

*Mezhdunarodnik* as a Vocation: Formation of Soviet International News  
Workers, 1945–1964

Inaugural-Dissertation  
zur  
Erlangung des Doktorgrades  
der Philosophie des Fachbereiches 04 der  
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

vorgelegt von Mariia  
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Gießen, Deutschland

2025

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## Table of Contents

|                                                                               |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Acknowledgments.....</b>                                                   | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Abbreviations.....</b>                                                     | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>Note on Transliteration.....</b>                                           | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Introduction.....</b>                                                      | <b>6</b>   |
| First Theme.....                                                              | 6          |
| Research Objectives and Research Questions.....                               | 8          |
| Literature Review.....                                                        | 11         |
| Sources.....                                                                  | 19         |
| <b>Methodology and Key Terms.....</b>                                         | <b>24</b>  |
| Limitations.....                                                              | 28         |
| Structure.....                                                                | 28         |
| <b>Chapter 1: Exodus of the Fittest, 1917 – 1945.....</b>                     | <b>30</b>  |
| 1.1. New State – New People.....                                              | 31         |
| 1.2. The Story of People, or Lack Thereof.....                                | 43         |
| 1.3. The War, Regular and Cold.....                                           | 53         |
| Conclusions.....                                                              | 61         |
| <b>Chapter 2: Pillars of Change: Refinement over Time.....</b>                | <b>63</b>  |
| 2.1. The World of Nuance.....                                                 | 64         |
| 2.2. Luxury of Being a Mezhdunarodnik.....                                    | 73         |
| 2.3. Destalinized Minds.....                                                  | 81         |
| Conclusions.....                                                              | 94         |
| <b>Chapter 3: Professionalization? Journalists' Career Trajectories.....</b>  | <b>94</b>  |
| 3.1. Training.....                                                            | 96         |
| 3.2. Journalists Take the Reins.....                                          | 110        |
| 3.3. Central Misplanning System: Area Experts.....                            | 118        |
| 3.4. Job (In)Security.....                                                    | 124        |
| 3.5. Area Flexibility.....                                                    | 133        |
| Conclusions.....                                                              | 141        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Mezhdunarodnik as a Vocation: Porosity and Opportunity.....</b> | <b>141</b> |
| 4.1. System's Porosity and Mezhdunarodnik's Status.....                       | 142        |
| 4.2. News Agencies' Journalists vs. Gazetchiki.....                           | 147        |
| 4.3. Writer vs. Journalist.....                                               | 150        |
| 4.4. Academic vs. Journalist.....                                             | 155        |
| 4.5. Diplomat vs. Journalist.....                                             | 157        |
| 4.6. Translator vs. Journalist.....                                           | 164        |
| 4.7. Secret Agent vs. Journalist.....                                         | 168        |
| Conclusions.....                                                              | 174        |
| <b>Chapter 5: Of Gods and People: Nomenklatura and the Rest.....</b>          | <b>175</b> |
| 5.1. Feared Behaviors.....                                                    | 176        |
| 5.2. Gated Community of Mezhdunarodniki.....                                  | 192        |
| 5.3. Materialism beyond Marx.....                                             | 210        |
| Conclusions.....                                                              | 213        |
| <b>Conclusions.....</b>                                                       | <b>214</b> |
| <b>Bibliography.....</b>                                                      | <b>220</b> |
| <b>Appendix.....</b>                                                          | <b>240</b> |
| <b>Abstract.....</b>                                                          | <b>261</b> |

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who supported me throughout the course of this dissertation.

First and foremost, my heartfelt thanks go to my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Thomas Bohn and Prof. Dr. Bettina Severin-Barboutie, whose guidance and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this journey. Their support has been instrumental in shaping this work.

I am also grateful to the Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture for providing the resources, facilities, and financial support that made this project possible. My thanks further extend to the FB 04 Colloquium and Prof. Dr. Katharina Stornig, Dr. Johannes Nagel, and Prof. Dr. Nicole Immig, for their advice. I am equally grateful to my former supervisor, Prof. Marsha Siefert, for her generosity with her time, her thoughtful conversations, and her constant encouragement, without which I would not be able to keep going. I am indebted to the many scholars I encountered at academic events who offered valuable criticism and encouraged me to confront perspectives I might otherwise have overlooked (case in point, KGB). Special thanks also go to Dr. Christoph Schutte for our collaboration at the ZfO and for the opportunity to travel regularly to Marburg, which enriched my mundane life.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues and peers, namely, Anna Ivanova, Laura Loew, Anastasiia Marsheva, and Kajetan Stobiecki, for their stimulating discussions, constructive critiques, and much-needed humor. I cannot thank my best friends, Yana Kitaeva and Aleksandr Sulimov, enough for our calls, which gave me a sense of normalcy.

Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to my parents and my partner for their unwavering support and patience. Their faith in me has been my greatest source of strength. This work would not have been possible without the encouragement of all these remarkable people. Thank you.

## **Abbreviations**

APN – the *Novosti* Press Agency

CC CPSU – the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

GA RF – the Russian State Archives of the Russian Federation

GKKS – the State Committee for the Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries

KGB – the Committee for State Security

MGIMO – the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Affairs

MID – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NKID – the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs

NKVD – the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs

RGANI – the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History

RGASPI – the Russian State Archives of Socio-Political History

SIB / Sovinformburo – the Soviet Information Bureau

TASS – the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union

VOKS – the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries

### **Note on Transliteration**

Names well known to English-speaking readers are presented in the text in their most common forms, for example, ‘Khrushchev’ instead of ‘Hrushchyov’ or ‘Ehrenburg’ instead of “Erenburg.” For similar reasons, I have used ‘Izvestia’ rather than ‘Izvestiia’ or ‘Izvestiya’ because the word has become familiar in English. Other than that, transliterations were done according to the following pattern.

### **Scheme of Transliteration**

|        |        |       |          |        |
|--------|--------|-------|----------|--------|
| А – A  | Ж – Zh | Н – N | Ф – F    | Ы – Y  |
| Б – B  | З – Z  | О – O | Х – H    | Ь – ‘  |
| В – V  | И – I  | П – P | Ц – Ts   | Э – E  |
| Г – G  | Й – I  | Р – R | Ч – Ch   | Ю – Yu |
| Д – D  | К – K  | С – S | Ш – Sh   | Я – Ya |
| Е – Ye | Л – L  | Т – T | Щ – Shch |        |
| Ё – Yo | М – M  | У – U | Ъ – ‘    |        |

## Introduction

### First Theme

In 1946, a new world was being built on the ruins of the old one. The Nuremberg Trials, a turning point after the Allied victory, clearly showed that the world had changed forever right there, in the demolished city where the buildings would still crumble every other day. At that moment, the careers of many Soviet journalists obtained a new vector: by covering the Trials, they became known both in the USSR and abroad. There, they also faced correspondents from other countries and learned more about the work of unfamiliar media, “ [...] foreign journalists, whom I personally and most of us knew very little about, especially correspondents from Western countries, we approached them, needless to say, quite prejudicially [...]”<sup>1</sup> Having faced their counterparts, the Soviets noticed differences in various aspects of their work. For the first time, the Soviet reporters had to face competition for an audience on such a scale, and all of this while barely speaking any foreign languages. Boris Polevoi, one of the leading figures among the group, knew just one phrase in English at this time – “I don’t speak English.” During the months he spent there, he learned the second one – “Thank you very much,” self-admittedly, being afraid of jeopardizing his “excellent generation that, unfortunately, neglected foreign languages.”<sup>2</sup> Daniil Kraminov, who was stationed as a TASS correspondent in Sweden and later with the Western Allied armies, had a big advantage over this group, since he was one of the very few people in the delegation who actually knew foreign audiences. Kraminov propagated to his comrades an idea of learning something from their colleagues, above all, “their professionalism, their constant care that the fact is not reported on its own, but presented in a ‘good package.’ Their skill, their speed, their desire to beat the others and be the first to finish on the newspaper page.”<sup>3</sup> Kraminov was a pioneer of this idea among the top journalists, sowing the seed of doubt in their heads in those still pre-Cold War days. Polevoi had to admit that there was a lot to learn, although those times were just a rehearsal of the competition for the global audiences,

Frankly, even here in Nuremberg, where journalistic aces from all over the world have gathered, we have not experienced that kind of struggle yet. We are more concerned with what to write than with how or when. And sooner or later, sooner is better than later, and we, Soviet journalists, will have to deal with all this and do it seriously.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boris Polevoi, *V konce koncov. Nyurnbergskie dnevniki* [After All. The Nuremberg Diaries], *militera.lib*, <http://militera.lib.ru/prose/russian/polevoy3/02.html> [accessed 24.03.2024].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The real propaganda fights broke out soon after. Amid the Allies' triumph and the condemnation of war criminals, while the defendants were still sitting on the benches and waiting for the verdict, there was a dramatic shift: in March 1946, Churchill delivered his famous Fulton speech on the Iron Curtain, followed by Stalin's swift response in *Pravda*. Soviet journalists were unprepared for this turn of events, which left them confused and disoriented, not knowing what was expected from them and what it meant for their coverage.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the end of the Trials was still months away. In this uncertainty, the official start of the new information war led to an atmosphere of distrust and uneasiness in the very place that was supposed to be the beginning of a peaceful era.<sup>6</sup> Side-by-side, the East and West now had to co-exist and had a close look at each other, planting spy equipment in enemies' rooms and getting on each other's nerves. After a spy bug was found in the room of the main Soviet prosecutor, Vsevolod Vishnevskii, *Pravda* correspondent, imagining American officers listening through the furniture, yelled at the lamps: "We don't care about your atomic bomb!"<sup>7</sup> Just like that, Nuremberg marked a revolution in global affairs, and it did not go unnoticed. "Le Gavroche," a French weekly, published a caricature of the USSR and the USA cutting the globe into two halves with a saw.<sup>8</sup> The Cold War and the emergence of a new type of international expert and journalist, in particular, were born right then and there.

Given the circumstances, the role of that profession in the Cold War cannot be overestimated: before 1941, Soviet culture appealed mainly to a domestic audience, but now its addressee was the whole world, which needed to be convinced that the Soviet Union had become the first socialist superpower through the words of its journalists. Post-1945, correspondents stationed or traveling in various countries held a significant weight over how the populace perceived global developments.<sup>9</sup> Through their writings, they painted a vivid picture of the world, shaping the lenses through which readers viewed other nations, cultures, and political landscapes.<sup>10</sup> Their words and descriptions were not just fleeting; they often endured and shaped long-lasting attitudes of entire regions. Thus, those journalists played a significant

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<sup>5</sup> "Process: Istoriya Mezhdunarodnogo Voennogo Tribunala v Nyurnberge glazami zhurnalistov" [Process: The History of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg through the Eyes of Journalists], *TASS*, <https://spec.tass.ru/nurnbergskiy-process/> [accessed 05.10.2023].

<sup>6</sup> Vishnevsky wrote to *Pravda*'s editor-in-chief Pospelov that the situation had become psychologically difficult. Ibid. The overall course that the coverage needed to take was unclear. Maya Burak, *Shaping the Narrative: Pravda's Coverage of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, 1945–47* (MA thesis, Nipissing University, 2022), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Boris Yefimov, *Desyat' desyatiletii* [Ten decades] (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), 415–432, especially 428–429.

<sup>8</sup> "Process: Istoriya Mezhdunarodnogo Voennogo Tribunala."

<sup>9</sup> The journalists also liked to think of their craft as "the first draft of history," nitpicking the most important events throughout the world and noting those down in their media.

<sup>10</sup> James Mark and Péter Apor, "Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989," *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 4 (2015): 856.

role in knowledge production during the Cold War, gathering data about foreign countries and passing it not just to readers, but also to their governments for them to make more informed decisions on foreign affairs.<sup>11</sup> Dissecting their methods of work and the logic behind their operation explains the biases and asymmetries not just in Cold War knowledge, but also in the perception of the globalized world.<sup>12</sup>

## Research Objectives and Research Questions

In my dissertation, I showcase the nonlinear development of Soviet international journalism with its twists, ups, and downs in the postwar decades. Not only by looking at the policy targeting journalism, but also by examining the formation of a special category of *mezhdunarodnik* [mɪʒdɒnɐ'rodɲɪk – literally *internationalist*], the study focuses on how increasing the value of professionalism among internationally oriented journalists affected their lives and careers, as well as the range of actors involved. The main questions of the dissertation focus on which factors shaped the peculiar phenomenon and what implications it had for the Soviet system at large and why it was impossible before. Moreover, such emphasis inevitably raises the wider question of the specifics of Soviet professionalism and its social foundations. After all, the phenomenon of a *mezhdunarodnik* did not arise as a result of the creation of a separate educational program or a specialized professional institute. On the contrary, many workers in this field had diverse training and experience, entering the profession from different fields – from diplomacy and history to translation and economics. Such heterogeneity gave rise to a distinct dynamic of professional competence, in which

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<sup>11</sup> Sune Bechmann Pedersen and Marie Cronqvist, “Foreign Correspondents in the Cold War: The Politics and Practices of East German Television Journalists in the West,” *Media History* (2019): 1; Rosamund Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media: Radio, Politics and Socialist Celebrity in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1969* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2024), 240.

<sup>12</sup> On top of that, the Soviet foreign correspondents were crucial not only for the readers and officials in the USSR: countries in the Bloc could not have their own journalists abroad, as their states were not recognized in the Western world for decades. Since they did not have diplomatic relationships with foreign countries, they could obtain visas with great effort for assignments outside the Bloc and mostly relied on Soviet coverage. Moreover, if the journalists from the Bloc did go on their assignments, it was a risky undertaking, since there were no diplomatic missions. For instance, the German Democratic Republic was not recognized by the “West” until the early 1970s, hence, having foreign correspondents only in other friendly, socialist nations. The Soviet journalists were the eyes and ears of the whole Bloc. However, when the state’s existence was finally acknowledged, the correspondents’ presence abroad doubled just in a few years, given the immediate expansion of networks in major Western capitals. Bechmann Pedersen and Cronqvist, *Foreign Correspondents*, 3–4; Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media*, 241; Lutz Mücke, *Korrespondenten im Kalten Krieg. Zwischen Propaganda und Selbstbehauptung* (Cologne: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2014), 20. On the other hand, the Soviets did not have a monopoly on the socialist vision of the world, as there were other actors with alternative outlook, like Western left-leaning politicians or Chinese Maoists. Su Lin Lewis and Nana Osei-Opare, “Introduction: Development Dreams from the Socialist South,” in *Socialism, Internationalism, and Development in the Third World*, ed. Su Lin Lewis, David Brydan, Nana Osei-Opare, and Jessica Reinisch (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024), 3–4.

formal qualifications did not always determine the practical effectiveness and prestige of a position. Yet little is known about the genesis of the *mezhdunarodnik*, the origin and structure of the international journalistic community in the USSR, their motivations, professional practices, and career paths.

Understanding the particularities of this profession leads to the question of the relationship between structure and agency: who shaped the nature of the occupation, the state, or the journalists themselves? Traditionally, the Soviet bureaucracy and ideology defined many of the functions and rules of conduct, setting external restrictions and standards for professional activity. Contrariwise, employees adapted to this framework, developing their own strategies and practices that allowed them not only to fulfill formal requirements but also to satisfy their own needs. Thus, the dissertation identifies the extent to which the profession resulted from the constant interaction between institutional conditions and individual initiative, in which professional identity was formed through a combination of external pressure and internal choice. This perspective allows the researcher to consider Soviet professionalism as a social construct in which a person's role is not limited to the mere fulfillment of prescriptions: a professional was both an object and a subject of the formation of professional practice.

The extent of expressing one's agency was closely tied to one's position in the Soviet power hierarchy. After all, contrary to popular belief, not all journalists working on international coverage were part of the higher class, as preferential treatment for some social groups creates boundaries for others. The internal divisions inside the group played their part, as only a minority of news workers belonged to the *nomenklatura* – the Soviet elite. Thus, part of the dissertation's focus is on the general trends and patterns of the Soviet model, including social stratification. The author aims to identify the impact of social inequality on the formation of the profession and its further implications for efficiency through this lens. In reference to Pierre Bourdieu, Simon Huxtable called those journalists a “dominated fraction of the dominating class.”<sup>13</sup> Soviet journalism was relatively low on the imaginary pedestal of prestige, and such positions did not attract many seekers. Brain drain plagued news organizations and departments, as the hopes of travel and the possibility of seeing the world associated with international journalism could not always outweigh the poor living conditions, organizational chaos, and low salaries. Moreover, most workers in the journalism sector experienced only mundane, less striking aspects of their jobs, including office routine,

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 196, as quoted in Simon Huxtable, *News from Moscow: Soviet Journalism and the Limits of Postwar Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 3.

reading readers' mail, lack of living space, and sleep deprivation. The professional community's differing societal weight became a defining characteristic of Soviet news' performance globally and, consequently, a crucial component of this dissertation's narrative.

## Literature Review

Understanding the Cold War often comes down to knowing who won the standoff. This retrospective projection automatically determines any changes and shifts as yet another step toward failure on the Soviet side. Yet, the Soviet chiefs did not have any doubts about the superiority of the Soviet model and the inevitability of the victory of socialism.<sup>14</sup> This Cold War fleur has left an indelible mark on the image of a Soviet correspondent, and mythology surrounds the profession of an international journalist. Part of the reason why foreign correspondents are seen as global elite is the journalists themselves – the most prominent of them wrote autobiographies and portrayed themselves in a certain favorable light, as “a cosmopolitan among cosmopolitans, a man in gray flannel who ranks very high in the hierarchy of reporters.”<sup>15</sup> They are depicted as heroes on the hemlines of the Cold War, ready to fight, lie, and cheat to win over the reading public. A romantic notion of travel in the shut-down world is the one that often comes to mind, where journalists were the ones opening up the Iron Curtain just enough for the readers to peek behind it. Still, multiple fields address the issue from different angles, broadening perspectives on the profession and its professionals and questioning several pre-established notions.

First, my analysis deals with the field of Media studies.<sup>16</sup> The scholarship of international press circulation is rather extensive, but such research imposes several challenges: objects are

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<sup>14</sup> Tatyana Shishkova: *Vnezhdanovshchina. Sovetskaya poslevoennaya politika v oblasti kul'tury kak dialog s voobrazhaemym Zapadom* [Vnezhdanovschina. Soviet Post-War Cultural Policy as a Dialogue with the Imaginary West] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2023).

<sup>15</sup> In their own eyes, they were not just newspaper workers but heroes and moral defenders, and their written works built a myth surrounding the profession. Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 17; Marcos Rodríguez-Espinosa, “The Translators Who Shook the World: Journalists and Translators in the Russian Revolution,” *Perspectives* (Universidad de Málaga): 3, [http://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/34967/Perspectives\\_The translators who shook the world.pdf?sequence=1](http://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/34967/Perspectives_The translators who shook the world.pdf?sequence=1) [accessed 15.05.2024].

<sup>16</sup> The field can be generally divided into two. The most popular political economy approach usually highlights the interrelation between power and media systems, oftentimes narrowing it down to media and economy, media and policies, etc. After all, the Soviet media were inseparable from the state, and its employees' careers went hand-in-hand with the official policies. For example, Robert Waterman McChesney, *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008). The second option, cultural studies, often focuses on audiences and their perception of the content of the media. In the case of Soviet Union research, it often leads to interpreting the press' content, as well as letters from its readers, etc. See, Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 1 (1996): 78–105; Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Stalin's Peasants, and 'Readers' Letters to Krest'ianskaia Gazeta, 1938,” *Russian History/ Histoire Russe* 24 (1997): 149–70; Matthew Lenoe, “Letter-Writing and the State: Reader Correspondence with Newspapers as a Source for Early Soviet History,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 40 (1999): 139–69; Matthew Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). My study of people involved in this system can fall into both categories: the analysis highlights the media organizations and the overall prosopography of journalists. More on journalists and approach to studying them: Barbie Zelizer, *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004).

geographically dispersed, multilingual, and oftentimes hard to access.<sup>17</sup> For those reasons, many scholars focus primarily on objects within a more reachable distance, and their studies address the Western news agencies and globalizing aspects of printed media.<sup>18</sup> When one reads about the practices and work culture of foreign correspondents from different countries, it becomes clear that the journalists from the USSR are often left out. This asymmetry in the study of professional practices creates a distorted picture of Cold War-era journalism, either antagonizing the “other side” or exoticizing it. Yet, the practices of international correspondents were often mirror images of each other: both “Western” and Soviet journalists performed similar tasks, promoting state ideology and creating a certain international image of their countries. The impact of the Soviet press in the international arena was not just downplayed in the Cold War context; it was simply hard to evaluate and analyze for the “outsiders.” Due to the remote location and authoritarian nature of the Soviet state, much of the research was speculative and not based on internal documentation.

For decades, the English-speaking field was dominated by the so-called Sovietology (otherwise known as Kremlinology) – a discipline focusing on USSR policies.<sup>19</sup> Starting in the 1950s, the Cold War gained momentum, so numerous scholars wrote about the Soviet Union, including its news dissemination. The work titled “Four Theories of the Press” has established the standard for approaching the analysis of Soviet media within the framework of the totalitarian paradigm in scholarly discourse.<sup>20</sup> This investigation delved extensively into what made the USSR different from the Anglo-American idea of news: censorship, state dependence, and power relations. The primary emphasis was on the Soviet Union's hypocrisy, with minimal attention to operations in the media. Access to reliable sources was limited, and foreign scholars depended on print media available in the West, word-of-mouth from *nevozvraschentsy* [non-returns], and speculation. The USSR was portrayed as an empire of

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<sup>17</sup> The sources are hard to work around: news organizations, especially those affiliated with governments, are not eager for the scholarly community to explore their repositories. Michael B. Palmer, *International News Agencies: A History* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Sovietology was oftentimes used as a distorted mirror for American values, which attached moralistic connotations and outright judgment to anything the Soviet Union did. David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> See: Fredrick S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956); Philip E. Mosely and S. Michalkow, “Kalter Frieden. Ergebnisse der sowjetischen Diplomatie,” *Ost-Probleme* 4, no. 12 (March 22, 1952): 354–65; Anthony Buzek, *How the Communist Press Works* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964).

evil, wielding falsehood and blatant deceit.<sup>21</sup> The menace from the Soviet state was closely associated with the impact of ideology, which was especially scrutinized in the early Cold War context and became a significant field of investigation.<sup>22</sup> However, while scholars had made significant strides in studying the Soviet state, certain aspects remained largely unexplored. Selection, training, and dispatching journalists to international posts were yet to receive the examination. The materials produced by these foreign correspondents were also left out, and the nuances of how the narratives remained largely unknown. Furthermore, the reception and interpretation of their texts had been a relatively under-researched area.

A notable turn in Sovietology happened during the 1970s. Scholars began to adopt a more critical perspective, with a gradual softening of the dominant totalitarian paradigm. As a result, a growing body of literature emerged to explain the motivations and actions of this ideological rival. The normative suspicion persisted, but it evolved into a more sophisticated analytical approach, allowing for a deeper exploration of the complexities within the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> More human-oriented research appeared, focusing on the understanding of professionalism within Soviet society or on the social stratification within it.<sup>24</sup>

The 1990s were marked by the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent cessation of the Cold War, thereby fueling greater curiosity in the sole surviving ‘camp’ – capitalism. The focus was rather redirected toward the press in the newly established independent states and the process of democratization of surviving news giants like TASS.<sup>25</sup> The change of the regime also led to the declassification of documents. However, access to the archives did not

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<sup>21</sup> See, J. Gregory Oswald: “Soviet News and Notes,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 41, No. 1 (1961): 120–6; Rudolf Schlesinger: “Problems of the Soviet Press as Illustrated by the Soviet Journalists’ Monthly Sovetskaya Pechat,” *Soviet Studies* 9, No. 2 (1957): 223–38.

<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the United States was not studied from the position of having its own ideology, and it was long denied due to the negative connotation of the term. And, while Soviet and American policymakers utilized propaganda and culture as an integral part of a strategy to “win hearts and minds”, it was more than merely an adjunct to foreign policy, e.g. W. Scott Lucas, “Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War,” in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Gary D. Rawnsley, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999: 11–30; Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> For example, George Gerbner and George Marvanyi, “The Many Worlds of the World’s Press,” *Journal of Communication* 27, Issue 1 (1977): 52–66.

<sup>24</sup> Mark W. Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (New York: Western Publishing Co., 1970); Christine Kunze, *Journalismus in der UdSSR* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1978); Lilita Dzirkals, Thane Gustafson, and A. Ross Johnson, *The Media and Inter-Elite Communication in the USSR*, Rand Corporation Report R-2869 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1982); Paul Roth, “Die sowjetische Agentur Nowosti (APN): Funktion, Bedeutung, Vorläufer,” *Osteuropa* 29, no. 3 (March 1979): 203–19; Bohdan Harasymiw, “Nomenklatura: The Soviet Communist Party’s Leadership Recruitment System,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 2, no. 4 (December 1969): 493–512; John D. Nagle, “A New Look at the Soviet Elite: A Generational Model of the Soviet System,” *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1975): 1–13.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Natalia Roudakova, *Losing Pravda: Ethics and The Press in Post-Truth Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

prompt an immediate surge in research on the 1950s, as attention centered on Stalinism and Perestroika. The period of Stalin's leadership has attracted scholarly interest in Soviet society, as well as the intimidation, mobilization, and oppression conducted by the state.<sup>26</sup> The Perestroika era generated an exploration of the democratization of its press, closing the gap between the Eastern and Western media,<sup>27</sup> as well as, conversely, the constraints imposed on press freedom during the waning years of the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the so-called Thaw remained largely overlooked.

In recent years, the analysis of the Cold War has undergone a paradigm shift. Its range has been broadened beyond conventional beliefs about “sides” of the conflict. More and more scholars highlight the possibilities of mutual understanding and cooperation, by ultimately renaming the Iron Curtain into the Nylon Curtain, highlighting its permeability.<sup>29</sup> The involved countries were increasingly seen not as mortal enemies with nothing in common: researchers described more and more shared trends, and previously divisive concepts turned out to apply to all sides of the conflict.<sup>30</sup> In this light, the pervasive totalitarian ideology has proven to be a hindrance to scholars in their efforts to gain an understanding of the Soviet media system.

Furthermore, the geography of research of foreign correspondents in the Cold War did not just concentrate on the direct standoff between the United States and the USSR.<sup>31</sup> For instance, Christian Chmel has looked into the activities of West German journalists in the

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<sup>26</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Igal Halfin, *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> He Zhou, “Changes in the Soviet concept of news - to what extent and why?” *International Communication Gazette* 42, Issue 3 (1988): 193–211.

<sup>28</sup> Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika And The Soviet Media* (London: Routledge, 1991); David Wedgwood Benn, “Glasnost’ and the Media,” in *Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics*, ed. Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Gitelman (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1992): 174–97.

<sup>29</sup> György Péteri, “Nylon Curtain – Transnational And Transsystemic Tendencies In The Cultural Life Of State-Socialist Russia And East-Central Europe,” *Slavonica Volume* 10, No. 2 (2004): 113–23; Michael David-Fox, “The Iron Curtain as Semi-Permeable Membrane: The Origins and Demise of the Stalinist Superiority Complex,” in *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s–1960s*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014): 14–39.

<sup>30</sup> For example, for the longest time, the US was considered to have no ideology, since this term was so closely associated with the “empire of evil” – the USSR. However, recent studies have proven that the USA had an agenda beyond “helping the free world.” See, for example, Lucas, *Beyond Diplomacy*, 11–30. Scholars are also paying more attention to the collaborative efforts of the rivals. Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer, eds., *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s–1960s* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Anthologies like Kristin Roth-Ey, ed., *Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023) also deal with the exploration of space beyond the simple opposition between the West and the East.

German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>32</sup> His work unveils the dynamics of cross-border journalism during the Cold War.<sup>33</sup> Further, Guido Thiemeyer has dedicated his study to West German journalists in the Soviet Bloc, with a specific focus on the GDR and the Soviet Union.<sup>34</sup> Lotta Lounasmeri's research has cast a spotlight on Finnish journalists and their coverage of news from the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup> Through her study, Lounasmeri examines how Finnish journalists engaged with information from their neighbor. The 2014 work by Lutz Mücke led to a book of interviews with foreign correspondents from both the Eastern and Western blocs.<sup>36</sup> Those correspondents not only retold firsthand accounts but also reflected on their working conditions. All in all, a natural consequence of these works has been the rediscovery and reevaluation of journalists' roles during the Cold War.

The contemporary studies of the Soviet press are diverse in their methodologies and topics. They encompass diverse perspectives, such as Cold War propaganda, depictions of particular media events, and the construction of imagery in Soviet newspapers. However, until recently, numerous inquiries failed to account for a significant element of the interpersonal relationships within the propaganda system owing to the conceptualization of news production as a uniform, state-oriented mechanism. So, the researchers shifted their attention toward the role of government professionals and intermediaries, how they impacted state policies, and constructed knowledge about the world.<sup>37</sup> Works by Julia Metger, Rósa Magnúsdóttir, and Dina Fainberg unveiled a heightened interest in this subject,<sup>38</sup> expanding

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<sup>32</sup> Christian Chmel, *Die DDR-Berichterstattung bundesdeutscher Massenmedien und die Reaktionen der SED (1972–1989)* (Berlin: Metropol, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> German outlook on the Cold War journalism is two-sided, since the divided country experienced both socialism and capitalism, directly affecting the journalistic contents of both parts. For the same reason, studies, some more and some less explicitly, keep comparing the two, for instance, Stefan Zahlmann, ed., *Wie im Westen, nur anders* (Berlin: Panama, 2010); Michael Meyen and Anke Fiedler, eds., *Die Grenze im Kopf: Journalisten in der DDR* (Berlin: Panama, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Guido Thiemeyer, "'Wandel durch Annäherung.' Westdeutsche Journalisten in Osteuropa 1956–1977," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 45 (2005): 101–16.

<sup>35</sup> Lotta Lounasmeri, "Through Rose or Blue and White Glasses? Decades of News about the Soviet Union in the Finnish Press," *Nordicom Review* 34 (2013): 105–23.

<sup>36</sup> Mücke, *Korrespondenten im Kalten Krieg*.

<sup>37</sup> Some articles reflected on the training of professional cadres in the GDR, for instance, Michael Meyen's work, telling a story of journalism professors having their own agency, as well as the organizational chaos of the first years of attempting to create the system preparing journalistic cadres. Michael Meyen, "Die Erfindung der Journalistik in der DDR: Ein Beitrag zur Fachgeschichte der Nachkriegszeit," *Journalistik. Zeitschrift für Journalismusforschung* 1, no. 2 (2019): 3–32. On the role of personal input: Alexander R. Schejngeit, "Der Mann, der die sowjetische Auslandsberichterstattung organisierte. Yakov Doleckij, Leiter der Nachrichtenagentur TASS, 1921–1937," *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies* 18, no. 25 (2012): 79–87.

<sup>38</sup> Julia Metger, "Writing the Papers: How Western Correspondents Reported the First Dissident Trials in Moscow, 1965–1972," in *Entangled Protest: Transnational Approaches to the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert Brier (Osnabrück: fibre, 2013), 87–108; Rósa Magnúsdóttir, "Cold War Correspondents and the Possibilities of Convergence: American Journalists in the Soviet Union, 1968–1979," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 41 (2014): 33–56. Dina Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents: Soviet and American Reporters on the Ideological Frontlines* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).

foreign correspondents' roles as political agents. For instance, Dina Fainberg's comparative analysis of Soviet journalists in the United States and American journalists in the Soviet Union concludes that journalism was not merely a product of the Cold War; it also played a crucial role in shaping Cold War ideologies. Moreover, it influenced how citizens in both the United States and the Soviet Union perceived not only the opposing side but also their own identities.

Present-day academic discourse has turned its focus towards the self-identification of Soviet journalists, the social dynamics within journalistic circles after 1953, and the re-evaluation of genres inherent to the newspaper craft, among other related topics. Significant emphasis was placed on the connections between journalists and their values, treating them as specialists in their field. Moreover, a significant body of literature focuses on journalists' conduct during the Soviet era. For example, Mary-Catherine French delved into the founding of the Journalism Union and the changing connotations surrounding the occupation of journalism during the Thaw era.<sup>39</sup> In her study, journalists acted as representatives of the state and discovered effective methods to convey their concerns to authorities, or they transitioned into the roles of officials themselves. Analyzing their connections may serve as a substitute or a complementary approach to the Cold War factions in the dispute since journalists instigated discussions on practicality, opposing the Party's strict stance. I agree with the view that Soviet media were not anonymous entities under state pressure, but rather groups of people who advocated for reform and sought to coordinate their efforts to achieve more favorable outcomes.

The investigation into the Soviet media landscape conducted within the Soviet Union itself (and subsequently in Russia) diverged significantly from the aforementioned examinations, as these works are often disconnected, if not directly opposed, to the discourses in Anglo-American scholarship. The state's ideology, in combination with the Cold War objectives, demanded a claim for moral superiority of the Soviet Union as the principal defender of peace and liberty.<sup>40</sup> Thus, analyses of Soviet media were markedly partial and

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<sup>39</sup> Mary-Catherine French, *Reporting Socialism: Soviet Journalism and the Journalists' Union, 1955–1966* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Aleksei Kiselyov, *Pechat' angliiskikh monopolii protiv Gany: 1957–1965 gg.: formy i metody neokolonialisticheskoi propagandy* [The Press of the British Monopolies against Ghana: 1957–1965: Forms and Methods of Neo-Colonialist Propaganda] (PhD diss., Moscow, 1966); Vladimir Kelin, *‘Chetvertoe izmerenie’ vneshnei politiki imperializma: Ispol'zovanie imperialisticheskimi gosudarstvami sredstv massovoi informatsii i propagandy vo vneshnei politike* [The ‘Fourth Dimension’ of Imperialism's Foreign Policy: The Use of Mass Media and Propaganda by Imperialist States in Foreign Policy] (PhD diss., Moscow), 1967; Valerii Yegorov, *Angliiskaia imperialisticheskaia propaganda na sluzhbe u podzhigatelei voyny* [British Imperialist Propaganda in the Service of Warmongers] (PhD diss., Moscow, 1955).

were grounded in Marxist theoretical principles.<sup>41</sup> Such works were usually self-centered and tended to glorify the Soviet international propaganda's activities and successes. They can also be called generalizing since they also operate in the binary dimensions of “socialist” versus “bourgeois” principles of work.

Perestroika and the collapse of the USSR in 1991 were also pivotal moments in the domestic academic field. The country was, on the one hand, searching for a new identity, and, on the other, trying to process the events of its past. Numerous scholarly works were produced regarding the ideological underpinnings of propaganda within the Soviet Union, as well as the distinctive features within regional press.<sup>42</sup> The usual temporal framework is the first decades of the Soviet Union: from the 1920s until the end of World War II.<sup>43</sup> Research on Soviet propaganda at large has been mostly focused on thematic issues: anti-religious, visual, military, etc.<sup>44</sup> Besides, several recent works by Russian researchers have focused on the institutional history of TASS.<sup>45</sup> Sovinformburo is strongly associated with World War II, so

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<sup>41</sup> Soviet intellectuals conducted an analysis of the functions of the press utilizing Marxist terms like class struggle, base, superstructure, and overall did not shy away from using binary oppositions constantly. A. Izorkin, *Deyatel'nost' otdelenii Rossiiskogo telegrafnogo agentstva v Chuvashii v 1918-1922 godah* [The activities of the offices of the Russian Telegraphic Agency in Chuvashia in 1918-1922] (Cheboksary: NII pri sovete ministrov Chuvashskoi ASSR 68, 1966), 77–89. N. Keizerov et al., eds., *60-letie Velikogo Oktiabria i aktual'nye problemy bor'by protiv ideologii i propagandy sovremennogo imperIALIZMA* [The 60th Anniversary of the Great October and the Current Problems of the Struggle against the Ideology and Propaganda of Modern Imperialism] (Moscow: Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU, 1977); Yuri Maleka, *Vneshnepoliticheskaya propaganda Kommunisticheskoi partii v gody inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny, 1918–1920 gg.* [Foreign Policy Propaganda of the Communist Party during the Years of Foreign Military Intervention and the Civil War, 1918–1920] (PhD diss., Moscow, 1981); Yuri Tsvizov, *Propaganda sredstvami pechati politiki KPSS v oblasti kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty* [Propaganda by Means of the Press of the CPSU Policy in the Field of Cultural and Educational Work] (PhD diss., Moscow, 1983).

<sup>42</sup> Anton Kuropatkin, “Novye napravleniya v ideologicheskoi propagande SSSR posle smerti I. V. Stalina” [New directions in the ideological propaganda of the USSR after the death of I. V. Stalin], *Izvestiya Samarskogo nauchnogo centra Rossiiskoi akademii nauk* 13, no. 3 (2011): 165–9; E.L. Vartanova, G.V. Viren, T.I. Frolova, “Tipologiya informatsionnykh agentstv” [Typology of Information Agencies], *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 10: Zhurnalistika, № 3 (2013): 6–30.

<sup>43</sup> Lyudmila Sanzhieva, “Problemy osushchestvleniya informacionnogo obmena SSSR s zarubezhnymi gosudarstvami (na primere TASS v 1930-e gody)” [“The Problems of Information Exchange between the USSR and Foreign Countries (on the Example of TASS in the 1930s)”, *Vestnik IrGTU* 4m no. 20 (2004): 45–48; Maksim Babyuk, “Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskikh punktov i otdelenii ROSTA i TASS za rubezhom v 1920-e gg.: finansovo-ekonomicheskii aspekt [Activities of Correspondent Offices and Branches of ROSTA and TASS Abroad in the 1920s: Financial and Economic Aspect],” *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, Series 10: Zhurnalistika, no. 2 (2023): 125–44; Diana Kolesnichenko, “Agitacionnaya deyatel'nost' Telegrafnogo agentstva Sovetskogo Soyuza v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny” [Propaganda Activities of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War], *Gumanitarnyj akcent* 1 (2022): 43–51.

<sup>44</sup> E. Luchshev, *Antireligioznaya propaganda v SSSR: 1917–1941 gg.* [Antireligious Propaganda in the USSR: 1917–1941] (Saint Petersburg: ITA Ritm, 2016); Dmitrii Astashkin, “Organizatsiya kinopropagandy v poslevoennoi Novgorodskoi oblasti (1945–1953 gg.)” [Organization of Film Propaganda in the Postwar Novgorod Region (1945–1953)], *Vestnik Novgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 72 (2013): 4–6; A. Ilyasova, “Plakatnoe iskusstvo v sisteme antireligioznoi propagandy v 20–30-h godakh SSSR” [Poster Art in the System of Anti-Religious Propaganda in the 1920s–30s USSR], *Nauka, iskusstvo, kul'tura* 4, no. 36 (2002): 194–9.

<sup>45</sup> Maksim Babyuk, “Organizacionnye aspekty funkcionirovaniya sistemy telegrafnykh agentstv v pervoe desyatiletie sovetsskoi vlasti” [Organizational Aspects of the Functioning of the Telegraph Agency System in the

the vast majority of scholarly work focuses on its first four years of existence,<sup>46</sup> largely ignoring its post-war activities. In addition, the issue of other related foreign policy activities, such as cultural diplomacy, is also increasingly being addressed.<sup>47</sup> However, numerous works are drawn to self-exoticism, focusing on “exceptional” features of Soviet journalism while overlooking its mishaps. Given the modern official stance of the Russian state, many scholars continue to describe the world, both past and present, in Cold War oppositions, often hyperbolizing the successes of the Soviet media system. However, researchers such as Vladimir Pechatnov and Ekaterina Kamenskaya built bridges between the “Western” and “Eastern” historiographies on the Soviet press. Pechatnov, being an Americanist and a specialist in foreign relations, shows his deep knowledge of the Cold War and international diplomacy, which enables him to bring a unique perspective to the study of the Soviet press, contributing a critical analysis of the Sovinformburo's activities in the post-war years.<sup>48</sup> In turn, Ekaterina Kamenskaya explored the entanglement of pragmatism and media, economics, and reporting from abroad within the Soviet context, examining the foreign correspondent network of *Selskaya zhizn'*, a relatively understudied newspaper.<sup>49</sup>

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First Decade of Soviet Power], *Mediascope* 4 (2021), <http://www.mediascope.ru/2747> [accessed 01.09.2024]; Valeriya Bitvutskaya, *Sovetskoe informacionnoe agentstvo: evolyuciya soderzhaniya i tehnologii deyatel'nosti (po materialam TASS)* [The Soviet News Agency: The Evolution of Content and Technology of Activity (Based on the Materials of TASS)] (PhD diss., Saint Petersburg State University, 2019), [https://disser.spbu.ru/files/2019/disser\\_bitvutskaya.pdf](https://disser.spbu.ru/files/2019/disser_bitvutskaya.pdf) [accessed 04.07.2022].

<sup>46</sup> Olesya Balandina and Aleksandr Davydov, “Deyatel'nost' Sovinformburo v Velikobritanii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny: struktury i lyudi” [The Activities of the Soviet Information Bureau in Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War: Structures and People], *Nauchnyi dialog* 11, no. 29 (2006): 170–9; Oleg Bakulin, “‘V rezul'tate bombardirovki... v Moskve ubito \_\_, tyazhelo raneno \_\_ chelovek’ (kak vysshee sovetskoe rukovodstvo ‘Redaktirovalo’ soobshheniya Sovinformburo)’ [‘As a Result of the Bombing ... \_\_ People Were Killed and \_\_ Seriously Injured in Moscow’ (As the Top Soviet Leadership ‘Edited’ the Sovinformburo Reports)], *Mediascope* 2, no. 19 (2007): 66–8; Olesya Balandina, “Deyatel'nost' Sovinformburo za rubezhom v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny: jeffektivnost' i ideologicheskie prioritety” [The Activities of the Soviet Information Bureau Abroad during the Great Patriotic War: Effectiveness and Ideological Priorities], *Nauchnyi dialog* 3 (2019): 215–30; Viktor Fedotov, “Informacionnaya deyatel'nost' Sovinformburo v g. Kuibysheve (1941–1945 gg.)” [Information Activities of the Soviet Information Bureau in Kuibyshev (1941–1945)], *Obshchestvo: filosofiya, istoriya, kul'tura* 7 (2022): 110–4.

<sup>47</sup> Oksana Nagornaya et al., eds., *Sovetskaya kul'turnaya diplomatiya v gody Holodnoi voyny (1945–1989): sbornik dokumentov* [Soviet Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War (1945–1989): A Collection of Documents] (Chelyabinsk: Yuzhno-ural'skii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2017); Oksana Nagornaya, “Istoriya sovetskogo vyezdnoho turizma v kontekste kul'turnoi diplomatii ‘holodnoi voyny’ (1955–1991)” [The History of Soviet Outbound Tourism in the Context of Cultural Diplomacy of the Cold War (1955–1991)], *Vestnik Permskogo universiteta. Istoriya* 4, no. 39 (2017) 120–8; Mikhail Novikov and Aleksandr Morozov, “Kul'turnaya diplomatiya SSSR v stranah Zapada v gody holodnoi voyny” [Cultural Diplomacy of the USSR in Western Countries during the Cold War], *Verhnevolzhskii filologicheskii vestnik* 2, no. 21 (2020): 264–70.

<sup>48</sup> Vladimir Pechatnov, “Exercise in Frustration: Soviet Foreign Propaganda in the Early Cold War, 1945–47,” *Cold War History* 1, no. 2 (2001): 1–27.

<sup>49</sup> By focusing on this often-overlooked newspaper and its correspondents, Kamenskaya's work illuminates how media outlets with specialized interests contributed to the broader range of Soviet journalism. Ekaterina Kamenskaya, “‘A Window to the World’: Newspapers and Soviet Foreign Correspondents in the 1960s,” *Russian History* 48, nos. 3–4 (2022): 404–18; Ekaterina Kamenskaya, “Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo Sverdlovskoi oblasti i Chechoslovakii v 1950-h – 1980-h gg.” [Economic Cooperation between the Sverdlovsk Region and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s–1980s], in *Ural Industrial'nyj. Bakuninskie chteniya. Industrial'naya*

Given the complexity of the field, my research spans various directions, with an overarching goal of analyzing the inner workings of news systems. Moreover, this research is inherently interdisciplinary: it draws on insights from media studies and history, weaving together a range of perspectives to address the complexities of news institutions and their personnel and present a more holistic analysis. This study bridges gaps in the modern understanding of Soviet news. It aspires to demystify the mechanics of news organizations while providing a human face to those who operated within them.

## Sources

To analyze the people behind Soviet international news, I consulted various sources and sought to synthesize different perspectives. First and foremost, my research heavily relied on archival records. The archival system in Russia is vast, complex, and subject-specific; relevant documents were dispersed across various Moscow archives. Among the essential funds were those of prominent organizations in propaganda activities. For instance, at the State Archive of the Russian Federation, I studied the documents of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, Sovinformburo, the Union of Soviet Journalists, and the Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries.<sup>50</sup> The archival funds are sorted by the organizations and chronicled over the years. There, I could find official correspondence, minutes of meetings, and interdepartmental discussions, which offer a closer look at the problems of those organs, operational objectives, and projects for improvement. Additionally, many documents are organized thematically, according to the workings of the internal departments of those organizations, e.g., regional or structural departments. Such thematic organization helped me understand the specialized functions performed by different units or, conversely, see clear overlaps in their performance. For instance, by exploring regional departments, I could observe the strategies for targeting specific geographic areas or demographic groups. Then, the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History housed the funds of *Agitprop*, a department focused on agitation and propaganda.<sup>51</sup> *Agitprop* addressed issues within propaganda organizations, proposed changes, controlled the day-to-day flow, and corrected major errors in those organizations. Reports, internal correspondence, inter-organizational

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*modernizaciya Rossii v XVIII–XXI vv.: Materialy XIII Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferencii* (Ekaterinburg, October 18–19, 2018), vol. 2, 51–9.

<sup>50</sup> Funds used: Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) – f. R-4459; Soviet Information Bureau (Sovinformburo) – f. R-8581; Novosti Press Agency – f. R-9587; Union of Journalists of the USSR – f. 10124; Soviet of Ministers of the USSR – f. R-5446; Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries under the Council of Ministers of the USSR – f. 9518.

<sup>51</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU – f. 3; Apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU – f. 5; Ideological Commission under the Central Committee of the CPSU – f. 72.

negotiations, orders, budget spreadsheets, and official reflections on the trips are among the invaluable records that helped me with my research. Moreover, I had a unique opportunity to gain access, albeit limited, to the documents of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Policy Archive.<sup>52</sup> As this archive holds a non-federal status, the employees determined the sources I could access. Despite these serious limitations, the information I gained from these documents still provided valuable context on how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged in foreign press monitoring and planned Soviet media strategies. By combining the little information I had from there with other archival data, I was able to piece together the inner workings of the Soviet news system. Part of my research had to rely on digitized sources, for instance, archival collections posted online by the foundation “Fond Aleksandra N. Yakovleva”, which focused on pre- and postwar-period documents. Thanks to those online collections, I had a chance to familiarize myself with the documents from the RGASPI – Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. Naturally, the pre-selection of those documents by other researchers limited my ability and the scope of information I could reach. Yet, given the inaccessibility of documents in Russia, online sources from those archives and funds helped me better understand the earlier period.

At the same time, I fully recognize the potential limitations and biases present in official state documents. Historians studying the Soviet period often turn to projects, plans, and accounting documents, since these are the ones most fully preserved in official archives and allow tracing the dynamics of government thinking and institutional priorities. However, such sources are always fraught with problems: Soviet statistics and reports contain not only bias but also ideological “polish” and frequent discrepancies with real practice. Nevertheless, it is impossible to completely abandon these materials, as they reflect the official understanding of the state's goals and objectives, the language used by the government, and the image of reality that was intended to be broadcast. On top of that, one of the main problems of working in the Moscow archives was the fragmentation of the data. Documents on journalists’ activities are often not concentrated, as they are interspersed in various archives and in smaller reports, correspondence, books, etc. Following this, the extent of the organizations of interest imposes limitations on the sources for research – documents of multiple organizations, as well as of different quality and origin, needed to be investigated to see the span of news organizations across multiple units in the system. The same judgment pertains to people in the said organizations, given how flexible their working lives were. On top of

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<sup>52</sup> The Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – f. 56.

that, some documents are still hidden in the archival funds, like documentation of the main newspapers – *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and only alternative sources can shed light on the state of work for their employees. Moreover, as in many historical cases, some circumstances seemed too obvious for contemporaries to note, and they were recorded only in later documents, such as memoirs and published books with reflections on the past.

Therefore, I decided to look for materials and evidence that would allow me to “read between the lines,” identify contradictions and gaps, and pay attention to personal memories, correspondence, professional discussions, and other “informal” sources. This approach makes it possible to see not only the facade structures of ideology but also the processes that influenced the formation of Soviet international journalism. Furthermore, certain moments were omitted at the time because they were obvious to contemporaries. I worked with additional sources on the lives and experiences of journalists. I delved into books by *mezhdunarodniki*, including their notes on trips, memoirs, and diaries. These first-hand accounts mostly focused on extraordinary aspects of such work that had been overlooked in official reports. Many just described “exotic” aspects of foreign countries, sometimes even bordering on neocolonial remarks.<sup>53</sup> Yet what could be useful for the study was that the journalists mentioned small details of their journeys. They discussed visa struggles, 3-day-long flights, etc. The journalists unveiled the personal experiences and perspectives that often remained hidden behind the veil of official reporting.<sup>54</sup> These memoirs revealed the internal struggles, exploring how their careers were shaped, sometimes in unpredictable ways.

On the other hand, those printed sources differ in their origins and, more importantly, in whom they were written for and when. Pre-1991 narratives in published books were Party-line-coded: they highlighted the benefits of the socialist system and built the self-narrative around it.<sup>55</sup> There were few, if any, controversial moments in those books, and

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<sup>53</sup> As studied in many books, for instance, in Wendy Bracewell, “Travel Through the Slav World,” in *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, ed. Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 147–94 or Eric Burton, Zoltán Ginelli, James Mark, and Nemanja Radonjić, “The Travelogue: Imagining Spaces of Encounter – Travel Writing Between the Colonial and the Anti-Colonial in Socialist Eastern Europe, 1949–1989,” in *Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular*, ed. Kristin Roth-Ey (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 237–59.

<sup>54</sup> For instance, Anatolii Sofronov, *Rasskaz o polete v Yaponiyu* [A Story about a Flight to Japan] (Moscow: Pravda, 1957); Boris Izakov, ‘*Letuchie gody, dal'nie kraya...*’ *Ot 20-h do 80-h: Zapiski starogo zhurnalista* [‘The Flying Years, the far lands...’ From the 20s to the 80s: Notes of an old journalist] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988).

<sup>55</sup> There are numerous examples of such writing. Lev Bezymenskii, *K zapadu ot Jel'by: Ocherki o Zapadnoi Germanii* [West of the Elbe: Essays on West Germany] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958); Benik Beknazar-Yuzbashev, *Moi meridiany* [My Meridians] (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1971); Genrikh Borovik, *Daleko-daleko...: V'etnamskie zapiski* [Far, Far Away...: Vietnamese Notes] (Moscow: Pravda, 1956); Genrikh

topics like secret services or anything critical of their colleagues could never be published. This happened because not everyone had access to getting published: the very fact of issuing a book was a marker of one's privileged position in the Soviet society, and, of course, such sources from this era reflect the memoirs of the top of the population – the “title” nationality, “correct” political beliefs, and “appropriate” outlook on foreign lands,

An ordinary Soviet author may write like Leo Tolstoy, but it will be difficult for him to get published. For each author in any editorial office, a so-called card is filled out indicating party affiliation, nationality, education, position, and place of primary employment. [...] The guidelines were simple: preference should be given to members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Russians (nationals are acceptable, but Jews are undesirable), with higher education, and even better – with academic degrees, and, of course, it would be ideal if the author held a high-ranking position.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast, workers with differing beliefs and status gained their own voices after the collapse of the USSR. Their reflections and recollections post-1991 granted more freedom to talk about previously no-go topics, such as KGB involvement, financial struggles, inequality, etc.<sup>57</sup> The discussion of those topics would have been unimaginable while the regime was still in place. With its fall, the shifting “self” of journalists also came, adapting their past to the

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Borovik, *Reportazh iz novoi Birmy* [A Report from New Burma] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958); Georgii Dad'yants, *Chetyre vstrechi s Franciei* [Four Meetings with France] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961); David Zaslavskii, *Talant, otdannyi gazete* [Talent Given to the Newspaper] (Moscow: Pravda, 1980); Georgii Zubkov, *Million reporterskih kilometrov* [One Million Reporter Kilometers] (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1970); Sergei Zykov, *Pestraya Franciya* [Motley France] (Moscow: Izvestia, 1964); Boris Izakov, *Puteshestvie s dvumya pasportami* [Traveling with Two Passports] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Agentstva pečati “Novosti,” 1968); Stanislav Kondrashov, *Lyudi za okeanom: Amerikanskii ocherki raznykh let* [People across the Ocean: American Essays from Different Years] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987); Daniil Kraminov, *V orbite voyny: Zapiski sovetskogo korrespondenta za rubezhom. 1939–1945 gody* [In the orbit of war: Notes of a Soviet correspondent abroad. 1939–1945.], 2nd edition, expanded (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1986); Nikolai Makeev, *Amerikanskii vstrechi: Zametki zhurnalista* [American Meetings: Notes of a Journalist] (Moscow: Gazeta “Krasnaya zvezda,” 1961); Karl Nepomnyashchii, *Druz'ya Korei: Putevye ocherki i reportazh* [Friends of Korea: Travel Essays and Reportage] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1955); Boris Pankin, *Gazeta i gazetchiki: (Podrobnosti odnoi professii)* [Newspaper and Newspaper Men: (Details of One Profession)] (Moscow: Pravda, 1973); Viktor Poltoratskii, *V doroge i doma* [On the Road and at Home] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo i tipografiya “Izvestii,” 1950); Natal'ya Sergeeva, *Na v'etnamskoi zemle: Zametki zhurnalista* [On Vietnamese Soil: Journalist's Notes] (Moscow: Geografiz, 1955); Boris Strel'nikov, *N'yu-Jorkskie vechera* [New York Evenings] (Moscow: Pravda, 1964); Boris Strel'nikov, *Sto dnei vo V'etname: Iz putevogo dnevnika* [One Hundred Days of Vietnam: From a Travel Diary] (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1955); Melor Sturua, *Vremya po Grinvichu i po sushhestvu* [Greenwich Time and Actual Time] (Moscow: Izvestia, 1969); Oleg Feofanov, *Schast'e v kredit: Ocherki o Kanade* [Happiness on Credit: Notes on Canada], 2nd ed., updated and expanded (Moscow: Politizdat, 1966); Vladimir Tsvetov, *Narod Yaponii protiv voennykh baz SShA* [The People of Japan Are against US Military Bases] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1960).

<sup>56</sup> Mikhail Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2005), Belousenko, [http://www.belousenko.com/books/publicism/voslensky\\_nomenklatura.htm](http://www.belousenko.com/books/publicism/voslensky_nomenklatura.htm) [accessed 03.03.2023].

<sup>57</sup> Earlier, diaries could have easily compromised their owners. One of the reasons why journalists did not have diaries but rather had memoirs were the constant checks of their loyalty, and those diaries could have damaged them. For instance, when Lev Delyusin was supposed to go on his first internship to China, he was strongly advised against writing his diaries by his professor, who, according to rumors, was expelled from the Soviet embassy for his diaries himself. *Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya* [Russian Sinology – Oral History], Collection of Interviews with Leading Russian Sinologists of the XX–XXI Centuries, 2nd ed., revised and expanded (Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences Publishing House ‘MAX Press,’ 2018), 131, <https://book.ivran.ru/f/golovachevsk-ktom1pechat22102018.pdf> [accessed 27.11.2023].

current democratic trends of the 1990s.<sup>58</sup> Portraying journalists as a driving force against the Party also seems impossible:<sup>59</sup> many of them were Party and *nomenklatura* members. Hence, there is a clear watershed in self-fashioning and description of this profession, directly tied to the regime. The clear juxtaposition of books published before and after the fall of communism goes to show the variety of people, status, and opinions that existed there all along.

Third, recognizing the passage of time and the unfortunate reality that many of the journalists from that era had already passed away, I reached out to their surviving children and grandchildren, who graciously agreed to be interviewed. Namely, I managed to get in touch with a granddaughter of Viktor Mayevskii, Marianna Mayevskaya, as well as a third-generation *mezhdunarodnik*, Mikhail Beglov, whose grandfather and father also worked for an internationally oriented press. These interviews provided a rare opportunity to hear personal recollections from those connected to the journalists I was studying.<sup>60</sup> Through their stories, I gained insights into the more mundane aspects of being a *mezhdunarodnik*. The relatives shared candid accounts and recounted stories of their loved ones, with the sacrifices they made to fulfill their roles. Naturally, both interviewees were biased and presented the story across generations, mixing the chronology and generational developments. Yet, I consider those interviews valuable, as they also shed light on the lasting legacies of such careers.

Aside from personal accounts, I delved into teaching materials for journalists. From the literature published at the time, I would see the expectations placed on journalists, including both the technical aspects of their work and the ideological framework. By studying those materials, I learned about the professional discussions and settings in which journalists were involved in foreign news production work. For instance, a series of manuals for news-writing for foreign countries published by TASS in the mid-1950s is an invaluable source for

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<sup>58</sup> See: Vikentii Matveev, *Dnevnik shkol'nika, studenta, zhurnalista «Izvestii» 1938–1996 gg.* [Diaries of a Schoolboy, Student, Journalist of Izvestia, 1938–1996 Years] (Moscow: Pero, 2019); Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, *Dva litsa Vostoka: Vpechatleniya i razmyshleniya ot odinnadcati let raboty v Kitae i semi let v Yaponii* [Two Faces of the East: Impressions and Reflections from Eleven Years of Work in China and Seven Years in Japan] (Moscow: AST, 2014); Sergei Tikhvinskii, *Kitai v moei zhizni (30–90-e gg.)* [China in My Life (1930s–1990s)] (Moscow: Nauka, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> For instance, the majority of members of the Union of Journalists were, in fact, Party members or candidates to join the Party. Many journalists became officials, so their functions overlapped. As in Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), the author talks about *shestidesyatniki*.

<sup>60</sup> Those interviews were composed of 25 questions divided into categories: gender aspects, career perspectives, professional specificity, etc.

understanding the logic of printed propaganda at this time and serves as a testament to the formation of a separate cohort of journalists, *mezhdunarodniki*.<sup>61</sup>

By combining these sources, I attempted to recreate journalists' career trajectories in all their variety. Official documents, personal memories, interviews, and teaching materials allowed me to construct a narrative beyond the standard Cold War thinking. This extensive approach bridges the gaps between the extraordinary and the mundane, focusing on social dynamics and their effects on the media performance.

### Methodology and Key Terms

While there are many ways of how Soviet international journalism could be tackled, I saw a particular benefit in using social history, focusing on the lived experiences of people who have directly experienced historical events and created history through their actions and decisions.<sup>62</sup> This method allows the researcher to go beyond institutional structures or analysis of the highest state leadership, revealing the variety of strategies and everyday solutions used by “lower-standing” and less visible contemporaries. This approach is especially valuable for understanding how people interacted with its structural framework. They changed their behavior and adapted to new conditions, creating room to maneuver within the specified constraints. Taken together, these observations explore power and agency within the field.<sup>63</sup> While studying organizations is of great value, such a focus often limits analysis to institutions and leaves out broader social processes. The study of professionalization, by contrast, expands the analytical horizon. It also helps to identify not only vertical forms of social mobility, e.g., moving up the career ladder, but also horizontal processes: transitions between fields of activity, the interpenetration of professions, and the transformation of social roles. Thus, this work aims to highlight the group of people who

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<sup>61</sup> Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Yazyk i stil' informacii TASS* [The Language and Style of TASS Information] (Moscow: Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza TASS, 1956); Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Obzor informacii TASS dlya zagranicy* [Overview of TASS Information for Foreign Countries] (Moscow: Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza TASS, 1956); Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Osveshchenie faktov v informacii: O soyuznoi informacii TASS dlya zagranicy* [Coverage of Facts in Information: About TASS Union Information for Foreign Countries] (Moscow: Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza TASS, 1958); Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Sovetskii chelovek v informacii TASS* [The Soviet Person in the Information of TASS] (Moscow: Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza TASS, 1956); Shalva Sanakoev et al., eds., *Teoriya i praktika sovremennoi mezhdunarodnoi zhurnalistiki* [Theory and Practice of Modern International Journalism] (Moscow: Uchenye zapiski, 1972).

<sup>62</sup> See: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) or Susanne Schattenberg, *Stalins Ingenieure: Lebenswelten zwischen Technik und Terror in den 1930er Jahren* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002).

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

worked as journalists to understand the internal dynamics: their survival strategies, identities, career trajectories, subdivisions, and exclusions.<sup>64</sup>

Through the prism of social history, one can also examine various criteria for understanding journalistic professionalism. For instance, in the American paradigm, telling the truth has long been regarded as the bedrock of legitimacy and a defining characteristic of journalism as a profession.<sup>65</sup> Yet, the interpretation of truth can become a subject of contention, and the line between objective reporting and bias was blurry on both sides. Americans and Soviets described their versions of reality, inextricably linked to their values and world systems, portraying their own as superior and highlighting the flaws of the “opposing team.” Those journalists were professionals, but their professionalism was deeply entwined with their political and ideological leanings.

On top of that, a singular definition of a journalist during the Cold War is rather an aspiration than a reflection of reality. The media landscapes in both the “East” and the “West” were far more complex than a simple binary division would suggest, and they overlooked the existence of a diverse range of media outlets and journalists in both systems. In the capitalist world, each publication and broadcaster had its own political preferences: some were overtly pro-capitalist, while others championed pro-socialist ideas. Similarly, within socialist countries, there is a spectrum of media outlets with their nuances also present.<sup>66</sup>

Hence, in the Soviet case, professionalism cannot be based on generalized or borrowed values and ideals; it requires its own formula and explanation. In sociology, a profession is often defined by its key components: training or education, moral code, necessary skills, etc.<sup>67</sup> The professionals also have to form a professional community to feel like they belong and have a platform for discussing the boundaries of norms within the profession.<sup>68</sup> While the process of professionalization is often seen as linear and inevitable, a one-way street toward the whole community evening out its creative and moral differences, in practice, the journalistic brethren were and still are diverse,<sup>69</sup> as many become part of it through practice,

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<sup>64</sup> While informal networks are only supposed to complement official institutions in the “West”, interpersonal relationships, trust and mutual services are often more important than formal rules in the USSR. Success was largely determined by the circle of acquaintances and the right connections. Alya Guseva, “Friends and Foes: Informal Networks in the Soviet Union,” *East European Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2007): 323–48.

<sup>65</sup> Fainberg, Cold War Correspondents.

<sup>66</sup> While the state-controlled media predominantly adhered to the official party line, there were instances of dissent, subtle criticism, or independent reporting that managed to find its way into the public discourse.

<sup>67</sup> Harold L. Wilensky, “The Professionalization of Everyone?” *American Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 2 (September 1964): 137–58.

<sup>68</sup> Barbie Zelizer, “Journalists as interpretive communities,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 10, no. 3 (2003): 220–3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 220.

not always education, “Unlike classically-defined professions like medicine or law, where professionals legitimate their actions via socially recognized paths of training, education, and licensing, these trappings have had only limited relevance for practitioners [journalists – M.Z.]”<sup>70</sup> Thus, one can talk of only limited potential for professionalization in a classical sense when it comes to international journalism.

In this study, I understand professionalization as an internal process centering around performing one’s job most efficiently and securing one’s area of expertise, a definition loosely based on Natalia Roudakova’s idea of professionalization as “an occupational project where occupational groups struggle for jurisdiction over a particular domain of knowledge and practice.”<sup>71</sup> The definition is most relevant to the Soviet scenario, as other criteria, such as education, professional unions, and skills, were slowly developing in the 1950s or were still highly variable across professions in the following decades. Practitioners came from all walks of life, as the constant lack of human power in the field led to a lower bar for expectations on the one hand, and to experts fulfilling multiple tasks across different professions on the other. The Cold War objectives set higher standards for reporting, and entering global markets put a strain on journalists’ shoulders. With its development in the 1950s, efficiency increased hand in hand with the growing number of new experts and the gradual separation of duties among the practitioners involved in the process. Although still problematic, this delineation was a necessary step for the crystallization of a separate profession and the skills expected from its representatives.

The product of such a development became a separate concept. In Russian, this phenomenon was designated by the word “*mezhdunarodnik*” – a specialist in foreign affairs, which could refer to a lawyer, diplomat, journalist, or anyone with expertise in the international field. In this sense, the international journalist was closer to a diplomat than to a “regular” journalist. The undeniable, yet peculiar separation between journalist-*mezhdunarodnik* and a domestic correspondent is also crucial for understanding the dynamics of professionalization, which, although they had some parallel developments and overlaps, still evolved individually. From early on, the USSR created and maintained a gap in events at home and abroad, producing different news for different audiences.<sup>72</sup> With the start of the Cold War, the gap only widened: journalists themselves transformed, creating new departments to gather information abroad. The growing divide also meant that international and domestic journalists needed different

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 222.

<sup>71</sup> Roudakova, *Losing Pravda*, 33.

<sup>72</sup> Stanislav Kondrashov, “*Puteshestvie politobozrevatelya. A. B. Pumpyanskii*” [The Journey of a Political Observer. A. B. Pumpyansky], in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: Lyudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 446.

skills to do their work well. Thus, in my work, I define a *mezhdunarodnik* by their writings (focused on foreign events or directed toward foreign audiences), as well as their career trajectory – typically (but not always) the *mezhdunarodniki* had foreign assignments and were sent abroad for shorter tasks or for a longer term to be based there for years. For instance, Aleksei Adzhubei, despite his high nomenklatura status as a son-in-law of Khrushchev and editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*, and his frequent foreign travel, was not a *mezhdunarodnik*, as he did not write for foreign readers or cover foreign events. The same pertains to Pavel Satyukov, the editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, who accompanied Khrushchev on his foreign trips and played an important role in shaping the Soviet image abroad. He simply did not write for or about foreign audiences and was rather a manager than a journalist.

The diversity of professional biographies of specialists working in this field contributes to a significant blurring of the profession's boundaries. Some of them entered journalism out of extreme necessity, such as the writers involved in the Second World War. Others found themselves in this field due to a lack of specialists with specific knowledge or language skills in certain countries, and they were originally historians or country experts. Some had initially hoped for a diplomatic career but failed to secure a suitable position and were forced to turn to the media as an alternative career path. Finally, many translators saw international journalism as an opportunity to increase their social weight, compared to their traditional, “invisible” activities. The requirements for professional qualifications varied significantly depending on many factors. At times, language competence came to the fore, perceived as a key tool in international journalism. In other times, the focus was on knowledge of economics and history, given the need for an analytical approach. There were also cases when the presentation skills (the ability to “correctly” formulate and present information) were the decisive factor. This variability of requirements highlights the heterogeneity of the professional field and also demonstrates the grey zone that the profession existed in. Yet, no matter the origins, all of them had to produce texts for or about foreign audiences and realities abroad.

Thus, the dissertation adopts a social history approach to uncover and understand the formation of international journalism on Soviet soil. While writing about the political circumstances sheds light on the structural deficiencies and benefits that gave rise to the profession, social history breathes life into these structures and organizations, populating them with people and mapping opportunities for them in the given circumstances. By doing so, the research showcases the nuanced portrayal of professionals in the field, including their internal hierarchies, divisions, and struggles. Here, I attempt to highlight the broader

structural deficiencies of the Soviet Union, including the creation of an elite and exclusion based on biographical and other features.

### **Limitations**

The vastness of the topic, in combination with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, has posed limitations on access to the archives in the Russian Federation. Further, the temporal framework of the thesis could have been extended to 1967 (the dissolution of the Committee of Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, the foundation of a Journalism Faculty at MGIMO, and the change in internal dynamics of journalists) or 1968 (the Prague Spring and a shift in the Soviet international standing). The documents showed a clear progression in the professionalization of international journalists, almost uninterrupted with the dismissal of Khrushchev in 1964 and later in the 1960s. Unfortunately, this realization came only after the initial archival visit, with no possibility of an additional trip. Hence, the timeline could not be extended, although it could have been organic for the topic.

### **Structure**

The dissertation extends beyond its official temporal scope and delves into the prewar period, focusing on preexisting structures and cadre policies. On the one hand, given that the interwar period is considered the Golden Age of “Western” foreign correspondents,<sup>73</sup> it was important to see how the situation was reflected among Soviet foreign correspondents. Globally, it was the time of a rapidly developing profession, as journalists took on more and more prominent roles in shaping global perceptions.<sup>74</sup> The gradual introduction of global networks aided the profession, allowing journalists to operate in other regions. On the other hand, the development of the journalistic field within the Soviet State carved its own linear path, and it was crucial to investigate the reasons for this. This decision served two objectives: on the one hand, exposing the external factors behind the USSR’s inability to spread its news abroad effectively, and, on the other hand, describing how internal policies had prevented the accumulation of knowledge and expertise in the earlier era. Those two, combined, led to a climax in the postwar period, which I start with, as their amalgamation drove the processes described in this work.

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<sup>73</sup> One could travel to a country on their own initiative and get paid for the assignments sent to editors back in their home country, landing work despite having zero experience in the press and no official job posting from any news outlets. Around that time, the access to travel and financial capabilities of news publishers also increased, and now it was possible to dispatch correspondents in different parts of the world. Moreover, it was the time of the end of news cartels' agreements. Sam Lebovic, “Of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Correspondents,” *Modern American History* 7, no. 1 (2024): 141–6.

<sup>74</sup> Jason Lee Guthrie, “Revising the First Rough Draft: On Journalism, History, and Journalism History,” *American Journalism* 40, no. 4 (2023): 500–5.

The second chapter examines the key turning points and strategic decisions that significantly shaped the image of Soviet international journalism in the postwar era. Among them, the inclusion of a limited number of journalists in the professional hierarchical elite, the systematic tracking of the effectiveness of the press's distribution abroad, and the consequences of Stalin's death for organizational structure and for journalists as survivors stand out. These transformations not only defined the media institutions but also directly influenced employees' lives, creating conditions for the accumulation of experience and competencies. As a result, new practices were based on three key pillars, which simultaneously served as measures of the successes and failures of Soviet news broadcasting abroad.

The third chapter examines in detail the inconsistencies in training future *mezhdunarodniki*, identifies contradictions between the formal requirements and plans for their education and actual training practices, and analyzes both institutional and individual adaptation strategies in response to the given conditions. The focus of the chapter is the discrepancy between the content of the training and the practical skills required to perform professional duties, explaining the variability and fragmentation of acquired knowledge by the peculiarity of educational programs, being rooted in a planned economy and distribution system, which in turn hindered the formation of a stable professional identity. Here, the formation of Soviet international journalism is understood as a result of the tension between normative expectations and practical realities, and professional socialization – as individual adaptation strategies rather than a linear consequence of formal training.

Subsequently, the fourth chapter dissects the dynamics of career development and the dichotomy of the profession of a Soviet-raised international journalist, paying special attention to the complex and sometimes confusing trajectories of their professional lives, alternative scenarios, and individual biases. In this regard, the voluntary (and involuntary) interactions between journalists and other professional groups (diplomats, writers, academics, translators, secret agents, and even other journalists) are considered. Sometimes, such multidisciplinary inclusion was the result of informed choice and strategic planning, and, in other cases, it was dictated by external circumstances or political and institutional requirements. Thus, the chapter explores the balance between personal autonomy and structural limitations, discusses adaptation strategies, and shows the intersection of professional roles. After all, journalists' agency and their ability to adapt professionally were inextricably linked to the special, porous institutional framework in which they operated.

