

The Journal of Russian American Studies

Summer 2025

Special Edition



To the Good of the Soviet Union: New York Times Moscow Correspondents during the Second World War

Author: Dmitrii Nechiporuk

Issue: Special Issue 2025

Abstract

The *New York Times* was one of the first American newspapers to have its own foreign correspondent in Soviet Russia in the 1920s. From August 1921 to the mid-1930s, its first reporter in Moscow was Walter Duranty, who had a favorable view of the Soviet experiment and praised the development of the Soviet Union under Stalin. This admiration granted him exclusive access to high-ranking Soviet officials. After Duranty, two other reporters covered prewar Moscow for *The New York Times*: Harold Denny (1934-1939) and G.E.R. Gedye (1939-July 18, 1940).

This article explores previously unresearched aspects of the complex and often opaque interactions between American journalists and Soviet diplomats during World War II. A month after the start of the Winter War, Soviet authorities reintroduced strict press censorship, rendering the presence of American newspaper correspondents in Moscow largely ineffective. Foreign correspondents were restricted to sending home English-translated prefabricated news authorized by Soviet censors. Consequently, by the fall of 1940, leading American newspapers had closed their Moscow bureaus. The remaining correspondents operated under heavy censorship, preventing them from fully reporting what they learned in the Soviet Union. This censorship coincided with the deterioration of Soviet-American relations in 1940 and the first half of 1941.

The situation changed swiftly after Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. As this article demonstrates, American diplomats and reporters were aware of the possibility of a German attack on the USSR in advance, though they could not confirm when or if it would occur. Alongside diplomatic and military support from the United States and Great Britain, the Anglo-American press adopted a more favorable stance toward the Soviet Union. Leading newspapers covering international affairs returned, and *The New York Times* re-established its Moscow bureau in July 1941. In the private talks with the Soviet officials the representatives of *The New York Times* sought to position itself as closely aligned with President Roosevelt. This status allowed it to maintain correspondents in the Soviet Union throughout the war. However, *The New York Times* failed to regain its prewar status as the premier source of exclusive news and semi-official rumors. In this regard, its correspondents in Turkey and Europe had significantly greater access to diplomatic and military sources than those in Moscow.

На пользу Советского Союза: собственные корреспонденты *New York Times* в Москве в годы Второй мировой войны

To the Good of the Soviet Union: New York Times Moscow Correspondents during the Second World War

Dmitrii Nechiporuk

Введение

За семьдесят лет истории освещения внутренней и внешней политики Советского Союза (1921-1991) московское бюро газеты “*New York Times*” (далее - *NYT*) функционировало практически беспрерывно. Всего лишь дважды за столь долгий период нью-йоркское издание закрывало свое представительство в СССР. Оба раза закрытие бюро пришлось на сталинскую эпоху, в период между 1939 и 1949 гг., когда Советский Союз был участником Второй мировой войны (далее - ВМВ), вышел победителем в статусе одного из главных участников Антигитлеровской коалиции и начал послевоенную военно-дипломатическую борьбу за сферы влияния в Европе и Азии с недавними партнерами в рамках “Большой тройки” - Великобританией и США. Внезапные повороты сталинской внешней политики в указанный период напрямую коррелировали с отношением советской власти к зарубежной “буржуазной” прессе, что хорошо прослеживается на истории присутствия собственных корреспондентов *NYT* в Советском Союзе с 1939 по 1945 год¹.

В историографии до сих пор не написано обобщающего труда по работе московского бюро *NYT* в 1921-1991 гг. в контексте дипломатической истории советско-американских отношений. Но если межвоенный период деятельности *NYT* (1921-1939) и освещение газетой различных аспектов политики Советского Союза в годы Холодной войны (1949-1988)

¹ В указанный период в Москве работали шесть корреспондентов, представлявших *NYT*: Джордж Эрик Роу Геди (George Eric Rowe Gedye), Сайрус Лео Сульцбергер (C.L. Sulzberger), Ральф Паркер (Ralph Parker), Уильям Лоуренс (William H. Lawrence), Брукс Аткинсон (Brooks Atkinson).

изучены в работах Тэйлора, Крисберг, Файнберг, Моретти, Нечипорука и других историков, то освещение *NYT* участия Советского Союза во ВМВ практически не исследовано². Лишь недавно были опубликованы две содержательные работы Г. Лапиной, посвященные восприятию московского корреспондента *NYT* Брукса Аткинсона довоенной и послевоенной атмосферы Москвы, а также его оценке первых разногласий в советско-американских отношениях в 1945-1946 годах³. В данной статье будет исследована история ухода и возвращения *NYT* в Советский Союз в первые годы ВМВ на фоне первоначального ухудшения советско-американских отношений и стремительного оформления союзнических отношений после 22 июня 1941 г. Московское бюро *NYT* в межвоенный период хорошо изучено в упомянутой монографии Тэйлора. В ней показано, что первый собственный корреспондент *NYT* Уолтер Дюранти сумел стать искусным апологетом Сталина и его внутренней политики в годы многолетнего пребывания в Москве. В 1934-1940 гг., когда московскими корреспондентами были соответственно Харольд Денни и Джордж Эрик Роу Геди, Дюранти продолжал неофициально влиять на работу бюро вплоть до его закрытия летом 1940 г. Он выступал против его ликвидации из-за введения строгих цензурных ограничений 29 декабря 1939 г., предвещая, что в скором времени события могут развернуться для зарубежных журналистов в совершенно другом направлении. Тогда наличие своего корреспондента в Москве вновь будет совершенно необходимо для полноценного освещения советской внешней политики⁴. В других работах, посвященных международной журналистике в годы советско-финской и странной войн показывается, что цензурные правила 1939 г. привели к исходу из Москвы всех ведущих американских газет. Редакции не видели большого смысла в простой передаче сообщений на английском языке от “Телеграфного Агентства Советского Союза” (далее - ТАСС). Помимо *NYT*, из Советского Союза в 1939-1940 гг. были отозваны корреспонденты американских газет “*Christian Science Monitor*”, “*The Herald Tribune*”, а “*Chicago Daily News*” отказалась от

² См.: Sally J. Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times's Man in Moscow* (Oxford University Press, 1990); Dina Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents: Soviet and American Reporters on the Ideological Frontlines* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020); Martin Kriesberg, “Soviet News in The “New York Times,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1946): 540-564; Anthony Moretti, “New York Times Coverage of the Soviet Union’s Entrance into the Olympic Games,” *Sport History Review* 38, no. 1 (2007): 55-72; Jothik Krishnaiah, Nancy Signorielli, and Douglas M. McLeod. “The Evil Empire Revisited: New York Times Coverage of the Soviet Intervention in and Withdrawal from Afghanistan,” *Journalism Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1993): 647-655; Дмитрий Нечипорук, *Взгляд со стороны: американские журналисты о социально-экономическом развитии России и СССР в XX веке* (ТюмГУ-Press, 2023).

³ Галина Лапина, “Американские паломники в театральной мекке: московские театральные фестивали “Интуриста” 1933-1937,” *Rossica. Литературные связи и контакты* 2 (2022): 98-132; Она же, “Заславский vs Аткинсон: из истории холодной войны,” *Slavica Revalensia* 10 (2023): 472-498.

⁴ Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist*, 284.

собственного корреспондента еще в середине 1930-х годов⁵.

New York Times и закрытие московского бюро (декабрь 1939 – июль 1940)

Почти месяц спустя после начала советско-финской войны 28 декабря 1939 г. московский корреспондент *НУТ* Джордж Эрик Роу Геди (Gedye), узнав о новых цензурных предписаниях при отправке статей из Москвы в редакцию, пытался понять, насколько серьезно он ограничен в возможностях передавать фактический материал. В итоге Геди провел непредвиденное и спонтанное интервью с сотрудником Отдела печати Народного комиссариата иностранных дел (НКВД), который объяснил ему новые правила отправки корреспонденции: 1) цензура не является военной, поскольку СССР ни с кем не находится в состоянии войны; 2) цензура распространяется на все телеграммы, отправляемые корреспондентами в свои издания, независимо от того, предназначены ли они для публикации или нет; 3) на телефонные звонки цензура не распространяется; 4) сотрудники почты не примут текст статьи без пометки о проверки Отделом печати НКВД; 5) цензура вводится по причине “общих международных условий”, а также из-за отсутствия “удовлетворительных результатов” после отмены проверок содержания телеграмм иностранных корреспондентов в мае 1939 г. 6) отныне цензоры не будут пропускать статьи, угрожающие безопасности Советского Союза и все материалы, которые наносят ущерб престижу Советского Союза; 7) критика страны не запрещается, но должна быть “объективной”; 8) наконец, Геди хотел знать заранее, будут ли разрешены статьи, взвешено критикующие военные операции, на что ему ответили, что заранее дать четкий ответ на такой вопрос невозможно⁶.

На практике это означало, что иностранные корреспонденты лишаются возможности изменять или переписывать по-своему официальные сводки ТАСС и главных коммунистических газет, выходивших в Москве. Геди в конце статьи выражал надежду, что применение правил цензуры будет в итоге гибким и снисходительным, но в январе 1940 г. он убедился, что правила на этот раз не вводились для того, чтобы их можно было обходить. Например, его статья о перебоях с поставками хлеба в Москве была сухим пересказом строгой критики Исполкомом Мосгорсовета автобазы треста Хлебопечения и цитированием журнала “*Советская торговля*”, в котором упрекали администрацию предприятия за провал в распределении продовольствия. Статья Геди ничем не отличалась от заметки в московских “*Известиях*”, за исключением того факта, что цензор позволил журналисту назвать управляющего трестом “козлом отпущения”⁷.

Главной причиной, которая привела к закрытию московского бюро

⁵ Robert William Desmond, *Crisis and Conflict: World News Reporting between Two Wars, 1920-1940* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1982), 442.

⁶ G.E.R. Gedye, “Soviet Denies War Led to Censorship,” *New York Times* (31 December 1939): 2.

⁷ G.E.R. Gedye, “Moscow Bread Deliveries Have Breakdown,” *New York Times* (13 January 1940): 3; *Известия*. No 10 (1940): 4.

летом 1940 г. было отсутствие возможности передавать эксклюзивную информацию. Сводки и статьи московского корреспондента не представляли ничего уникального и важного по сравнению с информационными сообщениями агентства “*Associated Press*”. Геди, как и любой другой иностранный корреспондент, не мог получить эксклюзивную информацию о ходе советско-финской войны; советская пресса освещала конфликт очень скупом. Поездки по стране – даже официально согласованные – окончательно прекратились, так что о посещении мест военных действий не могло быть и речи. В мае 1941 г. Советский Союз запретил поездки в пограничные территории даже дипломатам⁸. Как следствие, за первые семь месяцев 1940 г. подписанные статьи Геди нечасто попадали на страницы *NYT*. Всего 28 опубликованных статей московского корреспондента за январь – июль 1940 г. свидетельствовало о его неспособности наладить работу в условиях строгой советской цензуры. Кроме того, *NYT* как периодическое издание находилось в невыгодном отношении по сравнению с “*Associated Press*”, у которой было соглашение с ТАСС о первоочередной отправке телеграфом новостей в США. Из-за неудобной разницы во времени между Москвой и Нью-Йорком, Геди приходилось ждать утра, чтобы отправить отредактированную новость, что всегда означало потерю в оперативности по сравнению с информационным бюро, которое выигрывало во времени, просто ретранслируя советские новости своим подписчикам. Оценив все *pro et contra*, менеджмент *NYT* решил, что в таких условиях затраты на бюро в Москве перестали себя оправдывать⁹. Объясняя решение издания на праздновании 43-й годовщины института Карнеги в Питтсбурге, издатель *NYT* Артур Хейс Сульцбергер рассказал собравшейся аудитории, что миссия газеты в контексте мировой войны состоит в “защите единства и мощи американской нации от дезинтеграции в результате проникновения иностранных идей, насаждаемых новым и смертоносным оружием пропаганды”. Основная задача газеты, по мнению Сульцбергера, давать читателю факты международной жизни, оказалась под угрозой, поскольку в трех значимых столицах Берлине, Токио и Москве была организована эффективная цензура исходящих сообщений, а сами журналисты находятся в опасных условиях, подвергаясь физическому и моральному давлению. Касаясь истории с закрытием московского бюро, Сульцбергер объяснил аудитории, что Геди вынужден был покинуть Советский Союз, получив назначение в Стамбул, чтобы журналист наконец написал и отправил в редакцию статьи, которые он не мог передать, находясь в Москве¹⁰. Развернутая статья Геди о внутреннем положении Советского Союза вышла в *NYT* только 17 сентября, хотя было указано, что она была

⁸ Dmitrii Nechiporuk, “Urban Space Securitization: Foreign Visits to Soviet Omsk in the 1920s–1960s,” *Historia Provinciae – the Journal of Regional History* 8, no. 2 (2024): 417, <https://doi.org/10.23859/2587-8344-2024-8-2-1>

⁹ Steven Casey, “Learning and Adapting: The American Media and the ‘Phony War,’ September 1939–April 1940,” In *Reporting World War II*, edited by G. Kurt Piehler and Ingo Trauschweizer (Fordham University Press, 2023): 27–28.

¹⁰ Arthur Hayes Sulzberger, “Depicts Our Press as Line of Defense,” *New York Times* (24 October 1940): 6.

написана в болгарской Варне еще 1 августа 1940 г. В ней Геди объяснял драматический разворот в сторону торгового сотрудничества с нацистской Германией экономическим кризисом в Советском Союзе¹¹.

В подвешенном состоянии: положение англо-американских корреспондентов в Москве накануне нападения Германии на Советский Союз

Как бы пафосно ни звучало выступление Сульцбергера на юбилее Института Карнеги о миссии *НУТ* и положении зарубежных корреспондентов издания в Москве, он был прав в отношении тех американских журналистов, кто продолжал находиться в Москве. После того, как ведущие газеты закрыли свои бюро, оставшиеся американские корреспонденты в СССР, в полной мере ощутили свою уязвимость в условиях запрета на свободную передачу информации. Помимо отмены для иностранцев поездок по стране, так необходимых для расширения круга новостей о жизни советских людей и написания актуальных репортажей (*featured story*), в 1940 г. журналисты столкнулись с трудностями получения информации неофициально, что было возможно в 1930-1939 гг., когда главой НКВД был М. М. Литвинов¹².

Введение цензуры для иностранных корреспондентов, происходило на фоне неуклонного ухудшения отношений между СССР и США с декабря 1939 по январь 1941 гг., т.е. сразу после начала советско-финской войны. Прежде всего, в Советском союзе были недовольны запретом на поставку продукции стратегического характера, необходимого для производства высококачественного авиационного бензина¹³. Как показывают, сохранившиеся в архиве внешней политики РФ записи бесед советских дипломатов с американским послом в СССР Лоуренсом Штейнгардтом, ограничения в правах американских корреспондентов и их советских жен регулярно обсуждались на встречах с заместителем Наркомата иностранных дел С. А. Лозовским и заведующим Отдела печати НКВД Н. Г. Пальгуновым. Главными вопросами были: 1) выход из советского гражданства трех жен американских корреспондентов в связи с их желанием отправиться в США; 2) внезапный арест в 1941 г. советских жен американских корреспондентов Херманна Габихта (*Hermann R. Habicht*) и Роберта Магидоффа; 3) просьба предоставить корреспондентам Генери Шапиро и Генри Кэссиди возможность разговаривать с заграницей по телефону напрямую из дому; 4) вопросы задержки телеграмм информационных агентств с важными новостями, которые было необходимо, как можно скорее рассылать по

¹¹ G.E.R. Gedy, "Economic Crisis Was a Major Cause in Bringing about Accord With Hitler," *New York Times* (17 September 1940): 6.

¹² Alfred Erich Senn, *Foreign Correspondent: Henry Shapiro in Moscow, 1933-1973* (Kaunas, Lithuania: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2006), 52.

¹³ The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt), 24 December 1939, Foreign Relations of the United States, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, 806. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1933-39/d617>

газетам¹⁴.

На строгую цензуру жаловались сами корреспонденты, когда удавалось встретиться с Пальгуновым. Одну из встреч с Генри Шапиро 15 февраля 1941 г. сам Пальгунов описал следующим образом:

*“На протяжении добрых 3/4 часа Шапиро жаловался на исключительно трудные условия работы в Москве, на отсутствие достаточного количества информации для иностранных корреспондентов, на невозможность для иностранных корреспондентов комментировать в желательном им духе события и акты советской внешней и внутренней политики, на “дискриминацию” большинства иностранных корреспондентов, поставленных в Москве в отношении цензуры в неизмеримо худшие условия по сравнению с германскими и итальянскими корреспондентами и т.д. Шапиро жаловался также на продолжающиеся случаи задержки телеграмм в цензуре, указывая, в частности, на то, что телеграмма о переменах в личном составе генерального штаба РККА была задержана цензурой на 6 или 7 часов, что была задержана на продолжительное время телеграмма о выступлении тов. Куусинена в Петрозаводске и т.д.”*¹⁵.

Ни одна из этих просьб американцев так и не была удовлетворена сотрудниками НКВД в первые пять месяцев 1941 г. Более того, ситуация еще более ухудшилась, когда 4 июня 1941 г. американскому гражданину и корреспонденту лондонской “*News Chronicle*” Джеймсу Скотту дали три дня, чтобы покинуть Советский Союз без жены и детей. В этот раз Штейнгардт сумел смягчить ситуацию с выдворением, доказывая Лозовскому, что из-за войны в Европе Скотт не сможет за три дня уехать из России. В итоге Скотту дали восемь дней на выезд из России, разрешив покинуть страну вместе с семьей¹⁶.

На стороне фактов и союзнических обязательств: возвращение New York Times в Москву и освещение войны на Восточном фронте

15 апреля 1941 г. Штейнгардт недвусмысленно предупредил Лозовского о высокой вероятности военного нападения Германии на Советский Союз уже в мае. Американский посол ссылался на сведения, полученные как от американцев, проживавших на тот момент в Третьем Рейхе, так и от “многочисленных немцев-полуамериканцев, занимающих очень высокие и ответственные посты в Германии”. Реакция Лозовского была сдержанной и скептической, так как в советском руководстве считали, что Германии невыгодна война на востоке: “Я поблагодарил Штейнгардта за информацию и сказал, что не думаю, чтобы Германия напала на СССР, ибо это не есть линия наименьшего сопротивления. Во всяком случае СССР всегда готов и

¹⁴ АВП РФ. Ф. 06 (Секретариат В. М. Молотова) Оп. 3. АВТО. Д. 34. Папка 4. Л. 34, 51, 53.

¹⁵ АВП РФ. Ф. 06 (Секретариат В. М. Молотова) Оп. 3. АВТО. Д. 58. Папка 6. Л. 27.

¹⁶ Там же. Л. 119-120; АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 3. АВТО. Д. 36. Папка 4. Л. 38-39.

не даст себя захватить врасплох»¹⁷.

Американские журналисты, судя по беседам с Пальгуновым, также знали об этих слухах с весны 1941 г. Шапиро, узнавший о военных приготовлениях Германии от Штейнгардта, также предупреждал Пальгунова о вероятном вторжении 18 апреля 1941 г. Магидофф во время частной встречи с Пальгуновым 14 июня рассказал о готовящейся эвакуации членов семей сотрудников британского посольства в связи с вероятным вторжением Германии. 20 июня Магидофф в беседе с Пальгуновым пытался уговорить его разрешить отправку телеграммы о разговорах «о вторжении германских войск в пределы СССР» с ссылкой на опровержение от имени «официальных кругов» СССР. При этом Магидофф уверял Пальгунова, что понимает всю «нелепость» этих слухов. В итоге корреспондент отправил телеграмму с опровержением от своего имени¹⁸. В свою очередь, специальный корреспондент *NYT* в Анкаре Сайрус Сульцбергер сообщал в тот же день, что его дипломатические источники из двух разных стран, граничащих с Советским Союзом, владеют информацией о том, что немецкое вторжение на востоке начнется в течение ближайших 48 часов. Сульцбергер также не имел возможности официально подтвердить или опровергнуть этот слух¹⁹. На следующий день Сульцбергер сообщал о слухах, распространяемых в Праге и Бухаресте, что немцы якобы склоняют руководство Советского Союза сдать в аренду Украину на 99 лет²⁰. В целом же, из разных статей *NYT*, вышедших 21 июня, можно было понять, что нападение Германии на Советский Союз в ближайшее время – решенный вопрос. Мобилизация в Финляндии, прекращение транспортного сообщения между Стокгольмом и Хельсинки, остановка морского сообщения между Румынией и Турцией – всё это, по мнению газеты, свидетельствовало об актуальной угрозе немецко-советской войны²¹.

22 июня 1941 г. *NYT* вышла с заголовком о нападении Германии на Советский Союз. Газета опубликовала на первой странице в сжатой форме «Декларацию Гитлера в связи с нападением Германии на Советский Союз» и очень коротко в разделе «Международное положение» сообщило о дипломатических подробностях решения о нападении на СССР. Гораздо больше внимания газета уделила военным успехам британских войск, которые 21 июня 1941 г. заняли сирийский Дамаск. Это было прямым следствием того факта, что в Анкаре у издания было два специальных корреспондента, а в Москве – никого.

Вступление Советского Союза в войну против нацистской Германии радикально изменило характер взаимоотношений между американскими корреспондентами в Москве и Отделом печати. После 22 июня 1941 г. обе

¹⁷ АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 3. Д. 35. Папка 4. Л. 176

¹⁸ АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 3. АВТО. Д. 58. Папка 6. Л. 127, 128, 131, 133.

¹⁹ C.L. Sulzberger, "Demobilizing of Red Army Said to Be German Demand," *New York Times* (20 June 1941): 1.

²⁰ C.L. Sulzberger, "Ukraine "Leasing" Seen," *New York Times* (21 June 1941): 4.

²¹ *New York Times* (21 June 1941): 1.

стороны нуждались в друг друге. При этом они не изменили своих взглядов, понимая, что новое взаимодействие формируется на основе необходимости общей борьбы с врагом, но не на ценностном фундаменте общих идеалов. Начинаясь новый этап во взаимоотношениях иностранных журналистов и НКВД, который изменил условия цензуры для представителей прессы. Она не отменялась, но в связи с формированием союзнических отношений между Великобританией, США, с одной стороны, и СССР – с другой, приняла другой характер, чем это было в период с декабря 1939 по июнь 1941 г. И необходимость цензурных изменений была осознана с обеих сторон уже в первые дни.

В частности, в день начала войны в кабинете у Пальгунова собрались находившиеся в Москве американские, английские и французские журналисты, которые выразили свою поддержку Советскому Союзу, заявив, что “они чувствуют себя сейчас на положении представителей прессы стран, которые считают себя союзником Советского Союза”. Шапиро, на правах главы делегации иностранных корреспондентов, выступил с пространным заявлением, в котором просил пересмотреть цензурные условия работы для зарубежных журналистов, обосновывая свою просьбу необходимостью эффективно “противодействовать германской пропаганде”. Американский корреспондент от лица собравшихся просил вернуть работу цензоров в ночное время, не задерживать поступление важной информации в агентства, не ограничивать передвижение журналистов по Москве, выдав им необходимые удостоверения. Шапиро обращал внимание, что необходимо сделать выводы из негативного для иностранных журналистов опыта освещения советско-финской войны: “В прошлом происходило так, что мы получали сводки (во время войны с финнами) очень поздно. Советские сводки теряли по меньшей мере половину своей эффективности - общественное мнение на Западе рассматривало советские сводки не столько в качестве самостоятельного документа, сколько в качестве более или менее запоздавшего опровержения к финляндским реляциям”²².

Ответ Пальгунова был положительным. Он пообещал иностранным журналистам “всяческое содействие в наилучшем выполнении ими их профессионального долга”²³. Также НКВД с первых же дней пошел на встречу американским просьбам о приезде новых зарубежных корреспондентов и увеличении штатов, уже аккредитованных изданий. Это делало возможным возвращение в Москву специальных корреспондентов видных американских газет, освещавших международную политику – *NYT* и “*Chicago Daily News*”. 2 июля 1941 г. Штейнгардт на встрече с Лозовским обсуждал, с одной стороны, предоставление возможности покинуть СССР

²² АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 3. АВТО. Д. 58. Папка 6. Л. 134.

²³ Пальгунов был жестким администратором, который в обычной ситуации неохотно шел навстречу иностранным журналистам. См.: Владимир Невежин, “Советский дипломат и иностранные корреспонденты в СССР в условиях войны: по страницам служебного дневника Н.Г. Пальгунова (1941–1942 гг.),” *История: факты и символы* 4 (37) (2023): 130-143.

арестованным женам Габихта и Магидоффа, разрешив им предварительно выйти из советского гражданства. С другой стороны, Штейнгардт просил без промедления оформить въездные визы для специальных корреспондентов вышеупомянутых газет – Джона Уитакера и Сайруса Сульцбергера, а также “смягчить строгость, с которой до сих пор обращались с сообщениями американских корреспондентов”²⁴.

Данные просьбы были выполнены, что было совершенно невозможно в довоенное время. В конце июля 1941 г. зарубежный корреспондент *NYT* Сульцбергер переехал из Анкары в Москву, а “*Chicago Daily News*” в августе 1941 г. направила в Москву Арчибалда Стила (Steele), известного к тому времени по репортажам и сводкам из Китая. Приезд в Москву Сайруса Сульцбергера, племянника владельца *NYT*, который освещал международное положение в Европе и Ближнем Востоке, опираясь на конфиденциальные дипломатические источники, означало, что в газете возлагают большие надежды на возобновление работы московского бюро. Хотя редакция газеты оценила войну Германии и Советского Союза как битву двух тоталитарных режимов, она решительно выступила за военную поддержку противников Гитлера, открыто выступив за удвоение помощи Великобритании и завуалировано - не называя прямо страну - за поддержку СССР²⁵. Показательно, что Сульцбергер придерживался похожего взгляда, когда писал статьи из Анкары, посвященные первым неделям продвижения Германии по территории СССР. Он допускал вероятность поражения Москвы в войне, но полагал, что Гитлер не сможет эффективно воспользоваться экономическими ресурсами захваченных территорий по причине дезорганизации и неослабеваемого сопротивления со стороны русских²⁶.

Тем не менее, по мере нарастания конфликта и первых успешных контратак вермахта Советской армией, отношение к Советскому Союзу на страницах *NYT* изменилось. Сдержанность постепенно сменилась поддержкой. Особенно показателен тот факт, что по соседству с аналитическими статьями, в которых разбирали тяжелое положение Советского Союза публиковались антинацистские карикатуры. В них изображалась тщетность усилий Гитлера по захвату СССР. На одной из них - “Там, где мировые завоеватели потерпели крах” был изображен Гитлер в комнате, на которого со стороны улицы через окно смотрели тепло одетые Вильгельм II с подписью на плаще “1918” и Наполеон на мундире, у которого было написано “Святая Елена”. Взгляд Гитлера был устремлен на

²⁴ The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State Moscow, 4 July 1941, Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, General, The Soviet Union, Volume I, 891. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1941v01/d845>

²⁵ Editorial, “Hitler Invades Russia,” *New York Times* (23 June 1941): 16.

