box 10, Freda Kirchwey Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. This last letter noted the extensive controversy about the Chamberlin-Fischer exchange and celebrated the resulting increase in newsstand sales.

[68] Louis Fischer, untitled essay in *The God That Failed: Six Studies in Communism*, Richard Crossman, ed. (1949; rpt. edn., New York, 1959), 188–89.

"man-made" but wavering as to its origins. By 1949, Duranty's final book offered an apology of sorts: "Whatever Stalin's apologists may say, 1932 was a year of famine." While it may have appeared unintentional to those "on the spot," he explained, he now believed that authorities should be blamed for their actions. The section closed by quoting Stalin: "Why blame the peasant? . . . For *we* [the Communist Party] are at the helm."[69]

Lyons's and Chamberlin's rancor covered up their own actions and writings during the famine year—some of which bore marked similarities to those of their targets, Duranty and Fischer. In 1932–1933, all four authors portrayed the battle between the party and the countryside as one between determined modernizers and recalcitrant, fatalistic peasants. While reporting—and regretting—the loss of peasant lives, all four authors framed the loss of life as a necessary cost in the struggle for economic progress. All four journalists, furthermore, deployed stereotypes about Russian peasants in order to explain peasant actions (or ostensible inaction). Fischer and Chamberlin explicitly linked the horrible fate of the Soviet peasantry to visions of a modern, industrial society. The expression, repeated by these two as well as other journalists and scholars, that the Five-Year Plan represented Russia's attempt to "starve itself great" emphasized the hoped-for ends of industrialization over the brutal means.[70]

Enthusiasm for Soviet economic development led American Russia-watchers of all political persuasions to support or at least withhold judgment on Soviet Five-Year Plans. This "romance of economic development" explains the widespread American support for the USSR far better than Lyons's harangues about "the Stalinist penetration of America."[71] Many commentators approved of Soviet-style industrialization while denouncing communism. Their support for Soviet efforts to modernize a "backward" nation came in spite of their recognition of the tremendous human costs entailed. Even though they had some information about rural conditions during the famine, American observers had an easier time finding the sacrifices worthy because they considered the people sacrificed so unworthy. Common stereotypes about Russians served to explain their struggles and suffering. Conservative and apathetic peasants could be trusted to resist (but only passively) Soviet plans. To bring about important changes, so the logic went, would entail extreme hardships and even significant loss of life—which the peasants, fatalistic and inured to suffering, were especially well suited to endure. National-character

[69] Walter Duranty, *Stalin and Co.: The Politburo—The Men Who Run Russia* (London, 1949), 68–69; Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 236–37. Duranty is loosely translating Stalin's speech of January 11, 1933, "O rabote v derevne," *Sochineniia*, 13 vols. (Moscow, 1952), 13: 233, italics in original.

[70] Fischer is quoted in *Experiences in Russia—1931: A Diary* (Pittsburgh, 1931), 85. Other instances include H. R. Knickerbocker (a journalist and close friend of Duranty's), "Everyday Russia," in *The New Russia: Eight Talks Broadcast by the BBC* (London, 1931), 21; Bruce Hopper to Hamilton Fish Armstrong, January 18, 1930, Box 35, Armstrong Papers; and Boris Brutzkus, *Economic Planning in Soviet Russia* (London, 1935), 226.

[71] See, for instance, Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York, 1973); Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba* (1984; rpt. edn., Lanham, Md., 1991), chap. 3; Frank A. Warren, *Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Reconsidered* (New York, 1966); John P. Diggins, "Limping after Reality: American Intellectuals, the Six Myths of the USSR, and the Precursors of Anti-Stalinism," in *Il mito dell'URSS: La cultura occidentale e l'Unione Sovietica*, Marcello Flores, ed. (Milan, 1990); and Eduard Mark, "October or Thermidor? Interpretations of Stalinism and the Perception of Soviet Foreign Policy in the United States, 1927–1947," *AHR* 94 (October 1989): 937–62.

stereotypes thus combined with enthusiasm for economic development to resolve the tensions between ends and means in American writings on the USSR. As anticommunist economist Calvin Hoover put it, Russian peasants would not rise from their "Asiatic" laziness unless prompted by the "immediate stimulus of hunger."[72] The worthy goal of modernization, Hoover and others implied, could be reached only through difficult if not violent means.