The final chapter defies the stereotypical image of the Soviet international journalist as a “cosmopolitan drowning in luxury” as a reflection of reality. In fact, international journalists were under particularly severe pressure tied to the direct demands of their profession: trips abroad and writing for a foreign audience implied unconditional loyalty, the demonstration of model behavior, and the creation of an exemplary image of the Soviet Union. Thus, journalists not only performed professional functions, but also became “living symbols” of the state. Passing through the state “filter” to represent its international goals meant access to various sources that only the state possessed: material benefits, publications, and knowledge about the world beyond Soviet borders. However, this field was highly stratified: representatives of “undesirable” nationalities, women, and people with “questionable” social backgrounds had virtually no chance of inclusion in international relations, even as journalists. For those who were on the periphery of the field, the division became obvious: they often faced “glass ceilings” in various forms, for instance, through the inability to remain in Moscow even after graduating from prestigious universities, or an outright ban on the profession due to biographical “flaws.” Thus, the final chapter highlights the ambivalence of Soviet international journalists' position and the role of social stratification in Soviet society at large: on the one hand, they had access to various benefits; on the other, they remained vulnerable, constantly dependent on trust and the political conjuncture. This dynamic sheds light on the Soviet version of international journalism not only as a professional practice but also as part of a broader system of power, in which individual trajectories were shaped at the intersection of personal strategies and structural constraints.

### **Chapter 1: Exodus of the Fittest, 1917 – 1945**

In any regime, no matter how democratic or non-democratic, the cadres always reflect the policies and general directions of the state: the selection and promotion of officials and administrators are typically connected to the goals and objectives of those in power. Such synchronicity might be enforced through stricter control under non-democratic regimes, as the cadres need to be aligned with the government's vision. However, under early Soviet rule, the situation was particularly volatile. The Bolsheviks were a significant force when it came to underground publishing and printing, even before the Revolution.<sup>75</sup> Yet, the situation changed after 1917, and they faced many issues after seizing power. Domestic and external factors heavily impacted the new state, and the experimental nature of the land of the Soviets

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<sup>75</sup> See Whitman Bassow “The Pre-Revolutionary Pravda and Tsarist Censorship,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 13, no. 1 (1954): 47–65.

only intensified the impact on journalistic development. In those conditions, news system evolution was not a straightforward or linear process; rather, it involved sporadic updates and revisions, along with periods of disruption and new highs. Such rapid switches required equally fast, if not rushed, adjustments in personnel and bureaucracy at large. Given the extreme conditions, the staff had to adapt to those abrupt directives, otherwise risking being purged, demoted, or reassigned at the very least.

Thus, in this chapter, I will discuss the early Soviet structural circumstances, how international journalists operated within them, and why change was needed before the start of World War II. While it is not the main chronological focus of this study, understanding the origins (and the decline in numbers) of the *mezhdunarodniki* by the start of the Cold War is instrumental. I will subdivide the chapter into chronological sections to show the shift in dynamics, both internationally and domestically. After all, those changes depended not solely on ideology, but also on the economic and global conditions within complex alliances and rivalries within the socialist movement, first in hopes for a world revolution, and later with the dominance within the Comintern.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, it is important to address the widespread claim that the Soviet propaganda principles were fully formed between 1917 and 1941,<sup>77</sup> an assertion I strongly disagree with. All in all, this short excursus will clarify why Soviet international propaganda failed before the outbreak of the Cold War and only flourished after 1945.

### 1.1. New State – New People

The Russian Revolution brought a communications revolution along with it:<sup>78</sup> the near-total breakdown of media networks, printing, and railroads meant that many pre-existing information channels were no longer usable, and the Bolsheviks grappled with the challenge of repurposing (or replacing) the existing technical infrastructures.<sup>79</sup> On the domestic front,

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<sup>76</sup> The Comintern existed from 1919 until 1943.

<sup>77</sup> E.g., Aleksandr Borkov, *Sozдание i deyatelnost' osnovnykh sovetskikh organov or Aleksandr Gasyuk, Vneshnepoliticheskaya propaganda SSSR nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny: 1939-1941 gg.* [Foreign policy propaganda of the USSR on the eve of the Great Patriotic War: 1939-1941] (PhD. diss., 2008), *disserCat*, <https://www.dissercat.com/content/vneshnepoliticheskaya-propaganda-sssr-nakanune-velikoi-otechestvennoi-voiny-1939-1941-gg> [accessed 01.01.2022].

<sup>78</sup> Larissa Zakharova, “Concevoir l’efficacité des communications en Union soviétique (fin des années 1920-début des années 1930),” *Histoire et mesure* 30, no. 1 (2015), <https://journals.openedition.org/histoiresmesure/5178> [accessed 15.03.2023].

<sup>79</sup> Plus, the Bolsheviks inherited communication infrastructure from the Russian Empire with its complex web of international involvement, particularly with heavy influence from Germany, which could no longer be relied on. Tehri Rantanen, “The globalization of electronic news in the 19th century,” *Media, Culture & Society* 19, № 4 (1997): 617. Another “inherited” issue was the same set of dilemmas: vast territories, peasant majority of the population, etc. Daniel Stotland, “Cadres Decide Everything: The Enduring Dilemmas of the Party-State and the Soviet Service Class,” *International Journal of Russian Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 2014): 1–19.

this was the time of chaos with hundreds of decrees that turned the norms upside down, as the Civil War tore the former empire apart.<sup>80</sup> The first policies forced many people to leave the cities, which led to reduced access to the communications network.<sup>81</sup> Under such extreme circumstances, the telegraph was vital for upholding order, providing a uniform communication tool that was more powerful than literacy and distance.<sup>82</sup> When the Bolsheviks reorganized the telegraph infrastructure, it was a sign of a fight for their own information control.<sup>83</sup>

One of the main vectors of regaining control was the fight with the old regime at its roots – the people who had been its backbone. The Bolsheviks had to deal with the human dimension of the imperial legacy: the transition to socialism and then communism required not only the transformation of the material base of the old regime and the seizing of the means of production. It also meant an occasional change in the superstructure – societal behaviors that were ingrained over generations living under bourgeois exploitation, including intelligentsia and various strata of the working class with different political beliefs.<sup>84</sup> Yet, foreign affairs and international news were the forte of imperial administrators and intellectuals, hostile to the regime. As much as the government relied on and hoped for the proletariat to fill in, the reality was that regular workers did not speak French and were not involved in diplomacy, and it took them a long time to be properly trained for the job. Of course, there were the Party leaders themselves, who were once experienced writers and propagandists. However, they were mostly consumed by managing government tasks, leaving little time for propaganda and

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<sup>80</sup> The conflict left vast areas of the country disconnected. The population was subjected to starvation and shortages. This scarcity also meant a lack of critical communication materials, such as paper. This shortage was challenging for producing newspapers, books, and other printed materials that the government needed. Due to the domestic production shortfall, the officials bought paper from abroad, with a subsequent financial burden. A poor, half-ruined state, struggling to recover from the war and economic collapse, could barely afford such expenses. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 225, l. 15. Shvedchikov — to the Politburo regarding the purchase of paper abroad, 08.12.1921, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1014126> [accessed 28.06.2022].

<sup>81</sup> S. Frederick Starr, *Communications Technologies and Civil Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 27.

<sup>82</sup> At the very beginning, the telegraph was barely used for international missions. Economic and financial institutions were the main users of the telegraph, especially in the 1930s when they were responsible for a large proportion of telegrams sent, despite the telegraph's wider range of uses. These organizations were accountable for sending 40 percent of all telegrams. Larissa Zakharova, "Electrical Signalling: Telegraph," in Kirill Postoutenko, Alexey Tikhomirov, and Dmitri Zakharine, eds., *Media and Communication in the Soviet Union (1917–1953): General Perspectives* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 292.

<sup>83</sup> Contrary to popular belief, the Soviet Union did not play the main role in the Comintern, nor did it orchestrate the organization's international publications. Gleb J. Albert argues that a struggle over Soviet press markets was waged by the Comintern. Such a fight led to the establishment of TASS in 1925. Gleb J. Albert, "Think Tank, Publisher, Symbol: The Comintern in the Early Soviet Media Landscape," *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies* XVII, no. 24 (2011): 118.

<sup>84</sup> See Geoffrey Swain, *A Short History of the Russian Revolution*, revised edition (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022); Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Bolsheviks' Dilemma: Class, Culture, and Politics in the Early Soviet Years," *Slavic Review* 47, no. 4 (1988): 599–613.

direct involvement in foreign affairs. Instead, their focus was mostly on the troublesome task of creating a new state from the ruins of World War I and the Civil War.

In the meantime, while the officials were waiting for a more reliable replacement, administrators and professionals from the previous regime had to be tolerated to perform the tasks with the necessary expertise to aid socialism.<sup>85</sup> One such gap could be observed in international news: foreign languages, previously associated with culturedness in bourgeois circles, were common among the pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia but were among the USSR's weakest spots. As much as the state was unwilling to hire non-party specialists, certain tasks could not be done otherwise. So, people with a great knowledge of foreign languages, mostly the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia or people who worked for the former bourgeoisie, were as valuable as gold.<sup>86</sup> This was, if used “properly”, the most important advantage for intellectuals. “Philologists, doctors, sailors, failed diplomats, and bankers of the pre-revolutionary era” worked in the editorial boards, as they were among the very few people who spoke foreign languages.<sup>87</sup> Yet, they found themselves at odds with a new vision for a social order. Their loyalties and allegiances were always questioned,<sup>88</sup> and many were in no rush to work in such a hostile environment. The official attitude toward those with experience working for imperial administration was to see them as “enemies of the people” or “class enemies,”<sup>89</sup> and they were designated as “non-party specialists.”<sup>90</sup> Many opted to leave the country altogether, seeking refuge in other parts of the world, hoping to evade persecution.<sup>91</sup> Such an exodus of skilled professionals, including those people speaking foreign languages and having diplomatic skills, was a noticeable loss:

[...] there was a clear shortage of people who spoke foreign languages, of cultured people in general. Some of the intelligentsia who knew languages fled; some hid, afraid of questionnaires, the personnel department, and the next purges. Former governesses and governesses who spoke English and French, as well as girls from the Baltic States who spoke German, came to the forefront.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> James C. McClelland, “What Made Stalinism Work?” *History of Education Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 446.

<sup>86</sup> Lyudmila Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'* [Slanting Rain] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2015), *flibusta*. <http://flibusta.site/b/712871/read> [accessed 18.08.2024].

<sup>87</sup> Nikolai Palgunov, *Tridcat' let: Vospominaniya zhurnalista i diplomata* [Thirty Years: Memoirs of a Journalist and a Diplomat] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), 6.

<sup>88</sup> Stotland, *Cadres Decide Everything*; Michael S. Gorham, “Tongue-Tied Writers: The Rabsel'kor Movement and the Voice of the ‘New Intelligentsia’ in Early Soviet Russia,” *The Russian Review* 55, no. 3 (1996): 412–29.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 24.

<sup>90</sup> Stotland, *Cadres Decide Everything*.

<sup>91</sup> *Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya: Lazarevskii institut Moskovskii institut vostokovedeniya MGIMO* [Chapters from the History of Moscow Oriental Studies: Lazarev Institute Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies MGIMO] (Moscow: Aspent Press, 2015), 206, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/c59/lazarevsky-institut.pdf> [accessed February 7, 2023].

<sup>92</sup> Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'*.

Hence, the human remnants of the past were the necessary evil: there was no one to replace them. For example, the Bolsheviks initially kept the previous editors responsible for incoming telegrams from foreign countries.<sup>93</sup> It was clear, however, that they were only being kept for some time until the Bolsheviks could train their own editors to complete this task.<sup>94</sup> Formally, there also were some journalists from the old times, and the first Soviet telegraph agency, ROSTA, inherited a foreign network of branches and correspondent offices from the Petrograd Telegraph Agency that existed before that.<sup>95</sup> However, its network was inoperable. Some correspondents refused to work with the Bolsheviks, and the work of others did not suit the Soviet leaders for political reasons: most of the old cadres “sabotaged the work of the new agency or provided unfair information.”<sup>96</sup> So, the state was not capable of attracting enough well-prepared specialists from the right social strata, but also not able to settle for less on the most important positions.<sup>97</sup> As the researcher Julie Kay Mueller put it, “Initially, the regime tried to provide technical training to those whom it trusted and ideological training to those whom it needed.”<sup>98</sup>

With the passage of time, the rows of former intelligentsia were waning, and the skills that they possessed became more and more valuable. Those losses by some turned into gains for others,<sup>99</sup> and a new elite class came into being.<sup>100</sup> For instance, in 1918, the first meeting of

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<sup>93</sup> According to Theodore Kruglak's interviewee. Theodore Kruglak was a famous Sovietologist. The data is from the Interview with Nicholas Kirilov, April 1958 (Paris), as quoted in Theodore E. Kruglak, “The Role and Evolution of Press Agencies in the Socialist Countries,” *International Communication Gazette* 21, no. 1 (1975): 7.

<sup>94</sup> This step would have guaranteed that the Bolsheviks had absolute authority over the sending and receiving of telegrams, a vital element in maintaining power and handling international affairs during a period of substantial change and turmoil in the country.

<sup>95</sup> Maksim Babyuk, *Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskikh punktov*, 125–44.

<sup>96</sup> Nikolai Brylyakov, *Rossiiskoe telegrafnoe...* [Russian telegraphic...] (Moscow: Mysl', 1976), 36.

<sup>97</sup> Julie Kay Mueller, “Staffing Newspapers and Training Journalists in Early Soviet Russia,” *Journal of Social History* 31, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 851–73.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 853. Among the students of higher educational institutions, 85% came from representatives of the nobility, former officials, etc.; 15% were from families of merchants and wealthy landowners, and only 5% came from workers and peasants. Moreover, many regions of the country experienced even more acute shortage of specialists, as there were no universities in those areas. The famous line from the Internationale perfectly captured this transformation, and some nationalities did not have their own written language. Valerii Belov, *Podgotovka kadrov dlya zarubezhnykh stran v sovetskikh vuzakh: Vtoraya polovina 60-h - konec 80-h godov* [Personnel training for foreign countries in Soviet universities: The second half of the 60s - the end of the 80s] (PhD diss., 2000), *disserCat*, <https://www.dissercat.com/content/podgotovka-kadrov-dlya-zarubezhnykh-stran-v-sovetskikh-vuzakh-vtoraya-polovina-60-kh-konets-> [accessed 03.08.2024].

<sup>99</sup> The old elites or simply ideologically “incorrect” people like the priests were then categorized as *lishenets* or *byvshii*, meaning that they lost their civil rights like rights to vote and lost their social status after the Revolution. More on this in: Golfo Alexopoulos, *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926–1936* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>100</sup> The elite's standing was also fixated in their access to media, which was brilliantly described by Larissa Zakharova, “Access to Communication Tools in Stalin's Soviet Union,” trans. Michael C. Behrent, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 68, no. 2 (2013): 463–97,

the Union of Soviet Journalists took place.<sup>101</sup> As a result, the responsibility of maintaining (or, at least, igniting) the revolutionary flames fell largely on the shoulders of lower-ranking Bolsheviks with little to no experience in writing and agitating.<sup>102</sup> Opportunities for upward mobility, previously unimaginable, began to appear, and they found new prospects for their careers.<sup>103</sup> Officially, the new elites were expected to come from proletarian or peasant backgrounds, so that they had the “correct” ideological views.<sup>104</sup> The famous line from the Internationale perfectly captured this transformation: “He who was nothing will become everything!”<sup>105</sup> Such a process, in contemporary terms, would be seen as positive discrimination or affirmative action. Members of previously marginalized or discriminated-against groups now received preferential treatment. In a way, positive discrimination was a cornerstone of the Soviet strategy to dismantle the pre-revolutionary class structure and build a new society, rather than merely filling quotas. It involved substantial institutional changes and the creation of educational and training programs to prepare the new elite for their roles. Schools, universities, and technical institutes were supposed to nurture talent from working-class and peasant families, as the term “vydvizhenets” referred to individuals who were promoted from the ranks of ordinary workers (more seldom peasants) into higher positions.<sup>106</sup> It became a badge of honor for someone who had deserved it through their ideological commitment. Yet, there was a notable absence of both being ideologically well-versed and being overall professional writers. It was stated that “the overwhelming majority of our newspapers are in the hands of semi-literate people who have no idea what a newspaper is.”<sup>107</sup> Those were the dark years of Soviet

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[https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E\\_ANNA\\_682\\_0463--access-to-communication-tools-in-stalin.htm](https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_ANNA_682_0463--access-to-communication-tools-in-stalin.htm) [accessed 10.07.2023].

<sup>101</sup> “Soyuzu zhurnalistov Rossii – 105 let!” [The Union of Journalists of Russia is 105 years old!], *Soyuz zhurnalistov Rossii*, November 13, 2023, <https://ruj.ru/news/soyuzu-zhurnalistov-rossii-105-let-20619> [accessed 27.12.2024].

<sup>102</sup> Mueller, Staffing Newspapers and Training Journalists, 853.

<sup>103</sup> Hans-Henning Schröder, “Upward Social Mobility and Mass Repression: The Communist Party and Soviet Society in the Thirties,” in *Stalinism: Its Nature and Aftermath*, ed. Nick Lampert and Gabor T. Rittersporn, *Studies in Soviet History and Society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992).

<sup>104</sup> McClelland, What Made Stalinism Work? 447.

<sup>105</sup> “The Internationale,” *Prolewiki*, [https://en.prolewiki.org/wiki/The\\_Internationale](https://en.prolewiki.org/wiki/The_Internationale) [accessed 03.07.2023].

<sup>106</sup> Ingo Grabowsky, *Agitprop in der Sowjetunion: Die Abteilung für Agitation und Propaganda 1920–1928* (Bochum: Projekt Verlag, 2004), 13.

<sup>107</sup> I. Vardin, “On the Needs of the Party-Soviet Periodical Press,” *Herald of Agitation and Propaganda*, no. 22–23 (1921), 40, quoted in O’lga Minaeva, *Status zhurnalista v sisteme partiino-sovetskikh SMI v 1920–1930 gg* [Status of a Journalist in the System of Party-Soviet Mass Media in the 1920–1930s], *Istoriya otechestvennykh SMI: Ezhegodnik 2016*, issue 1, vol. 1 (Moscow: Facutemltyoften of Journalism of the Moscow State University, 2016), 67, <https://www.journ.msu.ru/upload/iblock/b91/b91bf076035dcca12bfd01ad49991c55.pdf> [accessed 03.02.2023].

journalism with very low-quality press.<sup>108</sup> Widely perceived as amateur, such press lacked structure and well-written content.<sup>109</sup> The failures of the state to propagate more efficiently were researched by David Brandenberger:

Political literacy courses also proliferated on the mass level, providing neophytes with what was supposed to be a rigorous approach to Marxism-Leninism and the party line on key issues. Staffing such groups with qualified discussion leaders proved a constant headache for party cell administrators, often forcing them to moonlight as agitators and instructors. Party authorities attempted to compensate for this shortage of grassroots propagandists by forming mobile agitational brigades that would travel to outlying villages to popularize the basic tenets of the official line.<sup>110</sup>

Despite the best efforts, the first Soviet-grown journalists had no taste for foreign languages, as they considered learning them outside their scope of responsibility: translators could always assist them if needed. Not involving translators and interpreters was also not an option: there were neither decent dictionaries nor good reference books – such literature was rarely published in the USSR.<sup>111</sup> The German translator at TASS had “only a very small German-Russian dictionary [...] and an old encyclopedic dictionary, “Little Brockhaus” in German, published [...] in the Weimar Republic.”<sup>112</sup> The overall situation at TASS was dire: the agency could not find translators, as the candidates had no idea how to present a political text in a foreign language. Moreover, having translators on staff was costly, so linguistic training became increasingly necessary for journalists. The head of the Foreign Section of TASS himself, Konstantin Umansky, had to translate the materials into German.<sup>113</sup> A similar situation emerged at the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, where there were only a few people who were specialists in narrow fields, “and there cannot be another person who knows it, so everyone is absorbed, overloaded, and cannot breathe.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> This was a real crisis for the Soviet chiefs, as the press also played a pedagogic role. Contrary to popular belief, the role of the Soviet press extended beyond mere propaganda dissemination. While it undoubtedly served as a tool for ideology, the press was also tasked with fulfilling a range of vital non-ideological objectives. First and foremost, the Soviet press was entrusted with the responsibility of disseminating news and information. In a vast and diverse country like the Soviet Union, where communication channels were often limited, newspapers served as a crucial lifeline, keeping citizens informed. Moreover, the Soviet press played an important role in the educational efforts aimed at the largely illiterate peasant masses. Through newspapers, magazines, and other publications, the government sought to enlighten and empower rural communities, providing them with knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of the new world. Mueller, *Staffing Newspapers*, 851.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> David Brandenberger, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Political Indoctrination, and Stalinist Terror, 1928-1930* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 12.

<sup>111</sup> Marxist specialist literature was surprisingly lacking: many professors of the University of Oriental Studies, for instance, had to write the teaching materials from scratch, so they would correspond to the Soviet ideology. Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya, 219.

<sup>112</sup> Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'*.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Plus, the few cadres that Chicherin had were always taken away from him for temporary business trips, by way of attachments to factories, appointments to various commissions, or different types of party and social

Hence, in the early stages, there was a certain level of discrepancy between what the state wanted and what it could actually afford with the personnel it had. Due to insufficient training opportunities, many journalists did not, in fact, come from the journalism courses of any kind and just began their careers in small regional newspapers, working their way up to the top. As Boris Pankin described it, many came to journalism “from life.”<sup>115</sup> For example, Vladimir Chachin, a former sailor, who once had the urge to write about his friends from his military service to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, became a popular *gazetchik* [newspaper journalist]. Yet, given the growing demand for new cadres, many of them ended up learning everything on their own. At that time, most international journalists had no specialized training and were rather “ordered” to switch into their new roles. One of the most prominent Soviet international journalists, Boris Izakov, recalled the following late 1920s episode in his book:

Then I was told that the Soviet Union had decided to produce a weekly newspaper and that I would have to edit it, in addition to my work on the international committee.

— I'm not a journalist, I objected.

—“But you weren't a *mezhdunarodnik* either”, I was told. “But we decided it, and you became one.”

That's how – against my will – I became a journalist.<sup>116</sup>

Self-admittedly, Izakov did not consider himself a good journalist and was not very good at writing.<sup>117</sup> However, his chiefs sent him on assignment to the most prestigious Soviet newspaper, *Pravda*, and he became a foreign correspondent in London. He had to learn on the go, to the point when he had to acquire the skill of typing in Latin script and slowly spelling out what he had written down over the phone.<sup>118</sup> The same went for the language, as he learned it only by being surrounded by native speakers.<sup>119</sup> Yet there was significant pressure on him despite his humble training: he had to write a lot because there were so few Soviet journalists abroad. In these circumstances, the editorial staff expected as much

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work, so his workers were often out of his reach and he had to do everything by himself. Chicherin left for Berlin to fix his health in the late 1920s, and, to his greatest terror, the situation got even worse. Everything that he carefully built was lost: people close to him had been fired and the established work system had been destroyed. Yevgenii Zhirnov, “Zdes' lezhit Chicherin, zhertva sokrashhenii i chistok” [“Here lies Chicherin, a victim of cuts and purges”], *Kommersant*, 01.02.2010 <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1308070> [accessed 04.02.2024].

<sup>115</sup> Boris Pankin, *Rubezhi i knigi* [Frontiers and books] (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1981), 19. Of course, only a few of those self-taught journalists could become top-level propagandists, and the state recognized it. So, some short-term courses were offered at the State Institute of Journalistics for those who already worked at the newspapers. Mueller, *Staffing Newspapers*, 853.

<sup>116</sup> Boris Izakov, *Nash romanticheskii vek: dvadcatye, tridcatye, sorokovye* [Our romantic age: the twenties, thirties, forties] (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1977), 46.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>119</sup> Izakov also mentioned learning German in the 1920s when he was sent to Berlin by Profintern. All-in-all, he was an outstanding case, as he only had 5 classes of education and very modest origin.

information as possible from its London correspondent, and not only about English affairs but about the Western world at large.<sup>120</sup>

To address the issue at hand, the Moscow Institute of Red Journalism was established in 1921.<sup>121</sup> It was an act with the intention to create “homegrown” propaganda cadres: to nurture journalists from peasants and workers to be the voice of the new era,<sup>122</sup> changing general access to the field, which was still dominated by the intelligentsia.<sup>123</sup> However, it soon became clear that the accepted students were not ready for the intended work and needed more time to get properly educated.<sup>124</sup> They were required to be communists first and foremost, and then journalists, although “the simple logic of improving the quality of any labor required the opposite.”<sup>125</sup> Soon, education had to be prolonged: 1-year courses turned into three years, but that was still not enough to produce high-quality correspondents.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 129. Brooks analyzed the coverage and claimed that foreign affairs’ news mostly focused on England, Germany, France, America, and China. Overall, he argued that the country focused less or even neglected foreign affairs over the years nearing the World War II. To Brooks, Thank You, Comrade Stalin! 150.

<sup>121</sup> Bukharin wanted professional journalists to work for *Pravda*, so this could be the reason for the institute’s foundation. Ibid, 8. At this time, journalism was seen as a craft, not a creative profession. Because of that, journalism was taught at professional colleges, not at the university level. So, while All-Union Communist Institute of Journalism named after *Pravda* at the CEC of the USSR existed from 1921 until 1938, it was described as having less and less to do with journalistic skills and more with studying Marxism-Leninism. More on this in: Dmitrii Gutnov, “Iz istorii zhurnalistskogo obrazovaniya v Rossii: institut krasnykh zhurnalistov i ego blizhaishie preemniki (1919 – 1938)” [From the history of journalism education in Russia: The Institute of Red Journalists and its immediate successors (1919-1938)], *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta* (Series 10. Zhurnalistika) № 6 (2014): 102–14, <https://vestnik.journ.msu.ru/books/2014/6/iz-istorii-zhurnalistskogo-obrazovaniya-v-rossii-institut-krasnykh-zhurnalistov-i-ego-blizhayshie-pr/> [accessed 04.02.2023].

<sup>122</sup> Irina Fateeva, “K. P. Novitskii: U istokov professional’nogo mediaobrazovaniya” [K. P. Novitskii: At the origins of professional media education], *Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 11 (2007): 102–9, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/k-p-novitskiy-u-istokov-professionalnogo-mediaobrazovaniya/viewer> [accessed 30.11.2023].

<sup>123</sup> In 1930, it underwent a transformation, emerging as the All-Union Institute of Journalism, but the institute’s journey was not destined for longevity. In 1938, amidst Stalin’s purges and the tightening grip of totalitarianism, it met its demise. Dissolved by decree, the All-Union Institute of Journalism became a casualty of Stalin’s fear against journalists.

<sup>124</sup> Mueller, *Staffing Newspapers and Training Journalists*, 853.

<sup>125</sup> O’lga Minaeva, “Status zhurnalista v sisteme partiino-sovetskih SMI v 1920–1930 gg.” [Status of a journalist in the system of party-Soviet mass media in 1920-1930s], *Istoriya otechestvennykh SMI* 1, № 1 (2016): 75, <https://www.journ.msu.ru/upload/iblock/b91/b91bf076035dcca12bfd01ad49991e55.pdf> [accessed 03.02.2023]. Brooks wrote about the Party loyalty as the main criterion for advancement. See: Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!* 9.

<sup>126</sup> Some organizations took on the training, as they were not satisfied with the quality of education elsewhere. In the autumn of 1929, TASS started training international journalists. At first, they started with only 10–15 people with some experience of political work and newspaper skills, from editors of metropolitan and provincial newspapers and magazines, from listeners and teachers of the Institute of Red Professors, university professors, etc. The training required knowledge of the history of international relations, foreign languages, press reviews, translation and printing of telegrams. This preparation only lasted ten to twelve months, after which the correspondent had to learn mostly on-the-go. Then, the journalist was given one and a half months to learn about the country for his mission. It is evident that the scale of such training was small and nowhere near what a global news agency would want, so there were no conditions for TASS to take the spotlight in those years. Plus, it was overall hard to cross the border. The candidates who were chosen to be sent abroad did not necessarily have all the aforementioned skills, but were picked chiefly due to their political reliability and loyalty. The Party

Responsibility for this was put on journalists themselves, who could not keep up with their duties after this education, more so after learning the basics of the profession in study circles and reading groups.<sup>127</sup>

Yet, despite the enormous costs of a new and half-ruined state, the USSR was not ready to give up on the international front, thanks to external hopes for the upcoming World Revolution. In 1919, the Communist International (Comintern) was established, and its main focus was on mobilizing support for the international socialist cause. In its early years, the Comintern relied on the printed materials to propagate its message,<sup>128</sup> and this quickly backfired on many fronts. Many countries saw the Soviet Union as a menace to their own regimes and were not particularly eager to acknowledge it, to the point of not recognizing it on a legal level.<sup>129</sup> For instance, Great Britain imposed bans on the import of Soviet press to avoid socialist propaganda.<sup>130</sup> Yet the USSR did not give up on its hopes for world revolution: its leaders remained heavily involved in workers' movements and sought to provoke more revolutions around the globe. In fact, the Comintern pulled the pin on the narkom's [minister] of Foreign Affairs' Chicherin's efforts for stabilization of relations with other countries, "The Comintern speeches of our leading comrades and any detection of contacts between the apparatus and the Communist parties were especially harmful and dangerous."<sup>131</sup> Those activities of the Commissariat and the Comintern were mutually exclusive, for instance, when they called for diplomatic relations, yet organized a radio broadcasting for German workers to call for strikes – an unimaginable intervention into the internal politics. Going back and

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Presidium had to approve the appointment of any Soviet citizen abroad by a 5-man subcommittee that nominated correspondents for news agencies and newspapers. In addition to the Presidium member, members of the committee represented the Foreign Ministry, Foreign Trade Ministry, and Ministry of State Security. Additionally, foreign correspondents assigned to TASS were required to obtain approval from the Foreign Ministry, at least formally. This was the case during and after Stalin's lifetime. Palgunov, *Tridcat' let*, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Brandenberger, *Propaganda State in Crisis*, 28–9.

<sup>128</sup> The main publication of the Comintern, *The Communist International*, was established in May 1919 and distributed in four languages: German, English, French, and Russian. Initially, the Russian edition, 'Kommunisticheskii Internatsional,' was printed in the Comintern's own publishing house in Petrograd before being produced in various party publishing houses. Its actual print runs were rather modest. In 1921, the Comintern initiated the publication of 'Inprecor,' a multilingual journal that served as a platform for disseminating news and theoretical analyses in German, English, and French. This publication played an important role in articulating the revolutionary agenda of the Comintern to a global audience, providing a counter-narrative to bourgeois discourse and fostering international solidarity among socialist sympathizers.

<sup>129</sup> In 1924–1925, the USSR was officially recognized by Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and a number of other states, and in 1933 by the USA. However, this did not lead to the withdrawal of support for the Communist Parties and other forces advocating the overthrow of capitalism, which was regarded by the governments of these states as interference in internal affairs and in a number of cases even led to the severance of diplomatic relations (Great Britain, 1927; Mexico, 1930, etc.)

<sup>130</sup> Natalya Dovzhik, "VKP(b) i Komintern v bor'be za politicheskikh soyuznikov" [The C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern are fighting for political allies], *Sotsial'no-gumanitarnye znaniya* 6 (2016): 362, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vkp-b-i-komintern-v-borbe-za-politicheskikh-soyuznikov/viewer> [accessed 29.03.2023].

<sup>131</sup> Zhirnov, *Zdes' lezhit Chicherin*.

forth on its ambitions, the USSR eventually muffled its propaganda, expecting opportunities for international trade since the economy was at its weakest after the Civil War.<sup>132</sup> The material conditions and political circumstances were not the best grounds for large-scale propaganda, at least at that time.

From propaganda offensive, the USSR switched to a more reactive genre – *oproverzheniya* [refutations] by TASS.<sup>133</sup> These refutations were essentially responses to negative or critical publications about the Soviet Union in the foreign press, basically, counter-propaganda. Instead of promoting Soviet achievements, TASS focused on defending the Soviet state by countering foreign hostile narratives. This was propaganda in defense, not in offense, in the Soviet Union's effort to consolidate its position and counter external criticism, aiming to mitigate negative perceptions and build a more positive reputation through measured responses rather than through large-scale ideological offensives.

Yet the USSR was not ready to fully abandon its international propaganda and continued on a smaller scale. Despite the potential expenses and political backlash, TASS started training international journalists in the autumn of 1929. At first, they started with only 10–15 people with some experience of political work and newspaper skills, from editors of metropolitan and provincial newspapers and magazines, listeners and teachers of the Institute of Red Professors, university professors, etc.<sup>134</sup> The training required knowledge of the history of international relations, foreign languages, press reviews, translation, and printing of telegrams. This preparation only lasted ten to twelve months. Then, the journalist was given little time to learn about the country for his mission.<sup>135</sup> On the ground, the journalists had to figure out the rest and make up for the blind spots in their training, although they had little to no time to prepare for their assignments: “A month and a half before leaving abroad, the correspondent was freed from processing current information, devoted himself entirely to studying the country in which he was to work.”<sup>136</sup> It is evident that the scale of such training

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<sup>132</sup> The USSR was interested in world revolution, but to the extent that it did not undermine the international position of the Soviet state and did not lead to destruction of all that had been achieved by Soviet diplomacy. Pavel Makarenko, “Narkom G. V. Chicherin i sovetskaya vneshnyaya politika” [People's Commissar G. V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Policy], *Vestnik Tomskogo universiteta* 349 (2011): 109–10, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/narkom-g-v-chicherin-i-sovetskaya-vneshnyaya-politika> [accessed 08.09.2024]; Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 46, 93.

<sup>133</sup> Borkov, *Sozдание i deyatelnost' osnovnykh sovetskikh organov*.

<sup>134</sup> Palgunov, *Tridcat' let*, 7.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

was small and nowhere near what a global news agency would want, so there were no conditions for TASS to take the spotlight in those years.<sup>137</sup>

Another way to staff socialist propaganda channels was through the Comintern. The organization published several journals<sup>138</sup> and instructed the national communist parties on how to keep high standards in their press.<sup>139</sup> For instance, many international Comintern members worked for Soviet radio, helping to create the programs and training new cadres. Through those international communist connections, the Comintern placed Soviet citizens abroad,<sup>140</sup> as well as created an option to hire foreign professionals.<sup>141</sup> The New York bureau of the ROSTA/TASS, established in 1923, was composed entirely of U.S. citizens.<sup>142</sup> Kenneth Durant, an American communist, was its first chief for almost two decades. The staff included him, his deputy Harry Freeman, two correspondents, and two technical staff members. Those foreigners were pillars for the Soviet news networks: before World War II, there were no Soviet newspaper correspondents stationed in the United States.<sup>143</sup> The same situation was all over the world:

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<sup>137</sup> Plus, it was overall hard to cross the border. The candidates who were chosen to be sent abroad did not necessarily have all the aforementioned skills, but were picked chiefly due to their political reliability and loyalty. The Party Presidium had to approve the appointment of any Soviet citizen abroad by a 5-man subcommittee that nominated correspondents for news agencies and newspapers. In addition to the Presidium member, members of the committee represented the Foreign Ministry, Foreign Trade Ministry, and Ministry of State Security. Additionally, foreign correspondents assigned to TASS were required to obtain approval from the Foreign Ministry, at least formally. This was the case during and after Stalin's lifetime.

<sup>138</sup> The organization facilitated the dissemination of socialist beliefs through dedicated newspapers such as *Kommunisticheskii International* and *Inprekor!* Such publications served as vital mediators for information exchange among left-leaning allies, fostering a sense of solidarity across borders. Moreover, radio propaganda had increased its influence as a crucial tool of the Comintern's propaganda apparatus, playing a pivotal role in disseminating revolutionary messages and shaping public opinion both domestically and internationally. It provided the Comintern with a powerful platform to reach mass audiences without the necessary reading skills. Radio stations operated under the auspices of the Comintern that were established in strategic locations, broadcasting revolutionary content in multiple languages.

<sup>139</sup> Aldo Agosti, "The Concept of World Revolution and the 'World Party for the Revolution,' 1919–1943," *The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Cominternationals necessaryntern, Communism and Stalinism* 4/5 (1997/98): 73–83; Serge Wolikow, *L'Internationale Communiste, 1919–1943: Le Komintern ou le rêve déchu du parti mondial de la révolution* (Ivry-sur-Seine: Éd. de l'Atelier, Éd. Ouvrières, 2010), 151–61 as quoted in Gleb J Albert, *Think Tank*, 112. Plus, The Comintern played an important role in the creation of international propaganda, including its radio broadcasting. Many international Comintern members staffed Soviet radio, on the one hand, helping to create the programs, and, on the other, training new cadres. "Vospominaniya Inny Zasko – o lyudyah, programmah i professional'nyh tainah Inoveshhaniya: [Inna Zasko's Memoirs about people, programs, and professional secrets of Foreign Broadcasting], *radiportal.ru*, <https://radiportal.ru/articles/4977/legendy-inoveshchaniya> [accessed 08.10.2023]. In the Soviet case, due to the party and state apparatus being practically the same entity, a special type of press emerged, given the media monopoly. See, for example: Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses*.

<sup>140</sup> Dovzhik, VKP(b) i Komintern, 363.

<sup>141</sup> Almost all foreign employees were dismissed or repressed during the Great Purge.

<sup>142</sup> Igor' Shamshin, "SShA otmechayut 90-letie informacionnogo sotrudnichestva s ITAR-TASS" [The United States celebrates the 90th anniversary of information cooperation with ITAR-TASS], *TASS*, 06.03.2013, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/573363> [accessed 13.03.2023].

<sup>143</sup> Meaning that this TASS office essentially provided the entire news coverage about America to the USSR.

*Pravda* had only a handful of foreign correspondents at that time: the Soviet journalist Hartmann in Berlin, the Frenchman Remy in Paris, and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States, Olgin, in New York. I [Boris Izakov – M.Z.] was the first Soviet correspondent of *Pravda* in London: my predecessors were English comrades in arms.<sup>144</sup>

Hiring foreign nationals was a pragmatic solution – in the absence of educated Soviet citizens with the necessary skills, it was easier to hire native speakers who were happy to support the spread of communism in their states. If anything, those foreigners were a link between the Soviets and the global proletariat.<sup>145</sup> They also had a deeper cultural and linguistic understanding of their local or neighboring areas. For example, Andrew Rothstein,<sup>146</sup> a journalist born in London to Russian Jewish migrants, had a strong connection to his Russian heritage. By around 1920 or 1921, Rothstein had become actively involved with ROSTA (later TASS), and his employment spanned over 24 years. Fluent in both English and Russian, Rothstein was ideally positioned to serve as a link between the English and Soviet publics: his deep understanding of both cultures helped him advocate for Soviet ideas. In the same manner, correspondents like Lajos Magyar and Sándor Rádö, both Hungarians, worked for ROSTA at the Berlin and Vienna offices, respectively.<sup>147</sup> It appeared to be not only a safer option when it came to hiring unreliable pre-imperial professionals but also the more sensible option in terms of expertise. Given the Austro-Hungarian past, those employees spoke German, which was essential within the diplomatic and media circles of Berlin and Vienna. Even with the aid of foreigners, the Soviet news network in the 1920s was severely lacking in many aspects. Most importantly, it was understaffed and irregular, with many postings being temporary and rather sporadic. By 1925, TASS had 18 offices abroad, and new offices were in constant flux, opening and shutting down.<sup>148</sup> The biggest offices, like Berlin, Vienna, London, New York, or Paris, had 5–6 people working in them, including the head of the office, 1–2 correspondents and editors, a secretary, and a typist, sometimes even using the services of translators and couriers.<sup>149</sup> In most cases, however, just one person was employed, performing all the functions by themselves. The functionality of such offices was also limited by the lack of international agreements and a tight budget. Lajos Magyar, for instance, stated the rarity of communist press correspondents abroad, explicitly saying how infrequent such

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<sup>144</sup> Izakov, *Nash romanticheskii vek*, 46.

<sup>145</sup> Babyuk, *Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskih punktov*

<sup>146</sup> “Andrew Rothstein”, *marx-memorial-library*, <https://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk/project/socialist-opposition-ww1/andrew-rothstein> [accessed 11.05.2023].

<sup>147</sup> Irén Komját, *Die Geschichte der Inprekorr. Zeitung der Kommunistischen Internationale. 1921–1939* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Marxistische Blätter, 1982), 26–7.

<sup>148</sup> Babyuk, *Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskih punktov*.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

assignments were and that those typically occurred under exceptional circumstances.<sup>150</sup> The reason for this was that the communist press faced a constant shortage of funds. After all, information from abroad was 15–20 times more expensive than that based in the USSR.<sup>151</sup> There was also no financial profit from such work, as in the budget drawn up it was unequivocally stated that “no foreign revenue estimates are provided, since foreign correspondents provide no income.”<sup>152</sup> The Soviet state’s opportunities were very limited and humble, while the most influential telegraph agencies worldwide (all capitalist) worked together as a united group that spread news across the entire globe.<sup>153</sup> Such collaboration mutually strengthened the influence of capitalist interests worldwide, furthering capitalist goals.

Foreign-born journalists could not completely cover the whole foreign network of the Soviet state,<sup>154</sup> and the shortage of journalists inside the country also led to their lack outside the Soviet borders.<sup>155</sup> Three strategies – hiring prerevolutionary elites and clerks, developing a system for raising new, reliable cadres, and employing foreigners – were at the forefront of the Soviet state. Overall, the 1920s were marked by (very limited) progress in international news – some countries finally recognized the USSR, and its operations were somewhat stabilizing just before dipping into new crises amid Stalin’s growing grip on power.

## **1.2. The Story of People, or Lack Thereof**

Disappointment with the previous attempts at international propaganda left its mark on the 1930s. Failed revolutions abroad, trade embargoes, etc., created concerning trends that stifled the growth of Soviet international journalism and foreign affairs at large. This era saw a shift in the state course, as the Leninist idea of a world revolution was replaced by the

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<sup>150</sup> Komját, *Die Geschichte der Inprekorr*, 26.

<sup>151</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 60, d. 888, l. 34 as quoted in Babyuk, *Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskih punktov*.

<sup>152</sup> GA RF, f. R-4459, op. 9, d. 2, l. 8 as quoted in Babyuk, *Deyatel'nost' korrespondentskih punktov*.

<sup>153</sup> Komját, *Die Geschichte der Inprekorr*, 26.

<sup>154</sup> It is important to note that those correspondents were not similar to traditional journalists in the usual sense, especially not akin to *mezhdunarodniki*. In contrast to traditional journalists who appeal to a larger audience and follow standard journalistic conventions, those contributors worked within a unique framework. Their main focus was on connecting with fellow revolutionaries and like-minded individuals who shared their ideological beliefs, rather than appealing to a large audience. The socialist media provided a forum for intellectual discourse among the revolutionary community, rather than seeking a large readership. Moreover, these publications were often not widely distributed and only reached a specific group of people within the socialist movement, including activists, intellectuals, and supporters. Their influence on wider public conversation was somewhat limited in comparison to mainstream media.

<sup>155</sup> Moreover, many revolutionaries held Soviet citizenship, further illustrating the interconnectedness of socialist movements across borders at that time. Prior to the late 1930s, the Soviet Union offered citizenship to any worker residing within its territory, effectively extending its ideological influence and fostering solidarity among international socialist networks. This policy not only helped the mobility of activists but also served as a mechanism for ideological exchange and collaboration.

Stalinist-Bukharin theory of “building socialism in one country.”<sup>156</sup> The departure from Lenin’s concept was, in part, a response to external factors such as the rise of fascism and the failure of revolutionary movements in other countries. It signaled a pragmatic reorientation of socialism within the Soviet Union,<sup>157</sup> even at the expense of revolutionary workers’ solidarity. This idea altered the dynamics of communist movements worldwide: it led to an extreme centralization and the full hegemony of the Bolshevik Party.<sup>158</sup> A result of it was a change of course on the propaganda, not outside the country, but inside it, thanks to an increasing exposure through cultural diplomacy.<sup>159</sup> The state was frequented by foreign guests who would later promote the USSR’s successes in their home countries. Such strategies were implemented through the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) and had a positive effect on the image of the country abroad, although other options for engaging the international information market were very limited.<sup>160</sup> Broadly, this strategy was rather slow-paced, peaceful, and non-invasive. As Michael-David Fox put it, “These interwar innovations anticipated the ideological sweep and systematic clash of the Cultural Cold War.”<sup>161</sup> At that point, there was little room for growth, and most of the news the USSR received abroad came from news agencies of capitalist countries. The USSR was adapting its global orientation and international propaganda methods to what seemed feasible at that time. Yet some tectonic changes were happening outside the country, and they altered the realm of possibility. The established global news system has reached milestones that have forever changed the international news markets. To that point, the world has been divided between the four biggest news agencies since 1870: through a cartel agreement, they arranged news supplies to exclusive parts of the world for six decades.<sup>162</sup> A few European countries, Central and South America, and some Far East countries were exclusive to Havas. Reuters covered the British Empire, including some countries in the Far East. Wolff covered Germany, Austria, Russia, and Scandinavia. The Associated Press joined later and was granted

<sup>156</sup> O. Malets, “Ideologichni zmini u politici komunistichnogo internacionalu v 1935–1939” [Ideological changes in the policy of the Communist International in 1935–1939], *Sciences of Europe* 24 (2018): 63.

<sup>157</sup> The theory proposed focusing on rapid industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and centralized state planning.

<sup>158</sup> K. Khudolei, “Evoluciya idei mirovoi revolyucii v politike sovetского soyuza (epoha kominterna i socializma v odnoi strane)” [The evolution of the idea of world revolution in the politics of the Soviet Union. The era of the Comintern and socialism in one country], *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta politologiya, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* 10, № 2 (2017): 153.

<sup>159</sup> Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>160</sup> VOKS also had its information campaigns that needed to be coordinated with the Comintern, Foreign Affairs, ROSTA, and the telegraph agency Inprekorr. Ibid, 43.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>162</sup> Since 1870, the world has been divided between the four most powerful international news agencies: Havas, Wolff, Reuters, and the Associated Press.

information rights in the US. While there were some tumults in between the countries and organizations, the regional monopolies were officially over only by 1934: the world agencies agreed not to follow the directions from the past.<sup>163</sup> As Nikolai Palgunov, the head of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, recalled it, “A fierce struggle was waged in the Western information markets.”<sup>164</sup> The news markets were finally penetrable thanks to the global media conglomerate falling apart. Hence, TASS had a chance to enter the global arena and held on to it. For instance, Sovietologist Theodore Kruglak noted that,

TASS, to all intents and purposes, emerged from the ‘national agency’ stage to that of a full-fledged international news agency on an equal footing with the Associated Press, United Press, Reuters, and Havas in the early 1930s. It had exchange agreements, not only with the Big Four but with the scope of national agencies that had sprung up in Europe.<sup>165</sup>

Yet despite the emerging possibility, the USSR was barely prepared to expand its presence in the international news market. TASS, for instance, had very limited capabilities and an overall regional character in the 1930s. It gained information through its correspondents only from neighboring countries, except for offices in the following locations: New York, Washington, London, Ankara, Istanbul, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tehran, Stockholm, Canberra, and Mexico City.<sup>166</sup> The partial reason was technological backwardness – telegraph connections were unstable and were held in sessions; Morse machines were slow, and teleprinters could not be used without the cable connections.<sup>167</sup> Second, Stalin’s increasing paranoia led to the dismantling of international communication and the undermining of the structures that Soviet journalists relied on: the section of professional journalists had been shut down already in 1930, effectively closing the analog of the professional union of pen workers existing from 1918.<sup>168</sup> When the USSR needed more journalists, it produced even fewer.

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<sup>163</sup> Before, the Soviets considered themselves excluded and discriminated against due to this agreement and inability to enter many news markets. Paul F. Douglass, Karl Bömer, and Emil Dovifat, “National and World Planning: Supplement: The Press as a Factor in International Relations,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 162 (1932): 262. More on this in: Terhi Rantanen, *Howard Interviews Stalin: How the AP, UP, and TASS Smashed the International News Cartel* (Master’s thesis, School of Journalism, Indiana University, 1994).

<sup>164</sup> Palgunov, Tridcat’ let, 267–76.

<sup>165</sup> Theodore E. Kruglak, *The Two Faces of TASS* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), 9.

<sup>166</sup> Palgunov, Tridcat’ let, 270. Overall, the number of TASS correspondent points grew significantly from 1920 to 1935, from 4 to 27. Alexander R. Schejngeit, *Der Mann, der die sowjetische Auslandsberichterstattung organisierte*, 83.

<sup>167</sup> Palgunov, Tridcat’ let, 271.

<sup>168</sup> This way, it appears that journalism was closely guarded, and some journalists’ rights were stripped away already by the late 1920s. The Russian Union of Soviet Journalists ceased to exist, it functioned from 1918 until 1928. Stalin was methodically aiming at pillars of professionalism of Soviet journalists. Julie Kay Mueller, “Soviet Journalists: Cadres or Professionals?” *Russian History* 23, no. 1/4 (1996): 277–93; see also “Istoriya Soyuza zhurnalistov Rossii,” *Soyuz zhurnalistov Rossii*, <https://ruj.ru/about/history> [accessed 30.12.2023].

Moreover, the year of the cartel's fallout coincided with a major event inside the USSR, which served as a trigger for waves of repression – in 1934, Stalin's comrade, Sergei Kirov, was murdered in his office in Leningrad. Following this, more and more people became political prisoners and victims of purges.<sup>169</sup> A chain of show trials commenced, accusing people of connections to Trotsky, anti-Soviet activities, and espionage. Those repressions caused constant diplomatic scandals, for instance, because of foreigners being executed without a trial, as well as arrests of people with connections to foreign embassies.<sup>170</sup> Like so, previously mentioned journalist working for the Soviet news network abroad, Lajos Magyar, was arrested in 1935 and executed in 1937.<sup>171</sup> He was the first Comintern worker to be killed because of the wrongful accusations. Needless to say, journalists were part of the showdown: the international work of correspondents became their downfall, and the suspicions surrounding their activities proved deadly. Anything that could connect them to people abroad, even within the direct scope of their responsibilities, could be used against them. Moreover, their previous achievements and contributions were disregarded, no matter how much they championed the regime and served the state's interests. Yakov Doletskii, the head of ROSTA and then TASS from 1922, was one of the key figures in the centralization of news in the Soviet Union and the establishment of TASS. He constantly and persistently addressed the structural problems,<sup>172</sup> promoting the idea of the change in news flows. Yet his achievements were downplayed: he was accused of the poor state of his organization and of allowing many unreliable people to work for it. Knowing about the upcoming arrest, he took his own life on the day when that devastating report on TASS was issued.<sup>173</sup> Another tragic turn was meant for Mikhail Koltsov. Koltsov's career took different directions in journalism and foreign affairs when he joined the Press Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Over the years, he served as a special correspondent for various outlets, including *Pravda*, where he was employed for over 16 years.<sup>174</sup> He also represented Soviet interests as a delegate at international congresses in Paris (1935) and Barcelona (1937), where

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<sup>169</sup> See, Matt Lenoe, "Did Stalin Kill Kirov and Does It Matter?" *The Journal of Modern History* 74, no. 2 (June 2002): 352–80.

<sup>170</sup> Zhirnov, Zdes' lezhit Chicherin.

<sup>171</sup> Brigitte Studer, *Travellers of the World Revolution: A Global History of the Communist International* (London and New York: Verso, 2023), 350.

<sup>172</sup> Maksim Babyuk, Organizatsionnye aspekty funkcionirovaniya sistemy telegrafnykh agentstv.

<sup>173</sup> Tehri Rantanen lists several potential reasons for his arrest: "First, he had been a friend of Radek. Second, people with foreign contacts such as journalists or diplomats were considered especially suspicious. Third, Doletzky was Polish, and they suffered the highest casualties among foreigners in Russia." Rantanen, Howard interviews Stalin, 31.

<sup>174</sup> Koltsov's influence extended beyond mere reporting; he was instrumental in multiple journals. He played a pivotal role as a founder and editor of *Za zarubezhom* magazine and in launching magazines such as *Za rulyom* and *Sovetskoye foto*. He also held the position of editor-in-chief at the satirical publication *Krokodil*.

he led the Soviet delegation, and covered the tumultuous events of the Spanish Civil War. Despite his significant contribution to Soviet foreign reporting, Koltsov's life ended tragically. In 1938, he was arrested; in 1940, he was executed.<sup>175</sup>

Amidst the horrendous repression, it was not just key officials who were under severe scrutiny: the TASS rank-and-file staff were not exempt from the harshest punishments. Some bureaus did not even have their own correspondents, and many of those present in foreign offices were considered undesirable by officials. For instance, 57 TASS workers were stationed abroad, 26 of whom were foreign nationals. Yet, zero out of 57 were trustworthy for the Soviets.<sup>176</sup> Many employees were suspended or were marked as needing to be “seriously examined” [podlezhit ser'yochnoi proverke].<sup>177</sup> The central authorities criticized all TASS bureaus for mismanagement. In May 1937, Ilya Chernyak, who had been working as the head of the TASS department in Austria since January 1934 and who was a party member since 1918, was dismissed from his job “for writing counterrevolutionary Trotskyist literature abroad (the opposition bulletin) and hiding it from the party organization, a strict reprimand was issued with a warning. Consider it inappropriate to use T. Chernyak I.M. at work abroad.”<sup>178</sup> The head of the TASS bureau in Berlin, Sitkovskii, was exposed as an enemy of the people. TASS correspondent in Rome, Mark Charny, was accused of working “sluggishly and making serious mistakes in his work,” and the fact that his brother had been previously arrested did not add any credibility.<sup>179</sup> This terror, of course, did nothing to help TASS's foreign operations. Here are a few lines of the report to illustrate the sheer scale and variety of accusations:

Berlin: The department's secretary, Schulz, a German citizen, did not inspire trust and should have been dismissed. The department was performing extremely poorly.

Helsingfors (Helsinki): There was no correspondent present at the time of the report.

Beiping (Beijing): The correspondent, V. Ya. Aboltin, a member of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks since 1917, had joined the Trotskyist opposition in 1923. He was recommended for immediate replacement.

Istanbul: The correspondent, Stoklitsky, was under suspicion due to an alleged connection with the executed spy Eidemann. A serious investigation into his activities and affiliations was deemed necessary.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> “Koltsov (Fridland) Mikhail Efimovich,” *bessmertnybarak*, <https://bessmertnybarak.ru/books/person/1866171/> [accessed 05.09.2023].

<sup>176</sup> RGASPI, f. 83, op. 1, d. 89, ll. 8–10. Khavinson to Stalin about the personnel of TASS foreign missions. June 19, 1937, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1015846> [accessed 15.12.2022].

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, f. 17, op. 71, d. 48, l. 88. Document remark, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/remark/1015845> [accessed 25.11.2023].

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, f. 83, op. 1, d. 89, ll. 8–10. Khavinson to Stalin.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

The Foreign Department of TASS in Moscow was not safe from the purges either, as “enemies” were discovered there as well.<sup>181</sup> The main group of editors was described as poorly qualified and failing to perform the basics needed for the job. The head of the Editorial Office for Information Abroad, Chernov, was under investigation for his alleged cooperation with Trotskyists. Chernov's wife had also been arrested and exiled for anti-Soviet activities. The presence of such “suspicious” cadres was seen as a liability that could compromise the agency's, if not the USSR's, work. The situation was so dire that almost all the personnel needed to be checked or replaced with utmost urgency.<sup>182</sup> Immediate action purged the department of unreliable staff and “ensured” that only loyal staff were employed. Of course, it was not just TASS journalists who were targeted. People with knowledge of foreign languages and with foreign connections were all viewed as potential threats, and any outlet having ties abroad was a recipe for disaster.<sup>183</sup> Their experience, once valued, became their end, as they were seen as people with a high potential for espionage and betrayal. Vladimir Romm and Dmitii Bukhartsev were correspondents for *Izvestia* in America and Germany since 1934, both arrested; Vladimir Losyev (Rover) worked for *Trud* and lived in Chicago, was expelled from the party for “the ambiguity of his stay abroad in the past from 1919-20.”<sup>184</sup> Eduard Butlitzky-Tumanov had his career abruptly cut short by arrest. Prior to his detainment, he had been affiliated with the newspaper *Gudok*, but his association with the Comintern marked him for the same fate as countless others caught in the web of suspicion and accusation.<sup>185</sup> Another journalist, Cecilia Kin, held multiple positions in foreign affairs: she worked at *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, in the foreign office of TASS, and served as a referent in the Press Department of the USSR Embassy in France from 1933 to 1936. Despite her varied and important roles, she was sentenced to eight years in the labor camps.<sup>186</sup> However, her fate, though harsh, was somewhat better than that of many others in the foreign network, including her own husband. Viktor Kin-Surovikin, the executive editor of “Le Journal de Moscou,” faced a grimmer end; he was executed for his perceived subversive

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> The Institute of Oriental Studies' staff did not escape the purges, either, and several arrests took place. During the Great Terror, the work of the Institute was basically paralyzed. Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya, 242.

<sup>184</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 71, d. 49, ll. 22–3, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/remark/1015845> [accessed 25.11.2023].

<sup>185</sup> “Butlitsky-Tumanov Eduard Mineevich,” *bessmertnybarak*, [https://bessmertnybarak.ru/Butlitskiy-Tumanov\\_Eduard\\_Mineevich/](https://bessmertnybarak.ru/Butlitskiy-Tumanov_Eduard_Mineevich/) [accessed 05.09.2023].

<sup>186</sup> “Cecilia Isaakovna Kin,” *bessmertnybarak*, [https://bessmertnybarak.ru/kin\\_tssetsiliya\\_isaakovna/](https://bessmertnybarak.ru/kin_tssetsiliya_isaakovna/) [accessed 05.09.2023].

activities.<sup>187</sup> Thus, foreign correspondents were often singled out for purging. To illustrate the scale of the “cleansing” within the foreign apparatus, here are some notable names:

- Evgenii Gnedin: the Head of the Press Department of the USSR People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, had previously worked for *Izvestia*, was executed.
- Ippolit Sitkovsky: a TASS journalist based in Berlin, was executed.
- Jan Strauyan: a former correspondent of TASS in Beijing, executed.
- Stefan (Stepan) Alexandrovich Raevsky (Neiman): worked for TASS, *Izvestia*, and numerous other publications. Executed.
- Frederyk Zeifert: a TASS correspondent in Poland and Sweden, was executed.
- Arsenii Voznesenskii: a TASS journalist in Japan, executed.
- Rudolf Abich: a TASS correspondent in Tehran, executed.
- Ivan Bepalov: a TASS correspondent in Sweden and Germany, was executed.
- Mikhail Pavlov: a TASS correspondent in Shanghai, was executed.
- Mikhail Levidov: the head of the Foreign Department of ROSTA and the Press Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. As a correspondent, he traveled extensively abroad, including to London, The Hague, and Berlin. Executed.

An American journalist working at the “Moscow News” wrote about the growing atmosphere of fear, “One by one, three staff members, all of them Soviet citizens who had lived abroad for a time – the foreign news editor, the business manager, the star translator – were arrested, as well as a makeup foreman at the foreign-language print shop where the paper was put to press. Each time, Borodin [editor-in-chief] brought us together and delivered a lecture in an attempt to justify the purge. We, Americans and British, remained shocked, silent, and wondering.”<sup>188</sup>

The Foreign Ministry was also deliberately purged in 1939, when Molotov urgently replaced the Minister Litvinov and his team for failing to ally against Nazi Germany.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, Litvinov, a Jewish politician, with a majority of personnel being Jewish, too, it would have

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<sup>187</sup> “Kin-Surovikin Victor Pavlovich,” *bessmertnybarak*, [https://bessmertnybarak.ru/kin-surovikin\\_viktor\\_pavlovich/](https://bessmertnybarak.ru/kin-surovikin_viktor_pavlovich/) [accessed 05.09.2023].

<sup>188</sup> Leo Gruliow, “Working for a Soviet Newspaper in the Stalinist Era: US Journalist Remembers Time as a Staff Member of *Moscow News*,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 25, 1987, <https://www.csmonitor.com/1987/1125/oneews.html> [accessed 07.09.2023].

<sup>189</sup> 80% of the whole Council of People’s Commissars was purged. N. Bonyushkina, “Opyt izucheniya stanovleniya professional'noi sovetskoi jelity (SNK 1937–1941 gg.)” [The experience of studying the formation of the professional Soviet elite (Council of People's Commissars 1937-1941], *Mir Rossii. Sociologiya. Jetnologiya*, no. 3–4 (1995): 123, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/opyt-izucheniya-stanovleniya-professionalnoy-sovetskoy-elity-snk-1937-1941-g> [accessed 04.07.2025].

been harder to negotiate with Germany.<sup>190</sup> Thanks to the systematic “cleansing” of the diplomatic corps, many prominent figures were decimated, “At least 34 percent of Narkomindel [People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs – M.Z.], including 62 percent of those functionaries who occupied positions of paramount importance, were purged.”<sup>191</sup> The situation was dire. As Stephen Kotkin wrote, “Soviet embassies were emptied of personnel. To the extent that dispatches were still being sent to Moscow, the paperwork often went unanswered due to a lack of staff. The state of affairs in the Foreign Trade Commissariat was also catastrophic. Out of the 46 people who had been employed there since 1930, there was not a single one left after the purges.”<sup>192</sup> Moreover, fifteen of twenty-five trade representatives in foreign states were removed, and even key economic countries such as France, Italy, and neighboring Finland and Mongolia had no Soviet representatives for economic relations. Anastas Mikoyan, then head of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade, described the general panic in the international field: “A lot of people are afraid. People are afraid to show initiative, lest it be considered sabotage. Panic and overreaction prevail in the Commissariat.”<sup>193</sup>

The very point of Stalinism at this time was accelerated social mobility: the cycle of reaching the top and then being “cleansed” was pushed to the extreme. These upward and immediate downward spirals were used on a mass scale, with new officials coming and going across the whole country. Ten years later, Vyacheslav Molotov pointed out that “the careers of diplomats enrolled after the 1936-37 purges evolved particularly quickly before World War II.”<sup>194</sup> Under those conditions, all those purges within the apparatus of foreign affairs were not a coincidence or a sudden naive realization of enemies hiding amidst the employees: it was a deliberate tactic of cadres renewal, ensuring the constant fear of wrongdoing.<sup>195</sup> In fact, such heavy “rotation” had the opposite effect: one’s loyalty could not have developed amid

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<sup>190</sup> Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin’s Team*, 143–5.

<sup>191</sup> Teddy J. Uldricks, “The Impact of the Great Purges on the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs,” *Slavic Review* 36, no. 2 (June 1977): 188.

<sup>192</sup> Anastas Mikoyan, *Tak bylo* [That’s how it was] (Moscow: Vagrius, 1999), *militera.lib*, <https://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/mikoyan/03.html> [accessed 05.08.2022].

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1027, l. 167. Stenogramma vystupleniâ tov. V.M. Molotova na sovešanii sotrudnikov central’nogo apparata MID SSSR okončivših IMO [Transcript of V.M. Molotov’s speech at the meeting of the workers of the MID central apparatus, who graduated from the Institute of International Relations], 04/03/1955, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 70. Vyacheslav Molotov was involved in foreign affairs at different capacities in different years: he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, head of External Intelligence Services, etc.

<sup>195</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 42. For instance, Mao also purged experts in foreign affairs despite the scarcity of specialists, for instance, qualified interpreters. Jesús Baigorri-Jalón and Manuela Fernández-Sánchez, “Understanding High-Level Interpreting in the Cold War: Preliminary Notes,” *FORUM: Revue internationale d’interprétation et de traduction / International Journal of Interpretation and Translation* 8, no. 2 (October 2010): 9, <https://open.unive.it/hitrade/books/BaigorriFernandez.PDF> [accessed 17.04.2023].

constant fear and short-term work for the organization. Moreover, the constant comings and goings made it almost impossible to hire capable cadres: most experts were gone after several waves of repression, and newcomers often lacked sufficient time to develop their skills.

The high turnover, with few “backup” professionals, was a dead end, and the officials soon ran out of educated and experienced workers. The state could not function without foreign affairs specialists, so the solution was simple but inefficient: fast-tracking people’s careers to fill in the gaps among higher ranks.<sup>196</sup> Urgently, unprepared youngsters were rushed to cover the unfolding gaps of Soviet foreign affairs. Many of them were completely unprepared to do what was asked of them: they did not speak any foreign languages and had zero experience in foreign affairs.<sup>197</sup> Likewise, right after graduating from the Historical, Philosophical, and Literary Institute in 1938, at the height of repression, Ivan Filippov was immediately appointed head of the Berlin branch at TASS. While Filippov claimed to have some experience in publishing across various magazines and newspapers, he did not speak German and lacked the necessary experience in foreign affairs. His immediately getting such a high-standing position was the case of “luck” – everyone before him “disappeared.” Filippov’s scenario of a rapid rise to power was typical at this time: TASS had to urgently hire a lot of fresh graduates and send them straight to foreign assignments: “More than a dozen young people gathered in the Foreign Department, who came from various institutes and were preparing to work abroad. We were given lectures here on foreign policy, history, diplomacy, journalism; every day we worked hard on foreign languages.”<sup>198</sup> In the meantime, there was space for a new generation of diplomats and foreign correspondents that needed to emerge urgently.<sup>199</sup>

On the institutional level, radical changes were also unavoidable.<sup>200</sup> The main journalistic schools within the USSR were shut down in 1941. Their closure on the eve of World War II further complicated the issue, as the pipeline for producing new, qualified press personnel

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<sup>196</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 70.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Ivan Filippov, *Zapiski o ‘Tret’em reihe’* [Notes on the ‘Third Reich’] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1966), *royallib*, [https://royallib.com/read/filippov\\_ivan/zapiski\\_o\\_tretem\\_reyhe.html#40960](https://royallib.com/read/filippov_ivan/zapiski_o_tretem_reyhe.html#40960) [accessed 02.01.2023].

<sup>199</sup> Yuri Kashlev, German Rozanov, and Valentin Shchetinin, *Diplomaticheskaya akademiya MID Rossii: Istoriya i sovremennost’* [Diplomacy Academy of The Russian Ministry Of Foreign Affairs: History And Modernity] (Moscow: Izvestia, 2004), 56.

<sup>200</sup> With the rise of Nazism, the Soviet Union wanted to form the anti-fascist front. The VII Congress of the Comintern happened in summer 1935, which led to important realizations of weakening the West given the previous economic crises and Nazis coming into power. However, it was also decided that the dream of overthrowing capitalism was postponed until further notice, as the antifascist fight was more urgent. O. Malets, *Ideologichni zmini*, 64. The organization completely lost its status and significance as the platform of equal exchange and became taken over by the USSR. See: Edward Hallett Carr, *Twilight of the Comintern, 1930–1935* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.)

was effectively severed.<sup>201</sup> To address the immediate personnel shortage, the Soviet government attempted to implement temporary solutions, such as offering short-term courses for newspaper workers. However, these measures proved insufficient.<sup>202</sup> Those courses were unable to provide the comprehensive training and depth of knowledge that a full university program could offer.<sup>203</sup> As a result, many of the recruits lacked the necessary skills and understanding to perform effectively in their roles. The combined effect of the purges and the closure of journalism faculties was a substantial decline in the quality of Soviet journalistic cadres. This period of weakened journalism had a long-lasting impact, as the Soviet Union had to work hard to rebuild its journalistic capacity in the years following the war. As the Cold War was approaching, such losses proved a monumental disadvantage for the Soviet Union. Certainly, the murder of journalists in the upper echelons like Doletskii or Koltsov meant more than just the elimination of skilled professionals; it marked the halt of extensive international networks where those were the key links.<sup>204</sup> This void was evident not only in diplomatic channels abroad but also within the USSR itself, as there was no one to fill those positions. Without those knots, the preexisting networks of foreign activists, media outlets, and cultural institutions began to wither. The trust, painstakingly built over the years, was dwindling. The death of such experts meant that many processes had to be restarted from scratch: new faces had to be introduced, relationships rebuilt, and trust reestablished. The absence of those higher-ups also meant a loss of institutional memory and expertise. Their insights and strategies, gained over many years of work in the field, were assets that could not be quickly regained and have proven invaluable later, during the War or right after it.

While contemporary Russian researchers claim that “In the pre-war period, the personnel and technical potential of the Soviet government agencies was significantly strengthened,”<sup>205</sup> a closer look might reveal a different understanding. Instead of being reinforced, the personnel and technical potential of Soviet government agencies were severely compromised by the policies and decisions implemented under Stalin's rule. If anything, the repressions put even

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<sup>201</sup> Irina Shirokorad, *Central'naya periodicheskaya pechat' SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941 - 1945 gg.* [The Central Periodical Press of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945.] (PhD dissertation, 2002), *disserCat*, <https://www.dissercat.com/content/tsentralnaya-periodicheskaya-pechat-sssr-v-gody-velikoi-otechestvennoi-voiny-1941-1945-gg> [accessed 17.04.2024].

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Journalism in general was not taught at many places, mostly at Communist Party schools or within the communist media. Michael Foley, *The Press and Democracy Building: Journalism Education and Training in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during Transition* (Dublin: Technological University Dublin, 2010), 56, <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=appamas> [accessed 03.04.2025].

<sup>204</sup> People working for the domestic news markets were also repressed. For instance, Nikolai Bukharin, the editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*, got shot in 1938.

<sup>205</sup> Gasyuk, *Vneshnepoliticheskaya propaganda SSSR*.

more pressure on the surviving cadres: aside from the mental strain of seeing everyone around you disappear, they had to perform more duties to replace the missing people. Right before the war, it was ordered that TASS's American offices switch into 24-hour operations, which was impossible for the staff to fulfill.<sup>206</sup> The legacy of such poor decisions continued to impact Soviet propaganda throughout the war years and into the post-war period. For instance, describing the pre-war operations of VOKS, Michael David-Fox says that "permanent features of VOKS international activities included delays, bumbling, execrable translations, lack of qualified cadres, and cultural misunderstandings of the outside world."<sup>207</sup> Interestingly, those attributes were intrinsic to international propaganda during the onset of the Cold War, too. The organizations continued to contend with inefficiency among their workforce, limited understanding of global affairs, poor linguistic abilities, and other related challenges.

Overall, the 1920s and 1930s were a time of exploration and the development of propaganda across various media. At that point, the Soviet state became a new entity with its own interests and objectives. Still, the Soviet leadership had to be careful with trying to spread propaganda, especially considering the status of the "Soviet experiment" globally. Yet the greatest perceived danger came from within: the Great Purge undermined the propaganda potential and destroyed all the previously achieved progress, which was needed right before World War II.

### 1.3. The War, Regular and Cold

The Second World War greatly enhanced the Soviet Union's ability to spread propaganda on a global scale – all eyes were on the Eastern Front.<sup>208</sup> Stalin and his circle paid the closest attention to the reporting, soon coming up with the plan on how the front and rear should learn about the latest events.<sup>209</sup> Aside from special military periodicals like *Krasnaya zvezda* [Red Star] informing the citizens, a completely different means was established. Already on June 24, 1941 – just two days after the German invasion of the USSR – the Sovinformburo, a

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<sup>206</sup> Malcolm L. G. Spencer, "Signals from Stalin: The Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union in the Midst of the Soviet-Finnish War, 1939–40," *Slovo* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 58, [https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1387980/1/Slovo\\_25\\_1\\_pp\\_48-64\\_Spencer.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1387980/1/Slovo_25_1_pp_48-64_Spencer.pdf) [accessed 04.12.2021].