²⁶ C.L. Sulzberger, “Nazis in a Race against Time to Win the War,” *New York Times* (29 June 1941): E3; C.L. Sulzberger, “Nazi Plans to Use Russia Beset by Complexities,” *New York Times* (6 July 1941): E3.

расположение России на глобусе²⁷.

Начало освещения Сульцбергером военных действий на Восточном фронте уже непосредственно из Москвы совпало с успешными, хотя и локальными попытками Советской армии сдержать наступление нацистов на Москву²⁸. Поэтому первые две недели, до середины августа 1941 г., Сульцбергер в своих статьях показал упорное сопротивление со стороны Советской армии и решительность советского руководства в борьбе с нацистами, прежде чем пришлось написать о захвате вермахтом Смоленска. В дальнейшем корреспондент время от времени сообщал об отходе советских войск или потере некоторых населенных пунктов, но о крупных поражениях сентября 1941 г. Сульцбергер не писал. Так, новости о захвате германскими войсками советского Киева были сообщены берлинским корреспондентом газеты. Московский корреспондент *NYT* в это время находился в прифронтовом городе Вязьма вместе с другими англо-американскими репортерами, который был взят немецкими войсками несколько позже - 7 октября²⁹.

В первой половине октября 1941 г. Сульцбергер стал свидетелем успешного наступления вермахта в сторону Москвы. В своих статьях он отмечал "серьезность ситуации", т.е. продолжение поступательного движения нацистских войск к Москве, даже несмотря на замедление темпов. Статья Сульцбергера, опубликованная в газете 14 октября была последней перед эвакуацией иностранцев из Москвы вглубь России, на восток. Об отъезде дипломатического персонала и иностранных корреспондентов в *NYT* узнали от Государственного департамента, который, как и советские чиновники, не сообщал имя города, в который переезжали иностранцы и ведомства³⁰. Только после прибытия американцев в город на Волге издание сообщило, что дипломатические сотрудники и корреспонденты обосновались в Куйбышеве³¹. Туда же переехало цензурное ведомство НКВД, чтобы отправлять в американские издания одобренные материалы, написанные журналистами.

Пребывание журналистов в Куйбышеве продлилось чуть менее двух месяцев – до 12 декабря 1941 г. Переезд в провинциальный город не особенно сказалось на продуктивности Сульцбергера, хотя часть статей выходило с пометкой "Задержано" (*Delayed*). Нахождение в Куйбышеве было для американцев испытанием. Ни дипломаты, ни журналисты не были особенно довольны тем, что им приходилось вместе, в одном отеле. Корреспонденты чувствовали себя оторванными от столицы: они были вдалеке от советского

²⁷ A British Artist Points a Historical Lesson for Der Fuehrer, *New York Times* (6 July 1941): E3.

²⁸ C.L. Sulzberger, "New Soviet Blows," *New York Times* (30 July 1941): 1.

²⁹ Henry Cassidy, *Moscow Datelines, 1941-1943*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 109-113.

³⁰ "Secret Capital Set Up by Soviet (Steinhardt and Other Envoys Move to Undisclosed Center)," *New York Times*, (18 October 1941): 1.

³¹ О Куйбышеве как "запасной" столице см.: Сергей Буранок, Ярослав Левин, Анна Соколова, "Запасная столица СССР: оценки американской прессы и спецслужб," *Самарский научный вестник* 6, no. 2(19) (2017): 168-173.

руководства, которое осталось в Москве; они были изолированы от информационных инсайдов и неофициальных слухов, которые помогли бы лучше разобраться в происходящем; известие об атаке японских войск на Пёрл-Харбор, заставило их особенно остро почувствовать, что они находятся вдалеке от главных событий ВМВ³². Наконец, было немало бытовых неудобств, в частности, сильный мороз и отключение света.

Сульцбергер за время пребывания в Куйбышеве написал свыше тридцати статей о положении на Восточном фронте, героизме и упорном сопротивлении Советской Армии, укреплении союзнических отношений между СССР, Великобританией и США. Сульцбергер особенно отмечал важность военной помощи со стороны Лондона, который оперативно сумел поставить танки для советских войск и оказал дипломатическую поддержку Советскому Союзу в виде формального объявления войны Финляндии, Венгрии и Румынии 5 декабря 1941 года³³. Корреспондент *NYT* не мог не отметить в своих статьях еще одного важного союзника, значение “действий” которого будет сильно преуменьшено в советской историографии Великой Отечественной войны – жесточайшие морозы в ноябре-декабре, которые помешали вермахту в решающие недели продвижения к столице СССР³⁴.

В Куйбышеве к Сульцбергеру в ноябре 1941 г. присоединился второй корреспондент *NYT* британец Ральф Паркер, прибывший на поезде из Владивостока. Он представлял также лондонскую газету “*The Times*”. После отъезда Сульцбергера в декабре 1941 г. Паркер на долгое время оставался единственным корреспондентом *NYT*. В мае-июле 1943 г. в Москву во второй раз приезжал Сульцбергер. Во время своего недолгого пребывания он написал несколько статей о возросшей мощи Советской армии, которая, по его мнению, уже была способна довести дело до безоговорочной победы над Германией в обозримом будущем³⁵. С октября 1943 по февраль 1945 г., в период победоносного продвижения Советской Армии вместе с Паркером *NYT* в СССР представлял опытный политический обозреватель Уильям Лоуренс. Наконец, в самом конце Великой Отечественной войны, уже в третий раз, в Москву приехал Сульцбергер, в том числе для того, чтобы решить вопрос о назначении в Москву первого послевоенного корреспондента. Находясь в столице в мае 1945 г., он стал свидетелем окончания войны с Германией и первого празднования дня Победы в Москве: “*At the end of the greatest day of celebration in the history of modern Russia, the skies above Moscow were split apart tonight as 1,000 Red Army guns fired thirty rounds each to signalize the end*

³² Cassidy, *Moscow Datelines*, 158.

³³ C.L. Sulzberger, “First British Tanks Praised,” *New York Times* (26 November 1941): 6; “Soviet Sees Gains In New Diplomacy,” *New York Times* (9 December 1941): 24.

³⁴ Сульцбергер отмечал, что холодная погода играет положительную роль в обороне Москвы, срывая план Гитлера захватить столицу в ближайшие недели. См. C.L. Sulzberger, “Winter and Russians Rob Hitler of Victory,” *New York Times* (16 November 1941): 4; “Nazis Find Winter Is Formidable Foe” *New York Times* (16 November 1941): 15.

³⁵ C.L. Sulzberger, “New Red Army, at Peak of Power, Evolved to Master Nazi Menace,” *New York Times* (4 June 1943): 4.

of the European war in "complete and total victory".³⁶

Восстановив зарубежное бюро в Москве, корреспонденты *NYT* в годы ВМВ оказались в крайне непростой, двоякой ситуации. С одной стороны, как уже отмечалось, советские власти пошли навстречу просьбам Штейнгардта. Они перестроили работу военную цензуру ради регулярных сообщений иностранных корреспондентов из союзных стран, организовывали (хотя и нечастые) поездки в прифронтовые районы и визиты в советские учреждения, а представители Отдела печати стали проводить пресс-конференции и давать официальные комментарии. Как следствие, у корреспондентов появилась возможность публиковать свои статьи в различных жанрах, чем наиболее полно сумел воспользоваться Ральф Паркер. Помимо обязательных военных сводок с фронтов и театров военных действий, корреспонденты *NYT* опубликовали несколько больших специальных репортажей, посвященных тыловой жизни Москвы и Куйбышева, борьбе партизан, самоотверженности и героизму советских людей; развернутую аналитику о положении дел на фронте; репортажи, передающие мобилизационную атмосферу городов и учреждений воюющей страны³⁷.

С другой стороны, разногласия и конфликты по поводу видения работы военного журналиста в Советском Союзе между американскими корреспондентами и Отделом печати сохранились. Советская цензура по-прежнему работала таким образом, чтобы статьи иностранных журналистов показывали военные действия в выгодном для Советского Союза свете. Например, статьи *NYT* об отходе войск и утрате территорий при наступлении вермахта летом 1942 г. работали в пользу Москвы, так как подобные известия помещались в контексте обсуждения о наращивании материальной и военной помощи СССР. Постоянное недовольство вызывало и ограниченное количество поездок в освобожденные районы и прифронтовые зоны боевых действий. В ноябре 1943 года Паркер, выражая недовольство тем, что Отдел печати не включил его в поездку зарубежных корреспондентов в расположение польской армии, направил личную просьбу главе НКВД В.М. Молотову - разрешить ему поездку по Донецкому бассейну для изучения нанесённого немцами ущерба. Паркер, понимая, как надо обосновывать необходимость командировки, обращал внимание на пользу Советского Союза от такой поездки: "по моему мнению было бы важно обратить внимание британского и американского народа на то, какой тяжелый удар немцы нанесли этому району. Несколько месяцев тому назад Заведующий Отделом Печати сообщил мне, что Вы согласились с тем, что,

³⁶ C.L. Sulzberger, "Moscow Goes Wild Over Joyful News (Thousands Mill in Red Square as Holiday Is Declared; U.S. Shares in Tribute)," *New York Times* (10 May 1945): 6.

³⁷ Вот лишь некоторые примеры специальных репортажей и аналитических статей московских корреспондентов *NYT*: Ralph Parker, "The Man Who Stopped Hitler: Portrait of the Soviet Soldier," (8 March 1942): 151, 175; C.L. Sulzberger, "Red Army Officers Symbolize New Era," (6 June 1943): 13; W.H. Lawrence, "Russia's New Women," (5 November 1944): 145, 146, 163, 164; C.L. Sulzberger "Industry Booming In Eastern Russia," (26 March 1945): 7.

когда представится возможность, мне будет предоставлено исключительное право совершить поездку в какое-нибудь интересное место. Смею ли я попросить о том, чтобы мне и моему переводчику была разрешена поездка по Сталинской области?”. Примечательно, что Паркер направил свое прошение в Отдел печати в тот же день, когда в *НУТ* вышла его статья о материальном уроне и человеческих потерях на Донбассе в результате нацистской оккупации и военных сражений³⁸.

Англо-американские корреспонденты издания прекрасно понимали, что Отдел печати использует их в своих интересах, но поскольку Восточный фронт был одним из ключевых направлений во ВМВ, они готовы были мириться с неудобствами и ограничениями ради шанса получить эксклюзивную информацию или заветное интервью с одним из лидеров Политбюро. Главным призом для журналиста было, разумеется, личное интервью со Сталиным. В октябре и ноябре 1942 г. повезло корреспонденту “*Associated Press*” Генри Кэссиди, которому Сталин дважды дал письменные ответы на вопросы о втором фронте и военной компании союзников в северной Африке³⁹. В мае 1943 г. очень короткий письменный ответ от Сталина получил Паркер; Сталин счел нужным уверить корреспондента *НУТ*, что “безусловно желает” видеть сильную и независимую Польшу после окончания войны⁴⁰. Вскоре, после профессиональной удачи Паркера, Лео Сульцбергер приехал в СССР и во время своего летнего пребывания в Москве безуспешно просил уже о личном интервью Сталина. Как честолюбивый газетчик, он надеялся превзойти успех Паркера и Кэссиди. Его июньские статьи о войне на Восточном фронте и Красной армии были очень хвалебными и комплиментарными, но это не помогло заполучить желанное интервью с главой СССР⁴¹.

Упомянутое выше Паркером “исключительное право” было главным аргументом сотрудников *НУТ* при обосновании своих запросов на получение эксклюзивных поездок или интервью. Вернувшись в СССР, газета подавала себя как ведущее американское издание, освещающее международную политику. На неофициальной встрече издателя газеты Артура Сульцбергера и главы НКВД В. М. Молотова 5 июля 1943 г. американец позиционировал себя как владельца издания “формирующего общественное мнение в США”. Визит в СССР, по утверждению Сульцбергера, был согласован с президентом США Ф. Д. Рузвельтом, который принял решение направить его

³⁸ АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 5. Д. 119. Папка 13. Том 2. Л. 76; Ralph Parker, “Donbas Industries Ruined, Soviet Says,” *New York Times* (14 November 1943): 3.

³⁹ Stalin Says Aid From Allies So Far Is 'Little Effective' *New York Times* (5 October 1942): 1.

⁴⁰ Ralph Parker, “Stalin's Letter to Times Man Was on Plain White Notepaper,” *New Yorker Times* (7 May 1943): 4.

⁴¹ Сульцбергер 9 июня 1943 г. направил письмо на имя Сталина с просьбой об очном интервью. АВП РФ. Ф. 06. Оп. 5. Д. 119. Папка 13. Том 2. Л. 3. См. статью Сульцбергера о значительном улучшении снабжения фронта и армии по сравнению с Первой мировой войной: C.L. Sulzberger, “Russian Supplies Moving Smoothly,” *New York Times* (29 June 1943): 23.

в качестве представителя “Красного Креста” исключительно из внутренних соображений, “поскольку в США существует значительное число издателей, желающих посетить Советский Союз”⁴². Такая самопрезентация позволила Сульцбергеру провести откровенный обмен мнениями с одним из главных советских руководителей о послевоенном устройстве и взаимных ожиданиях союзников от заключительного этапа войны при том, что о визите издателя Молотов не был заранее предупрежден. Однако, статус печатного издания, близкого к президенту США в восприятии советских высокопоставленных функционеров и дипломатов означал, что газета “очень часто выражает официальную точку зрения Госдепартамента по ряду политических вопросов”. Неудивительно, что в Советском Союзе с неудовольствием относились к критическим редакционным статьям, публикациям на основе сведений неназванных источников и даже частным, непубличным разговорам издателя *NYT*. Согласно утверждению посла СССР в США А. А. Громыко, А. Сульцбергер после возвращения из Москвы в частных беседах утверждал, что военная помощь Советскому Союзу “должна быть прекращена в день, когда русские прекратят убивать немцев”⁴³. В практическом плане недовольство А. Сульцбергером в 1943-1944 гг. проявилось в том, что советское посольство всячески затягивало выдачу въездной визы его племяннику, который хотел в третий раз попасть в Москву. Согласно архивным документам, Лео Сульцбергер подал заявление на советскую визу в апреле 1944 года, но смог приехать в Москву лишь в марте 1945 года после неоднократных обращений редакции с просьбами ускорить рассмотрение заявления корреспондента⁴⁴.

Свидетели триумфа СССР: корреспонденты *New York Times* в 1944-1945 гг. и окончание Великой Отечественной войны⁴⁵

В 1944 году, на фоне успешного наступления советской армии, американские корреспонденты всё чаще выражали недовольство ограничениями, с которыми сталкивались в своей профессиональной деятельности. Прежде всего это касалось крайне ограниченного доступа к поездкам в тыл и на фронт, отмены заранее согласованных визитов, а также отсутствия официальных комментариев со стороны Сталина и Молотова по вопросам текущего и будущего военного, дипломатического

⁴² Советско-американские отношения во время Великой Отечественной войны, 1941-1945: Документы и материалы в 2 т. Том 1. 1941-1943. М.: Политиздат, 1984. С. 344.

⁴³ АВП РФ. Ф. 059. Оп. 10. Папка 3. Д. 27. Л. 100-102. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/293821>

⁴⁴ См. фонд 192 АВП РФ “Посольство в Вашингтоне”. Ф. 192. Оп. 11. Д. 34. Папка 78. Л. 68.

⁴⁵ Термин “Great Patriotic War” использовался в газете крайне редко. Мне удалось найти только три статьи. Все они имели прямое отношение к одноименной книге И. В. Сталина (Сталин И. “О Великой Отечественной войне” (1942) и его выступлению по радио 9 мая 1945 года. См.: “Stalin's Book in Third Edition,” *New York Times* (24 June 1943): 19; “Stalin Book Reprinted,” *New York Times* (10 December 1944): 34; “Premier Stalin's Speech,” *New York Times* (10 May 1945): 6.

и экономического сотрудничества между СССР и западными союзниками. В этом контексте письма московских корреспондентов *НУТ* Паркера и Лоуренса в Отдел печати, наряду с недовольством просоветского журналиста *New York Herald Tribune* Мориса Хиндуса условиями своей работы, служат характерными примерами таких настроений.

Так, в письме Молотову от 6 июня 1944 года Паркер в сдержанной, но настойчивой манере поднимает проблему несогласованности действий советских учреждений в работе с иностранной прессой. Он описывает неоднократные попытки договориться с Отделом печати о посещении одного из московских заводов в ночь, когда стала известна точная дата высадки союзников во Франции, то есть открытия второго фронта в Европе — события исключительной важности для американской прессы. Несмотря на устные обещания сотрудников, визит так и не был организован, а Паркер до последнего момента не получал чёткой информации о деталях поездки. В письме подчёркивалось, что подобная дезорганизация и отсутствие координации мешают иностранным корреспондентам выполнять свои профессиональные обязанности в критически важные исторические моменты⁴⁶. В результате вместо полноценного репортажа о реакции населения на открытие второго фронта, Паркер был вынужден ограничиться небольшой заметкой, в которой лапидарно передал атмосферу ликования, царившую в Москве, в связи с этим долгожданным событием: *"When news of the Allied landing in France was flashed by the Moscow radio at 1:45 o'clock this afternoon scenes of tremendous excitement occurred in the streets near the public loudspeakers"*⁴⁷.

Лоуренс, в свою очередь, столкнулся с нежеланием высокопоставленных советских чиновников комментировать вопросы, представлявшие значительный интерес для западной аудитории — такие, как соблюдение союзнических обязательств (в частности, отказ от сепаратных переговоров с Германией) и формулирование принципов послевоенной внешней политики. Поводом для его обращения к И. В. Сталину 20 января 1944 г. послужила публикация в *"Правде"* от 17 января под заголовком "Слухи из Каира". В статье, со ссылкой на греческие и югославские источники, утверждалось, что в Каире состоялась встреча представителей Великобритании с министром иностранных дел нацистской Германии Иоахимом фон Риббентропом⁴⁸. Несмотря на последовавшее 19 января официальное опровержение британского МИДа, также размещённое на страницах *"Правды"*, данная публикация вызвала обеспокоенность на Западе, поставив под сомнение прочность антигитлеровской коалиции. В этой связи Лоуренс обратился к советскому руководству с просьбой публично подтвердить приверженность совместным военным планам⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ АВП РФ. Ф. 0129. Оп. 28. Д. 40. Папка 159. Л. 41-42.

⁴⁷ Ralph Parker, "Moscow Excited by News," *New York Times* (7 June 1944): 9.

⁴⁸ "Слухи из Каира," *Правда*. No 15 (1944): 4; "Заявление английского Министерства иностранных дел," *Правда*. No 16 (1944): 4.

⁴⁹ АВП РФ. Ф. 0129. Оп. 28. Д. 40. Папка 159. Л. 5-6.

В одном из последующих обращений, ссылаясь на обнародованную декларацию государственного секретаря США Корделла Халла, изложившего 17 принципов внешней политики, Лоуренс в марте 1944 г. обратился к В. М. Молотову с просьбой представить официальную позицию Советского Союза в аналогичной тезисной форме⁵⁰. Данное обращение Лоуренса преследовало цель подготовить материал для публикации, способной способствовать укреплению взаимного доверия между союзниками, а также смягчению идеологических и мировоззренческих разногласий накануне завершения ВМВ⁵¹. Однако ни на это, ни на предыдущее обращение Лоуренса ответа так и не получил.

Ещё более выраженное недовольство действующей системой ограничений проявилось в письмах и личных беседах Мориса Хиндуса, корреспондента газеты *New York Herald Tribune*. Показательно, что, выражая недовольство собственным положением, он одновременно подчёркивал, что с аналогичными трудностями сталкиваются и его коллеги. В письме от 19 марта 1944 г., адресованном наркому иностранных дел В. М. Молотову, Хиндус сообщал о своей фактической изоляции и невозможности выезжать за пределы Москвы. Он отмечал, что, в отличие от предыдущего года, когда имел возможность активно путешествовать, встречаться с людьми и передавать героический настрой советского народа, в 1944 г. он был вынужден проводить большую часть времени в московском отеле “Метрополь”. Журналист писал: “В продолжение двадцати лет, в течение которых я писал о Советском Союзе, я никогда не чувствовал себя столь изолированно от народа и страны, как это я чувствую сейчас”⁵².

Эти настроения ещё более чётко проявились в его беседе от 21 сентября 1944 г., где Хиндус в эмоциональной форме описывал общее недовольство иностранных корреспондентов своим положением в СССР: “Инкоры в Москве находятся в безвыходном положении. Почти все они бывали на многих фронтах, некоторые были ранены, имеют награды. В Москву они приехали, чтобы описывать войну — и какую войну! — но не видят этой войны, так как почти всё время сидят в “Метрополе”. Он подчёркивал, что в то время, как советские журналисты, по его словам, “входили во французские города вместе с наступающими войсками союзников”, их иностранные коллеги практически были лишены возможности выезжать как на фронт, так и в тыловые районы. В той же беседе Хиндус открыто критиковал работу Отдела печати, обвиняя его в некомпетентности: “Особенно тяжело положение инкоров, не знающих русского языка. Они не получают никакой информации, кроме официальных источников. Я и некоторые другие — в более выгодном положении. Я знаю язык, имею связи, знакомства и могу достать материал. И потом, я знаю СССР по многолетней работе здесь. Я не напишу враждебных книг, как бы ни относился к нам Отдел печати НКВД. А инкоры, работающие здесь не так долго, не знающие русского языка, будут

⁵⁰ “Secretary Hull on Foreign Policy,” *Current History* 34, no. 6 (1944): 502–510.

⁵¹ АВП РФ. Ф. 0129. Оп. 28. Д. 40. Папка 159. Л. 16.

⁵² Там же. Л. 15.

писать враждебно не потому, что они враждебно относятся к советской власти, к СССР. Они не знают советской власти, не знают СССР и будут писать книги, очень часто основываясь на своём личном опыте, вкладывая в эти книги озлобление, которое создаёт политика Отдела печати НКВД⁵³.

Хиндус подчёркивал, что ограничения на передвижение мешают ему работать над новой книгой и журналистскими материалами: “С сожалением должен я сказать, что нахожу очень трудным собирать материал для новой книги, а также и для таких статей, которые я хотел бы написать”. В связи с этим он обращался к Молотову с просьбой содействовать организации поездок по различным регионам страны — на Кубань, в Свердловск, Магнитогорск, Челябинск, Кузнецк и другие ключевые промышленные центры. Его стремление охватить как сельскохозяйственные, так и индустриальные районы подчёркивало намерение представить всестороннюю картину жизни Советского Союза. Сравнивая текущее положение с прошлогодним опытом, он отмечал: “В прошлом году я побывал во многих местах страны. Повсюду, куда я ездил, я встречался с людьми. Я мог чувствовать героическое настроение и боевой дух советского народа”. При этом он подчёркивал, что обращается не просто как зарубежный репортёр, а как давний знаток страны, настроенный благожелательно: “Если бы я был всего лишь газетчик, я не считал бы себя оправданным в обращении с такой просьбой сейчас, когда вы все столь заняты делом борьбы и выигрыша войны. Но дело в том, что я не газетчик. “Нью-Йорк Геральд Трибьюн” пригласила меня для того, чтобы я писал для нее пояснительные статьи, так как она считает, что мои знания Советского Союза позволят мне представить вашу страну в ее созидательном труде весьма влиятельной аудитории. Если бы я поехал на Кубань сейчас, а на Урал и в Сибирь ранним летом, то я бы получил богатейший материал для книги, которую я хочу написать и которая по духу и подходу к ней не будет во многом отличаться от “Матери России” [“Mother Russia”]”⁵⁴.

Тем не менее, Отдел печати продолжал организовывать поездки для иностранных корреспондентов как в тыловые регионы, так и на освобождённые от Вермахта территории в 1944 г. Однако даже в тех случаях, когда американским журналистам удавалось побывать в зонах боевых действий или на освобождённых землях, их возможности освещать события оставались жёстко ограниченными. Так, в репортажах, подготовленных по итогам поездок в Катынь, на север Украины (освобождённый в ходе Корсунь-Шевченковской операции), а также в детский дом для польских детей в подмосковном Загорске, корреспонденты NYT передавали исключительно официальную информацию, не имея доступа к альтернативным источникам

⁵³ Там же. Л. 49.

⁵⁴ Там же. Л. 14-15, 49. В итоге Хиндус посетил в 1944 г. Кубань, а в 1945 г. в Нью-Йорке издал книгу *“The Cossacks: The Story of a Warrior People”* (New York, Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1945).

и не располагая возможностью представить различные точки зрения⁵⁵. Об успехах Красной армии они писали в подчеркнуто комплиментарном ключе, акцентируя внимание на героизме советских солдат, организованности военного управления и тёплом отношении к англо-американским союзникам⁵⁶. При этом любые упоминания о трудностях наступления Красной Армии, включая оценку человеческих потерь, были невозможны в силу жёсткой военной цензуры.

После отъезда Паркера из Москвы в июне 1944 года Лоуренс оставался единственным корреспондентом NYT в советской столице вплоть до февраля 1945 года. В марте того же года, как уже отмечалось ранее, в Москву в третий раз прибыл Сайрус Сульцбергер. Помимо освещения военных сводок и успехов в восстановлении советской экономики, Сульцбергер сосредоточил внимание на формирующихся чертах и принципах внешнеполитического курса СССР в последние месяцы войны с Германией. Анализируя московские статьи Сульцбергера, необходимо отметить, что его репортажи представляли собой не просто хронику событий, но и попытку понять внутреннюю логику действий советского руководства. Как журналист-международник, он стремился разобраться в характере внешней политики Советского Союза в условиях его значительного вклада в победу над Германией. Сульцбергер подчеркивал, что советская дипломатия исходила прежде всего из собственных представлений о национальной безопасности. Опыт двух разрушительных мировых войн на своей территории сформировал у руководства СССР устойчивую установку: миропорядок должен быть устроен так, чтобы исключить возможность нового вторжения. Отсюда, по мнению журналиста, внимание к созданию “санитарного кордона” из просоветских государств в Восточной и Центральной Европе. Политика СССР в отношении Польши, Чехословакии, Румынии, как отмечал Сульцбергер, не была импульсивной, а подчинялась выверенной стратегической линии формирования буфера безопасности⁵⁷.

Он также обращал внимание на стремление СССР встроиться в архитектуру послевоенного мирового порядка. Поддержка идеи международной организации по обеспечению мира — будущей ООН — свидетельствовала о готовности Москвы участвовать в многосторонних структурах. Однако, как указывал журналист, эта поддержка сопровождалась рядом оговорок: от требования предоставить отдельные голоса для Украинской и Белорусской ССР до акцента на равноправие великих держав. Тем самым, писал Сульцбергер, Москва стремилась легитимировать своё

⁵⁵ Ralph Parker, “Young Poles Find Havens in Russia,” *New York Times* (12 April 1944): 4; Idem, “Escape at Korsun Made Only by Air,” *New York Times* (9 March 1944): 3; William H. Lawrence, “Soviet Blames foe in Killing of Poles,” *New York Times* (27 January 1944): 3.