This dilemma of ends and means persisted through Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Writers in Mikhail Gorbachev's Russia (and other parts of the collapsing Soviet Union) wrestled with the historical meaning of the tragedies of the 1930s. A plaintive assessment by two journalists in 1990 stands out in this often nasty debate. Concluding a newspaper article on new research on the famine of 1932–1933, these writers struggled to sum up the Soviet period in a single paragraph: "It is not true," they wrote, "that nothing good was created [under the Soviets]. It is true that everything good came at too high a price."[73]

Most Western journalists in Stalin's Moscow, spared the high price paid by the Russians, reached less poignant conclusions. Chamberlin noted the great loss of life but placed it in the context of Soviet goals: the villages he visited in the famine's aftermath, he wrote at the time, stood as "grim symbols of progress." Duranty, for his part, insisted that the peasants who died in the battle for control of the countryside had become "victims on the march toward progress."[74] That the march was a forced one, prodded by Soviet bayonets, concerned these journalists less than the ostensible destination.

THE SOVIET PATTERN OF THE EARLY 1930s—a devastating famine, the very existence of which was contested abroad—reappeared with alarming precision during China's Great Leap Forward (1958–1960).[75] The all-out Chinese attempt at collectivization (like the Soviet case, designed to funnel resources to the industrial sector) led to chaos in the Chinese countryside. Government authorities instituted collectivization and political repression to gather whatever food they could to further economic and political goals. The breadbaskets of China, stripped of all food, became home to mass starvation, with death toll estimates as high as 26 million.[76]

[72] Calvin B. Hoover, *Economic Life in Soviet Russia* (New York, 1931), 85.

[73] S. and P. P. Zavorotnyi, "Operatsiia Golod: Vosem' mesiatsev 1932–33 goda unesla milliony krest'ianskhikh zhiznei," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, February 3, 1990.

[74] William Henry Chamberlin, "Some Cossack Villages," *Manchester Guardian*, October 18, 1933; Duranty, *I Write as I Please*, 288.

[75] While finding many commonalities in the Soviet and Chinese famines, Thomas P. Bernstein also notes differences, most notably that Soviet authorities (unlike the Chinese twenty-five years later) saw the peasants as the enemy of the state; see Bernstein, "Stalinism, Famine and Chinese Peasants: Grain Procurements during the Great Leap Forward," *Theory and Society* 13 (May 1984): 339–78. I am also indebted to D'Ann Penner's published ("Agrarian 'Strike' ") and unpublished work for comparisons of the Soviet and Chinese famines. General background on the origins and operations of the Great Leap Forward can be gleaned from Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Vol. 2, *The Great Leap Forward, 1958–60* (New York, 1983), esp. chaps. 5, 8; and David Bachman, *Bureaucracy, Economy, and Leadership in China: The Institutional Origins of the Great Leap Forward* (Cambridge, 1991).

[76] Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine* (New York, 1996), chap. 18. More careful analyses are found in Penny Kane, *Famine in China, 1958–61: Demographic and Social Implications* (New York, 1988), 84–90.

Western observers denied the existence of the famine in terms strikingly similar to those used by Moscow-based reporters in the 1930s. Edgar Snow, whose *Red Star over China* (1938) introduced Mao Zedong to the English-speaking world, returned to China in 1960. Rumors of famine clearly weighed on Snow's mind, but he denied them outright: "I saw no starving people in China, nothing that looked like old-time famine." His travelogue later repeated the line of argument used by Duranty, Fischer, and Ralph Barnes regarding the Soviet famine: "Considerable malnutrition undoubtedly existed. Mass starvation? No."[77] Snow's earlier writings on Chinese famine, based on his travels through northwest China in 1929–1931, furthermore, shared much with the Moscow correspondents. In that analysis, he complained that residents of the famine region did not take any steps to prevent or even delay their deaths: "I was profoundly puzzled by their passivity. For a while I thought nothing would make a Chinese fight."[78] Peasant inaction, as much as government action, had been a central factor in Snow's Chinese famines.