<sup>207</sup> David-Fox, Showcasing the Great Experiment, 97.

<sup>208</sup> Of course, the war also took direct hits at the propaganda system, for instance, because of the closure or downsizing of many outlets. Many were not sustainable, given the shortage of paper, ink, and other materials in the wartime. Owen V. Johnson and Rashad Mammadov, "Russian Journalists and the 'Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union,'" *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 35, nos. 3–4 (2022): 358.

<sup>209</sup> Moreover, already in summer of 1941, a decree "On the Front Work of Special Correspondents" was issued. *Ibid*, 357.

new powerful propaganda channel, was founded.<sup>210</sup> Its main task was initially to compile reports for radio, newspapers, and magazines on the situation at the fronts, the work of the home front, and the partisan movement during the War.<sup>211</sup> The heightened interest led to operations in a complex dual performance: disseminating war reports and publishing articles depicting life in the USSR.<sup>212</sup> Propaganda synergy created an illusion of its effectiveness, and the military achievements only heightened the general interest in the Soviet Union. It was also engaged in information support of the USSR embassies and consulates abroad, foreign broadcasting corporations and radio stations, telegraph and newspaper agencies, societies of friends of the USSR, newspapers, and magazines of various directions. The organization enjoyed a significant range of activities, also thanks to its extensive staff, which numbered around 240 people in 1944.<sup>213</sup>

Due to war-related duties, many correspondents faced reassignments, and the central editorial offices, previously hit by the purges and employees with limited education, faced a critical shortage of experienced and skilled journalistic staff.<sup>214</sup> After all, a significant number of qualified cadres left were mobilized, sharply weakening, if not destroying, the established correspondent network.<sup>215</sup> Many had to write their reports from the little they could get from secondary sources, and the editors hundreds and thousands of kilometers away could not help the situation either.<sup>216</sup> The inexperienced correspondents were a threat in themselves: their lack of judgment and training could lead them to reveal secret information or simply portray

<sup>210</sup> The discussions of creating an agency that could function “in war circumstances” started at least in 1936. AVP RF f. 5, op. 16, p. 122, d. 107, ll. 28–45. Letter from K.A. Umansky, Adviser to the Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in the USA, to G.A. Astakhov, Head of the Press Department of the NKID of the USSR, with proposals to strengthen the informational influence of the USSR on the USA, October 19, 1936, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/71001> [accessed 06.05.2025]. Sovinformburo became one of the most significant propaganda channels. In 1944, a special bureau for propaganda to foreign countries was created within Sovinformburo. In the post-war period the information of the Bureau was disseminated through 1171 newspapers, 523 magazines and 18 radio stations in 23 countries, Soviet embassies abroad, friendship societies, trade union, women's, youth and scientific organizations.

<sup>211</sup> In this way, Sovinformburo familiarized readers and listeners with the struggle of the Soviet people against Nazism, as well as with the main directions of the Soviet Union's domestic and foreign policy.

<sup>212</sup> At this point, the Soviet officials did not fully grasp what was asked of them when they got requests for more information on the lifestyle of regular citizens, so the chiefs at that time were not willing to give what the foreign correspondents were asking for. Robert W. Desmond, *Tides of War: World News Reporting 1931–1945* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1984), 178.

<sup>213</sup> Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 354.

<sup>214</sup> Only some outlets were allowed to have correspondents at the front in the first place, namely, Sovinformburo, TASS, Radiocommittee, *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Krasnaya zvezda*. Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 358.

<sup>215</sup> Shirokorad, *Central'naya periodicheskaya pechat' SSSR*.

<sup>216</sup> Desmond, *Tides of War*, 112. Moreover, the candidates for the main newspapers also had to be approved through the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. Iakov I. Makarenko, *Stroki iz ognia: Rasskaz o pravdistakh voennykh let, o tekh kto delal gazetnykh, nakhodias' v Moskve, i o tekh kto byl voenkorom na frontakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi* [Lines from the fire: A story about the pravdisty of the war years, about those who made the newspaper while in Moscow, and about those who were military officers on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1985).

the country in an unfavorable light. Plus, their reportage in all parts of Europe was complicated by visas, logistics, and security concerns.<sup>217</sup> To compensate for this shortage of qualified journalists, the Soviet government had to employ various strategies to fill the ranks. First, local organizations were instructed to begin conducting training programs for journalists, which could be helpful at least in the early stages of the war.<sup>218</sup> This direction, however, was far from the administration's top priorities, so other measures had to be introduced. For instance, the officials sought to attract writers to work in newspapers and magazines. Ilya Ehrenburg, Boris Gorbатов, Konstantin Simonov, and Yevgeny Petrov quickly qualified as war correspondents.<sup>219</sup> The cadre hunger was so intense during the war that Lyudmila Chernaya, a Jewish woman, got her job at TASS even without filling out questionnaires and going to the Cadres Department, just being invited to the workplace the next day after the interview.<sup>220</sup> TASS for her was a simple choice since her mom has been working there for decades, and she could get food stamps for this work.<sup>221</sup> The liberty of “letting” women write on international topics was an exception for wartime sake: “As a young girl, I promptly broke into one of the protected zones – the zone of international journalists. But that was during the war years – the invisible fences, if they had not fallen then, then at any rate they had faltered and lost their impregnability. Besides, 1937 devastated this area like no other. Then I was kicked out of journalism.”<sup>222</sup> The era was soon over, and Chernaya “had to admit that my career as an international journalist is at an end.”<sup>223</sup>

Writing talent was not always the main requirement, as country expertise was also highly valued in a state of global war. Given the low number of country specialists, those could be picked out right from the frontline:

The USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs urgently needed young people with a good knowledge of France and the French language. There were still very few of them at that time, and they were sought even at the front. Georgii [Ratiani] was suddenly summoned to his military superiors:

— You were a graduate student at Leningrad University?

— Yes.

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<sup>217</sup> Desmond, *Tides of War*, 112.

<sup>218</sup> Yuri Zhukov, *Stroki, opalennye voynoi: Vospominaniia, Ocherki, Razmyshleniia* [Lines scorched by the war: Memoirs, Essays, Reflections] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1987).

<sup>219</sup> Moreover, they were actively used after the war: distinguished Soviet reporters/writers, including Polevoi, were in attendance at the Nuremberg Trials. Their presence at this widely-covered global event provided an opportunity to communicate the Soviet viewpoint on the global stage and was somewhat of a training ground, as it enabled Soviet journalists to connect with various global audiences, shaping the conversations about the importance of working together to promote global peace, a central point for the later, Thaw period. Desmond, *Tides of War*, 276.

<sup>220</sup> Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'*.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

— Studied France?

— Yes.

— You are immediately dispatched to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

— But...

— No buts. It's an order.<sup>224</sup>

This way, Georgii Ratiani ended up being a journalist, as he was urgently sent to the Soviet embassy in Algeria. The same happened to Enver Mamedov, a 20-year-old officer sent to serve in Italy as an attache with zero diplomatic education and experience, just the knowledge of foreign languages.<sup>225</sup> If he were to argue, he was “softly” threatened to be sent to a sawmill instead.<sup>226</sup>

In a way, the war was also a helpful hand for the development of Soviet journalism. The USSR had almost exclusive control over information due to the distance between the Eastern and Western fronts. The USSR's information monopoly let it control the narrative. The wartime was a convenient excuse for total censorship: even Western Moscow-based correspondents had to submit their writings to Soviet censors and did not really know what parts of their texts had actually reached their headquarters.<sup>227</sup> There were no alternative viewpoints on the Eastern front and on the USSR in general: Western correspondents could only follow the narrative told by their Soviet counterparts, and even the press conferences were more of a formality, repeating the same theses given by the Party.<sup>228</sup> Overall, such a lack of competition had its benefits but also posed difficulties for quality. Due to the absence of opposing views, there was little need for news, and reporting became careless, if not uninspired. Nevertheless, criticisms of Sovinformburo's materials were already present during the war itself,<sup>229</sup> including insistent demands to improve content and presentation for foreign audiences. Despite this writing on the wall, the problems persisted, remaining unresolved in 1942 and beyond, and organizational inertia hindered the implementation of changes.

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<sup>224</sup> Yuri Zhukov, *Zhurnalisty: Rasskazy o soldatah perednego kraia fronta ideologicheskoi bor'by* [Journalists: Stories about the soldiers of the frontline of the ideological struggle] (Moscow: Pravda, 1984), 250.

<sup>225</sup> Viktor Litovkin, “Nyurnberg vynes prigovor fashizmu” [Nuremberg has condemned fascism], Interview with Enver Mamedov, November 21, 2010, <https://world-war.ru/nyurnberg-vynes-prigovor-fashizmu/> [accessed 22.10.2024]. Mamedov confessed that his family was of aristocratic origin and he learned French, Italian, and German as a child. Additionally, he learned English in the army. See: “Mamedov Enver Nazimovich - pervyj zamestitel' predsedatelya Goskomiteta SSSR po televideniyu i radio, diplomat i zhurnalist” [Enver Mamedov, First Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio, diplomat and journalist], *ourbaku.com*, <https://tinyurl.com/yp6wj795> [accessed 28.07.2023].

<sup>226</sup> Litovkin, *Nyurnberg vynes prigovor fashizmu*.

<sup>227</sup> Dmitrii Nechiporuk, “To the Good of the Soviet Union: New York Times Moscow Correspondents during the Second World War,” *Journal of Russian American Studies* (2025): 1–22.

<sup>228</sup> R. B. Cockett, “‘In Wartime Every Objective Reporter Should Be Shot’: The Experience of British Press Correspondents in Moscow, 1941–45,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 3 (1988): 518.

<sup>229</sup> Tatyana Shishkova, *Vnezhdanovshchina*, 39.

Besides, the Soviet news organizations were extremely busy: as the Red Army advanced, a network of war correspondents for central newspapers, Sovinformburo, and TASS was hastily formed, “New locations began to be added: Helsinki, Bucharest, Sofia, Warsaw, Vienna, Berlin, Prague, and Budapest.”<sup>230</sup> Reporters also appeared in Copenhagen, Oslo, Rome, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ottawa, Algeria, Jakarta, Ulaanbaatar, Beijing, Tokyo, Pyongyang, and Hanoi.<sup>231</sup> Communication techniques with foreign correspondents were also improved and switched to two-way teletype communication.<sup>232</sup>

After the war, despite the devastating consequences in all areas of life, the Soviet media got into a surprisingly favorable position. TASS not only survived but also upgraded its infrastructure by capturing modern German communication equipment: it gave TASS a major technological edge.<sup>233</sup> Furthermore, the international news and how rapidly it was changing were key factors for the Soviet journalists. Havas, a French news agency that collaborated with the Nazis and that had previously had a major influence in Eastern Europe,<sup>234</sup> faced its downfall. Because of their work with Nazis, the agency lost its reputation, creating a gap in the Eastern region's news media. TASS saw the chance to take over the role previously held by Havas, cementing its position as the main news supplier in the area. Now, the state had to create its own network, an extremely competitive field in terms of speed and credibility. After all, with the onset of the Cold War, the state could no longer afford to receive American and British news – it had to write its own news, spread its own versions of global events, and do so fast. As Nikolai Palgunov later put it: “Any political news takes hold of the public opinion in the version that it first learned about. All subsequent versions will be perceived as either an attempt to evade the truth or to tweak or refute the already known version. More often than not, belated information is not published at all.”<sup>235</sup> Being the first to break the news meant this account would likely be referenced and used by smaller media outlets worldwide. Plus, other information markets were essentially taken over by the three agencies, the British

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<sup>230</sup> Palgunov, *Tridcat' let*, 275.

<sup>231</sup> With this, there was a new opportunity to increase the spy circle, “During the war, some TASS correspondents in France, Italy and Africa never cabled a line; they wore Red Army uniforms, were good mixers, busily gathered military intelligence. And in Ottawa there was Nikolai Zhevinov, who lasted until last September – shortly after Embassy Lode Clerk Igor Gouzenko tattled to the police about the spy ring. Then Zhevinov quietly returned to Russia.” “The Press: Tass,” *TIME*, July 29, 1946, <https://time.com/archive/6773412/the-press-tass/> [accessed 22.09.2024].

<sup>232</sup> It means that the news exchange was mutual: the USSR would share the news from its fronts, and the second country would send its news back. These types of exchanges were usually free of charge for both parties.

<sup>233</sup> Kruglak, *The Two Faces of TASS*, 12.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> Nikolai Palgunov, *Zametki ob informacii* [Notes about Information] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1967), 27.

Reuters, the American Associated Press, and the United Press.<sup>236</sup> The two main centers from which news spread around the world were now New York and London. Now, the Soviet media had to fight for the readership with other, more established global players. In those years, it was urgent to expand TASS's information volume and raise the agency as a whole to the level of the world's telegraph agencies. While it had previously been unimaginable due to news monopolies and established spheres of influence, the advent of new regimes and organizations created an ideal environment for Soviet international propaganda to step in.

The Soviets recognized the opportunity, set out to catch up with other countries, and wanted to reform the outdated system.<sup>237</sup> To address the nearly catastrophic state of TASS employees, the news agency was allowed to hire 40 more editorial staff due to increased workload. London and New York offices had to become the utmost priority, and new employees were sent there. In 1939, the American bureau of TASS switched to a round-the-clock schedule and had to expand the staff.<sup>238</sup> significantly. By the end of 1941, 20 correspondents and editors worked in New York and two in Washington. At the same time, the first TASS people from Moscow appeared in New York – Nikolai Zhiveynov, Boris Vronskii, Vasilii Parkhomenko, and Vladimir Pravdin.<sup>239</sup> The agency also received a helping hand with its material base: the Moscow Soviet of Ministers has given 5 apartments to workers returning from abroad.

On the other hand, people without the necessary qualifications were appointed to important positions, as those journalists did not speak foreign languages and were chosen despite their limited experience abroad. Nikolai Rogov, despite admitting in his questionnaire that he had poor Chinese skills, was appointed head of the TASS office in China. Moreover, in the recommendation for his candidacy, the deputy editor-in-chief wrote: “He is very useful for his excellent knowledge of Chinese life and Chinese spoken and written language.”<sup>240</sup> Nikolai Palgunov himself attested to the scarcity of specialists in the field at this time. In his memoirs, he emphasized the extreme importance of recruiting and training personnel during

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<sup>236</sup> Michael B. Palmer, *Agence France-Presse and Reuters, 1944–91: Beginnings and Renewal* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2020).

<sup>237</sup> I call it a system because many organizations were intertwined for propaganda production for foreign countries: TASS, Sovinformburo, central newspapers, Radio Committee, All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), International Section of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, Foreign Section of the Union of Soviet Writers, Lecture Bureau of the Ministry of Higher Education, Exportfilm, Publishing House of Foreign Literature (Inoizdat), International Book (Mezhkniga), Anti-fascist Committees (All-Slavonic, Soviet Women, Soviet Youth, Soviet Scientists).

<sup>238</sup> GA RF, f. 4459, op. 11, d. 1079, ll. 130–1 as quoted in Spencer, Signals from Stalin.

<sup>239</sup> Shamshin, SSHA otmechayut 90-letie.

<sup>240</sup> Aleksandr Kolpakidi, *Vse o vneshnei razvedke* [All About Foreign Intelligence] (Moscow: AST, 2002), 71.

wartime and the immediate post-war period.<sup>241</sup> However, he lamented the lack of journalists with expertise in international relations and foreign information, noting that they were few in number, and that those deemed unsuitable for employment at the telegraph agency were also few. Furthermore, Palgunov saw deficiencies among those who did possess foreign-language skills. First and foremost, many of them were not journalists. Some were capable of providing accurate translations, but their lack of journalistic training made their work plain and ineffective. Additionally, he claimed the potential candidates were simply too old for such work, as their age often precluded them from working late hours or traveling extensively, further limiting their utility in a field that demanded flexibility and mobility. That is, even if it had been possible to teach them journalistic skills. Thus, the post-war period in Soviet international news coverage revealed a substantial gap, if not a gaping hole, within the profession. While it still could operate under the conditions of military mobilization and an extreme centralization of all resources and people, once the war was over, this void was particularly noticeable. Thanks to the removal of experts with years of experience and extensive contacts abroad, the networks were disbanded, and their loss was a significant blow to the Soviet news apparatus.

Furthermore, despite the clear signs of irreparable damage to the international journalist apparatus of the prewar era, the repressions did not end in 1939 or even in 1941. For instance, Mikhail Korostovtsev was sent to Egypt as a TASS correspondent in 1944. In 1947, he was allegedly trying to escape to England but was caught, arrested, and brought back to the USSR. For an attempted bolt for freedom, he was sent to a labor camp for 25 years.<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, the post-war years were marked by a wave of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, which led to the dismissal of experts like Solomon Lozovsky simply because they were Jewish.<sup>243</sup> Another victim of the repressions was previously mentioned, Mikhail Borodin (Gruzenberg).<sup>244</sup> He was the deputy director of TASS and served as the editor-in-chief of the English-language newspaper “Moscow News.” Later, he became the editor-in-chief of Sovinformburo. However, in 1949, during the campaign against

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<sup>241</sup> Palgunov, *Tridcat' let*, 271.

<sup>242</sup> “Korostovcev Mihail Aleksandrovich,” *SPBIIIRAN*, <http://www.spbiiran.nw.ru/korostovzev-m-a/> [accessed 25.01.2024].

<sup>243</sup> Lozovsky was the head of Sovinformburo from 1945 until 1948, he was shot in 1952. Six, *The Party Nobility*, 169.

<sup>244</sup> A short story about him was written by Leo Gruliow. He described the start of the newspaper, hindrance by censorship and Soviet bureaucracy, and the atmosphere during the purges. Working for a Soviet newspaper in the Stalinist era. US journalist remembers time as a staff member of Moscow News. Leo Gruliow, “Working for a Soviet newspaper in the Stalinist era. US journalist remembers time as a staff member of Moscow News”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 25.11.1987, <https://www.csmonitor.com/1987/1125/onevs.html> [accessed 29.03.2023].

“cosmopolitans,” Borodin himself, the man who tried to justify the purges to his American employees at “Moscow News” a decade prior, was arrested and later died in prison. His son, Norman Borodin, also worked for foreign coverage as an English correspondent for the “Moscow News.” In 1949, by association with his father, Norman was arrested and sent into exile in Karaganda, Kazakh Soviet Republic. Norman Borodin survived his father and his own exile, was later rehabilitated in the 1950s, and even returned to his career, working at the *Novosti* Press Agency. Another prominent *mezhdunarodnik*, Enver Mamedov, instrumental in the war efforts, survived his father, Nazim Mamedov, who was falsely accused and shot in 1949.

Needless to say, a serious imprint of repressions was left on many, and those who survived were still scarred for life. One of the early *mezhdunarodniki*, Mikhail Galaktionov, also became a victim, although he was never arrested or repressed. He had a high standing after the war, joining the first-ever group of political observers at *Pravda*, but the constant fear and the need to look over his shoulder took a severe toll on him. As Ilya Ehrenburg recalled, “Now they write a lot and talk even more about the victims of the ‘cult of personality,’ remember those who were shot and died in the camps. Mikhail Romanovich was never arrested; he was only waiting to be arrested.”<sup>245</sup> Galaktionov was deeply affected by the “Yezhovshchina” period of repressions.<sup>246</sup> He vividly remembered being called a “coward,” a “sycophant,” and a “hypocrite” during meetings, which left him anxiously listening for noise on the stairs at night. Ehrenburg later noted that the post-war trip to America and Canada only worsened Galaktionov’s paranoia, leading to his decline.<sup>247</sup> Galaktionov struggled with the conversations with American journalists, sensing their fake politeness, and those days were particularly tormenting for him. Overwhelmed by his deteriorating mental state, Galaktionov tragically took his own life after that assignment. This not only stripped the profession of seasoned workers but also underscored the discriminatory nature of these purges. The loss of experts like Lozovsky or Galaktionov, who had survived wartime turmoil and earlier political repression, further exacerbated the shortage of experienced international journalists.

Unsurprisingly, the constant paranoia and cleansing did not fix the cadre shortage. No amount of checks were enough, and even surviving several waves of purges did not guarantee passing the next check: “Even though six or seven years have passed since many employees of the foreign information editorial office were allowed to work with classified correspondence, the

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<sup>245</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, *Lyudi, gody, zhizn'* [People, years, life], Vol. 3, (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), 69, [https://imwerden.de/pdf/erenburg\\_lyudi\\_gody\\_zhizn\\_tom1\\_1990\\_text.pdf](https://imwerden.de/pdf/erenburg_lyudi_gody_zhizn_tom1_1990_text.pdf) [accessed 06.05.2024].

<sup>246</sup> Yezhovshchina refers to the height of repressions in 1937-1938 with Nikolai Yezhov as the head of the NKVD.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 70.

TASS management did not take measures to double-check the possibility of using them to work with classified materials until January of this year.”<sup>248</sup> Hence, the reality was that TASS had to work with what it was left with: its foreign editorial departments had only a few Party members in their rows (for example, in English – 1 out of 6, in German – 1 out of 5).<sup>249</sup> The editorial office of foreign information employed people with an anti-party past, for example, Kotsyn, who was expelled from the Party twice. In regional offices, there were people with immoral behavior, cases of fraud, extortion, and abuse. In the view of Soviet authorities, all of this was possible due to the lack of supervision: until 1949, TASS correspondents did not report on their work, and there was virtually no control over foreign correspondents.<sup>250</sup> The brain drain was also significant: young people who had graduated from the Higher Diplomatic School and MGIMO were leaving TASS due to a lack of prospects and support. In contrast, cadres with some experience were poorly supported by management, even though they were especially valuable upon their return from their trips. By 1950, the problems with personnel in the TASS system had become systemic and acute. The main issues were the lack of politically reliable, professionally trained staff; weak leadership; a vague control structure; a formal approach to criticism; and an inability to retain and develop staff. The successful work of TASS, both domestically and abroad, would have been impossible without a decisive revision of questionable personnel, strengthening Party influence, restructuring the personnel management system, and investing in training new specialists.

## Conclusions

The Soviet state underwent significant transformations over the decades following the Russian Revolution and the Civil War, with multiple ruptures in the social fabric and rapid shifts in political course in the 1920s and 1930s. First, the country was in complete disarray. The borders were unclear, and the imperial infrastructure largely ceased to exist. The wars, the First World War and the Civil War, had devastated the economy and population. The Bolsheviks faced the challenge of consolidating power in a nation torn by years of conflict, famine, and economic collapse. On top of that, the 1920s saw the Soviet state transitioning to a more stable, albeit experimental, phase. Old cadres with experience were often rejected for their social origins, and new ones were hard to get. Professional education for journalists was

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<sup>248</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 122, ll. 175–81. A memo from the agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov about the personnel of TASS. 23.03.1950, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69797> [accessed 06.11.2021].

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> They started sending reports on their activity every 6 months.

introduced, raising the cadres for the new era. During the early Soviet period, foreign correspondents played a key role in promoting the idea that international cooperation among communist parties was essential for the survival and expansion of the Soviet state. Slowly but surely, their ranks were growing, though not always through formal education but through practical knowledge and by being stationed abroad without knowledge of the local language or diplomatic etiquette.

The 1930s saw a dramatic shift under Joseph Stalin's leadership. This period was characterized by a rapid transformation of the state, often at great human cost. With that, the position of the foreign correspondents began to change, as Joseph Stalin consolidated power. During the Great Purge of the late 1930s, millions of people were executed, imprisoned, or exiled to labor camps, including journalists who popularized the regime. On the other hand, the era demanded skilled personnel, as institutions quickly began to disintegrate. The repressions had decimated a generation of experienced journalists and diplomats, creating a vacuum that was increasingly difficult to fill. The “cleansed” cadres, in the context of the upcoming Cold War, diminished the USSR's chances of successful propaganda. Few seasoned journalists survived, and even fewer could mentor the newcomers. Because of this, the postwar period felt like a new chapter in journalistic development. Despite having two decades to build the foundation for international propaganda, the system had left the field almost empty, yet again. It was at the onset of the Cold War that the full impact of the cadre disaster became so evident. The Soviet Union's ambitions grew significantly, and so did the insatiable hunger for the cadres.

Last but not least, the postwar window of opportunity for Soviet propaganda was truly unique and had to be seized. By the end of Stalin's life, the market already belonged to radically different players than it did just 20 years prior. The 1954 UNESCO's “Freedom of Information” issue stated the existence of the “big six” world telegraph agencies: Associated Press, United Press, International News Service, Reuters, TASS, France-Presse.<sup>251</sup> Moreover, 1953 was marked by the foundation of the United States Information Agency – essentially an American internationally-oriented organization, dedicated to combating the Soviet Union in the field of cultural diplomacy.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> “‘Big Six’ of the Agencies,” *The Courier*, no. 3 (1954): 11, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000069904/PDF/069904eng.pdf.multi> [accessed 02.07.2023].

<sup>252</sup> More on this in: Wilson P. Dizard Jr., *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004).

## Chapter 2: Pillars of Change: Refinement over Time

Multiple turning points altered the course of Soviet journalism. The breakdown of global news syndicates, repression, and the war were undeniably setting the stage for change and provoking tectonic shifts in how Soviet journalists worked. The proximity of all those events within a single decade attests to the system's resilience and its willingness to adapt and survive. The start of the Cold War was a natural continuation of shake-ups. Some of those shifts were more state-induced, while others were unexpected consequences of preplanned reforms. The changes led to a growing disconnect between Soviet perceptions and the new international reality. Given how few journalists, among others, could go abroad, it is not surprising that the USSR's knowledge was outdated. Often, Soviet actions were driven by inertia rather than by a nuanced understanding of the changing world.

Furthermore, with the start of World War II and then the Cold War, Soviet journalists acquired another audience, even larger than that at home – they, too, had to enlighten foreign readers. It was not a simple task, since that audience had a rather vague understanding of the USSR. The researchers often write about the low level of knowledge about the outside world among the Soviet populace. Still, the statement is equally true for the outsiders and their understanding of the USSR. Given the years of self-imposed Soviet isolation, as well as the fears of other states' governments of the “red menace,”<sup>253</sup> a vacuum was created around the information on the USSR. The image of the Soviet state was usually shaped by stereotypes and misconceptions, leading to a simplistic image of the USSR.<sup>254</sup> Soviet journalists had to fight those negative messages and take into account the general levels of ignorance about their state.<sup>255</sup> Vladimir Silantiev recalled the following exchange:

As a correspondent for *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I met with English schoolchildren and students in London. It is hard to keep from smiling when you hear such questions.<sup>256</sup>

- Are you really Russian?

- Yes.

- Why are your eyes not like those of Mongols? You look European.

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<sup>253</sup> By red menace they meant a fear of being overthrown by a communist government.

<sup>254</sup> Rosa Magnúsdóttir wrote about the switch from the USSR being comfortable with presenting an alternative modernity in the 1920s and the 1930s to the “explaining” socialism to foreign (and even domestic) audiences in late Stalinism. Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One*, 4.

<sup>255</sup> Of course, it was not just the job of the Soviet correspondents to tell the world about the USSR. There were journalists from other countries who were stationed in Moscow and covered the local realities. Moreover, this assignment was especially prestigious and was considered to be fit for the most skillful journalists. See: Rosa Magnúsdóttir, “Cold War Correspondents and the Possibilities of Convergence: American Journalists in the Soviet Union, 1968–1979,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 41 (2014): 33–56.

<sup>256</sup> Vladimir Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR: Vsyudu Vseennuyu ya ob'ekhal* [The same age as the USSR: I've travelled across the universe] (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 2020), *litres*, <https://www.litres.ru/book/vladimir-ivanovich-silantev/rovesnik-sssr-vsudu-vseennuu-ya-obehal-58143534/chitat-onlayn/?page=24> [accessed 17.06.2024].

- Almost half of Europe is in the Soviet Union!
- Really? But you write from right to left like all Asians, don't you?

Even on the official level, as Stanislav Kondrashov recalled, “At a reception in Syria, the orchestra played ‘Ochi chernye’ [Dark Eyes – Russian romance song from the 1840s – M.Z.] as the Soviet anthem. The Syrians knew little about the USSR at the time.”<sup>257</sup> While it does sound comedic, it illustrates how little was known about the country to the point of obscurity of not knowing the state symbols. The front of work ahead of Soviet correspondents can be explained in two ways: with more journalists stationed abroad, the Soviet leadership had a chance not only to learn more about the outside world but also to tell the world about the USSR.

Thus, this chapter explores the newly introduced changes, modest and sizable, the effects they had on journalism, as well as the dynamics in the institutional background in which journalists operated. Moreover, the context provides a better understanding of the field the journalists had to play in, with its contradictions, breakthroughs, and setbacks. After all, while the end of the previous era was crucial, it did not necessarily mean the transformation of the root causes of many issues. The epochal changes in Soviet elite formation, the way of thinking about the world beyond Soviet borders, and the institutional dynamics post-Stalin’s death are all highlighted here. These three components shaped the playing field of *mezhdunarodniki*, predetermining the successes and failures of their professionalization and work.

## 2.1. The World of Nuance

“Before taking up the pen, the correspondent should clearly imagine for whom, for the readers of which country he intends to write.”<sup>258</sup>

For decades, the attitude toward foreign audiences in the USSR was ambiguous. Normally, the Soviet journalists did not give much thought to it and imagined their foreign reader as someone who, “at best, knows little about the Soviet Union, and, at worst, is misinformed.”<sup>259</sup> The Soviet officials were aware that their propaganda was not a good fit for global markets, yet they deemed it impossible to do anything about it. Discussions and debates concluded

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<sup>257</sup> Stanislav Kondrashov, “Ya otkazalsya pisat' o vvode voisk v Chehoslovakiyu i Afganistan” [I refused to write about the deployment of troops to Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan], *iz.ru*, <https://iz.ru/news/285324> [accessed 06.08.2023].

<sup>258</sup> Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Obzor informacii TASS dlya zagranicy* [Overview of TASS information for foreign countries] (Moscow: Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza TASS, 1956), 6.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 13.

with the same: “We must conclude that the information market has reached such a high degree of monopolization everywhere that even with significant investment, it will be impossible for a new agency to break into the mainstream press.”<sup>260</sup> Soviet journalists were somewhat content with the state of the art and made no major attempts to penetrate the Western press, despite their partial awareness of it.

There were many reasons for the USSR's propaganda failures in global news markets. For once, purges and the constant influx of new journalists did not improve the state of propaganda. The newcomers were not allowed abroad; they had no practical experience; hence, their skills were raw and unfit, their approach was lackluster, and their messages were generic. After all, without knowledge of states abroad, they focused not on the receiver but on the sender.<sup>261</sup> Their humble beginnings were to blame: they were not aware of foreign realities, of diplomatic etiquette in the international press, of the necessity of explaining seemingly obvious details to a new reader, or of simply adjusting to local media habits. Their linguistic skills often left much to be desired: without much practice abroad, they could get by in foreign countries but could not write elaborate texts that would satisfy native speakers. Thus, they could not fully know what they were facing. For decades, it was nearly impossible to learn anything about the foreign audience.<sup>262</sup> Journalists networked with one another, exchanged letters, and improvised, but did not know for sure whether their efforts were successful or of any interest to their foreign readers. Plus, the previous decades were the times of facing “outside” on the inside – through foreign tourists visiting the country, while the post-war period accelerated the accumulation of knowledge abroad.<sup>263</sup> So, there was one significant flaw in the counter-propaganda work of the time, as the *mezhdunarodniki* could not get any “feedback” on the efficiency of their work. Even to improve their performance, listening to “enemy propaganda” was strictly forbidden. Soviet citizens turned in their shortwave receivers in the very first days of the war, so they had almost no access to the response to their propaganda on the receiving end. Lyudmila Chernaya called it “writing to

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<sup>260</sup> AVP RF, f. 5, op. 16, p. 122, d. 107, ll. 28-46. Letter from K.A. Umansky to G.A. Astakhov with proposals to strengthen the USSR's informational influence on the USA, 19 October, 1936, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <http://alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/71001> [accessed 15.09.2024].

<sup>261</sup> Without a specialization, Soviet journalists were keen on telling the story of the USSR first. Promoting the Soviet Union's path, while intriguing to certain audiences, lacked relatability and universality: the Soviet domestic policies, ideological debates, and economic achievements held limited relevance for audiences outside the Soviet state.

<sup>262</sup> The ones who did understand the difference in reading habits of the foreigners were gems and worked long hours in multiple outlets. Famous writer/journalist Yevgeny Petrov had to write for *Izvestia* and *Krasnaya Zvezda* with his military coverage, as he was one of the few who had actually been to America. Ilya Ehrenburg, *Memoirs*, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/772433> [accessed 21.02.2024].

<sup>263</sup> David-Fox, Showcasing Great Experiment.

nowhere, into the abyss” [v moloko].<sup>264</sup> Factually, they could not know, to any extent, how successful or unsuccessful their attempts were.

The war brought a paradigm shift toward greater efficiency and rapid reorganization. As journalists gained opportunities to travel abroad, they realized not only that this was the chance to enter new markets, but also that the foreign audience was vastly different from that in their home country. From then on, the Soviet news officials were well aware that now they stood a chance, although they still had to compete for attention and that their information existed not in a vacuum, but in the pre-established markets:

...outside our country, Soviet information collides with foreign information, must compete with it in the brightness of content, sharpness of form, conciseness, accessibility to the reader's understanding, accustomed to certain information standards.<sup>265</sup>

Therefore, the more journalists were abroad, the more alarming reports they sent back to Moscow, triggering change. The Soviet press took a course for a significant formalization and bureaucratization,<sup>266</sup> introducing hierarchical systems of authority and decision-making.<sup>267</sup> These bureaucratic mechanisms were designed to enhance efficiency, accountability, and coordination within the press apparatus. Already in September 1945, the “Resolution of the Organizing Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) ‘On Improving Soviet Propaganda Abroad’” was published.<sup>268</sup> It acknowledged the shortcomings of the international propaganda system and urged the changes. The following year, September and October were busy months for reforming the system, and the resolution of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee “On The Work of the Soviet Information Bureau” was

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<sup>264</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, *Osveshchenie faktov v informacii (o soyuznoi informacii TASS dlya zagranicy)*, (Moskva: TASS OIDZ, 1958), 9.

<sup>266</sup> Françoise Daucé, “Military Journalists and War Correspondents From the USSR to Russia: Subjectivity Under Fire,” *Military Journalism in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*, Issue 16 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.4000/pipss.4121> [accessed 19.03.2022].

<sup>267</sup> The Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party was put in charge of overseeing the activities of TASS, Sovinformburo, and other internationally-oriented organizations. It also needed to consult and coordinate its activities with the help sent back of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the Council for the Management of Propaganda of Soviet Organizations Abroad and Coverage of International Events in the Soviet Press was established and was supposed to direct the reforms of propaganda. RGASPI, f. 77, op. 4, d. 16, ll. 55–63. Draft resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) ‘On the coverage of foreign policy issues in the Soviet press and on Soviet propaganda abroad,’ August 13, 1946, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69294> [accessed: 12.01.2022]; Ibid, f. 17, op. 125, d. 155, l. 17. Draft resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On the Council for the management of international propaganda in foreign countries and the coverage of international events in the Soviet press”, August 8, 1946, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69292> [accessed: 12.01.2022].

<sup>268</sup> Ibid, d. 317, l. 1. Resolution of the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “on improving Soviet propaganda abroad”, September 29, 1945, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69228> [accessed: 12.01.2022].

published.<sup>269</sup> This decree deemed Sovinformburo inadequate for its goals, as it did not pay “enough attention to the main loci of anti-Soviet propaganda (U.S., England)”.<sup>270</sup> Second, Sovinformburo was accused of taking a predominantly defensive, passive position in foreign propaganda,<sup>271</sup> the opposite of what the Party was wishing for – aggressive and preemptive dissemination of Soviet information abroad. The same could be said of the complete dissatisfaction with the agency's “overblown” staff. The decree attacked the employees and called them unfit for the job:

Most employees at Sovinformburo lack the necessary qualifications. Most of the heads of departments and editors of the Sovinformburo do not know about the economics, politics, and culture of the countries for which they prepare propaganda materials; they have insufficient political training, literary and editorial skills, and are unable to conduct the business of Soviet propaganda abroad.<sup>272</sup>

Even *Pravda*, the main Soviet newspaper, got its fair share of criticism, especially regarding its international traction.<sup>273</sup> *Pravda* was accused of something that any Soviet newspaper was doing – the lack of initiative, mostly limited to the reprinting of what TASS had supplied.<sup>274</sup> From that point on, the newspaper was ordered to expand its network and have correspondents permanently stationed in the USA, England, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Japan, China, and India.

Those initial steps were not enough, as shown by a 1946 report by Semyon Rostovsky (Ernst Henry), long-time correspondent in London, who criticized Soviet propaganda on British soil.<sup>275</sup> In his opinion, the USSR's efforts failed to differentiate between Soviet and foreign readers, maintaining a uniform format that did not cater to the specific preferences of local

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid, op. 3, d. 1059, ll. 90–3. From the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) ‘On measures to improve the newspaper Pravda,’ August 2, 1946, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69291> [accessed 12.01.2022].

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, d. 1062, ll. 34–7. Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) ‘On the work of the Council of Information Bureaus,’ October 9, 1946, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69314> [Accessed 12.01.2022]. At the very same time, the Americans were also trying to reform their education. One of the first steps of the American administration at the beginning of the Cold War was to pass the Foreign Service Act, creating conditions for training of cadres involved in foreign affairs, where they were asked to learn foreign languages and get acquainted with the host countries. Prior to that, the American Foreign Service paid far less attention to linguistic capabilities, although World War II was a perfect launching pad for mass training in foreign languages. Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, “Notes in the History of Intercultural Communication: The Foreign Service Institute and the Mandate for Intercultural Training,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76, no. 3 (1990): 264–265.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, d. 17, op. 3, d. 1062, ll. 34–7. Resolution of the Politburo.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, f. 1059, ll. 90–3. From the Resolution of the Politburo.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> RSASPH, f. 17, inv. 128, fold. 1006, file 219, ll. 188–220. From the report by the representative of the Soviet Information Bureau in Great Britain, S.N. Rostovsky, ‘On the status of Soviet propaganda in Britain’ to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b), 18 December, 1946, *LSE Home*, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents> [accessed 27.11.2024].

audiences.<sup>276</sup> Rostovsky noted a shortage of young, talented journalists capable of writing for foreign audiences, and Soviet propaganda often fell flat as a result. A talented propagandist needed to be prepared in the same way as diplomats and foreign trade professionals were trained: they needed to understand the country and clearly express what their homeland had to say. So, ideologically, the content had to be Soviet. Still, technically, it had to be presented in a format that was understandable and familiar to foreign readers, given their current stage of development and specific circumstances. It was the primary skill for any international journalist: delivering Soviet content in a foreign format.<sup>277</sup> If this basic principle were neglected or poorly executed, no amount of information, financial resources, labor, energy, or ideological pressure could be effective. This report perfectly set the tone for the decade, full of attempts at change and reform to reach foreign audiences.

Thus, the attempts to meet the demands of the audiences, not knowing it, were not cutting it. Wandering in the dark, the journalists could only do so much. Through their experience traveling abroad, journalists learned that the world is diverse and complex. In fact, trips abroad were eye-opening, allowing the Soviet Union to re-evaluate its knowledge of the world and recalibrate its tactics. Thus, the Cold War was simultaneously an obstacle and an accelerator for knowledge production and accumulation – an interplay between secrecy, competition, and the growing need for concrete data. Like weeds, Soviet news sprouted up in different areas of the globe despite internal pressures and external obstacles.

The key concept of that time became *napravleniya informatsia* [directed information],<sup>278</sup> meaning that journalists had to adjust their texts to the local conditions, habits, and culture. In essence, they had to invent ways to present themselves to outsiders, aiming to increase the relatability and appeal of their propaganda. However, a long way of discussions, arguments, and endless checks was needed to come to such a realization. Most importantly, the lack of knowledge about the countries where materials were sent was finally realized and admitted, “Sovinformburo has no plan of propaganda and information work for various countries; departments and editors of the bureau, when preparing and sending materials abroad, do not take into account the peculiarities of individual countries and the demands of foreign

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<sup>276</sup> Rostovsky also criticized the technical and operational aspects of Soviet propaganda, including the use of outdated equipment and the poor quality of translations. Moreover, Rostovsky pointed out the lack of communication and coordination between the London and Moscow offices, as well as the poor state of the London office, which was ill-equipped to handle its responsibilities and support the broader Soviet propaganda efforts. One of the central themes was the pressing need for new specialists and a reserve of capable personnel within the current management. Naturally, those people had to possess a strong command of the foreign language and demonstrate genuine adaptability to foreign environments.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), *Obzor informacii TASS dlya zagranicy*, 6–7.

readers.”<sup>279</sup> Despite endless inspections, it was still impossible to evaluate the efficiency of Soviet news agencies. In fact, the news chiefs themselves did not have accurate information about their organization’s performance: foreign publications often did not report on whether they had received and published articles sourced from the Soviets. Employees of the USSR embassies also did not always have time to track publications in local news,<sup>280</sup> and correspondents abroad were not much help either. As Solomon Lozovsky admitted, “I cannot provide exact numbers of how much we published or didn’t publish because no one is keeping records of it yet.”<sup>281</sup>

So, in 1948, TASS and Sovinformburo established methods of tracking down *pechataemost’* [printability] – establishing a number of citations or references to information provided by the Soviets.<sup>282</sup> From that time, foreign correspondents read local news outlets daily and summarized their content, the types of material published, and reactions to the Soviet Union’s policies and statements. Furthermore, they collected requests and proposals from the local press on demand, whether for certain aspects of Soviet life or other topics of interest. Those reports were instrumental in planning counter-propaganda, too, as they could include what needed to be rebutted and which claims were falsified. The journalists’ summaries were not uniform in form or volume, and they varied widely in how often they were submitted and in the details they included. The main point of this practice was to measure the efficiency of Soviet media abroad. Yet, for several countries, the printability was not clear (Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Iran, the Netherlands, Latin America) or was poorly studied (Australia, Egypt, China, etc.) due to the lack of specialists who spoke local languages or who had access to local press.<sup>283</sup> The journalists’ synopses included many important details that could better tailor propaganda: topics that might interest a local audience, their reading habits, and other relevant details they noticed. For that reason, there was a wide array of techniques to

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<sup>279</sup> The critique was followed by suggestions on what could be done to improve Sovinformburo’s performance abroad, with the main point of redirecting its focus on the dissemination of positive information about the USSR and the countries of people’s democracy, as well as the exposure of imperialist and reactionary propaganda abroad. RGASPI, d. 17, op. 3, d. 1062, ll. 34-37. Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) "On the work of the Council of Information Bureaus" 09 October, 1946, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69314> [accessed 12.01.2022].

<sup>280</sup> As part of such an analysis, embassy workers also sent their press summaries to the Foreign Ministry’s Press Department.

<sup>281</sup> It can also be explained by the method of work of Sovinformburo: they did not have much “original material” (although they published two newspapers in English and French, but mostly fulfilled the requests of other news outlets for specific questions and problems).

<sup>282</sup> It appears that some correspondents still tried to read foreign newspapers in countries where they were stationed. Palgunov, being a TASS correspondent in Finland in 1932-1935, recalled that there were 200 newspapers, so it was very hard to read all of them. Palgunov, *Tridcat’ let*, 99.

<sup>283</sup> GA RF, f. R-4459, op. 39, d. 25, ll. 169–72. Suggestions for Improving the Work of TASS, M. Basharin, 29 December, 1953.

influence foreign countries. Soviet propagandists used diverse media channels, including print, radio, cinema, and art, transcending literacy barriers.<sup>284</sup> For instance, the radio was perfect for nations with lower literacy levels, who could not read but could listen to Soviet ideas.

Moreover, to help and adjust to local conditions, the so-called thematic plan [tematicheskii plan] was developed. Those plans were the backbone for shaping and guiding the content that reached a global audience, and they were sometimes written months before the actual publication. Thematic plans covered “predictable” events, such as regular annual meetings, anniversaries, or state-imposed policies that were well known in advance. Such texts were easier to write (there was no rush for it), and because of it, were more sophisticated and more thought-out. However, thematic plans for foreign distribution often fell short of addressing the unique characteristics of countries. For instance, materials like “In a Russian Village in Winter” were not universal.<sup>285</sup> While this topic could be of interest to readers, its presentation had to make sense. So, for African and Indonesian readers, it was crucial to provide context and explanation that makes this text relevant to their experiences. Similarly, when it came to photo series like “Forestry Farms in Karelia,” it was evident that such visuals would be better suited for Scandinavian countries, where forestry farms were more common. However, for readers in Korea, forestry farms in the Far East of the USSR could make more sense. Tailoring thematic plans ensured the maximization of impact and the progressive understanding of the diverse global readership.

Furthermore, deepened knowledge of foreign states enabled the Soviets to organize and systematize it. The Soviet organizations had to follow and regularly update the list of countries that were considered either allies or “main capitalist countries.”<sup>286</sup> Those lists included a range of nations with different geopolitical significance, economic influence, and political dynamics. What is more important, this list showed the imaginary geography of friendly countries and enemies, with different methods of work, respectively. For instance, amid the Eastern Bloc's expansion, Soviet journalists saw an opportunity to showcase the path to socialism. The Soviet way was portrayed as the definitive approach, with collective farms, norms, and lessons from the Soviet model. According to one of the press plans, it was “important to extend the coverage of agricultural matters, focusing on the distinctive

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<sup>284</sup> In fact, radio quickly became one of the main competitors, if not threats, to printed materials.

<sup>285</sup> GA RF, f. 9518, op. 1, d. 17. Letter from Yuri Zhukov to Kislova L. D. (SSOD). 12 November, 1958.

<sup>286</sup> This list included such countries as India, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Burma, Indonesia, Japan, the United States, England, France, Italy, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Scandinavian countries, and Latin American countries, underscored the global scope of TASS's reporting. *Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (TASS), Obzor informacii TASS dlya zagranicy*, 20.

characteristics of Hungary, such as the development of collective farming, the daily activities and lifestyles of collective farmers, and the cultural aspects of rural life.”<sup>287</sup> Soviet journalists were tasked with praising the Soviet experience while also taking into account the unique circumstances of other nations. Due to the geographic proximity, the neighboring republics were of special interest:

Taking into account the demands of Polish readers, the editorial board should cover more widely the life of all republics of the Soviet Union and, first of all, the blossoming of Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. ... to propose to the editorial board of the journal ‘Kraj Rad’ to replenish the staff with the prominent party and public figures, scientists, writers, and qualified journalists.<sup>288</sup>

Aside from their own initiative, Soviet correspondents on the ground gathered submissions from the locals. These submissions were then relayed to central offices in Moscow. The inclusion of such perspectives helped meet local demands and was integrated into the publications’ plans. APN, after overtaking Sovinformburo’s network in FRG, had to:

[...] improve the planning of the magazine. In the perspective plans for individual issues, take into account the interests and wishes of FRG readers as much as possible. For this purpose, the representative of the APN in FRG, comrade N.T. Bukhtiarov, should be obliged to regularly send to Moscow thematic requests, readers’ inquiries, and specific elaborations of especially important topics.<sup>289</sup>

When commenting on other thematic plans, Yuri Zhukov, as the head of GKKS, also advised targeting the migrant groups with their specific interests and backgrounds.<sup>290</sup> Thus, he pointed out the role of expatriate communities, given their global reach and influence. Plus, they could play an important role in maintaining diplomatic ties through cultural and family ties. The suggested “Ukraine in Seven Years Plan” photo essay for distribution in Canada and “Lithuanian SSR in Seven Years Plan” materials for Latin American countries are examples of such strategic messaging.<sup>291</sup> Given the large numbers of Ukrainians in Canada and Lithuanians in Latin America, the Soviet press was hoping to counter any negative perceptions the expatriates may have held. Yet most of those ideas were difficult to implement due to a lack of qualified personnel, even in the later years.

Further, the year 1950 brought yet another examination, this time of TASS and its staff.<sup>292</sup> Its employees were called politically unreliable because of the small percentage of Party

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<sup>287</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 1, l. 2. Protocol № 1 of the APN Ruling Committee, 5–14 September, 1961.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, l. 14. ‘Kraj Rad’ was a Soviet publication, prepared by Sovinfomburo, later APN, intended for Poland. It was supposed to educate the Polish populace on the Soviet experience of building communism and everyday life.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, d. 1. Protocol № 5, 22 September, 1961.

<sup>290</sup> GA RF, f. 9518, op. 1, d. 17. Letter to the SOD Deputy N. V. Popova, 6 February, 1959.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 122, ll. 175–81. A memo from the agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov about TASS personnel, March 23, 1950, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69797> [accessed 10.01.2023].

members, as well as due to some criminal investigations into its workers in the late 1940s. A chronic shortage of cadres was also noted: while TASS was supposed to have 90 editorial workers abroad, it actually had only 63. Positions in some countries were vacant for years: such important posts as the head of TASS office in England, France, China, and Canada were vacant for 2–4 years, while the deputy heads were absent in England, the USA, China, and Japan, sometimes for as long as six years. Moreover, there were no TASS correspondents in Argentina, Afghanistan, Hungary, Iraq, Indonesia, China, Germany, Czechoslovakia, or Uruguay. To make matters worse, of the 110 TASS technical staff abroad (translators, radio operators, typists), only 18 people were Soviet citizens. The rest were local citizens, whose candidacies were coordinated with the embassy or consulate of the USSR in a particular country before accepting them for a job in the TASS offices.<sup>293</sup> Moreover, the percentage of Soviet workers in foreign offices was particularly low at the most important centers: the United States and England accounted for the largest number of occupied positions by non-Soviet citizens. For example, the New York branch of TASS employed 17 non-Soviet citizens out of 27 employees (16 members of the Communist Party of the USA and 1 non-partisan recommended by members of the Communist Party of the USA), the London branch of TASS employed 4 Soviet citizens, 4 foreign citizens (three members of the Communist Party of England), and 3 positions were vacant. The staff of the TASS London office of the information bulletin “Soviet Monitor,” numbering 31 people, consisted entirely of foreign citizens. It was a necessary measure, with all the people purged: there was no one to replace the undesired foreigners who formed an overwhelming majority among the technical staff of news bureaus abroad. Those of Soviet origin also did not meet the strict criteria for international workers: their materials were poorly written, and their behavior left much to be desired (to the extent that they were expelled from the Party upon returning to the USSR). TASS was also accused of a lack of persistence in attracting recent graduates from the Higher Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Moscow Institute of International Relations.<sup>294</sup>

The evaluation of the successes of many internationally-oriented organizations was very unfavorable year after year, with criticism on all levels.<sup>295</sup> In yet another resolution in 1952,

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> The highest-ranking staff were not receptive to critique: executive editor Yakobson was unable to cope with his duties, the director Palgunov did not engage in systematic work with personnel, and the Deputy for Personnel, Seliverstov, was passive and detached from the departments. These systematic troubles with employees led, in their turn, to constant delay of news to the point that TASS has failed to deliver news in the desired 30-minute time frame (after the event happened) on most occasions.

<sup>295</sup> For instance, the performance of the “International Book” [Mezhdunarodnaya kniga], for instance, was heavily questioned, given its lack of strategic direction. One of the main points of criticism was reliance on

the Central Committee continued its pressure to perform better, especially in its flagship newspaper, *Pravda*.<sup>296</sup> The resolution emphasized the importance of sending their own reporters to the scene of international events, so that they could provide firsthand accounts and insights.<sup>297</sup> This move helped me quickly learn about and fight against the narratives of Western media. Second, the resolution called for an analytical division in Moscow, with commentators who would provide in-depth analysis through the lens of Soviet ideology. This way, part of the work was laid down by Stalin and his circle, but it is hard to tell if it would have ever worked out if he had not died one year later, in March 1953. At least some of those steps were a crucial foundation for future successes, yet under his rule, journalists fought for their lives rather than for greater achievements.

Thus, Soviet propagandists finally began to understand the value of creating different propaganda for different readership groups. Rarely did information hold the same level of interest for the press across all nations, and journalists tailored their messages to their target audiences. In essence, those methods were largely based on the insights of journalists and officials and drew heavily on direct interactions with locals. The more time journalists spent abroad, the more they updated libraries and databases about the world beyond Soviet borders. Learning to assess the printability of their materials and to differentiate among groups of readers across the planet was a breakthrough for their methods of work, helping not only in their day-to-day operations but also in realizing the bigger picture.

## **2.2. Luxury of Being a *Mezhdunarodnik***

One of the root causes of the postwar issues was the extensive repression of experts with international ties. If anything, those caused an obvious cadre crisis, which could bring the USSR to the brink of collapse. Thus, this deadly totality forced the highest Party officials to shift much of their focus to successful performance, hurting the ideological line.<sup>298</sup> New staff were chosen at the expense of socialist ideals, and the officials were ready to offer some relative support to the leftover experts. This new social contract of offering everyday comfort by the state to the new middle class, the so-called Big Deal, has changed the dynamics within

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chance rather than structured planning and proactive management, resulting in missed opportunities to capitalize on the interest in the USSR. The administration aggressively pushed for change, laying the groundwork for future progress. RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 663, ll. 88–99. Memo of Nikolai Shpanov [writer].

<sup>296</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 117, ll. 230–50.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid, d. 52, ll. 112–3.

<sup>298</sup> The conflict between Party functionaries and effective workers was illustrated by Daniel Stotland, a dilemma that the author called “Reds vs. Experts”, e.g. staunch communists against skilled managers. Daniel Stotland, “A More Perfect Union,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 41, no. 2 (2014): 121–45.

socialist elites.<sup>299</sup> In the power pyramid, the new mediators between Party and population appeared, remunerated for their services rather generously.<sup>300</sup> This elite was easy to create: since there was no private property, there was a syncretism of power and ownership, as the state was the sole owner.<sup>301</sup> The hiring practices of editorial staff were also changing: if previously social background (peasant or proletarian origins), as well as years in the Party, were the decisive factors for employment, the late 1940s and the 1950s were noticeably focused on people with higher education.<sup>302</sup> Creating (and rearranging) *nomenklatura* positions was not only focused on supplying the power vertical with cadres but also making sure that they were interested in the prosperity of the state system, were personally invested in it, and were, at least in theory, qualified to improve the state of things.<sup>303</sup>

One such type of technocrat was effective media managers, able to build international networks and promote beneficial narratives for the state.<sup>304</sup> First, political observers [politicheskii obozrevatel'] were appointed in *Pravda* in 1946,<sup>305</sup> and they became generals in the field of journalism, enjoying all the privileges of lavish Party life.<sup>306</sup> It was the birth of the

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<sup>299</sup> Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 77. The idea of the financial well-being of journalists that they received as a thank-you from their respective parties for spreading propaganda was also only partially true: only the top layers of *nomenklatura* actually had access to those privileges. Many journalists had to work strenuously to earn a good enough living. For instance, the position of Polish journalists was one of the worst in comparison to other intellectuals, as many had problems with housing and did not own a car. Moreover, many appeared to evaluate the social prestige of the profession as mediocre or low. Hence, other socialist countries also experienced rapid turnover of journalistic cadres who were unsatisfied with what the state had to offer. Tadeusz Kupis, *Zawod dziennikarza w Polsce Ludowej* (Warsaw: Ksiazka i Wiedza, 1966), as quoted in Stanislaw Skrzypek, "The Profession of Journalism in Poland: A Profile," *Journalism Quarterly* 49, № 1 (1972): 126–8.

<sup>300</sup> Valery Lazarev, "Evolution of the Soviet Elite and Its Post-Communist Transformation" (paper presented at the conference *Initial Conditions and the Transition Economy in Russia*, University of Houston, Houston, TX, April 19–21, 2001), <https://www.uh.edu/~pgregory/conf/SovElite.PDF> [accessed 26.02.2024].

<sup>301</sup> Anna Naronkaya, "Sistema rekrutirovaniya sovetskoy praviaschey elity: obschey i spetsificheskoy," *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya*, no. 73 (2021): 20, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sistema-rekrutirovaniya-sovetskoy-pravyaschey-elity-obschey-i-spetsificheskoy> [accessed August 25, 2025].

<sup>302</sup> R. Dautova, "Kadrovaya situatsiya v regional'noy zhurnalistike perioda 'ottepeli,'" *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 4, № 12 (2010): 100.

<sup>303</sup> Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura*.

<sup>304</sup> Out of all 41,883 *nomenklatura* positions, mezdunarodniki occupied only a measly percentage: 1168 postings (2,7%) were given to people in foreign relations, and culture, science, and art were represented by 2305 positions (5,4%). Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> 1946 was marked by the widescale reshuffling of the administrative apparatus, which previously remained largely ignored due to the ongoing war, but when the Central Committee finally had time to deal with its bureaucratic structures, those had already overgrown and needed serious systematization. Moreover, the previous lists did not reflect the current needs and demands of the state. The administrative bodies were also allowed to present their own ideas and positions for approval. Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura*.

<sup>306</sup> In this situation, it was meritocracy – journalists were handpicked to become part of *nomenklatura* with all of its entailing privileges based on their merit – ability to propagandize and maximize the Soviet international potential. In return, they had the so-called "public consumption funds" or "invisible part of the salary" like their own health care and special, "Kremlin" hospitals, as well as using state property as one's private property. James C. McClelland, *What Made Stalinism Work?* 453; Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*; Yelena Tvedryukova, *Kampanii po uporyadocheniyu*, 255. They also had significantly higher chances for their children to be accepted to

journalistic elite – political observers became the peak of their journalistic career from now on. This first group included Otto Kuusinen, David Zaslavsky, Vladimir Khvostov, A. Georgiev, Yevgeny Varga, Lev Ivanov, Mikhail Galaktionov, Boris Ponomarev, Yakov Khavinson, Georgii (Yuri) Zhukov, Boris Izakov, Natalya Volchanskaya (Sergeeva), and Yakov Viktorov (Goldenberg).<sup>307</sup> Interestingly, not all of them were journalists – many were experts in wider questions. For instance, Lev Ivanov was known as a historian and an economist, or Vladimir Khvostov was a professor and a diplomat. Evgeny Varga and Otto Kuusinen were prominent Comintern members, with a big experience of revolutionary struggle behind them. Even among journalists, not all of them were professionals in international coverage: Boris Izakov worked in the Soviet press abroad for more than two decades, while Yuri Zhukov was just about to start his first foreign assignment.<sup>308</sup> Moreover, with the increasing tension of the Cold War, the number of journalists who were a part of this deal was increasing.<sup>309</sup> In 1947, heads of departments, first deputy editors, and deputy executive secretaries were now all part of the privileged Soviet class.<sup>310</sup>

The high status of this group is clearly seen in the fact that each of its members was appointed by the decision of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>311</sup> Moreover, their rank entailed better compensation for their work.<sup>312</sup> Reflecting on those processes, Vladimir Silantiev, *mezhdunarodnik* from *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and later *Izvestia*, wrote about the upper-crust journalists that comrade Stalin tried to destroy the *kulaks* [rich peasants] as a class and succeeded, but “he did not succeed in destroying the *kulak* spirit in the mortal bodies of many of his countrymen.”<sup>313</sup> All of them were dedicated promoters of

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prestigious institutes, had better tailoring ateliers, canteens, vouchers to sanatoriums, and access to better schools, nurseries, groceries, and general stores. Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

<sup>307</sup> Lazar' Brontman, Diaries, 09.08.1946, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/6356> [accessed 07.04.2023].

<sup>308</sup> With such a diverse composition, the group was never meant to last long: mere 2 years later, amidst the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, Yakov Viktorov (Goldenberg) was banned from the profession, and David Zaslavsky, of Jewish origin himself, supported the purges and attacked other prominent Soviet Jews, but it did not save him from being dismissed. It shows that the start of the profession was rough, even in the most prestigious Soviet newspaper.

<sup>309</sup> The invisible division between the “simple” journalists and the press elite was also present outside the USSR – correspondents are divided into the so-called a team and b team, those who are officially employed and have some ties to the elite and governments and more independent journalists who enjoy much less access and privilege. Mark Pedelty, *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents* (London: Routledge, 1995), 87–8.

<sup>310</sup> Lazar' Brontman, 17.03.1947, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/6375> [accessed 07.04.2023].

<sup>311</sup> Vasily Gatov, Elisabeth Schimpfössl, and Ilya Yablokov, “From Soviet to Russian Media Managers,” *Russian Politics* 2, no. 1 (2017): 12–3.

<sup>312</sup> For instance, when Vikentii Metveev was promoted into the position of a political observer for *Izvestia* in the early 1960s, with attached to it “the most favorable conditions for work and life in general,” he saw it as a social contract. In return to this generous offer, his duty was to provide analytical and other materials as quickly as possible. Vikentii Matveev, Memoirs. 30.01.1962, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/669613> [accessed 02.03.2024].

<sup>313</sup> Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

Marxism-Leninism and highly valued for their skills. So, the propagandists knew their worth and wanted to be paid back accordingly.<sup>314</sup> A few of them became indispensable members of the elite, helping sustain the regime and receiving generous returns on their propaganda work from the state. After all, within the Soviet hierarchy, the editors-in-chief of central newspapers held a high position – the third rank out of approximately 14 tiers within *nomenklatura* positions.<sup>315</sup> At this level, the editors-in-chief of central newspapers were evaluated to be equal to key leaders within the Soviet Union, like Union ministers or ambassadors in socialist countries.<sup>316</sup> For once, those people had much higher salaries that were astronomical for an average Soviet citizen or even a rank-and-file journalist: no newspaper had such high royalties as *Pravda*.<sup>317</sup> *Izvestia* was catching up and established 20 *nomenklatura* positions, so its journalists were able to call a black *Izvestia* Volga on official business or have access to better medical services.<sup>318</sup> Those privileges were, of course, meant for the most prominent journalists.<sup>319</sup> As Silantiev recalled,

A. Bovin, S. Kondrashov, I. Golembiovsky, and other nomenclature [nomenklaturshchiki] did not have to make much effort to become owners [of a new dacha– M.Z.] as soon as possible. They moved from cramped, dilapidated state dachas to new apartments, without sparing themselves new Moscow apartments. They received those for themselves and their children to improve their living conditions or simply ‘by way of exception’ [v poryadke isklyucheniia].<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid. Thomas C. Wolfe claimed that the main function of Soviet journalism was teaching the Soviet way of life, so the journalists were instrumental for conducting the essence of Soviet, 2.

<sup>315</sup> Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White, “From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Élite,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 5 (1996): 711–33. Alternative *nomenklatura* rankings in: Harasymiw, *Nomenklatura*, 497–8.

<sup>316</sup> The Soviet *nomenklatura* had a multi-layered hierarchy with numerous sub-ranks. Journalists rank also included first and sometimes second secretaries of the republican Central Committees of the Communist Parties, the first secretaries of regional committees and city committees of the largest cities, Union ministers, top military officers, ambassadors in all socialist and G7 countries, directors of the largest factories within the military-industrial complex and heads of creative unions. All of those people collectively formed a critical segment of the Soviet elite, shaping the policies and direction of the nation through their performance. Most of the Soviet elite was made up of the party-state *nomenklatura* and the military top officials. Another part of it were outstanding creative figures, writers, actors, movie directors, and some representatives of the technical intelligentsia, and they all enjoyed various privileges. Kryshtanovskaya, *Transformatsiya staroi nomenklatury*, 52.

<sup>317</sup> Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*. *Izvestia* was also known to pay its workers well. Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'. *Pravda*, however, by no means was an indicator of how the rest of the Soviet press functioned or how the journalists in it were treated. Due to its direct ties to the Central Committee, it was more conservative, more authoritative, and more prestigious. He Zhou, *Changes in the Soviet concept of news*, 194.

<sup>318</sup> In 1962, *Izvestia* got their own *nomenklatura* cadres – Vikentii Matveev, Vladimir Kudryavtsev, and Nikolai Polyanov became political observers. All of them had high salaries, access to a separate clinic, dacha, canteen, and a black Volga. Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

<sup>319</sup> It is important to note that not all of them are part of *nomenklatura*, even though their rows were expanding. Yet, with Khrushchev's son-in-law, Aleksei Adzhubei, *Izvestia* was called “a branch of the Foreign Ministry.” Adzhubei often met with world leaders, forming an informal channel for dialogue with the West.

<sup>320</sup> Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

An additional *nomenklatura* privilege for journalists was access to exclusive information amidst the shut-off from world society.<sup>321</sup> After all, TASS correspondents, alongside different ministries and departments, KGB agents, embassies, trade missions, foreign Communist Parties, and diplomats were among the people who possessed the most exclusive information not meant for the public.<sup>322</sup> Moreover, those journalists did not just learn about the events abroad – they could write almost anything, even if it was not intended for public release, but for informing the top officials,<sup>323</sup> and the government was always eager to read this information and make decisions based on it.<sup>324</sup> In this sense, journalists worked as analysts, submitting their reports directly to the officials. For instance, Olga Chechetkina, *Pravda* correspondent, traveled to Southeast Asia to gather information specifically for the Central Committee, helping to shape the Soviet foreign policy in the region, and this information was never meant for the “regular” readers to see.<sup>325</sup> Enver Mamedov perfectly summed up the privilege that came with being the so-called political observer – the *crème de la crème* of Soviet journalistic circles,

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<sup>321</sup> The degree of being informed determined one's position on the hierarchical ladder. For instance, there were confidential reports by TASS to different officials, the so-called “green” and “white” TASS. Only high-ranking officials were allowed access to the “white” TASS. Lyudmila Zotova, *Memoirs*, [Prozhito.org](https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/710708), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/710708> [accessed 14.04.2023]. However, there were limitations to it. In case of the most confusing turn of events, journalists themselves often found it difficult to determine what to write. This was particularly true in cases such as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, where two countries, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, completely altered the course of their actions, leaving many bewildered by the sudden diplomatic shift. See: Daniil Kraminov, *V orbite voyny. The researcher of TASS, Valeriya Bityutskaya, sees work for the agency as a form of freedom that comes with its own set of responsibilities. Valeriya Bityutskaya, “Sovetskaya zhurnalistskaia 1960–1980-h gg. i rossiiskaya zhurnalistskaia 1990-h gg.: istoricheskie mify i real'naya praktika korrespondentov [Soviet Journalism of the 1960s–1980s and Russian Journalism of the 1990s: Historical Myths and Real Practice of Correspondents].” Voprosy teorii i praktiki zhurnalistiki 12, no. 2 (2023): 248–62, CyberLeninka, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sovetskaya-zhurnalistskaia-1960-1980-h-gg-i-rossiiskaya-zhurnalistskaia-1990-h-gg-istoricheskie-mify-i-real'naya-praktika/viewer> [accessed 20.03.2022].*

<sup>322</sup> TASS journalists were among the most informed individuals in the entire country, having access to a wide range of data and intelligence that was not readily available to the general public. Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*, 48.

<sup>323</sup> In such cases, when certain content was deemed too sensitive or controversial for the public domain, it could still be included in closed reports for Party officials, which were cross-referenced by other reports from the KGB and the MID (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>324</sup> “On occasion, a single report by a foreign correspondent affects government actions, policies, and priorities. News of a foreign crisis or disaster may require immediate government responses, which in turn can involve military units, diplomats, and aid workers alike.” John J. Schulz, “National Security Affairs Reporting,” in *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications*, (2003), 199.

<sup>325</sup> Larisa Efimova, *Stalin i Indoneziia: Politika SSSR v otnoshenii Indonezii v 1945–1953 godakh: neizvestnye stranitsy* [Stalin and Indonesia: Soviet Policy towards Indonesia in 1945–1953: Unknown Pages] (Moscow: MGIMO, 2004), 62, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/8f7/8f7d86b67cf5d1186d2621fd8c710c9c.pdf> [accessed 18.08.2024] The same process and data-collecting for the officials took place in the German Democratic Republic. Anke Fiedler, *Medienlenkung in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014), 115.

I began to write a lot and was included among several political observers appointed by the Politburo.<sup>326</sup> To make their importance clearer, we had the same salary as ministers, a car, a secretary-referent, all, in my opinion, not very necessary, so to speak, things. But another important thing was that we had access to secret materials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and some other organizations. In addition, we enjoyed the right to leave the Soviet Union for any part of the world without lengthy paperwork - we could do it all in a few days. This is what was then called a multiple-entry visa.

Such privilege stemmed from the fact that journalists, along with secret agents, diplomats, and trade representatives, were among the first Soviet people to live abroad. Their lives were not always luxurious, but the very fact of traveling abroad was a sign of status and importance. Hence, it was another privilege to travel abroad, let alone do so regularly or even be stationed there for extended periods. Only the main Soviet news organizations ought to have permanent representative offices abroad or send their correspondents overseas: *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Trud*, and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were authorized to station their workers outside of the USSR.<sup>327</sup> The establishment of an extensive overseas reporting network also signaled a newspaper's prestige and status within the Soviet media landscape, as even the most powerful newspapers' editorial offices needed to justify not just the permanent stationing of their journalists in specific countries, but also any potential assignment abroad. Even for the most prestigious newspapers, not all requests were automatically approved: correspondence was held regarding the need to send someone for coverage, as every assignment had to be justified individually. So, each placement had to be approved based on both the geopolitical significance of the location and the potential news value that the correspondent could generate.<sup>328</sup> If an important event was taking place, the CC CPSU had to approve the newspapers and correspondents for the coverage, who were nominated by their editors.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> "Mamedov Enver Nazimovich - pervyj zamestitel' predsedatelya Goskomiteta SSSR po televideniyu i radio, diplomat i zhurnalist" [Enver Mamedov, First Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio, diplomat and journalist], *ourbaku.com*, <https://tinyurl.com/yp6wj795> [accessed 28.07.2023].

<sup>327</sup> It was a signifier of the prestige of the media. For them, the use of foreign correspondents translated into a more comprehensive global coverage, as well as easier control over the narrative. The newspapers could now provide their readers with a firsthand account of events in distant corners of the world, reinforcing their role as a reliable source of information. Moreover, this expansion allowed Soviet newspapers to bridge the gap between the interests of their readers and the global events they were reporting on. Readers could now access news that resonated with their concerns, perspectives, and curiosities, even when focused on international matters. This alignment of content with the preferences of the readership facilitated a stronger engagement with the newspaper and fostered a sense of relevance and connection. Ekaterina V. Kamenskaya, 'A Window to the World,' 210.

<sup>328</sup> The process of selecting and stationing foreign correspondents involved a delicate balancing act. Newspapers needed to align their choices with Soviet political priorities, while also ensuring that their correspondents could navigate the intricate world of international journalism effectively. *Pravda* had 40 journalists posted abroad, *Izvestia* had 30, and *Trud* had 11, as of 1967. Yuri Zhukov, "S perom po globusu," *Zhurnalist* 11 (November 1967): 74.