⁵⁶ Ralph Parker, “Soviet Hails Gains Under British Pact,” *New York Times* (27 May 1944): 6; William H. Lawrence, “Stalin Lauds U.S. for Aid to Soviet,” *New York Times* (28 June 1944): 8.

⁵⁷ L.C. Sulzberger, “Soviet Union Has Mapped Extensive Foreign Policy,” *New York Times* (8 April 1945): 56.

влияние в Европе и одновременно укрепить позиции в новых международных институтах⁵⁸.

В статье *"Allies' Use of German Labor Set At Yalta Parley, Soviet Paper Says"* он проанализировал подход СССР к Германии как побеждённой державе. Согласно его оценке, позиция, озвученная на Ялтинской конференции, отражала не только стремление к возмещению ущерба, нанесённого войной, но и желание использовать послевоенное урегулирование для восстановления экономики и усиления политического влияния. Советский Союз рассматривал Германию как главного виновника разрушений и человеческих потерь. В этом контексте использование немецкой рабочей силы для восстановления пострадавших территорий воспринималось как справедливая компенсация. Сульцбергер подчёркивал, что такой подход не носил исключительно карательного характера, а представлял собой прагматичное решение — восполнение потерь за счёт побеждённой стороны. Оценка ущерба, озвученная советской стороной — 250 миллиардов золотых рублей, — служила аргументом в переговорах с союзниками и инструментом формирования общественного мнения внутри страны. Упоминание разрушенных городов — Сталинграда, Киева, Минска — подчёркивало представление о Германии как главном виновнике не только военных, но и гуманитарных катастроф⁵⁹.

Помимо германского вопроса, Сульцбергер уделял внимание и более широким внешнеполитическим установкам СССР. В советской прессе, особенно в *"Правде"*, активно критиковались инициативы создания западных военно-политических блоков, таких как "Атлантическое сообщество", предложенное влиятельным американским журналистом Уолтером Липпманом. В противовес этому СССР продвигал идею коллективной безопасности, закреплённую в международных соглашениях. По мнению журналиста, это отражало стремление Москвы избежать изоляции и сохранить влияние в формировании нового миропорядка⁶⁰.

Наконец, Сульцбергер в своих статьях описывал внутреннюю атмосферу в СССР в преддверии и в момент победы. Особое внимание он уделял эмоциональному состоянию советского общества — радости, смешанной с горечью утрат. Его репортаж о праздновании Победы 9 мая в Москве стал последним в роли московского корреспондента. В нём он описывал массовые гуляния, игнорирование людьми комендантского часа, залпы артиллерии, здания, украшенные флагами стран-победительниц, а также сочетание официальной советской атрибутики — портретов Ленина, Сталина, Калинина и военачальников — с массовым религиозным переживанием: церкви были открыты для проведения молебнов "в память о

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ L.C. Sulzberger, "Allies' Use of German Labor Set at Yalta Parley, Soviet Paper Says," *New York Times* (21 April 1945): 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 6.

бесчисленных погибших”⁶¹.

Одним из главных сюжетов репортажа Сульцбергера стали проявления признательности советских граждан союзникам. Он подробно описывал многолюдные собрания у американского посольства, где толпа приветствовала дипломатов, скандируя лозунги в честь Трумэна и Рузвельта. Особенное впечатление произвело выступление Джорджа Кеннана с балкона посольства, встреченное овациями. Советский и американский флаги были вывешены рядом, символизируя союзничество, а громкоговорители транслировали на площадях гимны США и Великобритании. Таким образом, Сульцбергер в своей последней московской статье зафиксировал редкий момент единения СССР и Запада в момент безоговорочной победы над Германией⁶².

Помимо освещения текущих событий из Москвы, Сульцбергер принимал участие в неофициальных переговорах, касавшихся будущего присутствия *NYT* в Советском Союзе. Руководство газеты рассчитывало, что окончание войны и перспективы послевоенного сближения между СССР и США создадут условия для расширения штата московского бюро. Однако в реальности не без труда удалось добиться разрешения на приезд лишь одного нового корреспондента — известного театрального критика Брукса Аткинсона, который в годы войны освещал события в Китае. Согласование его кандидатуры в качестве постоянного представителя газеты в Москве летом 1945 года стало возможным благодаря положительным отзывам советской стороны на его публикации о взаимоотношениях между Народно-освободительной армией Китая и Гоминьданом. По оценке сотрудника советского посольства в Вашингтоне Ф. Т. Орехова, Аткинсон в своих статьях не допускал “каких-либо выпадов в отношении прогрессивных элементов Китая”, в связи с чем он расценивался как “лучшая кандидатура, на которую можно было рассчитывать от “Нью-Йорк Таймс”⁶³. Аткинсон приехал в Москву летом 1945 г. и стал свидетелем стремительной трансформации советско-американских отношений — от союзничества в рамках антигитлеровской коалиции в войне против Японии до появления первых серьезных взаимных разногласий в начале 1946 г.

Заключение

Как показано в статье, функционирование московского бюро *NYT* напрямую зависело от контекста советско-американских взаимодействий и зависело от множества политических, цензурных и идеологических факторов. С началом советско-германской войны на Восточном фронте и вступлением СССР в Антигитлеровскую коалицию иностранные корреспонденты вновь получили возможность работать в Москве, однако

⁶¹ L.C. Sulzberger, “Moscow Goes Wild Over Joyful News,” *New York Times* (10 May 1945): 6.

⁶² Ibid,

⁶³ АВП РФ. Ф. 192. Оп. 12. Д. 29. Папка 87. Л. 91-92 (Справка о корреспонденте Brooks Atkinson).

их деятельность оставалась жёстко регламентированной, подчинённой требованиям советской цензуры и стратегическим интересам Отдела печати НКВД.

Корреспонденты NYT стремились выполнять свою профессиональную миссию в условиях ограниченного доступа к информации и малого количества командировок по стране. Несмотря на трудности, они передавали в редакцию не только информационные статьи, но и репортажи о воюющем Советском Союзе, которые давали американской аудитории представление о логике советской внешней и внутренней политики в военное время. Особую ценность представляет собой деятельность Сульцбергера, чьи публикации последних месяцев войны демонстрируют попытку американской журналистики осмыслить позицию СССР в перестраивающемся международном порядке. Его репортажи, сочетающие фактографичность с тонким анализом, позволяют проследить, как в американской прессе формировался образ Советского Союза — союзника по войне, но потенциального идеологического оппонента в будущем.

Наконец, следует отметить, что модель управления деятельностью иностранных корреспондентов, сформировавшаяся в Отделе печати НКВД в 1941–1944 гг., сохранялась практически без изменений вплоть до 1987 года. Иностраный журналист был обязан находиться в Москве, согласовывать любые поездки по стране и встречи с советскими гражданами с представителями из отдела, а также учитывать возможные последствия своих публикаций, даже если они получали одобрение у советских цензоров. В то же время советские власти сохраняли за собой право ужесточать или, напротив, смягчать эти ограничения в зависимости от текущего состояния советско-американских дипломатических отношений, а также индивидуального отношения к тому или иному американскому журналисту.

Ideology and Identity in Teaching about Russia in the United States: 1945-1950

Author: Rachel Stauffer

Issue: Special Issue 2025

Abstract

In 1945, predominantly white and male academics at elite postsecondary institutions, bolstered by nineteenth century industrialist wealth and connected to government and military elites, shaped and influenced the teaching of Russian in the United States in ways that remain traceable in the field today. Through critical inquiry the study finds that the field's progenitors reacted to war and McCarthyism in ways that were color-blind, politically-averse, and self-preservational, exposing the roots of white supremacy and Russocentrism in Russian language textbooks. Critical race theory helpfully frames matters of anti-discrimination law and interest convergence regarding *de jure* and *de facto* forms of educational exclusion. The study locates and illuminates significant developments in Russian language instruction during and after the war. It also assesses and presents ideologies about teaching and learning Russian that were expressed contemporaneously by practitioners.

Ideology and Identity in Teaching about Russia in the United States: 1945-1950

Rachel Stauffer

Introduction

The 1940s in the United States (US) witnessed a significant transition in teaching Russian and teaching about Russia.¹ Until wartime expansion efforts, teaching Russian was unusual as the language was orientalized and exoticized as Asian or Far Eastern.² The American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) and the American *Russian Review* first appeared in 1941, but many other important developments in Russian language teaching occurred after the war. In 1945, the *American Slavic and East European Review* (now *Slavic Review*) was first published. The Russian Research Institute at Columbia (now the Harriman Institute) and the *Russian Language Journal* were both established in 1946. The Joint Committee on Slavic Studies (JCSS), the Russian Institute at Harvard (now the Davis Center), and the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (now the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies [ASEEES]) were all organized in 1948.

The rise of Russian language study coincided with the development of area studies programs, broadly conceptualized as education for purposes of national security. The Cold War began, emergent McCarthyism targeted celebrities and academics, and the legal and social landscape of Jim Crow segregation coexisted with the desegregation of the military and federal workforce in 1948.³ As an example, Corliss Lamont, a Columbia University faculty member writing about the Soviet Union, was deposed by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1946, coalescing with philanthropic and government efforts to expand Russian

¹ It is worth noting that the literature varies significantly in the way fields are described. This paper will use terms *education about Russia* and *teaching about Russia* interchangeably; *Russian area studies* and *Slavic studies* usually when describing the past, and *Russian Studies* or *Slavic and Eurasian Studies* when describing the present. Russian language instruction is specified as such.

² David Engerman, "The Ironies of the Iron Curtain," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45, no. 3/4 (2004): 469.

³ Harry S. Truman, Executive Order 9981, July 26, 1948, *Our Documents*, National Archives, accessed January 19, 2025, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9981>.

language instruction.⁴ Simultaneously, instruction in the Russian language moved from grammar-translation to audio-lingual methods in the 1940s, largely owing to the success of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), which set the stage for today's emphasis on communicative competence.

While significant scholarly attention has been directed to reforms impacting education about Russia after the Soviet launch of Sputnik in October 1957, less has been received by the often significant transformations and developments in the field after World War II. The scope of the present paper will, therefore, discuss identities and ideologies involved in teaching Russian during the period 1945 to 1950. The present study is critical and considers how race, sex, and class impacted access to the full menu of educational opportunities, including Russian language study. Critical race theory applied to matters of identity and ideology among those promoting Russian illuminates connections to a "regime of white supremacy."⁵ The broader national security apparatus under construction in the US after World War II was constructed predominantly by white, elite men with access to generational, institutional, and systemic power.⁶

Theoretical and Conceptual Assumptions

The premise of this paper is that teaching Russian is and has been distinctive from teaching other world languages in the US. Furthermore, the period 1945-1950 accelerated the rise of the necessity and availability of Russian studies in postsecondary settings. Since then, the US government has prioritized Russian as a critical language owing to geopolitics, militarism, arms development, and competition in science and technology. Government and military interests and values contributed to ideological and pedagogical conflicts in teaching Russian, requiring instructors "to simultaneously inculcate open-mindedness while encouraging conformity to white, middle-class norms."⁷ Before and after 1945, efforts to expand area studies and Russian language study involved intermingling circles of power elites, "men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men . . . in positions to make decisions having major consequences."⁸

Teaching Russian was significantly influenced by well-connected and highly positioned white academic men who leveraged Ivy League status and unfettered access to intellectual, social, and financial capital. White industrialist wealth of John Rockefeller, Henry Ford, and Andrew Carnegie was dressed as philanthropy to support teaching and research about Russia. Ideologically,

⁴ House Committee on Un-American Activities, "Executive Session," February 6, 1946, Washington, DC: National Archives, accessed May 30, 2024, author's collection.

⁵ Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press, 1995), xiii.

⁶ "Wealth also is acquired and held in and through institutions . . . the great inheriting families . . . are now supplemented by the corporate institutions of modern society" from C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 9-10.

⁷ Zoë Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 102.

⁸ Mills, *The Power Elite*, 3-4.

these philanthropic organizations “mediate[d] among the concerns of the state, big business, party politics, and foreign policy-related academia; articulate[d] a divided system; and constitute[d] and create[d] forums for constructing elite expertise.”⁹ Simultaneously, the government leveraged the power of the purse to bankroll language instruction for predominantly white military servicemen via the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP).¹⁰ Accordingly, this further bolstered a predominantly white “educational system, that was dominated by men, especially at the most influential universities in the field.”¹¹ Because US educational settings reproduced and reinforced features of white supremacy, including race-based educational exclusion, teaching Russian during this time contributed to an unintended, but impactful result, in which elite “social arrangements . . . create[d] structural disparities.”¹² This inequity of access to education is observable even now in the predominantly white composition of student and scholar identities studying Russian in the US today.¹³ Unfortunately, this, too, was and is a distinguishing feature and flaw of the field.

The stories supplied in contemporaneous and retrospective memoirs and reports written by those teaching Russian, and relatedly, Slavic languages, reflect the influence of identity and ideology. They provide insight into how educators thought about their students, colleagues, the American public, as well as the efforts and outcomes related to teaching Russian. These and other histories of the field, in combination with organizational reports and journal articles about teaching Russian illuminate ideologies in operation in Russian language instruction and its expansion during and after World War II. Critical race theory (CRT) illuminates legal and social aspects of “the fact that all educational spaces are unique and politically contested.”¹⁴

Educational ideologies have changed over time. However, it is still possible to acknowledge associated practices and beliefs in the past, recognizing their impacts, whether intentional or unintentional, so as to disrupt their ongoing harm in the present. This paper argues that the harmful impact of these ideologies on Russian language instruction today has led to a dearth of representation of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity among imagined American learners and Russian speech communities worldwide. Accordingly, Russian

⁹ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 5.

¹⁰ Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick, “The Cold War at Cornell,” in *Cornell: A History, 1940-2015*, eds. Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 75.

¹¹ David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

¹² Zeus Leonardo, *Race, Whiteness, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 18.

¹³ Dianna Murphy and Hadis Ghaedi, “‘Who (Are)n’t Our Students?’” *The Gender and Ethnoracial Distribution of U.S. Bachelor’s Degrees in Russian Language and Literature over Twenty Years, from 1999-2000 to 2018-2019*, *Russian Language Journal* 71, no. 3 (2021): 17.

¹⁴ Joe Kincheloe, “Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: Evolution for Survival,” *Counterpoints* 422 (2012): 155.

language textbooks published in the US have been subject to detailed, much deserved criticisms over the last two decades.¹⁵

Teaching Russian, 1945-1950

The wartime efforts to teach Russian in the 1940s experienced rapid development and implementation. By 1945, this growth led to predictions, though unfulfilled, that Russian would “become one of the major languages studied.”¹⁶ Within five years of its founding, AATSEEL had significantly grown its membership, published a regular newsletter, and established a regional presence in several US states and in Canada.¹⁷ In 1948, Vassar Russian professor Catherine Wolkonsky reported, “In December 1941, a mere 19 colleges and universities offered Russian; now the number is well over a hundred.”¹⁸ In a 1945 report, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation confirmed, “Until ten years ago there were but few courses given in American universities in the Russian language, and no broad resources were developed for understanding the social and cultural life of a nation which in a single generation has become one of the most powerful forces in the world.”¹⁹ He further described the challenges confronting Russian language expansion, “Even today our resources are pitifully meager. Only one university accepts Russian as a language with which undergraduates may satisfy the usual language requirements; and it is possible to thumb through the catalogues of courses in even large institutions without finding the words ‘Slavic’ or ‘Russian.’”²⁰ Between 1935 and 1945, the Rockefeller Foundation “appropriated approximately \$775,000” toward expanding language offerings, including Russian.²¹

In real time, instructors reported “scarcity . . . of the basic resources necessary for the development of Russian studies – scholars and teachers, research materials, and books and teaching aids” in 1946.²² With regard to instructional materials for Russian, by 1951, Ornstein asserted that “the field is still in its infancy,” recommending that “members of our profession strive to perfect the best possible

¹⁵ Maria Shardakova and Aneta Pavlenko, “Identity Options in Russian Textbooks,” *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 3, no. 1 (2004): 25-46; Nizora Azimova and Bill Johnston, “Invisibility and Ownership of Language: Problems of Representation in Russian Language Textbooks,” *Modern Language Journal* 96, no. 3 (2012): 337-349; Rachel Stauffer, “Addressing the Representation of Russian Language Textbooks,” In *The Art of Teaching Russian*, eds. Evgeny Dengub, Irina Dubinina, and Jason Merrill (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020).

¹⁶ J. Cayce Morrison, “An Administrator Looks At Language Study,” *The Modern Language Journal* 29, no. 8 (1945): 685.

¹⁷ “1946 год и положение русского языка в Америке,” *The Russian Language Journal* 1, no. 1 (1947): 14.

¹⁸ Catherine Wolkonsky, “Some Aspects of Teaching Russian,” *The Modern Language Journal* 32, no. 1 (1948): 24.

¹⁹ Raymond Fosdick, “Excerpts from the Review for 1944 of the Rockefeller Foundation,” *The Modern Language Journal* 29, no. 7 (1945): 631.

²⁰ Fosdick, “Excerpts from the Review for 1944,” 632.

²¹ Fosdick, “Excerpts from the Review for 1944,” 632.

²² Cyril Black, et. al, “An Appraisal of Russian Studies in the United States,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 18, no. 3 (1959): 419.

means for its effective teaching.”²³ The dearth of resources and expertise was one result of the observably limited access to the study of Russian and other Slavic languages outside of elite or highly selective postsecondary institutions, and outside of the northeast.

In 1948, Stanford Russian professor Jack Posin reported that “interest in Russian civilization and the language skyrocketed . . . aided by government subsidies . . . colleges and universities . . . increased their staffs to meet the new demand.”²⁴ Among the efforts which Rockefeller funded was the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). The ASTP stimulated new pedagogical approaches that moved away from grammar-translation and toward audio-lingual methodology. The ASTP method demonstrated that it was possible to build proficiency in a language by increasing intensity over a shorter period of time, rather than lengthening more incremental study over several years. Posin, however, credits the intensive method to Harvard in the 1930s: “Contrary to widespread belief, this method did not originate during the war. It has been successfully used with Russian language since 1934 . . . The war merely popularized this method and gave it wider application.”²⁵

Wartime emergency is the most commonly cited reason that public and student interest in Russian ascended in the 1940s. There is also evidence of other learner rationales. A 1946 survey of 656 undergraduate students taking Russian at two dozen postsecondary institutions reported the top three reasons cited for studying the language were “I believe that Russia has a great future” (64%, n = 418); “I’m interested in the culture” (62%, n = 404); and “I intend to go there some day” (57%, n = 377). The bottom three reasons were “I was born in Russia and want to speak the language” (1%, n = 7); “I am a singer and want to sing Russian songs” (2%, n = 10); and “I am a librarian and want to catalogue books in the language” (3%, n = 18). Some of the outlying individual responses were, “I plan to become a secret agent,” and “I am going into the export business.” 148 respondents replied “other reasons,” among which included working in “foreign or diplomatic service.”²⁶

37% (n = 157) of the respondents’ reported majors (n = 424) were in the sciences, engineering, medicine, and math, while 63% (n = 267) of students reported majors in liberal arts fields, and 14% (n = 37) reported majors in Russian and other Slavic languages.²⁷ In response to a prompt about the language skills they wished most to develop in Russian, students expressed strong interest in speaking, reading, and understanding, and weak interest in writing and grammar. The change they most wanted in their classes was “more conversation.”²⁸ By the

²³ Jacob Ornstein, “A Decade of Russian Teaching: Notes on Methodology and Textbooks,” *The Modern Language Journal* 35, no. 4 (April 1951): 279.

²⁴ Jack Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” *The Russian Review* 7, no. 2 (1948): 63.

²⁵ Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” 64.

²⁶ Agnes Jacques, “Why Students Study Russian,” *The Modern Language Journal* 31, no. 8 (1947): 529-530.

²⁷ Jacques, “Why Students Study Russian,” 528.

²⁸ Jacques, “Why Students Study Russian,” 531.

end of 1947, “140 colleges and universities offered some instruction in Russian in the academic year . . . 240 persons, either full or part-time, are engaged in teaching Russian language, literature, or both.”²⁹

A generational transition also changed the field as several faculty in Slavic at Columbia, California, Chicago, Harvard, and other institutions all died at around the same time.³⁰ The deaths impacted Rockefeller Foundation efforts to encourage “a geographically diverse set of institutes” where Russian was studied, “as universities adopted different responses to a rash of deaths among scholars prominent in prewar Slavic Studies.”³¹ An article in the very first issue of the *Russian Language Journal* in 1947 mourns the older generation as part of a “*prepodavatel'skaia sem'ja* (teacher family)” of Russian faculty in the US, noting that Harvard professor Samuel Cross, especially, would not be easy to replace.³² Posin lamented the losses to the profession in 1948, “because of retirement and death, the ranks of trained and experienced scholars in the field have been narrowing rather than growing.”³³ The wave of deaths were part and parcel of a series of sea change events over this short period of time that etched Russian studies increasingly more deeply into academic, government, philanthropic, and public spheres. However, due to emergent McCarthyism, the incoming leaders of Russian language instruction encountered conditions that contributed to the disproportionate representation of dominant identities in Russian language textbooks today.

Identities Teaching Russian, 1945-1950

The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) at Cornell was designed, informed, and/or delivered by Ernest J. Simmons (Literature), Sergius Yakobson (Government), Bernard Pares (History), Corliss Lamont (Social Institutions), and Vladimir Kazakevich (Economics). During the McCarthy era, few US experts on the Soviet Union publicly advocated for racial equity, the working class, and global movements for social justice. However, those who did, - like Simmons and Lamont - were all investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). To illuminate influences on curricula as a result of this phenomenon between 1945 and 1950, I will describe the experiences of individuals involved with ASTP at Cornell who were targeted by HUAC, namely Corliss Lamont and Ernest Simmons, with briefer discussions of Harriet Moore and Bernard Pares. Sergius Yakobson was the husband of Russian specialist Helen Yakobson, and brother of Roman, whose stamp on the field is indelible, but has received sufficient attention elsewhere. Vladimir Kazakevich was the most likely communist sympathizer and returned to the Soviet Union shortly after his brief contribution to the ASTP, thus there is less about him worth discussing in this paper's context.

²⁹ Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” 64.

³⁰ Clarence Manning, *A History of Slavic Studies in the United States* (Milwaukee, WI: The Marquette University Press, 1957), 67-68.

³¹ Engerman, “The Ironies of the Iron Curtain,” 469-470.

³² “1946 год и положение русского языка,” 12.

³³ Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” 66.

These individuals' experiences are model experiences of how teaching about Russia and teachers of Russian were differently impacted by McCarthyism, given that historian Albert Parry described the Cornell program as "the prototype of Russian area studies programs in various American institutions" prior to 1950.³⁴ Simmons, who directed the ASTP and Russian language and culture intensive at Cornell University, thus directly contributed to the shape of modern curricula, funded by Cornell and Rockefeller.³⁵ Accordingly, Simmons' and his ASTP colleagues' involvement contributed to contemporary Russocentrism in Slavic Studies as their "studies of Soviet culture meant, with rare exceptions, studies of Russian literature . . . limited almost exclusively to works in Russian. A few books and articles on Ukrainian culture appeared . . . Next to nothing appeared on literature in other Soviet languages."³⁶

In 1944, Lamont published a book called *The Peoples of the Soviet Union*, in which the introduction condemned racism, "I can think of nothing more unjust, more cruel, or more uncivilized than discrimination against individuals or groups because of their color, facial characteristics, or ethnic origin."³⁷ Lamont committed time, effort, and personal funds to resisting prejudice and McCarthyism while others removed themselves from the political fray. For example, Geroid Robinson, the head of Columbia's Russian Institute, and Clyde Kluckhohn, head of Harvard's Russian Research Center preferred "to stand removed from the political controversies that divided the American public."³⁸ Robinson had served the government during wartime in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and so was uniquely receptive to Washington's demands, and he recruited Hazard and Simmons to help staff the Institute.³⁹

Along with two other Columbia faculty, Simmons "faced accusations of disloyalty. McCarthy condemned Ernest Simmons as 'a Communist' at the time he had led the wartime program at Cornell."⁴⁰ Likewise, in HUAC testimony from 1953 that discussed Simmons 1947 book, *USSR: A Concise Handbook*, McCarthy named historian Bernard Pares, Lamont, Simmons, and Harriet Moore as Stalinists.⁴¹ In HUAC transcripts of a March 1947 hearing, a witness rebuked Cornell's Russian program asking, "Who was responsible for the employment of such notorious preCommunists as Corliss Lamont . . . Sergei Kaurnakoff [sic], military writer on the staff of the *Daily Worker*; Harriet Moore, director of the

³⁴ Albert Parry, *America Learns Russian: A History of the Teaching of the Russian Language in the United States* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967), 113-114.

³⁵ Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 36.

³⁶ Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 131.

³⁷ Corliss Lamont, *The Peoples of the Soviet Union* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944), vii-viii.

³⁸ Robert Byrnes, *A History of Russian and East European Studies in the United States* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 131.

³⁹ "Robinson to Head Russian Institute," *The New York Times*, November 6, 1945, 10.

⁴⁰ Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 41.

⁴¹ U.S. Senate. *Communist Infiltration in the Army: Hearing Before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations, Eighty-Third Congress, First Session, Pursuant to S. Res. 40, September 28, 1953*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office (1953), 86-87.

pro-Soviet American Russian Institute . . . Vladimir Kazakevich, lecturer and writer for Communist publications. All were engaged in some phase of training Army officers at Cornell University in Ithaca, N. Y.⁴² Simmons, Lamont, Moore, and Pares were all targets of investigations by HUAC after its activities became more publicly legitimized due to Alger Hiss and his association with the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) in 1948.⁴³ Upon Bernard Pares' death in 1949, Harvard historian Michael Karpovich wrote,

As a young man, Sir Bernard lived and studied in Russia. He returned to Russia during the political crisis of 1905, and in the years that followed, he made several visits to the country to watch the growth of the recently born constitutional regime. In the First World War he was with the Russian Army as a semi-official British observer, and after 1917 he continued his travels in Russia, braving the dangers of the revolutionary turmoil so long as this was possible. The extent of his personal contacts in Russia was amazing. He knew Tsarist ministers and revolutionary leaders, businessmen and intellectuals, peasants and landed gentlemen.⁴⁴

It goes without saying that the types of contacts and experiences Pares had in both world wars likely led to McCarthyist suspicion, and also, that Pares' connections to Soviet insiders was spectacularly different than that of Simmons, Lamont, or Moore.