While Snow's case is the most famous because he was granted permission to travel through the famine regions, other Western specialists came to the same conclusions without firsthand experience. Like those Western experts who stressed the global significance of the "Soviet experiment" in the 1930s, some China specialists of the 1960s trumpeted the achievements rather than the costs of the Great Leap Forward.[79] The Hong Kong–based *Far Eastern Economic Review*, for instance, editorialized that "what is happening in China is of momentous importance . . . [as] a new model for human society and a new method of overcoming poverty."[80] Scholars such as Gunnar Myrdal and John King Fairbank, the dean of American Sinology, downplayed or dismissed rumors of famine conditions.[81]

Debates about foreign coverage of the Chinese famine have resurfaced in recent years, with increasing acrimoniousness. Some Western Sinologists who had once been more sympathetic to the People's Republic of China—recapitulating the trajectory of Eugene Lyons and William Henry Chamberlin vis-à-vis the USSR—renounced their earlier views and criticized those with whom they once agreed. Ross Terrill, a onetime colleague of Fairbank's at Harvard, recently accused American Sinology of soft-peddling Maoist "social engineering" as well as Mao himself—whom Terrill calls "pathological" and a "borderline personality."[82]

[77] Edgar Snow, *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today* (New York, 1962), 619–20; also chap. 81, "Facts about Food"; S. Bernard Thomas, *Season of High Adventure: Edgar Snow in China* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 306–08.

[78] Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, rev. and enl. edn. (New York, 1968), 216.

[79] On the USSR in the 1930s, see, for example, Sir Bernard Pares, "The New Crisis in Russia," *Slavonic and East European Review* 11 (1933): 490; Hans Kohn, "The Europeanization of the Orient," *Political Science Quarterly* 52 (1937): 264. On China in the 1950s, see two retrospectives by American development economists: George Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia* (Baltimore, 1985); and W. W. Rostow, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Foreign Aid* (Austin, Tex., 1985), chaps. 4–6.

[80] "Wheat and Chaff" [editorial], *Far Eastern Economic Review* 29 (September 29, 1960): 691. While Becker cites this article disapprovingly (*Hungry Ghosts*, 299), he does not put it in the context of that magazine's rather pessimistic view of the Chinese economic plan; the remainder of the editorial, in fact, is a complaint about China's press policies.

[81] On Western responses to the famine of 1958–1960, see Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, chap. 20; Steven W. Mosher, *China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality* (New York, 1990), 110–18; and Article 19, *Starving in Silence: A Report on Censorship and Famine* (London, 1990).

[82] Ross Terrill, "Mao in History," *National Interest* 52 (Summer 1998): 54–63. For brief analyses of

Yet broader insights from the Soviet famine of 1932–1933 extend well beyond the parallels in China three decades later. The Soviet famine also revealed assumptions about modernization that came to stand at the center of American intellectual life in the decades after World War II. The concepts shaping Western responses to the Soviet famine—enthusiasm for development, reliance on national-character stereotypes, and ideas about "Asia"—operated in various combinations through 1950s and 1960s scholarship in the United States. They appeared at a moment when many intellectuals resolved to grapple with two central problems in the postwar global order: the Soviet Union on the one hand and economic development in the newly independent states of Asia and Africa on the other. The intellectual traffic between scholars of the Soviet Union and of the Third World was heavy, as scholars applied their understanding of Russian/Soviet history to the "battle for the hearts and minds of the Third World."[83]

Many scholars made the trip themselves, working in both development studies and Russian/Soviet history. Important figures here include two of the scholars responsible for promoting modernization theory within and outside the academy, Walt Whitman Rostow and Cyril Black, as well as one of the earliest and most incisive critics of modernization, the economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron. All three writers' works focused on economic aspects of modernization and revolved, to a great degree, around the question of the costs of development. All three drew lessons about such costs from the Soviet case. And in quite different ways, all three scholars employed parts of the logic used by those journalists covering the Soviet famine of 1932–1933.[84]

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this shift, see Mosher, *China Misperceived*, 124–38, 177–86; Andrew J. Nathan, "Setting the Scene: Confessions of a China Specialist," in Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* (New York, 1990); and Harry Harding, "The Evolution of Scholarship on Contemporary China," in *American Studies of Contemporary China*, David Shambaugh, ed. (Washington, D.C., 1993).