<sup>329</sup> For instance, the editor of *Trud*, Mikhail Strepukhov, had to formally request authorization to dispatch Boris Izakov as a correspondent to cover the upcoming meeting of foreign ministers from the four powers in Berlin on January 25, 1954. Ultimately, the meeting in Berlin was deemed crucial, and correspondents from all the main

Assignments abroad usually divided correspondents' lives into before and after: their status radically shifted after gaining such a unique experience. They became much more valuable in the system's eyes and could now apply this knowledge across different organizations, with more agency than before. It also created competition among those cadres, and, fearing they would lose such people, their editors showered them with gifts and awards. For instance, Boris Chekhonin, upon his return from *Izvestia's* correspondent post in Japan, received an award, an apartment, then another apartment in a prestigious Moscow house, and a new position as Deputy Editor of *Izvestia's* Foreign Department. All of it was miracle-like, and “before the trip to Japan, it was impossible to even dream of such things.”<sup>330</sup> Those in luck immediately felt as chosen and favored, both for themselves and among their colleagues. As fellow journalists later recalled, “When they [journalists who were abroad – M.Z.] appeared in the editorial office, they looked more like foreigners sent to us than compatriots. They came back and became our colleagues, our equals. Although in their hearts, I think, they did not consider themselves our equals.”<sup>331</sup> Trips abroad could either make or break one's career. Some interns at APN, for instance, after practice abroad were immediately hired for a permanent roster upon return to Moscow: “All employees who returned from a trip were employed promptly.”<sup>332</sup> *Pravda's* Gennadii Zafesov, after his foreign assignment, felt that he had gotten a new status, socially and especially materially,

Received the official status of *Pravda's* correspondent in the Republic of Cuba and the Central American countries.’ The last three words were sort of virtual. I don't remember any Soviet journalists going there. More material was the increase in salary and the transition to the category of *nomenklatura*.<sup>333</sup>

The elite status of international journalists was also their gateway to active participation in the reproduction of the elite, despite the supposed mechanisms to restrict nepotism within Soviet *nomenklatura*.<sup>334</sup> According to the unspoken rule, children of top officials were not

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central newspapers (*Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Trud*) were dispatched to report on the event, including Izakov. RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 566, l. 29. A Letter to Khrushchev from Moskovskii and Romanov, 25 January 1954.

<sup>330</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

<sup>331</sup> A.D., G.K., A.P., “Kollegi v pogonah” [Colleagues in uniform], *agentura.ru*, 2022, <https://agentura.ru/books-reviews/a-d-g-k-a-p-kollegi-v-pogonah/8/> agentura.ru [accessed 09.01.2024].

<sup>332</sup> GA RF, f. 9587, op. 1, d. 8, l. 308. Comments on the Selection, Training, and Placement of APN personnel Abroad, 1964.

<sup>333</sup> Gennadii Zafesov, *Posle dvadcati let molchaniya. Ot sobstvennogo korrespondenta gazety "Pravda"* [After twenty years of silence. From the *Pravda* newspaper's own correspondent] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2009), 59–60.

<sup>334</sup> Children of the Soviet elite often studied at specialized schools and learned foreign languages there: Zhdanov's children attended special “German” school, Molotov's daughter learned French, and Malenkov's sons went to an “English” school. See, Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 174–5. On the other hand, Olga Kryshтанovskaya pointed out how the Soviet *nomenklatura* implemented mechanisms to restrict the spreading of nepotism in later years. Olga Kryshтанovskaya, “Transformaciya staroi nomenklatury v novuyu rossiiskuyu elitu” [Transformation of the Old Nomenclature into the New Russian Elite], *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* № 1 (1995): 52.

allowed to inherit their parents' high-ranking positions.<sup>335</sup> Instead, these “elite children” were rather directed into specific professional niches, including foreign affairs, international trade, and diplomatic missions.<sup>336</sup> So, the offspring of high-ranking officials with prestigious careers often received specialized education tailored to them. While it was unusual to follow in their parents' exact footsteps, it was also possible and even natural. After all, many of them spent parts of their childhood abroad and, hence, were more likely to have an interest in foreign cultures and to possess better foreign language skills than most of their peers. For instance, this was the case for the Vsevolod Ovchinnikov’s family, whose extensive stay in Japan made it only natural that Lyubov’ Ovchinnikova, daughter of the journalist, would follow suit, becoming a prominent Japanese Studies scholar and a member of the Institute of Asian and African Countries at Moscow State University.<sup>337</sup> Similarly, Yuri Bandura's coverage of Japanese society led to an interest in his son, Dmitrii, who inherited not only his father's love for Japan but also his passion for journalism.<sup>338</sup> Melor Sturua’s son, Andrei Sturua, also became a prominent *mezhdunarodnik*.<sup>339</sup> So, their formative years in foreign cultures left marks on them, equipping them with linguistic prowess and cultural fluency that were rare assets in the field. However, not everyone followed in their parents' footsteps. Yuri Zhukov’s son, Maxim Zhukov, carved his own niche, although still in foreign affairs. He became a “typographic coordinator to the United Nations” in an unexpected trajectory.<sup>340</sup>

Nevertheless, not all Soviet journalists were children of other prominent figures or products of prestigious universities, nor did they all have direct influence over decisions of national significance. However, there certainly were some of them who fit this description perfectly. This lifestyle applied only to a select few. In fact, the inequality in the journalistic brethren

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<sup>335</sup> Moreover, thanks to the imposed limitations of the rank of *nomenklaturshiki*'s descendants that they could not occupy the same ranks as their fathers, there were niches like foreign reporting that this rule did not necessarily apply to. This practice was only strengthened by elite institutions that reinforced the ties of children of the elite. Kryshtanovskaya and White, *From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Elite*, 714; Kryshtanovskaya, *Transformaciya staroi nomenklatury*, 52; Evan Mawdsley, Stephen White, *The Soviet elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: the Central Committee and its members, 1917-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 260.

<sup>336</sup> Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union: A Study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism* (London: Routledge, 2012), 163.

<sup>337</sup> “Ovchinnikova Lyubov' Vsevolodovna: kandidat istoricheskikh nauk: [Ovchinnikova Lyubov Vsevolodovna: Candidate of Historical Sciences], [msu.ru](https://istina.msu.ru/workers/434505/), <https://istina.msu.ru/workers/434505/> [accessed 15.05.2022] While it may seem unavoidable that those parental legacies aligned with “their” regions and interests, it goes to show the specifics of Soviet work abroad.

<sup>338</sup> “Biografiya – Dmitrii Bandura Zhurnalists ‘Nihon Kjejdzej Simbun,’ Yaponiya” [Biography – Dmitrii Bandura, Nihon Keizai Shimbun Journalist, Japan], [livelib.ru](https://www.livelib.ru/author/214757-dmitrij-bandura), <https://www.livelib.ru/author/214757-dmitrij-bandura> [accessed 05.07.2022].

<sup>339</sup> “Sturua, Andrei,” *Bol'shaya biograficheskaya enciklopediya*, <https://tinyurl.com/277n5c9e> [accessed 19.05.2022].

<sup>340</sup> “Maxim Zhukov,” *The Type Directors Club: The Archive*, <https://archive.tdc.org/officers/maxim-zhukov/> [accessed 19.05.2022].

was rather visible throughout Soviet history. Even at the Nuremberg Trials, the division between *nomenklatura* journalists and “rank-and-file” correspondents was clear: renowned writers like Ilya Ehrenburg and Boris Polevoi stayed at the “Grand Hotel”, while the rest stayed at the modest press camp.<sup>341</sup> Decades later, people like Melor Sturua and Valentin Zorin stood out as the brightest stars of Soviet journalism and enjoyed significant privileges, often interacting with influential political figures. While there are dozens of extensive records about prominent figures, the lives of most others are not easily traceable. Many of these journalists disappeared from the media field for various reasons, before and after the fall of the USSR. Some chose to step away from public life, and others struggled to adapt to the new political environment. Their impact was very limited, often constrained by finances and bureaucracy. So, while they did travel abroad and report on international affairs, their work was often heavily scrutinized, leaving little leeway for personal agency.

Thus, the inequality in the media field was institutionalized right after the war. The state, struggling with qualified personnel, went beyond the hard Party line and hired efficient managers, who were paid accordingly for the services. This compromise offered stability to media employees, who, in return, were now invested in their performance and in sustaining the regime to the best of their ability. The chosen journalists enjoyed various privileges associated with the status of political observers – foreign trips, better remuneration, higher prestige, etc., while other journalists saw such blatant preferential treatment. However, the consolidation of the elite also had the opposite effect: the elite’s interests gradually diverged from the regime's ideological objectives. Instead of modernizing and reforming, the elite often sought to maintain their positions. In the long run, this weakened the Soviet state: during the Cold War, the USSR proved less flexible and less innovative than its opponents. This group dynamic forever changed the face of Soviet journalism and the internal mechanisms of its operations, forging new motivations among graduates and shaping new career trajectories in the later years. Yet, it was not the only life-changing direction of the postwar policies.

### 2.3. Destalinized Minds

We were beginning to see the world up close. We needed it for the job.<sup>342</sup>

Aleksii Adzhubei

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<sup>341</sup> Boris Polevoi, *V konce koncov*.

<sup>342</sup> Aleksii Adzhubei, *Te Desyat' let* [Those Ten Years] (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1989), *belousenko*, [http://www.belousenko.com/books/adjubey/adjubey\\_10\\_years.htm](http://www.belousenko.com/books/adjubey/adjubey_10_years.htm) [accessed 03.11.2024].

An era ended with the death of Stalin in March 1953 – the biggest impulse for reforms, as his passing allowed for reflection on the hits and misses of the media without fear for life.<sup>343</sup> With the change in leadership, the management style and social hierarchies were gradually shifting.<sup>344</sup> The rule of Khrushchev was called the Thaw thanks to the loosened-up system when he came to power,<sup>345</sup> but “habits and ideas formed over two decades are not transformed overnight.”<sup>346</sup> The following era did not experience immediate success, although journalism reflected a degree of relative freedom, driven by exceptional circumstances of the time.<sup>347</sup> The Thaw was experimental and self-contradictory in its nature, with its mixed developments that led to change. The Geneva Convention,<sup>348</sup> the suppressed revolutions in Hungary and Poland,<sup>349</sup> and the secret speech of Khrushchev against Stalin’s cult of

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<sup>343</sup> With the death of Stalin, the USSR still was an authoritarian state, but a threat to one's life was considerably lower. Under Stalin's rule, undesired professionals often faced brutal fates, including death or labor camps. After Stalin's death, these extreme measures were mostly abandoned. Instead of perishing, now professionals out of favor were to face less severe measures. They could have been reassigned to remote regions, basically removing them from central social circles. Others were demoted to insignificant positions within their fields or were forced into early retirement, a move that cut short their careers. These methods, while still oppressive, were more humane than the earlier practices of executing or incarcerating perceived enemies. Still, the assumed immediate change after Stalin's death was also not entirely true. There was a period of struggle inside the Party, first against Beria and then against Malenkov, before Khrushchev fully established his leadership. Some claim this was the period of ideological confusion and no clear path. Karl Aimermakher, “Partiinoe upravlenie kul'turoi i formy ee samoorganizatsii (1953–1964/67),” in *Ideologicheskie Komissii TsK KPSS, 1958–1964: Dokumenty*, ed. Karl Aimermakher et al. (Moscow, 1998), 7.

<sup>344</sup> For instance, Susanne Schattenberg wrote about Richard Wortman's theory of scenarios of power in relation to Soviet leaders. Each one of them built a myth or an image around themselves and ruled the country based on those self-projections. Each leader had distinct features. See: Susanne Schattenberg, “Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo: Brezhnev's Scenario of Power,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 4 (2015): 835–58. Plus, both Stalin and Khrushchev liked to surround themselves with a “team” or a “clan”, people who helped them rule the biggest country in the world. Khrushchev's inner circle included multiple journalists, which, of course, was a significant factor in the direction of some of the reforms. Rósa Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 3.

<sup>345</sup> On the outside, the policies slowly shifted from total rejection of anything West-related to a rhetoric of “peaceful co-existence” – a doctrine claiming that the two systems have no need for another war. This fear of a global warfare, or the perception and anticipation thereof, appears to have significantly influenced the perception of the world as a unified entity more profoundly than any narrative centered around peace. For more on the principle of the peaceful co-existence, see Georgii Zadorozhnyj, *Mirnoe sosushhestvovanie i mezhdunarodnoe pravo [Peaceful Coexistence and International Law]* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1964). Although that did not mean a complete cessation of competition, it signified that blocks could just compete in their ideological supremacy in other fields. Because of that, the Soviet Union was quickly becoming increasingly open to exchanges of different sorts: people, exhibitions, and books could finally travel across borders, although with consciousness. More on limitations of said liberalization, see Gleb Tsipursky, “Citizenship, Deviance, and Identity: Soviet Youth Newspapers as Agents of Social Control in the Thaw-Era Leisure Campaign,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 49, no. 4 (2008): 629–50; Eleonory Gilburd, “The Revival of Soviet Internationalism in the 1950s,” in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, ed. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 262–401.

<sup>346</sup> Huxtable, News from Moscow, 19.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> The event was the a significant marker of Soviet willingness for peaceful co-existence, and the first meeting of a Soviet leader and top-officials with foreign presidents since the Potsdam conference in 1945.

<sup>349</sup> Two events made the USSR to revisit its foreign propaganda and upgrade its organizations.

personality in 1956,<sup>350</sup> all those events made the changes imminent but self-contradictory.<sup>351</sup> Such a series of challenges, in some cases even catastrophes, showed the Soviet inability to control the narrative and manage the backlash outside the state, so they were truly cathartic. In light of those events, there was no choice but to reevaluate the course of Soviet journalism. With this, it seems, even the organizations associated with Stalinist foreign policies were not just reformed but dissolved and rebranded: All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) was turned into Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (SSOD),<sup>352</sup> and Sovinformburo was turned into *Novosti* Press Agency. The old methods of propaganda were no longer as effective, and there was a growing realization of the need for new methods of work. Naturally, destalinization affected people, not just institutions. It was the feeling of having outlived the time of constant fear. Journalists were “[...] the ultimate survivors. They had learned to wage a permanent struggle for their positions between the suspicious tyrant and the army of lesser-rank party and state officials, the political *nomenklatura* that looked up to them with both reverence and envy.”<sup>353</sup> For many, playing safe was a matter of survival with the intensifying Party purges.<sup>354</sup> As Konstantin Simonov wrote, “We are all mentioned in the decree, even if our names are not there.”<sup>355</sup> Everyone was in danger. The very context of late Stalinism suffocated the desire to stand out and innovate, and no one was willing to take risks or evolve the system. Mutual suspicion made it impossible to collaborate or even learn from foreigners without fear of being branded a cosmopolite. Despite the pronounced principle of

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<sup>350</sup> The 20th Party Congress was held in February 1956 and became one of the most prominent and shocking assemblies of the Party. In the words of the First Secretary, the Party fell a victim to Stalin. Despite the “secret” character of the speech, the word spread quickly and had the effect of an exploded bomb both within the Soviet borders and with foreign countries. All-encompassing critique only strengthened after the 20th Party Congress, which denounced the cult of Stalin’s personality. Khrushchev’s harsh speech has pointed out the flaws of the previous ruler, as well as the shortcomings of the system. This speech has also tremendously affected the press as the close companion of the Party, so journalists became more outspoken (yet again, with limitations) on the faults of propaganda. More on the interrelation between the Secret Speech and press, see: Huxtable, *News from Moscow*, 54–8; Simon Huxtable, “Shortcomings: Soviet Journalists and the Changing Role of Press Criticism after the Twentieth Party Congress,” in *De-Stalinisation Reconsidered: Persistence and Change in the Soviet Union*, ed. Thomas M. Bohn, Rayk Einax, and Michel Abeßer (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014), 209–22.

<sup>351</sup> On effects of limited de-Stalinization: Kathleen E. Smith, *Remembering Stalin's Victims: Popular Memory and the End of the USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 20–40.

<sup>352</sup> The SSOD organized a huge number of delegations consisting of representatives of the public, famous scientists, writers, and cultural figures. Naturally, their main task was not just to establish ties with public, political and business circles of other states, but also to explain the main directions of Soviet foreign policy. Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 323.

<sup>353</sup> Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 95.

<sup>354</sup> Many high-profile cases were initiated after the War: against newspapers “Zvezda” and “Leningrad”, against Jewish international organizations, etc.

<sup>355</sup> Konstantin Simonov, “Drama, teatr, zhizn” [Drama, Theater, Life], *Pravda*, November 22, 1946.

criticism, many of the reforms did not come to fruition: commissions often existed only on paper or were too hesitant to act.<sup>356</sup>

After Stalin's death, journalists were able to speak up about the systematic failures and deeper issues in their reports.<sup>357</sup> Having survived that time, journalists realized that they were more in control of their output, as the Cold War prompted the use of their creative forces. And while they knew they were not well prepared for this mission, they had too little knowledge of the outside world to know exactly what needed to be changed. Under such circumstances, journalism could finally bring to life the principle of *kritika and samokritika* [criticism and self-criticism] – exposing one's own flaws and having comradely discussions were finally in place to resolve the existing troubles.<sup>358</sup> It also signified the need for a continuous search for perfection in the face of labor discipline and staff strengthening. The end goal of self-criticism was to expose deficiencies in oneself and others. Under Stalin, such criticism was inherently formalist, seeking to adhere to set plans and metrics. No serious criticism or self-criticism was possible in a climate of fear and snitching. Those internal reports revealed that the same negative aspects recurred year after year after year: very little, if anything, was changed in practice; problems were piling up, and those reports rather played a ritualistic function.<sup>359</sup> An admission of a string of failures was an eye-opening experience for those working in the field, and it became impossible to ignore. Remarkably, those reports originated from the journalists themselves, albeit many were of high rank and often closely tied with the Soviet *nomenklatura*. Even the most well-connected and experienced journalists themselves were sounding the alarm. Already in 1954, Daniil Kraminov, a foreign correspondent of *Pravda* at the time, sent a memo to the Central Committee and stated the USSR was in desperate need of catching up with other “people's democracies”, as it was the only country with no professional union of journalists, and this fact was jeopardizing the alleged Soviet leadership positions within the Bloc.<sup>360</sup> With that, the 1950s were an important

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<sup>356</sup> More on this in: Vladimir Pechatnov, *Exercise in Frustration*.

<sup>357</sup> Due to the nature of the Soviet system, they, of course, could also be punished, but those penalties were far less severe than the death sentence. Normally, scrutinized journalists were fired, expelled from the Party, or just transferred to another, less significant position.

<sup>358</sup> Thankfully, those points of critique were recorded meticulously, and the researchers can access annual reports of many Soviet organizations, with summarized negative and positive outcomes of their performance.

<sup>359</sup> Much research was done on the phenomenon of self-criticism under Stalin. See: J. Arch Getty, “Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–8,” *Russian Review* 58, no. 1 (1999): 49–70; Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Lorenz Erren, *‘Selbstkritik’ und Schuldbekenntnis: Kommunikation und Herrschaft unter Stalin (1917–1953)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2008), 59–73; Matthew Leno, Closer to the Masses, 182–211, etc. Simon Huxtable also brilliantly wrote about it in the Thaw era: Huxtable, *News from Moscow*, 54–72.

<sup>360</sup> With this division in mind, it also becomes apparent that the USSR was not a flag bearer of the socialist camp when it came to foreign reporting, and had some things to learn from other colleagues. Thus, the late

time when uncomfortable truths at least occasionally led to real actions, even with limited capabilities.

Just one month after Stalin's death, a significant reorganization of the Soviet apparatus took place, for instance, at TASS. The agency was under attack for multiple deficiencies, including the content, the presentation of information, and timeliness. The delay was so noticeable that foreign press and radio networks frequently received news about the most crucial events in the USSR from their own Moscow-based correspondents before actually getting this information from TASS, the area that the Soviet agency was supposed to dominate. Even for the domestic market, TASS's information consistently arrived late.<sup>361</sup> Reports about significant events, even of the magnitude of speeches by Soviet representatives at the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, were transmitted by TASS only after the BBC and Voice of America had already reported on them. TASS's delays often meant that Soviet audiences were the last to learn of their government's deeds abroad. Moreover, TASS could not keep up with the vital events from countries of the so-called people's democracies. For instance, the World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace in Bucharest opened on August 2 at 5 p.m. Yet, TASS released its initial report on the event only at 1:30 a.m. on August 3, several hours later. Such delays meant that the news would be in print only the next morning at best, yet this has become the norm for TASS.

Even the most loyal supporters were unhappy with the news from TASS and Sovinformburo and their inexcusable delays: news agencies within the Eastern Bloc had to resort to using information from Western, "bourgeois" news agencies as a result. For instance, Chinese readers of the "Soviet Union" magazine have expressed their dissatisfaction with the significant delays in receiving their copies. The root cause of this issue lies in the magazine's consistently late publication. For instance, the January 1953 issue was only printed on

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establishment of a dedicated professional union for Soviet journalists in 1959 stands in stark contrast to the situation in many other countries within the Eastern Bloc. A notable difference in the recognition of journalistic professionalism had implications for the Soviet Union's leadership in the field of journalism and raised questions about the professional standing of its journalists. For example, the Hungarian Journalists' Union had been established as far back as the 1880s. The Polish People's Republic had its journalists' union established in 1951, well before the Soviet Union. In essence, it jeopardized the perception of the Soviet Union as a leader in the field of journalism and could be interpreted as an obstacle to the development of a unified socialist press identity under the Soviet flag. The professionalization of journalistic cadres was also happening elsewhere in the Eastern bloc at the same time, despite the USSR having a headstart of 20 years. Thus, the timeline of the shift is detailed in the state policies, as well as personal decisions and initiatives. Thus, the efficiency of Soviet international journalism needs to be closely reevaluated. This episode was described in Mary-Catherine French, *Reporting Socialism*, 5–6. The Union was only established in 1959, after years of debates; Rosamund Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media*, 213.

<sup>361</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 605, l. 94. Report by comrade Semin on TASS and Radio. The project is contained within the documents of RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 71, ll. 1–9. ZK KPSS, letter from F. Konstantinov and A. Romanov, both employees at Agitprop. The project was signed by Shatzkov, A. Ponomaryov, F. Kisch.

February 15, followed by the February issue on March 19, the March issue on April 19, and so forth.<sup>362</sup> A side effect of such delays was that Soviet news organizations could not shield the “brotherly” nations from anti-Soviet propaganda and could not even voice their version of the events.<sup>363</sup> The friendliest toward the USSR nations, like Finland, had no choice but to use Reuters, as British reports came one or even two days earlier than those of TASS.<sup>364</sup> The Finnish media were unhappy with the situation, stating that Reuters’ dispatches were full of mistakes, inaccuracies, and plain, skewed interpretations. This also meant there was an opportunity for anti-Soviet propaganda in the Finnish press, and the USSR needed to tighten control over its own media. The TASS coverage there was also deemed completely unsatisfactory, characterized as “occupying an insignificant place.”<sup>365</sup> For instance, TASS provided only 43 notes on the whole bloc in 4 days – a ridiculously low number for an agency claiming to be global. The main drawback, however, was that those were mostly figures and statistical data, not “lively” aspects of these countries. So, the long-winded reports from TASS struggled to reach readers on time, often losing impact because its materials were excessively verbose and clichéd. Furthermore, TASS tended to publish full texts, neglecting the global practice of news agencies to disseminate concise summaries.<sup>366</sup> This was one of the reasons the agency failed to send out reports on noteworthy events promptly. Thus, TASS could not meet the ambitious goals set for it as a world news agency. It was deemed “unable to fulfill the tasks assigned to it as a world agency that collects and brings truthful Soviet information in a politically effective, propaganda-oriented form to the broad public of the Soviet Union and foreign countries in the shortest possible time.”<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 611, l. 62. A Letter to CC CPSU from Comrade Zmeul. 23 July, 1953.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, d. 605, l. 98. Report by Comrade Semin.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, d. 600, l. 81. To Comrade Mikhaylov N.A. about the trip of a delegation of Soviet journalists to Finland. On the other hand, the Soviet press was markedly proud of its factual accuracy and always underlined that they would always prefer fact-checking to the speed of delivering the news.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, d. 605, l. 96. Report by comrade Semin.

<sup>366</sup> Not all fault, however, can be placed on TASS’ love for longer news pieces: some of the tardiness can be explained by its technical capabilities. The agency lacked the modern and sophisticated communication equipment necessary for the efficient reception and transmission of information. This technological deficit not only slowed down the speed of news transmission but also placed TASS at a disadvantageous position in the news race with other international news agencies. Such technological shortcomings made it difficult for TASS to effectively combat the rival news outlets. The brutal report on TASS’ activities concluded that the agency was ill-equipped for the global competition, especially when facing major news agencies of the United States, England, and France. Overall, the speed of reporting has been a long-standing issue for many Soviet news organizations. See: Simon Huxtable, *A Compass in the Sea of Life: Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953–1968* (PhD diss., Birkbeck, University of London, 2013), 126, <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/40022/1/FINAL%20VERSION%20Simon%20Huxtable%2014%2002%2013-1.pdf> [accessed 03.11.2021].

<sup>367</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 184, ll. 74–9. “Note to the TASS work proposals,” signed by N. Palgunov, A. Vishnevskii, K. Shiryayev, 26 May, 1956.

The Central Committee's response to the issues was to propose a plan to address them. Their vision was clear: TASS needed a transformation into “a combative information and propaganda center of the Soviet state.”<sup>368</sup> It was no longer a passive news source but an assertive player. But the potential expansion and improvement of TASS came with substantial financial commitments. In 1956, TASS maintained a network of 70 correspondents and editors stationed in 43 different locations abroad.<sup>369</sup> With ambitious plans to expand and enhance its global presence, TASS aimed to increase its correspondent network to 150 correspondents and editors, as well as expand the number of stations to 55 by 1960.<sup>370</sup> Furthermore, TASS had plans to invest in the professional development of its workforce.<sup>371</sup> To achieve this, the agency required 210,000 rubles per year to support the internships of 10 workers at TASS branches and correspondent offices abroad. This initiative was supposed to help nurture talent and foster the growth of professionalism.

On the other hand, TASS's state of operations still looked better than that of its direct competitor for foreign audiences' attention – Sovinformburo. The organization was preparing and sending Soviet propaganda materials abroad to dozens of countries, to no avail. Once established for the needs of war, the luster of Sovinformburo faded somewhat in the early years of the Cold War, and it seemingly never managed to adapt to postwar realities,

Behind the loud name of the Soviet Informburo [...] from the times of the Great Patriotic War, by the end of the 1950s, there was an underpowered office for foreign-policy propaganda. But originally, Sovinformburo, according to Stalin and Molotov, was created as a ‘cunning’ agency within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose tasks were to exert constant propaganda pressure on the USSR's allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, which would result in increased supplies of military equipment, war materials, food, and medicine to the Soviets.<sup>372</sup>

Yet, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Sovinformburo slowly waned altogether from the minds of any Soviet citizen, even journalists themselves: “In 1956, when I took a full-time

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Such growth would naturally incur higher costs, primarily related to personnel. Specifically, the expenditures on the salaries of correspondents and editors were projected to increase substantially. In 1956, these salaries amounted to 1,345,000 rubles. However, with the planned expansion, the cost of compensating this larger staff was estimated to rise twofold. There also were plans to improve the TASS correspondent network within the Soviet Union and recruit an additional 14 new employees. The staff of the TASS Translation Department had to increase by 15 translators and 7 technical personnel specializing in foreign-language typing.

<sup>371</sup> In addition to personnel costs, there were other budgetary considerations. Expenditures for the transmission of TASS's own information from foreign countries, the maintenance of technical staff, command staff, and other economic purposes abroad were forecasted to reach 3,450,000 rubles. These funds would be essential for sustaining the infrastructure and operations necessary to facilitate the global transmission of news and information. All in all, the maintenance of the TASS correspondent network abroad required 6,700 thousand rubles in foreign currency (against 4,560 thousand rubles in 1956), plus costs for purchasing new vehicles and supplies for new correspondent points, which amassed to 350,000 thousand rubles in foreign currency.

<sup>372</sup> Igor' Sinitsyn, *Andropov vblizi: Vospominaniya o vremenah ottepli i zastoya* [Andropov Up Close: Memories of the Times of Thaw and Stagnation], *flibusta*, <http://flibusta.site/b/420209/read> [accessed 06.11.2023].

job as an editor at the Sovinformburo, few people had heard of it, not only among readers of the Soviet press, but also in broader journalistic circles.”<sup>373</sup> So, yet again, just one month after Stalin’s death, a discussion was initiated on the Sovinformburo’s work. Following it, in a detailed report from August 1953, it was relayed that the organization is overloaded and overburdened, its territorial departments were disorganized and did not cooperate.<sup>374</sup> Moreover, the prevailing attitude was to reduce the amount of materials, especially in the so-called countries of people’s democracy, for the sake of “printability percentage” – the organization’s officials assumed that those allies would write the necessary materials about the USSR themselves, while trying to chase capitalist countries and rather write for them. However, the potential for “more” was not there – non-professionals curated most foreign publications and no qualified personnel were available for the work. The cornerstone of the issue was often a lack of knowledge about the country and its languages: there were no staff in Moscow with sufficient qualifications to translate and adapt articles, and people sent abroad could not efficiently edit, adapt, and translate materials received from Moscow, either. The budget allocated for “translating articles” was also insufficient even to hire one qualified editor. The final product was called outright “clumsy” and was often rejected even by the “progressive”, left-leaning press. Moreover, the foreign staff hired by the agency was often overburdened and underpaid, and they did not have time to polish the texts either. The proposed solution was to direct editing and stylistic adaptation to the local journalists, proven by communists, who speak the language well and understand the context – an impossible suggestion. A big part of the report focused on finances: circulation often did not meet demand and was limited by funding. For instance, Lebanon and India had a high demand for materials on Soviet life, but this demand could not be met due to insufficient financing. To meet the new demands of nuanced foreign reporting, three Directorates were established: the Directorate of Capitalist Countries,<sup>375</sup> the Directorate of Colonial and Dependent Countries,<sup>376</sup> and the Directorate of Countries of People’s Democracies of Europe and Asia.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> Here and forward: RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 646, ll. 115–33. Some remarks about the work of the Soviet Information Bureau, 10 August, 1953, V. Sorokin.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

It comprised several departments dedicated to major regions such as Great Britain, Southwest Europe, Northern Europe, the United States, and Canada.

<sup>376</sup> Its scope had regions such as the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, reflecting the Soviet Union’s interest in supporting anti-colonial movements and promoting solidarity among oppressed peoples.

<sup>377</sup> It included divisions dedicated to European People’s Democracies, Asian People’s Democracies, and European Countries of People’s Democracy. Notably, this restructuring involved the unification of previously separate divisions, such as the Balkan, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and Central European divisions, into a unified European Countries of People’s Democracy Division.

Such reorganization was a clear sign of a shift in the political worldview, incorporating both the previously established “Soviet Bloc” and decolonial movements worldwide. By restructuring the apparatus along new regional lines, Sovinformburo attempted to systematize its knowledge and methods of work according to the general geographic contours. As the report put it,

The three directorates enable more targeted propaganda for the three main groups of countries, which are essentially different from one another: capitalist, colonial, and dependent countries, and countries of people's democracy. This will make it possible to improve the quality of our propaganda for each of these groups of countries and will undoubtedly achieve greater results both in terms of the printability of our materials and their impact on the reader.<sup>378</sup>

Beyond mere territorial distinctions, it eliminated broader departments: the Soviet Life Department and the Central Editorial Office. The Soviet Life Department was a centralized division that produced materials for all territories. It endlessly produced uninspired pieces that failed to resonate with audiences abroad, as the general approach could not appeal to anyone. Its key problem was a lack of editors with a deeper knowledge of foreign countries. After it was dissolved, there was a temporary problem with article supply, since it also aided the plans of more specific territorial departments, but it was a temporary loss. It was a turn towards a more specialized model. The other eliminated department, the Central Editorial Office, was the main gendarme of content in terms of its accuracy and coherence: “The Central Editorial Office was a kind of scissors, which tarred all materials with the same brush.”<sup>379</sup> Its dissolution, yet again, placed greater responsibility on individual departments. This decentralization, at least in theory, was supposed to answer the targeted needs of each department's audiences and stop stifling their creativity.

Upon closer look, it became clear that one of the key issues was the personnel, who were underqualified and overworked. First, the editors-in-chief, with few exceptions, lacked the necessary knowledge to produce content for international audiences. Without these basics, the editors struggled to improve their reporters' content. Second, the time-pressured pace of news-making, coupled with a heavy workload, proved very tough for editors and wore them out. Switching between topics and regions required not only a lot of focus but also specific knowledge that they simply could not have. The sheer range of topics and geography was impossible to cover events in the generalized departments: “... it was difficult for even a relatively qualified worker to switch over: to prepare an article on China and think about its specifics, in half an hour to give materials on Great Britain and take into account its specifics,

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<sup>378</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 646, ll. 115–33. Some Remarks.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

and in an hour to work on an article for India and take into account the specifics of this country.”<sup>380</sup> Editors often had to resort to a “middle approach” of generalized and vague texts. So, it was unreasonable to expect deep knowledge of the “countries as diverse as Great Britain, Bulgaria, China, and Mexico” at the same time.<sup>381</sup> Thus, it was more realistic to acknowledge that regional department heads were better equipped to understand the features of their respective countries.

One of the turning points in maintaining hope for Sovinformburo was the establishment of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (GKKS) in 1957. Headed by Yuri Zhukov, a prominent Soviet journalist, it had to direct several activities, including international radio broadcasting, book distribution, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS (later SSOD)), and overseeing the Sovinformburo.<sup>382</sup> Quick checks of multiple organizations under the control of GKKS underscored that staffers were at the heart of many shortcomings.<sup>383</sup> For instance, one of the primary reasons for VOKS's lackluster performance was the fact that many of its associates held only part-time positions. So, they were unable to fulfill their assigned duties in the given hours of work: they often failed to submit reports, lacked initiative in establishing contacts, and limited their activities to simply relaying requests and proposals to the central authority. Shockingly, before establishing GKKS, there was a notable absence of analysis and oversight of organizations' performance. If those existed, they focused predominantly on financial matters through correspondence. Because of such a lack of control, untrained workers were dispatched in several instances for assignments abroad. So, the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries had to check on all of its entrusted organizations, and the 1959 report from the Committee revealed both progress and shortcomings in the activities of the second-biggest news organization.<sup>384</sup>

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> N. Tregubov, “Gosudarstvennyj komitet po kul'turnym svyaziam s zarubezhnymi stranami kak organ sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii (1957–1967 gg.) [The State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries as an Organ of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy (1957–1967)],” *Upravlenie v sovremennyh sistemah*, no. 4 (11) (2016), *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/gosudarstvennyy-komit-et-po-kul'turnym-svyaziam-s-zarubezhnymi-stranami-ka-k-organ-sovetskoy-kul'turnoy-diplomatii-1957-1967-gg> [accessed 21.02.2022].

<sup>383</sup> RGANI, f. 3, op. 36, d. 7, l. 7. Letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU from N. Popova and Yu. Zhukov. 17 June, 1957.

<sup>384</sup> There was an increase from 1958 when editions were published in the same number of countries, with a total circulation of 1,088,840 copies. New distribution efforts included the dissemination of articles, photographs, and special supplements. While advancements were noted in book publishing, such as the publication of Khrushchev's article "On Peaceful Coexistence" and related materials in various languages, there were many challenges in meeting modern propaganda standards. GA RF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 524, ll. 41–43. Extract from the Report of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for 1959. 24 February, 1960.

One such vice was that the Sovinformburo's workers were not sufficiently motivated to assist other foreign-facing organizations under the supervision of the GKKS. For instance, it was supposed to provide some help to the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies (SSOD) in their propaganda efforts abroad. However, they frequently missed opportunities to use those friendship societies effectively as channels for targeted propaganda. Upon a closer look at the 1960 report,<sup>385</sup> the Sovinformburo did not supervise the magazines and newspapers of Friendship Societies like it was supposed to: the editorial offices ignored requests to produce specialized materials. Moreover, when being reminded of those, Sovinformburo typically provided generic materials, which, in turn, jeopardized SSOD and led to dissatisfaction and complaints among the readers. Yet, SSOD's readership was something to be reckoned with: the organization published 49 magazines and newspapers, along with numerous bulletins covering various aspects of Soviet reality. Many of these publications were widely read and influential: the France-USSR Society, for instance, distributed a magazine with a circulation of 100,000 copies. Furthermore, Sovinformburo, wanting to keep the best materials for itself, sometimes simply declined to submit propaganda materials to SSOD or significantly delayed the required materials. For instance, between February 3 and November 25, 1959, the Press Department of Great Britain took ten months to draft an article on modern trends in Soviet music for SSOD in England. A similar delay happened for an article on television in the USSR, among other instances. Essentially, SSOD staffers were begging for a more responsible approach to their requests, to no avail. Hence, the Union of Friendship Societies was compelled to avoid Sovinformburo's input altogether and independently (and often unprofessionally) prepare propaganda materials themselves, without involvement from the editorial apparatus.

In February 1961, the *Novosti* Press Agency (APN – *Agentsvo Pechati Novosti*) was established. According to its charter, it was to prepare materials for the press, news agencies, publishers, and radio in foreign countries.<sup>386</sup> For its foundation, the All-Union conference was held in Moscow: the Union of Journalists of the USSR, the Union of Writers of the USSR, the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and the All-Union Society “Znanie” [Knowledge] all joined in.<sup>387</sup> APN's funding came from

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<sup>385</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 153. ll. 99–102. Report on the Work of the Sovinformburo in Preparing Articles and Other Materials for Foreign Friendship Societies with the USSR. 29 April, 1960. Signed by V. Gorshkov.

<sup>386</sup> Those materials were of different media and use: books, brochures, albums, articles, commentaries, interviews, public talks, reviews, essays, reports, messages, photo illustrations, and other matters.

<sup>387</sup> Later, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions took part in its operation. The on-paper aim was to disseminate truthful information about the Soviet Union abroad, to enlighten the Soviet public about peoples of the world, and to strengthen mutual understanding between different nations. The motto of APN was “Information for the benefit of peace, for the benefit of friendship between peoples.”

public organizations (founders), publishing activities, revenues from the sale of products to mass media organizations abroad, and subscriptions. The ostensible transparent and non-state-dependent character of APN was a new smart tactic,<sup>388</sup> “During the Thaw years, Khrushchev [...] decided to transform the state propaganda institution Sovinformburo into a supposedly independent “public” journalistic organization.”<sup>389</sup> It was done to appear as self-standing for many reasons: so that the Soviet state was seemingly not responsible for the agency's activities and finances, nor was APN liable for claims against the Soviet state and other Soviet organizations. After all, such a solution let the organization get rid of a stigma of being pro-Soviet, and its ambiguous status helped to overcome the otherwise low credibility of its materials in capitalist countries.<sup>390</sup> APN's public status was a leeway for both selling its products contractually or providing information for free.<sup>391</sup> Since the founders were major public organizations, a great pool of specialists and creatives could get involved: scientists, writers, journalists, and workers of cultural relations. Through APN, they could communicate their achievements in the field. Plus, foreign journalists received help from APN when traveling to the USSR.

The replacement of Sovinfomburo with APN was not just a change of name and public status. The key difference was also in replacing the majority of personnel to switch up the disdainfully called Sovinfomburo's [sibovskie] methods of work. Already in 1962, around 65 to 75% of staff were replaced, aiming for the involvement of younger cadres, as well as getting rid of old habits of working with information, “This course of decisive rejuvenation of the editorial staff, the combination of old experienced staff with young people, in our opinion, fully justified itself, contributed to the creation of a good working atmosphere, creative enthusiasm.”<sup>392</sup> At the time of the creation of APN, there were 959 positions, and 542 of those were occupied by those previously employed by Sovinformburo. The remaining positions were filled by hiring new employees. Among the editorial staff, 343 people (82

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<sup>388</sup> There are few versions on whose suggestion it was to make it appear as a public organization: Boris Yefimov claimed that one of those was Enver Mamedov: “Chelovek-legenda Enver Mamedov” [The Man and the Legend: Enver Mamedov], Moscow State University, <https://ftv.msu.ru/about/life.php?ID=6044> [accessed 31.05.2022] However, the general consensus is Aleksei Adzhubei, the editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*, who could affect his father-in-law, Khrushchev. Sinitsyn, Andropov vblizi.

<sup>389</sup> Interview with Beglov.

<sup>390</sup> Oksana Nagornaya described the same tactic in regard to the Committee of Soviet Women. Moreover, such idea was welcome as an illusion of pluralism of opinion in the USSR. Oksana Nagornaya, “Zhenshhiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii holodnoi voyny: prostranstva mobilizatsii i praktiki souchastiya” [Women in the Structures of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy of the Cold War: Spaces of Mobilization and Practice of Complicity], *Noveyshaya istoriya Rossii* 10 (2020), № 31: 456–7.

<sup>391</sup> The same scheme was previously used for Sovinformburo. Paul Roth, “Die sowjetische Agentur Nowosti (APN): Funktion, Bedeutung, Vorläufer,” *Osteuropa* 29, no. 3 (März 1979): 206.

<sup>392</sup> GA RF, f. R- 9587, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 244, 247. Minutes of 1-55 Meetings and Resolutions of the Board of APN.

percent) had higher or incomplete higher education, 262 spoke foreign languages, and 158 had work experience abroad. By 1964, only 5 foreign correspondents had been placed there by the Sovinformburo in 1960 and 1961. Those replacements abroad were gradual: over the years, 14 new staffers were dispatched abroad, in 1962 – 50, in 1963 – 47, in the course of the still ongoing 1964 – 9 people.<sup>393</sup> Overall, 138 APN employees were placed in 43 countries, of whom 88 were journalists.

Last but not least, surprisingly, the Soviet state kept some of its foreign workers abroad. Despite repressions and unjustified dismissals, the USSR had a hard time competing with foreign propaganda without the locals. Hence, the Soviet officials took better care of foreign subjects working for Soviet media abroad than of their journalists. Foreign employees had a higher degree of legal and financial protection than their Soviet counterparts. They received compensation in accordance with the labor code of their home country, a privilege not consistently extended to the Soviets.<sup>394</sup> The foreign employees were also duly entitled to various benefits, including, but not limited to, insurance, which had to comply with the employment regulations of their respective nations. Hence, the use of local personnel was considered a last resort when dispatching Soviet citizens overseas was impossible or unwise. Yet, paying foreign personnel was always hard. At that time, some countries had restrictions on the amount of foreign currency that could be brought into or taken out of their borders, and travelers were required to declare large amounts of foreign currency upon entry or exit. The rates of the Soviet currency – the ruble – were also strictly regulated by the government.<sup>395</sup> As a result, the exchange rate was not determined by market forces but was set and controlled by the government. Such state policy in practice led to the fact that journalists, like other Soviet citizens traveling abroad, were given a very limited amount of foreign currency, the expenditure of which was strictly regulated, and their bosses were directly asked to be as frugal as possible in planning their expenditures.<sup>396</sup> However, the expenses for Soviet and local employees abroad were high, including salaries and operational

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid, op, 1, d. 8, l. 305. Minutes of the 18th Joint Meeting of the Board and the APN Party Committee. 28 March, 1964.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, op. 2, d. 524, ll. 1–3. To the Head of the Soviet Information Bureau, Comrade. To Poryvaev A.P. February 1961 “Report on the work of the Representative Office of the Council of Information Bureaus in Denmark in 1960.”

<sup>395</sup> Many countries had fixed exchange rates, where the value of their currency was attached to a specific commodity (like gold) or another stable currency (like the British pound or the U.S. dollar). This system aimed to provide stability in international trade and finance. See: Franklyn D. Holzman, “The Ruble Exchange Rate and Soviet Foreign Trade Pricing Policies, 1929-1961” *The American Economic Review* 58, no. 4 (1968): 803–25.

<sup>396</sup> For instance, Gennadi Zafesov did not have foreign currency for 3 days and had to pay with cigarettes in Cuba. Zafesov, *Posle dvadcati let molchaniya*, 90.

costs.<sup>397</sup> Thus, the system underwent a significant transformation, challenging the operational foundations of the Soviet international press by undertaking serious political decisions.

## Conclusions

While several important challenges marked the postwar period for Soviet journalists and the state at large, it also saw contradictory measures that laid the foundation for both further improvement and now-unavoidable failures. First, the practice of measuring the Soviet press's efficiency abroad introduced a new framework for Cold War knowledge production and laid the groundwork for a systematic understanding of the world. This, in turn, affected the way educational systems and work methods were organized in the later years. After years of complaints from foreign readers and experts, the journalists were finally putting in the work to create more refined texts, taking into account regional specificities: literacy levels, local spelling, migrant communities, etc. Second, the official initiation of journalists into the elite ranks of *nomenklatura* cemented the place of the top journalists in the system. Now, they could count on prestige and privileges, previously unattainable by the workers of the pen. Their role in the state, and more so, in the Cold War, was acknowledged, and privileges were a token of appreciation for their efforts. Inequality was also visible to other journalists within the same news organizations, undermining their motivation and their perception of their craft. Last but not least, the death of Stalin was a catalyst for fundamental changes not only in the organizational structures but also in minds. People felt a certain degree of liberty and could finally express the perceived downsides of their operations without fear for their lives. The principle of criticism and self-criticism became a regulatory tool of the era, helping people finally fix what they had seen as broken all along. Institutional changes and a switch-up of personnel followed, with their own trials and tribulations.

## Chapter 3: Professionalization? Journalists' Career Trajectories

The career trajectory of a journalist, even more so an international journalist, is unpredictable.<sup>398</sup> International journalism on a competitive basis was just being established in the Cold War, so the group of people involved in it was minuscule and overall much smaller than that of "regular" journalists.<sup>399</sup> The field had very diverse demands and expectations

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<sup>397</sup> RGANI, f. 72, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1–9. Letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU from A. Egorov and V. Kortunov. January 13, 1964.

<sup>398</sup> The reflection of this debate can be seen, for instance, upon the foundation of the Union of Soviet journalists, where the chief journalists had to debate long and hard about who belonged to the profession and, hence, to the Union.

<sup>399</sup> Pedelty, *War Stories*, 47.

depending on the country of origin: for some, knowledge of a foreign language was at the forefront, while for others, loyalty to the newspaper and journalistic skills were of the utmost priority.<sup>400</sup> Like so, American foreign correspondents rarely spoke the target languages of their assignment destination,<sup>401</sup> while editorials from Germany and France tried to find reporters with linguistic skills.<sup>402</sup> The professional standards across the board varied across spheres: the supposed values behind their reporting, the expected frequency and intensity of coverage, views on the flow of information and freedom of information, and censorship – all of those factors played into the variations within the profession. Even within one country, fellow journalists had very different backgrounds and paths, but, somehow, they all belonged to the same professional group: some wrote for radio, some for the press; some had graduated from prestigious colleges, while others just took up the pen and started writing while working at the factory.<sup>403</sup> Hence, the professionalism of rank-and-file or international journalists is hard to grasp, since the criteria for the profession were so diverse even within a singular state.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> The variety of skills and expertise can be seen also in specialization in one specific region or a diverse and universal background. For instance, American correspondent Seymour Topping reported from China, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Europe.

<sup>401</sup> Before World War II, American foreign bureaus of news outlets had “fluid norms.” Deborah Cohen, “The Birth of the American Foreign Correspondent,” *The New Yorker*, March 17, 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-birth-of-the-american-foreign-correspondent> [accessed 08.10.2022] People who did not have writing experience, not even speaking of knowledge of intercultural communication, could be posted, or even go on their own initiative, abroad. When considering postings, the knowledge of a local language for a long time was not the most important factor for American journalists, although it could affect the potential length of their stay. Robert D. Hess, *International News and Foreign Correspondents* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 86; Sam Lebovic, *Righteous Smokescreen: Postwar America and the Politics of Cultural Globalization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 157.

<sup>402</sup> Matthias Müller, “Daily Routines under Constant Surveillance. West German Foreign Correspondents in Moscow in the 1950s and 60s,” *Storicamente* 11, No. 22 (2015); Niklas Venema, “Auslandskorrespondenten in drei politischen Systemen (1914–1939),” *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 32, no. 2 (2017): 24; Julia Metger, “‘Der Nervenkrieg hat hier jedenfalls zugenommen.’ Westliche Moskau-Korrespondenten in der Ära Chruščëv und der Wandel der Zensurpraxis um 1960,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 11, no. 1 (2014): 36–55.

<sup>403</sup> For decades, different countries had discussions about whether journalism can be called a profession in the first place. See: Liane Rothenberger, Irina Tribusean, Andrea C. Hoffmann, and Martin Löffelholz, “History and Development of Journalism Studies as a Global Field,” in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2019), 487–505. More on the Soviet understanding of professionalism and intentional cultivation of certain professions in: Roman Abramov, “Understanding Professionalism in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: an Analytical Review,” *The American Sociologist* 47 (2016): 81–101.

<sup>404</sup> On the other hand, the socialist bloc countries and their international journalists were shaped largely within the same temporal framework and under the pressures of the Soviet State. In many ways, the journalists in the Bloc shared many similarities with the Soviets: endless security checks by secret services, problems with foreign languages, male predominance, and slow professionalization of the group. With the Sovietization, the East-Central European states, just like the Soviets in the 1920s, first attempted to hire loyal, but not particularly professional cadres. Over time, the situation changed, and education came to the fore, and people of the “correct” social origin were not as prioritized anymore. Sune Bechmann Pedersen, Marie Cronqvist, *Foreign Correspondents*, 5, 9; Rosamund Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media*, 238; Stanisław Skrzypek, “The Profession of Journalism in Poland: A Profile,” *Journalism Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 123–8; Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

The sense of unpreparedness for the global competition in the postwar world was still haunting the USSR's officials.<sup>405</sup> At that time, the Soviet Union's ambitions grew significantly, demanding a broader and more robust network of experts to compete on the global stage. Still, with the increasing stakes and the rising decolonial movement, the realization of profound changes in global dynamics took the USSR by surprise, and the Soviet path toward the professionalization of international correspondents was thorny. With it, the first Cold War years were marked by the process of the unification of standards and practices.<sup>406</sup> As players in the global news markets, the journalists had no choice but to level the field and standardize their practices not just with their fellow citizens, but with the global merit to satisfy international readership. In this atmosphere, the professionals and their organizations competed with one another, and their actions reflected their ways of thinking, which could make them the most efficient and win the race to publish the news first.

Thus, in this chapter, I deconstruct the changing practices and standards of training Soviet foreign correspondents, as well as the requirements imposed on both new hires and experienced specialists who had undergone various stages of transformation in Soviet journalism. Special attention is paid to how, in the context of the post-war development of the international environment, correspondents' expectations changed, how the system of selection and professional socialization was formed, and which skills and qualities were considered key to successful work abroad. In addition, I analyze the specifics of the regional expertise – the ability of correspondents to understand the peculiarities of the political, cultural, and social life of the host countries, which in the Soviet context combined elements of linguistic competence and political economy. Taken together, this shows how the professional standards of international journalism in the USSR reflected not only the state's internal needs but also the challenges of foreign policy, and how they influenced journalists' career paths.

### **3.1. Training**

The early decades of the Soviet Union's existence showed a unique approach to the expertise of foreign professionals, even on the level of their supposed specialization. Soviet five-year plans, adopted in the late 1920s, were a means of establishing the transition to socialism and, later, communism. Through those plans, the USSR achieved impressive results,

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<sup>405</sup> Both new superpowers, USA and USSR, felt unprepared and changed the ways they were operating abroad and training of cadres. Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, "Notes in the history of intercultural communication: The Foreign Service institute and the mandate for intercultural training," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76, No. 3 (2009): 264.

<sup>406</sup> With the apparent globalization in the postwar era, many professions started rapidly developing: for instance, the start of simultaneous interpreters coincided with the onset of the Cold War.

industrializing the backward economy and rendering this model viable, at least in some of its aspects.<sup>407</sup> In 1935, amidst the second five-year plan, Stalin was satisfied with the tempo of change in the country and gave a new direction to the state-cadre orientation instead of equipment orientation, creating a new catchphrase – “cadres decide everything.”<sup>408</sup> With it, there was no need to wait for quick results, as work with people only bears fruit after a certain time.<sup>409</sup> After all, central planning extended not just to resources but also to people, quickly incorporating them into its calculations: the workforce was the driving force of the industry. Estimation of the number of needed workers and their education was a requirement for further progress.

The downside of introducing this policy was the USSR's constantly shifting political course, which demanded a flexible approach to human resources to adapt to new political realities. Experts were treated as universal specialists, performing multiple roles and switching between assignments. A person could not simply specialize in a narrow field, as the country might demand rapid changes in expertise to meet its needs: focused areas were rare and generally incompatible with the actual line of work. This flexibility was still seen as essential to maintaining the Soviet Union's path toward progress and responding quickly to internal or external developments: the expertise of any professionals was often regarded through a pragmatic lens, with their specialization being a secondary consideration to their potential utility.<sup>410</sup> For this reason, for many years, the officials did not pay much attention to the

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<sup>407</sup> Alexandre P. Vladislavlev, *A Conceptual Framework for the Development of Lifelong Education in the USSR*, Fundamentals of Educational Planning 35 (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 1987): 72–3.

<sup>408</sup> In the context of a planned economy, the state allocated all resources, including human capital, to meet its premeditated goals. V. Stalin, “Rech’ I. V. Stalina, 5 Maia 1935 g. (vypravlennaya stenogramma),” RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 1077, ll. 31–42, as quoted in V. A. Nevezhin, *Zastol’nye rechi Stalina: Dokumenty i materialy* [Stalin's table speeches: Documents and materials] (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003), 84–91. Having overcome the hunger for technology, the country faced a hunger for workers capable of moving this technology, squeezing everything possible out of it. Stalin highlighted that the equipment by itself was not worth anything without people behind its wheel. This catchphrase is beloved by historians but is barely mentioned when it comes to the discussion of the inefficiency of the centralized approach when it came to cadre policies. For instance, Daniel Stotland, “Cadres Decide Everything: The Enduring Dilemmas of the Party-State and the Soviet Service Class,” *International Journal of Russian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–19; Susan Grant, “Stalinist Care: Cadres Decide Everything,” in *Soviet Nightingales: Care under Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022), etc. On the inefficiency of planned economy, see: Robert W. Campbell, *The Failure of Soviet Economic Planning: System, Performance, Reform* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

<sup>409</sup> One needed to be patient, not giving up after the first setbacks, but moving on without hesitation and self-doubt. Now, the cadres needed to be grown and cherished, no matter how small or influential they were. Formally, this speech was addressed to a military audience. Yet, Stalin did not speak about the troops or commanders – he addressed the state-wide need for experts in different fields. The Soviet leader stressed that it was time to rely not on those people who had revolutionary merits in the past, but on professionals who had special education. On the one hand, he justified the upcoming repressions of any potential competitors from the rows of old Bolsheviks, and, on the other hand, emphasized the role of professional preparation of experts.

<sup>410</sup> The experimental nature of the Soviet state in its first decades of existence explains why the situation with cadres was unstable. The first years of the Soviet state's existence were marked by constant recalibrations of educational programs and policies, but further mismanagement and inability to coordinate between the

formal education of even middle and top managers, as long as they had practical experience in the needed fields in different spheres of Soviet life.<sup>411</sup>

When it came to global assignments, this pragmatic lens was also applied. This time, there was an added layer of complexity – a perfect *mezhdunarodnik* was hard to attain. An ideal specialist would possess diplomatic skills and tact, speak foreign languages, have an extensive knowledge of the history and politics of foreign countries, and, on top of that, know how to write engagingly about the recent news. So, the combination of all those skills was nearly impossible to find in a single person. Hence, hiring someone for such a position was always about a compromise: something would have to be omitted upon entering the position and, hopefully, gained with work experience. In the early Soviet decades, the training of experts in foreign affairs was targeting only a limited scope of the aforementioned qualities, raising country experts or diplomats, rather than international journalists.<sup>412</sup> Moreover, the training was limited to dozens of people per year.<sup>413</sup> Namely, the Higher Diplomatic School

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organizations seem to be the reason why the Soviet foreign cadres were so disoriented, if not wasted, by the state. Five-year plans, just like education that took several years to complete, needed a lot of premeditated considerations and simply took time, so an outcome of such planning was not always a desired outcome.

<sup>411</sup> Gradually, however, they were getting replaced and/or got their academic qualifications to stay in their positions. I. V. Ivanov, “Skilled-Manpower Planning, Forecasting and Training in the USSR,” in *Forecasting Skilled-Manpower Needs: The Experience of Eleven Countries* (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 1985), 165.

<sup>412</sup> The original short-term courses for journalists that barely covered the basics were deemed inappropriate already in the prewar time: taking into account the level of graduates, it was deemed necessary to organize a special scientific and educational institution, the State Institute of Journalism, with a program that includes the minimum of special and general educational knowledge that a professional journalist should possess. Those courses were transformed into GIZh. GIZh students, for example, studied the courses “The Bourgeois and Socialist Press of Europe and America”, and also had practical courses in German, English and French. The emphasis in training was on journalistic disciplines, but due to the increasing ideologization, the share of specialized subjects in the schedule decreased in the 1930s. The narrow aim of training party press workers was now with primary attention not to professional and creative development, but to ideological (propaganda) competencies. Plus, GIZh had no specializations, training “journalists in general,” with no subdivisions for the coverage of economics, culture, foreign affairs, etc. D. A. Gutnov, “Iz istorii zhurnalistskogo obrazovaniya v Rossii: institut Krasnykh zhurnalistov i ego blizhaishie preemniki (1919–1938)” [From the history of journalism education in Russia: The Institute of Red Journalists and its immediate successors (1919–1938)], *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*, № 6 (2014): 105, 112; I. A. Fateeva, “Ot shkoly zhurnalistov pri ROSTA k Moskovskomu institutu zhurnalistiki” [From the School of Journalists at ROSTA to the Moscow Institute of Journalism], *Izvestia Ural'skogo federal'nogo universiteta*, № 1 (171) (2018): 86, <https://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/58272/1/iurp-2018-171-09.pdf> [accessed 29.11.2024]. There were other forms of education. In 1924, newspaper sections were opened at the Communist University of the Peoples of the East and the Communist University of National Minorities of the West to train and send staff to newspapers in national languages and published in the national republics of the Union.

<sup>413</sup> For instance, while the Moscow State University and the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies existed from the 1920s and the Institute for Diplomatic and Consular Personnel (the Higher Diplomatic School) plus the Moscow Institute of Foreign Trade from the 1930s, the number of their graduates was quite insignificant, and the scale of training could not possibly cover the needs of the huge Soviet state. Moreover, the repressions that started in 1936 persecuted not just people individually but institutions at large. 1936 became the year when the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West was shut down, and 1937 was the final year for the Sverdlov Communist University. 1938 was marked by the biggest wave of the reorganization (see, shutting down) of a system of Party enlightenment, including Communist University of the Toilers of the East, the Institute of Red Professors, as well as the All-Union Institute of Journalism. Hence, many higher-level

would have a few dozen graduates per year, and those would be categorized by the ranks within the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs – they would be staffing Soviet embassies.<sup>414</sup> So, this training was not meant for journalists, and diplomacy was not a regular way into the profession in the prewar years.

Factually, most Soviet correspondents abroad of that era not only did not have any formal training in foreign languages, diplomacy, or foreign countries – they were not even journalists in the first place.<sup>415</sup> Many journalists had degrees in other areas, sometimes very far from journalism.<sup>416</sup> An engineer/ tractorist like Yuri Zhukov was retrained into a diplomat/ journalist for *Pravda* in France, while Yuri Kalugin was a professional rowing instructor who became a TASS correspondent in Brazil.<sup>417</sup> The bar of professionalism was, overall, low, since political loyalty and a “right” ideological/family background were at the cornerstone of cadre selection. Given the scarcity of specialists, they had to cover multiple countries. Novices like Boris Izakov were sent to Berlin and then to London, or, similarly, Abram Gartman was sent first to Germany and then to China, with officials seeing no vast difference

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institutions preparing professional propaganda cadres, be it in education or in Soviet media, were abolished at the peak of the Great Terror. See, for instance, on the Institute of Red Professors: Larisa Kozlova, «Institut krasnoi professury (1921–1938 gody): istoriograficheskii ocherk» [The Institute of the Red Professorship (1921–1938): A Historiographical Sketch], *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (1994): 110–1.

<sup>414</sup> A. Panov, V. Shchetinin, and Y. Fokin, *Diplomaticheskaya akademiya MID Rossii, 75 let vo blago Otechestva: 1934–2009* (Moscow: Nauchnaya kniga, 2009), 48.

<sup>415</sup> Many researchers argue that this was the intent of the early Soviet officials: to “deprofessionalize” journalism and involve people with the correct social background. For instance, Stephen Coe, *Peasants, the State and the Languages of NEP: The Rural Correspondents Movement in the Soviet Union, 1924–28* (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1993); Michael S. Gorham, *From Charisma to Cant: Models of Public Speaking in Early Soviet Russia* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003).

<sup>416</sup> Yuri Zhukov graduated from the Lomonosov Moscow Automobile and Tractor Institute, Boris Polevoi – from a technical school in Tver, Lev Bezymensky – from the Philosophy Department of the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, History, and Literature, etc. Some of the most prominent figures in the field had a pedagogical background (Nikolai Palgunov, Viktor Mayevskii, Pavel Satyukov, Viktor Poltoratskii, Anatolii Sofronov) or background in History (Vladimir Tsvetov, Nikolai Shishlin, Vitalii Zhurkin, Igor Fesunenkov). The degree in History was logical: before the emergence of the Faculty of International Journalism at MGIMO in the 1960s and the Department of International Journalism at the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University in the 1970s, basic education in Humanities could only be offered in History. In addition, History provided a deeper understanding of international relations, so it was a useful degree for foreign affairs. A path from pedagogy to journalism is also clear, given the supposed didactic role of the Soviet press over its own population. It is important to note that many American journalists did not have any formalized training and did not speak the local languages, relying only on reading for their future postings, while British foreign correspondents did not have a degree in international journalism, not speaking of a degree in journalism at large: many studied Humanities, Social Sciences, English, etc. Kenneth Starck and Estela Villanueva, *Cultural Framing: Foreign Correspondents and Their Work*, paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Montreal, Canada, August 5–8, 1992.

<sup>417</sup> There was also no support system for them, with no libraries and no teaching staff that could have helped. Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 20. On the other hand, the 1940s were still a time of transition and, hence, struggle while the cadres were only being formed at universities, especially for not-so-prestigious organizations like TASS and Sovinformburo. For instance, the 1945 hires of TASS for its London office did not have any previous experience in journalism – they were a railway engineer, a schoolteacher, ex-farm labourer, and an official of the Ministry of State Security. Central Intelligence Agency, *TASS: Its Role, Structure, and Operations*, June 1959, 15, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-02771R000100330004-8.pdf> [accessed 04.07.2022].

in those regions. After all, the Soviet officials had a vague understanding of foreign countries and what it was like to master a foreign language and how long it takes.<sup>418</sup> In most cases, having no language skills was seen as a temporary obstacle and an easy-to-fix problem, as Soviet officials seemed to have a very vague idea of what it took to master other languages. For instance, when Stalin noticed that his English translator made mistakes, he asked Molotov to provide him with a replacement. Molotov could only provide someone with knowledge of German, and Stalin said, “I’ll tell him, and he’ll learn English.”<sup>419</sup> As such, this interpreter urgently needed to learn English.

Daniil Kraminov’s story is a perfect example of the state of journalistic professionalism in the late 1930s. He, then a regional correspondent with some knowledge of German, could be very valuable in the light of an upcoming war. Yet, he was instead sent to Sweden for his assignment in a country he had never visited and whose language he did not speak. Moreover, it was nearly impossible to prepare for the said assignment: there were few books about Sweden and few people who knew the country well.<sup>420</sup> There was no Swedish-language textbook in Russian, so Kraminov had to learn the language from an English book his teacher owned. His teacher, a Swede who had lived in Moscow for about ten years, did not speak Russian well and had limited English proficiency; hence, Kraminov’s knowledge was limited to a dozen common phrases for greeting people in the morning, saying goodbye, thanking them, and asking for necessities. Moreover, before leaving Moscow, at Khavinson’s request,<sup>421</sup> Kraminov was received at the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. While he hoped to gain some insights for his upcoming assignment, none of the officials in the department had ever worked in Stockholm, so they could not share any firsthand experience. The Press Department was headed by a recently appointed philosophy professor who had a very vague understanding of the press in general and no knowledge of the Swedish press specifically. His two young assistants had never traveled abroad and were therefore hesitant to offer any advice. As a result, Kraminov left these meetings with zero advice, expertise, or understanding about Sweden, the country to which he was being sent. On his assignment, his

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<sup>418</sup> Some of the highest ranking officials, at least in the 1930s, attempted to learn English and German, including Molotov or Stalin himself, despite their expectations of the world revolution. For them, learning major European languages was rather a sign of high culture that they aspired to promote, alongside communist values. Mikoyan, as trade minister, also felt the need to learn foreign languages, especially since he was sent on missions abroad. Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin’s Team*, 100.

<sup>419</sup> Aleksei Alekseev, “Berezhkov: On stoyal za plechom u Stalina [Berezhkov: He Stood at Stalin’s Shoulder],” *Kommersant*, November 26, 1998. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/209448> [accessed 27.07.2025].

<sup>420</sup> Daniil Kraminov, *V orbite voyny: Zapiski sovetskogo korrespondenta za rubezhom, 1939–1945 gody* [In the Orbit of War: Notes of a Soviet Correspondent Abroad, 1939–1945], 2nd ed., expanded (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1986).

<sup>421</sup> At this point, Yakov Khavinson was the head of TASS.

situation was becoming increasingly dire. In addition to Sweden,<sup>422</sup> he was now also responsible for covering Norway and Denmark, countries where TASS had no correspondents at all. His chief promised to send two or three additional people to Stockholm to help him with his workload, but this never happened. Kraminov was also tasked with finding people who could assist with the coverage of Norway, Denmark, and Finland: the latter was particularly urgent, as the Soviet-Finnish war was already looming.<sup>423</sup> The pressure was immense, and he had little to no idea about the region.

Seeing the Scandinavian office struggle with its tasks in such an urgent situation, conclusions were drawn, and the Soviet-Finnish war that Kraminov now had to observe was a catalyst for further change. The conflict was devastating for the Soviet international reputation, and it became clear that attempts to raise universal *mezhdunarodniks* backfired. While aiming to create multifaceted professionals, the schools graduated students with surface-level knowledge across diverse fields. They were aiming to cultivate all-embracing soldiers, but the output was “raw” students that needed a lot of additional, more specialized training.<sup>424</sup> The chiefs insisted on the expansion of foreign coverage despite having no means or specialists for it.<sup>425</sup> Major capitals of the world got new offices, and bureaus in London and New York got reinforced with more employees. It also accelerated promotions and postings abroad, simultaneously overburdening their workers.<sup>426</sup>

With the Great Patriotic War immediately following, the determination to change was only growing, albeit with the state’s limited capacity at that point. If, in the first two years, the

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<sup>422</sup> Before him, in Stockholm, the duties of the TASS correspondent were being handled by a Swedish Communist journalist, Knut Bäckström. Marxistarkiv, "Bäckström, Knut," <https://marxistarkiv.se/profiler-i-svensk-arbetsrorelse/backstrom-knut> [accessed 03.09.2022].

<sup>423</sup> For the entire region, there were seven people stationed at the correspondent point. This team included Kraminov himself, a Swedish correspondent, Koryagin, who was responsible for handling the Norwegian press, Zoya Rybkina, who assumed the role of secretary, another German secretary Dabbert, a Finnish translator, and a typist. This small group worked together to cover news and maintain communications across the entire region. The correspondent point evolved into a fully functioning TASS bureau, and Kraminov was appointed as its head. This change also meant a bigger regional coverage with the onset of the Soviet-Finnish War. This period was especially stressful until the war ended, after which the Soviet correspondent in Finland could return to its place.

<sup>424</sup> The institutions were struggling with coming up with educational programs, since they had to find a middle ground between “three blocks of disciplines – Oriental studies (languages, regional studies, history and culture), special (law, statistics, commodity science, etc.) and general “Marxist” subjects (historical materialism, political economy, the history of revolutionary movements, etc.) They were not ready for any of the supposed career prospects: neither trade, translation, nor diplomacy. For instance, since the Institute of Oriental Studies had to continue to train workers of a generalized profile “orientalists-social activists” [vostokoved-obshchestvennik] not only for the NKID [then Ministry of Foreign Affairs], but also for other, primarily trade purposes, the multi-subject nature of training continued to persist. Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya, 223.

<sup>425</sup> Malcolm L. G. Spencer, *Signals from Stalin: The Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 63.

<sup>426</sup> Just like Kraminov, Enver Mamedov, an attaché at a Soviet embassy, had to keep tabs not just on Italy where he was based, but also on Germany and partially America. *Ya ne sovershal bol'shih podvigov* [I Haven’t Done Any Great Feats], [http://broadcasting.ru/articles2/Litsa/ya\\_ne\\_sovershal\\_podvig](http://broadcasting.ru/articles2/Litsa/ya_ne_sovershal_podvig) [accessed 05.06.2023].

country was just fighting for its survival and focused much of its propaganda on convincing everyone of its unbreakable spirit, the flickers of hope after the Battles of Kursk and Stalingrad gave new impetus to a radical restructuring of international propaganda. With all eyes on the USSR, it needed to swiftly create and fill those new positions. For instance, in mid-1943, Lazar' Brontman, a *Pravda* journalist, talked about a "signal" for the newspaper's workers for re-orientation: "We are now seriously considering learning foreign languages. That's a very serious signal. I should do it myself. I used to take up German, French, and English, but I didn't take it too seriously."<sup>427</sup> Like so, the main Soviet newspaper was a weathervane: now, the journalists will be turning their attention to the West, focusing on foreign languages and analyzing the politics abroad.<sup>428</sup>

Around the same time, the idea of establishing a university that trained cadres for foreign affairs was born.<sup>429</sup> There were many versions of the foundational projects of such an institution, but most point to the need to create a new type of cadre in foreign affairs, as well as to the USSR's new place in the world order. As early as 1943, the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs established the Faculty of International Relations at Moscow State University. Just a year later, the Faculty was transformed into a separate Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).<sup>430</sup> MGIMO offered various faculties for future international personnel, including International Relations for diplomats, International Economic Relations for trade-mission positions, and International Law for a comprehensive understanding of legal issues. MGIMO brought a much-needed and profound change in the training system.<sup>431</sup> It was not just the scale of training that was switched: it was also the variety of faculties in the field of foreign affairs.<sup>432</sup> The strategy was poorly thought

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<sup>427</sup> Lazar' Brontman, Diaries, July 5, 1943, [prozhto.org](http://prozhto.org), <https://corpus.prozhto.org/note/6164> [accessed 09.04.2023].

<sup>428</sup> Already during the war, it became clear that the future standoff between socialist and capitalist countries is inevitable. Geoffrey Roberts, "Ideology, Calculation, and Improvisation: Spheres of Influence and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1939–1945," *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 667.

<sup>429</sup> It is worth noticing that the information could not be corroborated, but it sounds plausible. Boris Kurbatov, *Sbornik Vypisniki MGIMO 1948-1954 gg.* [MGIMO Alumni yearbook 1948-1954] (Moskva: Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 1998), 7. as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 17.

<sup>430</sup> "Faculty of Foreign Affairs: History of the Faculty," *Mgimo.ru*, <https://mgimo.ru/study/faculty/mo/docs/mo-history/> [accessed 15.01.2023].

<sup>431</sup> In the projects, more details were also discussed, for instance, more specific geographic areas like the Middle and Far East that needed more attention and more professionals to cover those. With developing discussions, the future institution was getting more and more upscale: it started out as a mere department, then faculty, and then the whole institute. Pis'mo otvetstvennogo rukovoditelya TASS Ya. Havinsona zamestitelyu narkoma inostrannykh del V. Dekanozova, [Head of TASS Ya. S. Havinson's letter to vice-minister of foreign affairs V.G Dekanozov], 05/05/1943, MGIMO Museum, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 87.