Lamont's engagements with HUAC escalated throughout the 1950s. In 1953, "When Senator Joseph R. McCarthy investigated him, Dr. Lamont replied vigorously. He said he was not a Communist, and intended not to answer and to enjoy his First Amendment freedoms."⁴⁵ Lamont's boldness was admonished with denial of his passport renewal in 1951.⁴⁶ Like many, but not all of his colleagues, Lamont was generationally wealthy, yielding fewer concerns about his livelihood. Still, for others teaching Russian, the professional jeopardy caused by suspicions of communism or the appearance of being political were preferably avoided. For a woman like Harriet Moore, HUAC scrutiny was riskier. All the same, according to her obituary, Moore throughout her life advocated for social equality: "She was very proud of her role in organizing a large and controversial civil rights fundraising event in Scarsdale, NY in the early 1960s, featuring . . . Pete Seeger, Ossie Davis, and Ruby Dee. Harriet organized the concert to raise bail for the Freedom Riders, then jailed in Mississippi . . . in the face of vociferous opposition."⁴⁷ Simmons had a productive academic career, teaching Russian and writing mostly about Russian literature at Cornell, Harvard, and Columbia. Lamont continued teaching and pushing for progressive and working class interests and defending constitutional

⁴² *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*. 80th Congress, (March 27, 1947), 278.

⁴³ Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 69.

⁴⁴ Michael Karpovich, "Sir Bernard Pares," *The Russian Review* 8, no. 3 (1949): 183.

⁴⁵ Israel Shenker, "Still-Active Corliss Lamont," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1972, 22.

⁴⁶ John Gregory, "Obituary: Corliss Lamont," *The Independent*, May 11, 1995, <https://www.the-independent.com/news/people/obituary-corliss-lamont-1619163.html>

⁴⁷ "Harriet M. Gelfan Obituary," *Atamaniuk Funeral Home*, accessed January 16, 2025, <https://www.atamaniuk.com/obituaries/Harriet-M-Gelfan?obId=2112473>.

freedoms and civil rights, even self-publishing and distributing pamphlets and booklets on democratic principles for the public and supporting organizations that shared his values.

Ideologies in Teaching Russian, 1945-1950

In the context of educational settings and pedagogical approaches reflected in recollections of the history of education about Russia in the US, there are strong undercurrents of discriminatory ideologies. The ideologies discussed and exemplified from writing by Russia specialists and general area studies collaborators appear to have been influenced by the privileged identity factors of predominantly white and male academics in elite and highly selective postsecondary institutions. Ideologies discussed here include deficit and meritocratic thinking, orientalism, and native-speakerism. Although these phenomena were not identified as such during the period at hand, the ideologies are observably reproduced in educational settings as described in the histories and stories supplied by scholars writing about teaching Russian. Broadly, reflections presumed that learners themselves accountable for their success or failure, owing to “genetic, cultural, or experiential differences.”⁴⁸ Deficit thinking is reflected in writing about teaching Russian as well as other world languages, which suggests it was a widespread ideology in the profession.

However, responses in the previously mentioned 1946 poll of undergraduates surveyed about studying Russian counters deficit thinking as it reports “a serious interest . . . a desire to master the language.”⁴⁹ In the late 1950s, authors Cyril Black and John Thompson traced the need for Russian studies as a way to confront “deficiencies in our knowledge of many areas of the world, and the lack of Americans who knew these areas well.”⁵⁰ American students’ lack of knowledge about the region through no fault of their own, given the past limitations on studying the region, was described as a “very hazy notion of Russia.”⁵¹ Deficits were attributed to colleagues as well. For example, an area studies scholar suggested that foreign-born colleagues were less equipped for the classroom because their experiences as refugees meant they were “disturbed psychologically.”⁵² The difficulty of the language itself was a deficit that led to gatekeeping, “purists among the deans and even a few strict professors rule that only superior students be admitted to Russian classes, or that a background of two or three years in Latin or Greek or French or German be required.”⁵³ Graduate students’ and post-docs’ language skills were criticized.⁵⁴ In a 1948 article, the

⁴⁸ Sonia Nieto and Patricia Bode, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Education* (New York: Pearson, 2018), 12.

⁴⁹ Jacques, “Why Students Study Russian?” 533.

⁵⁰ Cyril Black and John Thompson, *American Teaching About Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 13.

⁵¹ Wolkonsky, “Some Aspects of Teaching Russian,” 27.

⁵² William Fenton, *Area Studies in American Universities* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1947), 13-14.

⁵³ Parry, *America Learns Russian*, 166.

⁵⁴ Parry, *America Learns Russian*, 179.

author invoked deficit thinking toward college students taking Russian: “There is a marked discrepancy between the intellectual maturity of the college student and his facility in the language, and this we have to face as a challenge.”⁵⁵ Even in a 1948 issue of the AATSEEL *Bulletin*, organization leadership described its own members as “the stepchildren of the modern language profession.”⁵⁶

Akin to deficit thinking, meritocratic thinking as an ideology asserts that with enough resilience and hard work, anyone can work from the bottom up to reach any goal.⁵⁷ Meritocratic thinking is incompatible with reality, particularly in light of forms of meritless access to power and opportunity in use among elites, such as cronyism and nepotism. Likewise, meritocratic thinking requires evasiveness of matters of race, sex, and class, which, during the time at hand, impacted access and opportunity to levers of social uplift, such as education.

Meritocratic and deficit thinking are both observable in descriptions of the educational pedigrees of servicemen selected for the ASTP.⁵⁸ In fact, a “school’s national reputation has very little to do with actual quality . . . and more to do with its ability to confer social capital via networks of wealth and institutional power.”⁵⁹ Until post-Sputnik educational reforms, the study of Russian and other Slavic languages was practically located predominantly in the Ivy League.⁶⁰ The pedigrees of predominantly white, male scholars, philanthropists, and bureaucrats overseeing expansion of Russian language instruction reflect experiences of ease, access, and opportunity. Intermingled with the white, male, national security-oriented status quo, academics fulfilled in educational settings their role in performative anticommunism as “‘officers’ of the ruling class for the subordinate functions of social hegemony and political government.”⁶¹

Columbia sociologist C. Wright Mills viewed elite power circles as an exclusive *and* exclusionary social system of influence in the upper classes. He described the ways that systems of opportunity and power were then managed

⁵⁵ Wolkonsky, “Some Aspects of Teaching Russian,” 28.

⁵⁶ “The American Slavist Must Grow Up,” *Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages* 5, no. 4 (1948): 77.

⁵⁷ Paul Gorski, *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2018); Katy Swalwell, *Educating Activist Allies: Social Justice Pedagogy with the Suburban and Urban Elite* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Katy Swalwell and Daniel Spikes, *Anti-Oppressive Education in “Elite” Schools: Promising Practices and Cautionary Tales from the Field* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2021).

⁵⁸ “Academic standards as they vary between undergraduate colleges with limited personnel resources and universities with distinguished faculty in the habit of operating on the graduate plane affect judgments of level achieved under ASTP; standards naturally vary from place to place and reflect the type of students normally attracted to that campus . . . The nature of the course and the diverse backgrounds of the students had not been previously encountered in the colleges and universities. . . the trainees exhibited in the mass a great range of scholastic background . . . their worldly experience and maturity varied widely” in Fenton, *Area Studies in American Universities*, 76-77.

⁵⁹ Swalwell and Spikes, *Anti-Oppressive Education in “Elite” Schools*, 2.

⁶⁰ Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 7.

⁶¹ Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince* (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 124.

and overseen by elites. In his characterizations, Mills alleges, “the power elite is composed of men of similar origin and education . . . careers . . . styles of life . . . social type . . . leading to the fact of their easy intermingling.”⁶² Elites worked together to operate “the structure and the mechanics of those institutional hierarchies over which the political directorate, the corporate rich, and the high military now preside.”⁶³ Based on the phenomena described, Mills’ definition of elitism is applicable to individuals, institutions, and organizations involved in teaching Russian language and in the formation of Russian area studies during this period.

In writings on Russian language instruction, the language skill, trustworthiness, and potential for instructional success of émigrés are judged in ways that reflect identity-based forms of deficit and meritocratic thinking. Native-speakerism asserts that some identity factors are assumed to reflect greater cultural and linguistic authenticity than others. The concepts of *native speaker* and *non-native-speaker* are “professionally popularised categories, often with skin colour as a determining characteristic.”⁶⁴ An observable opposition exists between native and non-native speakers of Russian in the field: “‘nonnative’ teachers and those that do not fit the traditional image of a ‘native’ speaker, are still considered ‘deficit’, are underrepresented, and/or find themselves modeling their teaching after ‘native’ speaker teachers.”⁶⁵ In some ways, this view mirrors Imperial Russian and American forms of race- and class-based othering.

In 1946, Alfred Senn, writing about the first year of Russian language instruction recommended it “be taught only by people wholly familiar with the English language.”⁶⁶ In 1948, it was recommended that future scholars of Russian area studies, “come from the ranks of young American-born men and women. Russian ancestry *per se* qualifies a person for training for a professorship in Russian no more than does English or American ancestry alone qualify one for a similar career in English.”⁶⁷ Also in 1948, a Russian instructor wrote, “an oral drill class cannot be placed in charge of a teacher whose own pronunciation is short of the most perfect. Unfortunately, Brooklyn Russian can be as bad as Brooklyn English, and for the oral class only a well-educated native Russian will do.”⁶⁸ The same instructor insisted, “I should like to make an appeal to my fellow-Russians in the United States, who make up the great reservoir from

⁶² Mills, *The Power Elite*, 19.

⁶³ Mills predicted that elites’ end goal was, “the development of a permanent war establishment by a privately incorporated economy inside a political vacuum.” See Mills, *The Power Elite*, 19.

⁶⁴ Adrian Holliday, “Native-speakerism: Taking the Concept Forward and Achieving Cultural Belief,” in *(En)-Countering Native-Speakerism: Global Perspectives*, eds. Anne Swan, Patricia Aboshiha, and Adrian Holliday, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13.

⁶⁵ Amy Thompson and Emil Asanov, “‘Nonnative? Next!’ Native-speakerism in World Language Job Advertisements,” in *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 14, no. 1 (2024): 57.

⁶⁶ Alfred Senn, “College Russian: Objectives and Methods,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 5, no. ½ (1946): 182.

⁶⁷ Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” 66.

⁶⁸ Wolkonsky, “Some Aspects of Teaching Russian,” 26.

which most of the teachers of Russian are drawn, to study English and to master it thoroughly. This is very important.”⁶⁹ David Engerman notes a “division between those whom language teachers called ‘native experts’ and American scholars.”⁷⁰ Throughout Russian history, multilingual non-ethnic-Slavs and non-Christians, even those who spoke Russian as a primary language were minoritized as “non-native,” largely due to racialized forms of categorization created for colonization and conquest.⁷¹ Furthermore, the characterization of Russian as a language for national security adds a layer of adversariality, “even as speakers of these ‘critical languages’ are serving to further the agenda of the State (a controversial matter in its own right) . . . they continue to be viewed with suspicion.”⁷²

Critical Race Analysis

The ideologies described above are characteristic of US educational settings and curricula, which reinforce systemic, legal, and societally-constructed hierarchies of race, sex, and class. In fact, schools and communities became more racially segregated after *Brown v. Board of Education*, owing to a lack of white interest convergence, and not only in the southern states.⁷³ Therefore, until 1954, which includes the period at hand, white supremacy operated as unmarked, whereas white interest convergence⁷⁴ with racial equality was marked and socially stigmatized. Anticommunism was unmarked and concomitant with whiteness.

This arrangement created social conditions in which some academics yielded to performative solidarity with unmarked white supremacy and anticommunism, which I am convinced contributed directly to evasiveness of matters of race, sex, and class in Russian language textbooks. White academics, public officials, and philanthropic organizations declared a need for national security education initiatives providing wider access to education to reify whites’ “legal legitimization of expectations of power and control . . . while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination.”⁷⁵ Relatedly, scholars have asserted white interest convergence as concomitant with any possible progress owing to race conscious

⁶⁹ Wolkonsky, “Some Aspects of Teaching Russian,” 29.

⁷⁰ David Engerman, “The Ironies of the Iron Curtain,” 475.

⁷¹ Alexandra Vukovich, “The Ethnic Process,” in *Is Byzantine Studies a Colonialist Discipline?: Toward a Critical Historiography*, eds. Benjamin Anderson and Mirela Ivanova (State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2023); Kati Parpei and Bulat Rakhimzianov, eds., *Images of Otherness in Russia: 1547-1917* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2023).

⁷² Timothy Reagan, “The Language of Pushkin, The Language of Putin: Teaching Russian in the United States,” *American Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 2 (2023): 10.

⁷³ Lani Guinier, “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004): 93.

⁷⁴ Derrick Bell, Jr., “*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (1980): 518.

⁷⁵ Cheryl Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1715.

reforms.⁷⁶ Crucially, however, author Kimberlé Crenshaw observes, “the societal adoption of racial equality rhetoric does not itself entail a commitment to end racial inequality.”⁷⁷ Given that few of those who teach Russian commented on matters of race (or sex or class for that matter), I have yet to find explicit white interest convergence, though so far it is clear that Lamont and Moore were outliers in their outspokenness.

Writing in 1988, Crenshaw was commenting on affirmative action during the Reagan era, and this topic continues to have relevance today. A 2023 Supreme Court decision disempowered antidiscrimination law in favor of non-race-conscious college admissions, about which Justice Jackson dissented, “today, the majority . . . announces ‘colorblindness for all’ by legal fiat. But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life.”⁷⁸ Although color-evasiveness appears merit-based, that is the result of meritocratic thinking.⁷⁹ Such a stance fails to recognize the legal, social, educational, and economic disenfranchisement of women, migrants, Indigenous communities, formerly enslaved African Americans, people experiencing poverty, and people with disabilities. *Brown v. Board* challenged Jim Crow segregation and set the stage for race-conscious antidiscrimination law. Soviet propaganda routinely chastised American racism, so those teaching about Russia were presumably aware of such matters, whether or not they publicly problematized them.

Beginning in February 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy and HUAC escalated anticommunist investigations and surveillance. The wartime urgency that led to unique growth in study of Russia and the Soviet Union was exchanged for anticommunist paranoia. The political landscape meant that instruction in Russian was compelled to submit to an anticommunist status quo, concomitantly maintaining white supremacy, or teaching Russian in ways that would appear apolitical. It is interesting that multiculturalism had a strong presence in volumes which predate 1950, pointing to the importance some scholars ascribed to identity even then. Multiculturalism was more widely discussed until anticommunism led, for example, to the retraction of Simmons’ book for use in military training, just a few years after he was recruited to run the ASTP Russian Intensive at Cornell. Lamont’s generational wealth shielded him from significant disruptions to his livelihood when targeted by HUAC in 1946, though his troubles escalated in the 1950s. In the 1960s, Lamont sued the Postmaster General for violating the first amendment by reporting to the government individuals receiving materials

⁷⁶ Derrick Bell, Jr., “*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (1980); Guinier, “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy.”

⁷⁷ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law,” *Harvard Law Review* 101, no. 7 (1988): 1346.

⁷⁸ *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

⁷⁹ The term *color-evasiveness* is used here instead of *color-blindness*. See Subini Annamma, Darrell Jackson, and Deb Morrison, “Conceptualizing Color-Evasiveness: Using a Dis/ability Critical Race Theory to Expand a Color-Blind Racial Ideology in Education and Society,” *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* 20, no. 2 (2017): 147-162.

about Communism or from Communists by mail. The case went to the Supreme Court and unanimously in Lamont's favor.⁸⁰ But Lamont truly was an outlier. Others involved with the field were subject to top-down pressure to conform or at least perform. McCarthy's objections to Lamont's, Simmons', and others' scholarship appear to have been at least partially derived from what was perceived as allegiance to Soviet multiculturalism, rather than American white supremacy.

Implications

Race consciousness, not color-evasiveness, should be a goal of teaching about the Russian-speaking world in the US today. Russocentrism and whitewashing were logical, but harmful outcomes of the collision of anticommunism and segregationism characterizing the years after World War II. There was a shift in the development of the field between the ASTP years and Sputnik, the first satellite in space, launched by the Soviets in 1957, causing new uncertainties about American exceptionalism. Disproportionately, the identities and ideologies of elite academics, nineteenth century industrialists, and government officials leading up to and after 1945, made it possible to be evasive of matters of multiculturalism, since whiteness and maleness were widely accepted defaults among intermingling elites. After *Brown* there was not an influx of funding to teach historically disenfranchised students Russian, but there was after Sputnik, because education for scientific competition and national security were white interests, and thus prioritized.

Programs in Russian and Slavic in the northeast continued to benefit disproportionately from the field's expansion, even after post-Sputnik federal grants became available to publicly-funded institutions for international education. Slavist Leon Twarog reflected in 1961 that wartime efforts were less impactful than post-Sputnik reforms.⁸¹ Scarcity was still a feature of the field, since Twarog noted a "shortage of qualified people."⁸² Deficit thinking still abounded a decade after Sputnik, when Parry observed, "from the 2 per cent of American scientists with the ability to read Russian . . . the number rose only to 6 per cent in 1965. A severe shortage of American specialists with a proper knowledge of scientific, technical, and engineering Russian was reported in August, 1965."⁸³ In fact, according to a federal scientist in the US Commerce Department, it was "almost impossible to obtain good Russian translators for specific scientific disciplines."⁸⁴

The poor outcomes of federally-funded initiatives did not end them, but in fact aided power elites to collaborate advantageously in ways that further secured access to taxpayer funds. Of course, they had the advantage of private money too, since "philanthropic foundations fostered this environment as they applied funds to meet their own intellectual and political goals."⁸⁵ It is worth noting, however,

⁸⁰ *Lamont v. Postmaster General*, 3381 U.S. 301 (1965).

⁸¹ Leon Twarog, "A Program of Slavic Studies: A Guide for the College Student," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 5, no. 3 (1961): 208.

⁸² Twarog, "A Program of Slavic Studies," 209.

⁸³ Parry, *America Learns Russian*, 148.

⁸⁴ Parry, *America Learns Russian*, 149.

⁸⁵ Engerman, "Knowing Allies and Enemies," 181.

that philanthropy was the primary form of private funding that benefited the field at the time. In 1948 it was reported that “Russian studies to date benefited very little from private gifts to universities. The fact is that in the entire country there is not one endowed chair of Russian studies.”⁸⁶

Forms of sex-based exclusion are observable around the same time. For example, in 1954, a group of Slavists from Columbia, Harvard, Yale, MIT, Berkeley and Chicago held a meeting at the “Men’s Faculty Club at Columbia University.”⁸⁷ Women were then teaching in elite programs but clearly excluded from planning initiatives in the expansion of the field. In fact, in 1952 Bryn Mawr College Russian professor Frances de Graaf became AATSEEL’s first woman president.⁸⁸ Catherine Wolkonsky began teaching Russian at Vassar, which would have positioned her as having congruent experience and status to those meeting at the Men’s Faculty Club.⁸⁹ Observable exclusion of discussion of the careers of women is a feature of histories of the field, including Engerman, who did not investigate women academics because they received fewer PhDs than men.⁹⁰ However, Engerman’s claim is inadequately supported. The citation for his assertion relies on data only from the US National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Other primary sources, including histories of the field, reveal that quite a few women teaching Russian in the US during this time earned their degrees abroad. In fact, Marianna Poltoratzsky, who taught Russian at the Army Language School, Middlebury, Georgetown, Vassar, and Norwich earned *two* PhDs abroad before emigrating to the US, one in Russia in Slavic and Romance languages and one in Austria in linguistics.⁹¹ White male historians have trivialized, dismissed, and/or minimized women’s wartime contributions to teaching Russian, which reflects patriarchal ideologies in historical research that are not based in actual evidence. The field must devote attention to the lives, experiences, and contributions of women teaching Russian in wartime and beyond. Pioneering women – Lila Pargment, Elena Mogilat, Catherine Wolkonsky, Frances de Graaff, Fan Parker, Ludmilla Turkevich, and many others - found pathways to earn advanced degrees, despite *de facto* and *de jure* barriers to educational access. Post-Sputnik reforms made the study of Russian more widely accessible to all students, including women, in public institutions, as opposed to only in institutions abroad or private women’s colleges,

Increased access to study of Russian in public institutions due to federal funding was similarly believed to create a level playing field for students at public postsecondary institutions. By 1961, an equivalent distribution was

⁸⁶ Posin, “Russian Studies in American Colleges,” 68.

⁸⁷ Chauncy Harris, “Russian, Slavic, and Soviet Studies in the United States: Some Memories and Notes,” *Russian History* 24, no. 4, (1997): 448.

⁸⁸ J. Thomas Shaw, “AATSEEL: The First 50 Years,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 35, AATSEEL Golden Jubilee Issue (1991): 53.

⁸⁹ “Catherine Wolkonsky,” Vassar Encyclopedia, accessed January 30, 2025, <https://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/faculty/prominent-faculty/catherine-wolkonsky/>.

⁹⁰ David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 10.

⁹¹ N.V. Pervushin, “M.A. Poltoratzsky: A Tribute,” *Russian Language Journal* 22, no. 83 (1968): 4.

reported among degree programs in private postsecondary institutions (42%, $n = 22$) and public institutions (38%, $n = 20$), which constituted such a change.⁹² Simultaneously, the regional distribution of degree programs by the same time remained disproportionately northeastern. Although this may not seem like a barrier to access, particularly in light of the influence of meritocratic thinking on the field, it is also true that there were fewer programs in poorer, southern states and institutions. Consequently, there was far more disparate access to study of Russian for southerners, including Black students after desegregation. No Russian programs were instituted in Black colleges or universities, even though Tuskegee and Hampton were well supported by Carnegie and other philanthropists, they funded the preservation of Blackness as a subject race to reify white wealth and dominance.⁹³ More research is needed to understand how anti-Blackness operated as a phenomenon in decisions about geography and institutions where Russian was to be taught, as well as in the design, organization, and instruction of area studies programs and centers.

Harmful ideologies about teaching Russian continue to be observable in the field's practices and most popular textbooks. A 2020 Carnegie study on the field's Master's programs cites deficit and meritocratic thinking from faculty describing a "lack of qualified undergraduates for advanced MA studies" claiming "the level of regional expertise and language skills developed at the undergraduate level has decreased in recent years."⁹⁴ It is worth mentioning to these program directors that the language requirements for the programs as reported in the survey are unlikely to yield applicants with more advanced proficiency, given that only two or three years of language study are required.⁹⁵ The implicit nature of the hidden expectation of exceeding the requirement is a feature of white supremacy, coloniality, and dominant culture in educational settings that reflects deficit and meritocratic thinking.

There is still more work to be done toward identifying and locating geneses of harmful ideologies like deficit thinking, orientalism, meritocratic thinking, nativism, and native-speakerism in the field as these phenomena persist in educational settings where Russian is taught today. We must work in community to disrupt inequities that thrive in contexts of Russian language instruction. Likewise, antiracist, antisexist, and critically conscious content and pedagogies should be more widely applied so as to both, enroll and retain culturally-, linguistically-, and socioeconomically-diverse learners, and to more accurately represent the multiculturalism and multilingualism of the Russian-speaking world today. It is fitting to end with the words of Averell Harriman, millionaire benefactor of Columbia's Harriman Institute, who said in 1954, "Some of the

⁹² Twarog, "A Program of Slavic Studies," 235-236.

⁹³ Maribel Morey, *White Philanthropy: Carnegie Corporation's AN AMERICAN DILEMMA and the Making of a White World Order* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 136.

⁹⁴ Andrew Kuchins and Jesse Mitchell, "The State of M.A. Russia/Eurasia Programs in the United States," accessed January 30, 2025, <https://ceres.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/02/CarnegieReport.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Kuchins and Mitchell, "The State of M.A. Russia/Eurasia Programs," 6.

greatest mistakes of judgment have been made by experts in a single field who do not see or know the wider problems.”⁹⁶

About the Author:

Rachel Stauffer is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian at Virginia Tech. She has a Master’s and PhD in Slavic languages and literatures from the University of Virginia and a Master’s of Education from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her current research examines the history of education about Russia in the United States from the late nineteenth century to the present.

⁹⁶ Catherine Nepomnyashchy, “After the Fall,” *Sixty Years of The Harriman Institute at Columbia University*, accessed January 30, 2025, <https://harriman.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/60-Anniversary-Harriman-pdf.pdf>.

Bibliography

- “1946 год и положение русского языка в Америке.” *The Russian Language Journal* 1, no. 1 (1947): 12-15.
- Altschuler, Glenn, and Isaac Kramnick. “The Cold War at Cornell.” In *Cornell: A History, 1940-2015*, edited by Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick, 74-99. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Annamma, Subini, Darrell Jackson, and Deb Morrison. “Conceptualizing Color-Evasiveness: Using a Dis/ability Critical Race Theory to Expand a Color-Blind Racial Ideology in Education and Society.” *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* 20, no. 2 (2017): 147-162.
- Azimova, Nizora, and Bill Johnston. “Invisibility and Ownership of Language: Problems of Representation in Russian Language Textbooks.” *Modern Language Journal* 96, no. 3 (2012): 337-349.
- Bell, Jr., Derrick. “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma.” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (1980): 518-533.
- Black, Cyril, Robert Byrnes, Charles Jelavich, Henry Roberts, Melville Ruggles, Marshall Shulman, David Treadgold, and John Thompson. “An Appraisal of Russian Studies in the United States.” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 18, no. 3 (1959): 417-441.
- Black, Cyril, and John Thompson. *American Teaching About Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959.
- Blakely, Allison. *Russia and the Negro*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1986.
- Borstelmann, Thomas. *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Burkholder, Zoë. *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Byrnes, Robert F. *A History of Russian and East European Studies in the United States*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994.
- Coleman, Arthur P. “The Teaching of Area and Language Courses in the Field of Slavic and East European Studies: A Directory of U.S. Collegiate Institutions.” *American Slavic and East European Review* 4, no. 1 (1945): 185-208.
- Clowse, Barbara. *Brainpower for the Cold War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law.” *Harvard Law Review* 101, no. 7 (1988): 1331-1387.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. New York: New Press, 1995.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: McClurg, 1903.
- Engerman, David C. “The Ironies of the Iron Curtain.” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45, no. 3/4 (2004): 465-496.