[83] Nobel laureate W. Arthur Lewis was among those calling attention to this relationship; see *The Theory of Economic Growth* (London, 1955), 431. For more detailed discussions of the Soviet model in development economics, see Morris Watnick, "The Appeal of Communism to the Peoples of Underdeveloped Areas," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 1 (1952): 22–36. Also see Francis Seton, "Planning and Economic Growth: Asia, Africa, and the Soviet Model," *Soviet Survey* 31 (January–March 1960): 48–54; W. Donald Bowles, "Soviet Russia as a Model for Underdeveloped Countries," *World Politics* 14 (March 1962): 483–504; and Charles K. Wilber, *The Soviet Model and Underdeveloped Countries* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1969).

On the origins and implications of the term "Third World," see Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), 190–93; and especially Carl E. Pletsch, "The Three Worlds and the Division of Social-Scientific Labor, circa 1950–75," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (October 1981): 565–90.

[84] Rostow and Black represent important, economically oriented, strands of modernization theory in the late 1950s and early 1960s, though far from the only ones. Other scholars associated with "modernization" concepts, such as Alex Inkeles, also undertook studies of the Soviet Union. Though Rostow's original training was in economic history—his PhD dissertation analyzed economic growth in nineteenth-century England—he also wrote a widely circulated book on the Soviet Union (*The Dynamics of Soviet Society* [New York, 1953]); see also W. W. Rostow, "Marx Was a City Boy, or Why Communism May Fail," *Harper's Magazine* 210 (February 1955): 25–30. For biographical details on Rostow, see his reminiscences, "Development: The Political Economy of the Marshallian Long Period," in *Pioneers in Development*, Gerald M. Meiers and Dudley Sears, eds. (Oxford, 1984).

Critiques of modernization theory have been a growth industry in recent years; see Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Man*, 402–18; Ian Roxborough, "Modernization Theory Revisited: A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988): 753–61; and especially Michael Edward Latham, "Modernization as Ideology: Social Science Theory, National Identity, and American Foreign Policy,

The three scholars derived from the Russian experience lessons for Third World development. Gerschenkron first discussed his theory of "economic backwardness" at a 1951 conference called "The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas." He originally submitted his contribution as "Historical Bases of Appraising Economic Development in a Bipolar World," a title that emphasized the connection between Third World development and Soviet-American antagonisms. The conference organizer, wary of promoting a paper with such a wordy title, proposed an alternative, which was later to earn Gerschenkron his reputation: "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective." That article drew lessons from Russia's "extreme relative backwardness" to show how such economies required significant levels of state intervention in order to industrialize.[85]

Rostow, like Gerschenkron, drew lessons from the Russian experience for former colonies just beginning the process of development. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960)—subtitled "A Non-Communist Manifesto"—aimed to discredit the Soviet approach to industrialization. Yet the Russian experience was a touchstone throughout the book. His description of the role of the agricultural sector in industrialization fit the Soviet experience especially well: the rural sector provided foreign exchange (via the export of primary commodities) and government funds to promote industry (via taxes).[86]

Black's transit between the Russian past and the Third World present was even more frequent. Starting in 1960, he promoted the application of modernization theory to the study of Russian history by editing a conference volume, *The Transformation of Russian Society*. It included contributions by Gerschenkron, Talcott Parsons, and an impressive array of present and future leaders in Russian/Soviet studies. By the mid-1960s, he had expanded his field of inquiry dramatically, publishing a world-history primer called *The Dynamics of Modernization* (1966); its opening pages asserted that modernization was the third fundamental transformation of life on earth, on par with the rise of human life and the shift to settled agricultural societies.[87]

1961–1963" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, forthcoming, Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000). I have also learned much about the meanings of modernization theory from ongoing discussions and disagreements with Nils Gilman, who is currently completing his dissertation on the topic.