<sup>432</sup> The graduates were not meant to be only diplomats: they were also lawyers, specialists in commerce, and historians. In practice, their work portfolio could be even more expansive, spanning from work at Soviet embassies to the NKVD (secret services).

out because there was no faculty of journalism, so no press specialists could graduate in the first place, while several internationally-oriented organizations were in dire need of specialized cadres:

The vice-commissar [Dekanozov] argued that the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the Commissariat for Foreign Trade, the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS), and the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) were experiencing a pressing need for cadres endowed with a deep knowledge of international relations and foreign languages.<sup>433</sup>

It comes as no surprise that TASS was heavily involved in the debates on the goals of that school: it was clear how useful the new institute could be for restaffing the agency and positively affecting its performance abroad.<sup>434</sup> The head of TASS tried to use MGIMO for his agency's gain, asking to use the new establishment for training correspondents, as well as consular employees and foreign trade workers.<sup>435</sup> The first drafts of the project also confirmed that "the future organization would be a breeding ground for workers who would later be employed by institutions such as TASS and VOKS."<sup>436</sup> The project did not come to life, and the gap in special education for journalists could not be addressed by the skills taught to other specialists, at least in the eyes of the TASS head. For him, a more precise training was needed, and languages were not cutting it:

And people who did know foreign languages were not journalists. Some of them could make a flawless translation from a foreign language into Russian, but spent so much time on the work that the result of it lost all interest; others were exceptionally accurate in their translation, but the text they produced was, if not impossible, then at least very difficult to read.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Pis'mo zamestitelya nakorma as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 74.

<sup>434</sup> RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1027, l. 74. Stenogramma vystupleniya tov. V.M. Molotova na soveshhanii sotrudnikov central'nogo apparata MID SSSR okonchivshih IMO [Transcript of V.M. Molotov's speech at the meeting of the workers of the MID central apparatus, who graduated from the IMO], 04/03/1955, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 18.

<sup>435</sup> Pis'mo predsdatelya Vsesoyuznogo Komiteta po delam vysshei shkoly pri SNK SSSR S.V. Kaftanova zamestitelyu narkoma inostrannykh del V.G. Dekanozova [Letter of the chairman of the All-Union Committee for higher educational institutions Sergei Kaftanov to as ell deputy people's commissar of foreign affairs V.G. Dekanozov], 25/05/1943, MGIMO Museum, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 84.

<sup>436</sup> Pis'mo zamestitelya nakorma as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 76.

<sup>437</sup> Nikolai Palgunov, *Tridcat' let: Vospominaniya zhurnalista i diplomata* [Thirty Years. Memoirs of a Journalist and a Diplomat] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), 271.

To partially address the issue, in addition to language training,<sup>438</sup> the educators focused on the cultural and historical contexts of English and American literary traditions, as well as general enlightenment in other world regions. Journalists were not a priority for MGIMO, and this was reflected in their career prospects.

Outside of MGIMO, a new opportunity arose to become a correspondent – through newly-established Journalistic departments.<sup>439</sup> The first journalistic faculty was opened at Leningrad State University in 1946. The feat was followed by Moscow State University a year later, setting off a chain reaction. By 1952, there were 13 journalistic faculties throughout the Soviet Union, and hundreds and thousands of journalists graduated annually.<sup>440</sup> Upon graduation, the “personnel officers” of the agencies (who had a close relationship with the rectorates) asked for the annual quota of graduates. If the graduates did

<sup>438</sup> It was a shared problem between two superpowers: any American correspondent had only limited knowledge of foreign languages, even in Russian and Chinese, despite the ideological stand-off: usually, their skills were limited to major Western European languages. Many did not have area expertise either, only catching up with the necessity to be knowledgeable about their assigned regions later, for instance, having graduated from the Soviet Studies or taking courses in “Political Russian”. Like so, Jonathan Sanders became the first Sovietologist to be hired by a major U.S. news outlet after being a Fulbright scholar in Moscow. However, it was almost impossible to specialize in one’s area thanks to the vastness of the assignments: most ought to cover not just one country but the whole region, sometimes meaning dozens of languages and varying cultures at that time. Throughout the Cold War, Americans started preparing their citizens for an “outward-oriented” orientation – foreign languages, exchange programs, etc. Many of those programs and measures were not sufficient: language training and area expertise were squeezed into one year at university. After that, the correspondent, or an area specialist at large, was left on their own. Many “exotic” languages demanded more time and effort to learn. Moreover, having learned a more “exotic” language did not guarantee an assignment in the area, and many lost the skills that they fought to acquire in a short time. There was no planned career for area experts, safeguarding their development and securing positions that would make for them and for the state. Stephen Hess, *International News & Foreign Correspondents* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1996): 84–85; Central Intelligence Agency, *Standards of Foreign Language Proficiency for the Foreign Service – 1959*, declassified document, 44, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP61-00357R000100180003-9.pdf> [accessed 22.11.2023]; Leon and Leila Poullada, “Our Tongue-Tied Foreign Service,” *The Reporter*, March 19, 1959: 44.

<sup>439</sup> After the war, journalism education began developing in higher education system. Ideological training, which was preferential in the 1930s, did not contribute to the professional and qualitative growth of press workers, and more fundamental education was needed. It was universities that provided deep and extensive humanitarian training. The bare minimum for them was not a certain quantity of journalistic skills but rather political education that they had to acquire. “Istoriya zhurnalistskogo obrazovaniya v Rossii: ot ideologii k tehnologii,” [The history of journalism education in Russia: from ideology to technology], *Zhurnalistska i mediaobrazovanie*, 21 October, 2019, <https://jmlst.ru/2019/10/21/6075/> [accessed 04.02.2022] However, the problem of the postwar journalistic faculties were that they were often based on the Philological Faculty, meaning that much of their program was focused on the Russian language and linguistic aspects of journalism, not on the particular tasks of this craft. There was no “holistic” university program for this academic discipline at that time, it was based on lectures and a journalism program at the Higher Party School. Iena Vartanova and Maria Lukina, “Russian Journalism Education: Challenging Media Change and Educational Reform,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 72, no. 3 (2017): 274–84; “Istoriya fakul'teta s 1947 po 1966 gody” [The history of the faculty from 1947 to 1966], [journ.msu.ru](http://journ.msu.ru), <https://www.journ.msu.ru/about/history/40-70.php> [accessed 19.05.2024]; N. Alekseeva, “Universitetskoe zhurnalistskoe obrazovanie v Rossii,” *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistska, № 4 (2006): 9–35, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/universitetskoe-zhurnalistskoe-obrazovanie-v-rossii/viewer> [accessed 20.05.2024].

<sup>440</sup> RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d. 526, ll. 12-16. A memorandum on improving the training of journalists at state universities.

exceptionally well, the agencies were happy to endorse them, and the candidate could get a position. Vitalii Ignatenko recalled that the competition in the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University was very intense:

And they accepted, first of all, industrial workers and those who had already served in the army. Only 15 places were allocated for yesterday's schoolchildren. The competition was about 20 people per spot. But for some reason, I was sure that I would get in right away. I already had publications. And I firmly believed that I would succeed. However, it lasted only until the first exam. At the first exam, next to me sat a wonderful young man, Misha Palievsky, who was writing an essay as a poem. When I saw this, I thought: I must have gotten to the wrong place!<sup>441</sup>

Journalists with publications were not the priority for the entrance exams – in the Soviet spirit, people with experience of work at the factory were. So, they had to fit in “biographically,” as well as pass the entry exams. Hence, the admission was on a competitive basis, not just based on Party membership.<sup>442</sup> One desired part of the biography was partaking in the war: right in the middle of it, MGIMO was enrolling either wounded soldiers or fighters who were recalled from the front to study for the needs of the state.<sup>443</sup> Around one-third of all students (200 people) previously were in the army.<sup>444</sup> So, the first generations of MGIMO students were often called “Lieutenant,” thanks to the high presence of military ranks.<sup>445</sup> Former soldiers had an upper hand, to the point that some of them lacked the necessary skills and no past in writing for the Soviet press. Vladimir Tolstikov, a 22-year-old former navy officer who fought in Korea, learned English on his own for a week, so his skills were objectively poor. He was still admitted to the university thanks to his military background, as “the leadership of the institute understood how difficult it was for front-line

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<sup>441</sup> Mikhail Rostovsky, “Vitalii Ignatenko: ‘Horoshii zhurnalyst prodatsya tol’ko odin raz – svoei idee’ [Vitalii Ignatenko: ‘A Good Journalist Is Sold Only Once – to His Idea’],” *Vsemirnaya associaciya russkoi pressy*, April 19, 2016, <http://warp.pro/c12/293.html> [accessed 01.03.2023].

<sup>442</sup> Although, of course, children of officials had an upper hand in getting admitted. Vikenty Matveev, on the other hand, recalled multiple steps that he had to pass for admission: an initial interview with an employee of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, an English exam, and yet another interview. Vikentii Matveev, *Memoirs*, [prozhitto.org](http://prozhitto.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/669240> [accessed 02.03.2024].

<sup>443</sup> “Leitenantskoe pokolenie MGIMO” [The MGIMO Lieutenant's generation], *MGIMO Journal*, 7 May, 2025, <https://mgimo.ru/about/news/main/leytenantskoe-pokolenie-mgimo/> [accessed 03.07.2025]. Yuli Yakhontov, for instance, upon graduation from the Air Force Military Aviation Communications School, was sent to continue his education at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages of the Red Army, which he calls the best linguistic education in the country in those war years. N. V. Kasabova, “Vospominaniya o rabote v Krasnoyarskom krae” [Memories of work in the Krasnoyarsk Territory], *Memorial Krasnoyarsk*, <https://memorial.krsk.ru/memuar/K/Kasabova/09/08.htm> [accessed 26.08.2025].

<sup>444</sup> Rostislav Sergeev, “Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov) – Pedagog i Rukovoditel’ (01.10.1903–18.04.1969)” [Yuri Pavlovitsh Frantsev – Pedagogue and Leader], *MGIMO Review of International Relations* 5, no. 20 (2011): 266, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/yuriy-pavlovich-frantsev-frantsov-pedagog-i-rukovoditel-01-10-1903-18-04-1969> [accessed 04.07.2025].

<sup>445</sup> For instance, Aleksei Shestopal got into the first row of MGIMO students after being wounded on the front. Leitenantskoe pokolenie MGIMO.

soldiers to return to school, and the passing score was more sparing [shchyadyashchii] for them.”<sup>446</sup> It appears that the readiness for self-sacrifice for the motherland was the test that any *mezhdunarodnik* needed to pass:

It was very difficult to get into MGIMO even then, especially after school. The competition itself was not very high: 5–6 people per place. However, almost a third of MGIMO applicants were young participants of the Great Patriotic War who had just been demobilized. Naturally, they were admitted first. Everyone else could count either on someone's patronage or on very strong knowledge.<sup>447</sup>

This was a ubiquitous trend: the core of a Faculty of Journalism at the Moscow State University was also former front-line soldiers.<sup>448</sup> They had special quotas for higher education and better conditions upon entry tests.<sup>449</sup> After all, being part of an army was the ultimate marker of loyalty to the state's ideals and party values,<sup>450</sup> no matter if in a correspondent's capacity or as a regular soldier.<sup>451</sup>

Another war-related vector of change was already existing facilities and institutions. On October 3, 1944, a new resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR “On Measures to Improve Personnel Training in the Countries of the Foreign East at the Moscow

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<sup>446</sup> Tamara and Vladimir Tolstikov, “Roman dlinoyu v zhizn” [A Lifelong Romance], *MGIMO Stories* (2019): 4, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/2019/10/MGIMO-Stories.pdf> [accessed 28.07.2023].

<sup>447</sup> “Vladimir Pavlovich Dunaev,” in Aleksandr Grebel'nikov, ed., *Zhurnalisty XX veka: lyudi i sud'by* [Journalists of the Twentieth Century: People and Destinies] (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 383.

<sup>448</sup> Adzhubei, Te desyat' let. Lev Delyusin also remarked that he was “an excellent candidate – a front-line soldier, candidate for membership in the CPSU, graduated from high school with honors” for his enrollment into the Institute of Oriental Studies. “Interview with Lev P. Delyusin,” in *Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaia istoriia. Sbornik interv'iu s vedushchimi rossiiskimi kitaevedami XX–XXI vv.*, ed. V. Ts. Golovachev et al., 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN; Maks Press, 2018), 119, <https://book.ivran.ru/f/golovachev-sb-ktom1pechat22102018.pdf> [accessed 28.09.2023].

<sup>449</sup> Children of fallen soldiers could also join prestigious establishments. For instance, Sergei Afonin could get into the elite Kyiv boarding school because his father died in the war and mother was disabled. E. Kobelev, “Pamyati druga” [In Memory of a Friend], *The Russian Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1, no. 3 (2013): 365–72, <https://vietnamjournal.ru/2618-9453/article/view/84416> [accessed 14.11.2022]. Even by the mid-1950s, having served in the army increased chances of entering universities: after the XX Congress of the CPSU, preferential enrollment was guaranteed to cadres with experience or to the former soldiers. Ekaterina Vitman, “Interv'yu s izvestnym zhurnalistom-mezhdunarodnikom Borisom Aleksandrovichem Kalyaginym, 29 Maia 2013” [Interview with a Famous Journalist-Mezhdunarodnik Boris Kalyagin, 23 May 2013], *Permskii filial Vysshei Shkoly Ekonomiki*, May 29, 2013, <https://perm.hse.ru/news/83976293.html> [accessed 04.11.2022].

<sup>450</sup> The willingness to die for the country was a way to earn the trust or return it if it had been lost before: one's blood and tears in the war could wash off one's mistakes. For instance, writer Aleksandr Avdeenko, fell out of Stalin's favor in 1940: he was excluded from the Party and could no longer get published in the best newspapers. He was forgiven for the military coverage, restored in his status, and continued his writing career. Konstantin Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia: Razmyshleniia o I.V. Staline* [Through the eyes of a man of my generation: Reflections on J.V. Stalin] (Moscow: APN, 1989), fragment, [https://hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_s/simonov12.php](https://hrono.ru/libris/lib_s/simonov12.php) [accessed 01.10.2023].

<sup>451</sup> Soviet correspondents at the frontlines had military ranks and, hence, were considered part of the military. Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 351–71. The same was done after the Civil War, when demobilized army cadres were a priority for recruitment for the Institute of Red Professors as the most ideologically-seasoned and loyal followers. Larisa Kozlova, “Institut krasnoi professury (1921–1938 gody): istoriograficheskii ocherk” [The Institute of the Red Professorship (1921–1938): A Historiographical Sketch], *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (1994): 99.

Institute of Oriental Studies” followed,<sup>452</sup> as its students could not be repurposed as foreign affairs specialists. In fact, students realized that the depth of the knowledge they were gaining was insufficient for a real line of work: the Institute’s main focus was on training translators, not foreign affairs specialists, and most of their teaching focused on languages and on Marxism as the scientific doctrine. Most importantly, the knowledge of the country and the region was secondary in their education, which made some students even consider getting a second degree in History at the Moscow State University, which, however, was not endorsed.<sup>453</sup> Even in their immediate field, despite the proclaimed focus on translation training, the level of preparation of students was not satisfactory.<sup>454</sup> The opportunities to practice their knowledge were scarce. After months of strict filtration in the counterintelligence agencies, “the lucky ones who passed the test were sent to work as interpreters in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps. [...] about half a million soldiers and officers ended up in Soviet captivity.”<sup>455</sup> Such practice was far from the imaginary glamour of foreign lands. Facing the reality in the target country made the supposed specialists realize how poor their training was, feeling their inadequacy in just reading books and newspapers.<sup>456</sup> So, it was just the start of the change for many institutions.

Much of the teaching staff was also not specialists: former professors went to work on the construction sites of communism. In contrast, the new, more ideologically appropriate teaching staff was formed from practitioners of the “world revolution,”<sup>457</sup> with no necessary skills other than loyalty to the party. When describing the teaching staff of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, Boris Chekhonin listed several people who did not fit into the Soviet society but survived the purges and passed on their unique expertise: Nikolai Konrad studied at Tokyo University, was later sentenced to exile in GULAG, and returned to teaching in the postwar era, now living in more than modest conditions. Many other teachers were students of Konrad with broken fates – “burned-out diplomats” or Russian emigrants

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<sup>452</sup> According to it, the Institute was supposed to train “highly qualified reference translators in the countries of the foreign East,” and the term of study was extended to five years. Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya, 244.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>454</sup> For instance, the library at the Oriental Studies Institute had very sparse, unorganized materials from the former Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History library [The Institute was shut down in 1941], “as well as replenished with Chinese-language Comintern materials previously published in Moscow, the confiscation of arrested people and various closed, liquidated institutions.” Yet, even having those at hand was not a guarantee of having access to those, as they were still classified “probably because they were in a foreign language”, and therefore were not given out. Rossiiskoe kitaevdenie – ustnaya istoriya, 120.

<sup>455</sup> Chekhonin, Zhurnalistika i razvedka.

<sup>456</sup> Rossiiskoe kitaevdenie – ustnaya istoriya, 120.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid, 121.

who returned from Manchuria after the war.<sup>458</sup> The fates of many were about to be broken during Chekhonin's studies: Robert Elmston, an American communist and English teacher, "disappeared." Professor Bregel, a political economist, was fired because he was Jewish. The same fate followed one of the most notable professors, Nikolai Yakovlev, dismissed for being Jewish.<sup>459</sup> Such unfair treatment led to him having psychological issues that he suffered from until the end of his days. Dismissal and purges of professors left an imprint on the ability to create new professionals: the Institute of Oriental Studies, for instance, did not train specialists in Southeast Asia and Ceylon, which largely caused a shortage of specialists in these countries.<sup>460</sup> At the same institute, the head of the Department of Indian Languages, Vladimir Meresh, had not only no scientific title or degree, but also no formal training in Oriental Studies whatsoever.<sup>461</sup>

Many were punished for simply doing their job: Kacyn, Professor at MGIMO, got fired for letting students access foreign press: in her eyes, it was a better way not only to get acquainted with the press itself, but also a method of learning foreign languages.<sup>462</sup> A logical conclusion that knowing your enemy means being prepared for the fight did not satisfy the officials, nor did the students defending her help. Mikhail Danishevskii, who taught Journalism at the Higher Party Courses, was sentenced to 10 years in exile and died in prison.<sup>463</sup> Many were expelled for their Jewish origins or other issues with family background, as Jewish students were not very welcome at MGIMO faculties.<sup>464</sup> Many were dismissed for something they were supposed to be doing: the director of the State Publishing House for Foreign Literature was arrested with an excuse of his contacts with Americans,<sup>465</sup> while "Lozovsky openly declared that the Soviet security organs regularly arrested students because of their contacts with foreigners."<sup>466</sup> So, students also vanished, "One by one, people began to disappear from the classrooms. Their comrades later whispered about the arrests."<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Boris Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka* [Journalism and intelligence] (Moscow: Algoritm, 2002), [https://royallib.com/read/chehonin\\_boris/gurnalistika\\_i\\_razvedka.html#0](https://royallib.com/read/chehonin_boris/gurnalistika_i_razvedka.html#0) [accessed 03.07.2024].

<sup>459</sup> "130-letnii yubiley N.F. Yakovleva (1892–1974)" [130th anniversary of N.F. Yakovlev (1892–1974)], *Institute of Philology and Language Communication, Siberian Federal University*, <https://iflyak.sfu-kras.ru/news/130-letniy-yubiley-nf-yakovleva-1892-1974/> [accessed 08.10.2023].

<sup>460</sup> Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya, 244–5.

<sup>461</sup> Shastitko and Charyeva, *Kak zakryvali moskovskii Institut vostokovedeniya*.

<sup>462</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 131.

<sup>463</sup> "Annotirovannyj indeks imen k delu 'Krug'" [The annotated index of names to the Krug case, Regional State Administration of the SBU], OGA SBU, f.65, d.S-6974, t. 1–15, <https://jdoc.org.il/krug-index> [accessed 01.08.2023].

<sup>464</sup> Grigorii Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat' interv'yu. Tak rabotayut zhurnalisty* [Twenty-five Interviews. That's How Journalists Work] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1978), 384.

<sup>465</sup> Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 193.

<sup>466</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 132.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

The same went for the students of MGIMO: out of 200 enrolled in 1943, only 120 graduated.<sup>468</sup> Of course, some dropped out because of the difficulty of studies, but “students noticed that their classmates were disappearing from the Institute daily.”<sup>469</sup> Thus, on top of the already poorly thought-out educational structure of *mezhdunarodniki*, the system was severely undermined by repressions. Firing or arresting the professors impaired the students’ training when it was just being established.

Needless to say, the new human-oriented trajectory was intended to be long-term, and it took many years to produce the first cohorts of professionals, especially since many people vanished in the process. The chaotic, rushed assignments for international departments of news outlets were now less prevalent, though not obsolete. There was an upward trend toward a more professional background, increasingly present among post-war graduates. The change was happening faster in the lower echelons of professional journalists: the first real results could be seen right before Stalin’s death in the early 1950s, with fresh graduates filling out the gaps in staffing in less prestigious positions of the newspapers, although they started in the best news outlets of the country like *Izvestia*, “So we took the risk of recruiting seven MGIMO graduates to the editorial staff over a period of two or three years.”<sup>470</sup> De facto, *Izvestia*’s international department has existed since the early years of the newspaper;<sup>471</sup> it only began to take shape after World War II, with the foundation of a full-fledged department of international politics – INO [foreign]. Vladimir Kudryavtsev was responsible for its creation as a journalist with experience in foreign affairs and an understanding of the needs of a newspaper: “The war knocked out the average journalistic link. It came to the point that people who had never been involved in international affairs had to be hired for duty in the department.”<sup>472</sup> So, young journalists like Spartak Beglov, Stanislav Kondrashov, Mikhail Sagatelyan, Georgii Dadiyants, Oleg Feofanov, Valerii Lednev, etc. graduated in the late 1940s, and they became the fuel to restaff the newspapers.<sup>473</sup>

Nonetheless, professionalization was not a linear process; there was no perfect or holistic education for international journalists. Many had to learn from their older colleagues, and people like Izakov, having had much experience by the post-war era, further passed down his

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Evgeniya Pimenova, “Vsemirnaya izvestnost’ [Worldwide Fame],” *Izvestia*, March 13, 2017, <https://content.izvestia.ru/news/657578> [accessed 18.04.2023]. Of course, this was possible due to an active involvement of MGIMO’s head, Yuri Frantsev. Sergeev, Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov), 266.

<sup>471</sup> For example, *Izvestia* had a big office in Berlin in the 1920s.

<sup>472</sup> Evgeniya Pimenova, Vsemirnaya izvestnost’.

<sup>473</sup> Vikentii Matveev, Memoirs, 17 June, 1947, [prozhitto.org](http://prozhitto.org), <https://corpus.prozhitto.org/note/669240> [accessed 02.03.2024].

knowledge to other soon-to-be international journalists. Yuri Zhukov, the *Pravda* correspondent at the time, wrote the following in his memoirs about his own training after the war,

At that time, there were very few international journalists; therefore, former war correspondents were sent on such responsible assignments, as they had a chance to see a bit of foreign countries, even though in very peculiar conditions of front-line reality. I represented *Pravda*, and Viktor Poltoratskii represented *Izvestia*. We didn't yet know any languages and didn't know much about the finer points of world politics, so only Boris Izakov was an expert among us. He taught us how to work.<sup>474</sup>

Thus, in most cases, newcomers' competence was lacking: they were mostly area experts and foreign-language speakers, not journalists.<sup>475</sup> They were *mezhdunarodniks* trained either as journalists with no specific qualifications in foreign affairs, as a *mezhdunarodnik* without any focus on writing, or as translators with expertise beyond linguistics. A "full" professional background was never a complete must, and hiring anyone for the position was almost always a compromise. Essentially, the foreign correspondents were expected to either speak multiple languages, have area expertise, or be good journalists. All three were nearly impossible to find, since it was a rare combination thanks to how the system of raising those cadres was set up from early on.

### 3.2. Journalists Take the Reins

Even with the establishment of faculties of journalism in different parts of the country, it was still common to come into the profession without any formal education by just working with the editor first, submitting an article to the editorial office, and, with positive feedback, "the person is gone."<sup>476</sup> In fact, many graduates from Journalism departments not only did not follow up on their degree and tried to do a Ph.D. – they never pursued work in the immediate field in the first place. "18,000 journalists in the Russian Federation. 53,000 throughout the Union. 3,000 graduates of journalism faculties work in editorial offices, fewer than the number of graduates."<sup>477</sup> For instance, at the time of APN's foundation in 1961, 432 staffers had higher education,<sup>478</sup> making up approximately 56 percent of the total staff.<sup>479</sup> So, many

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<sup>474</sup> Zhukov, *Zhurnalisty: Rasskazy o soldatah*, 235.

<sup>475</sup> International journalism as a faculty was established at MGIMO only in 1969 (the department had existed since 1967), and before that, they were people with no formal education in this field, who were the pioneers and creators of the traditions of Soviet international journalism.

<sup>476</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 141, l. 20. Transcript of the All-Union Creative Seminar on the Topic of a Conversation about the Training of Journalistic Personnel, report by Ivanova L.M. March 14, 1962.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>478</sup> The data did not specify if the education was in the field of journalism or any related field.

<sup>479</sup> Within the editorial staff, 343 people (82 percent) had education beyond the secondary level. A total of 262 employees with knowledge of foreign languages were in the organization, 158 out of whom had no prior experience of working abroad. Hence, most of the staff was not prepared to work for the countries abroad – the

workers did not have a higher education, nor even a specialized education suited to the APN. Many graduates evidently did not work in their field of study; instead, they worked elsewhere. After all, they were poorly prepared to work for news outlets, let alone international news,

I want to say, first of all, that TASS and the Soviet Union's telegraphic agencies have, and will continue to have, a very serious need for qualified journalistic personnel. I emphasize – qualified journalistic personnel – because our fate is that we are forced to discuss all newspapers and have the largest readership of any newspaper.<sup>480</sup>

Therefore, the issue with journalism faculties was the lack of specialization. Journalists were short of formal and precise training in hopes of the state molding the correspondents into specifics later, in practice.<sup>481</sup> Moreover, there was almost no focus on international affairs in the journalistic education: at that time, most of the students had practice in newspapers, and tutoring in newspaper journalism meant learning about the production of newspaper content, radically different from work at a news agency: to a large extent, their task was repurposing TASS information to construct the newspaper page. Real “newsmakers,” mostly journalists of TASS or any other news agency worldwide, were responsible for generating news.<sup>482</sup> TASS was both an information-processing entity and an analytical hub. The agency ensured the country was supplied with up-to-date news and also provided the so-called “official information” for the Party leadership. Hence, Soviet news giants like TASS and APN were cadre-hungry for more specialized staff. Still, the agencies could not and did not count on having “ready-made” *mezhdunarodniki* upon accepting fresh graduates.

Unable to rely on journalistic faculties and in hopes of improving the skills of their own correspondents, TASS launched a special training program with seminars and internships held regularly.<sup>483</sup> The system placed a great deal of emphasis on attracting competent writers

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main mission of the APN. GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 303–11. Minutes of the 18th Joint Meeting of the Board and the APN Party Committee dated March 28, 1964.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 141, l. 20. Transcript of the All-Union Creative Seminar.

<sup>481</sup> For instance, specialization by subject was absent, and people with specific interests were assigned to other fields instead of utilizing their own inclinations and expertise: an intern with an interest in culture could be assigned to the industrial department. It was counter-intuitive, as each correspondent brought their unique perspective, focusing on subjects that resonated with their interests and expertise. For instance, Genrikh Borovik wrote about art and ideology, Vladimir Nikolaev – about principles of state propaganda in the USA, etc. Anna Obycheva, *Ocherki o SShA v tvorchestve sovetskikh zhurnalistov 1960-h godov* [Essays on the USA in the Works of Soviet Journalists of the 1960s] (MA thesis, Saratov National Research University, 2016), [http://elibrary.sgu.ru/VKR/2016/42-04-02\\_008.pdf](http://elibrary.sgu.ru/VKR/2016/42-04-02_008.pdf) [accessed 21.10.2021].

<sup>482</sup> Because of the specificity of employment at news agencies and harsh deadlines, foreign correspondents were required to summarize information without losing the most crucial details. The basic background that was expected from every internationally-oriented journalist included knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and the ability to apply it to a contemporary context, history of international relations, economic geography, and mastery of several foreign languages.

<sup>483</sup> Specialists in other journalistic categories were trained separately. In order to improve the training of radio and television journalists and meet the increasing needs in this category of creative workers, the Department of Radio and Television within the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University was established in 1959. In

and ideologists to journalism and encouraged on-the-job training at every level. The permanent pool of young specialists trained at TASS for independent work abroad was also limited to 10 people per year, with the limit set to increase to 30. To gain insight into the specifics of the profession, interns had to attend press conferences, get to know the countries they were writing about, know how to operate a typewriter, and even obtain a driving license. A further 10 sessions with the editor were arranged to introduce interns to the basics of work at TASS and Sovinformburo. Those included the use of reference materials, text editing, translation, etc. Thus, it became the responsibility of TASS to train cadres for the entire system of international news,<sup>484</sup> as well as to assist republican agencies in training correspondents.

Moreover, several mandatory lectures were offered based on APN: “How to Write an Essay for Foreign Readers” by B. Agapov and M. Shaginian, “Photo Information and Illustration for Foreign Readers” by A. Zhitomirsky, and “Design of Publications Intended for Foreign Readers” by A. Yar. Kravchenko.<sup>485</sup> To further spread knowledge, the Society “Znaniie” has published annual issues to help lecturers who read on international topics; these publications made the Soviet position clear on many issues and regions. As the knowledge accumulated, more and more handbooks were getting published: for instance, by Matvey Koronen – “Office of *Mezhdunarodnik*. In support for the Lecturer-*mezhdunarodnik*,”<sup>486</sup> In later years, many manuals were published, some on an annual basis: “Handbook of the Propagandist-*mezhdunarodnik*,” “Handbook of a Lecturer-*mezhdunarodnik*,” “4000 Useful Words and Expressions: A Short Guide for an International Translator: (French).” Such a series multiplied knowledge and skills and guided new graduates and those willing to join the field. Furthermore, the Union of Journalists tried to extend some training beyond Moscow and major cities, organizing masterclasses, workshops, and training programs, aimed to elevate the quality of journalism across the nation.<sup>487</sup>

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subsequent years, the same faculty began to carry out recruitment to the Department of International Journalism, introducing specialization in Photojournalism.

<sup>484</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 184, ll. 74–9. Note to the TASS Work Proposals, signed by N. Palgunov, A. Vishnevskii, K. Shiryaev, 26 May, 1956.

<sup>485</sup> GA RF, F. 9587, op. 1, d. 7, l. 126. APN Protocol No. 18, November 20, 1963.

<sup>486</sup> After Khrushchev, the creation of *mezhdunarodniki* only intensified: in 1967, a separate department of journalists-internationalists was founded at MGIMO.

<sup>487</sup> The formation of the Union provided a centralized platform where journalists from across the vast expanse of the Soviet Union could congregate, exchange ideas, and collaborate. This central hub, often symbolized by the publication “Sovetskaya pechat” [Soviet Press], served as a vital nexus for anyone interested in journalism. It became a focal point for establishing a dialogue on best practices and guidelines for ethical reporting. Thus, the Union contributed significantly to the development of a collective identity among Soviet journalists.

One of the innovative solutions that emerged to address poor or insufficient skills of employees was the implementation of a bonus system for mastering foreign languages.<sup>488</sup> By doing so, the chiefs could avoid involving translators and improve the quality of the original texts. Furthermore, the implementation of such programs signaled to employees that the organization was invested in their professional growth and was a tangible incentive to invest time and effort in language learning. As employees successfully acquired proficiency in various foreign languages, they not only gained new skills but also benefited their organizations. The bonus played a role in retaining talent. The free study of foreign languages with professional teachers was authorized as a rule for those employees who needed to know the language for practical work. For other employees who were willing to study foreign languages, study circles were organized on a voluntary basis. This way, many employees got involved in learning various languages. As the report to the editor-in-chief of APN stated:

At present, 196 people study foreign languages at the news agency, including 160 literary and editorial staff and 36 technical staff (half of the 36 people study languages in voluntary study groups). The agency has organized the study of 10 foreign languages, including: English – 107 persons, French – 32 persons, German – 21 persons, Spanish – 13 persons, Swedish – 2 persons, Chinese – 5 persons, Hungarian – 2 persons, Urdu – 2 persons, Dutch – 3 persons, Polish – 9 persons. Fifty-two study groups of 3–5 students have been set up to study foreign languages. All groups are provided with highly qualified teachers. A total of 17 teachers work in the agency on a part-time basis.<sup>489</sup>

Besides the practical programs, organizations tried to encourage all of their employees to participate in foreign coverage more proactively, like TASS was asking to contribute to the OIDZ (Office of International Information).<sup>490</sup> However, this well-intentioned directive engaged workers without any special training or experience in writing for foreign audiences. So, TASS issued a manual to guide the journalists, offering advice on crafting articles that would resonate with international audiences. Even for this manual, the editors could not find “perfect” examples of the writing, as the current state of TASS’s work was unsatisfactory, and there were so few correspondents (and, hence, materials) that there was not much to choose from. This humility was evident in the manual's statement: “The examples given in this review are by no means the best of what can be achieved by persistent work in this area. But at present, OIDZ has no other material to choose from. We do not doubt that the not-too-distant future will provide such samples of informational benefit to those who resort to our reviews.”<sup>491</sup> Thus, TASS openly acknowledged that its work was not the ultimate

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<sup>488</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 1, l. 152. Protocol № 42, June 7, 1962.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuz (TASS), Obzor informacii TASS dlya zagranicy, 1.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

standard of excellence, and this phrase encapsulated TASS's state of cadre crisis as of the mid-1950s.

Moreover, the Soviet journalists went beyond studying their own press, as they got their hands on the 1959 Handbook for the Associated Press workers, where they learned the American organization's definition of news, methods of work, etc.<sup>492</sup> Getting acquainted with such documents helped them to recalibrate their own approach and adjust their performance.<sup>493</sup> TASS was especially invested in optimizing its performance, so any new ideas from those manuals could be of interest. One of the duplicated practices from the Associated Press manual was concerned with the method of information dissemination, cutting the costs and involving local actors.<sup>494</sup> It also helped to avoid the accusation of neocolonialism and not ruin the relationship between other countries and the UK/USA at large, "[...] foreign states, especially those that have recently freed themselves from colonial rule, disapprove of the dissemination of information by foreigners, seeing this as a form of interference in internal affairs."<sup>495</sup> So, TASS was ready to experiment and adopt a similar model: establishing relationships with intermediaries who would receive TASS's information at the Soviet agency's expense.<sup>496</sup> Through such tactics, TASS reached a wider audience without the need for new TASS correspondent bureaus or specialists who spoke the local language at the natives' level. Without any extra effort, TASS could tailor its news to local sensitivities and avoid criticism of being a big imperialist power getting involved in local affairs.

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<sup>492</sup> Valeriya Bityutskaya, "Sovetskaya informatsiya za granicey: osobennosti raboty TASS v usloviyakh "zheleznogo zanavesy" [Soviet information abroad: the specifics of the work of TASS in the conditions of the "Iron Curtain"], *Vestnik SPbGU, Yazyk i literatura* №4 (2017), *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sovetskaya-informatsiya-za-granitsey-osobennosti-raboty-tass-v-usloviyakh-zheleznogo-zanavesy> [accessed 09.03.2022].

<sup>493</sup> Simon Huxtable also listed the debates inside *Komsomolskaya Pravda* about learning from the best practices of friends and enemies. Simon Huxtable, *A Compass in the Sea of Life: Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953–1968* (PhD diss., Birkbeck, University of London, 2013), 126, <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/40022/1/FINAL%20VERSION%20Simon%20Huxtable%2014%2002%2013-1.pdf> [accessed 03.11.2021].

<sup>494</sup> Instead of directly transmitting their information to local editors, global organizations often relied on a network of regional news agencies as intermediaries. These local agencies were a bridge between international giants and the native media outlets. Like so, this practice was beneficial both for Reuters/AP, etc. and for the locals.

<sup>495</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 184, l. 2. Letter to comrade Shepilov D.T. from N. Palgunov, 25 January, 1956.

<sup>496</sup> These intermediaries then disseminated TASS' news within their respective regions. This multistep process somewhat simplified and streamlined the news circulation, as TASS did not have to involve information selection, translate it into the local language, and transmit it to local news outlets. It was a cost-effective solution. This approach was, in many cases, twice or even thrice cheaper than establishing and maintaining new offices with their personnel and infrastructure. This strategy allowed TASS to tap into the expertise of local intermediaries who were naturally well-versed in the cultural and linguistic nuances of their regions. RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 184, l. 2. Letter to comrade Shepilov D.T. from N. Palgunov, 25 January, 1956.

Aside from adapting learning and working methods through books and manuals, direct contact also played a crucial role in the 1950s. Thanks to Khrushchev's enthusiastic embrace of foreign travel, it was a time of state-level professional exchanges, where Soviet engineers, scientists, etc., traveled to various countries not only to exchange practices but also to engage in dialogue on professional standards and methods of work. It was becoming a normal practice not only to exchange experience [obmen opytom] between specialists in the Bloc and workers in other parts of the world, but also to learn from and copy the most efficient techniques. Journalists were no exception: the most famous trip happened in 1955 with a delegation of 7 Soviet journalists visiting the US.<sup>497</sup> This direct contact with American reporters became a mirror image for the USSR that was unpleasant to look at. American offices, their equipment, and overall approach were very different from those of the Soviets. In contrast to their colleagues, TASS offices were called “humiliating” and damaging to the Soviet reputation,<sup>498</sup> as its correspondents could not even afford a business lunch because of how little financial freedom they had. Most importantly, an overall recommendation was made to learn from Western counterparts to improve propaganda techniques. In delegates’ opinion, it was instrumental to match the peers in their levels of professionalism and appeal.<sup>499</sup> Those urges and conclusions were not just words. Given the delegates’ high standing and their understanding of the urgency of the situation, they undoubtedly had sufficient influence to change media practices. For instance, Aleksei Adzhubei, the son-in-law of Khrushchev and the youngest in the group, was very attentive to the things he had seen: during the reconstruction of a building for *Izvestia*, he tried to utilize what he had seen.<sup>500</sup> Instead of small separate offices, the new building incorporated several common rooms, where every employee was visible. Further, new office equipment was purchased, and employees were encouraged to use typewriters. Copying went to the smallest details, as, in

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<sup>497</sup> Boris Polevoi, writer/journalist and the chairman of the Foreign Commission of the Union of Soviet Writers became the head of the delegation. It was made up of Boris Polevoi was Nikolai Gribachev, a poet; Anatolii Sofronov, a two-time winner of the Stalin Prize; Boris Izakov, a well-known *mezhdunarodnik*; Viktor Poltoratsky, a Stalin Prize winner, Aleksei Adzhubei, a prominent journalist; Valentin Berezhkov, representative of *Novoye Vremya* and Stalin's translator during World War II. Olga Scherbinina, “‘Uplyvalo semero romantikov’: Pervaya poezdka gruppy sovetskikh zhurnalistov v SShA epohi ‘Ottepeli’” [‘Seven Romantics Sailed Away.’ The First Trip of a Group of Soviet Journalists to the USA during the ‘Thaw’ Era], *Literaturny fakt* 3, no. 29 (2023): 295, [https://litfact.ru/images/2023-29/12-Shcherbinina\\_293-322.pdf](https://litfact.ru/images/2023-29/12-Shcherbinina_293-322.pdf) [accessed April 5, 2024]. Aside from Adzhubei, they were all old-timers and had already earned a certain authority in international reporting. Those mixed ages and background also gave its fruits: some possessed the experience in the field, while some were utterly open to anything new. RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 734, ll. 139–47. Report of the Delegation of Soviet Journalists to the USA.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, l. 138.

<sup>499</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 84.

<sup>500</sup> Adzhubei, *Te desyat' let*.

the fashion of those years, the walls were painted in different colors to make the workspace more enjoyable.

The Soviet leader's enthusiasm for foreign travel was also translated to the universities. During the fifth year of studies, the new opportunity arose – internships held at either Moscow's central news outlets or international organizations, “at the MID, TASS, VOKS, the State Radio Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, or the editorial boards of several major Soviet newspapers, or to spend a six-month internship abroad.”<sup>501</sup> This way, for the first time in 1960, one-third of last year's students (90 people) were sent abroad,<sup>502</sup>

And in the 5th year, something out of the ordinary happened. The management of the institute [...] obtained permission to send its students abroad to practice in countries that align with their specialization profiles. As a result, more than half of the 5th-year students of the Indian Department of the Eastern Faculty of MGIMO, as well as the Western one, went to practice abroad, in our case, to Pakistan. This was a great event in the life of the institute, which dramatically increased the quality of education received here, as well as the attractiveness of studying there itself.<sup>503</sup>

Moreover, professors themselves used their trips abroad to learn about new work methods. Yasen Zasursky, a deputy dean of the Journalism Department and the head of the Department of the History of the Foreign Press, used his trips as opportunities to learn and copy whenever necessary.<sup>504</sup> Zasursky was sent abroad to attend a session of the International Center for Higher Journalism Education in Strasbourg. During his visit, he took a chance to get acquainted with the work of several Parisian newspapers and with overall journalistic education in France.<sup>505</sup> Hence, the person directly involved in journalists' education in the

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<sup>501</sup> For a long time, there were no international internship programs, and only two semesters were allocated for practical journalism within the years of studies, introduced in the mid-1950s. During the practice, students gained experience at various media establishments.

<sup>502</sup> TSAOPIM, f. 192, op. 1, d. 677, l. 113. Protokoly partiinyh sobranii i zasedanii partburo pervichnoi partiinoi organizacii upravleniya kadrov MIDa [Minutes of the party meetings and of the partburo meetings of the MID HR party organization], 04/01/1960, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 253–4.

<sup>503</sup> Yuri Malov, “MGIMO: Vostochnyj Fakul'tet” [MGIMO University: Oriental Faculty], *MGIMO Stories* 6 (2019): 8, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/2019/10/MGIMO-Stories.pdf> [accessed 27.07.2024].

<sup>504</sup> From the early decades of the Soviet state, the officials were ready to learn from their peers abroad. Be it industrial espionage or official exchanges for experience, the government endorsed studying the best foreign practices and adapting those on Soviet soil. Already in the 1930s, Anastas Mikoyan, then-Trade-Minister, regarded his trip to the US to learn more about the local food production as his “university.” Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 104. The USSR even learned from the Nazi German experience in the organization of foreign propaganda, which was reflected in the reports and memos of the heads of Soviet propaganda agencies. Aleksandr Gasyuk, *Vneshnepoliticheskaya propaganda SSSR*. A decade later, Aleksei Adzhubei, editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*, explained that when people were sent on an assignment abroad, they took it as a learning experience and even called their trip “The Brussels seminar,” emphasizing the learning aspect of their mission. Adzhubei, *Te desyat' let*.

<sup>505</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 3, l. 49. To the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR, Comrade Yelyutin, Chairman of the USSR Commission for Unesco Zhukov G.A. Already from the 1920s, journalism professors proactively sought out and compared their ideas to those implemented in the West. At that point, the UK was a leading country in the field of press development; hence, the USSR turned its eyes to it. They wanted to learn from the best and test the waters in their conditions. Studying London practices, those teachers drew a conclusion about the importance of applicable skills above a theoretical base. The same judgment was made

USSR was sent to Paris to learn more from French colleagues, as the French press was highly developed and all-pervasive. Zasursky made a point of how important it was to study the press in other capitalist countries.<sup>506</sup> For instance, students under his supervision could acquaint themselves with newspapers published abroad, a luxury that even American students could not afford when it came to studying the Soviet press,

It was an assumption of the Cold War that communist propagandists were better informed about liberal democracies than the other way around. The cause of the knowledge gap was not espionage but the media. While Western reporters relied on governments for information about Soviet life, Soviet media could deride America in the U.S. press's own words.<sup>507</sup>

Those efforts, however, were limited to a few organizations, with few opportunities to address gaps in official education. The overall picture was still dull. It was almost impossible to find an ideal candidate – with knowledge of foreign languages, the country itself, and writing talents, who, above all, would prefer a career in journalism over a diplomatic path. Thus, the news organizations themselves had to either train new hires who just graduated from journalistic or diplomatic faculties or upgrade the skills of their staff off their permanent roster, since it was cheaper than dealing with an ever-present brain drain or hiring new personnel. They went to great lengths, issuing several manuals, organizing courses and lectures, and creating internship opportunities to attract more people to writing for foreign audiences. It was clear that the gaping holes they were trying to cover were rooted in deeper issues, an adjustment to the regime.

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from studying the American experience after sending requests to American universities and inquiring about their teaching methods. The head of the Soviet Institute of Journalism at that time, Konstantin Petrovin/Novitskii, compared the approach of American and European schools to those of his organization: he was convinced that 25 years of work of those renounced schools could not be a mistake. B. M. Schoenfeldt (Rossov), “*London'skaya shkola zhurnalizma*” [London School of Journalism], *Zhurnal'ist* 3 (1925): 69–71 as quoted in E. Yu. Gordeeva: “*Voprosy podgotovki zhurnalistskikh kadrov na stranicah zhurnala ‘Zhurnal'ist’ v pervye desyatletiya XX v.*” [Issues of training journalistic personnel on the pages of the *Journalist* magazine in the first decades of the 20th century], in: *Zhurnal'istika v sisteme al'ternativnykh istochnikov informacii. Sbornik materialov nauchnoi konferencii* (Nizhnii Novgorod, 2017), 39.

<sup>506</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 3, l. 42. To the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR, Comrade Yelyutin, Chairman of the USSR Commission for Unesco Zhukov G.A.

<sup>507</sup> Nick Rutter, review of *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda*, by Rosa Magnúsdóttir (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), and *Liberty's Tears: Soviet Portraits of the ‘American Way of Life’ During the Cold War*, by Alan Ball (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

### 3.3. Central Misplanning System: Area Experts

“The influence of revolutionary China is particularly affecting the situation in India and Pakistan. There is no doubt that we will witness major events in these countries in the near future. However, we are very poorly prepared for these events.”<sup>508</sup>

The Soviet system was supposed to connect potential employers and employees through the so-called distribution, as the state was obliged to find working places for former students, guaranteeing their employment.<sup>509</sup> The country itself was solely responsible, on the one hand, for the education of its cadres and, on the other, for knowing who it would need; this was incongruous because the market did not regulate those graduates; regulation was in the state's hands. *Gosplan*, the main planning authority, drew up an annual plan for upcoming graduates in consultation with ministries and departments.<sup>510</sup> In theory, the distribution system was supposed to meet the demands for cadres in different fields of industry and geographic areas of the country.<sup>511</sup> The central issue for planning, however, was the demand prognosis, which was largely oriented toward a rather distant future of 5 or even 10 years. At this time, whole industries could change, cease to exist, or have new objectives. Moreover, the planning tended to underestimate the number of needed specialists by at least 10–15% for the next year, not speaking of even more long-term plans.<sup>512</sup> As a consequence, the planning was subdivided into two categories based on the demand for cadres: forward and current. The current demand was calculated within 18 months to distribute future graduates and was more flexible. However, within the framework of the Soviet economy, forward planning was more prevalent and served as the basis for secondary and higher education, which normally could not adjust quickly enough to short-term goals, since these programs took at least a few years to complete and were not particularly flexible. It was detrimental to supply the industries on time.

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<sup>508</sup> “XX s’ezd KPSS (14–25 fevralya 1956). Stenograficheskiy otchet” [XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. February 14–25, 1956. Verbatim Report], in *Sbornik dokumentov i materialov cikla ‘KPSS v stenogrammu, dokumentah i materialah’* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956), vol. 1, 324.

<sup>509</sup> Sometimes, the said graduates were not necessarily happy with the state's choice, as they could be, for instance, sent to more remote parts of the country. Some positions were easier to fill if the specialization was rare and geographically attractive, while others did not awake much enthusiasm.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>511</sup> The planned cadre policy was disorganized and mismanaged. It suffered from double subordination, a disconnect between demand and supply, and an overall inability to keep up with the broader objectives of the Soviet state in the international arena. This approach was typical for the USSR, where planning of related skilled workers was imposed on all sectors of life. Olivier Bertrand, “Planning Human Resources: Methods, Experiences and Practices.” In *Fundamentals of Educational Planning*, Vol. 75 (UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 2004,) 21; I. V. Ivanov, “Skilled-Manpower Planning, Forecasting and Training in the USSR,” in *Forecasting Skilled-Manpower Needs: The Experience of Eleven Countries* (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 1985): 153–72.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

Still, the plan was never detailed enough to truly encompass and meet all the demands of the permanently cadre-hungry Soviet state.

On the one hand, it was not just the USSR that needed to plan. In fact, any country needs a certain level of planning and calculations for its political course outside of its borders. States need a certain level of calculation to anticipate what is about to happen in the world and how they can turn it to their advantage. However, outside, there are too many additional and uncontrollable factors.<sup>513</sup> Of course, some big players attempted to calculate all possible variables and plans B, C, and D, yet, in the complex international crises like the Berlin Wall, it was simply too unpredictable and depended on too many factors and other players involved.<sup>514</sup> So, much of this planning was dedicated to analyzing those additional factors: any state tried to gather as many facts as it could to see the picture in its fullest. Sometimes, there was so much information that there was no capacity to process it, “The information-gathering facilities of the United States government have developed at such a pace since World War II that the assemblage of raw facts has overtaken our ability to digest and use them.”<sup>515</sup>

Given the complexity of foreign affairs planning, the Soviet Union was at a crossroads. After directing multiple shifts in the educational system, Soviet officials found themselves in a peculiar situation: there was simultaneously a shortage and an overproduction of international cadres. After all, aside from a rough estimation of representatives of one profession, there were multiple subdivisions with one craft: in this case, area expertise. Most universities had some form of specialization in a particular geographic area/country or in a particular language, aiming to create cadres with more focused knowledge. New institutes and faculties began training internationalists, but the ideas of their specialties were often misdirected. In fact, the USSR did not have a clear plan of how to measure the demand for certain cadres at least until the mid-1960s, when industrial sociology was introduced.<sup>516</sup> Before, no scientific attempts at measuring the concrete cadre demand and supply were made, which led to the mismanagement of graduates, “A contradiction ripened: the country needed orientalists,

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<sup>513</sup> Planning within the country is more predictable, as the state possessed factoids from censuses and other analytical channels.

<sup>514</sup> A. R. Day, “Planning in the Conduct of Foreign Affairs,” *Polity* 1, no. 4 (1969): 411–27.

<sup>515</sup> For Americans, an analogy of central planning was implemented in the postwar era. They attempted to apply program planning with its allocation of people, money, and other, less measurable, variables. So, they could at least quantify its external affairs in expenses on certain programs and organizations. Organizations like USIA, the United States Information Agency, ironically enough, were managed through five-year planning to combat the Soviet analogs. *Ibid.*

<sup>516</sup> See: Shaila Pattle, “Soviet Industrial Sociology, 1960s–1970s: A Specialism Developed in Local Research Institutes,” *Réformer (avec) les sciences sociales en Union soviétique*, no. 40 (2022), <https://journals.openedition.org/rhsh/6898> [accessed 07.12.2024].

while the Institute was training specialists not demanded by practical organizations.”<sup>517</sup> So, until the mid-sixties, the number of such graduates and overall existence of particular departments were regulated without scientific or market mechanisms, as the Party course was the directive instrument for the cadre plans.<sup>518</sup> The first alarm bells started ringing already in the late 1940s. Then-student of MGIMO, Leonid Kamynin, half-jokingly dared to ask the head of MGIMO, “Yuri Pavlovich, there are rumors again that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will not need us due to the overproduction of cadres?”<sup>519</sup> In response, he was told, “There are many words that can be used to describe your future profession: diplomat, lawyer, historian, economist, journalist. Understand the essence of the matter, and you will not have to fear any overproduction...”<sup>520</sup>

So, despite the reforms, the state continued to hope for universal experts, to create specialists in areas it did not need, to spend significant amounts of money, and to overlook gaps where it did need experts. For example, APN faced numerous instances where vacancies abroad remained unfilled for extended periods, leading to a multitude of operational challenges and personnel strain.<sup>521</sup> This need was especially acute in some regions, as the Soviets were completely understaffed for penetrating new, decolonized territories or countries that were previously unreachable for them,

We are experiencing significant difficulties with personnel for the newly established main editorial office for Latin America. Of course, it was difficult to prepare personnel in advance for the African continent, where 50 independent states have been formed in recent years. But even in countries with an APN bureau, we still need personnel. If we take Latin America, then we don't have a person at all, although the issues of propaganda there are very acute.<sup>522</sup>

On the other hand, alumni of the Institute of Oriental Studies were systematically struggling to find positions with their expertise: several dozen students were admitted to the Uighur and Mongolian departments each year, although there was no demand for them: “It seemed that the directorate of the Institute was primarily concerned with ensuring the academic load of

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<sup>517</sup> Moreover, the cost of training one specialist in Oriental studies amounted to 150 thousand rubles. P. Shastitko and N. Charyeva, “Kak zakryvali moskovskii Institut vostokovedeniya” [How the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies Was Closed], *Vostok. Afro-aziatskie obshchestva: istoriya i sovremennost'* 6 (2002), <https://shorturl.at/trcN8> [accessed 26.01.2023].

<sup>518</sup> Without experts in planning authorities and the Politburo itself, the plans for needed graduates and control numbers of specialists could not be accurate. It also seems that the main planning authority – *Gosplan* – was itself understaffed and could not keep up with the demands of Politburo. Paul Gregory, *Behind the Facade of Stalin's Command Economy: Evidence from the Soviet State and Party Archives* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2013), 31.

<sup>519</sup> Sergeev, Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov), 269.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> GA RF, d. 9587, op. 1, d. 8, l. 299. Remarks on the Selection, Training and Deployment of Foreign Staff of the APN.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid, l. 292. Minutes of the 18th Joint Meeting of the Board and the APN Party Committee, 28 March, 1964.

teachers, and not the further fate of graduates.”<sup>523</sup> Upon analysis of this situation, it was concluded that “The main drawback in the distribution of young specialists graduating from the Institute of Oriental Studies stems mainly from the fact that there is a gap between the planning of training and the actual need of the national economy for specialists in Oriental studies.”<sup>524</sup> The cadres who were already present and specialized in Asia were deemed a complete failure, unable to speak local languages or even translate simple texts with a dictionary.<sup>525</sup> They also did not know the region's history, geography, or political situation. Furthermore, in 1953, 57 people out of 220 graduates did not get a job, and the Central Committee of the CPSU was snowed under complaints from those unlucky students.<sup>526</sup> For that reason, the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Institute of Foreign Trade, and the Military Institute of Foreign Languages were all shut down around the same time and “added” to MGIMO in the mid-1950s due to the inability to secure spots for all their graduates,

Such a radical decision [...] was dictated by the urgent need to escape the severe crisis of overproduction of personnel specializing in international relations. In those years, the Soviet Union remained, in fact, a closed state with a minimal number of external ties. And three civilian Moscow universities: MGIMO, the Institute of Oriental Studies, and the Institute of Foreign Trade, not to mention the Institute of Foreign Languages, annually threw into the national economy several specialists that far exceeded the needs of those state institutions that monopolistically dealt with foreign policy and foreign economic issues.<sup>527</sup>

This solution led to harsh political and social consequences. Politically, by closing the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Soviet state thoughtlessly lost its only institution preparing cadres for the so-called third world countries, with which the USSR already had troubles. The chiefs of the Institute of Oriental Studies tried to contact the authorities and notify them that it was a mistake, “[...] the colonial East has awakened to a decisive struggle for its national liberation and wishes to establish closer ties with the great Soviet Union, the decision to liquidate the only Oriental Studies University in the country is uncalled for.”<sup>528</sup> Without it, the USSR was immediately losing its political potential in the decolonizing territories. On top of that, the students started protesting against the closure, which was leaked to the pages of the foreign press,

I was supposed to graduate from the Institute in 1955. But the reorganization that began unexpectedly (the institutes of Foreign Trade and Oriental studies were added to MGIMO) did not allow this to be done. Centralized planning had another glitch, and there was nowhere to put the surplus of specialists. The students of

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<sup>523</sup> Shastitko and Charyeva, *Kak zakryvali moskovskii Institut vostokovedeniya*.

<sup>524</sup> *Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya*, 247.

<sup>525</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 341, ll. 13–6, as quoted in *Ibid*.

<sup>526</sup> *Glavy iz istorii moskovskogo vostokovedeniya*, 215.

<sup>527</sup> Malov, *MGIMO: Vostochnyj Fakul'tet*, 8.

<sup>528</sup> *XX s'ezd KPSS (14–25 fevralya 1956)*, 324.

the first four courses were sent to complete their education at other universities. And we, the graduating class, staged something like a strike – pictures of our “pickets” around the institute [...] appeared even in American newspapers...<sup>529</sup>

Another institution created in the earlier decade was mindlessly disbanded in the mid-1950s – the Military Institute of Foreign Languages ceased to exist in 1956. The dissolution happened according to the same scenario: the institution was closed without paying much mind to not only its importance in the past but also to its increasing value for the future, given the rising decolonial movement.<sup>530</sup> However, those people also learned about regional geography and other, more generalized subjects needed for any specialist in foreign affairs. Students were also affected by the rushed decision, having to find another spot at the last minute. German Baikov, for instance, could not finish the Institute because of its closure and had to continue his education at the faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University.<sup>531</sup> Typical for the cadre policy of that time, his language proficiency and expertise were thrown out of the window, as the worker had to start anew, and the extent of neglect of specialized education might be surprising:

Having studied French, I was assigned to the Romanian editorial office. There was no need for international specialization there either: the foreign editorial offices of Moscow Radio had to cover the life of the USSR, not foreign policy problems, as there was an institution of political observers for that. So one had to start life from the beginning, rather than continue it, and forget as useless everything that had been studied at the Institute.<sup>532</sup>

Further political problems quickly followed with the cessation of the Military Institute of Foreign Languages. The expansion of the state's international relations, including military ones, already in 1958 required the resumption of training of military translators. This task was initially assigned to the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the Military Academy of the Soviet Army. Still, its scale was not sufficient, and the Institute was fully restored in 1963. Moreover, mere two years after shutting the Institute of Oriental Studies down, there was a rumored incident involving Nikita Khrushchev and the mistranslation of his words during negotiations with Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser.<sup>533</sup> The translator made a gross error

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<sup>529</sup> Ruben Evstigneev, *Memoirs*, 1955, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/689830> [accessed 14.12.2023].

<sup>530</sup> Of course, it also took a niche training for military cadres, like the interrogation techniques, and working with prisoners of war or people on the occupied territories. Aleksandr Frolov. “Alma mater voennykh i perevodchikov VIIya - 70 let” [Alma mater of the military and translators of the VIIA - 70 years old], *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, <https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/227> [accessed 27.05.2023].

<sup>531</sup> “Baikov German Iosifovich: Vostok – delo tonkoe” [Baikov German Iosifovich: The East is a delicate matter], *artofwar*, [http://www.artofwar.net.ru/profiles/baikov\\_german\\_i/about](http://www.artofwar.net.ru/profiles/baikov_german_i/about) [accessed 25.05.2023].

<sup>532</sup> Anatolii Torkunov, ed., *Ptency gnezda MGIMO'va (Pyat' desyat let spustya) 1949–1999* [Chicks of the MGIMO Nest (Fifty Years Later) 1949–1999], vol. 2, *Lawyers–Mezhdunarodniki* (Moscow: MGIMO, 1999), 506.

<sup>533</sup> Sergei Romanov, *Ne matom edinyim* [Not by Obscurity Alone] (Moscow: Niola 21 vek, 2001), *modernlib*, [https://modernlib.net/books/romanov\\_sergey/ne\\_matom\\_edini/read/](https://modernlib.net/books/romanov_sergey/ne_matom_edini/read/) [accessed 14.03.2023].

in interpreting Khrushchev's words, so the Soviet leader accused the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of keeping uneducated personnel and demanded an urgent reform of the system of cadre training.<sup>534</sup> So, the decision to merge MGIMO and other institutes was an evident miscalculation. So, soon after the merger, this ruling was found to be regrettable:

It is difficult to understand [...] the liquidation of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, which had existed for 139 years, at a time when our ties with the East are growing and strengthening, when with the expansion of economic, political, and cultural ties with the countries of the East, the Soviet public's interest in them has immeasurably increased, and the need for people who know the economy and culture of Eastern countries has grown.<sup>535</sup>

Moreover, MGIMO itself had become “overcrowded” due to this series of mergers.<sup>536</sup> Having absorbed the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Foreign Trade,<sup>537</sup> the Institute had to assume their duties and compensate for their loss. So, two new faculties were established: International Relations (with separate Western and Eastern departments – a replacement for the Institute of Oriental Studies) and Foreign Economic Relations (a replacement for the Institute of Foreign Trade). Previously, there had been a severe shortage of foreign specialists, but the influx of students from the mergers led to a surplus, necessitating a redistribution of some students. In fact, this overwhelmed the Institutes’ administration in terms of distributing the increased number of graduates. To manage this situation, the term of study was extended from five to six years.<sup>538</sup> Additionally,

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<sup>534</sup> On his orders, the raising of a new generation of translators who could work with Third World languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, and many others was initiated, in lieu of the Institute of Oriental Studies that performed this duty before. MGIMO also invested in updating its library collections and hiring teachers of oriental languages, as well as revised some of the teaching. The curriculum of its so-called Western Faculty provided for the compulsory study of only one foreign language, while the students of the Eastern Faculty, along with the study of one of the oriental languages, studied one of the Western languages: English or French. Yet again, this disproportion was balanced out in 1956, and the Western Faculty graduates had to learn two languages from that point. “Cherez reorganizacii k stabil'nosti” [Through Reorganizations to Stability], in Yu. Bulatov, ed., *MGIMO Faculty of International Relations is Turning 60 Years Old* (Moscow: Moscow State Institute of Foreign Affairs, 2003), 10, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/mgimo60/mo60.pdf> [accessed 19.08.2024]. Such reforms were a logical, yet overdue idea – specialization of students not just in language but also in the country where the language is spoken in 1956. Seemingly obvious, this approach had not been applied before, and it was supposed to finally strengthen the expertise of graduates, making them, however, less universalist than the Soviet State once hoped they would be.

<sup>535</sup> *XX s'ezd KPSS (14–25 fevralya 1956)*, 324.

<sup>536</sup> Anatolii Ivanov, “V Yegipte” [In Egypt], in Andrey Tokarev and Gennadii Shubin (eds.), *V Yegipte i na Zanzibare (1960–1966): Memuary sovetskikh voennykh perevodchikov* [In Egypt and in Zanzibar (1960–1966): Memoirs of Soviet Military Translators] (Moscow: Memories, 2011), 5–6, [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/0/pdf/russian/sb\\_egypt-zanzibar.pdf](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/0/pdf/russian/sb_egypt-zanzibar.pdf) [accessed 12.04.2023].

<sup>537</sup> This was also done so that MGIMO would monopolize education of any specialists in foreign affairs and concentrate language training. Thanks to those mergers, MGIMO started teaching Farsi, Arabic, Chinese, etc. Six, The Party Nobility, 20. Moreover, in 1960, further specialists in Scandinavian languages joined MGIMO rows. “Kafedra nemeckogo yazyka” [Department of the German Language], 109–10, in Yu. Bulatov, ed., *MGIMO Faculty of International Relations is Turning 60 Years Old* (Moscow: Moscow State Institute of Foreign Affairs, 2003). <https://mgimo.ru/upload/mgimo60/mo60.pdf> [accessed 19.08.2024].

<sup>538</sup> Ivanov, V Yegipte, 6.

the number of students admitted to departments that were temporarily in less demand was reduced. To further manage the student population, MGIMO “adjusted” the number of students in the second through fourth years by expelling those who did not achieve sufficiently high grades during the summer exams. However, these students were given the right to enroll without examinations in any other university in the country, as the administration tried to balance the student body. Moreover, many, upon their graduation, saw an unpleasant surprise in their diplomas – those stated that they suddenly were “a high school teacher with knowledge of a foreign language.”<sup>539</sup>

Endless restructuring was no good for planning and, more importantly, left people confused about their future, tasks, and goals. Mindless creations and the subsequent dismantling of novel organizations were a permanent feature of Soviet decision-making, and people had to exist in a constant experimental mode.

### 3.4. Job (In)Security

After the war, the hiring structure of the Soviet apparatus was now more similar to the model applied in the “West”: they did not necessarily have to stem from a family of peasants or workers and could be of any social origin – what mattered was their function for the state that unified them into one group.<sup>540</sup> This created the allure of being a *nomenklatura* worker, attracting people to the postings by the benefits that came with it.<sup>541</sup> Those material benefits and prestige could disappear just as fast, as *nomenklatura*’s lives depended on the leader’s favor,<sup>542</sup> as he could still contain his elites with the help of constant fear for their privileges: “The life of the new appointees was full of dangers. They were not the owners of the goods just mentioned: they had all this as long as they held their office, i.e., as long as they were in the good graces of Stalin, the NKVD, the Party Personnel Department of the Central

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<sup>539</sup> “Istoriya fakul'teta” [History of the Faculty], *mgimo.ru*, <https://shorturl.at/HR551> [accessed 27.05.2023].

<sup>540</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, “The Problem of the Capitalist State,” 238–53, in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. Robin Blackburn (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 246. A common trope of thinking about the Soviet press was also recognition of political reliability and knowledge of Marxism as the key factors for one’s appointment. Much of it depended in reality on other factors like connections. Fred S. Siebert, et al, *Four Theories of the Press*, 132.

<sup>541</sup> Harasymiw, *Nomenklatura*, 510.

<sup>542</sup> Hence, the top journalists enjoyed a great range of privileges, although from time to time, the Party tried to back out of this social contract and revise this compromise, resulting in repressions. It was a vicious circle of the Party, on the one hand, decrying the not-communist-enough officials and, on the other hand, needing them. The lack of qualified cadres also resulted in reshuffling of managers, simply sending them away, as the state did not have many options for a simple replacement. Stotland, *Cadres Decide Everything*. Only membership in Politburo could offer a limited degree of security, see: Evan Mawdsley, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: The Central Committee and Its Members, 1917–1991* (London: Routledge, 2000), 80.; Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945–1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.

Committee.”<sup>543</sup> As there were no security guarantees for the elite under Stalin, officials formed types of controlled mobility and created special niches that would protect them through personal relations.<sup>544</sup> The logical development quickly followed: *semeistvennost’* – [literally family-ness] – practice of employing or promoting relatives, sons-in-law, and friends spread like fire. *Nomenklatura*, established in their positions, sought to secure the future of those around them through marriage, friendships, patronage, etc. Originally used as a safeguard against unfair and unlawful prosecutions, they spread exponentially over time and multiplied through new informal ties.

The transition period, however, brought a new hit. Students, unfortunate enough to be enrolled under Stalin but graduate during Khrushchev, were in the worst of luck. At this time, appointments were sometimes driven by counter-selection, meaning setting aside people from the Stalinist elite and replacing them with his own cadres, not tied to Stalin’s circles (as well as associated with Beria and Malenkov) personnel.<sup>545</sup> Even the most valuable graduates of MGIMO fell victim to those policies, amid a critical personnel shortage. Nikolai Kanaev, a 1953 graduate, recalled his life going upside down,

1953. The year of Stalin’s death. The year of our graduation. [...] By the time of our assignment, Nikita Khrushchev had begun the purge of Stalin’s state apparatus. This manifested itself, particularly in the mass layoffs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Committee for State Security, Intourist, the departments of foreign relations of several ministries and research institutions, and the foreign departments of Radio and Television and other media; in other words, at organizations that mostly employed our graduates. As a result, none of the MGIMO graduates got any employment offers that year.

On the other hand, the new elites of the Khrushchev era quickly became increasingly powerful without the stringent constraints of the previous epoch. Khrushchev’s policies introduced a new political landscape where the consequences of falling out of favor were less severe, with exile being the worst fate they could face, as opposed to the very real threat of death during Stalin’s time.<sup>546</sup> This shift provided a measure of security to the top leaders but

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<sup>543</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Istoriya Sovetskogo Soyuza 1917–1991* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1994), 216.

<sup>544</sup> Anna Naronkaya, “Sistema rekrutirovaniya sovetskoy praviaschey elity: obschee i spetsificheskoe,” *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya*, no. 73 (2021): 21, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sistema-rekrutirovaniya-sovetskoy-pravyaschey-elity-obschee-i-spetsificheskoe> [accessed August 25, 2025].

<sup>545</sup> Lyudmila Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd’* [Slanting Rain] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2015), *flibusta*, <http://flibusta.site/b/712871/read> [accessed 18.08.2024].

<sup>546</sup> The elite dynamics can be evidenced by the fate of Khrushchev’s close allies following his dismissal. Many of his closest associates faced forced retirements or were reassigned to insignificant positions, highlighting the close proximity between *nomenklatura* and elites. Sergei Ustinkin, Alevtina Shunina, Boris Ginzburg, “Partiino-Sovetskaya nomenklatura v usloviyah brezhnevskoi “kadrovoy stabil’nosti” [The Party-Soviet nomenklatura in the conditions of Brezhnev’s “Personnel Stability”], *Vlast’* 7 (2012): 27, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/partiyno-sovetskaya-nomenklatura-v-usloviyah-brezhnevskoy-kadrovoy-stabilnosti/viewer> [accessed 24.04.2025].

also introduced new anxieties as Khrushchev subjected the party-state apparatus to continual reorganizations and reforms. And, while such changes greatly alarmed the upper echelons, they were rather accustomed to the unpredictability at this point.<sup>547</sup> So, the officials still felt the need to protect themselves by hiring friends and relatives.

Quickly taking up new positions and replacing potentially valuable cadres, the chiefs created obstacles for the prosperity of their organizations from the get-go.<sup>548</sup> Naturally, such an employment pattern was dangerous for the developing system and quickly came into contradiction with the USSR's ambitious plan in the Cold War.<sup>549</sup> The invited through patronage cadres did not necessarily outperform those who could have occupied the position in their stead, and many were not even qualified for such positions in the first place.<sup>550</sup> In fact, much of the APN staff could not even be used for posting abroad: out of 383 employees of the Main Editorial Offices, "225 people cannot be sent abroad for a long time for various reasons, and about 200 people are not allowed to travel at all (they do not know the language, are sick, have penalties, etc.)."<sup>551</sup> The chiefs promoted their favorites and actively damaged the Soviet mission abroad,

Meanwhile, editors-in-chief and departmental deputy editors sometimes strongly recommend people who do not speak the language or even have evidence of improper behavior in everyday life. There are many such examples, but here are 2 examples on the periodicals of the East: Comrade Bueverov in the Arabic section and Comrade (space) [the name in the document was left blank – M.Z.] to the Indonesian section. None of them speaks a foreign language and has never worked for these countries.

So, all the higher-ranking positions were occupied by people without the necessary expertise. Aging and concentration of elites, in their turn, lead to the lag in organizational responsiveness and flexibility of the system, which new experts could have rejuvenated with a fresh outlook.<sup>552</sup> Due to the expansion of the elite and the near-nonexistent mechanisms to

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<sup>547</sup> Andrei Khlynin, "Genezis podhodov k issledovaniyu elit v Sovetskom Soyuze" [The genesis of approaches to the study of elites in the Soviet Union], *Sotsiologiya* 3 (2022): 21, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/genezis-podhodov-k-issledovaniyu-elit-v-sovetskom-soyuze/viewer> [accessed 20.04.2025].