- Engerman, David C. *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Engerman, David C. "Knowing Allies and Enemies: The World War II origins of Soviet studies in American Universities." In *Russian/Soviet Studies in the United States, Amerikanistika in Russia*, edited by Ivan Kurilla and Victoria Zhuravleva, 171-187. Boston, MA: Lexington Books, 2016.
- Fenton, William. *Area Studies in American Universities*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1947.
- Fosdick, Raymond. "Excerpts from the Review for 1944 of the Rockefeller Foundation." *The Modern Language Journal* 29, no. 7 (1945): 631-632.
- Gregory, John. "Obituary: Corliss Lamont." *The Independent*, May 11, 1995. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/people/obituary-corliss-lamont-1619163.html>.
- Gorski, Paul. *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2018.
- Guinier, Lani. "From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma." *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004): 92-118.
- "Harriet M. Gelfan Obituary." Atamaniuk Funeral Home. Accessed January 16, 2025. <https://www.atamaniuk.com/obituaries/Harriet-M-Gelfan?obId=2112473>.
- Harris, Chauncy. "Russian, Slavic, and Soviet Studies in the United States: Some Memories and Notes." *Russian History* 24, no. 4, (1997): 441-456.
- Harris, Cheryl. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1709-1791.
- Hartman, Andrew. *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Holliday, Adrian. "Native-speakerism: Taking the Concept Forward and Achieving Cultural Belief." In *(En)-Countering Native-Speakerism: Global Perspectives*, edited by Anne Swan, Patricia Aboshiha, and Adrian Holliday. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- House Committee on Un-American Activities, "Executive Session", (February 6, 1946), Washington, DC: National Archives, accessed May 30, 2024.
- Investigation of un-American propaganda activities in the United States. Testimony of Walter S. Steele regarding Communist activities in the United States. Testimony of Victor A. Kravchenko. Hearings regarding* (273-308). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office: March 27, 1947.
- Jacques, Agnes. "Why Students Study Russian." *The Modern Language Journal* 31, no. 8 (1947): 525-534.
- Karpovich, Michael. "Sir Bernard Pares." *The Russian Review* 8, no. 3 (1949): 183-185.
- Kincheloe, Joe. "Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: Evolution for Survival," *Counterpoints* 422 (2012): 147-183.
- Kuchins, Andrew and Jesse Mitchell. "The State of M.A. Russia/Eurasia Programs in the United States." Accessed January 30, 2025, <https://ceres.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/02/CarnegieReport.pdf>

- Lamont, Corliss. *The Peoples of the Soviet Union*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944.
- Lamont, Corliss. "National and Racial Minorities." In *USSR: A Concise Handbook*, edited by Ernest J. Simmons, 3-15. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1947.
- Lamont v. Postmaster General*, 3381 U.S. 301 (1965).
- Leonardo, Zeus. *Race, Whiteness, and Education*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Manning, Clarence. *A History of Slavic Studies in the United States*. Milwaukee, WI: The Marquette University Press, 1957.
- Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Morey, Maribel. *White Philanthropy: Carnegie Corporation's AN AMERICAN DILEMMA and the Making of a White World Order*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.
- Morrison, J. Cayce. "An Administrator Looks At Language Study." *The Modern Language Journal* 29, no. 8 (1945): 679-687.
- Murphy, Dianna, and Hadis Ghaedi. "'Who (Aren't) Our Students?' The Gender and Ethnoracial Distribution of U.S. Bachelor's Degrees in Russian Language and Literature Over Twenty Years, from 1999-2000 to 2018-2019." *Russian Language Journal* 71, no. 1 (2021): 17-39.
- National Archives and Records Administration. "Executive Order 9981, July 26, 1948." Accessed January 19, 2025. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9981>.
- Nepomnyashchy, Catherine. "After the Fall." *Sixty Years of The Harriman Institute at Columbia University*. Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://harriman.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/60-Anniversary-Harriman-pdf.pdf>
- Nieto, Sonia and Patricia Bode. *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Education*. New York: Pearson, 2018.
- Ornstein, Jacob. "A Decade of Russian Teaching: Notes on Methodology and Textbooks." *The Modern Language Journal* 35, no. 4 (April 1951): 263-279.
- Parmar, Inderjeet. *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Parppei Kati and Bulat Rakhimzianov (Eds). *Images of Otherness in Russia: 1547-1917*. Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2023.
- Parry, Albert. *America Learns Russian: A History of the Teaching of the Russian Language in the United States*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967.
- Posin, Jack. "Russian Studies in American Colleges." *The Russian Review* 7, no. 2 (1948): 62-68.
- Reagan, Timothy. "The Language of Pushkin, The Language of Putin: Teaching Russian in the United States." *American Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 2 (2023): 1-22.
- "Robinson to Head Russian Institute." *The New York Times*, November 6, 1945, 10
- Schrecker, Ellen. *The Age of McCarthyism*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1994.

- Senn, Alfred. "College Russian: Objectives and Methods." *The American Slavic and East European Review* 5, no. 1/2 (1946): 176-186.
- Shardakova, Maria, and Aneta Pavlenko. "Identity Options in Russian Textbooks." *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 3, no. 1 (2004): 25-46.
- Shaw, J. Thomas. "AATSEEL: The First Fifty Years." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 35, AATSEEL Golden Jubilee Issue (1991): 3-192.
- Shenker, Israel. "Still-Active Corliss Lamont." *The New York Times*, April 2, 1972, 22.
- Stauffer, Rachel. "Addressing the Representation of Russian Language Textbooks." In *The Art of Teaching Russian*, edited by Evgeny Dengub, Irina Dubinina, and Jason Merrill, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020.
- Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. ____ (2023).
- Swalwell, Katy. *Educating Activist Allies: Social Justice Pedagogy with the Suburban and Urban Elite*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Swalwell, Katy and Daniel Spikes. *Anti-Oppressive Education in "Elite" Schools: Promising Practices and Cautionary Tales from the Field*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2021.
- "The American Slavist Must Grow Up." *Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages* 5, no. 4 (1948): 77.
- Thompson, Amy and Emil Asanov. "'Nonnative? Next!' Native-speakerism in World Language Job Advertisements." *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 14, no. 1 (2024): 49-74.
- Twarog, Leon. "A Program of Slavic Studies: A Guide for the College Student." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 5, no. 3 (1961): 207-241.
- U.S. Senate. "Communist Infiltration in the Army: Hearing Before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations." Eighty-Third Congress, First Session, Pursuant to S. Res. 40, September 28, 1953. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office (1953): 86-87.
- Vukovich, Alexandra. "The Ethnic Process." In *Is Byzantine Studies a Colonialist Discipline?: Toward a Critical Historiography*, edited by Benjamin Anderson and Mirela Ivanova, 121-132. State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2023.
- Wolkonsky, Catherine. "Some Aspects of Teaching Russian." *The Modern Language Journal* 32, no. 1 (1948): 24-29.

Eisenstein at the Movies, Spring 1945

Author: Maya Garcia

Issue: Special Issue 2025

Abstract

The pioneering Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein kept a day planner in March-June 1945 listing titles of recent Hollywood films that at least partially correspond with screenings that he attended. Some of these titles re-appear in theoretical and personal writings from the final years of his life, 1946-48. This paper examines the historical circumstances of wartime American film screenings in Moscow and investigates a key subset of the films from Eisenstein's planner for insight into the mature director's ever-developing thoughts on contemporary cinema and American popular culture.

Eisenstein at the Movies, Spring 1945

Maya Garcia

And now, when our colleagues in art are becoming also our friends and comrades in battle, it is especially heartening to send them greetings from Moscow and understand that the friendship between the American and Soviet cinemas is in its way a symbol of the friendship between two great peoples in their great battle.

– Sergei Eisenstein, from an address to a Soviet conference on American and British film, August 1942¹

The multilingual and internationalist orientation that informs the work of Sergei Eisenstein make the pioneering Soviet film director an ever-appealing figure of study for “foreign” students of Russian and Soviet culture. Identification with this trans-national perspective was a key source of motivation for me, an American with an entirely elective affinity for the region, during the final years of my PhD in 2019-2023. I began conducting research in Eisenstein’s archive at the Russian State Archive for Literature and Art (RGALI) in the fall of 2019 for a dissertation on depictions of Ivan the Terrible and his rumored lover Feodor Basmanov in works of fiction. Knowing that my time in Russia was limited and precarious, I made an effort to copy as much material as I could from this archive to take with me into the uncertain future. By the time my last academic research visa to Russia expired in July 2022, I had amassed a store of documents far exceeding the scope of my dissertation (though only representing a small fraction of Eisenstein’s massive paper legacy). Thus, I was to continue a modified form of archival research from within the borders of my home country, to which I returned with great sorrow in February 2022.

¹ Sergei Eizenshtein, “Amerikanskaia kinomatografiia i ee bor’ba s fashizmom [American cinema and its fight with Fascism],” reprinted in L. A. Parfenov, ed., *Zhivye golosa kino. Govoriat vydaiushchiesia mastera otechestvennogo kinoiskusstva (30-e – 40-e gody). Iz neopublikovannogo [Living voices of film. Leading masters of domestic film art speak (’30s-’40s). From the unpublished]* (Moscow: Belyi bereg, 1999), 181-189: 189. All translations from Russian are my own, except where noted otherwise.

This article reflects an early phase in a new scholarly project suggested by a particularly mysterious item in my selection of Eisenstein's unpublished papers: a day planner for the year 1945 inscribed with a number of English-language film titles across the months of March-June. My research into the historical context of this intriguing document has become the basis for ongoing study of American films screened in the USSR during World War II. Academic literature, including both published primary documents and secondary scholarship, has examined in some detail Soviet screenings of Hollywood films in 1940-41 and 1946-49, focusing on the phenomenon of so-called "trophy films" acquired from seized collections in Soviet-occupied territories and exhibited domestically after significant editing and the addition of subtitles or dialogue dubbing.² My investigation centers on a thin spot in the literature concerning films that made their way to the USSR between 1942-1945 through diplomatic and commercial exchanges between the Allied nations. Most of the films listed in Eisenstein's day planner were recent releases of the mid-1940s that could not have been acquired as "trophies": the first round of trophies were taken in the territorial annexations of 1939-1940 and the second round in 1945 took from German archives, whose Hollywood holdings were limited to the prewar era.³

Currently, there exists only a small body of literature on the history of official wartime Soviet-American film exchanges.⁴ Very little of this existing

² Soviet and Russian filmmaker and scholar Maya Turovskaya began publishing on the topic in the 1980s; for her most extensive treatment, see: Maiia Turovskaiia, "Gollivud v Moskve, ili sovetskoe i amerikanskoe kino 30-x – 40-x godov [Hollywood in Moscow, or Soviet and American film of the '30s-'40s]," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, No. 97 (2010): 51-63. and "Operatsiia 'Trofeinyi fil'm' [Operation 'Trophy film']" in *Zuby drakon: moi 30-e gody [Teeth of the dragon: my 1930s]* (Moscow: ACT, 2015), 199-216. Contemporary scholars performing significant work on Soviet trophy films include Kristina Tanis and Claire Knight. See: Kristina Tanis, "'This Film Was Captured as a Trophy...': the International Context of Trophy Films," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 14, No. 1 (2020): 2-16 and Claire Knight, "Enemy Films on Soviet Screens: Trophy Films during the Early Cold War, 1947-52," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, No. 1 (2017): 125-149.

³ For an overview of the trophy film corpus, see: Claire Knight, "Stalin's Trophy Films, 1946-56: A Resource (revised and updated)," *KinoKultura* 56 (2017), http://www.kinokultura.com/2017/56-knight_updated.shtml.

⁴ The most extensive treatment of the topic is a monograph by US foreign relations scholar M. Todd Bennett, *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012). Bennett's discussion of the US government's side of the exchange is fairly detailed and well-researched, but his chapter on the Soviet side is marked by gaps and inaccuracies, likely a by-product of over-reliance on English-language sources and a lack of interest in Soviet film or its history. The most glaring inaccuracy is Bennett's claim that American films were "banned" in the USSR in the 1930s and entirely absent from Soviet screens until 1943. The drop-off in official film imports from the US is not in itself enough to posit the existence of a formal "ban" (a knee-jerk reaction common among American scholars of the USSR not attuned to the many subtler ways in which the government influenced culture). And more to the point, small numbers of American continued to make their way to Soviet screens throughout the 1930s and 1940s, a fact that can be found in Turovskaya's eyewitness accounts (see Maya

scholarship examines these exchanges from a Soviet/Russian studies perspective and even less from a transnational film studies perspective; these are precisely the perspectives I wish to bring to the topic. Tying my investigations to Eisenstein foregrounds both the Soviet/Russian and transnational cinematic contexts: he was both a leading Soviet film director of the era and a key player in Soviet-American cinematic relations.⁵ And while little has been written about his participation in the film exchanges of 1942-45, his own writings contain a number of clues on the subject. I am well-versed in the body of his writing that has been published, largely through the posthumous efforts of scholar-archivists who have been ceaselessly compiling his unpublished and often unfinished manuscripts from his death in 1948 to the present day. Additionally, I have studied a sizeable corpus of archival materials that have not yet been published, mostly those pertaining to his unfinished film project *Ivan the Terrible* (1941-1948), but also letters, essays, and diaries of various periods. I have been aided in my study of Eisenstein by the historical, biographical, and analytical research of several generations of scholars including Naum Kleiman, Yuri Tsivian, Joan Neuberger, and – most of all – my dissertation advisor Daria Khitrova.

The current paper brings my preliminary historical research, extensive readings of Eisenstein, and general cultural studies training to bear on the 1945 list of movie titles found in Eisenstein's archive. Through various means available to the resourceful modern researcher, I was able to view all but one of the named films. My readings of these films through the lens of Eisenstein's writings forms the core of this initial stage of my project. I hope to expand the project in the future to include more archival work on both the historical circumstances of the film screenings and Eisenstein's observations. For the former, I will need to consult the archives of several American and Russian (former Soviet) diplomatic bodies as well as film studios; for the latter I will need to access more of Eisenstein's unpublished archives, including transcriptions of his lectures at the All-Union

Turovskaya, "The 1930s and 1940s: Cinema in Context," in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring, eds., *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1993), 34-53.) as well as recent scholarship (see, for example, Kristina Tanis, "Vospriatie amerikanskikh fil'mov v SSSR: na primere odnogo pis'ma k Dine Durbin [Reception of American films in the USSR: by the example of one letter to Deanna Durbin]," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 64, No. 3-4 (2023): 645-672.) based on published Russian-language primary sources, such as the lists of currently-playing films and where to see them included in Soviet newspapers such as *Vecherniaia Moskva* [Evening Moscow].

⁵ Regarding Eisenstein's promotion of American films in the USSR there are many examples to cite, such as his participation in the conference on British and American film (see footnote 1), his chairing of a commission that arranged educational screenings of foreign films (see footnote 17), and his extensive writings on Anglo-American filmmakers such as D. W. Griffiths, Charlie Chaplin, and Walt Disney. His significance in the U.S. is attested, among other things, by the inclusion of *Ivan The Terrible* in the film program of the United Nations Conference on International Organization held in San Francisco in April-June 1945. Eisenstein was invited to attend this conference, as well as several special screenings of *Ivan the Terrible* in Hollywood later that year. He was not able to leave the USSR to attend any of these events, but the invitations and programs are preserved in his archive (S. M. Eisenstein archival fond, RGALI 1923.1.666).

State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) and more of his diaries and letters from the 1940s. Due to bilateral visa restrictions and financial sanctions, it is impossible to directly access Russians archive as a US citizen without a Russian bank account. Indirect access is possible in theory, but difficult to manage in practice as an independent scholar without institutional backing or funding. The lack of such support is my main barrier to accessing US archives at the moment, though I anticipate that the chaotic restructuring of the federal government currently underway may present challenges to using those archives associated with the State Department. I am optimistic that I will find the means to access some archives of interest in the next several years, through some combination of funding and academic networking. Ideally, I would like to forge a collaborative approach to reconstructing this moment of shared American-Soviet cultural history. My contribution to this greater scholarly project will begin with this close examination of one archival document and the films named therein.

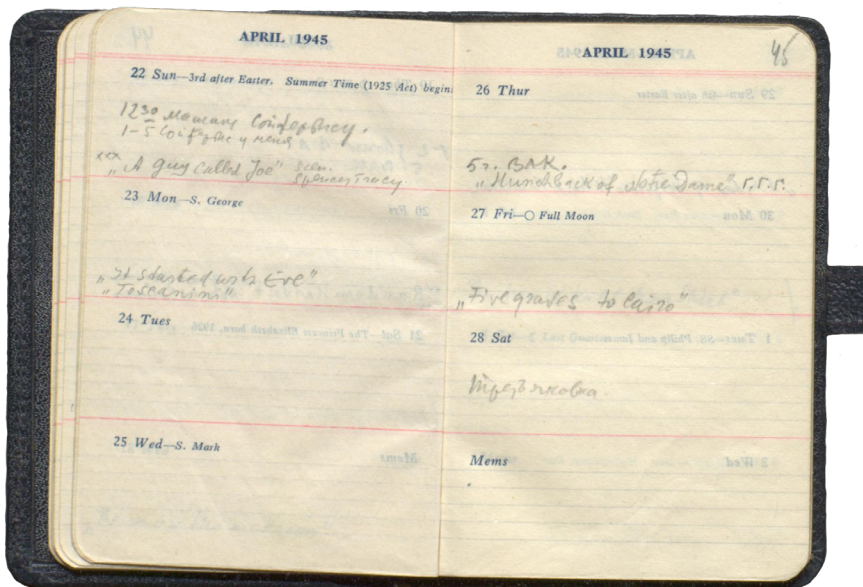


Fig. 1: Eisenstein's 1945 day planner.

Sergei Eisenstein kept many diaries throughout his life, most of them composed of paper scraps collected in folders. One of the few purpose-made bound diaries in his archive is a small, English-language day planner for the year 1945.⁶ The planner is mostly empty, but between the months of March and June there are a number of entries noting various engagements and events. The majority of these entries consist of titles that can be identified with recent Hollywood films (Eisenstein's transcriptions are often slightly off from the originals). These titles,

⁶ 1945 day planner inscribed by Sergei Eisenstein (S. M. Eisenstein archival fond, RGALI 1923.2.1150.40-51).

with one exception, do not overlap with the titles of films exhibited publicly in Soviet cinemas in 1945⁷, but as a leading film director, Eisenstein was among a privileged few who had additional means of watching movies, including closed screenings for industry professionals as well as private screenings put on by the US Embassy for the cultural and political elite of Moscow.

In 1944-1945, regular screenings of recent Hollywood films were arranged and hosted by Embassy staff led by acting director of the US Office of War Information (OWI) in Moscow, John F. Melby, with assistance from Kathleen Harriman, ambassador Averell Harriman's daughter and a journalist in the employ of OWI.⁸ Film screenings had been a feature of life at the ambassador's official residence, the (in)famous Spaso House in central Moscow, since the time of the first US ambassador to the USSR William C. Bullitt. However, deteriorating political relations between the two nations in the decade leading up to World War II led to increasingly limited contact between diplomats and civilians and a steep decline in the exchange of films. When the US and USSR became wartime allies at the end of 1941, political and cultural policies suddenly reversed course. Diplomats and filmmakers in both countries were swiftly engaged in a number of overlapping initiatives aiming for cooperation.

The current US ambassador in Moscow at the start of the war, William H. Standley, took a strong interest in importing and distributing contemporary American films as a means of educating the Soviet public on their new ally's culture and achievements, shown in their most glorified Hollywood light. Standley recalls rather bitterly in his memoir *Admiral Ambassador to Russia* the logistical and political roadblocks which held up his plans.⁹ The Soviet film director Mikhail Kalatozov recalls with equal bitterness the difficulties he faced on his trip to the US in 1943-1944 as an emissary of the Soviet film industry whose

⁷ I compiled the titles of American films shown in Soviet theaters in 1945 by consulting the listings printed in issues of *Vecherniaia Moskva* from across that year. The film in Eisenstein's planner that also appeared in 1945 cinema listings, *Bambi* (dir. David Hand, Walt Disney Productions, 1942), arrived in cinemas two months after the date given in the planner.

⁸ Little has been written about the Embassy screenings beyond the brief mentions in the biographies, memoirs, and letters of the US diplomats involved. See: Robert P. Newman, *The Cold War Romance of Lillian Hellman and John Melby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 29-30; W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York: Random House, 1975), 299; and Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman, 1891-1986* (New York: W. Morrow, 1992), 354-5; Geoffrey Roberts, "'Do the crows still roost in the Spasopeskovskaya trees?' The Wartime Correspondence of Kathleen Harriman," *Harriman Magazine*, No. 2 (2015): 12-23. I am extremely grateful to Geoffrey Roberts, who is preparing Kathleen Harriman's correspondence for publication, for providing consultation on the topic of the film screenings in Kathleen's letters and sharing relevant excerpts from them with me. Even with all these sources, I have not yet been able to compile a full list of all films screened (let alone the particulars of dates and guestlists), but I am continuing my research towards a longer and more comprehensive project on the subject.

⁹ William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), 424-426.

many tasks included selecting and procuring films to import.¹⁰ This effort was one of the few in which Kalatozov eventually found success and two shipments of recent Hollywood films, one Kalatozov's and the other Standley's, began their long and difficult journey to the USSR in the summer of 1943.¹¹ By the time the films arrived, Standley had already been succeeded as ambassador by Harriman. Under Harriman, these films, as well as others (including older movies found in the attic of Spaso House), were screened at regular gatherings of diplomats and top Soviet military and government functionaries.¹² Beginning in early 1944, the guest list for certain regular gatherings widened to include highly-regarded cultural workers.¹³

Eisenstein, as a decorated filmmaker and senior member of the Artistic Council of the Committee on Cinema, certainly had the standing to be included on the Embassy movie night guest list. Additionally, his unfinished memoirs contain a cryptic fragment that has been convincingly decoded by leading Eisenstein scholar Naum Kleiman as a reference to an Embassy gathering at which the director was deeply taken with the charismatic Kathleen.¹⁴ As Eisenstein spent 1944 working overtime to complete the first film of his unfinished three-part epic *Ivan the Terrible*, it seems likely that he would have begun attending the Embassy screenings after the successful premiere of that film in January 1945, which is consistent with the use of the day planner beginning in March.¹⁵ I have not found

¹⁰ See Mikhail Kalatozov, "'Seks...vydokhsia i vkonets sostarilsia'. Mikhail Kalatozov: pis'ma iz Ameriki ['Sex...has played out and finally gotten old', Mikhail Kalatozov: letters from America]," S.V. Kapterev, ed. *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 65 (2003): 196-216; and Mikhail Kalatozov, *Litso Gollivuda* (Moscow, Goskinoizdat, 1949).

¹¹ Standley, Admiral Ambassador to Russia, 425; Kalatozov "'Seks...vydokhsia i vkonets sostarilsia'...", 213-14. These were not the only shipments of films from Hollywood to Moscow made during the war years, but they are the most well-documented.

¹² Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman, 1891-1986* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1992), 354-355.

¹³ Harriman, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, 299.

¹⁴ Sergei Eizenshtein, "Printsessa dollarov," "Katerinki," in Naum Kleiman, ed., *Yo. Memuary [Yo. Memoirs]* (Moscow: Garazh, 2019), Vol. 2, 292-293, 294-2977. Additionally, Eisenstein drew several "friendly caricatures" of Kathleen that emphasized a physical feature also prominently exaggerated in caricatures of Eisenstein by himself and others – a large forehead; see Sergei Eisenstein, Naum Kleiman, ed. *Eizenshtein na bumage: graficheskie raboty mastera kino [Eisenstein on paper: graphic works of the master of cinema]* (Moscow: Ad Marginem press, 2017), 266-275. Perhaps Kathleen's role as a conduit for the sharing of recent American films played a role in the feelings of identification and affection Eisenstein seemed to have for her.

¹⁵ This theory is also suggested – obliquely – by the description of the terms of Eisenstein's acquaintance with Kathleen as described in the aforementioned memoir fragment interpreted by Kleiman. This text takes the form of an allegorical fairy tale of an unhappy "builder of cathedrals" (Eisenstein frequently described his film work in architectural terms and had gone to school for civic engineering at the behest of his architect father) who falls in love with a vivacious "Dollar Princess" (Averell Harriman was a fabulously wealthy banker and railroad "king"). In this piece, which is full of thinly-veiled allusions that Kleiman identifies with other frequent guests of Spaso House circa 1945, Eisenstein describes meeting the "Dollar Princess" when she "visited his newest cathedral" (i.e. attended a screening of his latest film in early 1945) and ending when she

a direct reference to the Embassy film screenings in Eisenstein's writings, but my research is currently limited to that which has been published and an incomplete subset of his unpublished diaries representing what I was able to obtain from RGALI between 2019-2022. Until I am able to access more archival materials, I cannot claim with full confidence that film titles in the planner correspond to Embassy screenings that Eisenstein attended. Films screened at the Embassy were often re-screened at other venues under the auspices of various Soviet institutions such as the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS).¹⁶ In particular, the films might be shown to students at the All-Soviet State Institute for Cinematography (VGIK) or to film industry workers at the House of Film (Dom Kino) professional club. In 1940-1941, Eisenstein was the nominal chairman of a commission that arranged for VGIK and Dom Kino screenings from the newly established "trophy" collection of foreign films. This much is attested by archival documents published in *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*,¹⁷ but the commission's and Eisenstein's activities after 1941 remain a question for further archival work. The outbreak of war with Nazi Germany upended the Soviet film industry, and I have not yet established how this commission and its activities changed after 1941. A version of this commission is likely to have existed in 1945 and it is reasonable to suppose that Eisenstein was involved in it, though perhaps in a less active role than before, as he was by then fully consumed with work on *Ivan the Terrible*.

For the present, I will set aside the question of where Eisenstein might have viewed the movies named in his planner to focus on assessing how he might have reacted to them, tracing where possible the imprints of these films in his memoirs and theoretical writings. I hope to write more about the Embassy, VGIK, and Dom Kino screenings themselves once I have succeeded in accessing further documentary materials. This paper reflects the early stages of my research in this area, drawing from three main sources: Eisenstein's writings, extant scholarship and published primary sources on Soviet and American cinema and cultural relations in the 1940s, and the films themselves. I will offer below a historico-culturally specific analysis of these films through the lens of Eisenstein's writings, in particular those associated with the major projects he began in 1945-1946, his memoirs and the theoretical treatise *Non-Indifferent Nature*.¹⁸

"went away with her Fatum" (i.e. her inevitable departure at the end of Averell's tenure as ambassador in January 1946). See Eizenshtein, "Katerinki," 294-297.

¹⁶ Todd Bennett, "Culture, Power, and Mission to Moscow: Film and Soviet-American Relations during World War II," *The Journal of American History*, 88, No. 2 (September 2001), 513.

¹⁷ Svetlana Ishevskaya and Denis Viren, eds. "Vyvezti v Belye Stol'by kartiny vysshei i l-i kategorii..." Protokoly zasedaniia Komissii po fondu inostrannykh fil'mov pod predsedatel'stvom Eizenshteina, 1940-1941, ['Send to Belye Stol'by films of the highest and first categories...' Meeting protocols of the Commission for the foreign film fond chaired by Eisenstein, 1940-1941], *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, No. 86 (2008): 124-152.

¹⁸ The most up-to-date scholarly edition reconstructing Eisenstein's drafts and plans for this work can be found in: Sergei Eizenshtein, Naum Kleiman, ed. *Neravnodushnaia priroda* [*Non-Indifferent Nature*] (Moscow: Muzei Kino, 2004). An English translation of the main four complete chapters of the work (without the additional notes, drafts, and

Eisenstein's planner contains the names of thirty films (twenty-seven features and three shorts) spread across eleven weeks without any discernible regularity or pattern to the dates. I believe that the film titles, as well as the other performances and meetings noted in the planner, were written in advance as a schedule to which Eisenstein, extremely busy with multiple projects and increasingly socially withdrawn, may not have strictly adhered. However, there are fifteen entries which feature symbols above or next to the names that appear to have been added in after the screenings as annotation – the placement, and in some cases, pencil quality, suggest later addition. While studying these films and a large contingent of Eisenstein's contemporaneous writings both published and unpublished, I formed a hypothesis about the meaning of these symbols. It is only a conjecture, but one plausible and compelling enough to stand as my going theory.