[85] On the paper's title, see the exchanges between Gerschenkron and conference organizer Bert Hoselitz in Box 8, series HUG 45.10, Alexander Gerschenkron Papers, Pusey Library, Harvard University. The article appeared originally in *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, Bert F. Hoselitz, ed. (Chicago, 1952), and was later rpt. in Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), and in many other collections. An excellent summary and critique of Gerschenkron's scholarship is offered by a former student: D. N. McCloskey, "Kinks, Tools, Spurts, and Substitutes: Gerschenkron's Rhetoric of Relative Backwardness," in *Patterns of Industrialization: The Nineteenth Century*, Richard Sylla and Gianni Toniolo, eds. (London, 1991), 92–107.

[86] W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, 1960), esp. 22–24; this relationship between agriculture and industry, of course, did not fit only the USSR. Rostow began working out these stages in a more abstract work, *The Process of Economic Growth* (New York, 1952).

[87] Cyril E. Black, "The Modernization of Russia," in Black, ed., *The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change since 1861* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960); see also Black's essay, "The Nature of Imperial Russian Society," along with commentary by Hugh Seton-Watson and Nicholas V. Riasanovsky in *Slavic Review* 20 (December 1961): 565–600. Black's key work on modernization theory

Of these three postwar scholars, Black had by far the most in common with the journalists of the 1930s. First, he employed national-character traits with a frequency similar to Duranty, Chamberlin, Fischer, and Lyons. His introductory essay to the Russian-history volume stressed Russians' passivity, patience, and submissiveness. Like the earlier journalists, Black deployed these traits in the interests of economic development. The traits explained the combination of economic hardship and political coercion that defined the Soviet era. Russians' traditional fatalism—which, Black claimed, began to wane only after World War II—explained the ease with which Soviet authorities could maintain their rule.[88] Finally, Black shared the journalists' argument that progress would be costly, even fatal, but was ultimately necessary. Considering modernization "simultaneously creative and destructive," Black hardly hid the costs, arguing that violence in modernization was primarily the result of the "radical character of the changes inherent in modernization." Twenty years later, only months after Gorbachev took power in the Soviet Union, Black described economic change as a worthy justification for despotic rule: "We think autocracy is a bad thing. It crushes individuals. Yet in real life you have to get things done. You have to get organized. And the Russians from that point of view had a good government, an effective government, with all its shortcomings—and still [do]."[89] Black envisioned modernization as a process through which all societies must pass; the degree of violence varied by political circumstances and especially "national character." The universalism of this vision is perhaps best exemplified by his conjecture that the process of modernization might eventually lead to a world so homogeneous that a "single world state" would emerge.[90]

Rostow shared Black's universalism; his *Stages* insisted that all nations went through a similar process of modernization, differing primarily in timing. He had even less room for variation than did Black. Rostow agreed with Black about the sacrifices and even violence that could accompany the social transformations they both described. By the late 1950s, Rostow had worked out foreign-policy applications of his theory, centered on the costs of modernization. Economic change, he argued, "create[d] potential unrest by dislodging convictions and habit patterns which have in the past insured stability." Such instability would make developing nations vulnerable to propagandizing by communists, whom Rostow called "scavengers of the modernization process." He devoted a significant portion of his political career, as a foreign-affairs adviser to presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson, to establishing and implementing aid programs that would

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is *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York, 1966). A similarly ambitious claim for modernization theory, that every problem in the world is related to modernization, is made in Marion J. Levy, Jr., *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors* (New York, 1972), 1.

[88] Cyril E. Black, "The Modernization of Russia," in Black, *Transformation of Russian Society*, 667, 672, 679. See also Black, "Russian History and Soviet Politics," testimony to the Subcommittee on Strategic Arms Limitation Talks of the Committee on Armed Services, March 18, 1970, rpt. in Black, *Understanding Soviet Politics: The Perspective of Russian History* (Boulder, Colo., 1986), 14–15.