<sup>548</sup> Moreover, The criticism of their work was often just a formality and could even harm relationships between organizations.

<sup>549</sup> This was and still is a characteristic feature of many national elites: patronage systems without any effective limitations lead to hiring appointees with no necessary skills and education, as for instance, 35% of American ambassadors got their positions through connections. Justin Kidd, *The Complexities of American Foreign Policy: The Case for Diplomatic Experience and Education*, Simons Center for Ethical Leadership and Interagency Cooperation, vol. 12, no. 1 (2022), 6, <https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IAJ-12-1-pg5-12.pdf> [accessed 31.10.2024].

<sup>550</sup> Nagle, A New Look at the Soviet Elite, 9.

<sup>551</sup> GA RF, f. 9587, op. 1, d. 8, l. 309. Comments on the Selection, Training, and Placement of APN Personnel. March 1964.

<sup>552</sup> Theodore L. Reed, "Organization Change in the American Foreign Service, 1925–1965: The Utility of Cohort Analysis," *American Sociological Review* 43, no. 3 (June 1978): 404.

regulate it, the newcomers had minimal opportunities for growth and career advancement and were forced into low-tier positions. The personnel turnover was declining, and the highest-ranking staff were inevitably getting older and more conservative. Hence, most offers were either awarded through personal connections or given to unqualified individuals. With it, the system was becoming increasingly rigid and unwilling to change. Acknowledging the problem but not addressing the root cause, the editorial offices were often blaming hiring practices on the lack of thorough checks before employing some and, more importantly, before sending them abroad.<sup>553</sup> Observing the new ripening cadre crisis, officials were insisting on the creation of reserve registries – a list of replacement candidates for *nomenklatura* positions.<sup>554</sup> On paper, they needed people who would possess certain qualities: political knowledge, foreign languages, reliability, and personal qualities. So, when someone had to be urgently recalled or replaced, there was already someone, loyal and prepared, as a plan B.

Meanwhile, recent graduates from prestigious universities rarely had any opportunities in good organizations if they did not have connections, and the postwar generation was progressively haunted by elitism.<sup>555</sup> Without contacts of those in power, it was hard to find a decent position as an entry-level job, and most occupations offered by the distribution were assignments in rural areas where no graduate of an elite institution wanted to end up.<sup>556</sup> Because of such tendencies, the supposed career prospects were divorced from reality, even for graduates of MGIMO. Graduating from it did not guarantee professional success, despite the evident cadre shortage. According to statistics, only circa 22% of its graduates with distinction got jobs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>557</sup> Even the perfect grades alone did not guarantee landing a job,

Having received a diploma with distinction from MGIMO, I was offered a job as the head of a club in Velikiye Luki, a job as a special correspondent for a youth newspaper in Stalingrad, and something else along the same lines. To hell with the knowledge you gained at the institute. To hell with the cost of our education. The best offer made to me then was our embassy in Addis Ababa. But I did not study Ethiopia, I did not know the language, and, as I have already said, I did not aspire to a diplomatic career. [...] The representative of the

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<sup>553</sup> GA RF, f. 9587, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 295–302. Comments on the Selection.

<sup>554</sup> Moshe Lewin, “Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura, 1945–1948,” *Cahiers du monde russe* [En ligne] 44, nos. 2–3 (2003), <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/8608> [accessed 17.08.2025].

<sup>555</sup> Benjamin Tromly, *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia: Universities and Intellectual Life under Stalin and Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 54.

<sup>556</sup> Thomas F. Remington, “Politics and Professionalism in Soviet Journalism,” *Slavic Review* 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1985): 492.

<sup>557</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 160.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs [...] couldn't admit that the system was to blame for the absurdity of the current situation.<sup>558</sup>

Moreover, MGIMO graduates had to compete with students from other institutions, who, at the time, usually spoke rare foreign languages, so they were in demand and had more niche specializations. Many of their contenders also studied French, English, Spanish, and German – languages of capitalist countries – and were in direct competition with MGIMO students. Out of those, people with specialization in German were the luckiest – many worked as translators in Austria and divided Germany.<sup>559</sup> As for the rest, countries with those languages would be considered complex assignments where a journalist would not be sent instantly – those positions needed to be earned, making the competition even tougher. Yet, even in those highly competitive environments, there were cases of lack of attention and care that placed specialists in the positions where they should not be in, e.g., a woman who spoke both Spanish and French was placed in the American department of TASS despite not being fluent in English.<sup>560</sup> She lacked the ability to carry out her tasks efficiently, especially on translation assignments, which led to unfair criticism and disapproval from her superiors.

Nevertheless, the “rarity” of one’s region was not a hundred percent guarantee of one’s success if the USSR had no interest in the region. One of Lev Delyusin’s fellow students, despite his expertise in China, could only get a job at the Institute of Geography through patronage.<sup>561</sup> Even slimmer chances were ahead of Tatyana Pravdina, who graduated from the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, Arabic faculty. There was no distribution after graduation, and she had to look for jobs herself, panicking about her options as a woman and a specialist in her area, “There is no special demand for Arabists. They invited me to Lubyanka [the KGB headquarters in Moscow – M. Z.]. I'm in a panic, I can't and won't work in the KGB!”<sup>562</sup> At some point, it seems the system was counting on graduates finding the jobs themselves,

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<sup>558</sup> Ruben Evstigneev, *Memoirs*, 1955, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/689830> [accessed 14.12.2023].

<sup>559</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 155.

<sup>560</sup> The lack of attention to new talent within TASS was astounding. Younger employees often felt alienated and demotivated by criticism from senior officials, which ultimately led them to leave the organization due to a lack of adequate explanation for the criticism. Overall, it was a rather troubling situation of mismanagement and dissatisfaction among *mezhdunarodniki*. Inappropriate allocation of TASS personnel was rather common, as the staff were placed in departments that were not suited to their qualifications or expertise. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 122, ll. 60–4.

<sup>561</sup> Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya, 122.

<sup>562</sup> Tatyana Pravdina, *Razgovor so svoimi* [Talking to Friends] (Nizhnii Novgorod: Dekom, 2006), 55, *belousenko*, [http://www.belousenko.com/books/art/gerdt\\_pravdina\\_razgovor.pdf](http://www.belousenko.com/books/art/gerdt_pravdina_razgovor.pdf) [accessed 18.02.2024]. It was rather a common case that women upon graduation were recruited by KGB, as they had very few career prospects and tried to avoid becoming village teachers or secretaries. Ruben Evstigneev, *Memoirs*, 1955, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/689830> [accessed 14.12.2023].

No one thought constructively about a career; everyone is used to the fact that our dear state will take care of them. [...] It became clear that the rescue of drowning people was the work of drowning people themselves. Having taken a fictitious application for distribution in the ministry [...], I untied my hands and began slowly sorting through other options.<sup>563</sup>

While the “exotic” specialization did increase potential and signal lower competition for a post, Soviet officials seemingly did not always know what to do with those experts, sending them on haphazard assignments that did not match their expertise. However, those with new expertise in countries of interest to the USSR were in great luck. In 1940, just after passing his state exams, Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov started preparing for a work trip to Sweden, a country whose language and culture he had studied for five years. As he recalled, it did not involve any patronage or favoritism.<sup>564</sup> The key point is that Aleksandrov-Agentov's class was the first group of Scandinavists to graduate from Leningrad State University, so there were very few specialists in those areal studies. Simultaneously, relations with the Nordic countries were expanding, and demand for specialists in that field was growing. So, there was a significant demand, or, as he said, “hunt,” for graduates like him. TASS was the first to reach out, offering him a position as a referent at the TASS correspondent office in Stockholm.

Thus, many *mezhdunarodniki* felt frustration upon graduation from MGIMO, deprived of promised upward mobility.<sup>565</sup> Most of them were dreaming of working at embassies or diplomatic missions, but such aspirations remained just that. Searching for opportunities to win more time and somehow stay in the foreign affairs-related fields was writing their dissertation, which some did, hoping to get noticed.<sup>566</sup> Most, however, did not get any positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>567</sup> and work for the press was the second best option: TASS, Sovinfomburo, *Pravda*, and *Izvestia* took in some of the graduates.<sup>568</sup> By no

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<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>564</sup> Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov, *Ot Kollontai do Gorbacheva: vospominaniya diplomata, sovetnika A.A. Gromyko, pomoshnika L.I. Brezhneva, Yu.V. Andropova, K.U. Chernenko i M.S. Gorbacheva* [From Kollontai to Gorbachev: memoirs of a diplomat, adviser A.A. Gromyko, assistant to L.I. Brezhnev, Yu.V. Andropov, K.U. Chernenko and M.S. Gorbachev] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1994), 12.

<sup>565</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 155–6.

<sup>566</sup> One such example was Evgenii Ambartsumov who graduated from MGIMO, could not find a job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, did his PhD, and then found a job at the journal *Novoe vremya*. Those dissertation defenses were not only an increase in scientific status, but also a way to secure better financial conditions. After all, working on the side – for instance, part-time – was not welcome, and solving housing problems required a lot of money for most to join the so-called housing cooperatives. Rossiiskoe kitaevdenie, 122.

<sup>567</sup> Out of 598 graduates in 1951, “a total of 198 graduates participated in the press, broadcasting, and publishing via positions at the Sovinformburo, the State Committee for Radio Broadcasting, the State Committee for Radio Information, *Glavlit*, and various press and publishing bodies.” Six, *The Party Nobility*, 152–3.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid., 156. Dina Fainberg also wrote, “Newspapers were usually reserved for graduates who lacked establishment connections or whose backgrounds were considered problematic.” Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 42.

means were those on the same level of societal weight or material compensation as embassy work, yet the graduates had to settle for such options. Then, on the list of prestige, work for VOKS and for Radio and foreign broadcasting were placed last.<sup>569</sup> Given the scarcity of opportunities, many tried to get in wherever they could: MGIMO student, Yuri Semyonov, tried to “sneak in wherever possible: in *Izvestia*, Sovinformburo, the Anti-Fascist Committee, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* – everywhere!”<sup>570</sup> Georgii Zubkov graduated from MGIMO but preferred a career at Gosteleradio, which was considered nonsensical.<sup>571</sup> Although still in the field of foreign affairs, they were seen as one of the less desirable career prospects:

It has to be admitted that, in the early 1950s, the assignment of MGIMO graduates to the radio, but not to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other state and party institutions, or national newspapers, was not considered a success. Perhaps there was something ‘wrong’ in the biographies of the parents of these journalists beginning their careers.<sup>572</sup>

Much of the lack of prestige of working for TASS, VOKS, or Radio was associated with not being able to publish under one’s name.<sup>573</sup> Several propaganda organizations were called “Tomb of the Unknown Journalist” – in analogy to the Tomb of an Unknown Soldier who died during the war without their names identified.<sup>574</sup> This could also be applied to journalists, whose names remained hidden, and who could never receive recognition for their work. There were several reasons for this phenomenon. First, the organizations themselves –

<sup>569</sup> Interestingly, the unfortunate fame of “a tomb of unknown journalist”, typically assigned to TASS, was also associated with work in foreign broadcasting. Anatolii Torkunov, R. A. Sergeev, E. V. Blinov, L. I. Kamynin, R. A. Krest’ianinov, A. O. Melikian, and A. M. Sutulin, eds., *Vremia strelki zheleznye dvizhet... (1946–1951). Govoriat vypuskniki 1951 goda* [Time moves the iron hands... (1946–1951). The graduates of 1951 speak] (Moscow: MGIMO, 1998), 31.

<sup>570</sup> Vikentii Matveev, Diaries, 03.11.1947, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/669345> [accessed 02.03.2024].

<sup>571</sup> Georgii Zubkov, “Fakt, obrashhennyj v obraz” [The Fact Turned into an Image], in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: Lyudi i sud’by* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 406.

<sup>572</sup> Vladimir Razmerov’s memoirs are quoted in Anatolii Torkunov, *Ptency gnezda MGIMO’va*, Vol. 1, 169.

<sup>573</sup> In general, not being able to sign your own materials was seen as a punishment. It was a death sentence, since the state was the only legal employer in the USSR. Some had to come up with creative solutions and start ghostwriting, so that they could share the fee with the person who “let them” write for themselves. Olga Chechetkina used Aron Vergelis, a Jewish writer who was persecuted for his nationality, for writing some of her publications, “Olga Chechetkina became even better known than before, while she handed over to me the honoraria that were given to her for these publications.” Audio, March 1994, as quoted in Mark Kupovetsky, “Aron Vergelis: Survivor of the Destruction of Soviet Yiddish Culture, 1949–1953,” in Mark Lipovetsky, Maria Engström, Tomáš Glanc, Ilja Kukuj, and Klavdia Smola, *The Oxford Handbook of Soviet Underground Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 35. Melor Sturua, having no other alternative income after his father’s dismissal, started writing for his former groupmate, “And the bony hand of hunger was already grabbing me by the throat, and my friend Slava came to the rescue. He offered to write notes and feuilletons for *Izvestia*, but under his last name. Laurels for him, royalties for me.” “Pozvonochnyi” kadr, *Iznews*, <https://iznews.org/news/259187> [accessed 09.08.2023]. Adzhubei, after his father-in-law’s dismissal, also had to publish under a pseudonym. When his real identity was uncovered, his friends had to get him to work under their names, which was risky behavior. Adzhubei, *Te desyat’ let*.

<sup>574</sup> Boris Shestakov, “Hronograf. Mogila neizvestnogo zhurnalista. Sostavit’ sebe imya, rabotaya v TASS, bylo nevozmozhno” [The Chronograph. The Grave of an Unknown Journalist. It Was Impossible to Make a Name for Yourself While Working at TASS], *Sobkor*, 27 October, 2022, <https://sobkor02.ru/news/socium/20489/> [accessed 15.10.2024].

some of them did not have a habit of signing their materials with authors' names, so they were left out. TASS, Radio Committee, and APN were all infamous for diminishing one's chances for fame. Plus, the skills gained with so much effort were considered wasted there, with no hope of recognition for one's effort and talents. The ambitious graduates, in defiance of their dreams, had to take what was offered to them – journalistic work – and this was far from their foregoing aspirations.

Furthermore, despite the USSR's significant investment in its propaganda, the material conditions of the organizations left much to be desired. Certain state organizations fell significantly below the standards that were normal in comparable roles within other governmental departments.<sup>575</sup> This insufficiency extended to various aspects, including salaries and benefits. *Pravda* had the highest-paid workers, and the rest of the news workers could only dream of such compensation. For instance, in late 1953, the head of TASS faced a critical issue of the salaries of his employees.<sup>576</sup> The problem stemmed from 1940, when the wage rates for TASS employees were set at the same level as those for *Pravda* employees. However, 13 years passed, and the rates for *Pravda* had been increased multiple times, while the pay for TASS employees remained the same. As wages in other sectors rose, the organization struggled to compete for talent due to unattractive compensation. TASS's salaries were also more modest than those of APN's workers, another point of contention, since they performed similar work.<sup>577</sup> The acquaintances also made fun of TASS remuneration, joking about the souvenirs that a correspondent could afford to bring from abroad.<sup>578</sup> At some point, TASS had to introduce a range of incentives to workers who spoke foreign languages or had scientific achievements and similar qualifications, for instance, if they had a doctoral title.<sup>579</sup> This diversified the materials that the media could produce and minimized the involvement of outside experts. Yet, the head of TASS also tried to fight for

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<sup>575</sup> For instance, the very building occupied by VOKS did not help to keep pace with the increasing demands and responsibilities placed upon the international propaganda. The issue of the unsuitability of the premises utilized by VOKS, which, while serving representative purposes, proved inadequate for the apparatus. RGANI, f. 3, op. 36, d. 7, l. 8. Letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU from N. Popova and Yu. Zhukov. 17 June, 1957.

<sup>576</sup> GA RF, f. 5446, op. 88, d. 1832, l. 15. Letter to Comrade Malenkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, December 30, 1953.

<sup>577</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistska i razvedka*.

<sup>578</sup> Yuri Ustimenko, *Zdravstvui, Irlandiya!* [Hello, Ireland], [https://world.lib.ru/u/ustimenko\\_j\\_w/ireland.shtml](https://world.lib.ru/u/ustimenko_j_w/ireland.shtml) [accessed 03.12.2024].

<sup>579</sup> In the later year, it also became possible to get significantly higher compensation through the royalties for the so-called "sobinfy". Through such publications, it was possible to earn an additional total equivalent to one and a half or even two salaries, a substantial amount by the standards of the Soviet era. There were no limitations on the amount of this stream of income. Such materials in different formats, namely publications in press-newsletters by TASS, were exclusive for their subscribers. These materials included translated articles sourced from foreign press outlets, which have been reviewed and authorized for publication. Interview with Mikhail Beglov; Sanzhieva, *Problemy osushchestvleniya informacionnogo obmena*, 45–8.

the most valuable part of his staff – workers with international experience. For instance, he called for a raise at the TASS London office, but such an offer was deemed “unreasonable” by both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ministry of Finance.<sup>580</sup> According to their assessment, the subsistence wages provided to Soviet employees were considered adequate and already exceeded the threshold for a living wage, sufficient to meet their basic needs. However, salaries of British citizens employed at TASS were indeed increased from January 1954 to retain them at the office.

When it comes to other organizations, the salary situation was even worse; department heads within the All-Union Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (managing Sovinformburo, VOKS, and other international propaganda channels) received salaries that were only half as much as their counterparts in the International Department of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions or the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Culture. Surprisingly, even working at *Izvestia* was not particularly appealing for a fresh graduate. Vladimir Chekhonin perfectly summed up the perspectives of working for the outlet after his graduation in the late 1940s, reflecting why many were not eager to join the all-Union newspaper,

The government newspaper *Izvestia* became interested in me. Is it really destined to become a journalist? After a meeting with the head of the newspaper's staff, the offer had to be rejected – the editorial office did not provide housing. They also did not like the inevitable night vigils in the newspaper, when some journalists, along with the staff, were making up the issue in the workshop, others were looking for typos, running newspaper strips smelling of printing ink through the editorial offices. And for all this, the salary of 900 rubles is a little more than a scholarship at the institute.<sup>581</sup>

As a result, many international journalists or candidates seeking to become one found themselves at a distinct disadvantage compared to their counterparts in similar positions in other government departments, affecting morale and organizational effectiveness. For instance, Sovinformburo, a huge organization with hundreds of employees, was not even afforded its own separate building. As Vladimir Pozner later recalled his employment, “The meeting [...] took place in the former building of Sovinformburo, as well as the State Committee on Radio and Television – now I write these words, and I don't understand how it could be that two powerful ideological organizations shared one building.”<sup>582</sup> TASS could drive their employees late at night with the bus because of the regular overwork, yet they

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<sup>580</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 605, l. 120. A letter to the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU M.A. Suslov, November 9, 1953.

<sup>581</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistska i razvedka*.

<sup>582</sup> “Pozner V.V. stanovitsya zhurnalistom, rabota v APN, 1961 g.” [Pozner V.V. becomes a journalist, work at APN, 1961], *famhist*, <http://www.famhist.ru/famhist/pozner/000b41b5.htm#00000bef.htm> [accessed 04.06.2024].

were not given any special vehicles or drivers, as it was common in other, more prestigious organizations.<sup>583</sup>

Thus, the state's failure to provide workplaces for its own graduates shows the mismanagement of cadres from the outset of their education. The students felt cheated because their expectations of graduating from the most prestigious universities were dashed, and they had to settle for news organizations. Even graduation with distinction was not a guarantee of one's success in job hunting, and many took to seizing opportunities that did not necessarily align with their training. Multiple factors exacerbated the issue, leading to the haphazard assignments and mismanagement of talent.

### 3.5. Area Flexibility

The chaos of the distribution system, combined with the *semeistvennost'* practices, put graduates on the path to being as flexible as possible in their choice of profession and even region. Thus, the system of regional demarcation among specialists was in constant flux and reflected the state's ever-evolving political landscape, as well as the accumulation of knowledge about foreign countries. One might assume that specialists in specific areas would naturally acquire regional expertise, as journalists guard "their" borders jealously. Even those venerable international reporters who have a whole continent in their sights sometimes perceive the arrival of a reporter from his home editorial office with an assignment in "their" zone as a serious threat.<sup>584</sup> Contrary to such claims, the boundaries of the Soviet correspondents were fluid. After all, the educational system struggled to keep pace with the ever-evolving list of friends and enemies of the USSR at the time, as professional training was inherently time-consuming. On top of that, personal connections decided the fates of many graduates, and former students had to take on any available opportunity. Ultimately, it took years to complete a degree; however, Soviet journalists were accustomed to adapting to new assignments and territories as dictated by state needs. Hence, such a notion of stable regional expertise, as advocated by some foreign journalists, did not fully apply within the Soviet context, particularly until around the 1970s.

Moreover, it appears that expertise was seen as easily adaptable, particularly given the rapid shifts in the Soviet Union's political trajectory. For instance, a student might begin their studies when a particular country was considered an ally, only to graduate when that same

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<sup>583</sup> GA RF, f. 5446, op. 95, d. 982. To the Council of Ministers of the USSR from Vice-Head of TASS A. Vishnevsky, March 1961.

<sup>584</sup> Erik Fichtelius, "Desyat' zapovedei zhurnalistiki" [The Ten Commandments of Journalism] (Värnamo, 2003), <https://dedovkgu.narod.ru/bib/fihtelius.htm> [accessed 01.04.2022].

country had become an adversary. For instance, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, who later went on to become one of the most prominent correspondents, had struggled in the beginning of his career.<sup>585</sup> After serving in the army, Ovchinnikov was dispatched to Moscow for further studies at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages (VIIYA). Looking back, he believed his chances of successfully passing the entry exams were exceedingly slim. In 1947, the Institute accepted only accomplished athletes or the offspring of high-ranking military figures, such as marshals and generals. Ovchinnikov's lifeline was an interest in studying the Chinese language, as it was a lucky timeline for him. The Chinese Civil War resulted in the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and Ovchinnikov's chosen area suddenly became en vogue. In 1950, his thesis "Soviet Literature in China" helped him to get noticed and appointed as a translator for one of the initial delegations from Beijing. The delegation also paid a visit to *Pravda*, where the editor-in-chief was impressed with Ovchinnikov's knowledge of Chinese and offered him a job. Yet, with his rapidly developing career, Ovchinnikov could not have seen the Sino-Soviet split coming. Due to this fallout, the journalist had to requalify as a specialist in Japan quickly. He recounted how he transitioned from Beijing to Tokyo after a two-year break.<sup>586</sup> Many people who followed the trend of studying China also had to adapt quickly. Andrei Krushinskii graduated at an unfortunate time of tension between Mao and Khrushchev. Thus, he was first sent on short trips to Poland and Nepal, later to Beijing as a regional correspondent for China, Vietnam, Mongolia, and the DPRK.<sup>587</sup> The same happened to Anatolii Ivanov, an MGIMO graduate specializing in English and Chinese, who ended up in Egypt. Undoubtedly, such radical transitions were challenging: mastering a new language and immersing yourself in completely new contexts was always hard.<sup>588</sup> This meant gaining an understanding of the cultural, economic, and other nuances specific to the region. Moreover, journalists had to quickly establish contacts and sources within the region to gather reliable information and insights. Beyond these aspects,

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<sup>585</sup> The biographical details are taken from "Vsevolod Ovchinnikov," 489–92, in Aleksandr Grebel'nikov, ed., *Zhurnalisty XX veka: lyudi i sud'by* [Journalists of the Twentieth Century: People and Destinies] (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003). He worked as a correspondent in China for an impressive seven years in the 1950s, followed by a seven-year period in Japan in the 1960s, and then spent five years in England in the 1970s.

<sup>586</sup> "Vsevolod Ovchinnikov k stoletiyu 'Pravdy'" [Vsevolod Ovchinnikov on the Centenary of Pravda], *Pravda*, May 6, 2012, <https://www.pravda.ru/world/1114187-ovchinnikov/> [accessed 09.03.2022].

<sup>587</sup> Andrei Krushinsky, *Pravda.ru*, 20 June, 2020, [https://www.pravda.ru/author/krushinskij\\_andrej/](https://www.pravda.ru/author/krushinskij_andrej/) [accessed 15.04.2022].

<sup>588</sup> Despite this shift, Ovchinnikov found that his deep knowledge of ancient Chinese history, philosophy, and poetry continued to serve him well in Japan. He noted that his understanding of Chinese culture resonated strongly with his Japanese counterparts, as proficiency in Chinese literature was esteemed among educated Japanese, much like Latin was valued among European intellectuals.

journalists also learned about the political dynamics at play, such as history, conflicts, and diplomatic relations.

Yet, there was a certain logic in the constant reallocation of regional experts, as hierarchy and status within journalistic circles were determined by the specific countries they specialized in covering. A sort of mental map existed during this period, and certain countries were perceived as more interesting, advantageous, or prestigious to report on.<sup>589</sup> Reports from strategically important regions were more likely to be published than those from less critical areas. Consequently, correspondents in more significant regions enjoyed greater visibility and publication frequency, while those in other areas only faced increased challenges in getting their work published.<sup>590</sup> This perception existed before the war and immediately after,<sup>591</sup> when specialized backgrounds in international reporting were relatively rare, and being a generalized *mezhdunarodnik* was the only requirement.

Thus, journalists frequently began their careers by covering developing or socialist countries<sup>592</sup> and were sent to the “brotherly nations” first – Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, etc.<sup>593</sup> Within this imaginary ladder, allies within the Eastern Bloc served as a training ground for many young specialists within the Soviet establishment. For example, consider the recollection of Georgii Zubkov, who, when appointed as a political observer, expressed a preference for covering socialist countries. This choice surprised his superior, with him remarking, “I thought you were a serious person. What is there to do?”<sup>594</sup> In contrast, Anatolii Druzenko, an appointed correspondent in Poland, was happy to take up the position even in a

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<sup>589</sup> Such prestigious posts were usually placed at major national capitals. Those enjoyed a heightened level of news coverage thanks to their inherent newsworthiness. These sites can be considered as “translocalities,” noteworthy due to the individuals who frequented them, no longer pertaining solely to specific regions, but rather existing within interconnected frameworks. The phenomenon of global interconnectedness frequently resulted in the erosion of boundaries between foreign and domestic news.

<sup>590</sup> For instance, Boris Izakov recalled that in the 1930s, “Pravda” had only a handful of correspondents stationed abroad. Under these circumstances, the editorial office placed substantial demands on him as its London correspondent, expecting him to deliver many materials. His coverage was not limited to English affairs alone; the correspondent was also required to report on significant events and developments from neighboring countries. The limited number of foreign correspondents meant that a single correspondent's output was crucial to filling the newspaper's foreign news sections. Izakov, *Nash romanticheskii vek*, 129.

<sup>591</sup> Previously, a single correspondent assigned to an international location was required to produce a substantial volume of content. This content often covered not only the correspondent's assigned region but also neighboring countries, a necessity arising from the limited number of foreign offices and personnel available.

<sup>592</sup> Even without training in Chinese or Korean, fresh graduates would be sent to war-torn Korea and newly socialist China. However, they were not “full” diplomats there – they needed to forget everything they learned at their university and requalify into translators at the local Soviet embassy. A. B. Voronov, R. A. Sergeev, A. V. Torkunov, and L. A. Filatov, eds., *A v glazakh budet Mezhdunarodnyi institut vozle Krymskogo mosta... (1947–1952). Govoriat vypuskniki 1952 goda* [And in Their Eyes There Will Be an International Institute near the Crimean Bridge... (1947–1952). Graduates of 1952 Speak] (Moscow: MGIMO, 2002), 179.

<sup>593</sup> Brooks calculated that the postwar foreign affairs’ coverage dedicated only around 10% of its space to “people’s democracies,” increasing only after Mao’s victory. Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!* 209.

<sup>594</sup> This anecdote highlights that socialist countries were seen as less challenging or interesting assignments in the eyes of some within the journalistic hierarchy. Zubkov, *Fakt, obrashennyj v obraz*, 406.

socialist country, as working abroad was a dream for many journalists at the time.<sup>595</sup> As a native of Western Ukraine, Druzenko was particularly appreciative of the assignment, and he found it easier to adapt there. Those assignments also provided learning experiences while allowing the Soviet Union to silence the scandals or conflicts if they arose.

Non-aligned countries came second because Soviet efforts focused on making a significant impression on the population, which required diplomatic tact. Typically, they were the next destination, already more demanding, but not quite as challenging as the “West.” So, at the top of the hierarchy were capitalist countries, notably the United States, which received the highest level of attention and resources from the Soviet government. Assignments to those countries represented the pinnacle of recognition and trust within the Soviet foreign affairs apparatus. They were considered the most rewarding and were often reserved for the most experienced “aces.” The challenges of reporting on those countries stemmed from their perceived complexity, diversity, and the highly competitive nature of their media landscapes. If some journalists resisted those assignments and switchups in their regions, they were harshly condemned, as the argument was made that “the mezhdunarodniki had to be prepared to take up any job at the Ministry, independent of their preferences.”<sup>596</sup> Gennady Zafesov, *Pravda* correspondent, further confirms the hierarchy, claiming that after his assignments in Poland, Syria, and Lebanon, he had passed a certain level of trust in him as a professional,

You were becoming a person who could be trusted in a broad sense. The newspaper began to look at you as a journalist who would get a foreign assignment any day. Since I worked in the Americas’ department, which included Latin America, it was thought that I would be the first candidate as soon as a position in Chile became available.<sup>597</sup>

However, even he, the trusted candidate, faced this misplanned treatment and was assigned to Cuba, yet again, a socialist country, which was a disappointing turn of events for the journalist. For him, it felt like a downgrade on the perceived mental hierarchy.

Interpersonal relationships within news outlets or with officials could also determine the fates of correspondents and accelerate their rise in the regional hierarchy. In *Izvestia*, Igor Golembiovski stated that he had no plans to leave the country, despite the editor's offer of a correspondent's position in Czechoslovakia, “Igor immediately stated that if he were to go, it

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<sup>595</sup> Vasilii Zakhar’ko, *Zvezdnye chasy i drama “Izvestii”* [Star Hours and the Izvestia Drama] (Moscow: Vremya, 2014) *litres*, <https://www.litres.ru/book/vasiliy-zaharko/zvezdnye-chasy-i-drama-izvestiy-8924772/chitat-onlayn/> [accessed 04.11.2023].

<sup>596</sup> TSAOPIM, f. 538, op. 1, d. 15, l. 72. Stenogramma obshhego partiinogo sobraniya partiinoi organizacii MGIMO [Minutes of the general party meeting of the MGIMO party organization]. 16/02/51, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 155.

<sup>597</sup> Zafesov, *Posle dvadcati let molchaniya*, 59–60.

would not be to any socialist country, but only to a capitalist country.”<sup>598</sup> Such demands were surprising, given that Golembiovsky did not even speak any foreign languages. However, thanks to the editor-in-chief's support, Golembiovski was appointed as a correspondent to Mexico, despite his lack of relevant experience.<sup>599</sup> Besides, the journalist did not know history, no orientation in domestic and foreign policy – he had previously worked in the Letters and Industry departments of the newspaper.<sup>600</sup> Plus, all forty of *Izvestia's* foreign correspondent points were occupied by other correspondents. All of those factors were easy to overcome because of the editor's personal dislike of the journalist, so he was ready to “send” him away. The Mexican stay of one of the correspondents, Vladimir Silantiev's, was getting too long, and Golembiovsky became his replacement. The editor-in-chief was so determined to exile the employee that he provided all possible arguments in favor of the new candidate for becoming a correspondent abroad, “Ideologically upstanding, devoted to the cause of the Party, and without such formulations, one cannot see abroad.”<sup>601</sup> Thus, the journalist was given three standard months to study the peculiarities of Mexico, master the literature, read TASS information, and obtain a driver's license.

However, for most, to climb to the top meant going through all the stages of the mental map hierarchy. Socialist and developing countries were often seen as training grounds for journalists, after which they could write about the “real” global issues, reporting from capitalist lands. Such postings were guaranteed to be less prestigious and less attractive, and purposefully choosing that region usually meant hardships in one's career, with occasional returns to Moscow, “The students felt a certain disadvantage, realizing [...] that [...] Bulgarian language alone would dramatically reduce the scope of their opportunities after graduation.”<sup>602</sup> Those were seen as temporary assignments, a necessary step until a real deal – capitalist states. Specialization or work in socialist countries was treated as just a phase. The journal “Problems of Peace and Socialism,” issued in Prague, was a common starting point for journalists wanting to specialize in foreign affairs in the 1960s.<sup>603</sup> Needless to say, those

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<sup>598</sup> Zakhar'ko, *Zvezdnye chasy i drama 'Izvestii.'*

<sup>599</sup> Incompetency was also covered up by bosses on the ground of personal ties, family relations, or even common ethnicity. Moreover, even gross misconduct could be forgiven, not even speaking of accelerated promotions and better positions offered to those with the ties. Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura*.

<sup>600</sup> After graduating from Tbilisi University, he worked at a Komsomol newspaper, from where he was transferred to the Central Committee of the Komsomol as an instructor in the propaganda department, plus, he had been a member of the CPSU for almost two decades.

<sup>601</sup> Zakhar'ko, *Zvezdnye chasy i drama 'Izvestii.'*

<sup>602</sup> Sergeev, Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov), 266–7.

<sup>603</sup> N. Yu. Lapina, “Transformatsiya sovetskoy politicheskoy elity” [Transformation of Soviet Political Elite], *Upravlencheskoe konsul'tirovanie*, no. 1 (2005): 117, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/transformatsiya-sovetskoy-politicheskoy-elity> [accessed July 4, 2025].

factors could be a powerful deterrent to the socialist country's specialization. After working in it, they could be allowed to work on more “serious” tasks in Western regions. The latter also paid better and offered benefits such as seeing the other side of the Iron Curtain and buying produce unavailable in the USSR.

On the other hand, less prestigious postings were also more demanding. For instance, the challenges of preparing for assignments in countries outside the European continent were manifold, given the fragmented information and cultural barriers. Firstly, the lack of prior knowledge about distant, non-European regions posed a significant obstacle to journalists. Unlike more “known” (see, Western) countries, which were often more extensively covered and studied, African nations, for instance, were frequently rather a mystery to a Soviet citizen at that time.<sup>604</sup> This lack of information meant that journalists had to rely on limited preparations when approaching their assignments, leaving them ill-equipped to understand the complexities of local politics, culture, and society. Moreover, the standards of journalism and information gathering that journalists were accustomed to in Europe often proved simply impossible in other contexts. As Nikolai Khokhlov observed, many African capitals had only a handful of small newspapers, some of which were published by foreign entities without representation in other countries.<sup>605</sup> So, there were very few opportunities to penetrate the local press in the first place.

Furthermore, the linguistic diversity of the world outside the “West” was a challenge in itself. Languages like Swahili were not commonly taught in Moscow at the time. Journalists often relied on English or French, the languages of colonial powers and administrators, to communicate with locals.<sup>606</sup> While these languages facilitated communication with diplomats and officials, they remained detached from the local people they sought to serve. Thus, the less prestigious positions were also hard to prepare for and demanded more effort to perform efficiently. Yet they were seen as one of the steps toward one’s progress on the career ladder. For instance, while Dina Fainberg points out that Boris Strelnikov, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* correspondent, was rather inexperienced and barely spoke any English before his assignment to America,<sup>607</sup> such cadre decisions were still intentional. The post in the US needed to be “deserved”, as Strelnikov had already been working in foreign coverage in other parts of the world. He came to journalism after the war and started as an assistant editor at the publishing house. Then, he studied at the Central Komsomol School and became an editor of the

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<sup>604</sup> Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat' interv'yu*, 273.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 100.

department of the Anti-fascist Committee of Soviet Youth. Between 1949 and 1956, he was the deputy editor for foreign affairs, executive secretary, and editor for foreign affairs in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. During those years, he had already been to socialist and developing countries. At the end of 1956, when Boris Strelnikov was executive secretary of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, he was invited by Yuri Zhukov, then deputy editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, and Daniil Kraminov, editor of the American section, to join *Pravda*.<sup>608</sup> They offered him a position in New York as a correspondent. At first, he had relatively easy tasks related to the United Nations: the delegates' speeches were translated synchronously. In addition, it was always possible to consult with the staff of the Soviet delegation. He had a hard time with the language, and his timidity was met with understanding by Zhukov, Kraminov, and Yevgeny Litoshko, the deputy editor of the American section. They tutored him in absentia, across the Atlantic. When he finally began to write for *Pravda*, he also received support from Boris Polevoi, although they were not personally acquainted. Other journalists and writers also reached out and encouraged Strelnikov to write more frequently. As the journalist recalled,

It was completely unexpected and, of course, an honor. I was transferred to *Pravda* and given an English teacher who spent 10 hours a day, every day, forcing me to chisel verbs, declensions, and conjugations for 3 months... To this day, I am grateful to this person, even though I was completely exhausted by the end of the course. Now I realize that, of course, it is impossible to learn a foreign language by this method. But what was to be done? I was once punished for my laziness. The editorial office, of course, also realized that I had not mastered the language sufficiently. Zhukov and Kraminov dealt with me tactfully: for the first six months, they did not ask me to give my best. I learned to speak on the streets of New York and to read newspapers, then books. Americans say: "If you put a pole made of Siberian pine or Lebanese cedar on Broadway, the pole will sooner or later speak English ... with a Brooklyn accent." I believe I didn't do well in the first two years. It was a learning curve. Poor knowledge of the language and superficial acquaintance with the country were a factor.<sup>609</sup>

Although chaotic, the situation with assignment preparation in capitalist countries was much better than in socialist or decolonized territories. The availability of reference departments within newspaper editorial offices and news agencies provided Soviet journalists with invaluable resources for analyzing the "rotten West." Viktor Mayevsky, for instance, held in high regard the work of *Pravda's* reference department, which served as a treasure trove of information on a wide array of topics. For him, the reference department was a lifeline, providing answers to a multitude of questions that arose in the course of their reporting.<sup>610</sup> Whether it was inquiries about the number of public organizations in the United States, the

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<sup>608</sup> Yuri Zhukov, *Rasskazy o soldatah perednego kraya fronta ideologicheskoi bor'by* [Stories about Soldiers at the Forefront of the Ideological Struggle] (Moscow: Pravda, 1984), 272–3.

<sup>609</sup> "Boris Georgievich Strelnikov," in Aleksandr Grebel'nikov, ed., *Zhurnalisty XX veka: lyudi i sud'by* [Journalists of the Twentieth Century: People and Destinies] (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 534.

<sup>610</sup> Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat'* interv'yu, 233.

educational background of General de Gaulle, the biography of Woodrow Wilson, or the ingredients used to make American Bourbon whiskey, journalists could rely on the reference department's expertise to provide them with the latest information. Thus, such reference departments were staffed by people who collected and cataloged materials, including newspaper clippings, news agency telegrams, and other relevant documents.

Aside from reference departments and special libraries within news organizations, separate professional institutes for regional studies were being established in those years.<sup>611</sup> For instance, the new Institute of Oriental Languages at the Lomonosov Moscow State University was established in 1956, the Institute for African Studies of the Academy of Sciences in 1959, and the Institute of Latin America of the Academy of Sciences in 1961. Those “prospective” areas of expertise received priority in institutionalization, given how little knowledge about them was within the Soviet sphere. After all, thanks to decolonization, the USSR established diplomatic relations with dozens of new states in Africa and Asia and urgently needed to accelerate the training of new cadres in an expanding number of languages: Hausa, Yoruba, and Fulah, among others. The approach in training specialists for the regions needed to change as well: until then, experts in African languages were mostly ethnographers.<sup>612</sup> Plus, thanks to the decolonial movement, the USSR saw a real chance to penetrate those regions and win them over to socialism, hence focusing expertise and resources on them first. So, the capitalist world got its research centers years later. For instance, the Institute for US and Canadian Studies was established in 1967, whereas the Institute of European Studies of the Academy of Sciences was established only in 1987. Yet, apart from those organizations, there were other ways to learn about the world and adapt to it.

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<sup>611</sup> For instance, in 1956, a new Institute of Oriental Languages at the Lomonosov Moscow State University was established. “Istoriya ISAA” [History of ISAA], *isaas.msu.ru*, <https://iaas.msu.ru/about/history/> [accessed 05.07.2024]; The Institute for African Studies of the Academy of Sciences was founded in 1959. “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma CK KPSS ‘Ob organizacii Instituta Afriki v Akademii nauk SSSR’” [Resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU ‘On the organization of the Institute of Africa in the USSR Academy of Sciences,’ July 2, 1959], *Dokumenty XX veka*, <https://doc20vek.ru/node/4191> [accessed 05.07.2024]; The Institute of Latin America of the Russian Academy of Sciences emerged in 1961. “Ob institute” [About the Institute], *ilaran*, <https://ilaran.ru/about/> [accessed 05.07.2024]. Those new areas of expertise got the priority in institutionalization. The capitalist world got their research centers years later. For instance, the Institute for US and Canadian Studies was established in 1967. “Istoriya instituta” [History of the Institute], *iskran*, <https://iskran.ru/ob-institute/istoriya/> [accessed 05.07.2024]. The Institute of European Studies of Academy of Sciences was only established in 1987. “Ob institute Evropy RAN” [About the European Institute of RAN], *Institute of Europe*, <https://www.instituteofeurope.ru/ie-ras/ob-institute> [accessed 05.07.2024].

<sup>612</sup> A. V. Torkunov, ed., *MGIMO – Universitet: Traditsii i sovremennost’. 1944–2004* [MGIMO University: Traditions and Modernity. 1944–2004], (Moscow: OAO Moskovskie uchebniki i Kartolitografiia, 2004), 23.

## Conclusions

Many of the aforementioned changes, whether in journalism education or in new methods of work, were intended to be long-term, and it took many years to produce the first cohorts of professionals. The change was rather quick in the lower echelons of professional journalists: the first real results could be seen right before Stalin died in the early 1950s, as the first cohorts of graduates appeared in the late 1940s, and they became the fuel to restaffing the international departments of newspapers.<sup>613</sup> However, such musings quickly stopped, as the new Soviet elite expanded significantly without any notable mechanisms for restraint, and the chiefs were gradually aging and becoming more conservative. Moreover, they were not leaving their positions and giving way to new experts, but rather awarding job offers to their friends and family members as a security measure. Therefore, instead of youthful and experts, the positions were often filled by unqualified cadres related to or acquainted with the bosses. On top of that, the distribution system was failing due to miscalculations in not only the professionals it needed but also the regional experts it was supposedly lacking. After all, foreign affairs and cadres are difficult to plan for over the years, especially given the USSR's unstable political course. This created an atmosphere in which graduates themselves had to accept either their limited options, reserved for patronage, or try to adapt to the offers they were given.

Furthermore, while, ideally, the correspondent meant for international coverage would have specialized training in journalism, as well as experience in the press and knowledge of foreign languages, those characteristics were so atypical even for the Soviet elite that they were hard to meet, if they were met at all: one, two, or all three components needed to be compromised to occupy the position. Often, language skills outweighed journalistic talent, and newspapers employed people who spoke foreign languages rather than journalists for assignments abroad. Yet it was a big compromise, given that the biggest newspapers and news agencies hired yesterday's students with zero experience, as their words were scrutinized under a magnifying glass by foreign governments.

## Chapter 4: *Mezhdunarodnik* as a Vocation: Porosity and Opportunity

The career of any Soviet expert in the international field was full of dichotomies and crossroads. The concept of “profession” deviated from the modern understanding: the boundaries between different fields of expertise, even within a single profession, were often

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<sup>613</sup> For instance, the journal *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* also hired fresh graduates like Tomas Kolesnichenko and Seyfull-Mulyukov. Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

indistinct. Traditional markers of a profession, such as specialized education and well-defined roles, did not consistently apply to many working in international reporting; for example, many supposed professionals might not have had the specialized education typically expected in the field. Until the late 1950s, there was no professional community for journalists in the USSR, and, hence, no associations that could have helped to define and uphold professional standards, an accepted code of conduct, or formalized ethics for the profession.<sup>614</sup> Looking through this lens, it becomes apparent that Soviet journalism had a peculiar modality. Journalists within the field had options to pursue a career within a newspaper or a news agency, or to consider work in diplomacy or in the KGB.<sup>615</sup> For many, this was a conscious choice to diversify their careers and maximize their employability. On a personal level, it carried implications for their professional identity, political alignment, and financial security. Yet this fluidity between roles in the media, diplomacy, and intelligence services also contributed to unpredictability within bureaucratic structures, fostering institutional chaos. Such volatility meant a mix of duties, both on paper and in practice, creating an unclear and unstable set of job expectations: employees performed a variety of roles that, in other contexts, would be considered distinct professions.

Thus, this chapter delves into the dynamics of Soviet journalism and the factors that enabled diverse career trajectories. The blurred lines between fields suggest a high degree of adaptability among Soviet professionals, who were required to take on a variety of roles. This flexibility was both a strength and a weakness, providing diverse experience but also potentially leading to role confusion and a lack of specialized expertise.

#### 4.1. System's Porosity and *Mezhdunarodnik's* Status

One of the defining features of the Soviet system was its centralization: from its core, it had multiple branches and subdivisions. Various organizations had identical or similar functions

<sup>614</sup> Zelizer, *Journalists as interpretive communities*, 219.

<sup>615</sup> The same options could be presented to the Western journalists, as the career paths could be similar: there were cases when Western journalism majors became diplomats like David D. Pearce or were accused of combining correspondent work with espionage like Henry Brandon working for the Sunday Times and MI6. BBC News, "The 'Secret Agents' of the UK Press," *BBC*, March 3, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21628728> [accessed 01.12.2021]; Stephen Dorril, "Russia Accuses Fleet Street: Journalists and MI6 during the Cold War," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 20, no. 2 (2015): 204–27; Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 95, 193; Edward Alwood, "The Spy Case of AP Correspondent William Oatis: A Muddled Victim/Hero Myth of the Cold War," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (2010): 263–80; Simon Willmetts, "The CIA and Time Magazine: Journalistic Ethics and Newsroom Dissent," *Diplomatic History* 48, no. 5 (November 2024): 719–43; Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media: How America's Most Powerful News Media Worked Hand in Glove with the Central Intelligence Agency and Why the Church Committee Covered It Up," *Rolling Stone*, October 20, 1977, <https://www.carlbernstein.com/the-cia-and-the-media-rolling-stone-10-20-1977?rq=the%20cia%20and%20the%20media> [accessed 23.01.2024].

and operated in close connection to one another.<sup>616</sup> Because of this, few worthy opponents could rival the Soviet Union in the art of global self-promotion. Every international event became a battlefield, and Moscow never showed up half-armed: Soviet officials planned all-encompassing propaganda campaigns far beyond plain media coverage.<sup>617</sup> To realize the full potential, an entire network of institutions was mobilized. Just for the 1960 exhibition in Hungary,<sup>618</sup> the Soviet embassy organized film screenings, the State Committee for Radio and Television filled radio waves, VAO Intourist hand-picked “tourists,” and the Ministry of Culture timed a tour of Soviet circus artists to coincide with the exhibition.<sup>619</sup> Journalists were a part of such coordinated efforts and inhabited the extensive, porous apparatus, including a plethora of Soviet international news propaganda organizations that worked for one goal – a positive effect on the image of the USSR.<sup>620</sup> TASS, Sovinformburo, *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Trud*, and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, along with *Novosti* Press Agency, *Selskaya zhizn'*, and others that emerged later in the 1960s, formed a network with correspondent points abroad. They worked in a tight bond, which also meant that they could exchange their expertise on methods

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<sup>616</sup> Direct oversight and coordination over them were complicated, as the organizations reported to multiple key authorities at the same time. Such as the State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (GKKs) and the Department of Propaganda and Agitation at the Central Committee of the CPSU (Agitprop).

<sup>617</sup> For example, the 1946 project of re-organization of propaganda lists different media that need to be coordinated in order to perform in the most efficient way. RGASPI, f. 77, op. 4, d. 16, ll. 55–63. Draft resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On the coverage of foreign policy issues in the Soviet press and on Soviet propaganda abroad,” as quoted in *Stalin i kosmopolitizm, 1945–1953: Dokumenty* [Stalin and Cosmopolitanism, 1945–1953: Documents], ed. by D. Nadzhafov (Moscow: Materik Publishing House, 2005), 60–5 and RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, D. 155, l. 16. Draft resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On the Council for the management of international propaganda in foreign countries and the coverage of international events in the Soviet press,” as quoted in *Stalin i kosmopolitizm*, 55–6. For instance, the Council of Ministers of the USSR was responsible for overarching policy decisions; *Glavlit* controlled literary and artistic censorship; the Ministry of Forestry played a role in paper distribution; and the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (SSOD) was tasked with establishing and maintaining international friendships around the globe. 1946 decrees on foreign propaganda mentioned all of the organizations working for abroad as one system. Foreign reporting was arguably the most politicized form of news-making, as the states always have involvement in foreign affairs. Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills, London: Red Globe Press, 2011), 8–11.

<sup>618</sup> GA RF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 524, ll. 60–1. Plan of Propaganda and Informational Events at the Soviet Industrial Exhibition in Budapest (Hungary). May 20–30, 1960.

<sup>619</sup> Meanwhile, several ministries and institutions, including the Ministries of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Health, and Enlightenment of the USSR, along with the Academy of Sciences, sent professionals to deliver lectures at the Soviet pavilion. The exhibition in Oslo also incorporated the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. As part of their involvement, the organization was tasked with sending 2–3 lecturers to provide public talks about various aspects of Soviet society, such as economy, industry, agriculture, culture, and science. Ibid, ll. 62–3. Plan of Propaganda and Informational Events at the Soviet Exhibition in Oslo (Norway). May–June, 1960.

<sup>620</sup> Much was written about the formation of a positive image of the USSR in different media like exhibitions, films, etc., e.g., Tomas Tolvaisas, “Cold War ‘Bridge-Building’: U.S. Exchange Exhibits and Their Reception in the Soviet Union, 1959–1967,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 4 (2010): 3–31; Alexander Fedorov, “Positive Image of the USSR and Soviet Characters in American Films in 1943–1945,” *Journal of Advocacy, Research and Education* 1, no. 1 (2014), [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2625052](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2625052) [accessed March 20, 2024].

of work, assist on their missions, lend equipment, swap employees, and work cooperatively.<sup>621</sup> Propaganda was designed as a team sport – messages had to be aligned and transmitted through various modalities.<sup>622</sup> Through the concerted efforts of these organizations, the USSR sought to maximize momentum and make the most of available opportunities.

This centralized control was not merely an oversight; it empowered the state to place personnel like chess pieces across the board, treating them as valuable resources in service of greater societal goals. The state had control over all channels and the people working within them: it was a common practice to reassign workers to different positions regularly. The CPSU Central Committee's Organization Department managed career movements to ensure that Soviet officials were not only geographically mobile but also capable of transitioning between various managerial positions.<sup>623</sup> This meant that a person's career could switch in terms of their responsibilities and areas of work.<sup>624</sup> By design, this flexibility was supposed to develop versatile cadres, ensuring that officials were well-rounded and experienced across the board, creating an adaptable elite. This approach led to an allocation of human capital, allowing the state to send workers to sectors where their talents were most urgently required,<sup>625</sup> as this principle applied to anyone climbing the social (and socialist) ladder.<sup>626</sup>

This universalism among Soviet *nomenklatura* went beyond the Party and spread onto the international apparatus, which can be best described as a labyrinth, with a certain degree of

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<sup>621</sup> For example, in the job description for a representative of a Soviet friendship society, it was stated that its head "works under the direction of the Ambassador [...]. He carries out his work in close contact with representatives of Sovinformburo, TASS, Sovexportfilm, International Book, and other Soviet organizations in the host country". GA RF, f. 9518, op. 1, d. 17. Comments on the draft regulations on the representative of the SOD.

<sup>622</sup> For instance, Sovinformburo played its part by covering the USSR's participation in the exhibition through features in the Soviet-controlled "Szovjet Híradó" [Soviet Newspaper]. Additionally, there was free distribution of Soviet literature worth 50 thousand rubles in Russian and foreign languages, especially since the Soviet embassy was already signaling the heightened interest in the "Soviet way of life." Not all forms of communication were explicitly political: many just looked like the promotion of Soviet culture, literature, arts, and other accomplishments. In reality, it was a means to assert cultural supremacy. Yet central to the coordination efforts at that period was the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which led propaganda and information initiatives.

<sup>623</sup> Alex Simirenko and C. A. Kern Simirenko, eds., *Professionalization of Soviet Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1982).

<sup>624</sup> One of the most typical career paths involved a progression from Komsomol work to Party work, and then potentially moving into Soviet administrative work, before possibly transitioning back to Party roles.

<sup>625</sup> There is a dissertation talking extensively about reallocation of human resources and mismatch of training and work in the USSR. Marc Rubin, *Soviet Manpower Planning: Decentralized Action Within a Centralized Framework* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/60dc6b37802e286fda898b3cee38a8b8/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y> [accessed 23.10.2024].

<sup>626</sup> Kryshstanovskaya, Transformaciya staroi nomenklatury, 53.

complexity and, arguably, a certain degree of porosity.<sup>627</sup> By porosity, I understand the presence of numerous gaps in opportunities and the process of filling them with whatever resources or options were currently accessible. This seemed a logical conclusion, given not only the scarcity of experts but also the officials' ability to move people. For diplomats, writers, or journalists, this centralized system guaranteed that personnel could be redirected to address the state's most pressing needs. Amidst this overgrown bureaucratic labyrinth, people were its centerpiece and a key to its functioning, exercising flexibility in methods and approaches.

The side effect of creating the porous system and, subsequently, universal cadres for it was a surprising lack of uniformity in both structure and opportunities. Rather than adhering to a standardized model, various institutions handled their tasks differently. This convoluted hierarchy, while stifling innovation, fostered an environment for internal competition among its members. Both higher and lower-level staff felt that the system could be played to their own advantage. Through the visible inequality in resources and prestige, the employees made the most of their positions. They showed their agency, the opposite of what is usually thought of about the Soviet cadres. After all, the monopoly over foreign affairs personnel meant that the state had only a very limited pool of staff to pick from.<sup>628</sup> Furthermore, the fact that workers could move within the bureaucratic structures pointed to an interplay of interests and competition.<sup>629</sup> This internal mobility was not just a byproduct of organizational fluidity; it indicated internal competition. Professionals were motivated to seek opportunities that fairly compensated their skills, so competence played a role in individual advancement. They could switch between organizations, not being mere cogs in this machine, but instead showing a

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<sup>627</sup> I have also encountered the use of this term but in a different context in the dissertation by Alexander Hazanov, who focused on the emergence of interaction zones between foreigners and Soviet citizens that somewhat relaxed the rigid sovereignty assertions of the Soviet party-state. Alexander Hazanov, *Porous Empire: Foreign Visitors and the Post-Stalin Soviet State* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016), *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/f196ea3a12bdd002bedb3b3384ef204d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750> [accessed 14.11.2023]. Moreover, researcher Moshe Lewin compared the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus to a bargaining field, “full of loopholes and interaction.” Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura*.

<sup>628</sup> This was especially noticeable after the war. As the state grew more insular, it was no longer willing to depend on foreigners. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, f. 122, ll. 175—81. A memo from the agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov about TASS personnel, 23.03.1950, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69797> [accessed 15.02.2023].

<sup>629</sup> At that time and to this day, anywhere in the whole world, there were many fewer foreign correspondents than there were general journalists, so the work culture was rather concentrated. For instance, despite the talk of range and diversity among the capitalist press, many journalists also switched between the organizations and media in the field, and “crews are drawn from the same pool of talent.” So, the same people worked for various news outlets and did not necessarily radically change their methods of work. After all, all global news media faced the same constraints of time, money, and trained personnel. Pedelty, *War Stories*, 47; Robert D. Hess, *International News and Foreign Correspondents* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 30.

degree of agency.<sup>630</sup> For instance, the key players had the luxury to maneuver between different positions for personal advantage: be it higher salaries, the ability to travel abroad, or a new apartment. Those people were a unique breed with linguistic proficiency, cultural understanding, and knowledge of international affairs. Some international journalists had a bilingual upbringing or education that was simply uncommon in the broader Soviet context.<sup>631</sup> Some were fortunate to have parents among the diplomatic corps, providing them with exposure to diverse cultures and languages from an early age.<sup>632</sup> Others had gained some insight through wartime experiences and following the Red Army abroad.<sup>633</sup> So, their ability to bridge the gap between different cultures made them invaluable assets in the eyes of the state, and these first, elite cadres, armed with their expertise, became sought-after figures in the Soviet system who sometimes could direct their own lives.

In essence, the porous nature of the Soviet system not only created adaptability but also fostered internal competition among organizations *and* individuals. This competition not only facilitated the rapid preparation of cadres but also gave the Soviet Union a competitive edge, despite its media monopoly. While the porosity might have seemed like a complication, it was fundamentally a response to the need for personnel. Instead of becoming a weakness, it became a double-edged sword: professionals accumulated experience across different organizations, and the system inadvertently created a pool of somewhat universal employees. The inequality in both financial compensation and professional opportunities, however, added to the system's complexity. The lack of uniformity spoke to the decentralization of the Soviet bureaucratic system. While it is true that some dedicated their entire careers to one path, sometimes even to a single news outlet, this was just a variation on the norm, where many switched between organizations, if not the entire field.

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<sup>630</sup> Pierre-Louis also noted the remarkable flexibility of many cadres: “[...] it was this flexibility that enabled them to make long careers.” Six, *The Party Nobility*, 221. It is important to note that, especially under Stalin, their degree of agency was undermined, since people were not allowed to leave their workplace on their own will. For instance, Georgii Levinson mentioned wanting to switch from VOKS to TASS, but it was nearly impossible. A year later, the organization accepted his resignation willingly thanks to the start of the antic cosmopolitan campaign. Georgii Levinson, *Memoirs*, 1945, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/778099> [accessed 04.05.2025].

<sup>631</sup> One of the most prominent Soviet and Russian journalists, Vladimir Pozner, was born in a Jewish-French family.

<sup>632</sup> For instance, Viktor Sukhodrev, a famous translator and diplomat, was a son of a diplomat based in London during WWII.

<sup>633</sup> See, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 247, ll. 14–37. A memorandum by correspondent I. Konstantinovskiy “On the stay of the Red Army in Romania.” July 15, 1944; Ibid, ll. 72–9. A memorandum by the military correspondents of the newspaper Pravda, Major V. Kozhevnikov and Major M. Sivolobov, to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), A.S. Shcherbakov, on the situation in Bulgaria. September 27, 1944; Ibid, ll. 59–61. A report by correspondent I. Konstantinovskiy on propaganda in Romania. September 26, 1944.

#### 4.2. News Agencies' Journalists vs. *Gazetchiki*

One of the variables in the career of a *mezhdunarodnik* was work at a newspaper or news agency. The two required different levels of preparation and entailed different responsibilities in the Soviet context. For work at a newspaper (even with a significant readership), the editorial process was more relaxed: “[...] journalists’ everyday work quite often resembled a mechanical process of placing TASS’s news stories and Party resolutions onto the printed page.”<sup>634</sup> The working hours for newspaper journalists were generally more relaxed, and the news itself tended to be more monotonous: “By and large, the correspondents of daily newspapers have a deadline each day. That day may be busy or not so busy, but at least in that way there is a certain predictability, a certain time to plan for.”<sup>635</sup> Overall, the editorial process in newspapers tended to be more structured and hierarchical, with less emphasis on breaking news and more focus on delivering curated and preplanned content.<sup>636</sup>

News agencies, on the other hand, took on the role of distributors of vast quantities of data. They had to work remarkably fast, processing thousands of messages for their clientele daily. Such workloads led to extreme time pressures for the employees. The pressure to adjust to global time zones, coupled with the orientation to Moscow time, added another layer of temporal constraints. They were often working long hours, sometimes with little to no rest. Around-the-clock demands took a toll on employees, leading many to experience burnout and exhaustion. News agency work was “... a job with no days off, because events in the country and in the world never go on vacation. It is honest work for a modest government salary, but with a great sense of satisfaction. It is almost fanaticism...”<sup>637</sup>

Only one newspaper met the standards of TASS workers – *Izvestia*. With Aleksei Adzhubei as its editor-in-chief, the newspaper adopted new methods of work, seeking to introduce greater dynamism into its content. The outlet was actively fighting for the attention of Soviet readers, publishing news from different angles and on new topics. It came to the point that Mikhail Suslov, a chief Soviet ideologist at that time, was unpleasantly surprised by such developments: “Imagine, I open *Izvestia* in the morning, and I don't know what I'm going to read in it.”<sup>638</sup> Outside of *Izvestia*, Soviet journalists themselves knew that “regular” (meaning, Western) newspaper journalists worked very differently. They were in the thick of events, not

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<sup>634</sup> Huxtable, News from Moscow, 13.

<sup>635</sup> Hannerz, Foreign News, 210.

<sup>636</sup> N. Bogdanov and B. Vyazemskii, *Spravochnik zhurnalista* [The Journalist's Handbook] (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1961), 140.

<sup>637</sup> Nikolai Dolgoplov, as quoted in Vitalii Ignatenko, *Memoirs* (1975), [prozhito.org, https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/654217](https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/654217) [accessed 12.02.2024].

<sup>638</sup> Adzhubei, *Te Desyat' let*.

sitting in the newsroom reading reports of other news outlets. They observed with their own eyes. Nonetheless, they were happy to be preoccupied with those tasks, writing about international events from their Moscow offices, “And I still thought that it was more interesting to write about world events than to glorify the happy life of Soviet citizens. Even if we were constantly reporting that the whole world was preparing for revenge and the imperialists of all countries and peoples were arming themselves to the teeth.”<sup>639</sup> To them, this was still better than other types of journalism in the USSR, and, despite *Izvestia*’s evolution, working at most Soviet newspapers still offered a more stable environment than at fast-paced news agencies.

Meanwhile, the immense time and administrative pressures on news agency journalists created high-stakes circumstances, and the visibility of mistakes made the already global competitive environment even more tense. Unlike domestic press materials primarily consumed by a home audience, news agency reports were read around the world: the global audience included organizations and entire governments awaiting any slip-ups in the Soviet press. It was much harder to retract false statements or backtrack on important claims, as Western observers could hold the Soviet news media accountable. Under this heightened scrutiny, the pressure on news agency employees was immense. Any errors could damage the credibility of both the news agency and the Soviet Union. Hence, the censorship had to intervene in the work of journalists writing for countries abroad. Yet, regular *Glavlit*’s extensive proofreading,<sup>640</sup> common in the domestic press, sometimes took days to complete. It was impractical in the fast-paced international news competition. To accommodate the time demands, the censorship functions were switched.<sup>641</sup> Instead of going through the traditional *Glavlit* review, censorship was “lifted” for news agency materials. Without days of proofreading, the news outlets gained valuable time and could streamline news production, though at the risk of publishing compromising information. With the absence of *Glavlit*’s control, the stakes were raised, and errors could have far-reaching consequences. This meant that the responsibility for content and any potential mistakes fell onto regional editors and editors-in-chief, who were to ensure the accuracy and right ideological interpretations of the news.<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd’.

<sup>640</sup> The main censorial organ of the Soviet Union. It is very telling that there was a representative of *Glavlit* at TASS, but the restrictions were mainly concerned with domestic information. International information was of no concern to this officer, and if there was indeed something important that could not go on the official pages, it went to the closed “Vestnik” of TASS for a limited number of highest-ranking officials.

<sup>641</sup> GA RF, f. 5446, op. 97, d. 1305. Letter to the Council of Ministers of the USSR from A. Vishnevskii, 1962.

<sup>642</sup> Particularly important materials concerning sensitive issues of foreign policy or comments on speeches of Soviet or Western leaders were additionally vetted by the head of the editorial office, the editor-in-chief, or his

Aside from the added pressure of responsibility, the matter of signatures on materials was another point of contention between journalists at news agencies and journalists at newspapers. Unlike their colleagues at newspapers, where articles featured their authors, journalists at news agencies worked anonymously. This anonymity was, in fact, built in for a news agency, as it was supposed to produce objective news without any personal bias, and news was “universal” and impartial. However, this lack of attribution proved to be a source of frustration for many journalists: it was seen as an ego hit. Without their names in signatures, journalists felt as though their efforts went unrecognized. After all, all newspaper *mezhdunarodniki* still used materials of TASS, but barely gave the agency’s workers any credit, “Our unnamed colleague from TASS has been sitting in Europe, Asia, Africa, or another part of the globe for many years, [...] and others use his knowledge, [...] without even deigning to mention his name.”<sup>643</sup> The absence of attribution also made it difficult to build a reputation within the industry. In the interview, Mikhail Beglov noted that the importance of a quick rise to fame could not be understated. In that environment, journalists established themselves quickly. Naturally, having one’s name on published materials was a symbol of expertise. In contrast, the absence of authors’ names on TASS materials was viewed as a drawback, which detracted from the work’s value. The work was often considered impersonal, diminishing its significance in the eyes of both colleagues and the public. On the other hand, newspapers credited their authors, providing a platform for individual expertise and perspectives. Seeing their names printed below the articles gave them a sense of accomplishment.

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deputy on duty, and sometimes even by the general director himself or his deputy on duty. This new mechanism also came with risks. Without immediate censorship, there was a possibility that sensitive or undesirable information might find its way into international news coverage. The responsibility for avoiding such lapses primarily rested on the shoulders of the editorial staff. They had to be cautious and ensure that the content complied with the Party’s directives before being approved and sent out for foreign readers. Leakage of military or sensitive information through the international press could lead to severe consequences, such as compromising national security or damaging the image of the Soviet regime abroad. Therefore, even with the adapted mechanism, there were still clear boundaries that journalists and editors had to respect when covering certain topics. For instance, several topics could not be mentioned under any circumstances and, in fact, were tabooed, especially for foreign coverage. Bringing any of those up could lead to an external criticism of the Party line and could not be allowed. For example, the Soviet state aimed to present a utopian image of a society free from crime and social unrest, so any sort of criminal activity was barely mentioned on the pages of the Soviet press. Criticizing or questioning the ideology of communism or the Soviet system itself was deemed unacceptable. The authorities also wanted to maintain an image of a strong and competent state, and admitting to disasters or accidents could be perceived as a sign of weakness or incompetence. Consequently, information about industrial accidents, environmental disasters, or any other catastrophic events was suppressed to preserve the perception of the government’s control and capability. Last but not least, it is self-explanatory that the Soviet Union placed a high value on the secrecy surrounding its military installations and activities. Information related to military bases, weapon systems, troop movements, and other defense-related matters was heavily censored. Then, *Glavlit* updated the topics from time to time and had to notify TASS about the new limitations.

<sup>643</sup> Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat' interv'yu*, 278.

Moreover, Mikhail Beglov's recollection sheds light on the perceptions of employment at TASS compared to *Pravda* and *Izvestia*: “Working at TASS carried significant responsibility, but it did not hold the same level of societal weight or prestige as working for prominent newspapers.”<sup>644</sup> In the eyes of Beglov's peers, securing a position at newspapers like *Pravda* and *Izvestia* was considered recognition of one's professional standing. Thus, when he declined an internship at *Izvestia* in favor of working at TASS, his colleagues were shocked. Vitalii Igatenko expressed the same negative bias toward TASS, writing:

Without beating around the bush, I will be blunt in saying that I crossed the threshold of TASS with a certain prejudice toward the professional capabilities of its staff. Obviously, back when I was still a trainee, I succumbed to the common belief in newspaper editorial offices that the news agency was filled with half-officials, half-journalists. And also losers from big outlets.<sup>645</sup>

The point was not to diminish the work of *mezhdunarodniki* working at newspapers: many foreign *Pravda* offices operated as one-man endeavors. Such work placed a burden on the employee stationed at each location. In those one-person operations, the journalist juggled editorial duties, administrative tasks, and often even logistical arrangements. The workload included not only the actual reporting and content creation but also the management of the office, correspondence, and coordination with higher authorities. However, the work of a newspaper journalist was still generally valued much higher for several reasons: they could become famous, they had a certain level of prestige associated with their position, and they were not as burdened by mistakes as their counterparts at TASS. Thus, the allure of choosing a path of a newspaper journalist was much stronger than that of a news agency, perceived as a death blow to one's career.

### 4.3. Writer vs. Journalist

The blurred boundary between the so-called workers of the pen – writers and journalists – created a unique, dual identity for correspondents. From early Soviet days, those professions were closely intertwined. On the one hand, the worker correspondents [*rabkor* – *rabochii korrespondent*] made a significant contribution in developing Soviet-style literature and language.<sup>646</sup> They wrote extensively in different genres, experimenting and developing new methods of depicting the novel socialist reality. Unlike writers, they often took a more hands-on approach, writing shorter pieces based on real events with more prominent

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<sup>644</sup> Interview with Mikhail Beglov.

<sup>645</sup> Vitalii Ignatenko, *Memoirs* (1975), [prozhitto.org](http://prozhitto.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/654217> [accessed 12.02.2024].

<sup>646</sup> Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo pisatelya* (Saint Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1999), 27.

pedagogical elements. However, didactics were a necessary element of any art in the USSR. On the other hand, given the fluidity of news genres in the USSR, it was easier for writers to become journalists – oftentimes, their pieces were rather creative writing for voicing important issues or raising morale.<sup>647</sup> The officials, however, often complained that there were plenty of writers but never enough journalists.<sup>648</sup>

With the outbreak of the war, the symbiosis became stronger than ever, and professions became interchangeable. Given the number of journalists purged mere years before the war, writers had to fill the gaps and step into their roles. Naturally, the editors and officials would not have had to tap into the writers had they had enough journalists to report on the front.<sup>649</sup> Just one month after the start of the war on the territory of the USSR, David Ortenberg, the new editor-in-chief of *Krasnaya zvezda*, decided to hire new cadres. To staff his newspaper, he sought specifically for writers – sending his editor to Peredelkino, a famous settlement for Soviet authors.<sup>650</sup> Likewise, the military newspaper, meant to supply soldiers at the front lines with information, became very literary, providing them instead with propaganda pieces. Prominent writers Vasilii Grossman, Aleksandr Avdeenko, and Andrei Platonov, among others, followed suit and joined the journalistic ranks.<sup>651</sup> The writers took their responsibility very seriously, as almost one-third of the members of the Writers Union partook in war

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<sup>647</sup> Writers and journalists could co-exist for decades thanks to the variety of accepted genres of Soviet press: newspapers were interested not only news in the Western sense (meaning, dispatches on the recent events), but also fullietons (accusatory pieces) and publitsitka (“analytical or polemical content”) – a genre that could be easily explored both by writers and journalists. Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 352; Jeffrey Brooks, “Pravda Goes to War,” in *The Heart of War: Soviet Culture and Entertainment, 1941–45*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 9–27.

<sup>648</sup> Jeremy Hicks, “Worker Correspondents: Between Journalism and Literature,” *The Russian Review* 66, no. 4 (October 2007): 574. Even institutionally, the professions somewhat overlapped: it is no coincidence that Aleksandr Scherbakov, the first head of Sovinformburo, was one of the founders of the Union of Soviet Writers. Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 354.

<sup>649</sup> Usually the division of labor worked the following way: journalists were at the front, while writers worked for the press from their offices. David Ortenberg, *Iiun’—dekabr’ sorok pervogo: Rasskaz-khronika* [June-December of 1941: Chronicle] (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1984), *militera.lib*, [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ortenberg\\_di1/01.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ortenberg_di1/01.html) [accessed 24.06.2025].

<sup>650</sup> Ibid, [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ortenberg\\_di1/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ortenberg_di1/02.html) [accessed 24.06.2025].