There are two recurring symbols, "X" and "T," sometimes appearing in double or triple form ("XXX," "T.T.") next to or above film titles. Throughout his notes, Eisenstein used X's to mark observations and citations of special significance, sometimes accompanying the X's with additional positive indications such as "Great!" It therefore seems likely that the X's placed by film titles in the planner are similar markers of significant interest or positive estimation, with repetition intensifying the sentiment. This conjecture is supported by the fact that several of the films marked with X's do show up in Eisenstein's writings, including two "X" films discussed with interest (and mixed or neutral estimation) and two "XXX" films discussed with strong praise.

The "T." indicator is trickier to decode, but I have settled on the theory that it's a rough antithesis of "X," indicating a negative reaction to the film. The period indicates that "T." (the cyrillic letter G) is an abbreviation for something (unlike "X" which is a conventional symbol of emphasis used without a period). I believe the full word indicated to be *govno* (shit), a word Eisenstein used not infrequently in his letters and diaries to describe works he disliked or judged inadequate.¹⁹ I have found one direct discussion of a "T." film in Eisenstein's writings and it is pointedly critical.

I formed my theories about this "rating system" in the process of viewing the films and judging them against opinions about film, art, and social ethics set out by Eisenstein in his late writings. I then composed brief reports summarizing my observations for each film of the "X" and "T." subsets. These summaries both support my interpretation of Eisenstein's "rating" and offer insights into the director's relationship to Hollywood film during the last years of his life, a period of feverish theoretical and personal investigation. Though he became increasingly

related essays) can be found in Sergei Eisenstein, Herbert Marshall, trans. *Non-Indifferent Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Among published texts, some illustrative examples can be found in Sergei Eizenshtein, Vladimir Zabrodin, ed. "...zhit' v usloviakh "neustoichivogo ravnovesiia" Pis'ma S.M. Eizenshteina M.M. Straukhu iz-za granitsy. 1929-1931 [...to live in a condition of "unstable balance" Letters from S.M. Eisenstein to M.M. Straukh from abroad. 1929-1931]," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 60 (2002): 179-212.

reclusive, especially following the banning of *Ivan the Terrible Pt. II* in 1946, he continued to engage with the latest developments in film at home and abroad up until his death in February 1948.

I will arrange my reports in the order of ascending estimation: “Т.Т.Т.” - ““Т.Т.” - “Т.” - “X” - “XX” - “XXX,” using my own discretion to organize the films within each rating category. Most reports will be brief, but a few will be extensive where Eisenstein’s engagement with the films can be traced directly in his later writings. The section headings contain the name of the film as recorded by Eisenstein in quotes followed by the official US release title and information.

“Т.Т.Т.”

“Henry V”: *Henry V* (dir. Laurence Olivier, Two Cities Films, 1944). Sir Olivier’s directorial debut appears to be the only non-American film on the list. Its screening may have been an undertaking of British diplomats, likely at the UK Embassy. Its provenance and release date rule out being a “trophy film” and it was not later given a Soviet release, so if it was being viewed in consideration for one, it underperformed. My guess is that it was a one-off screening arranged in honor of visiting British dignitaries: it was shown on May 12, the anniversary of King George VI’s coronation and three days after May 9, which was marked in Eisenstein’s planner with the note “VOKS. Mrs. Churchill.”

Eisenstein, a lifelong lover of British literature and more recently an ardent student of Elizabethan drama in preparation for *Ivan the Terrible*, must have been extremely disappointed by this emotionally and aesthetically flat interpretation of a Shakespeare play which squanders its precious color film stock on un-cinematic emulation of open-air theater and two-dimensional illustration.

In his writing on color in film, which was a major interest of his from the time of filming the part-color *Ivan the Terrible* up to the final day of his life²⁰, Eisenstein drew a distinction between *tsvetnoe kino* and *tsvetovoe kino*.²¹ This dichotomy might be rendered into English as “color film vs. chromatic film” or “film in color vs. film of color” – linguistically, it opposes two different adjectival forms of the word “color,” conceptually, it distinguishes between film that merely has color as one of its properties and film that uses color consciously as a tool of art. Films of the first category are at best disappointments for failing to realize the full potential of the medium. At worst, they are “color catastrophes” which resemble “bad oleographic prints” to borrow phrases from Eisenstein’s criticism of other

²⁰ Among the papers on his desk at time of death was a letter to his close associate, the director Lev Kuleshov, on the subject of color film. See: Sergei Eizenshtein, “Tsvetovoe kino [Chromatic film],” in Sergei Yutkevich, ed., *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* [Selected works] (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968), Vol. 3: 579-588.

²¹ This concept was set down in a manifesto titled “Ne tsvetnoe, a tsvetovoe [Not color, but chromatic]” first published in *Kinogazeta* 20, no. 29 (1940).

color films.²² Many shots in *Henry V* do resemble prints – there is an evident attempt to suggest the aesthetic of late medieval illuminated manuscripts. But without the painterly idiosyncracies, twisty Gothic details, surreal perspectives, and bloody violence of medieval illuminations, these shots more closely resemble early-twentieth-century mass-market children’s book illustrations.

“Hunchback of Notre Dame”: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (dir. William Dieterle, RKO Radio Pictures, 1939). As Eisenstein gave only the name of the film in his notebook, it is up to the researcher to determine which adaptation of Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) was shown. It seems overwhelmingly likely to have been the 1939 RKO film for three main reasons: one, this film was the most recent one in 1945 and thus of the same time period as the other movies in the planner; two, this is the version that was given a Soviet theatrical release in 1949; and three, the other versions that existed in 1945 were silents and while silents were certainly still screened in some settings, they would have been out of place in the Embassy screenings. I will thus give my criticism of the 1939 film.

Eisenstein returned to Hugo and this particular novel many times in his writings, evidently admiring this work greatly. He seems to have been particularly fascinated with the complex dialectic of horror and amusement characterizing the medieval attitude towards physical deformity depicted at an incipient moment of cultural transition into the early modern era. Eisenstein was probably very disappointed by this film’s apparent lack of interest in provoking terror and amusement in the viewer and engaging them psychologically-emotionally in the reconstruction of a historical moment. The film’s psychological-emotional toolbox is limited to the most predictable and palatable 1930s Hollywood conventions: excitement at danger and intrigue, pity at suffering and romantic yearning. Charles Laughton’s performance as Quasimodo gives the character humanity and pathos but does not horrify or amuse – to effectively adapt Hugo’s complex and deeply historically evocative novel requires the actor to do all these things at once. For someone of Eisenstein’s historically relativistic perspective, it is not the point to show that Quasimodo is not really a monster by modern standards, but rather to demonstrate the social and material reality in which this person is considered a monster. The film privileges the presentist view of triumphant rationalism, positing a clean break with the “superstitious” past that Eisenstein would likely find trite for numerous reasons, including his lifelong interest in magic and other occult practices as ongoing traditions, as well as his view that life follows a cyclical spiral and art must combine forward-thinking experimentation with retrospective exploration of historical forms.

²² Eisenstein, *Non-Indifferent Nature*, 388-90.

“T.I.”

“Tahiti Nights”: *Tahiti Nights* (dir. Will Jason, Columbia Pictures, 1944). This was the only film in the 1945 planner I was unable to view despite my best efforts. It does not seem to have ever been transferred to video and no archive with a publicly-accessible catalog reports owning a copy of the film. It may well be lost, perhaps not unfortunately. The synopsis of the film given by the American Film Institute (AFI) describes a typical cinematic crime of American colonialist racism, a lightly-raunchy musical comedy about the romantic misadventures of American musicians touring the Pacific Islands and making a mockery of supposed local courtship traditions.²³

“Counterattack”: *Counter-Attack* (dir. Zoltan Korda, Columbia Pictures, 1945). Several specimens of the oddball crop of pro-Soviet war-related films made in Hollywood during the brief years of Soviet-American alliance were eagerly purchased by the Soviet government and put into domestic distribution.²⁴ *Counter-Attack* was not, perhaps in part because it came quite late in the game, premiering in the US in April 1945. It appears in Eisenstein’s planner on May thirtieth, twenty-one days after the declaration of victory over Nazi Germany and eight days before the final film listed in the planner. The Soviet government had already spent a fair amount of money on *Mission to Moscow* (dir. Michael Curtiz, Warner Bros., 1943), *North Star* (dir. Lewis Milestone, Samuel Goldwyn Productions, 1943), and *Song of Russia* (dir. Gregory Ratoff, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, 1944) in the years prior.²⁵ By 1945, the government was curtailing its purchase of Hollywood films for political as well as financial reasons.²⁶

It’s hard to imagine a Hollywood film about the Red Army that could possibly live up to Eisenstein’s standards in terms of both artistic efficacy and political conscience. Artistically, the film is stylistically simple, failing to break free of its stage-play origins and become something dynamically cinematic. Politically, it’s under-developed, with a strangely bloodless depiction of Soviet-German conflict and a minor plotline involving an enlisted Wehrmacht soldier of proletarian origins developing class consciousness that comes across as a hasty sketch without psychological depth or nuance. Similarly unsatisfying are the film’s brief

²³ “Tahiti Nights,” AFI Catalog of Feature Films, American Film Institute, <https://catalog.afi.com/Film/24612-TAHITI-NIGHTS?sid=953ddec0-e3c9-4b03-a640-ef262b25de98&sr=11.719867&cp=1&pos=0>.

²⁴ *Mission to Moscow* (dir. Michael Curtiz, Warner Bros., 1943) was purchased and released in 1943, *North Star* (dir. Lewis Milestone, Samuel Goldwyn Productions, 1943) and *Song of Russia* (dir. Gregory Ratoff, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, 1944) were purchased and released in 1944. For more on the creation and reception of these films, see: Bennett, “Culture, Power, and *Mission to Moscow*,”; and Beth Holmgren, “Russia on Their Mind: How Hollywood Pictured the Soviet Front,” in Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren, eds., *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 105-123.

²⁵ G. L. Bondareva, ed. *Kremlevskii kinoteatr. 1928-1953: Dokumenty* [*The Kremlin Movie Theatre. 1928-1953: Documents*] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), 692.

²⁶ Bennett, “Culture, Power, and *Mission to Moscow*,” 516.

invocations of Christian imagery, or rather, vocabulary – the mentions of miracles and faith in the dialogue feel like throwaways, with no real thematic import or creative realization. The minimalist framework – the majority of the film plays out in an empty, caved-in basement and centers on a single soldier’s struggle – has the potential for a neo-Symbolist or metatextual meditation on human psychology, war, and theater. Done as a straightforward Hollywood action-drama, it just feels like a C-production. Its protagonist is a simple and morally flawless war hero created at the intersection of Hollywood crudity and Socialist Realist propaganda, and even Paul Muni’s idiosyncratic charisma and technical acting prowess cannot make something compelling of him. One wonders how the scene in which he pulls out his beloved pocket dictionary (already a trite detail) to reveal that he has literally crossed out the entry for “impossible” went over with an audience of Soviet writers, many of whom (including Eisenstein) used self-censorship as a survival tactic during the violent purges of only a few years prior.²⁷



Fig. 2: Soviet self-censorship?

The film’s own history, which Eisenstein may or may not have known about, is deeply tied up in the histories of both Soviet and American political repression of artists. A well-researched account of the strange history through which an obscure play published in the Soviet Union in 1937 transformed into a modestly

²⁷ The year 1937 is most remembered in connection with Stalin’s deadly purges, but 1940 was the year in which at least two artists very close to Eisenstein (Isaak Babel and Vsevolod Meyerhold) were executed by the state.

successful Broadway play in 1943 and then an ill-fated film in 1945 can be found in Maksim Gudkov, “Sovetskii raritet o voine na amerikanskoi stsene: p’esa I. Vershinina I M. Rudermana ‘Pobeda’ (1943) [A Soviet rarity about war on the American stage: I. Vershinin and M. Ruderman’s play ‘Victory’ (1943)],” *Voprosy teatra*, No. 1-2 (2018): 353-382.

“T.”

“Private Hargrove”: *See Here, Private Hargrove* (dir. Wesley Ruggles, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1944). Eisenstein was a great admirer of the eccentric tradition in American comedy, writing enthusiastically of his encounters with Chaplin, the Marx Brothers, and other vaudevillians and clowns. *Private Hargrove* is a comedy without clowns and utterly lacking in eccentric verve. It’s hardly a comedy at all, more of a lighthearted coming-of-age story about military training with a few jokes included. It may have been selected for an embassy screening with the thought of entertaining military personnel in mind (and Embassy screenings would have both Soviet and US current and former military personnel in significant attendance). Eisenstein did have a brief military career in his youth, which he returned to several times in his memoirs. There is enough overlap between his experience and Hargrove’s (both are young writer-intellectuals miscast as soldiers, both find themselves adjacent to extensive embezzling schemes cooked up by crooked comrades²⁸) that one can imagine Eisenstein reacting negatively to seeing material of personal significance used to make a vexingly uninspired and uninteresting film.

“KID OF SPAIN”: *The Kid from Spain* (dir. Leo McCarey, Samuel Goldwyn Productions, 1932). This early Eddie Cantor comedy may not stand up to the test of time on its merits as a film, but it is one of the most intriguing entries in the planner from a research standpoint. Most films shown by the US Embassy or purchased by the Soviet government during the war were recent releases of the 1940s. *The Kid from Spain* is a notable exception, significantly older than the other films on this list and other lists of American films shown in the USSR at this time.²⁹ This begs the question: why was it screened? Beginning from the position that perceived audience interest played a role in the selection of the Embassy films, I see two possible sources of motivation for hauling *The Kid from Spain* from the vault (or perhaps just the Spaso House attic). One: the film *Roman Scandals* (dir. Frank Tuttle, Samuel Goldwyn Productions, 1933), the final and most popular Eddie Cantor-Busby Berkeley musical comedy had made

²⁸ See Sergei Eizenshtein, “Mertvye dushi [Dead Souls],” in *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 1, 144-155.

²⁹ Lists I have consulted include the film listings in *Vechernaia Moskva*, a list of film titles mentioned in connection to Embassy screenings in 1944 in Kathleen Harriman’s letters shared with me by Geoffrey Roberts, and a compiled list of films mentioned in the various secondary sources cited throughout the paper.

it to the USSR and may have been popular enough to inspire interest in seeing a related film.³⁰ Two: several of the Soviet filmmakers who were among the most honored of the guests at these screenings had a well-known affinity for Mexico and one was also the leading Soviet disciple of Busby Berkeley.

Though both motivations could have been in play, I am most interested in considering the latter: that the film was programmed as a special treat of sorts for Grigory Alexandrov (Eisenstein's former assistant director who became a leading director of lighthearted musical comedies after their falling out in the early 1930s) and Eisenstein, who did write the film's name in all capitals (something he did not do anywhere else in the planner). It could well have been a treat for Alexandrov, but seems unlikely to have been enjoyable for Eisenstein, who had a very deep, personal connection to the country treated so frivolously by this thoroughly American film, in which not a single Mexican was a credited contributor. He would, however, have been intrigued (perhaps morbidly) to see this film for various reasons, including the dubious minor role it played in the controversy around his canceled Mexican film project of 1932. The backer for this project, American writer Upton Sinclair, lost trust in the Soviet team of Eisenstein, Alexandrov, and cinematographer Eduard Tisse and took possession of the extensive footage they had shot to create his own film after the trio had been forced to return to the Soviet Union. The release of Sinclair's film, titled *Thunder Over Mexico*, was met with protests from Eisenstein's American friends and admirers. One of these supporters, the writer and dance impresario Lincoln Kirstein, wrote a public letter to Sinclair that included the accusation that he sold some of the Soviet team's footage of a bullfight to Samuel Goldwyn to use in *The Kid From Spain*. Sinclair denied this allegation when pressed by a reporter from *The Motion Picture Herald*.³¹ The Goldwyn film features two bullfight sequences, one a showcase of the American Sidney Franklin, the "bullfighter from Brooklyn" made famous by Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*,³² the other a pantomime farce starring Cantor.

Having examined *The Kid From Spain* alongside the bullfight footage included in Alexandrov's 1979 arrangement of Eisenstein's Mexican footage released as *Que Viva México!*³³, I have to admit that there is nothing in the American film that could plausibly have come from the Soviet team's material. The appearance of the arenas and toreadors in each film are markedly different and there are no shots in *The Kid From Spain* in which neither the arena nor the toreador can be seen. It is still possible, however, that Sinclair may have sold some footage to Goldwyn that

³⁰ I have not been able to verify the Soviet release year for this film (1940) claimed by various non-scholarly sources (IMDB, Wikipedia, cinephile forums). I have seen a digitized copy of the Russian-subtitled Soviet cut that resembles releases of this general time, but the exact date and nature of the release (i.e. public or limited) cannot be determined from it.

³¹ "It's 'Thunder' Over Sinclair Now," *Motion Picture Herald*, September 30, 1933, 14.

³² Sidney Franklin reflected on his role in Cantor's film and Hemingway's book in his autobiography *Bullfighter from Brooklyn: An Autobiography of Sidney Franklin* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952).

³³ Sergei Eizenshtein, dir. *Que Viva México!*, ed. Grigorii Aleksandrov (Mosfil'm, 1979).

simply did not make it into the final cut of the film. Sinclair's flippant remark to a reporter that "Besides, neither Eisenstein nor Eddie Cantor had any labels on their bulls," leaves me with a vague, yet lingering suspicion. It remains to be seen if any material clues can be found in the relevant archives.

"Chopin": *A Song to Remember* (dir. Charles Vidor, Columbia, 1945).

Eisenstein wrote about this film in a "Postscriptum" to the fourth and final chapter of *Non-Indifferent Nature*. This chapter was written in spring-summer 1945 and the entry for this film (originally titled *A Song to Remember*, but evidently called simply *Chopin* in Russia) in the planner falls on April fifth. The chapter he was then writing takes as one of its central concerns the potentials of musically-structured color cinematography, Eisenstein invokes this film as an example of a recent work that failed to live up to the potential of its material.

The technical mastery of color has barely begun, has yet to be realized and the aesthetics of it have yet to be mastered, even to a modest degree.

And in the light of the "color catastrophes" that almost all color films appear to be today, the theoretical work on the problem of the subject matter of a film, its color and combination with music is very significant.

The definition of a "color catastrophe," as the definition of aesthetic lack of mastery in the application of color in film, unfortunately does not only refer to those film where the color functions only as a recurrent sensation – such as *The Thief of Baghdad* and *The Jungle Book* as well as *The Bathing Beauty* of MGM.

Other such examples, alas, were two pictures of apparently quite different intentions, which chance circumstances led me to watch on two consecutive days at the very height of my work on the Chinese landscape for this article: These are *Bambi* by my friend Disney (a very belated viewing for me) and *Chopin* by Columbia Pictures (1944).

[...]

The second film presents a no less melancholy picture.

Strictly speaking, from the purely plastic aspect of a film, any *general surface of each shot* is a distinct tonal or color "landscape" – not because of what it represents but because of the *emotional feeling* the shot must bear, which itself is perceived as *a whole* within the consecutive course of the montage pieces.

If such shots, as a plastic equivalent, are intended to repeat the course of such profoundly poetic music as Chopin's, then it would seem that it is difficult to find a more charming and delightful problem to solve.

To create a picturesque symphony of tender fading tones (repeating Chopin's nocturnes and preludes) is a charming problem indeed.

Yet what do we see instead in the film *Chopin*?

A jumble of colored fragments with no combination within themselves or with each other, without a logic of the feelings or mood or atmosphere of the scene or, above all, most important of all, most necessary of all, without a unified course of the composer's musical thought!

And again we have before us the stubborn *color variegation* of separate objects instead of a general unrestrained colored space of the suite composed of them.

Again a play of *colored objects*, and not of the *color of the objects*.

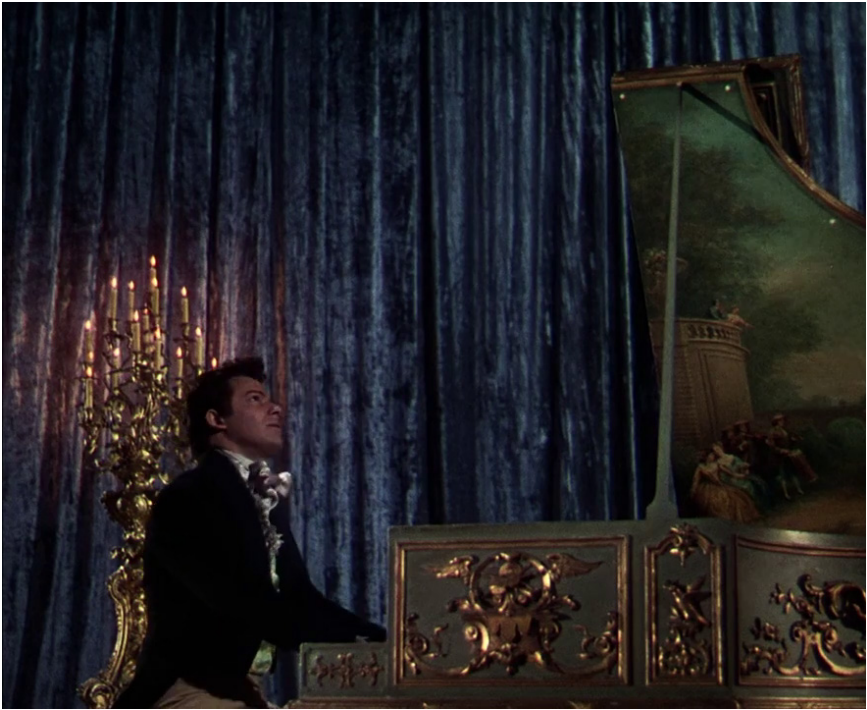
This is particularly scandalous and insulting in the last part of the film, which had been conceived correctly – in *Chopin's* concert tour to collect money for the Polish uprising (I will not go here into an evaluation of the historical veracity of the plot itself). Here the basic musical theme of the film, a polonaise (which is understood as an expression of the national feelings of the Polish people), is played continuously in the music, and at the same time the visual aspect of the episode is being continuously modified through change of European concert halls, where Chopin himself is playing the polonaise on the piano. Dissolving into each other, posters from various cities flash by, the varied forms of the halls, the changing forms of the pianos, the changing costumes of Chopin, which become darker in unison with his growing illness – and mainly the colored velvet backdrop of the background.

Well conceived – but terribly realized. For again the basic concept is forgotten, that *red velvet* cannot turn into *blue velvet*, and *green velvet* into *violet velvet*, *crimson velvet*, or *orange velvet*; and that this can only be done by *color* – easily flowing from *red* into *blue*, from *green* into *violet*, into *crimson*, into *orange*.

The color, and not the velvet.

After this flow of color into color, each color can then freely “materialize” in reverse into surface, texture, folds, the general concreteness of velvet; but musical transitions are accessible only to tonally colored or textured values and not to nailed-up pieces of varicolored plush!³⁴

³⁴ Sergei Eisenstein, *Non-indifferent Nature*, 388-392. I have slightly modified Marshall's translation.



Figs. 3-4: Scenes from a color catastrophe.

Eisenstein's intense frustration at the failure of this film to utilize color as an independent, mobile element not statically affixed to objects is made all the stronger by his personal situation as someone who had been theorizing on color for quite some time without access to color film stock with which to experiment and demonstrate his ideas. It was not until December of 1945 that he was about to obtain enough Agfacolor film (expropriated from Germany as war booty by the Red Army) to film one scene on one set – the fatal feast that became the capstone for *Ivan the Terrible*.³⁵ Eisenstein certainly made his limited foray into full-color film count, carefully planning an audiovisual symphony in which color (not only the color attached to objects, but untethered colored light projected with theatrical gels) moves and transforms, dancing expressively to Prokofiev's score. Unable to continue working with color film after the completion of this sequence, the director continued his work on paper, writing passionately about theoretical methods and subjects for color films until the very end of his life.

If Eisenstein had also included in his critique of *A Song to Remember* "an evaluation of the historical veracity of the plot," he would likely have noted the rather incongruous insertion of a proto-Bolshevik Russian revolutionary agitating for cross-cultural solidarity in the fight against oppression under the tsar. This character, who appears briefly in an underground meeting of Polish rebels that a young Chopin attends, was, it seems, a Soviet creation. One of the letters from Hollywood sent by director and cultural emissary Mikhail Kalatozov to the Chairman of the Committee on Cinema Under the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union Ivan Bolshakov described a meeting with Charles Vidor in which he helped the young director and "friend of the [Soviet] Union" re-work the screenplay he'd been assigned to give a more sympathetic image of the Russian people.³⁶ Kalatozov's anecdote ends with the loaded suggestion that "if the studio bosses don't change their tune following the renewed anti-Soviet campaign in the press regarding the Polish question, the picture will come out perfectly acceptable for us."³⁷ The film was evidently acceptable enough to be screened once in Moscow, but it did not make it into circulation, perhaps due to the Soviet government's increasingly fraught position on "the Polish question."

"X"

"Bambi": *Bambi* (dir. David Hand, Walt Disney Productions, 1942). Eisenstein's writings include several mentions of *Bambi* which suggest the film was of significant interest to him although his evaluation of it is complicated and critical. The single "X" may reflect a certain ambivalence – an abiding love for Disney³⁸ and enthusiasm for the film's concept weigh against his great

³⁵ Oksana Bulgakowa, Anne Dwyer, trans. *Sergei Eisenstein: A Biography* (Berlin: Potemkin Press, 2001), 223.

³⁶ Kalatozov, "'Seks...vydokhsia i vkonets sostarilsia'..." 214.

³⁷ Kalatozov, "'Seks...vydokhsia i vkonets sostarilsia'..." 214.

³⁸ Eisenstein, who had spent time with Disney in Hollywood in 1930, had planned

disappointment in the film's approach to color and landscape. In an early note on *Bambi* dated 3 December 1943, he is quite excited by the concept of a film about the circle of life starring a deer:

Bambi, of course, must not be ignored.

Bambi is already a shift towards ecstasy – serious, eternal: the theme of *Bambi* is the circle of life – the repeating circles of life.

No longer the sophisticated smile of the twentieth century towards totems. But a return to pure totemism and a *Rück-Rück* [reverse shift] towards evolutionary prehistory.

A humanized deer, or rather, *Rückgänglich* [conversely] – a “redeerized” human.