[89] Black, *Dynamics*, 27, 33, 159. "Tradition and Modernity," lecture to the Summer Institute on "Global Interdependence and New Jersey Education," July 15, 1985, Box 4, Cyril E. Black Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

[90] Black, *Dynamics*, 164. In that work, Black outlined a taxonomy of seven types of modernization based primarily on timing and political systems; see 106–28.

help prevent communist "scavengers" from taking advantage of the turmoil. This was a significant and explicit goal of the international "Economic Development Decade" he spearheaded in the 1960s.[91]

Gerschenkron's dissent from Rostow's and Black's universalism would eventually reveal an important application of cultural particularism. Gerschenkron's theory of economic backwardness combined a heuristic for understanding industrialization with a method for explaining differences based on the degree of "relative backwardness." The state role necessary for the most backward nations would eventually wither away, Gerschenkron believed, as once-backward nations began to lessen the gap between "what is" and "what could be." Not prone to the national-character stereotyping so common among the 1930s journalists, the economic historian nevertheless incorporated one of their most important themes: the notion that Russian development was "Asian." While Rostow and Black saw modernization as a universal process oftentimes indistinguishable from westernization (in Rostow's case, Americanization), Gerschenkron instead insisted on the separability of economic from political progress. The emergence of an industrial economy—the process he called westernization—could happen through the most "unwestern" means. Russia, to Gerschenkron, provided an excellent case: the Soviets' "westernization of the economy," he wrote, was accompanied by its political "orientalization." "Asia" thus took on different meanings: in the political sphere, it implied repression and despotism; in the economic sphere, it suggested stagnation and resistance to development. The result, what he saw as Russia's combination of economic advancement and political retrogression, nevertheless met its desired aims. While disparaging the Soviet "dictatorship," Gerschenkron conceded that it "no doubt has contributed to the course of industrialization more than any other single factor."[92]

Comparing Gerschenkron to Rostow and Black thus reveals interesting points of intersection and difference. Those endorsing the universalism of modernization theory argued that all nations undergo a similar process of social transformation and end up in a similar state: as an "integrated society" (Black) or in the "age of high-mass consumption" (Rostow). Like the journalists covering the Soviet famine of 1932–1933, Black and Rostow recognized the costs entailed but called for further modernization. Black carried the parallel with the journalists of the 1930s further, stressing that such costs relate to national-character traits. Rostow was swayed more by national interest than national character; he called for American aid to prevent the virus of communism from affecting those paying the costs. Gerschen-

[91] W. W. Rostow and Max F. Millikan, *A Proposal: A Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (New York, 1957), 22. This book represented Rostow's first major effort to apply his development theories to foreign policy. For the connections between Rostow's economic scholarship and foreign policies (especially in the Kennedy White House), see John Lodewijks, "Rostow, Developing Economies, and National Security Policy," in *History and Political Economy*, Annual Supplement, 23 (1991): 285–310; and Latham, "Modernization as Ideology."

[92] Alexander Gerschenkron, "The Early Phases of Industrialization in Russia: Afterthoughts and Counterthoughts," in *The Economics of Take-Off into Sustained Growth: Proceedings of a Conference Held by the International Economic Association*, W. W. Rostow, ed. (London, 1963), 155–56; Gerschenkron, "Problems and Patterns of Russian Economic Development," in Black, *Transformation of Russian Society*, 71; Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness*, 186; Gerschenkron, review of *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR*, by Naum Jasny (1950), in Gerschenkron, *Continuity in History and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 481.

kron, on the other hand, did not universalize the process of modernization, insisting instead on significant variations in national experiences. He also defined progress as divisible—unlike Rostow and Black—and proposed that the Soviet Union represented economic progress enacted through political retrogression. Gerschenkron characterized such cases by employing the language of "Asia" so central to both Chamberlin and Duranty. To Gerschenkron, "Asia" defined a particular form of social change, a form found in early Soviet Russia.[93] None of these three postwar scholars went as far as the 1930s journalists in offering justifications for Soviet economic policy in the era of the first Five-Year Plans. Yet all of them incorporated one or another aspect of American journalists' explanation of causes and consequences of the famine. That such usage entered mainstream intellectual life, as a central project of Western social science in the 1960s, suggests the durability of combining "national character" and economic development. Even though modernization theory fell out of academic favor in the late 1960s and beyond, the issues have hardly faded away.