<sup>651</sup> Grossman used his war years as a major inspiration for his novels, illustrating his experience in a book “A Writer at War: A Soviet Journalist with the Red Army, 1941-1945.” In the title, he also likened journalists to writers, designating himself as both. Many editors followed the suit: authors like Mikhail Sholokhov, Fyodor Pavlenko, Aleksei Tolstoi – all joined the propaganda front. Even Aleksei Surkov, a known poet, turned into an editor of *Ogonyok* journal in the war years, just to later turn back into a writer and even head the Union of Writers in the mid-1950s. Moreover, while some writers were already established in the prewar era, for some, this time was the jumpstart for their careers, as it was for the writer/journalist Boris Polevoi. Known mostly as a writer, especially for his 1946 magnum opus “A Story of a Real Man,” Polevoi garnered international acclaim and solidified his reputation as one of the main socialist realists for his reporting during World War II. Moreover, his journalistic achievements led him to an active participation in the Union of Soviet Journalists and the Union of Writers, as well as becoming the head of arguably the most important delegation of journalists to the United States in 1955. As the most well-known abroad member of the group, Polevoi represented Soviet journalism in the face of the main Cold-War opponent.

coverage.<sup>652</sup> For instance, the journalistic talents of Ilya Ehrenburg came to the fore during the war,<sup>653</sup>

It is said that Ehrenburg himself considered himself first of all a poet, then a novelist, and only then a publicist. I am not a critic, but I think it was just the opposite: Ehrenburg was a very average poet and an outstanding journalist-publicist. [...] Researchers of his work have calculated that over the years, the fifty-year-old writer published more than a thousand articles, essays, and notes, not counting the large number of works done on behalf of the Sovinformburo for foreign readers. I can responsibly say that we do not have many good journalists who have written so much in their entire lives, let alone in four years.<sup>654</sup>

However, in Stalin's eyes, writers were more valuable and were rarely sent directly to the front, mostly reporting from the accounts of other participants.<sup>655</sup> Many were working from the comfort of their offices, raising morale and building the pantheon of new heroes. Still, the core of any newspaper was journalists – they had to go near the frontlines and experience the events first-hand.<sup>656</sup> They mostly reported on the eventual side, retelling events and shaping the narrative around the front lines. Thus, the two were treated differently even in the face of the crisis.

With the war over, such a formation made little sense, as the professional standards and demands, as well as the skills required to meet them, were different. Slowly but surely, the professions were getting separated, and this process needed to be solidified through a new organization. It was a tough goal to achieve, as in the Soviet view, the journalists did not have a separate platform for professional discussions, debates, and training. By the 1950s, only writers had a professional union, which also sometimes housed journalists who did not have their own creative organization. In fact, the USSR did not have a separate organization for journalists, which was a notable deficiency given that the country had approximately 25,000 journalists. Moreover, many other creative professions, such as architects and musicians, found their support systems in those unions already in the 1930s.<sup>657</sup>

During the 1950s, a pressing need for a professional separation of journalists became apparent. Having participated in the Executive Committee of the International Organization

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<sup>652</sup> Semyon Zhukov, *Frontovaia pechat' v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* [Front-line Press during the Great Patriotic War] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1968).

<sup>653</sup> However, already in the 1920s, Ehrenburg started out in the constructivist magazine 'The Thing' [Vesh'] in Berlin, a platform for avant-garde art. In the 1930s, he provided his coverage of the Spanish Civil War and gained his experience on international reporting.

<sup>654</sup> Zhukov, *Zhurnalisty: rasskazy o soldatah*, 231.

<sup>655</sup> Iakov Makarenko, *Stroki iz ognia: Rasskaz o pravdistakh voennykh let, o tekh kto delal gazetnykh, nakhodias' v Moskve, i o tekh kto byl voenkorom na frontakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi* [Lines from the fire: A story about the truth-tellers of the war years, about those who made the newspaper while in Moscow, and about those who were military officers on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1985).

<sup>656</sup> Johnson and Mammadov, *Russian Journalists*, 368.

<sup>657</sup> More on creative unions in the USSR in: Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

of Journalists (IOJ) in October of 1954, Daniil Kraminov, then Editor of the American Countries Department of *Pravda*, was prompted to reflect on the Soviet Union's inferiority in international journalism compared to other states. The main point of this mediocrity was the fact that the Soviet Union had no professional union for journalists, unlike many other Bloc countries.<sup>658</sup> In his eyes, the Soviet Union's leadership was compromised by its failure to establish a professional organization for journalists,<sup>659</sup> with its on-paper objective to promote solidarity among Soviet journalists.<sup>660</sup> Moreover, the Union could be used for cooperation outside of the USSR, for establishing unifying values across the socialist camp: the 1954 International Organization of Journalists meeting pointed out increased collaboration between the so-called “progressive” journalists.<sup>661</sup> Thus, the necessity of establishing was not just a matter of bureaucratic formalization but also had tangible effects for the Soviet Union's leadership within the Bloc and, on a wider scale, in the Cold War. Without a professional union as a tribune for discussion of the ideals and methods of Soviet journalists, the state risked losing the uniformity of propaganda under socialism at large.

The Soviet chief ideologist, Mikhail Suslov, was not a big fan of the Union of Journalists project and long and stubbornly resisted the intentions of journalists to form their own creative association.<sup>662</sup> Only under pressure from many editors did Suslov allow Kraminov to submit a draft proposal to the Central Committee. Yet, practically everything that would allow the creation of any semblance of a creative public organization was excluded from it; rather, it was a signboard necessary only for relations with foreign journalistic organizations. The journalists did not give up, and *Pravda*'s editor-in-chief, Pavel Satyukov, invited

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<sup>658</sup> Indeed, the absence of a journalists' union in the Soviet Union stood in stark contrast to other socialist states, where such unions had long been established – some dating back to the imperial period, like Hungary's union founded in 1881. Others had been reformed in the postwar period to meet the demands of socialist governments like in Czechoslovakia or were established anew, as in the case of Poland in 1951. Moreover, the USSR had a journalists' union already established shortly after the Revolution, but Stalin's termination of it during the 1930s left the Soviet Union without a professional platform for the journalists.

<sup>659</sup> Having participated in the Executive Committee of the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) in October of 1954, he was made to think about the Soviet inferiority in international journalism compared to other states. RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 671, ll. 33–8. Letter from D. Kraminov to the Central Committee, October 26, 1954.

<sup>660</sup> While there were some organizations for journalists, none of them were as high-standing and official as a professional union. Until 1935, the Central Bureau of Journalists existed under the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Printers; in 1935, the Central Bureau was replaced by the Section of Journalists under the same trade union. The Section of Journalists ceased to exist in 1938, when the printers' union was reorganized into a broader union of press and printing workers. Since 1958, journalists have been part of the trade union of cultural workers, which unites the broadest strata of the intelligentsia, and this union has no section of its own.

<sup>661</sup> Journalists from countries of people's democracy and progressive journalists in nations like England, France, and Italy maintained continuous connections with each other. For example, the peace conferences in Wroclaw in 1948 and Paris in 1949 requested establishing a united front and fostering international partnerships with journalists from other nations. They often swapped representatives and informative resources on a regular basis. RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 671, ll. 43–4. Report, signed by V Kruzhkov and V. Stepanov, December 8, 1954.

<sup>662</sup> Adzhubei, Ya byl zyatem Hrushheva.

Khrushchev to the first congress of the Union of Journalists in 1958. What they called “the Suslov curse” was still with them: the Union was not equated with other creative unions and remained “defective, deprived of the opportunities that other creative unions have”.<sup>663</sup> writers, filmmakers, theater performers, musicians, artists, etc. Nonetheless, it was an important step, as the platform for profession-wide discussions was established.

With Union’s creation, a new emphasis was placed on professionalization within the journalistic fraternity: during its establishment, protracted discussions questioned the specifics of professional identity. These debates involved eligibility criteria for membership, relevant experience, and the rights and privileges that journalists could expect. Thus, the establishment of a journalists' union signaled the formation of a separate professional identity among its practitioners. This transformation did not occur overnight; it unfolded gradually as discussions and negotiations continued. Different types of journalists could join the Union of Journalists: TASS, Radio Committee, magazine, newspaper, and even publishing editors joined the Union of Journalists: “Many of them did not have a single publication. And still they were still to be considered journalists.”<sup>664</sup>

The foundation of the Union did not entail the separation of the two fields. This division between writers and journalists persisted and became protracted, as many performed dual roles, working simultaneously as writers and journalists. For instance, the lack of separation could be seen in a report discussing the formation of a delegation to the IOJ:

Ovsyannikova further notes that Soviet journalists do not have a full understanding of the IOJ [International Organization of Journalists], which may be due, in part, to the fact that the meetings and conferences of the IOJ were attended mostly by representatives of writers' circles, not journalists.<sup>665</sup>

After all, it was not uncommon to belong to both the Writers' Union and the emerging Journalists' Union. The reasons for that were very down to earth. Writers often had to rely on irregular publications for income, while membership in the Writers' Union helped them, including financial assistance through a dedicated fund.<sup>666</sup> In contrast, journalists lacked such support structures within their own union, prompting its members to join the Writers' organization. For instance, Lyudmila Chernaya wanted to join “a more powerful organization,”<sup>667</sup> the Union of Soviet Writers. Moreover, the pragmatic calculation did not

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<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

<sup>665</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 29–30. Protocol 2 of the meeting of the organizing bureau of the Union of Soviet Journalists. 10 April, 1956.

<sup>666</sup> Maria Zezina, “Crisis in the Union of Soviet Writers in the Early 1950s,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 4 (1994): 650.

<sup>667</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

end there. Journalists often branched out into writing and published their travelogues, thanks to the notes and other materials they had gathered in foreign countries, which they could not use all on the pages of the Soviet press. Ultimately, the lack of a rigid format common to newspapers or news agencies only helped create more space for analysis. Freed from prescribed numbers of lines and words, journalists were empowered to tell stories to the full. Thus, the 1950s were an essential moment in the separation of journalists' identity from that of writers. At its core, this process was an effort to delineate the profession from other roles, thereby solidifying its identity as a distinct professional group. In Soviet fashion, such separation was often marked by the establishment of a new professional union as a platform for debate and discussion. The painstaking separation between writers and journalists, however, did not end with the establishment of the Union: it was an impossible undertaking thanks to the asymmetry in opportunities.

#### **4.4. Academic vs. Journalist**

While it is commonly thought that part of professionalization is higher education, it was not always the case for journalists. Some were leaving the profession immediately upon graduation, as they did not see themselves working in the field and were not lured in by the offered conditions. Others turned themselves into academics, and the state was endorsing this behavior: it was highly interested in the dissertations by international journalists, as they formalized and institutionalized their knowledge, enriching the databases and passing them down in written form, making them independent of particular people and their expertise. The academization of knowledge acquired by journalists was beneficial to the state. What did the journalists have to gain from it?

For journalists, an academic degree entailed not only preparing for the career ahead but also diversifying their employment options. Amid a cadre crisis, many saw it as a survival strategy and pursued academic credentials, often attaining PhDs or higher doctoral degrees. A doctoral degree was a help in their careers, since it signified a certain level of prestige associated with hiring an academic and a validated professional in the field. For younger specialists, doctoral studies became a means to stay in foreign-affairs-related fields and helped them to win some time and stay in the institutions longer, while they attempted to find a workplace or to stay in Moscow.<sup>668</sup> Somehow, even those fired from other positions for their “suspicious” activity, undesired connections, or “wrong” family background could slip

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<sup>668</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 157.

through the cracks and, as a matter of exception, get into doctoral programs. Mikhail Yuriev (his real surname was Petzker or Pelzer) was not only Jewish but also had an uncle in America – two deadly sins for one’s career.<sup>669</sup> He still managed to be accepted into the PhD program. Some hoped to secure their financial well-being with a scholarship while waiting to be employed,<sup>670</sup> and some had ambitions to establish wider networks for the future – after all, many children of the highest-ranking officials were enrolled in PhD programs of Moscow universities.<sup>671</sup> Dissertations even helped journalists financially, as they were guaranteed higher salaries in any position requiring a doctoral degree. Many abused this practice in the later stages of their careers, nominating themselves for PhD candidacy and defense, as well as using those positions as immunity cards against potential dismissal. The practice was so widespread that Adzhubei sarcastically noted that “the percentage of doctors of sciences in other departments exceeded the corresponding figure in research institutes.”<sup>672</sup> Hence, Khrushchev tried to limit this practice and control the lawfulness of those academic practices and abuse of power connected to doctoral dissertations, “The pursuit of academic titles was stopped by an order stating that staff members do not have the right to nominate candidates for doctoral and PhD theses [...] without appropriate approval.”<sup>673</sup>

Given the high concentration of journalists-turned-academics, there is a certain thematic breadth to their dissertations. Rather than focusing solely on linguistic aspects, they wrote on a spectrum of disciplines, including history, law, and economics. Valentin Zorin defended two dissertations in History – “The Reactionary Course of Domestic Policy of the Government of the Republican Party of the United States (November 1952–November 1954)”, as well as “Monopolies and the Main Directions of Domestic Policy of the United States: The Internal Political Course of the Republican Government in 1952–1960.”<sup>674</sup> Similarly, Boris Kalyagin explored state capitalism in Indian agriculture,<sup>675</sup> Leonid Kolosov analyzed Italy's foreign economic relations post-World War II,<sup>676</sup> Yuri Bandura’s dissertation focused on cartels in

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<sup>669</sup> Georgii Levinson, Memoirs, [prozhito.org](https://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/778099> [accessed 15.05.2025].

<sup>670</sup> Vikentii Matveev, Memoirs, [prozhito.org](https://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/669294> [accessed 16.03.2023].

<sup>671</sup> Children of Stalin, Malenkov, etc. were enrolled. Fyodor Burlatskii, Memoirs, 1952, [prozhito.org](https://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/648440> [accessed 22.05.2025].

<sup>672</sup> Ibid.

<sup>673</sup> This ban was fully lifted in Brezhnev's time, and the real boom of doctoral dissertations among the Central Committee members started. Adzhubei, *Te Desyat' let*.

<sup>674</sup> “Enciklopediya: Zorin, Valentin Sergeevich,” *TASS*, <https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/zorin-valentin-sergeevich> [accessed 05.02.2023].

<sup>675</sup> “Kalyagin Boris Aleksandrovich, 10 sentyabrya 1938 — 5 dekabrya 2022,” *HSE*, <https://www.hse.ru/org/persons/135468> [accessed 05.02.2023].

<sup>676</sup> Leonid Kolosov, *Razvedchik v vechnom gorode* [An Intelligence Officer in the Eternal City] (Moscow: ProfPress, 1995), *flibusta*, <http://flibusta.site/b/493896/read> [accessed 05.11.2022].

Japan's foreign trade,<sup>677</sup> and Daniil Melamid examined political crises within fascist regimes. This diversity showcases the range of topics tackled by these journalist-scholars.<sup>678</sup> Moreover, some became prominent teachers and practitioners, serving as heads of research institutions. Nikolai Inozemtsev worked for *Pravda* and later became the head of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO); Georgii Arbatov, the creator of the Institute of the United States and Canada, started in the magazine *Novoe vremya*; and Vitalii Zhurkin, director of the Institute of Europe, started in Radio.

Furthermore, many of these journalists saw themselves as educators, passing down their knowledge. Igor Fesunenکو continued his academic tenure at MGIMO,<sup>679</sup> and Georgii Zubkov held the position of a professor at the Department of Mass Communications within the Faculty of Philology at RUDN (People's Friendship University).<sup>680</sup> Such journalists-academics leveraged their practical experience in the field alongside their scholarly pursuits.

#### 4.5. Diplomat vs. Journalist

In 1959, the CIA's 1959 report highlighted the close ties between TASS and the Soviet diplomatic network.<sup>681</sup> The analytics noted a tendency among workers in the Foreign Ministry and TASS to move between positions in both organizations, which they interpreted as indicating that TASS served not only as a news agency but also as a training ground for aspiring diplomats. Yet, the situation was more complex than that, and the Western observers could not imagine the extent to which the diplomats and correspondents had to co-exist when working abroad.

First, the news organizations, especially TASS, proactively recruited talent from the diplomatic sphere. To maintain this steady pipeline of fresh talent to TASS, specific quotas were established. According to those, the agency was to receive between 15 and 20 graduates

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<sup>677</sup> “Bandura Yu.N.,” *koob*, [https://www.koob.ru/bandura\\_u\\_n/](https://www.koob.ru/bandura_u_n/) [accessed 04.11.2022].

<sup>678</sup> Lyudmila Chernaya, *Chudesa v reshete, ili Veselye i neveselye pobasenki iz veka minuvshego* [Miracles in a Sieve, or Funny and Sad Fables from the Past Century] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021), *livelib*, <https://www.livelib.ru/book/783001/readpart-chudesa-v-reshete-ili-veselye-i-neveselye-pobasenki-iz-veka-minuvshego-lyudmila-chernaya/~6> [accessed 22.04.2023].

<sup>679</sup> “Umer zhurnalist-mezhdunarodnik Igor’ Fesunenکو” [International Journalist Igor Fesunenکو Has Died], *Vedomosti*, April 28, 2016, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2016/04/28/639474-igor-fesunenکو> [accessed 26.10.2022].

<sup>680</sup> “Umer zhurnalist-mezhdunarodnik Georgii Zubkov” [International Journalist Georgii Zubkov Has Died], *Interfax*, July 5, 2022, <https://www.interfax.ru/culture/850651>, [accessed 29.11.2022].

<sup>681</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *TASS: Its Role, Structure and Operations*, Report, June 1959: 4, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-02771R000100330004-8.pdf> [accessed 15.04.2022].

annually, with an equal proportion of graduates from both disciplines.<sup>682</sup> In essence, graduates of diplomacy were integrated into TASS in equal numbers as graduates of journalism. News agencies insisted on the influx of recent graduates from the Institute of International Relations, the Higher Diplomatic School, as well as Moscow and Leningrad Universities and their journalism departments.<sup>683</sup> By actively utilizing both departments, TASS tried to capitalize on and merge the strengths of each field.

Moreover, the interplay between journalism and diplomacy was shaped by future journalists studying at prestigious institutions such as MGIMO. Beyond the degree, the educational trajectory had far-reaching implications, since it fostered personal connections within diplomatic circles.<sup>684</sup> The cohorts of graduates, naturally, were not just journalists, as most chose work at (or were distributed to) embassies and other diplomatic establishments. These relationships helped them gain quicker access to the corridors of power that were often out of reach for most. This proximity to the elite also accelerated journalists' rise to positions of influence and prominence in their own right. Through mutual friendships, journalists-graduates had personal ties to diplomatic circles. Many helped each other find jobs or with their assignments, since even within one cohort, alums could occupy positions in very different fields,

When I worked in London, two more of our classmates were working there too: the *Pravda* correspondent, Gennadii Vasil'ev, and an employee of an international organization, Andrei Zhudro. We met often and at any time were willing to give each other a helping hand in professional and everyday matters.<sup>685</sup>

Another path within the career of a journalist-*mezhdunarodnik* was that of an ambassador or embassy worker, not as a formality but as a primary official status.<sup>686</sup> However, this avenue was sometimes viewed as an exile throughout the Soviet Union's history.<sup>687</sup> One of the main journalists of that era, the head of TASS from 1960 until 1967, Dmitrii Goryunov, was

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<sup>682</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 71, l. 29. Resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On measures to improve the work of TASS."

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 153.

<sup>685</sup> Torkunov, *Ptency gnezda MGIMO'va*, 351.

<sup>686</sup> Many high-standing journalists and officials were dismissed at two crucial historical points of the 1960s: in 1964 with the overthrow of Khrushchev and in 1967 as the so-called "shelepintsy". However, the opposite punishment could be applied: Valentin Falin, an ambassador, was "downgraded" to a journalist's status in the early 1980s. Zakhar'ko, *Zvezdnye chasy i drama 'Izvestii'*.

<sup>687</sup> Diplomatic positions, especially in socialist states, were seen as unimportant and could be filled by "disgraced politicians as a form of honorary retirement." Kryshchanovskaya and White, *From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Elite*, 715. The story of figures like Aleksandra Kollontai, sent away to Sweden in the 1930s, or Boris Pankin, hidden away as an ambassador from the 1980s, illustrated that such roles, despite their perceived prestige, held a certain aura of undesirability, at least among those who saw themselves primarily as journalists. Boris Pankin, *Preslovutaya epoha v licah, maskah, sobytiyah i kazusah* [The notorious Era in faces, masks, events and incidents] (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2002.) They were desirable after profile education, but not after longer and more impactful careers as journalists.

appointed as an ambassador (read: exiled)<sup>688</sup> in Kenya, writing, “In Kenya, freed from British colonial rule in 1963, I spent seven years in the diplomatic service. Before becoming a diplomat, I had been a journalist for many years and had traveled the world, visiting almost forty countries. And in Kenya, the journalist in me often took precedence over the diplomat.”<sup>689</sup>

Two fields were also tied logistically. Many of the news agencies’ workers abroad had diplomatic status or worked directly at the Soviet embassies.<sup>690</sup> Since juridically, TASS was a state-owned enterprise, its workers’ status was equal to those of state employees, with a degree of diplomatic immunity abroad.<sup>691</sup> This immunity can be easily explained: TASS served as an official mouthpiece of the Communist Party, and, when TASS correspondents were in trouble, the local Soviet diplomatic missions could often intervene and “save” them.<sup>692</sup> It was not a legal nicety but a protection for news workers from legal troubles and, by extension, a shield for TASS against legal challenges that could hinder its operations. The same later went for APN employees: if the laws of the host country did not allow APN representatives to disseminate Soviet propaganda directly, they acted on behalf of embassy press departments with diplomatic “cover” passports.<sup>693</sup> For instance, it streamlined visa applications, exempting journalists from bureaucratic hurdles and delays common to journalists working outside embassy grounds. The need to work on the premises of Soviet embassies was justified by the level of hostility of the host country.<sup>694</sup> Whenever diplomatic

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<sup>688</sup> Adzhubei also interpreted it as an exile. Adzhubei, Ya byl zyatem Hrushheva, 40.

<sup>689</sup> What Goryunov did not mention is the fact that he was dismissed from his high-ranking position by association with Aleksandr Shelepin, the Party Secretary, who was dismissed in 1967. With him, many officials’ careers went down, including Sergei Romanovsky, Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, who also got sent to Norway in 1968. Being posted abroad was seen, in such cases, as the potential for isolation from the journalistic scene in the USSR. Dmitrii Goryunov, *Vozvrashhenie v Afriku* [Return to Africa] (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1988), *flibusta*, <http://flibusta.site/b/387916/read> [accessed 26.02.2023]; “Aleksandr Nikolaevich Shelepin,” *Oxford Reference*, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100500791> [accessed 17.08.2023]. Participants of this dismissal also reflected on this practice later: “A byl li komsomol'skii zagovor?” [Was there a Komsomol conspiracy?], *OTR*, <https://otr-online.ru/programmy/programma-leonida-mlechina/a-byli-li-komsomolskiy-zagovor-33952.html> [accessed 03.01.2023]; “Romanovsky Sergey Kalistratovich,” *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/almanah-dict-bio/1023451/15> [accessed 02.01.2023].

<sup>690</sup> According to the 1959 CIA report, employees of TASS held bona fide status as representatives of the Soviet state. Consequently, they enjoyed diplomatic immunity while stationed abroad. CIA, TASS, 2.

<sup>691</sup> As mentioned in many sources, for example, F. A. Mann, “Immunity of Foreign Sovereigns,” *The Modern Law Review* 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1949): 494–6. Yet, at some point, TASS lost its status, and APN workers started holding diplomatic passports.

<sup>692</sup> Such status meant not merely a legal nicety but also shielded TASS workers from legal challenges that could potentially hinder their operations while overseas. Later, TASS employees lost their legal protection, and APN workers started having diplomatic immunity. CIA, TASS, 2.

<sup>693</sup> Sinitsyn, Andropov vblizi.

<sup>694</sup> This was not a new strategy of Khrushchev's time: many VOKS workers abroad held their positions at the Soviet embassies. David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 41.

relations were strained, such a strategy provided journalists with coverage and protection: they were shielded from potential surveillance or interference by local authorities. Foreign governments could not conduct inspections on embassy grounds without violating diplomatic protocols or risking diplomatic fallout. This safeguarded the journalists' equipment, materials, and operations from unwarranted interference by local authorities. Moreover, publishing within embassy premises gave practical advantages: the tax on materials published within embassy premises was often more favorable, as such press was subject to the tax laws of the guest country rather than those of the host nation.<sup>695</sup>

In a mundane line of work, the symbiotic relationship between journalists and ambassadors was cultivated regularly. Ambassadors played an important role in foreign reporting, as they were, supposedly, the most experts about the country of their assignment.<sup>696</sup> They could dictate the direction of coverage and advise on topics, pressuring journalists to follow the ideological line.<sup>697</sup> The ambassador was seen as the tsar and god by Soviet workers stationed abroad. He was the one to be consulted for troubles and crises. After all, they bore a significant responsibility for consulting the government on their view of the situation and for informing further decisions of state importance. On top of that, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs were directly involved in the work of foreign correspondents, consulting them on future trips, their tasks, and the expected conduct of foreign correspondents. On the ground, the ambassadors determined the responsibilities and overall defined the workflow of anyone working under their leadership.<sup>698</sup> As young MGIMO graduates were explained,

[...] the USSR's ambassador abroad is not just the chief administrative head of a Soviet colony in a particular foreign country, he personifies the Soviet government, all its executive and punitive bodies, judicial authorities, and, finally, for the young, he serves, figuratively speaking, as a prototype of father and mother.<sup>699</sup>

The ambassador was expected to help the journalists in their endeavors, and the correspondents also had a right to complain about the lack of assistance from the embassy.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 7, l. 35. Information about the work of the APN.

<sup>696</sup> It is important to note that the same consultancy was provided for the Western journalists abroad from their respective embassy workers, so it was rather a standard practice across the board. John J. Schulz, "Role of Media in Intelligence Gathering," *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications*, edited by Donald (H. Johnston, Elsevier Inc., 2003), 451–62.

<sup>697</sup> The journalists sometimes resisted those directions in reference to their editors' opinions. Anton Kaimakov, Vladlen Krivosheev: "Mne stydno i bol'no za 1968 god, no ya gluboko razocharovalsya v Vaclave Gavele" [Vladlen Krivosheev: "I am ashamed and hurt for 1968, but I am deeply disappointed in Vaclav Havel"], *Ruski radio*, 21.08.2007, <https://ruski.radio.cz/vladlen-krivosheev-mne-stydno-i-bolno-za-1968-god-no-ya-gluboko-razocharovalsya-8604870> [accessed 20.01.2023].

<sup>698</sup> Kamenskaya, *A Window to the World*, 411.

<sup>699</sup> MGIMO: *Vostochnyi fakul'tet*, 8.

<sup>700</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 9, l. 265. Information about the Propaganda Work of the APN Bureau in the Scandinavian Countries in Connection with the Visit of N. S. Khrushchev.

Upon arrival, Soviet journalists first visited their local ambassadors, getting into the thick of politics and getting an introductory lecture on the Soviet objectives in the region. Some ambassadors were relaxed and not too concerned with their work: “The ambassador has no time for the daily diplomatic routine, and certainly not for us, correspondents. In Tokyo, he is writing another book on China.”<sup>701</sup> Of course, it was not a rule, and some ambassadors felt the need to prove that they deserved their spot, so they made everyone around them work thrice as hard.<sup>702</sup> Boris Chekhonin repeats this sentiment and elaborates on the power dynamics of working at the embassy,

Formally, the correspondent is independent; he has his own boss, far away in Moscow. He is obliged to obey only instructions from the center. That's purely formal. The place has its own rules. You must always remember that the ambassador is the master of your destiny. He, like God, acts in three persons: an authorized representative of the Central Committee, the government, and the intelligence services. Try not to please him! A cipher with compromising information [will be sent] to the capital, and the editorial office cannot save you.<sup>703</sup>

Moreover, ambassadors were the original channels for mediating between local audiences and Soviet journalists, saying what would be of interest, presenting suggestions or requests from the locals, as there were protocols and diaries of their meetings that they reported on.<sup>704</sup>

The embassies even collected concrete requests from the local news outlets about what kind of materials or general topics they would be willing to get about the USSR.<sup>705</sup> Besides, they instructed not just locally based Soviet journalists but also the center (Moscow offices) on the country's current trends and interests, which materials could be interesting to the public, and what could be revised in the local media strategy. Media cooperation requests went through them, for instance, writing about the request of the biggest Swedish newspaper to have an exchange with *Pravda*:

The editorial staff of the Swedish official “Stockholms-Tidningen” has informed the Embassy of its appeal to you with a proposal to exchange delegations of the staff of *Pravda* and “Stockholm-Tidningen.” We consider it advisable to accept the Swedes' proposal. An exchange of such delegations, in our opinion, could find a positive response in Sweden, especially on the eve of Mr. Khrushchev's visit to the Scandinavian countries. An exchange

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<sup>701</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

<sup>702</sup> For instance, Boris Chekhotin illustrated how much the embassy life, if not lifestyle, has changed with a new ambassador, Musin, in Canberra where he worked. Ibid.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

<sup>704</sup> On the other hand, there was an exchange of information in the opposite direction: journalists had to relay the information that they gathered, report to them on the content of the conversations, etc. “Ya pytalsya s nimi govorit’”: Beseda s zhurnalistom Vladlenom Krivosheevym” [‘I tried to talk to them’: Interview with journalist Vladlen Krivosheev], <https://military.wikireading.ru/hY9i8eBTac> [accessed 17.01.2023].

<sup>705</sup> For instance, GA RF, R-9587, op. 1, d. 3, l. 18. Protocol 57 of July 28, 1962, Report on the work of the Chief Editorial Office on the preparation of materials for the press of Western Europe and North America (from August 1961 to July 1962).

of delegations would also contribute to the establishment of direct contact between *Pravda* and the largest socialist-democratic newspaper in Sweden.<sup>706</sup>

Moreover, Soviet embassies had a Press Department that often doubled the work of Soviet correspondents. It worked in two aspects – internal and external.<sup>707</sup> The internal aspect meant that the Press Department informed the ambassador and other employees daily about what was being written in local newspapers and magazines. By noon, this selection was delivered to the ambassador. The ambassador would review the contents to stay informed about the local media landscape and any significant developments.<sup>708</sup> The internal aspect of the work of the Press Department was not as prioritized as the external aspect.<sup>709</sup> Central to this effort was maintaining constant and proactive contact with the journalistic world. The Press Department engaged in endless conversations with representatives of newspapers and magazines, seeking opportunities to establish cooperation. However, the materials sent by ambassadors and TASS workers to Moscow could differ, creating a potential for hostility between the diplomatic staff and journalists. Moscow inevitably asked questions about those discrepancies, and one side always had to be at fault.<sup>710</sup>

Progressively, the symbiotic relationship became a source of contention, as the lines between embassy workers and journalists were too vague, leading to embassy personnel's unwillingness to help journalists. Embassy workers typically had primary duties related to the embassy's mission, including diplomatic, administrative, and representational tasks. All of those duties left them with limited time and no inclination to help the journalists with media-related initiatives. The resistance came from below, as the workers felt pressured into “universal” roles of both journalists and diplomats. As a result, they increasingly resisted

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<sup>706</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 29, l. 82. USSR Embassy in Sweden Stockholm to the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Pravda*, Comrade Satukov P.A., USSR Ambassador to Sweden N. Belokhovostikov. 11.02.1964.

<sup>707</sup> Ivan Maisky, *Vospominaniya sovetskogo diplomata, 1925-1945 gg.* [Memoirs of a Soviet diplomat, 1925-1945] (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1980), *militera.lib*, [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/maisky\\_im1/01.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/maisky_im1/01.html) [accessed 19.07.2024].

<sup>708</sup> In addition to compiling the daily press clippings, the Press Department had several other important functions. They were responsible for selecting and maintaining a reference library, ensuring that embassy staff had access to a comprehensive collection of relevant literature and periodicals. The department also prepared summaries and detailed reports on specific issues of interest. These reports were used to inform the ambassador's strategies and decisions. Furthermore, the Press Department recorded conversations with visitors to the embassy. This included documenting meetings and discussions with local journalists and other influential figures. The Press Department's activities ensured that the embassy was well-informed and prepared to engage with the host country's media and public effectively, thus supporting the broader objectives of Soviet diplomacy. Maisky, *Vospominaniya sovetskogo diplomata*.

<sup>709</sup> In an atmosphere saturated with negative portrayals of the Soviet Union, the Press Department's main mission was seen as countering such narratives and promoting a more favorable image of the USSR, aiming to combat misinformation. To achieve this, the Press Department focused on establishing relationships with more left-leaning locals who were potentially sympathetic to the Soviet worldview. By aligning with these local allies, the Press Department attempted to create a network of actors who could amplify pro-Soviet messages. Maisky, *Vospominaniya sovetskogo diplomata*.

<sup>710</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

being drawn into activities beyond their official duties. For instance, from the report of 1962, one could see the internal struggle between two fields,

But perhaps the biggest hurdle to the development of the work was, and in many respects still is, the fact that many heads of our representative offices are officially diplomats (in Italy, England, Canada, France, etc.). [...] They are not very inclined to develop activities in this [journalistic] direction. They explain this by the fact that they are officially on the staff of Soviet embassies and do not have a legal statute allowing them to engage in commercial activities.<sup>711</sup>

Journalists without specific diplomatic training still became, in a way, diplomats, as they were used for operations beyond news reporting. Those journalists were middlemen for diplomatic communication between nations outside of official channels.<sup>712</sup> A compelling example of this is the experience of Viktor Mayevskii, as recounted by his granddaughter.<sup>713</sup> Mayevskii held a unique status in the eyes of Soviet officials – he was perceived not just as a journalist, but as a diplomat and a middleman between the locals and the Soviet government. Thus, it seems that the Soviet officials treated him as a diplomatic figure who had the advantage of not officially holding such a title, as his position as a journalist gave him a certain degree of freedom that official diplomats did not have:<sup>714</sup> he could have delicate conversations without the traditional constraints. This granted him the leeway that could potentially lead to more open communication. Frequently sent on the most challenging assignments, he had to resolve the most intense conflicts:

Many readers of *Pravda* remember Maevskii's correspondence, articles and sketches from the fronts of Vietnam, from the banks of the Suez Canal, from Budapest fighting against counter-revolution; from the former Belgian Congo, where the networks of imperialist conspiracy were being woven; from the United States during the most acute period of the Cuban Missile Crisis; from Prague, when the enemies of socialism tried to carry out a counter-revolutionary coup there; from Beijing in the days of the madness of the notorious 'Cultural Revolution.' The missions were not easy, sometimes dangerous.<sup>715</sup>

Sometimes, the journalists were even testing the waters for the Soviet government. After the Cuban Revolution, for instance, the Soviet leadership could not determine whether the revolution was “genuine” and in the USSR's interest. They needed to send a correspondent

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<sup>711</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op., 1, d. 3, l. 14. Protocol 57, 28 July 1962, Report on the work of the Main Editorial office.

<sup>712</sup> Metger, *Studio Moskau*, 8.

<sup>713</sup> Interview with Marianna Mayevskaya.

<sup>714</sup> More on the diplomatic efforts of Soviet foreign correspondents: Tobias Reckling, *Foreign Correspondents in Francoist Spain (1945–1975)* (PhD diss., University of Portsmouth, 2016), 149–50.

<sup>715</sup> Zhukov, *Zhurnalisty: rasskazy o soldatah*, 238.

there and figure it out for them. Genrikh Borovik was dispatched as a correspondent, and he knew that global political decisions would be based on his reports.<sup>716</sup>

Hence, on many levels, the work of journalists and diplomats was intertwined. They studied and worked together, shared responsibilities, guided each other's efforts, and intervened in each other's processes. Many were biographically linked by holding different positions in journalism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs throughout their careers. At the same time, some have always combined the two in their line of work as unofficial diplomats.

#### 4.6. Translator vs. Journalist

In the early Soviet period, many people who spoke foreign languages came from undesirable social backgrounds. They mostly belonged to the intelligentsia and refused to work in the genre of socialist realism; hence, they were banned from the profession and could not publish their original pieces under their real names. They had very few chances to get any income, since they could not be accepted to the Writers' Union, which provided them with opportunities and financial support. Yet, they could also be accused of social parasitism for not working, so they needed an occupation not just to survive but also not to be persecuted for their own discrimination.<sup>717</sup> Censorship and overall control were not as tight on the translation, so those former intelligentsia members who spoke foreign languages had an option to work on translations,<sup>718</sup> and many of the Soviet writing brethren had to find the last resort in translation to be able to make ends meet.<sup>719</sup>

After much of the old intelligentsia and new Soviet intelligentsia were gone in the purges, so were most people who spoke foreign languages. For instance, with the beginning of the Nuremberg Trials, the Soviets simply did not have people who spoke foreign languages and could interpret to interrogate the criminals.<sup>720</sup> In the early 1950s, when the Soviets needed interpreters, they were still scraping to find anyone, even for the most important events. Like so, the 1952 International Economic Conference in Moscow became a significant challenge in terms of personnel.<sup>721</sup> Around 50 interpreters were brought in: some with no formal

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<sup>716</sup> "Borovik, Mikoyan skazal: 'Slushai, Borovik, hohesh' so mnoi razgovarivat' – pomolchi!'" ["Borovik, Mikoyan said, 'Listen, Borovik, if you want to talk to me, shut up!'"], YouTube video, November 28, 2016, [youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLznvROUQNk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLznvROUQNk) [accessed 15.08.2025].

<sup>717</sup> Emily Lygo, "Translation and the Cold War," *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics*, edited by Jonathan Evans and Fruela Fernandez (London: Routledge, 2018), 6.

<sup>718</sup> Moreover, they saw it as a leeway free of Marxist ideology, so they could translate Western literature without any references to Lenin and Stalin and served, in their eyes, the higher cause for world culture. Ibid.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid, 5–6.

<sup>720</sup> Francesca Gaiba, "Interpretation at the Nuremberg Trial," *Interpreting* 4, No. 1 (1999): 13.

<sup>721</sup> Aleksandr Shveitser, "At the Dawn of Simultaneous Interpretation in Russia," *Interpreting*. 4, No. 1, 1999: 26, <https://open.unive.it/hitrade/books/ShveitserRussia.pdf> [accessed 27.04.2023].

education but with prior experience working in interpretation booths at the UN, while others were trained at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages or the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages. Even those were not enough, and the organizers had to reach out to Radio Moscow and TASS correspondents to fill in the missing positions, mobilizing journalists for the job.

As with other areas of *mezhdunarodnik*, translators could also branch out into other fields. After all, translators also needed an impeccable sense for languages and cultural sensitivity. It was also a way to get noticed if one performed their duties well. For some, it was a launchpad into another career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in journalism: Vsevolod Ovchinnikov and Boris Chekhonin both graduated from translation universities and later became journalists. Others joined the journalistic ranks after shakeups in their careers: Valentin Berezhkov was translating at the highest levels during the war, later “demoted” to the journalistic line of work at the journal *Novoe vremya*, and was later rehabilitated and reinstated at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many avoided the profession and tried to switch into journalism, since the side effect of being a translator or an interpreter was the perceived invisibility.<sup>722</sup> Many journalists feared obscurity and avoided working for TASS, as it did not carry the signatures of its workers on its materials. Working as an interpreter was an even worse fate, often being treated as a furnishing and generally overlooked,<sup>723</sup> despite their intermediary functions,<sup>724</sup> and many were dreaming of switching careers. This was the difference between translators and interpreters in other countries, where they had one specific training:

In the Soviet Union, we were by no means destined for a lifelong career as translators. Participating in serious negotiations is a real university of diplomacy. In our country, “state” interpreters were happily employed both in embassies and in the Foreign Ministry's operational departments. And interpreters quickly rose through the ranks. I worked in the second European department of the Foreign Ministry, was deputy head of the department, then moved to the US and Canada department as deputy head. And from there, in 1989, I moved to New York for the last five years of my career. First as special assistant to the UN Secretary General, then as director of the

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<sup>722</sup> The interpreters were seen as the second-class citizens, ignored, underpaid, and overburdened with work. Ibid, 26–7.

<sup>723</sup> Andrei Rogatchevski, “Interpreting for Soviet leaders: The memoirs of semi-visible men,” *Interpreting Studies* 14, № 3 (2019): 442–63.

<sup>724</sup> Part of the reason for their invisibility might be because many of them were women: Dagmar Botvinova was translating for Iran, and Nina Krymova worked for the Comintern and Kollontai, as well as the Northern Navy during the War. Maki Vats’ was bilingual – her mother was French; Josiko Okada was a Japanese actress turned translator on the radio, and Leonora Yankovksya was from a family of Russian migrants from New York. “Vospominaniya Inny Zasko – o lyudyah, programmah i professional'nyh tainah Inoveshhaniya” [Inna Zasko's Memoirs about People, Programs, and Professional Secrets of Foreign Broadcasting], *Radio Portal*, <https://radiportal.ru/articles/4977/legendy-inoveshchaniya> [accessed 8.10.2023].

General Assembly Affairs Office, then as director of the Security Council Affairs Office. I became an international official.<sup>725</sup>

Hence, the synergy of work between translators/interpreters and journalists was undeniable. Many Soviet interpreters were career diplomats with greater knowledge and experience of life and customs beyond the USSR than their domestic counterparts. It is not surprising that Soviet leaders often sought their informal advice on a wide range of matters, sometimes extending beyond their usual interpreting responsibilities.<sup>726</sup> For instance, Oleg Troyanovskii, having graduated from the Military Institute of Foreign Languages, became an editor and translator for Sovinformburo and was later transferred to diplomatic work in London. From then on, he was constantly brought on the foreign trips of Soviet officials, accompanying Khrushchev on a variety of trips.<sup>727</sup>

On the other hand, there were barely enough journalists with sufficient linguistic expertise even to cover the news outlets' needs. After all, international journalists' area of responsibility was not just producing and disseminating texts. They needed to understand the intricacies of foreign languages not only to comprehend what they saw or read, but also to translate their thoughts, question their sources, or write for foreign audiences. Their skills needed to be nuanced and polished; however, due to the frequent turnover of regions, they did not always manage to learn the local language to the same extent before the assignment for effectively conveying the meaning across vast geographical territories.<sup>728</sup> However, most of them were not professional translators and did not possess the cultural competencies that were needed for such tasks.<sup>729</sup> They were not familiar with foreign realities and could not possibly take into account specific dialects and nuances of other countries. Translators and interpreters needed to be involved, as oftentimes they could not operate abroad on their own.<sup>730</sup>

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<sup>725</sup> Viktor Sukhodrev, "Inogda ya takie hrushhevskie perly perevodil!" ['Sometimes I translated such Khrushchev pearls!'], *Kommersant: Den'gi*. 30, April 8, 1999: 54, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/23135> [accessed 05.11.2024].

<sup>726</sup> Rogatchevski, *Interpreting for Soviet leaders*, 449.

<sup>727</sup> Oleg Troyanovskii, *Cherez gody i rasstoyaniya: Istoriya odnoi sem'i* [Through the years and the distances: The story of one family] (Moscow: Centpoligraf, 2017), *litres*, <https://www.litres.ru/book/o-a-troyanovskiy/cherez-gody-i-rasstoyaniya-istoriya-odnoy-semi-23878018/chitat-onlayn/> [accessed 09.06.2023].

<sup>728</sup> Hannerz, *Foreign News*, 3.

<sup>729</sup> Interpreters' guidance was sought on various matters, like understanding cultural norms. Rogatchevski, *Interpreting for Soviet leaders*, 449.

<sup>730</sup> From early on, translation was a significant part of the Soviet Union's mission abroad, for instance, for the work of Comintern in hopes of the world revolution. At least from 1928, interpreters were present at the Comintern's meetings to help to communicate with the world communists. Marcos Rodríguez-Espinosa, "The Translators Who Shook the World: Journalists and Translators in the Russian Revolution," (Universidad de Málaga), 4,

For decades, the egregious lack of linguistic skills was compounded by the desire to control every stage of news production in Moscow, so that mostly trusted Soviet citizens effectively participated in translation. As there were multiple complaints about the quality of the materials, the Soviet officials kept their ears open. In the 1950s, they finally accepted the reality that no matter how well written the text in Russian is, it can lose significant quality, if not mislead readers, when translated poorly. Thus, editors and officials became more willing to adapt to that reality, and two potential solutions emerged. Solution one proposed having more journalists abroad to get a feel for the language and culture, practice their skills with native speakers, and read more local newspapers to analyze the local population's reading habits. Naturally, it was an expensive investment in the future, sending dozens of journalists abroad in hopes that they would master their skills and never need translators again. The second option was to hire some staff members from the locals, who, obviously, knew the nuances of the language, reading culture, and interests of their fellow compatriots. However, the Soviet officials were never eager to hire foreigners: they demanded more pay and were harder to control. Both approaches proved unfavorable, as they demanded serious financial investment and more thorough supervision over personnel abroad.<sup>731</sup>

Moreover, for journalists, oral language skills were important beyond work on the radio and television. They frequently needed to engage with locals, officials, or sources, so the clarity of their spoken language was incredibly important. In their line of work, establishing trust, conducting interviews, and gathering information often required effective communication. A pertinent example comes from Nikolai Pastukhov's personal experience with Hindi,<sup>732</sup> which he had learned at the Higher Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When Pastukhov interacted with Hindi speakers, his speech was tinged with a distinctly Russian accent. This accent issue became especially apparent during a reception in Delhi when the journalist met Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Pastukhov tried to speak to the Prime Minister in Hindi, but Nehru switched to English and asked Pastukhov which language he was actually speaking.

Thus, using translators or locals was also desirable, as they could help Soviet journalists communicate. However, translators and interpreters remain largely in obscurity, working

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[http://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/34967/Perspectives\\_The translators who shook the world.pdf?sequence=1](http://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/34967/Perspectives_The translators who shook the world.pdf?sequence=1) [accessed 03.08.2025]; Shveitser, *At the Dawn*, 23.

<sup>731</sup> Employees at foreign bureaus faced minimal restrictions, thereby granting them a certain level of independence in their conduct, at least in principle. However, this autonomy was not held in high regard by editors in Moscow.

<sup>732</sup> Nikolai Pastukhov, *40 let s zhurnalistskim bloknotom* [40 Years with Journalist's Notebook] (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1989), 8.

under worse conditions than many others with similar skill sets, even though they are indispensable to foreign correspondents' work. Hence, many people either combined the tasks of an interpreter/translator with other occupations or switched their careers entirely to journalism or diplomacy.

#### 4.7. Secret Agent vs. Journalist

As early as the 1920s and 1930s, some Soviet news employees were already performing somewhat of a double duty: doing news coverage while working for the Soviet intelligence services.<sup>733</sup> At that time, political underground activity was in full bloom, with TASS among the most notable examples. People like Đuro Cvijić, a prominent member of the Yugoslav Communist Party, held formal positions at the agency while secretly working for secret services.<sup>734</sup> Journalists, by the nature of their profession, were naturally curious, often looking for answers to questions in most unexpected places. This inherent interest, involvement in different social circles, and mobility were an ideal cover for intelligence operatives.<sup>735</sup> Hence, the collaboration of revolutionaries with organizations like TASS as their front blurred the lines between journalism, intelligence work, and revolutionary activism, all long before the Cold War spy obsession.<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>733</sup> There is an understanding, due to the spy mania of the Cold War, that Soviet news outlets were utilized for covert operations abroad. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that this practice existed even before the Cold War began.

<sup>734</sup> Ivan Očak, *Braća Cvijići* (Zagreb: Spektar-Globus, 1982), 350.

<sup>735</sup> Thanks to such a natural symbiosis, many countries tended to suspect Soviet journalists in espionage and had special regulations for them on their territory. Tobias Reckling, *Foreign correspondents in Francoist Spain*, 72.

<sup>736</sup> There are many counter examples of journalists just being journalists, simply working undercover without intelligence services involved, hiding or faking their names and entire identities because of potential political prosecution. For instance, Leib (Leonid) Khentov turned into a Semyon Rostovsky, as well as Ernst Henry. He was a representative of a common type of international journalist that could be described as an information-gatherer for the semi-isolated Soviet state. Part of the reason was, of course, anti-semitism that was always looming in the background. He also worked in the English department of Sovinformburo and on the radio under the pseudonyms "Losev" and "Leonidov" upon his return to the USSR in 1951. Moreover, working in Germany, he deliberately made his name as vague as possible as a tactic to confuse the Gestapo. Moreover, the name perplexed not only the foreigners but the Soviets, too. In fact, some of his books were discussed on the pages of the Soviet press as works of a "progressive" English journalist. Lev Sidorovskii, "Kto vy, Jernst Genri?" [Who are you, Ernst Henry?], 29.05.2023, *glagol* 38, <https://glagol38.ru/text/29-05-2023/009> [accessed 15.05.2023]. He was a representative of a common type of international journalist that could be described as an information-gatherer for the semi-isolated Soviet state. It turned out that he simply subscribed to all the German newspapers he could find, and he carefully studied their contents, including death notices, wedding announcements, and government job appointments. From this information, he simply analyzed all the irregularities. He even managed to create detailed reports about the German army's movements based on what he learned from those bits of information. Leonid Repin, "Sovetskii zhurnalists Jernst Genri v tochnosti predskazal, kak nachnetsya Velikaya Otechestvennaya voina" [The Soviet journalist Ernst Henry predicted exactly how the Great Patriotic War would begin], *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, April 30, 2022, <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27230/4357553/> [accessed 30.07.2022]. Moreover, another such example was a columnist in Switzerland, eventually kidnapped by the Nazis under suspicion of having secret contacts in Germany, as he was that good at analysis and predictions.

The perception of Soviet journalists as spies is mostly influenced by Cold War-era thinking. A recurring motif is whether those journalists were more than just creators of information – were they perhaps spies, KGB agents, or informants? Finding the truth behind such suspicions is challenging, primarily due to the shortage of evidence.<sup>737</sup> In this vacuum, historians are left to read between the lines, attempting to analyze details through subtle cues. However, there are a few exceptions where evidence points to some journalists undercover, using a facade or the so-called “krysha” [cover] for covert activities.<sup>738</sup> Press corps were a universal cover-up for intelligence services around the world, helping them to get not only visas and credentials to stay in the country but also special access to events and networks.<sup>739</sup> The KGB was active in recruiting people with knowledge of foreign languages, in hopes of expanding its networks abroad. They often offered conditions that were hard to say no to: high salary and quick career growth were tempting for fresh graduates.<sup>740</sup> So, graduates with international expertise were willing to participate in the covert operations. In fact, work, or at least assistance for the KGB, was also an accelerator for one’s journalistic career:

The younger generation of careerists, such as myself, who had graduated from prestigious educational institutions (Institute of Oriental Languages, Institute of International Relations, etc.), could perhaps be considered “volunteers” (“initiators”). We knew very well that cooperation with the KGB would contribute very well to our careers as journalists and open the door to foreign trips.<sup>741</sup>

Moreover, TASS had to have a certain number of its foreign postings allocated as cover-ups for KGB officers.<sup>742</sup> While there are claims that the KGB was not allowed to recruit from *Pravda* and was discouraged from recruiting from *Izvestia* as a government newspaper, such “collaboration” was still taking place in different forms.<sup>743</sup> Some correspondents abroad, even if not permanently affiliated with secret departments, often did special assignments. These

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<sup>737</sup> The authoritarian nature of the modern-day Russian Federation further complicates matters. The archives of the KGB remain sealed, making it impossible for researchers to access documents on the activities of journalists. The shroud of secrecy around these archives stops any definitive conclusions from being drawn. Moreover, journalists and their families are not particularly open to talk about involvement in covert operations. Admissions of ties to intelligence agencies are infrequent, as reluctance to disclose such work naturally comes from the fear of punishment or the desire to keep a certain public image.

<sup>738</sup> This cover was rather common for journalists under socialism, for instance, in Eastern Germany. See: Mücke, *Korrespondenten im Kalten Krieg*, 41.

<sup>739</sup> Pedelty, *War Stories*, 61.

<sup>740</sup> Moreover, in 1947, there was a suggestion of introducing a course titled “Courses of International Information,” which, however, was supposed to teach the basics of intelligence work. Sergeev, Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov), 270; Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistsika i razvedka*.

<sup>741</sup> Yuri Bezmenov, *Vsemirnaya policiya myslei* [World Thought Police] (LoS Angeles: NATA Almanac, 1986), translated by Vitalii Kryukov. <https://www.lander.odessa.ua/doc/shuman-bezmenov-vsemirnaya-politsiya-mysley.pdf> [accessed 25.01.2023].

<sup>742</sup> “Interview with Igor’ Makurin,” *Google Documents*, [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F9yPI1k2rjucSozLHq\\_GOWHltHPHVNOQ/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F9yPI1k2rjucSozLHq_GOWHltHPHVNOQ/edit?tab=t.0) [accessed 09.07.2022] from: Valeriya Bityutskaya, *Sovetskoe informacionnoe agentstvo*.

<sup>743</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 108.

assignments involved writing reports not intended for publication, situational information pieces, referred to as “Correspondent's Letters.”<sup>744</sup> Sometimes, the involvement was direct, and the main Soviet newspapers provided cover-up for the secret agents: Kondrashov remarked that one-third of *Izvestia* employees were from secret services, to whom the newspaper provided a cover.<sup>745</sup>

One such notable figure was Leonid Kolosov, an outspoken *mezhdunarodnik*, whose career was a mix of journalism and intelligence work. His journey began during the Thaw era, when he started as a worker at the Trade Administration with Western Countries.<sup>746</sup> His hard work did not go unnoticed, and the secret services quickly recruited him. Contrary to suggestions of going to Italy under the cover of the deputy trade representative, it was seen as a better option for Kolosov to assume the role of the newspaper's correspondent. Thus, Kolosov turned from a trade administrator to a journalist on paper and, in actuality, an intelligence officer. Kolosov was trained in spycraft in Moscow and was then sent to Rome, playing the role of a manager of the Soviet network of local informants and gathering intelligence about the Italian Parliament. During his Italian assignment, he even wrote articles for the newspaper, blending into the fake journalistic life while working on intelligence operations beneath the surface. Kolosov acknowledged that his deep dive into journalism was accidental: “I was made a journalist by Soviet foreign intelligence.”<sup>747</sup>

Apropos, another known spy figure was Georgii Bolshakov, who was an agent in TASS offices in New York and Washington in the 1950s.<sup>748</sup> Later, he worked under the guise of deputy editor-in-chief at the “Soviet Union” magazine, giving him more excuses to stay in the US. Bolshakov's importance was at its peak during the Cuban missile crisis: he was an

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<sup>744</sup> For instance, journalists from *Pravda* and *Izvestia* did get their hands dirty with those reports. Molly Pucci, “The Soviets Abroad: The NKVD, Intelligence, and State Building in East-Central Europe after World War II,” in *The Secret Police and the Soviet System: New Archival Investigations*, ed. Michael David-Fox (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023), 294; Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*. According to some accounts, such reporting was similar to the duties of TASS journalists. A.D., G.K., A.P., “Kollegi v pogonah” [Colleagues in uniform], *agentura.ru*, 2022, <https://agentura.ru/books-reviews/a-d-g-k-a-p-kollegi-v-pogonah/8/> [accessed 28.12.2022].

<sup>745</sup> Aleksandr Grebel'nikov, ed. *Zhurnalisty XX veka: lyudi i sud'by* [Journalists of the Twentieth Century: People and Destinies] (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 446. Vladlen Krivosheev, an *Izvestia* employee, also confirmed presence of undercover agents at his Prague bureau. “Ya pytalsya s nimi govorit.”

<sup>746</sup> Here and further about his biography according to his book (first published in 1995): Leonid Kolosov, *Razvedchik v Vechnom gorode. Operacii KGB v Italii* [An Intelligence Officer in the Eternal City] (Moscow: Algoritm, 2017), *royallib*, [https://royallib.com/read/kolosov\\_leonid/razvedchik\\_v\\_vechnom\\_gorode\\_operatsii\\_kgb\\_v\\_italii.html#0](https://royallib.com/read/kolosov_leonid/razvedchik_v_vechnom_gorode_operatsii_kgb_v_italii.html#0) [accessed 17.12.2023].

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> Anatolii Dobrynin, *Memoirs*, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/728627> [accessed 22.10.2023].

unofficial intermediary between Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy,<sup>749</sup> and Bolshakov's discreet diplomacy helped in averting catastrophic conflict.<sup>750</sup> Following his dismissal from the secret services, Bolshakov became a journalist, now full-time. He briefly worked at the *Novosti* Press Agency, and then, until his death, as the editor-in-chief of the “Soviet Union.” Just like him, many, when retiring from their positions in the intelligence services, turned themselves into full-time journalists, producing articles and even books.<sup>751</sup>

APN was also involved in the covert operations, as it was “a special, unlike any other institution. Roughly speaking, it is a branch of the KGB.”<sup>752</sup> For the organization, this era came down to “APN was a signboard so that spies could travel abroad. But when I saw these spies inside the editorial office, they didn't seem like spies – you're not going on a reconnaissance mission.”<sup>753</sup> This statement was corroborated by another journalist, claiming that APN provided greater freedom of maneuver and convenient “public” cover for the KGB because of how wide the operations of APN were and thanks to its fake, non-state affiliation.<sup>754</sup> It appears that there was an established scheme for the “collaboration” between APN and KGB: after mere months at APN, the journalists were sent “to the capitals of exotic countries,” but were not present at the bureaus, showing up only at the embassy’s luncheons, creating an impression of work, and trying to blend in with other journalists.<sup>755</sup> The intersection of journalists and secret agents did not end there. APN became a rather strange

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<sup>749</sup>A.A. Fursenko, “Georgii Bol'shakov, svyaznoi Hrushheva s prezidentom Kennedy” [Georgii Bol'shakov, Khrushchev's contact with President Kennedy], *Zvezda* 7 (1997), <https://magazines.gorky.media/zvezda/1997/7/georgij-bolshakov-svyaznoj-hrushheva-s-prezidentom-kennedi.html> [accessed 15.01.2023]. Similar stories are known, for example, about the involvement of Valerii Lednev, a journalist, in the becoming an intermediary between Moscow and Bonn. Susanne Schattenberg, “Emotions and Play-acting in the Cold War: How Leonid Brezhnev Won and Lost the West’s Trust,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 45, no. 3 (2018): 323–4.

<sup>750</sup> Moreover, according to Karel Kaplan, 70 or even 80 percent of embassy workers should have a double duty of secret agents. Karel Kaplan, *Sovětské poradci v Československu, 1949–1956* (Malá Strana: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1993), 39–40 as quoted in Pucci, *The Soviets Abroad*, 9.

<sup>751</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

<sup>752</sup> Anastasia Medvedtskaya, “‘Nam, durakam, kazalos', chto ottepel’ — pisatel' Aleksandr Nilin o Moskve 1960-h’” [‘It seemed to us fools that there was a thaw’ — writer Alexander Nilin about Moscow in the 1960s], *Moskvichmag*, January 24, 2022, <https://moskvichmag.ru/gorod/nam-durakam-kazalos-chto-ottepel-pisatel-aleksandr-nilin-o-moskve-1960-h/> [accessed 07.09.2024]. Among the various bodies involved in external Soviet propaganda, which were directly subordinated to the departments of the CPSU Central Committee's apparatus, the *Novosti* Press Agency (APN) had the closest connections with the KGB, both in terms of personnel and organizational structure, as well as creatively. According to Igor’ Sinitsyn, this agency was integrated with the intelligence and security apparatus of the Soviet state. The APN's main editorial board for political publications, which was a crucial part of its operation, had a triple subordination: the international departments of the CPSU Central Committee, the KGB, and the deputy chairman of the APN board. Sinitsyn, *Andropov vblizi*. Lev Delyusin seemingly confirmed that although Stalin asked for *Pravda* to not be involved in intelligence services, there was still some cooperation. *Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya*, 133.

<sup>753</sup> “Nam, durakam, kazalos', chto ottepel'.”

<sup>754</sup> Sinitsyn, *Andropov vblizi*.

<sup>755</sup> Bezmenov, *Vsemirnaya policiya myslei*.

place of exile for intelligence workers, for instance, for running over someone abroad, and APN workers called them “speed demons.” The local police were looking for them, so the USSR, under the guise of medical treatment, had to recall them and hide them urgently. In later years, for instance, some Tsygankov has been stealing watches of Soviet embassy workers and exchanging those for alcohol, for which he had been “sentenced” to work at APN. Sexual deviances were also considered to be exile-worthy.

However, not all *mezhdunarodniki* were involved in foreign intelligence.<sup>756</sup> Kolosov made a distinction by referring to regular correspondents as “pure” [chistye],<sup>757</sup> making it clear that they were solely dedicated to journalism. Moreover, it appears that some of Kolosov's fellow journalists were unaware of his real occupation and were not complicit. They preferred to state they were unaware of who had infiltrated their rows. For instance, Aleksandr Nilin claimed that the journalists did not realize it, even when his colleague, Boris Krymov, was expelled from Canada after just 24 hours, and then he “realized that Boris was not as ordinary as we think.”<sup>758</sup>

On the other hand, other “pure” journalists may have speculated about his potential ties to secret services but chose to ignore them, maintaining a facade of normalcy. Yet, some potential KGB proteges could be noticed by the journalists. For instance, muscular, silent interns at their organizations inevitably raised suspicions. They could speak foreign languages, knew the bare minimum for the job, but advanced rather quickly on the career ladder. Thus, some journalists were aware of who was an “alien” among them. Zorin, for instance, was warned against talking to one of the undercover agents, which shows that there was a certain degree of knowledge of who was who. Oleg Kalugin, future KGB general, infiltrated the journalistic ranks pretty seamlessly, that is, before his assignment to the United States, just barely 6 months after his employment, which made clear who he really worked for.<sup>759</sup> Overall, some journalists tried to speculate who the spies were, while others refrained from doing so:

G.K.: How did our journalists in Poland perceive the presence of “agents” among them?

A.D.: They generally approached it with understanding. Although many of them pretended to be like Sherlock Holmes and attempted to uncover the “disguised” comrades. This stirred up excitement and nervousness among

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<sup>756</sup> There were attempts to recruit many people in the field. The KGB recruitment was seemingly hard to avoid for anyone from foreign affairs, and it was a skill to decline cooperation with a valid enough reason. For instance, Lev Delyusin rejected KGB's advancement by saying he had not read the full collection of Lenin's works. Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya, 127.

<sup>757</sup> Kolosov, *Razvedchik v Vechnom gorode*.

<sup>758</sup> “Nam, durakam, kazalos', chto ottepel'.”

<sup>759</sup> Oleg Kalugin, *Proshhai, Lubyanka!* [Goodbye, Lubyanka] (Moscow: Olimp, 1995), 78, *belousenko*, [https://belousenko.de/books/kgb/kalugin\\_lubyanka.pdf](https://belousenko.de/books/kgb/kalugin_lubyanka.pdf) [accessed 08.08.2024].

them. In social settings, they would analyze their surroundings and engage in conversations on the topic. Some suspicions were nearly openly discussed.<sup>760</sup>

On the other hand, the activities of Soviet journalists-turned-spies were also of interest to the West. Yet, when it came to the “Western” estimates, they were often blown out of proportion. Through defectors, the American secret services tried to estimate the percentage of spies in the Soviet news organizations, as well as their identities.<sup>761</sup> The CIA reports offer a glimpse into the imagined involvement of TASS employees in espionage. Some defectors claimed that a significant proportion (ranging from 80 to 95 percent) of TASS personnel were intelligence officers. One extreme claim even asserted that all TASS employees abroad were, in fact, agents of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs. Even the CIA could not believe such a number:<sup>762</sup> assuming that every single journalist worked for the secret services is unreasonable for a multitude of reasons. Incompetent workers would be of no interest to the KGB, not to mention those with risky behavior who could jeopardize the whole operation and secret network. Moreover, people with an incorrect pedigree and bad questionnaires would also not be considered. Hence, the officers first observed the workers and offered them positions only if they were fit. Moreover, the workers could always reject such proposals, either because of their personal beliefs or lifestyle that they deemed unfit for themselves. For historians, nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize the biases in defectors’ accounts.<sup>763</sup> Defectors, by the nature of their circumstances, often had a personal interest in emphasizing the negative aspects of the country they had left behind.<sup>764</sup> It helped them justify their escape and seek asylum. Their narratives were influenced by a desire to present an alarming picture to garner sympathy. Therefore, using defectors as a source of information was not always reliable, and even the adversaries needed to consider their motives. Ultimately, the mystery surrounding Soviet journalists in intelligence activities remains largely unresolved. The Cold War's shadow continues to loom and cast doubt, and such guesses are often shaped by speculation and by the limitations imposed by the lack of direct access to archives.

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<sup>760</sup> A.D., G.K., A.P., *Kollegi v pogonah*.

<sup>761</sup> CIA, TASS, 24.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>763</sup> For instance, Eric A. Scott critically engages with the sources stemming from defectors and questions the historiography around them. Eric A. Scott, *Defectors: How the Illicit Flight of Soviet Citizens Built the Borders of the Cold War World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

<sup>764</sup> One such example is Yuri Bezmenov (alias: Tomas Schuman) former APN employee who fled to the West. He became famous, as he wrote multiple books and gave lectures about KGB’s involvement in APN activities. However, there are doubts how he could have data about the KGB budget and other highly specific but top-secret details, and if he was a KGB agent in the first place.

## Conclusions

The professionalization of a journalist-*mezhdunarodnik* in the Soviet context was a complex process, inseparable from other professions that interacted with and influenced the development of international journalism. It is no coincidence that the term *mezhdunarodnik*, loosely translated as “internationalist,” went beyond the realm of journalism alone.<sup>765</sup> It designated a broader spectrum of professionals working in international affairs, including lawyers, economists, historians, and pen workers. The use of this term in Russian often requires more context, such as specifying “zhurnalist-*mezhdunarodnik*” (journalist-internationalist), “ekonomist-*mezhdunarodnik*” (economist-internationalist), etc. This term became a broad concept, mirroring the development of those professions, which were significantly impeded by a combination of external and internal conditions, as well as by a universal experience of working in foreign affairs. Notably, diplomats, translators, writers, and intelligence officers were all entangled in the formation of the international journalistic profession in the postwar years. Many factors caused such a web. The overly centralized system, including an international propaganda network, created a porous structure in which people could be commanded from different positions and urgently assigned new roles for the sake of the bigger picture. Likewise, a graduate trained in diplomacy could be assigned to work for TASS, or a translator could end up as a correspondent.

Yet it was not just the state dictating such transfers; it was also people with their own agendas and an understanding of what was best for them. The journalists themselves were eager to diversify their portfolios, seeking to work for different organizations and in different areas of foreign employment. Their drive to secure their futures manifested in different ways: some decided to pursue a PhD to secure their standing in society. In contrast, others were ready to join the ranks of KGB officers and accelerate their careers. After all, since the distribution system was not working, the journalists needed to be on their own and find the most beneficial options. This also explains why, for instance, many preferred working at a newspaper to a news agency – the pay was better, the workflow more relaxed, and the prestige associated with such employment was higher. Thus, with a certain degree of flexibility, the created porosity was beneficial for the state and the people involved. The state

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<sup>765</sup> For example, the first definition of “*mezhdunarodnik*” in an online dictionary: “Specialist in international politics, international law.” “*Mezhdunarodnik*,” *Gramota.ru*, <https://gramota.ru/meta/mezhdunarodnik> [accessed 15.04.2024]. The origin of the term is unclear, but Pierre-Louis Six found its first supposed mention on the pages of *Pravda* in 1924. *Pravda*, February 16, 1924, 8, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 18. With the creation of MGIMO, “*mezhdunarodnik*” also became the title in its graduates’ diplomas. Still, some journalists became *mezhdunarodniki* by experience, not always by the fact of graduation.

could easily relocate specialists to the areas where they were urgently needed, and the cadres could maneuver through the system and haggle for better conditions.

## Chapter 5: Of Gods and People: *Nomenklatura* and the Rest

“The tension between an egalitarian ideal and the creation of privileges lay at the heart of Soviet communications policies.”<sup>766</sup>

The Soviet Union has long been described as a country in a state of limbo with its own self-image. The government felt proud of its achievements, growth tempo, and ideological messaging and ideals. It worked hard to promote those values globally and wanted to present itself in the best possible light. On the other hand, it was self-conscious of its overlooked areas like light industry, food shortages, and cultural gaps in people’s behavior, transitioning from a petty bourgeois lifestyle into a proletarian mode, sometimes abandoning the manners and habits of the pre-revolutionary elites. Yet the state was sensitive to the perceived backwardness, given its visibility in “the West” and the potential judgment of outsiders. One of the inherent features of the Soviet system, and of its strategy of placing cadres abroad, was fear. As Michael David-Fox wrote, the officials were worried that “Soviet travelers abroad created the impression of being 'uncultured,' that is to say, embarrassingly backward.”<sup>767</sup> Despite the state’s best efforts, negative information about the USSR still surfaced in the opposing camp. The highly debated Iron Curtain was permeable after all – newsflow from East to West still existed.<sup>768</sup> The hyper-awareness of people watching over the Soviet citizens led to the “communism’s ambiguous globality” – a self-imposed challenge for the Soviet state, trying not to fall flat on its face in the global arena.<sup>769</sup> The Soviets went far in their attempts to “sell” their country as successful – after all, they were promoting their vision of modernity and state-building.<sup>770</sup> The same scheme worked on the outside: the foreigners were supposed to see the best version of the Soviet citizens, well-mannered and exemplary.<sup>771</sup>

The expected representation was, naturally, orchestrated by the state, as Soviet officials tried to keep hold of their correspondents and ensure that they correctly projected communist

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<sup>766</sup> Larissa Zakharova, “Access to Communication Tools in Stalin's Soviet Union.” Translated from the French by Michael C. Behrent, *Annales HSS* 68, no. 2 (April-June 2013): 463–97, <https://shs.cairn.info/journal-Annales-2013-2-page-463?lang=en> [accessed 11.10.2023].

<sup>767</sup> David-Fox, *The Iron Curtain*, 32.

<sup>768</sup> Péteri, *Nylon Curtain*, 113, 115.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>770</sup> The phenomenon of *pokazukha* [“for show”] behavior was born out of those fears and became very prevalent with anything to do with foreigners. Showing exemplary factories, coal mines, kolkhozes, or focusing on social advancement were always in focus when introducing the foreigners to the Soviet lifestyle. When they came to the Soviet Union, they were allowed to see only the best the USSR could offer: the cleanest cities, faultless collective farms, and advanced factories. Magnusdottir, *Cold War Correspondents*, 45.

<sup>771</sup> See, for instance, Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 99.

values. Under Stalin, this control was coming directly from the country's leader, as the famous 1946 journalists' delegation to the US was seemingly instructed by the Soviet leader himself.<sup>772</sup> No one was ever fully trusted and had to face continuous surveillance by interpreters, delegation leaders, embassy staff, and intelligence officers.<sup>773</sup> The correct representation was monitored, to the best of their abilities, by the Soviet embassies abroad, as they paid close attention to anything the correspondent wrote, scrutinizing anything they would say.<sup>774</sup> In fact, the said control did not stop there. Orchestration of desired behaviors abroad was also guaranteed by the groups permitted to operate there. Certain citizens could not have been trusted enough for such an important mission, and hence journalists faced glass ceilings and other limitations in their careers. Exclusion of entire groups of the population was carried out at the state level. Thus, this chapter will delve into the issues of stratification within international journalism, the extent of stratification, as well as the limitations on journalists' global participation in various aspects.