Bambi crowns, of course, the whole study on Disney.³⁹

This was evidently written before viewing the film. The later discussion of *Bambi* dates to mid-1945 and implies that he had just recently seen the film for the first time on the day indicated in the planner. In 1943, he had likely seen concept art (he corresponded with Disney and imported books reproducing his art) and might have been familiar with the original 1923 novel by the Austrian writer Felix Salten. The later discussion is part of the “Postscriptum” to the essay “Non-Indifferent Nature,” cited above in connection to *A Song to Remember*. His criticisms of its approach to color include similar points to those he would attack in the Chopin film (too static and literal, not moving in coordination with music and emotion), but here the locus of his critique falls on the film's painted backdrops and their failure to work with the foreground figures to achieve a stylistic unity fit to the lyrical tone of the film.

[...] I was particularly disappointed with the first film [*Bambi*]– it was so bad in the unmusicality of its *landscape* and *color*.

Disney – is the brilliant master and unsurpassed genius in the creation of audiovisual equivalents in music of the *independent movements of lines* and a graphic interpretation of the inner flow of the music (more often of the melody than of the rhythm!). He is surprising when it is a question of the structure of the comically exaggerated movement of the human characters, the masklike figures of the comic animals, but this same Disney is amazingly blind when it comes to *landscape* – to the *musicality of landscape* and at the same time, to the *musicality of color and tone*.

Already in the early works of Disney, in what I think is the best of

to write a book on the animator. His unfinished drafts and notes for this study have been collected and published in numerous editions and translations since the 1980s. For an English-language scholarly edition, see the section “On Disney” in Richard Taylor, ed., *The Eisenstein Collection* (London: Seagull Books, 2006), 79-184.

³⁹ Quoted from Alan Upchurch's English translation in *The Eisenstein Collection* (2006), 63.

his series, *Silly Symphonies*, I was disturbed by the total *stylistic rupture* between the background, painted in such a weak, childish manner, and the brilliant perfection of the movement and drawing of the moving figures in the – foreground...

[...]

In the Mickey Mouse series – especially the black and white ones – it is somewhat better, for there the landscape is mostly sustained in the linear-graphic manner with a concise black wash of parts of the landscape and background, as was applied in the drawing of Mickey and Minnie.

In addition, one should bear in mind that Disney bears the full responsibility for the failure of the landscape – (we [live-action filmmakers] are forced to chase after effects of real nature and on our knees beg it for symphonic elements of sunsets and sunrises, misty dawns, or the threatening racing of clouds) – whereas he is really the complete master of the atmosphere and the elements of his landscape!

Moreover, the possibilities within the art with which he works provide totally unlimited possibilities for landscape elements – in real transformation – to live and pulsate in the tone and emotions of corresponding action.

Here the real *flow* and *true* formation of landscape are possible, transitions from one element of landscape into another, not only as a meaningless panoramic shot or as a tracking of the camera back from the crude, naturalistic dabs of background, as, let us say, in *Bambi*, where this is very much objectionable.

It is much more than this. It is accompanied by a complete rupture of the stylistic manner between the flat drawing of *conventional* volume in the figures and *the false three dimensionality* of the *setting*, painted with all the painstaking care of a bad oleographic print.

[...]

Here in *Bambi*, where it was no longer a question of the parody of the paradoxical, but of *genuine lyricism*, one should have confined oneself to the soft dissolution of forms in the setting and background, able to pass one into the other and repeat the change of moods, and by this flow, great genuinely plastic music.

In *Bambi* I think the retention of the former mode of Disney's drawing was wrong, with its sharply confined linear contour and the continuous *outlining* of colored areas.

In Disney's earlier works this type of drawing corresponded completely to Mickey's paradoxical charm, which consisted in the very fact that Disney, within the self-contained, concrete representational form subjected it to an immaterial free play of free lines and surfaces. This is one of the basic mechanisms of comedic effect in his works. In *Bambi* it is just the reverse.

Here the most important thing is lyricism.

With a proper resolution of the landscape, figures would genuinely merge with it, a resolution of unrestricted strokes such as we know from Chinese *graphics* – and soft spots of color with indistinct edges. This is also typical of Chinese *painting* in its treatment of fluffy beings – monkeys or fledglings.

What is even more sad and tedious is that this had apparently all been kept in mind in the sketches for the film *Bambi*.

In these sketches a complete harmony between the drawing of a character and the background was projected, but the very way both have been drawn, as well as the color resolutions, follow very closely to what so upset me here.⁴⁰

If in 1943, *Bambi* was supposed to be the “crown” of Eisenstein’s study of Disney, in 1945 it became a crisis point in his estimation of Disney’s art. He evidently considered the earliest, pre-color cartoons the animator’s finest work and seemingly waited in vain for Disney to produce equally dynamic and stylistically unified work in color. *Bambi* was more useful to Eisenstein as a negative example against which to contrast his ideas, but he never fully gave up on Disney, whose way with depicting humanized animals (or animalized humans) and synthesizing motion with melody remained enchanting in spite of his gaudy and insipid backdrops.

“Stormy Weather”: *Stormy Weather* (dir. Andrew. L. Stone, 20th Century Fox, 1943). During his time in the US, Eisenstein repeatedly sought out opportunities to meet with Black Americans and experience their art and culture firsthand. He had hoped to meet the singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson during his travels and even began to sketch concepts for a film they could make together on the subject of the Haitian revolution.⁴¹ Eisenstein was unable to find backing for the project in Hollywood and his renewed attempt to realize this project in the USSR during Paul Robeson’s first visit in 1935 were likewise unsuccessful. In 1938, following the restructuring of the Soviet film industry and Eisenstein’s return to official favor with the creation of *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), the director hoped to use his new status to revive the possibility of working with Robeson, this time to make something on the subject of “the brotherhood of nations and races” as a cinematic stand against the rise of Fascism.⁴² If such an idea had any chance

⁴⁰ Eisenstein, *Non-indifferent Nature*, 388-391. I have slightly modified Marshall’s translation.

⁴¹ For more on this topic, see Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg, “Sergei Eisenstein and the Haitian Revolution: ‘The Confrontation Between Black and White Explodes Into Red,’” *History Workshop Journal* 78, No. 1 (2014), 157-185.

⁴² Eisenstein speaks of this in a letter to Paul and Eslanda Robeson dated April 9, 1938. The letter is reprinted (in Russian translation) in Sergei Eizenshtein, Naum Kleiman, ed. “‘Nadeius’ lichno pozhat’ vashu ruku...’ Iz perepiski S.M. Eizenshteina [‘I hope to personally shake your hand...’ From the correspondence of S.M. Eisenstein],” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 36/37 (1997/98), 336-43: 343. Parts of this letter in its original English are quoted in: Martin B. Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf,

of success, it was abruptly quashed by the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact the next year.

Eisenstein's eternally frustrated desire to make a film centered around Black revolutionary struggle and anti-racism surely influenced his reactions to the American films prominently featuring Black performers or racial topics that made it the USSR, few and far between as they were. A letter he sent to Paul Robeson and his wife Eslanda in 1937 contains an illustrative remark:

I just watched *Showboat*.⁴³ Paul is a marvel, but only in two or three shots is his face, figure, and personality treated in the way it ought to: there is so much to be made out of him! Picture pretty poor, considering all possibilities in it. Illustrating "All Man River"⁴⁴ – not the best taste: would prefer realistic treatment of Paul singing – song and singing being so marvelous by themselves.⁴⁵

One imagines Eisenstein's reaction to *Stormy Weather* may have included a comparable mix of intrigue and frustration. Here was a dazzling array of Black American musicians and performers from across generations and genres (with Eisenstein's love of eccentric humor and ethnographically-informed dance, one imagines he took particular interest in the artistry of Cab Calloway and Katherine Dunham). But Hollywood is still Hollywood (as Eisenstein sometimes quipped) and the untapped possibilities in this film made by white filmmakers within the racist American studio system are glaring. There is a total lack of engagement with the history and reality of racism, something *Showboat*, no matter how inadequately, did attempt. Especially during the fight against Fascism, Eisenstein would have hoped to see full-fledged anti-racism onscreen.⁴⁶

"GasLight": *Gaslight* (dir. George Cukor, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1944). Eisenstein expressed great interest in psychology throughout his life, reading extensively on the subject and seeking out conversations with many experts from across the field. His personal writings are full of descriptions of self-experiments aiming to examine, diagnose, and repair the inner mechanisms of his own psyche – and his own art. His late writings are especially rich in their explorations of psychology, not only as a force shaping and shaped by art, but as

1988), 222.

⁴³ *Showboat* (dir. James Whale, Universal Pictures, 1936).

⁴⁴ Eisenstein evidently misheard the name of the song "Ol' Man River." Tellingly, his version seems to suggest a vision of shared humanity collectively personified by the river rather than the patriarchal image of an "old man" river.

⁴⁵ My provisional rendering of the text is a composite of two published sources (I have not had the chance to view the originals): a partial English quotation in Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 203-204; and the Russian translation of the entire letter with scholarly commentary in Eisenstein, "'Nadeius' lichno pozhat' vashu ruku..." 342.

⁴⁶ In the above-mentioned letter from April 1938, Eisenstein frames his proposal to direct an anti-racist film with Robeson as the fitting ideological follow up to his "one hundred percent anti-Fascist" film *Alexander Nevsky* (Mosfilm, 1938).

a subject depicted in art. In several pieces written between 1944-7, he notes with interest a rising interest in Anglo-American cinema for depicting psychoanalytic theories and practices as plot material.

In a chapter of his unfinished memoir title “In Loving Memory of the Marquis [DeSade]” written in July 1946, he discusses the brief fad for specifically Freudian psychoanalysis in film:

Oddly enough, this dawn of this fad [for depicting psychoanalysis] comes to cinema very belatedly, unless you count *Geheimnisse einer Seele* [*Secrets of a Soul*] with Werner Krauss (Berlin, 1926).

The real cine-vogue of this topic on the screen coincides with the Second World War, which brought us *Spellbound* and *The Seventh Veil* in the mid-forties, and *Lady in the Dark* somewhat earlier.

And then after this general super-acceptance which had replaced “the height of disdain for psychoanalysis,” the “fashion” suddenly drops off.⁴⁷

These above-mentioned films appear again in several essays begun in 1947, with Hitchcock and *Spellbound* earning especially detailed discussion in an essay on 3-D film⁴⁸ and a chapter draft for an unfinished book on color.⁴⁹ These pieces range beyond the topic of Freudian psychoanalysis towards broader discussion of how film can depict subjectivity and altered states.

Eisenstein brings a number of other recent Anglo-American films and plays into these discussions, but *Gaslight* is not among them. Considering that these were unfinished pieces written in the final year of the director’s life, later edited and published by scholar-archivists, it’s hard to say whether he might have been intending to include it in a later draft. To be certain, the film has many significant elements in common with the films he does discuss – illustration of a psychopathological process as a plotline for a detective mystery, cinematographic attention to textures and volumes, use of deep focus lens and multiple planes of action, a compelling performance by Ingrid Bergman... Perhaps Eisenstein’s single “X” designation for this film indicated a certain ambivalence – there was enough to interest him, but not enough to make it into his writing (though I suspect there could well be a mention in one of his diaries from 1947-8, which I have not yet accessed).

“Hold up the dawn”: *Hold Back the Dawn* (dir. Mitchell Leisen, Paramount Pictures, 1941). In a section of his memoir essay “Epopée,” Eisenstein follows one of his characteristic chains of association from a visit to a film studio vaguely near Bois de Vincennes to the 1917 execution of Mata Hari in the fortress of

⁴⁷ Eizenshtein, “Svetloi pamiati Markiza [In loving memory of the Marquise],” *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 2, 98.

⁴⁸ Eizenstehin, “O stereokino [On stereofilm],” *Izbrannye proizvedenie*, Vol. 3, 474-8.

⁴⁹ This piece has been printed in several collections, including *The Eisenstein Collection* (2006) in an English translation by Alan Y. Upchurch.

Vincennes to Greta Garbo's portrayal of the infamous dancer-spy in "the first film that [he] saw after stepping for a second time onto the 'promised' land of the United States, having spent six weeks waiting for a visa in the borderland backwater of Nuevo-Laredo (Mexico)."⁵⁰ This reminiscence on *Mata Hari*⁵¹ soon leads him to recall another film, one of the few included in the 1945 planner to also appear in his memoirs:

...This would come two years later.
The concrete bridge doesn't so much connect as separate the two
shores – the US and the Mexican.
We sit on the Mexican side.
A week. A second. A third.
Still there is no permission from the immigration authorities.
Incidentally, anyone who has seen the film *Hold Back the Dawn* will
remember the border anguish of Charles Boyer.⁵²

Behind this passing comparison between his younger self and Georges Iscovescu, the protagonist played by Boyer in the 1941 film, lies a dizzying maze of connections and intersections between art and life in which Iscovescu acts as a cypher for at least four men: Eisenstein (the viewer), Boyer (the actor), Leisen (the director), and Billy Wilder (the screenwriter). In the current article, I do not have the space to venture too deeply into this maze, but I will attempt to relate an aerial view and a few choice close-ups.

Iscovescu is a Romanian-French gigolo who attempts to enter the U.S. from Mexico after fleeing war-torn Europe, and later sells his story to a Hollywood director in order to obtain the money needed to pay back the self-sacrificing woman he married for the sake of getting a quick visa, and later came to love in spite of himself. His depiction – and the film overall – wavers between sardonic cynicism and sentimental melodrama. Though the clash between Wilder's sardonic writing and Leisen's sentimental directing may inspire frustration in some audiences, such a dialectical tension was probably for Eisenstein a feature rather than a bug. The wavering tone produced by the interplay of tragedy, cynicism, romance, and optimism often feels akin to the complex ironies at play in Eisenstein's simultaneously self-effacing and self-aggrandizing, highly theatrical "written for the drawer" memoirs. For both Iscovescu (as framed by the script, which features significant first-person retrospective monologue) and Eisenstein (as framed by his memoirs), this ironic wavering is closely connected to the struggle to situate himself morally and ethically: he is in a tragic position, yes, but all around he witnesses greater tragedies and has done too much wrong in his life to feel deserving of pity. Iscovescu is by rights a refugee from Nazi occupation but neither he nor the film itself invokes such a charged framing. He gives his motivations for emigration as simply economic ("It was an easy life [...])

⁵⁰ Eizenshtein, "Épopée," *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 1, 211-2.

⁵¹ *Mata Hari* (dir. George Fitzmaurice, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1931)

⁵² Eizenshtein, "Épopée," *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 1, 212.

but the war came. People who had money made for America.”) and avoids further mention of the war. As a cosmopolitan living a marginal, not-quite-legal existence as an entertainer (implied to be a sex worker), he does not share in the grief for a lost homeland or the zeal for American assimilation that characterize the typical refugee narratives unfolding around him in the other rooms of the hotel by the border. The hotel’s name, “*Esperanza*,” is itself simultaneously earnest and ironic. In his love for wordplay and portents, Eisenstein would enjoy such a gesture, not unlike his whimsical selection of a tiny guesthouse named “*Hôtel États-Unis* [Hotel United States]” in Paris, where he stayed while waiting to receive his first US visa.⁵³

Eisenstein’s memoirs (and some of his personal letters) are suffused with a profound sense of displacement that does not align with the typical immigrant emotional narratives. Though he was displaced from his birthplace by the Russian Civil War, he expresses little nostalgia for Riga and indeed was eager to escape his father’s home and build his own destiny in the metropolises of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The geographical displacement that became a life-defining trauma for Eisenstein came later and followed a path much less often tread by romantic narrativization: forced repatriation to the Soviet Union from the country that he had taken with such passion that he was accused of desertion by his home government. That country was, of course, the one that Iscovescu and all his neighbors at the Hotel *Esperanza* were trying to escape: Mexico. Eisenstein’s own “border anguish” in Mexico was of a very different cast – he was reluctantly leaving at his home government’s demand, but his route home through New York required a transit visa to re-enter the US after leaving under somewhat “scandalous” circumstances the year before.

Perhaps this element of “scandal” fanned by American prejudice against Eastern Europeans and the sexually “deviant” bridges the gap between Eisenstein’s experience and Iscovescu’s. Eisenstein’s time in the US had been marked by harassment from reactionaries clamoring for the deportation of the “Jewish” “Bolshevik” “Messenger from Hell;”⁵⁴ his time in Mexico was troubled by his financial sponsor Upton Sinclair’s intolerant response to Eisenstein’s personal and artistic interest in exploring homosexuality.⁵⁵ Similar elements appear in different

⁵³ Eizenshtein, “Epopée,” *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 1, 172

⁵⁴ Such was the language of Major Frank Pease, the Los Angeles-based fascist activist who led a campaign against Eisenstein.

⁵⁵ Eisenstein’s memoirs and correspondences contain this story in a fractured and cryptic form which has been un-puzzled into comprehensible accounts by scholars including Oksana Bulgakowa, *Sergei Eisenstein: Eine Biografie* (Berlin: Potemkin Press, 1998); Harry M Geduld and Ronald Gottesman, eds. *Sergei Eisenstein and Upton Sinclair: The Making & Unmaking of Que Viva Mexico!* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970); Natalia Ryabchikova, “The Flying Fish: Sergei Eisenstein Abroad, 1929-1932,” (PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2016); and Masha Salazkina, *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein’s Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Upton Sinclair describes his side of the story in a letter making frequent derogatory use of the word “homo” to Eisenstein’s first English-language biographer and personal acquaintance Marie Seton. She printed the letter in full in Marie Seton, *Sergei Eisenstein, a Biography* (New York: A. A. Wynn, 1952), 515-16.

forms in Iscovescu's story: the racist quota system (and, implicitly, the US's reluctance to accept refugees fleeing Nazi aggression in the early 1940s) keeps him waiting for a visa and his sexual history ("some scandal in the papers about me and a lady from New York," his career as a gigolo, his implicitly ambiguous sexuality, and his hasty seduction of an American schoolteacher) makes him a target for hounding by immigration authorities.

Hold Back the Dawn does not take place entirely on the US-Mexican border, however, and the sequences set in the interiors of the two countries seem likely to have been just as interesting to Eisenstein. The opening and later scenes of Iscovescu at Paramount studios begging a director he once met in France (Mitchell Leisen playing himself⁵⁶) for financial help and later being whisked away by an immigration officer were scenes as close to Eisenstein's own life as those set at the Hotel *Esperanza*.



Fig. 5: "You stick to directing pictures and let me direct the traffic across the border."

The sequence in Mexico may have less obvious analogues to Eisenstein's life, but the connection may be all the more deep for its resonance on the symbolic and conceptual plane. Iscovescu travels into Mexico to take his new wife Emmy (Olivia de Havilland) on a "honeymoon" away from the prying eye of the

⁵⁶ Leisen's character is called "Mr. Saxon," but the movie he is shooting when Iscovescu accosts him is Leisen's own *I Wanted Wings* (Paramount, 1941) starring Veronica Lake.

immigration inspector. At the start of the trip, he doesn't love her, seemingly has never really loved anyone, but across a series of encounters with Mexico – its heat, its ocean, people, its spirituality, its music – he finds himself in love with Emmy, body and soul. In his letters from Mexico to his closest friends, Eisenstein describes a similar discovery of the ability to fully love another, both physically and emotionally, to “go all the way” in his wording.⁵⁷ In his memoirs, he does not unfold the intimate details of this episode, but speaks extensively and poetically of the transformational effects of his encounters with the Mexican landscape, people, and culture.

“XX”

“Random Harvest”: *Random Harvest* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1942). The only “XX” entry is a very intriguing film in regards to its potential connections to Eisenstein, though I have not found a direct discussion of it in his writings. Similar to *Gaslight*, this is a film about a psychological problem that is “solved” in parallel with the resolution of a mystery-melodrama plot that would fit well into one of his pieces on psychology and detective work as artistic devices and subjects. And there may well be some mention of this film somewhere in the great store of still-unpublished archival materials in Eisenstein’s archive. Perhaps this mention would be in a diary rather than a draft for a piece intended for a book – in addition to the heavy overlap with recurring topics in Eisenstein’s late theoretical work, *Random Harvest* is laden with elements of potential personal resonance, including intimate topics he rarely discussed outside of his private journals and letters.

The film’s protagonist is a British WWI veteran (played by Ronald Colman) with traumatic amnesia who accidentally escapes a mental institution and becomes involved in a dramatic love affair with a music hall performer, Paula (played by Greer Garson). He is instantly taken with this beautiful young woman who happens to be the first person to treat him like a normal person. The night Paula and “John Smith” meet, she stars in a saucy stage routine whose humor and titillation stems from her dancing in a modified Scottish military uniform with a very short kilt while belting out a throaty impersonation of a lusty lad in love with a lass called Daisy. Smith is watching Paula’s performance from the wings and towards the end of the number he faints. Someone with Eisenstein’s deep interest in bisexuality, gender transformations, and sex and dance as means of ecstatically escaping the self would surely have read the subtexts of this scene. The queer (or *bisex*, to use Eisenstein’s preferred umbrella term for phenomena relating to androgyny, gender non-conformity, and homosexuality) implications of Paula’s performance and Smith’s surrender of consciousness don’t portend a simple path to heterosexual bliss for the heroes, situated as they are in socio-historical conditions under which queerness is pathologized and marginalized.

⁵⁷ See Salazkina, “Going All the Way” in *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein’s Mexico*, 90-138, especially 129-138.

Indeed, non-normative sexual pathology seems to be a side effect of Smith's mental trauma, or at the very least an undercurrent of the film's melodrama. Once Paula knows of his condition, she begins to fuss over him more in the manner of mother than lover, and when they do fall in love, the mother-son dynamic persists in subtle ways. The romantic cliché "my life began with you!" is literal in Smith's delivery – he came to her with no memories or identity and let her shape him into a new person. When an accident reverses Smith's memory loss so that he goes back to where he was mentally before the war injury that caused his amnesia, his old personality is revealed to be a wealthy businessman's son with a conceited personality and sexual pathology in line with theories of the decadent disintegration of the ruling class. He – real name Charles Rainier – is the object of his teenage step-niece's adolescent infatuation and decides to marry her when she becomes of age, a decision the family supports. When they later break their engagement and admit they're not fit for each other, it's not because they're related and decades apart in age, but because Rainier is too haunted by not knowing who he was during his three-year lapse in memory to be a properly attentive husband. As Rainier continues to pursue a high-powered business-and-politics career, he realizes he needs a wife for the sake of projecting normalcy and managing his social affairs. He makes a predictable move and proposes marriage to his secretary – who is actually the accidentally estranged Paula trying to stay close to him while waiting to see if his memory comes back. The final act of the film depicts the turmoil of a "paper marriage" in which a pining wife longs for intimacy with a husband who is not in love with her. Lest the viewer fail to grasp the gay subtext, there is a scene of the two sitting stiffly through a performance of *Swan Lake* to summon an association with Tchaikovsky, whose sexuality and related marital problems had been indelibly linked to his image in the Anglophone world since at least the turn of the twentieth century.⁵⁸

The tragic situation is quickly and wholly resolved in the last few minutes of the film, a Hollywood convention only worth discussing because it positions the abandonment of ruling class loyalties as the beginning of the chain reaction that ends with Rainier/Smith getting back his full memory and love for his wife. There is a strike at one of Rainier's factories and he goes to oversee negotiations – and sides with the workers. In a rush of fraternity, the former snob goes with his victorious workers into town for a drink... It turns out this Midlands factory town is the very one where he and Paula first met. The familiar surroundings jog his memory and everything works out from there.

It is difficult to guess what feelings such a film might have provoked in Eisenstein, but it seems unlikely to have simply washed over him without activating a few nerves. He had intensely complicated relationships with his parents, class background, and sexuality. In many autobiographical writings, he credits the October Revolution and his decision to join the Red Army with freeing him from the soul-warping dead-end of a bourgeois life on the path mapped out for

⁵⁸ See Richard Taruskin, "Pathetic Symphonist: Chaikovsky, Russia, Sexuality, and the Study of Music," in *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 76-104.

him by his father. In an enigmatic quotation set down by his first biographer Marie Seton, the focus shifts away from his father and towards a literary predecessor: "Had it not been for Leonardo, Marx, Lenin, Freud and the movies, I would in all probability have been another Oscar Wilde."⁵⁹ This quotation might be reductively (mis)construed as a rejection of homosexuality as bourgeois,⁶⁰ but Eisenstein's complex understanding of Wilde (not to mention Leonardo and Freud...) and of sexuality as reflected in his memoirs, diaries, and personal letters problematize such a reading. I do not have space for a full account here, but his writings on *bisex* treat non-normative sexuality as a morally neutral phenomenon that may be a psychological prerequisite for artistic and spiritual genius. This genius, in turn, could be channeled into creation in either a mystical, inward-gazing vein or a materialist, socially-engaged one. While not discrediting the value of mysticism in certain doses, Eisenstein championed the materialist path. The tragedy of Wilde he was glad to avoid was not being queer so much as squandering his queer gifts on disengaged aestheticism, rather than revolutionary social change.

If *Random Harvest*'s depiction of a tragic queer-coded upper-class scion finding the ability to love after turning towards the working class presents warped-mirror parallels to Eisenstein's experiences in a broad sense, one imagines that he must have caught a strange reflection indeed in the scenes presenting a "paper marriage" between a sexually withdrawn man and his devoted secretary. Eisenstein's own marriage to his assistant and close friend Pera Atasheva was not widely known during his lifetime. It was, by most accounts, a platonic partnership of necessity; but if Rainier and Paula agreed to a public "merger" in the interest of pursuing wealth and power under capitalism, Eisenstein and Atasheva agreed to a private compact in the interest of protecting the director and his legacy from erasure under a version of state socialism that looked with increasing suspicion on men without registered wives and could not be trusted to execute Eisenstein's will regarding his archive in the event of his death without a designated heir.⁶¹ That is,

⁵⁹ Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein, a Biography*, 119.

⁶⁰ Though I largely agree with Simon Karlinsky's description of Eisenstein in "Russia's Gay Literature and Culture: The Impact of the October Revolution" in Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncy, Jr., eds. *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: New American Library, 1989) and greatly admire the pioneering anti-homophobic work done in this essay and other works by Karlinsky, I take issue with his use of this quotation to suggest that "Eisenstein may have internalized the homophobia of the Russian and international Communist movements." Seton's biography, while very pioneering and important in its time, was already by Karlinsky's time becoming outdated and problematic, informed by personal bias and based largely on credulously-conducted interviews and without recourse to Eisenstein's unpublished writings and personal papers, which frequently contradict his public statements. Eisenstein's relationship to sexuality and for that matter the Russian and international Communist movements was deeply complicated and best understood on its own terms, that is, bisexually and dialectically.

⁶¹ For descriptions of Eisenstein and Atasheva's relationship by people who knew them both closely, see: Lina Voitolskaia, "Dva goda [Two years]," *Prostor*, No. 6 (1967), 62-73; Viktor Shklovsky, "Pera Atasheva," in *Eizenshtein* (Moscow: Iskusstv, 1973), 178-180; and Iudif Glizer, "Eizenshtein i zhenshchiny [Eisenstein and women]," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, No. 6 (1990), 119-134. For scholarly work on sexuality and the early Soviet state, see: Dan Healy, "Homosexual Existence and Existing Socialism:

of course, only the broad strokes suggested by correspondences and memoirs, but it is already much more complex than the “paper marriage” depicted in *Random Harvest*.