THE IDEA OF A UNIQUELY ASIAN VARIANT of economic development was reappropriated by political leaders behind Asia's "economic miracle" of the early 1990s, including Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and Indonesia's Raden Suharto. These leaders saw rapid industrialization under political authoritarianism as the expression of "Asian values," thus turning "Oriental despotism" from a criticism to a compliment. Critics of Singapore and Indonesia, however, had a different name: "development dictatorships." Differences in terminology expressed radically different resolutions of the tension between the goal of economic development and the methods used to attain that goal—a central tension for the field of development economics.[94]

Notions of the "Asiatic" eased this tension for many Western experts on

[93] The frequent application of "oriental despotism" to Russia and the Soviet Union deserves a fuller discussion than can be provided here. See, of course, Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, Conn., 1957), and the rebuttal of sorts in Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 93–97. The connections between Wittfogel's writings and Russian discourses of "Asia" are explored in detail in G. L. Ulmen, *The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel* (The Hague, 1978), 245–61, 352–54. For longer-term historical roots, see Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*; and Donald M. Lowe, *The Function of "China" in Marx, Lenin, and Mao* (Berkeley, Calif., 1966).

[94] Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values: What Lee Kuan Yew and Le Peng Don't Understand about Asia," *New Republic* 217 (July 14, 1997): 33–40; Sen, "Freedom Favors Development (Elections after the End of History)," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 13 (Fall 1996): 23–27; Sen, "Liberty and Poverty: Political Rights and Economics," *Current* (May 1994): 22–28. See also a special issue of *Journal of Democracy* (8 [April 1997]) devoted to the topic "Hong Kong, Singapore, and 'Asian Values.'" The Asian financial crisis of the winter of 1997–1998 prompted other criticisms of "Asian values": Francis Fukuyama, "Asian Values and the Asian Crisis," *Commentary* 105 (February 1998): 23–27; Milton Friedman, "Asian Values: Real Lesson of Hong Kong," *National Review* 49 (December 31, 1997): 36–37.

Among the best summaries of development economics are those by participants; see especially Albert O. Hirschman, "The Rise and Decline of Development Economics," in his *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1981); and H. W. Arndt, *Economic Development: The History of an Idea* (Chicago, 1987). For recent works, see, for instance, Colin Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996); and especially the contributions in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, Frederick Cooper and Randall Packer, eds. (Berkeley, 1997).

economic change. Observers used the appellation to imply individuals' passivity, fatalism, and general unsuitability for modern economic life. Centuries-old conceptions of "Oriental despotism"—like more recent claims about "Asian values"—offered a ready explanation for economic development under strict political regimes. Interwar Russia experts, many of whom saw Russia as an "Asiatic" society, applied a similar logic. Their responses to the Soviet famine of 1932–1933 reveal the potency of combining such national-character stereotypes with a belief in economic development at all costs. Walter Duranty and Louis Fischer, so often blamed for the lack of major coverage of the famine, shared most of these ideas with their chief critics, Eugene Lyons and William Henry Chamberlin. These four reporters invoked peasant "passivity" and "apathy" as innate personal characteristics, not just responses to circumstances of collectivization, to explain and perhaps even justify the devastation of the Soviet countryside.

Thirty years later, Western academics turned their attention to economic modernization of the former colonies and once again considered the relationship between "national character" and economic development. Cyril Black used individual Russian traits such as passivity to explain the nation's economic and political trajectories. Alexander Gerschenkron applied notions of "Asiatic" Russia to suggest the separability of economic and political development. While recognizing the human costs of economic change, Walt Rostow insisted on its ultimate benefits, revealing the continuing power of what George F. Kennan called "the romance of economic development." Kennan coined that phrase in 1932 to explain why Soviet youths were willing to tolerate great sacrifices during the first Five-Year Plan. Yet the romance held people of all nations under its sway—observers trying to explain industrialization's high costs as well as activists willing to endure those costs (and inflict them on others). Echoing Kennan's words a quarter-century later, future U.S. national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote that university youths and other intellectuals "appear to be hypnotized by the image of large-scale industry."[95] Although both Kennan and Brzezinski focused on young people (their seduction by economic development or their hypnosis by large factories), such affairs of the heart were not mere teen infatuations. Economic development in the twentieth century was both made and understood by political leaders and intellectuals under a similar spell.

[95] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Politics of Underdevelopment," *World Politics* 9 (October 1956): 60.

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