Random Harvest’s queer and political themes are not developed with anywhere near the nuance Eisenstein brought to these issues, but he would hardly have expected such things from Hollywood. However shallow in its treatment of complex issues, Hollywood was still fascinating to him, especially when it trained its camera-eye on the warped pathologies of the Anglo-American upper classes, so similar to those in the Russian Empire of Eisenstein’s upbringing in their broad shapes, so distinct in their geographical textures and historical nuances.

“XXX”

“Star Spangled Rhythm”: *Star Spangled Rhythm* (dir. George Marshall, Paramount Pictures, 1942). Of the three “XXX” films, two are invoked in discussions of artistic philosophy in several of Eisenstein’s posthumously-published essays. *Star Spangled Rhythm* is not. This frothy studio showcase musical looks rather odd next to the other two films, which are both wartime dramas centered around the search for meaning in death and loss. But Paramount’s early entry in the patriotic morale-booster genre offered Eisenstein something less high-minded but perhaps equally moving: a rollicking fantasy of righteous reprisal in which the management of the Hollywood studio that once sorely mistreated him is humiliated and outwitted by a clownish has-been of the silent era in cahoots with a crew of merry young sailors and an eccentric, sexually voracious switchboard girl.

It’s easy to imagine Eisenstein identifying with the character of “Bronco Billy” Webster (played by Victor Moore), the former star of silent Westerns now a bashful and physically awkward middle-aged man who shares many traits with the director’s auto-caricatures and certain descriptions of himself in his memoirs. One might also recall the Western (The American Southwest and Mexico) setting of Eisenstein’s most wistfully remembered glory days, and in particular the photographs he took in local costume. That Billy Webster is the father of a sailor is fitting to Eisenstein’s tendency to refer to his film projects as children, with *Battleship Potemkin* being his most successful and well-known “offspring.” This identification would make it all the more satisfying to watch “Bronco Billy” get the best of the high-strung Paramount executive producer – nevermind that the film’s “BG Desoto” corresponds to the EP in place in 1942 (Buddy DeSylva), the character is a recognizable and recurring “type” Eisenstein knew well from his

New Light on the Repression of Male Homosexuality in Stalin’s Russia,” *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, No. 3 (2002), 349-78; and Ira Roldugina, “‘Why Are We the People We Are?’: Early Soviet Homosexuals From the First-Person Perspective: New Sources on the History of Homosexual Identities in Russia,” in Richard C. M. Mole, ed. *Soviet and Post-Soviet Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 16-31.

time in America the previous decade.⁶² The ridiculous, duplicitous reversals of favor and fortune lampooned in the showbiz comedy plot of *Star Spangled Rhythm* resonate with the sardonic observations made by the Soviet director in letters sent from Hollywood as well as his later-in-life reflections on the experience of being lavishly flattered at industry banquets by the same executives who shot all his proposed film projects to pieces behind closed doors.



Fig. 6: Bronco Billy watches Polly do “it” for defense.

In the tradition of studio-showcase musicals, the showbiz plot is merely the lightweight frame upon which star-studded variety acts are arranged, and these acts contained a fair bit which Eisenstein could relish. There is the double-entendre-packed comedy number “I’m Doing It for Defense” that Betty Hutton as Polly the wanton switchboard operator belts out perched atop of a suggestively bucking jeep and the similarly erotically-charged mass dance number “On the Swing Shift” set in an aircraft factory to tickle his fancy for bawdy humor and the playful sexualization of objects like jeeps, jets, and rivet guns. There is vaudevillian gender-bending and slapstick homoeroticism in several of the acts comprising the “revue” the Paramount stars stage for the sailors in the film’s second half – most notable is the verse in the opening number, “A Sweater, a Sarong, and a Peek-A-

⁶² It may be worth noting that this character is played by the very actor, Walter Abel, who incarnated another of Eisenstein’s greatest American foes in *Hold Back the Dawn*, where he plays the hard-nosed immigration inspector dogging the European protagonist.

Boo Bang,” in which the three leading ladies who are the performers and subject of the song (Paulette Goddard, Dorthy Lamour, and Veronica Lake) are replaced with a trio of male character actors in wigs (Arthur Treacher, Walter Catlett, and Sterling Holloway⁶³). Also sure to captivate Eisenstein was the number showcasing Black artists, “Sharp as a Tack,” which brought together the eccentric comedy of Eddie “Rochester” Anderson (who wears an exaggerated zoot suit and uses a telephone lavishly installed in his side car to communicate with his motorcycle driver) and the syncretic modern dance of performer-choreographer-anthropologist Kathrine Dunham.

“Human Comedy”: *The Human Comedy* (dir. Clarence Brown, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1943). In the essay “Non-Indifferent Nature” Eisenstein briefly invokes this film as an admirable example of contemporary American narrative art that has developed an intricate polyphonic style:

From the time of Sherwood Anderson, American literature has moved far ahead on this path [away from adherence to strictly-defined, intrigue-based plots], outlined in many ways by his stories. Such magnificently charming things as Saroyan’s *The Human Comedy* (the novel and the film) are completely free not only of intrigue, but even of a normally unfolding plot: They seem to be independent episodes all strung out one after another – often without beginning or end; in fact, they represent the most refined interweaving of the fabric of a single thematic picture, which is maintained strictly by one *inner* system of lyrical leitmotifs, just as a play of Scribe or a detective novel maintains *external* peripeteias of dizzy intrigue in a single unified tension.⁶⁴

In this section of a wide-ranging essay on the nature of art, Eisenstein traces the development of polyphonic narrative from the simple literalism of epistolary fiction with its clearly demarcated individual voices to the intricate methods of modernist composition weaving multiple perspectives into a single fabric. Works such as Joyce’s *Ulysses*, one of Eisenstein’s most beloved contemporary novels, seem at first an impenetrably solid surface (particularly those passages without punctuation or paragraph breaks) but upon close examination are carefully woven from a multitude of threads which can be followed in the same manner as a detective examining and comparing various testimonies and documents or a hunter tracing its quarry through dense foliage. Such intellectual searching is one of the most basic and central of human impulses that finds gratification in art and is present at all stages of development of a given medium or genre. Eisenstein identifies the modernist turn at the beginning of the twentieth century as one in

⁶³ Confirmed bachelor Sterling Holloway voice-acted in numerous Disney productions, including several Eisenstein knew, most notably *Bambi*, in which he played the older version of the swishy skunk pointedly named “Flower.”

⁶⁴ Eisenstein, *Non-Indifferent Nature*, 268. I have slightly modified Marshall’s translation.

which existing art forms in the Western world were reaching the end of a life cycle that began with simple forms (comparable to a single knot in a string) and ended with a floridly intricate chaos of polyphonic “woven” forms (comparable to a tapestry). But cinema as a newborn art inherited the lessons learned in other arts and repurposed them with fresh vigor.

Eisenstein’s writings, especially those related to the treatise *Non-Indifferent Nature*, place great emphasis on the close correspondence between cycles of life and patterns in art. These cycles and patterns also correspond internally: the single human life cycle modeling the trajectory of entire generations, classes, societies, and nations; the evolution of one artist’s oeuvre rhyming with the progression of entire movements, genres, and media. Artistic depiction of life cycles, then, had the potential to reveal deep truths about the societies and media that produced them.

Eisenstein’s high estimation of *The Human Comedy* in the citation above praises its formal artistic structure reflecting the achievement of a lyrical epos unified along non-linear motivic correspondences rather than a throughline “plot” in film. It seems likely he also found something to appreciate in the depictions of life the film contains. The setting is a semi-pastoral idyll in which the California Central Valley of screenwriter William Saroyan’s working-class up-bringing becomes a cradle of all humanity, populated by farmstead families of a panoply of ethnic backgrounds living in harmony. The virtues displayed by characters in their shining moments are those Eisenstein praised in his speech on American film given in 1942: “Vivacity and diligence, optimism and enterprise, ardor and clear-eyed simplicity.”⁶⁵

But perhaps more significant are the minor-key passages, the moments of weakness, doubt, and pain that weave throughout this cinematic song-cycle. One of the recurring leitmotifs is the death of sons (the film begins not long after the US entry into the war). Eisenstein did not have children, but this theme was of great personal meaning for him. It can be found throughout his work, from the early scenes of police murdering children in front of their parents in *Strike* and *Battleship Potemkin* to the death of Vladimir Staritsky brought about by his mother’s regicide plot. In his life, he did suffer great losses and the image of the grieving parent haunts his reflections on the premature deaths of his students Kazbek Uruimagov (1909-1938) and Valentin Kadochnikov (1911-1942), as well as the destruction of his film projects. The untimely demise of his Mexican film project was especially traumatic, happening at such a hopeful early phase of his career and under such terrible circumstances as forced repatriation from a place where he had found freedom, inspiration, and love. He recalls this moment of despair in a memoir essay composed after the death of his own mother in August 1946, “After the Rain on Thursday”:

I remember myself in a narrow compartment on the Moscow – Vladikavkaz train.

⁶⁵ Eizenshtein, “Amerikanskaia kinomatografiia i ee bor’ba s fashizmom,” 182.

Only just torn away from my Mexican child.
And a wail in my chest: let me have schizophrenia.
Since in that condition there is no difference between objective
observation and imagined observation.⁶⁶

There is a scene early on in *The Human Comedy* which seems very likely to have resonated with the Eisenstein still mourning the loss of his “Mexican child” over a decade later. A Mexican mother (played by lyric soprano Ann Ayars) receives notice that her son has died in the war. She begins to cry as she moves to a rocking chair, but once seated she tilts back her head, drawing back the tears with a breath, and begins to sing “Cielito Lindo” in the manner of a lullaby. She rocks back and forth and as she comes to the chorus, she looks down to the hand that holds the telegram. As she sings the first half of the chorus (*Ay ay, ay, ay, canta y no llores* [Ay, ay, ay, ay, sing and don’t cry]), the screen briefly darkens and then brightens: the half of the screen occupied by the mother in her chair has dissolved into a shot of the same space, but with light shining through the window and a younger version of the mother in the chair, smiling and holding an infant. As she sings the second half of the chorus, there is a slow dissolve back to the original shot of the older mother in a darkened room staring down into the hand that cradles the telegram. I may be biased as someone with childhood memories of Mexican songs, but I find this to be the most emotionally and artistically effective scene in the whole film, powerfully weaving together the two contrasting shots of life and death with music as the weft.

⁶⁶ Eisenstein, “Posle dozhdika v chetverge [After the rain on Thursday],” in *Yo. Memuary*, Vol. 2, 298-303: 299.



Figs. 7-8: Objective observation and imagined observation.

By a coincidence that speaks to both the primacy of the image and the social reality of the ongoing war, Eisenstein was himself in 1945 editing a film with two scenes of a mother singing the same lullaby over her son, first when he is alive, and then when he is dead. The scenes of Efrosinia Staritskaya singing to Vladimir Staritsky in *Ivan the Terrible, Pt. II* function very differently in the plot structure and moral universe of that very different film – the pathos of the grieving-mother-image is cross-cut with disgust at the ruthless boyarina's active role in the destruction of her pitiful child-man son. And yet, the depiction of the wretched Staritskys evokes pity, in part because it uses such primitively powerful imagery, in part because it is steeped in Eisenstein's personal pain. It was the last time he would depict a mother and son, a painfully ambiguous final statement on a complex tangle of traumas for which there could be no resolution.



Figs. 9-10: Staritskaya's lullaby.

“A Guy Called Joe”: *A Guy Named Joe* (dir. Victor Fleming, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1943). Of all the films in the planner, this one left the greatest imprint in Eisenstein’s writing. The powerful resonance of its portrayal of death, love, and the collective human struggle for freedom with the director’s deepest emotional and intellectual concerns deserves a separate essay of its own. Here I am limited to providing a small compilation of the most essential observations and citations.

Of the latter there are two. One is a passage in an untitled essay given the title *“Perevertysbi [Inversions]”* by the compilers of the director’s posthumous publications and usually assigned to his memoirs. The manuscript for this piece is dated 30 July 1946.

Biologically, we are mortal.

And immortal only in our social deeds; in that small contribution made by our personal run in the relay-race of social progress from the outgoing generation to the generation coming in.

[...]

The field of application for such a concept is now endlessly wider than just that sixth part of the world, where it exists not just as words!

See how coherently a sermon of this new image of immortality sounds from the American [movie] screen, true, only beginning from the moment that Uncle Sam found himself in need of the human power required to direct and fly planes and sacrifice oneself in the context of war.

A Guy Named Joe, in which the dead, fallen, crashed aviators sit behind the backs of the novices and use their store of experience, paid for in ruin, catastrophe, and the price of life, to lead host after host of young pilots to the heavens.

[...]

But the sermon on the theme is placed in the mouth of the “heavenly general” who dispatches crashed pilots back to the planes of novices.

And the idea that the hand of each new pilot is directed by the thousands who perished before him, is here elevated to pathos.

Even though this speech is given grumbly by Lionel Barrymore in his characteristic voice and received by a sardonically squinting Spencer Tracy in the image of the fallen pilot Joe⁶⁷, who receives an assignment to return to earth and invisibly direct the actions of a young pilot.

But there is also a fundamental difference. We do not see immortality as cooperation of older and younger generations beyond the grave.

We see immortality in the goal for which generations fight and die.

⁶⁷ Spencer Tracy’s character is actually named Peter and the title refers to the conventional name of the American everyman, a mantle which the prideful Peter rejects in life, but comes to accept after death.

And that goal is the very human freedom for which we believed, in the heat of war, that our allies also fought.

When the smoke of battle cleared, we saw that in a peaceful context, beyond the thundering of guns, one and the same words could apparently mean entirely different things.

Our ideal of revolutionary struggle, revolutionary life in the name of true freedom turned out to be entirely different from that which our allies flaunted on their flags.

And the formula by which we understand immortality again and again is emphatically defined as immortality in the struggle for the revolutionary ideal of freedom.⁶⁸

The other passage is a longer digression within an essay devoted to the actor Iudif Glizer – a lifelong friend of Eisenstein’s as well as a significant figure in early Soviet theatre. This essay, not published in Eisenstein’s lifetime, dates to March 1947 and contains much rumination on the craft of acting and artistic creation broadly. *A Guy Called Joe* enters as an illustration of a key principle of the artistic philosophy he observes in Glizer’s acting but quickly becomes a wider-ranging meditation. I will quote the full passage here even though it is long because there has not yet been published an English translation of the essay.

I saw a beautiful American war film.

Like many films of recent years – it’s fantasy.

But it’s the sort of concrete, “businesslike” fantasy which is so typical for Americans, so charming in their plays and film scenarios.

The film’s hero is a military pilot, an American sent to Britain. At the end of the first reel, he crashes to his death. Seemingly, this is how films end.

Nothing of the sort: actually, this is where the film really begins.

Immediately after the crash we see him walking through a wide open landscape.

In this landscape there is nothing except space itself. If you don’t count the boundless expanse of sky with no horizon line and the stuff – not quite morning fog and not quite cotton batting – playing about his feet.

There is one of his colleagues in an identical leather jacket walking alongside him.

They’re having a lively conversation.

About this and that.

And mostly about nothing at all.

Then suddenly the hero – he’s called Joe – has a sudden recollection.

“Now hold on! Didn’t you crash last year? You can’t be alive!”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Sergei Eizenshtein, “[Perevertyschi [Inversions]]” in *Yo. Memuary*, 202-3.

⁶⁹ Eisenstein’s recollection of certain details understandably differs somewhat from the actual film. I have given a translation of his version of the dialogue rather than using the actual lines from the film.

“And what about you?” his friend answers, “Alive? You also crashed yesterday...”

Joe is very confused and wants to know what comes next.

It turns out that “up above” everything is the same as on earth.

And downed pilots must go to the heavenly HQ of downed pilots and report to the chief of staff.

The chief of staff is a general (played by Lionel Barrymore), another distinguished pilot who went down in a military plane crash.

It turns out there is nothing like heavenly leisure and longed-for rest awaiting poor Joe in the afterlife.

Work continues.

He (like all his comrades) receives orders to return back to earth.

In a capacity that’s not quite guardian angel, not quite instructor, but at any rate – an invisible someone assigned to a young pilot who is just getting ready to make their first meaningful independent flights.

The scene of the first flight is excellently done!

The dead pilot sits behind the young one.

In the place an instructor usually sits.

The young pilot doesn’t see him.

But he hears his instructive voice.

To him, this voice seems to be something like remembered lines from a textbook or the voice of his own inner savvy.

But it’s not just a matter of the technical details of airmanship.

The main thing the senior expounds on to the junior is this: the inspired splendor that fills a person who shoots into the heavenly heights, the intoxicating pride which takes hold of a person who has conquered the expanse beyond the clouds, the creative ecstasy which envelops a person who masterfully plunges into the depths and reaches of the heavenly ocean.

And we see how, as if in tune with the words, an unprepossessing, so earthly and awkward little pilot is transformed before our eyes into an inspired enthusiast, the poet of the air and conqueror of heavenly plains, such as were and will be hundreds of pilots minor and great, great and magnificent, like our Chkalov, who so rigorously bore the inextinguishable flame of that very enthusiasm into the vast open skies.

Such a scene can be played, of course, by the deceptively prosaic-looking Spencer Tracey and the freckled [Van Johnson.]⁷⁰

And the firm MGM, of course, invited those particular actors to play this unforgettably beautiful scene in which a greenhorn youth in the open sky is suddenly touched by the “divine word” of creative understanding of that which only moments ago seemed to him dull routine and soulless professional training.

But this scene is not the most astonishing moment in the film.

⁷⁰ In the original manuscript the sentence ends without giving the name of the actor, which Eisenstein evidently could not remember offhand in the heat of writing.

How strange that in this film full of dizzying tricks and unbelievable situations – from the finest lyricism to the most laughable buffoonery, from characters’ heroism to set pieces of bombing raids on supply depots – the strongest scene is a monologue.

Lionel Barrymore’s monologue.

It is preceded by the following, in short:

The downed pilot Joe has a fiancée.

She is also a pilot.

And stationed at the very same air force base.

Tracy is unusually zealous in his patronage.

Like a scrupulous and compassionate guardian angel, he follows the young pilot everywhere.

Including, for example, to a dance-hall.

Bob⁷¹ is shy. Hesitant.

He’s afraid to approach the girls.

And just as instructively as before, the very same invisible Tracy whispers the same sort of wise suggestions, instilling in his protegee roguishness and self-confidence.

And what does the protegee do?

Out of all the possible young ladies he chooses...Tracy’s fiancée, in her grief and mourning sitting somewhere off to the side.

They don’t dance yet that evening.

But the simple provincial⁷² boy gradually wins her affections.

Tracy is amused at first.

Then angry.

And finally he goes into a rage of impotent jealousy.

And Tracy comes up with an “infernal” plan.

A daredevil in life, he often ended up in detention for his baffling stunts.

His earthly HQ’s chief of staff was a fierce opponent of “aerial hooliganism.”

What does Tracy do?

On the eve of Bob’s day off – which he had planned to spend on a picnic with Joe’s former fiancée – he provokes his “pupil” to a wildly daring stunt – he makes him fly through a barn.⁷³

That evening at HQ, Tracy rubs his hands in malicious glee when Bob is summoned to the general.

However, the cunning Tracy’s scheme is a total fiasco.

⁷¹ The character’s name is actually Ted.

⁷² Eisenstein miscasts the character – Ted Randall is described as a wealthy college graduate from Boston – but correctly identifies Van Johnson’s “typical” casting assignment. Johnson in fact played a “simple provincial boy” serving in WWII in *The Human Comedy*, which Eisenstein apparently watched about a month before *A Guy Named Joe*.

⁷³ They don’t actually fly through a barn in the film, rather they perform a variety of “barnstorming” stunts like loops and rolls. Perhaps knowledge of the English term contributed to Eisenstein’s misrecollection.

Bob comes out the victor.

And what's worse – he goes off with Joe's fiancée!

But it gets worse from there!

Tracy wants to tag along with them, so he can make another maneuver to impede their romance.

But all of a sudden Spencer Tracy's friend appears "from the sky": Spencer Tracy – the pilot Joe – is summoned to the general.

Not to the "earthly" HQ, but the "heavenly" one.

And at the "heavenly" HQ the general (Lionel Barrymore) gives Tracy a drubbing like nothing he'd ever gotten on earth!

And here that drubbing turns into a remarkable monologue about how Tracy has failed to understand his role.

His role – it's in the continuation of that uninterrupted connection between all generations of fallen aviators, which connects the living and the outlived with each other.

The fall of one is a guarantee that another may fly.

Sacrifices are not in vain.

And at the back of every youth who rushes towards the sky there stand generations who have died so that he can do that.

The chain of transferred experience is unbroken.

And in every aerial feat of an individual there is the collective creative achievement of all.

The grandeur of the very idea and the form in which it's delivered is so beautiful that if I was twenty I would probably have rushed for the skies then and there.

One must credit the splendor of the agitational artistry of this film.

In the film's finale (after many twists and turns), Tracy – once again in the instructor's seat – flies into action alongside his fiancée. She bombs the Japanese supply depot and saves Bob [from having to fulfill this dangerous mission originally assigned to him].

And when she returns to camp, she leaps into Bob's embrace and Tracy slowly walks away.

And...disappears.

His mission is fulfilled.

Of course I didn't end up becoming a pilot.

I'm not twenty years old!

But the story of *A Guy Named Joe*, as this film is called, is beautiful in exactly this conception of the creative continuum of generations – in whatever sphere we might consider.

And in our creative sphere no less than others.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Sergei Eizenshein, "Iudif," in Sergei Yutkevich, ed. *Izbrannye proizvedenie* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968), Vol. 5, 364-96: 383-6.



Fig. 11: Deceptively prosaic-looking Spencer Tracy and freckled Van Johnson.

The first passage – in the memoir chapter “Inversions” – contains a bitter reflection on the state of American-Soviet relations in 1946. The hope for future collaboration between the two nations’ film industries, so exuberantly expressed in Eisenstein’s 1942 film conference speech⁷⁵, had been utterly dashed by the break-up of the Allies and start of the new Cold War. The leadership of both US and USSR descended into paranoid reaction, and the film industries were rent by purges. Witchfinders on either side hunted those who bore the taint of having gotten too close to the enemy during the brief flash of friendship, those whose visions of human freedom were too wide for the tightening borders of the dis-united nations.

Eisenstein’s writings from this last, difficult period of his life are suffused with feverish inspiration and a search for the creative connections which demonstrate the existence of a deep, primordial unity in human striving despite the reigning discord and strife of the post-war world. Despair and optimism, resignation and defiance, each containing the trace of the other, like the Daoist Yin and Yang he so frequently invoked in *Non-Indifferent Nature*. The most enduring hope that Eisenstein develops in this period shines through in his discussions of *A Man Called Joe*: that everything he was trying to accomplish in his short, contentious

⁷⁵ The next line in the speech after the sentence used as an epigraph for this article was “The united post-war cooperation between the Soviet, American, and British film industries will open unimaginable horizons of creative ascension and growth for the film art of the future.”

life would be carried forward in the work of others yet to come. Even when he came to express doubt about the realization of worldwide revolutionary freedom, he continued to venerate the creative continuum through which his works would provide the lift to future artists' wings.

About the Author:

Dr. Maya Garcia is an interdisciplinarian with a passion for archival research, intercultural mediation, and creative experimentation. They received a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures with a secondary citation in Music from Harvard University in 2023 and a BA in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature from UC Berkeley in 2014. For their doctoral dissertation, "The Queer Legacy of Ivan the Terrible," Garcia received support from grants including a Fulbright-IIE student research fellowship and spent extensive time in Russian archives tracing the creation and censorship of historical fiction works depicting the contested sexuality of the first Russian tsar. Since returning to the US in 2022, Garcia has published work in *Opera*, *The Digital Review*, *The Cambridge Opera Journal*, and *The Journal of Russian American Studies*. Their post-doctoral research interests include Soviet-American film exchanges during World War II and Eisenstein's reception of Hollywood films.

Field Notes

Call for Proposals – *Journal of Russian American Studies (JRAS)*!

Journal of Russian American Studies (JRAS) - Call for Proposals

The *Journal of Russian American Studies (JRAS)* is calling for proposals for a special issue to be published in Summer 2026. The theme of this issue is articles about American views of non-Russian territories of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The journal has always embraced a broad geographic and thematic approach. This issue will highlight this emphasis by recognizing the importance of American views of non-Russian areas of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

Please submit proposals to jras1807@gmail.com by September 1, 2025. Notification of selection will be by September 30, 2025. The proposal should include three elements: 1) a 100-200 word description, 2) a one-page bibliography, and 3) a short c.v. (2-3 pages).

For the selected authors, the manuscripts will be due on March 1, 2026 emailed to jras1807@gmail.com

Publication will be in Summer 2026.

Sincerely,

William Benton Whisenhunt and Lee A. Farrow

Co-Managing Editors

Journal of Russian American Studies (JRAS)

<https://journals.ku.edu/jras>

jras1807@gmail.com

New York Public Library

The New Public Library is celebrating 125 years of its Slavic and East European Collections that are among the most extensive publicly accessible in the world!

Here is the link to their exhibit:

<https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/125-slavic#:~:text=Featuring%20items%20from%20the%2014th,microform%20titles%20in%20various%20languages.>

The Anthem Americans in Revolutionary Russia Series

Anthem Americans in Revolutionary Russia is an exciting series of republications of books by American eyewitnesses during the turbulent Russian Revolutionary Era (1914-1921). The men and women who wrote these accounts left a rich treasure of insights on a wide range of issues such as politics, ethnic identity, military, women, travel, and more, offering readers a first-hand view of a tumultuous, complex, and controversial era.

Providing a broad range of American perspectives, each volume includes an introduction and annotation by a leading scholar to help give the general reader, students, and scholars a glimpse into this critical and exciting era.

Series Editors

Lee A. Farrow - Auburn University at Montgomery, USA

William Benton Whisenhunt - Emeritus, College of DuPage, USA

Editorial Board

Lyubov Ginzburg - Independent Scholar, USA

Ivan Kurilla - Wellesley College, USA

Matthew Lee Miller - University of Northwestern, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Norman E. Saul, Emeritus - University of Kansas, USA

Victoria I. Zhuravleva - Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia

PROPOSALS

We welcome submissions of proposals for challenging and original works from emerging and established scholars that meet the criteria of our series. We make prompt editorial decisions. Our titles are published in print and e-book editions and are subject to peer review by recognised authorities in the field. Should you wish to send in a proposal, please contact us at: proposal@anthempres.com.

ANTHEM PRESS specialises in the publishing of new academic research, professional and trade books and e-books within established and emerging social sciences, humanities and business/law fields. We are headquartered in London (UK) with sales and distribution outlets in the USA, UK, Australia and India.