## 5.1. Feared Behaviors

“At that time, it was believed that every Soviet person abroad represented not only himself but also a Great Country. So, he should look appropriate.”<sup>775</sup>

Every Soviet national stationed abroad bore the weighty responsibility of serving as a de facto representative of the entire Soviet Union. Their conduct was expected to adhere to the highest standards, embodying an image that reflected the ideals and values of the entire country. In the officials' eyes, it was not enough to be a professional – one had to represent the Soviet Union and what it stood for worthily, putting up the show.<sup>776</sup> Being picked for such a mission meant having skills in public speaking, political competence, and discipline, but

<sup>772</sup> Simonov, Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya, 81.

<sup>773</sup> RGALI, f. 1817, op. 3, d. 14, ll. 116–8 as quoted in Oksana Nagornaya and Tatyana Raeva, *Iskusstvo “sochetat”* K. A. Fedina: Lichnyj opyt sovetskogo posla kul'turnoi diplomatii [The art of “combining” K.A. Fedin: the personal experience of the Soviet Ambassador of cultural diplomacy], *Dialog so vremenem* 69 (2019): 208, <https://roii.ru/r/1/69.15> [accessed 29.07.2022].

<sup>774</sup> Gennadii Zafesov, *Posle dvadcati let molchaniya*, 99. Moreover, this was a rather popular “trend” in foreign reporting elsewhere. Despite not being dictated directly on what to write, the American foreign reporters also depended on the embassies and ambassadors, having to closely cooperate with them and depend on their favoritism. Moreover, they could be “under a sharp attack” by the Ambassador and the State Department if they wrote anything not in the official line, while the State Department claimed their mistakes and biases and tried to ruin one's career. Pedelty, *War Stories*, 87–8.

<sup>775</sup> Georgii: Danelia, *Bezbiletnyj passazhir* [The Ticketless Passenger], (Moscow: Ripol-klassik, 2003), *litres*, <https://www.litres.ru/book/georgiy-daneliya/bezbiletnyy-passazhir-134400/citata/faca81e6668211e782dd0025905a0666/> [accessed 07.03.2023].

<sup>776</sup> Researchers tend to refer to such strategy as specially-constructed spectacles for the foreigners, as Michael David-Fox called it a cultural show, while Oksana Nagornaya and Tatyana Raeva labelled it as a “diplomatic show.” David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 100. Nagornaya, Raeva, *Iskusstvo ‘sochetat’*, 200–15.

only a few people could fit the bill.<sup>777</sup> The main concern before sending someone abroad was the combination of personal and professional qualities fit for such travel, and only a few people would be worthy candidates. In turn, it led to those worthy of being sent abroad to occupy multiple positions simultaneously, wearing multiple hats.<sup>778</sup> Some journalists were concurrently representatives of the USSR in Friendship societies, the Union of Journalists, or various committees, such as the Soviet Peace Committee.

The obligation to portray a certain image was particularly critical for journalists.<sup>779</sup> It was clear that, despite being at formal, semi-official, or informal gatherings, they were seen as representatives of their government. Every little move and word could get scrutinized by the looking glass, so any Soviet citizen needed to keep their eyes peeled. Being seen, or worse, being photographed doing something scandalous, also meant an unavoidable downward spiral for not just one's image, but potentially for the whole country. The fear of misrepresentation of the Soviet Union was deeply rooted not only in the officials and heads of the delegations, but it seems that any Soviet citizen was concerned with what they represented: for instance, upon sending journalists to the US in 1955, Molotov instructed them not only on the Soviet stance on the main issues that could be asked about but also gave advice to not drink Pepsi and Coca-Cola as "an embodiment of American imperialism and expansionism."<sup>780</sup> Moreover, the Soviet journalists were taught how to answer the most painful questions, including censorship,<sup>781</sup> antisemitism, etc., as well as how to behave,

The fundamental positions that the Soviet side was unwilling to compromise on included the following axioms: there is no anti-Semitism, concentration camps, or "black funnels" arresting people at night in the Soviet Union. Speaking about literature, the delegates reported that Soviet writers were free to choose topics that interested them without regard to the Party.<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> E.g., Even writers were not trusted enough with the "show" for the foreigners and got their speeches written for them. RGALI, f. 1817, op. 3, d. 14, ll. 116–8 as quoted in Nagornaya and Raeva, *Iskusstvo 'sochetat'*, 205, 207.

<sup>778</sup> Nagornaya and Raeva, *Iskusstvo 'sochetat'*.

<sup>779</sup> Plus, there were very few tourists outside of the USSR, so all eyes were turned to professionals abroad.

<sup>780</sup> Adzhubei, *Ya byl zyatem Hrushheva*.

<sup>781</sup> Discussions about censorship itself were considered taboo and unimaginable outside the closest inner circles of the ruling elite. Plus, the Soviet officials and journalists were well aware of how censorship reflected on them, so they were always claiming the freedom of the press in the USSR. Even in other friendly states or international forums, discussing the topic of Soviet censorship was considered beyond the realm of possibility. While the Eastern European nations were considered part of the Soviet sphere of influence, discussions about Soviet censorship were also off-limits. These countries, often referred to as "brotherly" Eastern European nations, also did not get any honest answers from the Soviet newsmen. Soviet journalists and officials were instructed to vehemently deny the existence of censorship or any guidelines that restricted their reporting. As a result, they consistently claimed that the press in the Soviet Union was entirely free, independent, and objective in its reporting. They often touted the idea that the press was the voice of the people, serving their interests and reflecting the true will of the working class.

<sup>782</sup> Scherbinina, *'Uplyvalo semero romantikov'*, 302.

To aid citizens in their preparations, official guidelines, “Basic Rules of Conduct for Soviet Citizens Traveling Abroad,” were adopted in 1955. Any preparations for the trip always incorporated an instructional talk, and the manual was brought to the travelers’ attention.<sup>783</sup> After receiving instructions, participants signed a document in which they undertook to “steadfastly observe the interests of the Soviet state, strictly keep its state secrets, be irreproachable in their personal behavior, and hold high the honor and dignity of a citizen of the USSR.”<sup>784</sup> They were especially strict for those going to capitalist and developing countries:

A Soviet citizen abroad must be an active conductor of the USSR's foreign policy. High moral and political qualities, ardent love for the Soviet Motherland, and constant vigilance while abroad will contribute to the successful fulfillment of the tasks assigned to him and will shield him from provocations and enemy intrigues.<sup>785</sup> Any misconduct or deviations from the expected standard were very visible in the international space. In the event of any incidents or excesses with Soviet journalists abroad, the intervention occurred at the highest levels, involving both the Agitprop apparatus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They went above and beyond to resolve such issues: they also needed to mitigate the fallout and avoid tarnishing the image the Soviet Union sought to project. Getting drunk in public, being noticed in gambling, engaging with “wrong people” – all those were crisis-provoking behaviors of a correspondent, and for that, the Soviets would invoke the phrase “behavior unworthy of a Soviet journalist.”<sup>786</sup> This expression condemned certain actions and implied a failure to accurately represent the Soviet Union's core values. This was more than a than personal lapse; it was viewed as a potential misrepresentation of the entire regime. Thus, potential incidents involving Soviet journalists could cause lasting negative impacts on the state of affairs.<sup>787</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> “Osnovnye pravila povedeniya sovetskikh grazhdan, vyezshayushchikh za granitsu” [Basic rules of conduct for Soviet citizens traveling abroad], in *Lubyanka – Staraya Ploshchad': Sekretnye Dokumenty TSK KPSS i KGB o Repressiyakh 1937–1990 gg. v SSSR: Document Collection* (Moscow: Posev, 2005), <http://www.sps.ru/?id=213821>. [accessed 05.08.2024].

<sup>784</sup> GARK, f. R-3776, op. 4, d. 152 as quoted in Aleksei Popov, “Sovetskii turist za rubezhom: missiya, illyuzii, otkrytiya” [Soviet tourist abroad: mission, illusions, discoveries], *Uchenye zapiski Krymskogo federal'nogo universiteta imeni V. I. Vernadskogo, Istoricheskie nauki* (2016), *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sovetskiy-turist-za-rubezhom-missiya-illyuzii-otkrytiya/viewer> [accessed 05.08.2024].

<sup>785</sup> Igor' Kijan, “Vspomnit' zanaves: Kak sovetskie grazhdane vyezzhali za granicu” [Recalling the curtain: How Soviet citizens traveled abroad], *Nasha versiya* 42 (31.10.2022), <https://versia.ru/kak-sovetskie-grazhdane-vyezzhali-za-granicu> [accessed 15.12.2022].

<sup>786</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 106, l. 79. Plan of the Union of Journalists, 1961.

<sup>787</sup> After all, they also regularly met with foreign officials, and it became one of the key means of communication between the states. Answers of Soviet citizens in the West were treated as those of the General Secretary. They were not allowed to slip up and talk about sensitive topics for the USSR, be it discrimination against Jewish citizens, censorship, or any kind of military secret. Whether these encounters took on a formal, semi-formal, or simply convivial nature, Soviet journalists understood the weight of their representation – they were de facto ambassadors for their respective governments, understanding that the topics of their discussions

To prevent such troubles, multiple measures were implemented. For once, every citizen planning to travel abroad had to fill out questionnaires about themselves and write their autobiographies.<sup>788</sup> Through the questionnaires, one had to answer about the criminal records of their relatives, their residence in the territories occupied by the Nazis,<sup>789</sup> undesirable connections, “wrong” family ties, or “cosmopolitan” nationality.<sup>790</sup> Moreover, MGIMO students, to get permission to travel abroad, needed to pass the “tests” on multiple levels: administrative, Komsomol, Party, and get personal characteristics (academic, political, and moral), etc.<sup>791</sup> Such checks were a standard procedure for proving the reliability of foreign-based staff, pervasive and unavoidable: “In the atmosphere of political vigilance that permeated the MID [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – M.Z.] in the 1950s, it was difficult for a specialist in foreign affairs not to be found guilty of something.”<sup>792</sup> The line of responsibility also trained Soviet officials to be extra careful: it was not just their employee’s fault but also the chief’s career that was on the line. Hiring, or even worse, sending on assignment abroad an unreliable person meant a certain career death, if not a real death under Stalin. Anyone involved in this hierarchy was theoretically at risk and was scared of making mistakes: it was better to do nothing than to risk one’s life.<sup>793</sup> Valentin Lednev, for instance, lost his job at *Izvestia*, as his father got arrested for Article 58-10, a typical political case for “Propaganda or agitation calling for the overthrow, undermining, or weakening of Soviet power or for the commission of certain counterrevolutionary crimes.”<sup>794</sup> Of course, with this label on his

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would be relayed back home. So, the journalist’s personal voice effectively represented the perspective of Soviet foreign policy during these interactions. Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 110.

<sup>788</sup> With more and more graduates with knowledge of foreign affairs and languages, their experience was somewhat devalued, and suspicion around them grew. Six, *The Party Nobility*, 168. Some categories of citizens were automatically prohibited from traveling abroad: military personnel, engineers working on secret projects, etc. However, many of those falling into this category were people at no fault: many were unreliable people, in the eyes of the Soviet state. E. Arkhipova, “Nekotorye aspekty razvitiya sovetskogo vyezdnoho turizma v 1980–1991 gg. (na primere turisticheskogo obmena s kapitalisticheskimi stranami)” [Some aspects of the development of Soviet outbound tourism in 1980-1991 (using the example of tourist exchange with capitalist countries)], *Sovremennye problemy servisa i turizma* 1 (2008): 42.

<sup>789</sup> For instance, a famous classical pianist, Sviatoslav Richter, was only allowed to tour in socialist countries for a long time because of the execution of the musician’s father in 1941 and his mother’s “escape” to Germany at the end of the war. K. Yudin, ““Vot do chego dovela Vas družba s amerikancami!” Osobennosti sovetskoi kul’turnoi politiki v seredine 1950-h –1970-e gg.” [‘That’s what friendship with Americans has brought you to!’ Features of Soviet cultural policy in the mid-1950s–1970s], *Lokus: lyudi, obshchestvo, kul’tury, smysly* 12, № 1 (2021): 37.

<sup>790</sup> For many, the cut-off points were nationality, gender, and background.

<sup>791</sup> MGIMO: Oriental Faculty, *MGIMO Stories*, 8, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/2019/10/MGIMO-Stories.pdf> [accessed 13.09.2024].

<sup>792</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 168.

<sup>793</sup> TSAOPIM, f. 192, op. 1, d. 184, l. 43. Minutes of the report-election meeting, Party organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15–16/07/1947 as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 73.

<sup>794</sup> Vikentii Matveev, *Memoirs*, 1948, [prozhito.org](https://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/669360> [14.05.2025].

father, Lednev could not be employed at the USSR's second most important newspaper, and the editor did not dare to defend him.

Family ties and other circumstantial faults could make or break anyone's rise to the top. Coming from a known family could help with entrance exams and in general during the studies: Vilya Gel'bras, son of Gdalii Gel'bras – an old Bolshevik and former worker at the Tehran embassy, had a chance for a trip to China to get more material for his dissertation.<sup>795</sup> Such a pedigree could also play to one's disadvantage. The elite was closely followed and targeted by repressions: "Paradoxically, the applicants who had been the most likely to successfully pass the MGIMO entrance examination because of their social origins were the people the most likely to experience downward mobility after graduation."<sup>796</sup> Like so, a year before Melor Sturua was supposed to graduate from MGIMO, his father, an old Bolshevik, was compromised for "missing Trotskyism."<sup>797</sup> This meant the absence of job prospects for Sturua upon graduation: anyone looking into his biography would immediately see his father's "misstep" and would not risk hiring such a candidate. Yet, Sturua was lucky: through his classmate and personal intervention from Anastas Mikoyan, then-Minister of Foreign Trade (as well as an old friend of his father), he managed to get a spot at *Izvestia* despite this "vulnerability" in not even his biography.<sup>798</sup> A similar situation happened to Valentin Berezhkov, who was having success in his career. His parents from Kyiv had disappeared during the war, and the NKVD got suspicious. The worst suspicions that his parents might have gotten to the West with the German army significantly harmed his career, and he was fired from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. While Berezhkov was spiraling and waiting for the footsteps on his staircase, Molotov protected him, so he could at least work for the press at the magazine *Novoe vremya* and write about Germany.<sup>799</sup> Of course, not everyone was friends with ministers who could save their careers, so Sturua and Berezhkov were a lucky exception to the rule. For most people, a tiny spot in their or their family's profiles led to their dreams being crushed. Such unfortunate events could include political prosecution of one of the relatives; having lived abroad; relatives residing overseas; foreign connections, possession of forbidden literature, etc.<sup>800</sup> Misconducts of this nature shut off the

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<sup>795</sup> Rossiiskoe kitaevvedenie – ustnaya istoriya, 122.

<sup>796</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 163.

<sup>797</sup> His case was rather lucky because he was only dismissed and not exiled or killed. "Pozvonochnyi' kadr," <https://iznews.org/news/259187> [accessed 09.08.2023].

<sup>798</sup> Ibid.

<sup>799</sup> Alekseev, Berezhkov: *On stoyal za plechom u Stalina*.

<sup>800</sup> Vol'f Sedyh-Chekannikov as quoted in Anatolii Torkunov et al., *Vremia strelki zheleznnye dvizhet... (1946–1951). Govoriat vypuskniki 1951 goda* [Time moves the iron hands... (1946-1951) The graduates of 1951 speak] (Moscow: MGIMO, 1998), 248.

possibility of working on the dissertation or getting a position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: their destiny was less prestigious organizations.<sup>801</sup>

Hence, filling out the questionnaire and passing the checks were often decisive factors in getting a desired trip. Ultimately, given the level of secrecy around many topics related to the “outside world,” not everyone would be trusted with such access, not even when speaking of travel. Every person had to obtain characteristics-recommendations that required approval from the Central Committee of the CPSU. More than ten commissions and instances took part in reviewing and approving the characteristics of those traveling, especially to the capitalist countries, since it would test the ideological strength of the candidate.<sup>802</sup> This multilayered approval system was in place to ensure that only those with unwavering loyalty would represent the Soviet Union abroad and to minimize the risk of defection. Such extensive checks could not be passed by the overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens, even for touristic purposes:

The procedure for foreign business trips boils down to the fact that the Party apparatus (with the participation of the KGB if it is a business trip to a country that is not part of the “socialist commonwealth”) decides on the necessity of such a trip from start to finish. Everyone knows that only the *nomenklatura* workers can easily pass through the numerous filters placed in the way of a potential traveler.<sup>803</sup>

Without meeting all the requirements for correct pedigree, gender, and nationality, Soviet citizens would not be allowed to travel abroad. Yet it could also have the opposite effect: one could be banned from the profession, falling into the category of non-travelers outside the country. Anatoly Kurov, for instance, had great career prospects ahead of him, as he was sent on an assignment to China for *Pravda*. However, his wife fled with a British man from there, and Kurov was fired from *Pravda* with a strict party reprimand, having to work for lesser-known publications.<sup>804</sup> After certain checks or being caught misbehaving abroad, they could fall into the category of *neveyzdnoi* [refused permission to exit], meaning that they

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<sup>801</sup> Ibid.

<sup>802</sup> Traveling to capitalist countries demanded extra checks for reliability of a person, since they could flee and sabotage the USSR. MGIMO: Oriental Faculty, *MGIMO Stories*, 8, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/2019/10/MGIMO-Stories.pdf> [accessed 13.09.2024].

<sup>803</sup> Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*.

<sup>804</sup> Gennadii Krasukhin, “Stezhki-dorozhki” [Stitches-tracks], *Znamya* 9 (2004), <https://znamlit.ru/publication.php?id=2440> [accessed 04.02.2024].

would not be allowed to leave the country.<sup>805</sup> For international journalists, this essentially meant a ban on the profession.<sup>806</sup>

This close monitoring stemmed from the presumption that people wanted to escape and needed to prove otherwise. The defection was tied to embarrassment and an image of a prison country that people needed to escape. Moreover, the deserters could bring very real damage to the country, unveiling its secrets like naming the spies stationed abroad.<sup>807</sup> Other defectors even capitalized on the interest in “the real Soviet Union” – not just on what the state was willing to project to foreign audiences through highly controlled media. Defectors sold their stories through interviews or book-publishing deals that made them significant sums – the daughter of Stalin, who escaped to the West through India in 1967, got a well-paid deal for her memoirs. Yuri Bezmenov/Tomas Schuman, having escaped in 1970, wrote four books about the Soviet indoctrination and principles of the KGB’s work.

In view of such high risks, Soviet citizens needed to be kept on a shorter leash: many could not travel to their assignments with their spouses to ensure they would not escape without their families, and many were allowed to go abroad only for short-term tasks. For journalists specifically, one of the measures for ensuring they stayed loyal to the USSR was not allowing them to stay abroad for too long (usually, under 3 years).<sup>808</sup> Journalists who were not long-timers in the locations of their assignments had a supposedly fresher outlook: they could notice things that an experienced journalist was too used to seeing. Since many of the *mezhdunarodniki* were writing for Soviet audiences, they also needed to keep in touch with

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<sup>805</sup> Naturally, the term cannot be found on the pages of Soviet encyclopedia because of its ideological implications. There are also no articles on the phenomenon, so it is always mentioned in passing in biographies of artists and scientists who were not allowed to leave. The same can be said, for instance, about another prohibitive term, “neprokhodnoi,” about a material that would not get published.

<sup>806</sup> Sergei Nekhamkin, “Puli, krashennye lakom dlya nogtei: 50 let nazad nachalsya Karibskii krizis” [Bullets painted with nail polish: The Caribbean crisis began 50 years ago], *Argumenti.ru*, 10 October, 2012, <https://argumenti.ru/history/n360/207036> [accessed 03.09.2023].

<sup>807</sup> For instance, Yuri Nosenko, an alleged KGB agent, escaped in 1964, which led to the Head of Counterintelligence Lieutenant General Gribanov’s removal, as well as many workers being fired or demoted, and hundreds of employees being recalled from abroad. N. Sidorov, “‘Ya, chelovek stalinskoi epohi, vospitannik komsomola’: molodye gody chekista Yuriya Nosenko, perebezhchika, kotorogo nikto ne ostanovil. 1950–1964” [‘I, a man of the Stalin era, am a pupil of the Komsomol’: the young years of the Chekist Yuri Nosenko, a defector whom no one stopped. 1950–1964], *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-intro/1026716> [accessed 08.02.2023]; Vladimir Malevannii, “CRU pohitilo oficera KGB” [The CIA kidnapped a KGB officer], 06.09.2002 <http://svr.gov.ru/smi/2002/09/nvo20020906.htm> [accessed 11.02.2023].

<sup>808</sup> The period was mostly limited to 3 years on one spot, the type of assignment placement that Ulf Hannerz called “spiralists.” Those spiralists were a middle-ground solution between short-term placements, “parachutists”, and “settlers” or long-timers – journalists spending over five years in one spot. And, while it seems to be a rather repressive method of control, it was also used by the Western media for the very same purposes. Hannerz, *Foreign News*, 83, 85. Overall, under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Soviet citizens were usually assigned to short-term roles in international organizations, with most assignments lasting between two to three years. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviets in International Organizations: Changing Policy toward Developing Countries, 1953-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 279–80.

the home country's interests and tastes. The damaging nature of such practice, however, is undeniable. This approach harmed correspondents' performance: they needed more time to develop personal connections and establish potential sources to do their jobs well. Moreover, newcomers did not have enough time to learn the country truly, so they brought stereotypes from their homelands, and cultural ignorance among international journalists was cemented.<sup>809</sup> They could never become full-on experts, since they were never given a chance to truly adapt and dive deep into local cultures, turning them into perpetual tourists on their assignments.<sup>810</sup> They were searching for the Other, the most exotic and the most “unlike at home” stories, rather than also seeing similarities and overarching stories.<sup>811</sup> Plus, the limited space of a newspaper would not afford to reeducate the home audience either, as there are only so many lines in the short note from one's reportage. Moreover, correspondents had to switch between postings frequently and thus struggled to gain deeper insights into the regions of their assignments. Because of this, they could not see the situation in real time, could not witness longer historical processes unfolding, and, simply put, many did not even have enough time to master the language at the locals' level. Unknowingly, the Soviets seemed to have utilized the strategy of the so-called “parachute journalism” – the approach of sending on assignment a journalist with little knowledge and experience in the area.<sup>812</sup> In the West, those were used for short-term and dangerous assignments like reporting in a warzone.<sup>813</sup> In the USSR, those assignments were meant to test the waters and see whether the candidate was loyal enough to be sent to more serious positions.

As a result of such a practice, their capacity to make the most of their expertise and qualifications, as well as their chances for advancement based on seniority, was greatly reduced. For instance, an American contemporary, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, believed that this policy of only short-term postings showed the Soviet government's disinterest in wholeheartedly participating in international life,<sup>814</sup> but a Soviet representative in Geneva

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<sup>809</sup> Kenneth Starck and Estela Villanueva, “Foreign Correspondents and Cultural Framing,” *Ecquid Novi* 14, no. 1 (1993): 4; Ulf Hannerz, “Foreign Correspondents and the Varieties of Cosmopolitanism,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 306–7.

<sup>810</sup> The same approach was common for American journalists, and a person once specialized in the USSR could be then stationed in Japan, in a vastly different cultural background. Starck and Villanueva, *Foreign correspondents*, 15.

<sup>811</sup> It also appears that was what the audience was craving, too. Landlocked in the USSR, they wanted to hear about something different, something unusual. Neal Ascherson in his foreword to Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other* (London & New York: Verso, 2008), 5–6.

<sup>812</sup> Hannerz, *Foreign News*, 42.

<sup>813</sup> For instance, Hedrick Smith, New York Times correspondent, first reported on the Vietnam War, after which he could work from Washington and Moscow.

<sup>814</sup> Rubinstein, *Soviets in International Organizations*, 280.

defended the use of temporary appointments of Soviet citizens abroad.<sup>815</sup> The official stated that the Soviet government was proactively tackling this problem by preparing competent individuals for extended careers and possibly lengthening their assignments. In reality, the Soviets kept the practice in place. However, there could have been alternative solutions if the editors in central offices had stronger ties to their correspondents abroad.<sup>816</sup> For instance, the editors could dispatch information letters to their reporters to instruct them on specific points of coverage and angles to pursue. This would have greatly advantaged journalists stationed overseas, who spent years far from Moscow. The correspondents themselves felt a lack of instructions, complaining about feeling outmatched by embassy personnel who were generally more informed.<sup>817</sup> The policy of sending qualified cadres back to Moscow also proved costly to the Soviet reputation: despite an acute cadre crisis, even the most trusted staff had to be replaced. The APN Personnel Department utilized a calendar plan for the systematic replacement of overseas employees, trying to ensure a smooth transition and continuity in operations, but did not always have candidates for all the regions.<sup>818</sup>

The Soviet inferiority complex came into direct conflict with other basic aspects of journalistic work: the fear of their own employees affected how news was produced and published. The officials did not let the more knowledgeable locals analyze the results or simply adjust the propaganda: panic about espionage and general mistrust stopped the Soviets from involving foreigners more broadly, which could have improved the quality of translation and the overall targeting of their materials. Publishing Soviet news abroad was an ambitious project that did not want to relinquish full control over the final product – Moscow chiefs wanted most of the process to take place in Moscow, including the writing and translation of the materials. For instance, the magazine in Polish for the Polish readers called ‘Kraj Rad’ had to relocate from Warsaw to the Soviet capital, and its editor-in-chief was pushed to Moscow.<sup>819</sup> Soviet media were reluctant to involve regional news agencies, even though those agencies could translate and tailor Soviet texts for foreign audiences, as they did for major Western news outlets. It was a rather bold approach, since the other agencies relied heavily on

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<sup>815</sup> Ibid, 284–5.

<sup>816</sup> RGANI, f. 72, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1–9. Letter from A. Egorov and V. Kortunov to the Central Committee, January 13, 1964.

<sup>817</sup> Thanks to the crucial roles of ambassadors, their circle received more frequent updates on the Soviet course and viewpoints from the Foreign Ministry. Needless to say, it helped them to stay up-to-date with the latest directives, but left journalists behind.

<sup>818</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 8, l. 297. Remarks on the Selection, Training and Deployment of Foreign Staff of the APN.

<sup>819</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 1, l. 14. Minutes of Meeting No. 1 of the APN Board meeting dated September 5–14, 1961.

local actors for mediation, selection, and translation of news. This method left Soviet propaganda in a no-man's land – neither effectively disseminated through local channels nor adequately written in Moscow for diverse international audiences.

Moreover, establishing certain connections was less desirable than others in the eyes of the state. Normally, journalists knew the value of establishing various contacts and put significant effort into them: the nature of reporting always demanded a wide on-the-ground network and many potential sources. Moreover, once established, they needed to be maintained – every New Year, Zhukov's assistant had to send 500 letters to foreign politicians and other useful contacts with greetings, reminding them of his existence, keeping the connection alive, and receiving the same number of postcards back.<sup>820</sup> Naturally, such contacts and correspondence, established under the guise of international friendship and cooperation, went through the specialized commissions that controlled what was said and done. If those friendships were established thanks to the exchanges of the Union of Journalists, regular correspondence was to be established, although, of course, it had to look as if it was personal.<sup>821</sup> The Soviet writer, Konstantin Fedin, questioned the efficiency of such universal behavior,

Everything is done for the "connection" [...], completely abstract, because when our guests return to their homes, they forget us as people – due to the sameness of our behavior, we merge into one face, and this face eats, drinks, and makes all the same toast, and the guests remember only that they too ate, drank, and made all the same toast, only in their own language. How, after such a ritual, can one become "friends"?<sup>822</sup>

On the other hand, there were many dangers in contacting strangers for Soviet citizens abroad, especially in unfriendly, capitalist countries, and their fears were very real.<sup>823</sup> Valentin Berezhkov vaguely noted that "close contact with foreigners could always turn into trouble. We've learned that well."<sup>824</sup> Building connections for professional purposes could become a double-edged sword: linking up with the wrong person could be compromising and unforgivable. Many journalists, afraid of being seen with such people, lived in rather solitary conditions – they mostly talked to and befriended other Soviet citizens abroad.<sup>825</sup> They rarely

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<sup>820</sup> Zhukov, *Zhurnalisty: rasskazy o soldatah*, 223.

<sup>821</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 1, l. 29. Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Organizing Bureau of the Union of Soviet Journalists dated April 10, 1956. Protocol No. 10 of July 18, 1956.

<sup>822</sup> RGALI, f. 1817, op. 3, d. 17, ll. 10–1; RGALI, f. 1817, op. 3, d. 14, ll. 116–88. as quoted in Nagornaya and Raeva, *Iskusstvo 'sochetat'*, 208.

<sup>823</sup> Mücke, *Korrespondenten im Kalten Krieg*, 36.

<sup>824</sup> Valentin Berezhkov, *Kak ya stal perevodchikom Stalina* [How I became Stalin's translator] (Moscow: DEM, 1993), *militera.lib*, [https://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/berezhkov\\_vm/03.html](https://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/berezhkov_vm/03.html) [accessed 17.03.2025]; Paul Roth, "Die sowjetische Agentur Nowosti (APN): Funktion, Bedeutung, Vorläufer," *Osteuropa* 29, no. 3 (März 1979): 207.

<sup>825</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 33.

showed readiness to participate in discussions with foreigners,<sup>826</sup> usually avoided answering in-depth questions, and their level of engagement did not always satisfy foreign correspondents.<sup>827</sup> Without special directives, they were not supposed to have dealings even with communists in the country of stay, and not to attend their meetings, etc. Famous Soviet director, Georgii Danelia, when traveling abroad, was very wary of the prohibition of talking to any foreigners, “And just in case, I'm not going to the Chinese. Although they were our friends, they were still foreigners. And back then, it was not recommended to visit foreigners.”<sup>828</sup> Hence, every Soviet citizen was supposed to avoid unauthorized contacts, not visit questionable entertainment venues, and, overall, strictly follow the rules of conduct established by the USSR Embassy in this country. They also had to look after each other and travel in groups, so that they could avoid getting in trouble and could help each other if anything happened.<sup>829</sup> Even within the Soviet Union, it was dangerous to make friends with foreigners – such people could have real-life consequences like being overlooked at any opportunity for career promotions, and overall, their political reliability became questioned.<sup>830</sup> Almost ironically, journalists whose professions were based on being abroad and having foreign contacts, were accused of this very thing – having lived abroad and having foreign contacts: “The editor-translator [...] Shkarovskii, born in 1924, a Jew, member of the Komsomol, who lived abroad until 1935. He has wide acquaintances among foreigners living in Moscow. He is a regular at restaurants most often visited by foreigners.”<sup>831</sup> Being seen with undesired connections could be a death blow to one's career.

Such behavioral guidelines were not of help to the journalists. Because of limitations overseas, journalists had restricted opportunities for travel and getting to know the host

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<sup>826</sup> It would be fair to note that the same was true for Americans abroad, as they also had to report back on any contacts with the Soviet citizens. Boris Chekhonin shared that his American neighbor avoided him at all costs despite the stereotype of American openness. Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistska i razvedka*.

<sup>827</sup> This was a general trend from the Stalinist times, as Stalin and his circle avoided foreigners.

<sup>828</sup> Danelia, *Bezbiletnyj passazhir*. Yet, the same was true for foreigners talking to the Soviets or covering “wrong” events. Géraldine Muhlmann, *A Political History of Journalism* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 130.

<sup>829</sup> Adzhubei, *Ya byl zyatem Hrushheva*.

<sup>830</sup> Magnusdottir, *Cold War Correspondents and the Possibilities of Convergence*: 40; R. S. Granin, “Raukas A. Dmitriy Kvasov, zabytyy imenitnyy entsiklopedist i paleolimnologiya [Raukas A. Dmitri Kvasov, the Forgotten Eminent Encyclopaedist, and Palaeolimnology],” *Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum* 7, no. 1 (Tallinn, 2019): 109–20, as quoted in *Sotsial'nye i gumanitarnye nauki. Otechestvennaya i zarubezhnaya literatura* [Social sciences and humanities. Russian and foreign literature], Series 3, *Filosofiya: Referativnyy zhurnal* 2 (2020): 203, *CyberLeninka*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/2020-02-034-raukas-a-dmitriy-kvasov-zabytyy-imenitnyy-entsiklopedist-i-paleolimnologiya-raukas-a-dmitri-kvasov-the-forgotten-emin> [accessed 06.12.2023].

<sup>831</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 122, ll. 175–81. Dokladnaya zapiska Agitpropa CK M.A. Suslovu o kadrah TASS [A Memo from the Agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov about TASS Personnel]. 23.03.1950, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69797> [accessed 05.05.2022].

country.<sup>832</sup> They also limited their journeys to cities near the state capital, impeding their capacity for in-depth reporting on the regions and people they were covering. On top of that, such a lack of communication and exploration limited the opportunities for the journalists to actually learn the language and practice it with the locals.<sup>833</sup> Moreover, establishing contacts with people from different backgrounds could have been beneficial if framed correctly. For instance, Nikolai Khokhlov claimed that it would have been more useful for a foreign correspondent to have contacts not only with those ministers who were of a rather positive opinion about the Soviet Union, but also with those who criticized the state, who were more connected with the West, and with the bourgeois way of life.<sup>834</sup> He insisted that if the conversation was well-argued and respectful, such ties could become useful sources. However, this seemed like a dangerous endeavor for most journalists, who rarely dared to get out of their comfort zone of the communist sympathizers' network.

On the other hand, some journalists did take risks with their contacts on their own initiative. For instance, Adzhubei encouraged *Izvestia's* employees in Japan to treat people with the utmost friendliness, "The doors of your house should be wide open [...]. Don't be stingy with expenses; money is not the key to happiness. The main thing is to spread good word of mouth about the *Izvestia* people."<sup>835</sup> Moreover, some Soviet journalists themselves became the stars and attracted the attention of Westerners. When Vikentii Matveev, the first postwar Soviet correspondent, arrived in London, he became the center of media attention. Three big English newspapers published "decent" materials about his arrival, and one, 'News Chronicle,' made a pun about him and the Soviet anti-religious campaign, as Easter was approaching.<sup>836</sup> Moreover, the 'Daily Mail' invited him to an interview and spun his words to suggest that he loved croquet, when, in fact, he liked lapta, a Russian game. He still accepted all media requests, unlike his colleague "Viktor Mayevsky, who, having arrived in London as a correspondent for *Pravda*, was running from journalists."<sup>837</sup> Matveev's media frenzy was his own invention,

Maybe I was playing with fire. Any journalist who applied for an interview could distort my words. But if you're afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest. An interview with me appeared in the *Star*, quite correct. Recently, my wife and I were waylaid at home by a *Daily Express* photojournalist. This time, they tried to avoid it: why such

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<sup>832</sup> RGANI, f. 72, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1–9. Letter from A. Egorov and V. Kortunov to the Central Committee, January 13, 1964.

<sup>833</sup> Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat' interv'yu*, 228.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>835</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

<sup>836</sup> Vikentii Matveev, *Diaries*, 06.06.1954, [prozhitto.org](http://prozhitto.org), <https://corpus.prozhitto.org/note/669426> [accessed 02.03.2024].

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*

an advertisement? Still, he took a snap of us, and apparently more than once. So far, nothing has appeared in the newspaper. Who knows? Maybe it wasn't the photographer from the Daily Express at all. I did not share such episodes with the embassy, did not consult with them, and there was simply no time for this.<sup>838</sup>

Planned and unplanned contacts were also commonplace for the journalistic delegation of 1955 to the United States – the seven Soviet journalists' trip took thirty-three days across America. The trip was regarded as a top priority, as much foreign coverage was expected to come out of it: the entire itinerary was scheduled by the hour, and the delegation was accompanied by representatives of the American press, the State Department, and the police.<sup>839</sup> They tried to use the press conference on the enemy's soil to the highest degree, present themselves in a friendly manner, and propagate Soviet views and values. They used different media, too, appearing on radio, television, and in the local press – all to maximize the impact of their visit and spread their agenda as far as possible.<sup>840</sup> However, such “unofficial ambassadors” could not be highly effective. While there were preliminary preparations and obligatory briefings, they received final clarity on the program of their stay from Soviet diplomatic officials only upon arrival at their destination, and making adjustments to prepared speeches often required additional efforts, or the speeches made were limited to general phrases.<sup>841</sup> If they felt like their words were distorted, as they did in the case of Time magazine, which published an article with unfriendly comments, the Soviet journalists tried to refute those statements and sent in their letters, although to no avail.<sup>842</sup> Upon their return to their home country, this endless race did not stop for them: they needed to write articles and reports for the Central Committee, and present at events, sharing with the public an ideologically accurate account of foreign affairs.

Sometimes, the Soviets tried to win over people who were not always seen as acceptable by officials. For instance, two high-ranking officials from Agitprop raised concerns about the “fraternization” [brataniye] between Soviet correspondents from TASS, *Izvestia*, and *Pravda*, with the staff of the Russian department at the BBC, Nina Dimitrievich and Anatolii Goldenberg.<sup>843</sup> This behavior was deemed inappropriate, especially given its potential implications for the integrity of Soviet media outlets. TASS London correspondent Belyaev and *Pravda* correspondent Maevsky faced significant criticism, particularly since they had no

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<sup>838</sup> Ibid.

<sup>839</sup> Scherbinina, ‘Uplyvalo semero romantikov,’ 293.

<sup>840</sup> Rósa Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda, 1945–1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 87.

<sup>841</sup> Nagornaya and Raeva, *Iskusstvo “sochetat”*, 205.

<sup>842</sup> Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One*, 87.

<sup>843</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 605, l. 101. A letter to the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU M.A. Suslov, October 25 1953.

official mandate to establish this contact. Their actions were not driven by any “legitimate professional necessity” in the eyes of the Soviet officials. Thus, Belyaev received a formal warning and was strongly advised against further contact with Dimitrievich and Goldenberg. Maevsky faced more severe consequences: he was relieved of his duties as Pravda's London correspondent and recalled to Moscow. This served as a reminder to other journalists abroad to adhere to established protocols when dealing with foreign citizens, including colleagues. On the other hand, the officials could not reprimand more valuable workers specialized in more “exotic” countries as simply. Sometimes, the USSR could not afford the luxury of letting go of a journalist with more unique expertise, as happened to a TASS correspondent, Perevalov, chatting with white émigrés during a press conference in the Netherlands.<sup>844</sup> Given the history of rivalry between the Reds and the Whites in the Civil War, the white emigrants were seen as far from friendly by the Soviets. The Soviet ambassador Kirsanov called for Perevalov's removal, and the highest echelons of propaganda officials, Palgunov and Zhukov, had to step forward to defend the correspondent. Their line of argument concerned not only Perevalov's personal qualities but also the scarcity of journalists in the Netherlands who could replace him, given his rare proficiency in Dutch. Moreover, obtaining an entry visa for a new correspondent was a protracted process. The combination of language expertise and the bureaucratic hurdles made it exceptionally difficult to find a suitable replacement for the slipped-up correspondent, and the defense of Perevalov was not just about protecting him and his job; it was about recognizing the cadre shortage and protecting their organizations, since there was no one else to replace the correspondent, potentially. However, in most cases, mistakes had rather dire consequences.

A misstep at work or in one's career, in general, could ban one from work. Aleksei Adzhubei, closely tied to the Soviet leader by family ties, could only work in the niche press and publish under a pseudonym after Khrushchev's removal. Vladlen Krivosheev, having criticized the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968, was expelled from his post in *Izvestia*, could never work for the press, and became “nevyezdnoi.”<sup>845</sup> Another way of becoming *nevyezdnoi* was through a strained relationship with one's boss or with KGB: after all, they were the deciders of who would get a positive recommendation for an assignment abroad.<sup>846</sup> For instance, a

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<sup>844</sup> Ibid, op. 33, d. 35, l. 46. To the Central Committee of the CPSU, A. Romanov, May 10, 1957.

<sup>845</sup> Kaimakov, Vladlen Krivosheev.

<sup>846</sup> There were opposite examples, as some were shielded from the repercussions of their indecent behavior by their connections. For instance, working abroad, Gennadi Zafesov has met a non-Party-member journalist just once: he was the son-in-law of the head of one of the departments of TASS. Despite his heavy drinking to the point that he had a nickname “Bottle of Rum,” he could still work abroad thanks to his relative. Zafesov, *Posle dvadcati let molchaniya*, 149.

sociologist, Vladimir Shlapentokh, wrote, “I refused contacts with the KGB and had been on their blocklist since 1956. I was firmly *nevyeznoi* despite many invitations from abroad.”<sup>847</sup> The disgraced journalists themselves did not know why they had this undesired status. Yevgenii Primakov was trying to guess why he was not let out of the country anymore, “Perhaps he [Khrushchev – M.Z.] did not like my speech at the party meeting, perhaps there were some other reasons, but for several years after accompanying Khrushchev on his trip to Albania, I was virtually *nevyeznoi*. Even tourist trips were ‘cut off’.”<sup>848</sup>

On the other hand, checks were sometimes rather a formality: many government agencies did not even bother to interview their candidates nor thoroughly screen them, even for foreign postings.<sup>849</sup> Such failure to adequately vet candidates for overseas roles led to several instances of misconduct and poor performance. Officials wrote with regret that, had they engaged more extensively with the candidates, looked into their personal lives, and interacted with family members and colleagues, many of the issues abroad could have been preempted. Especially common were unlucky appointments that were rushed – for instance, when the previous worker was urgently recalled back to Moscow. One such case was the sped-up selection process for the position of head of the APN bureau in the German Democratic Republic,<sup>850</sup> as comrade Morozov was sent to this post, only to be recalled to Moscow shortly thereafter. As the report stated, concerns were raised, given Morozov’s history of alcohol consumption, known even during his work at a regional newspaper.<sup>851</sup> Moreover, the decision to appoint Morozov was met with objections from three colleagues who knew him. They expressed concerns, calling him an “immature worker.” Despite their reservations, he was still recommended for the position. Morozov’s appointment, however, was only a symptom of a larger issue. In GDR, comrade Masich’s performance was evaluated as subpar, while Comrade Tsenin “compromised both himself and the agency’s reputation.”<sup>852</sup> Comrade Kalenchuk’s love for horse racing bets became known when he was already preparing for work in France, where he was still sent to be recalled soon after.<sup>853</sup> Comrade Pilosov’s passion

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<sup>847</sup> Boris Doktorov, “V.E. Shlyapentokh: ‘Tol’ko empiricheskaya sociologiya v SSSR byla arenoi tvorchestva dlya gumanitariyev’” [V.E. Shlyapentokh: ‘Only Empirical Sociology in the USSR Was an Arena of Creativity for Humanitarians’],” *Sovremennaya istoriya rossiyskoy sotsiologii* 2 (2006): 9.

<sup>848</sup> Evgeny Primakov. Memoirs, 1958, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/671711> [accessed 22.09.2023].

<sup>849</sup> Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura*.

<sup>850</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 8, l. 297. Remarks on the Selection, Training and Deployment of Foreign Staff of the APN.

<sup>851</sup> Ibid, l. 291. Minutes of the 18th Joint Meeting of the Board and Party Committee of the APN of March 28, 1964.

<sup>852</sup> Ibid.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid, l. 301. Remarks on the Selection, Training and Deployment of Foreign Staff of the APN.

for alcohol became evident when, just a few days into his trip abroad, he got drunk and got into a brawl on the streets.<sup>854</sup> TASS correspondent Latov regularly drank alcohol and even ran over a Czechoslovak citizen in Prague on a TASS business car.<sup>855</sup> Unsurprisingly, the journalists working abroad felt a sense of relief and freedom, as the control over them was significantly more relaxed than in Moscow. Because of this, many were tempted to test the limits of this freedom, heavily drinking or stealing from the funds.

Such dynamics might be surprising in the Soviet context, given the common perception of the regime as a totalitarian, all-watching entity. Yet the lack of control over correspondents abroad was commonplace, especially in one-person offices created for the sake of the foreign-currency economy. Staying alone in foreign countries, overwhelmed by responsibilities meant for several staffers, many journalists let loose. Far removed from the editorial office, foreign correspondents lived in a realm that could almost be described as “paradise” for a lazy journalist, “Write when you want to, and don't write if you don't want to.”<sup>856</sup> In reality, the editors were often unaware of activity in their distant offices. Numerous communications suggest that foreign correspondents were left to their own devices, oftentimes unable to respond to their supervisors in Moscow. Those journalists were alleged to have “unjustifiable on-site preparation of materials that could have been prepared at a higher level by the Moscow editorial office.”<sup>857</sup> Moreover, upon further examination, some of them had to undergo investigation for their theft from the workplace: a journalist who was assigned to Finland was accused of embezzlement because no one was tracking his spending closely.<sup>858</sup> It was a rather regular practice of journalists’ heavy drinking: “[...] Mitya Bukhanov, who never took a shot in the company of friends, became a drunk at APN.”<sup>859</sup> Thus, such misconduct was just one symptom of the overall crisis. Such unfortunate episodes vividly depicted the risks of expedited appointments. They served as a cautionary tale for checks of skills, experience, and maturity for foreign postings, given that all control over correspondents stopped once they left Soviet territory.

Hence, there was no proper system of control in place for Soviet citizens abroad. The lack of oversight often led to the “unworthy” behavior of Soviet journalists, either overburdened with their tasks or simply feeling a sense of freedom and lawlessness outside the Soviet State.

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<sup>854</sup> Ibid, ll. 301–2.

<sup>855</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 103, l. 20. Central Committee of the CPSU, May 6, 1959, from Chairman of the State Security Committee A. Shelepin.

<sup>856</sup> Sagal, *Dvadcat' pyat' interv'yu*, 265.

<sup>857</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 2, l. 70. APN Protocol, 1962.

<sup>858</sup> Ibid, l. 308. APN Protocol, 1962.

<sup>859</sup> “Nam, durakam, kazalos', chto ottepel'.”

Moreover, the state was well aware of these risks and employed heavy journalist rotation under the guise of preserving a fresh outlook on its region. Yet this approach had significant drawbacks, hindering journalists' ability to become regional experts or learn foreign languages. Such tactics were just one of the ways of controlling the USSR's projected image abroad.

## 5.2. Gated Community of *Mezhdunarodniki*

Despite Lenin's promise of the Revolution to "completely destroy the division of society into classes, and consequently, all social and political inequalities arising from this division,"<sup>860</sup> the new elite formed early on. Already Trotsky remarked that this course betrayed the Revolution: the one-party system and the suppression of political debate had resulted in the emergence of what he referred to as the "Soviet bourgeoisie."<sup>861</sup> The rows of those elite groups were actively expanding in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>862</sup> The primary, if not the only, social lift to achieving the elite status was through Party membership.<sup>863</sup> Being part of the elite meant being part of the *nomenklatura*, a select group of individuals who held key administrative and managerial roles across the political, economic, and military sectors.<sup>864</sup> Creating and systematizing *nomenklatura* was a deliberate practice of group-making,<sup>865</sup> meaning that the Central Committee engaged in organizing the ruling officials into categories and streamlined their careers to sustain the operation of different ministries and organs essential for the state.<sup>866</sup> Notwithstanding the proclamations of a classless society, this new

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<sup>860</sup> Vladimir Lenin, *Proekt programmy rossiiskoi sotsial-demokraticheskoi rabochei partii* [The Draft Program of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party], in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii: v 55 t.* [Complete Works: in 55 vols.], 5th ed. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), vol. 6, January–August 1902, 203–10, <https://shorturl.at/UQulM> [accessed 5.10.2023].

<sup>861</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Predannaya revoliuciya. Chto takoe SSSR i kuda on idet* [A betrayed revolution. What is the USSR and where is it going?], *marxists.org*, <https://www.marxists.org/russkij/trotsky/1936/betrayed/5.html> [accessed 05.08.2023].

<sup>862</sup> More on the establishment of the *nomenklatura* system in earlier decades in T. H. Rigby, "Staffing USSR Incorporated: The Origins of the Nomenklatura System," *Soviet Studies* 40, №4 (1988): 523–37. Yet, it is important to note that *nomenklatura* is still hard to do research on, since the Communist Party did not want those practices of favoritism to be known. Harasymiw, *Nomenklatura*, 493.

<sup>863</sup> Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White, *Sovetskaia elita ot Lenina do Gorbacheva: Tsentral'nyi komitet i ego chleny, 1917–1991 gg.* [Soviet elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: Central Committee and its Members, 1917–1991], ed. Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White (Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaiia entsiklopediya (ROSSPEN); Fond "Prezidentskii tsentr B. N. El'tsina," 2011), 7.

<sup>864</sup> Definition of elite by Kryshchanovskaya and White, *From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Élite*.

<sup>865</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* 14, № 6 (1985): 723.

<sup>866</sup> The term "nomenklatura" means both staffing practices of the Party and the officials inhabiting the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus themselves and the ruling elite. Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura, 1945–1948*.

elite, although different in name and ideology from the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie, effectively functioned similarly, given its influence and control over the society.<sup>867</sup>

At some point, a clear tension emerged between *mezhdunarodniki* from the *nomenklatura* and “regular” journalists. For instance, when discussing the journalist cadres, an employee of the Radio Broadcasting Committee pointed out the following: “There is a so-called blue blood [belaya kost’] in the newspaper, who travels abroad more than others, writes about different countries, about different meetings. But besides them, there are people in the newspaper who do the rough work, who do the day-to-day work.”<sup>868</sup> Evidently, the journalists noticed and did not like such preferential treatment, even at the very top of the hierarchy, such as editors-in-chief of the All-Union newspapers. Hence, Agitprop tried to balance such “injustices” and redistribute traveling opportunities more fairly. They could not help but notice black Volgas, state dachas, and regular trips. The division was so obvious that the officials had to react to it on different levels. For instance, the rejection of sending the editor-in-chief of *Trud*, Boris Burkov, was officially motivated by jealousy of his colleagues, It should be noted that comrade Burkov has traveled abroad nine times in the last five years; he has been to Romania, China, Yugoslavia, France, Norway, Finland, the GDR, and twice to Czechoslovakia. It is unlikely that there is a need to send comrade Burkov abroad again in the near future, especially since the practice of sending the same persons on trips abroad is criticized in journalistic circles.<sup>869</sup>

Despite those limited measures of exhibiting equality, exceptions form a pattern of systematic exclusion and discrimination. The elite was not always, if ever, about inclusion. Establishing elite circles led to exclusion and delineation of who belongs or, rather, does not belong; otherwise, the “elite” part loses its value. The fewer people who have access to limited resources, the larger each person's share in this finite group. So, some categories were automatically excluded, for instance, younger people, since they came “too late” for the division of resources.<sup>870</sup>

For those at the beginning of their careers and of more humble origins, or, even worse, women, the career ladder was starkly different from that of those lucky enough to be born a

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<sup>867</sup> They had the so-called “public consumption funds” or “invisible part of the salary” like their own health care and special, “Kremlin” hospitals, as well as using state property as one’s private property. James C. McClelland, “What Made Stalinism Work?” *History of Education Quarterly* 24, №3 (1984): 453; Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*; Yelena Tvedryukova, “Kampanii po uporyadocheniyu pol’zovaniya sluzhebnyimi avtomobilyami v SSSR (konets 1950h-1980e gg.)” [Campaigns to streamline the use of official vehicles in the USSR (late 1950s-1980s)], *Zhurnal issledovaniy social’noi politiki* 17, №2 (2019): 255. They also had significantly higher chances for their children to be accepted to prestigious institutes, had better tailoring ateliers, canteens, vouchers to sanatoriums, and access to better schools, nurseries, groceries, and general stores. Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd’*.

<sup>868</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 141, l. 53. Transcript of the All-Union Creative Seminar on the Topic a Conversation about the Training of Journalistic Personnel. March 14, 1962.

<sup>869</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 68. Letter to Central Committee of KPSS, 24 January, 1958.

<sup>870</sup> Kryshstanovskaya and White, *From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Élite*, 509.

certain way,<sup>871</sup> almost automatically qualified for the positions to work abroad. For instance, based on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's directives, authorization to travel overseas was almost exclusively granted to married men. Marriage was the supposed anchor that would keep a person on a foreign assignment and returning to the USSR. Even some of the most trustworthy officials and Politburo members were not allowed to bring their wives on foreign trips for fear of them fleeing. It was mostly allowed to the most trustworthy Party elite – people like Khrushchev himself or Adzhubei.<sup>872</sup> The singles were nearly excluded from selection because the KGB believed they were more susceptible to manipulation by foreign intelligence agencies. This vulnerability could be exploited through intimate relationships, commonly involving a mistress or even affairs with married men, which could then be used in blackmail.<sup>873</sup>

Hence, looking at the pool of Soviet foreign journalists, one might notice a significant underrepresentation of female reporters. The supposed genderless journalism was evidently extremely gender-dependent.<sup>874</sup> The profession was considered to be a man's field, and the world of foreign affairs was, in general, heavily dominated by men. While the USSR was trying to portray a picture of a modern state with blooming gender equality, de facto women in higher positions were in a significant minority, as the structure of Soviet society was still patriarchal in nature.<sup>875</sup> The endless contradictions in regards to female workers were an obstacle to reaching higher-up positions, increasing tensions between the declared ideals and the actual levels of desired control.<sup>876</sup> Such work came at high cost for personal life “in what looked suspiciously like a traditional bourgeois family set-up”: men were sent on long-term assignments with their wives who would leave their jobs behind, while the opposite is

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<sup>871</sup> Many found themselves struggling with limited influence, particularly due to their relatively junior status and lack of connections within officials' circles. These professionals were frequently sidelined in discussions concerning their own lives.

<sup>872</sup> Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

<sup>873</sup> GOPAPO, f. 105, op. 23, d.28, l.16. From the decision of the Bureau of the Molotov Regional Committee of the CPSU dated 02/01/1956 ‘On the organization of trips of Soviet tourists abroad’ as quoted in Sergei Shevyrin, “Za granicu! (iz istorii zarubezhnogo turizma v SSSR)” [Abroad! (from the history of foreign tourism in the USSR)], *Perm' State Archive*, <https://www.permgaspi.ru/publikatsii/stati/za-granitsu-iz-istorii-zarubezhnogo-turizma-v-sssr.html> [accessed 15.10.2024].

<sup>874</sup> For instance, there were only 5 female reporters among 75 foreign correspondents with accreditation in Moscow in 1957. Metger, *Studio Moskau*, 39, 120–3; Dominic Boyer, “Gender and the Solvency of Professionalism: Eastern German Journalism before and after 1989,” *East European Politics and Societies* 18, no. 2 (2005): 10.

<sup>875</sup> Oksana Nagornaya, “Zhenshiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii holodnoi voyny: prostranstva mobilizatsii i praktiki souchastiya” [Women in the Structures of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy of the Cold War: Spaces of Mobilization and Practice of Complicity], *Noveyshaya istoriya Rossii* 10, no. 31 (2020): 451–67.

<sup>876</sup> Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5.

unimaginable.<sup>877</sup> Societal norms translated traditional gender roles, which restricted women to domestic work, discouraging their ambitious careers.<sup>878</sup> Many women had to give up on their dreams of being correspondents, switching into the lower positions within news organizations, owing to a struggle to keep up with both their family and their careers, Because of these long hours, it was unusual for women to take on major roles as correspondents, especially when one considers that leading journalists needed to spend time away from Moscow on assignment. [...] Given such constraints, it is little surprise that many women opted for the security and predictability of work in the newspaper's Department of Letters or Department of Corrections to the irregular hours and pressures of life as a top-level journalist.<sup>879</sup>

During the war, the glass ceiling was temporarily removed for women writing on international topics – there simply were not enough men to cover all the bases. Women were only hired under the most strenuous and exceptional circumstances, when no other man could take the job.<sup>880</sup> Lyudmila Chernaya authored around 700 articles for TASS during the wartime years but did not sign them, as it was common practice within the organization. Later, in other news outlets, she could not sign her materials because she was a woman: "...The editor-in-chief of a military newspaper told me to sign my articles with a man's name. Female authors did not suit him."<sup>881</sup> Once the war was over, the glass ceiling was back in place.<sup>882</sup> One of the female classmates of Lev Delyusin, for instance, did not fit the expected criteria despite being good at her nominal job:

V.F. Sorokin's wife, the late T.A. Sutskever, also studied with us. She was a great specialist in language, and she was expected to have a decent future at the institute. But she was Jewish, and besides, she was a woman, and she was not accepted into any Chinese studies institution, including graduate school. As a result, she began teaching Russian at MGIMO. [...] I invited her to work there. And she finally began to use her knowledge of the Chinese language; she reviewed Chinese materials very efficiently.<sup>883</sup>

Overall, several factors contributed to the underrepresentation of women in the field. First, reporting from foreign countries, particularly those involved in conflicts, was regarded as

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<sup>877</sup> There are no known cases when a man would leave their position and go on a foreign assignment with their wife. Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media*, 263–4.

<sup>878</sup> For instance, in 1943, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs issued a resolution to establish what would later become MGIMO, with admission of 200 students 'mainly from among men.' "Istotiya fakul'teta" [History of the Faculty], *mgimo.ru*, [https://mgimo.ru/study/faculty/mo/docs/mo-history/?utm\\_source=google.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=google.com&utm\\_referrer=google.com](https://mgimo.ru/study/faculty/mo/docs/mo-history/?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com) [accessed 14.08.2024].

<sup>879</sup> Huxtable, *News from Moscow*, 11.

<sup>880</sup> Věra Šťovtčková, interviewed by Slava Volný ml. in Slava Volný ml. (ed.), *J sme s Vámi, Bud'te s námi – Vzpomínky redaktorů Československého rozhlasu nejen na srpnové události roku 1968* (Prague: Prostor, 2013), 64 as quoted in Johnston, *Red Tape and Hot Media*, 263.

<sup>881</sup> Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'*.

<sup>882</sup> Natasha Kolchevska, "Angels in the Home and at Work: Russian Women in the Khrushchev Years," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3/4 (Fall–Winter 2005): 115.

<sup>883</sup> Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya, 121.

unsuitable for women.<sup>884</sup> Here, women encountered discrimination unknown to their male counterparts.<sup>885</sup> It was not just the USSR that endorsed the patriarchal structures – other countries’ policies were also male-dominated and did not involve women in foreign affairs. Second, there was a dominant belief that women were emotionally unfit for the job, for instance, because their presence might be a source of distraction for their male colleagues or because they were “unstable” for diplomatic missions.<sup>886</sup> The men themselves were self-admittedly scared of women in foreign-affairs-related positions, as they automatically assumed them to be used by the KGB to gather intel about the male colleagues, “They knew that we, male chauvinists at the *Novosti*, had an ingrained unwritten rule: never get involved with *Novosti* girls, otherwise you would allow the KGB to gather information about you too easily.”<sup>887</sup> Moreover, there was quota enrollment in MGIMO for women entering only those faculties, graduation from which did not imply further work in foreign missions and leading positions in the Foreign Ministry.<sup>888</sup> So, the barriers for women were set from the start, at the point of entering a university.

In instances where women did achieve success, they frequently faced soft bigotry of low expectations: promotions to editorial roles were nearly impossible to attain. Vladimir Pozner, in his memoirs, confirms this tendency: he worked at the Main Editorial Office of Political Publications at APN and claimed that there was only one woman.<sup>889</sup> My interviewee, Beglov, could recall only one case of a woman working in the field, in the 1970s, and it was a single instance in which Ludmila Alexandrova-Agentova, who happened to be unmarried and the progeny of a prominent Party official,<sup>890</sup> became a TASS correspondent in Italy. In my study, I came across Larissa Reissner (early years of *Izvestia*, articles on Germany and

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<sup>884</sup> To be fair, the representation of women “in the West” was also very low. For instance, Stephen Hess mentions that only 16% percent of foreign correspondents were women by the 1970s. Stephen Hess, *International News and Foreign Correspondents*, 16. Ulf Hannez also remarked on the under-representation of women among foreign correspondents and their need to choose between a family and career. Hannerz, *Foreign News*, 93.

<sup>885</sup> By an overwhelming majority, the Soviet elite was male, educated, and had predominantly technical education. Gil Eyal and Eleanor Townsley, “The Social Composition of the Communist Nomenklatura: A Comparison of Russia, Poland, and Hungary,” *Theory and Society* 24, №5 (1995): 732; Kryshnanovskaya and White, *From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Élite*, 511.

<sup>886</sup> Interview with Beglov.

<sup>887</sup> Bezmenov, *Vsemirnaya policiya myslei*, 27.

<sup>888</sup> There was a special quota for female students entering MGIMO. Women represented under 10 percent of students. Sergeev, Yuri Pavlovich Francev (Francov), 270.

<sup>889</sup> Pozner V.V. *stanovitsya zhurnalistom*.

<sup>890</sup> It is still quite hard to find anything about Aleksandrova-Agentova, but it seems that she worked for TASS for decades. For instance, there is information about her being awarded “For services in the field of culture and press, many years of fruitful work” in 1998. “Alexandrova-Agentova Lyudmila Andreevna”, *nagrady.by*, <https://ru.nagrady.by/persona/135315/> [accessed 20.11.2024]. Her father, Andrey Aleksandrov-Agentov, started out as TASS correspondent in Stockholm, then worked as a diplomat at the USSR mission in Sweden. In 1947 he was transferred to Moscow, to the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and worked as an advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Afghanistan), Galina Serebryakova (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* in the 1920s and the 1930s, worked in England, China, France, and Switzerland), Mirova (TASS' correspondent in Spain in the 1930s, got repressed), Natalia Sergeeva (who wrote a book about her trip to Vietnam), Zinaida Mikhaylova (book on Indonesia), Nadezhda Nikolaeva (book on Indonesia), Olga Chechetkina (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Pravda*, published books on India and China), Irina Zorina (a few years for Problems of Peace and Socialism), Raisa Lert (TASS), Lyudmila Chernaya (TASS), and Tatyana Tess (*Izvestia*, wrote a book on American women). Sergeeva and Chechetkina stood out: Sergeeva rose the social ladder and became the editor-in-chief of *Novoe vremya*, and Chechetkina got a *nomenklatura* position at a newspaper.<sup>891</sup> However, it is hard to find much information on these women. While Tess might be the most famous of the group, she was best known for her articles in *Izvestia* rather than for her international coverage.

Thus, the field of foreign reporting has historically relied on networks and relationships dominated by men. This was a formidable obstacle for women in attaining equal access to the opportunities and contacts available to their male colleagues. It was rather common to assign women to cover “soft” news topics, including lifestyle, entertainment, and fashion. In the meantime, it did not mean that women could not occupy high-ranking positions within foreign affairs: the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Contacts (SSOD), another instrument for foreign propaganda, was always led by women (Nina Popova, 1958–1975, Zinaida Kruglova, 1975–1987, and Valentina Tereshkova, 1987–1992), or mentioned above Natalia Sergeeva was the editor-in-chief of *Novoe vremya* from 1956 until 1967. Cultural ties were managed and controlled space for women's activism, especially looking good from the outside, as it created an illusion of equality.<sup>892</sup> Valentina Tereshkova, the first female cosmonaut, or Agniya Barto, a famous female writer, served a certain representative role as cultural diplomats for the foreign spectators.<sup>893</sup> The perception of work

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<sup>891</sup> “...this post was included in the so-called ‘party nomenclature’, that is, the list of important posts which were to be occupied by persons chosen by the Communist Party leadership from amongst the Party’s most competent and trusted members.” Larisa Efimova, *Stalin i Indoneziia: Politika SSSR v otnoshenii Indonezii v 1945–1953 godakh: neizvestnye stranitsy* [Stalin and Indonesia: Soviet Policy towards Indonesia in 1945–1953: Unknown Pages] (Moscow: MGIMO, 2004), 62, <https://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/8f7/8f7d86b67cf5d1186d2621fd8c710c9c.pdf> [accessed 18.08.2024].

<sup>892</sup> Nagornaya, Zhenshchiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii, 451; Christine Varga-Harris, “Between National Tradition and Western Modernization: *Soviet Woman* and Representations of Socialist Gender Equality as a ‘Third Way’ for Developing Countries, 1956–1964,” *Slavic Review* 78, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 758–81.

<sup>893</sup> Ironically, the women found an ally in Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who refused to speak in the US in 1959 unless women could cover the event. Elizabeth Brownstein, “Khrushchev Demands Access for Women Reporters on 1959 Visit to Club,” *The National Press Club*, May 10, 2017, <https://www.press.org/newsroom/khrushchev-demands-access-women-reporters-1959-visit-club> [accessed 21.10.2024].

in foreign journalism, however, was that it demanded physical strength, which led to a limited representation of women in this profession. Most often, female participation in foreign affairs was limited to a spot in cultural relations.

Aside from gender, another significant form of segregation in the journalistic field was by nationality: not all men were guaranteed high positions, either. The early Soviet policies supported local national identities, introduced ethnic quotas for employment, and overall supported regional intellectuals through the so-called affirmative action.<sup>894</sup> To get a promotion in a national republic, one ought to be a representative of a local ethnicity and have a better chance of being noticed in that locality. The situation changed later, as right after the victory, Stalin made a speech in the Kremlin in honor of Red Army commanders,

I would like to raise a toast to the health of our Soviet people and, above all, the Russian people. [Rousing, prolonged applause, shouts of “hurrah.”] I drink, first of all, to the health of the Russian people because they are the most outstanding nation of all the nations that make up the Soviet Union. I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people because they have earned in this war general recognition as the leading force of the Soviet Union among all the peoples of our country.<sup>895</sup>

The Russians were seen as the main nation and the main backbone of the USSR, and any other nationals had to “deserve” their places next to Russians, “Through Stalin's mouth, the Russian people were directly placed above other nations, other peoples of our country. This is accompanied by the development of chauvinism towards non-Russian peoples.”<sup>896</sup> There was a decreasing chance of representatives of the non-title (meaning, non-Russian) nations getting to the top in Moscow. For instance, out of 1470 MGIMO students in 1949, only 199 (circa 13%) were not of Russian origin.<sup>897</sup> Bona fide, the system was intended to create equal opportunities, yet it was far from reality. Karen Brutents, having worked for international press and the International Department of the Central Committee, knew that thanks to his “non-aryan” origin, promotion would be much more difficult to get, especially in the

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<sup>894</sup> See: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

<sup>895</sup> Joseph Stalin, *Works*, vol. 15: 1941–1945 (Stanford, 1967), 203–4, as quoted in *Stanford University Libraries*, [https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument\\_ru&dokument=0028\\_toa&object=translation&l=ru](https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_ru&dokument=0028_toa&object=translation&l=ru) [accessed 05.08.2023].

<sup>896</sup> Georgii Levinson, *Memoirs*, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/778094> [accessed 29.11.2023]. More on this in: Michael G. Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917–1953* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), 164; Aneta Pavlenko, “Russian as a Lingua Franca,” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 26 (2006): 78–99.

<sup>897</sup> The breakdown went as follows: “Among the best represented, one finds Armenians (49 students), Ukrainians (47 students), Georgians (19 students), Byelorussians (19 students), Jews (17 students), and Mongolians (14 students).” “Spravka o studencheskom sostave Moskovskogo Gosudarstvennogo Instituta Mezhdunarodnyh Otnošenii MID SSSR,” [Report about the MGIMO student body] 18/03/1949, MGIMO Museum, as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 94. More on chauvinism’s role in higher education in the USSR: Tromly, *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia*, 79–101.

international direction.<sup>898</sup> Here, by “non-aryan” he meant not just Russian, but also Ukrainian and Belarusian cadres that had much higher chances to be seen and rewarded, unlike him, an Armenian functionary in Moscow.<sup>899</sup> Sergei Kulik (Kyiv), Yuri Zhukov (modern Dnipro region), Valentin Berezhkov (Kyiv), Leonid Cherkasskii (Kharkiv), Aleksei Rumyantsev (Kharkiv), Sergei Borzenko (Kharkiv), Genrikh Borovik (Minsk), among others, all reached higher positions thanks to their origin in the “right” regions of the country.<sup>900</sup> However, it is rather hard to define the chauvinism of the Soviet cadre policies,

Yes, everything that the *nomenklatura* class agrees to call “Russian” is an object of special glory, since the bulk of this class consists of Russians. But Cuban, Mongolian, and Angolan things have been praised with almost the same reverential glee as “Russian”. Socialist internationalism, then? No, Chinese, Albanian, or Yugoslavian were not praised at all. *Nomenklatura* chauvinism is precisely great-power chauvinism: it draws a hard line, above all, between what is subordinate to the Soviet power and what is free from its power, and not between real socialism and other social structures.<sup>901</sup>

It did not mean the absolute exclusion of cadres outside of the RSFSR, UkrSSR, or BSSR. Igor Golembiovskii and Melor Sturua came from Tbilisi but rose through the *nomenklatura* at *Izvestia*. Although people with “non-Slavic” names had slimmer chances, they still could get noticed on the very top: Karen Karagezyan, Ashraf Akhmedzyanov, or Valid Atamali utilized their identities by choosing the regions where they would “fit” more, usually, something to do with the “East”, not as prestigious as the USA, but still a niche they could occupy.

A successful career was also unthinkable without mastering “the main” imperial language of the state, and speaking and writing Russian were key to upward mobility. While there was a proclaimed slogan of promoting local national identities (languages included), Russian was an essential stepping stone for “making it,” as writing in republican languages had only limited career prospects in the republics, e.g., being promoted within a republic but not in Moscow. Around 10 million “non-Russians” converted into Russians between 1926 and 1939.<sup>902</sup> Among the journalists, there were many “non-Russians,” as long as they supported and worked for the sake of socialism, but it did not mean the absence of discrimination. During the war, for instance, Enver Mamedov was summoned to Moscow to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was only 20 years old, and he had not graduated from a higher education institution (it would have taken him 5 years) or had not studied at the Higher

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<sup>898</sup> Karen Brutents, *Memoirs*, 1963, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/687956> [accessed 10.04.2023].

<sup>899</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>900</sup> The national composition of Soviet *nomenklatura* proves the point: “Russians represented 66.7 %, Ukrainians – 11.3 %, Jews – 5.4 %.” Lewin, *Rebuilding the Soviet Nomenklatura, 1945–1948*.

<sup>901</sup> Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*.

<sup>902</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 312.

Diplomatic School (2–3 years), becoming the youngest diplomat.<sup>903</sup> Yet, despite the shortage of cadres with foreign languages being so noticeable, Molotov, then-minister of foreign affairs, objected to sending “some Tatar” to a responsible job in Italy.<sup>904</sup> Needless to say, Enver Mamedov was not Tatar but Azerbaijani, yet he had to use several Russian-sounding pseudonyms for his materials: Ivanov (his mom’s maiden name) and Dobrov.<sup>905</sup>

Following this, the question of one’s identity based on surname was always an issue. For instance, the questionnaires were not trusted, as Ivan Maiskii, an ambassador to London for a decade, was being hunted under a pure suspicion of his “non-Russian” origin, as his family members were all looked into to find out his “real” nationality: “All of these relatives of Maisky are Russians according to their personal data. However, people who know them personally from their work together and in everyday life, based on external signs, believe that they are Jews by nationality.”<sup>906</sup> Many nationalities were under automatic suspicion and a watch list: Poles, Germans, Latvians, Finns, Chechens, Tatars, etc. – all exhibited a threat in the eyes of Stalin. Such “political racism” was commonplace before and after the war.<sup>907</sup> Overall, people with foreign surnames, or even worse, foreigners, were also found suspicious and not particularly trustworthy, as they could have easily been tied to foreign espionage and would have tried to sabotage the alleged successes of the Soviet State,

Alfred Steckley, the son of Swiss natives, studied with me at Moscow University. During the war, Alfred was not drafted into the army because of his suspicious origin. And in 1948, when he was finishing his post-graduate studies as a Slavic historian, he was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to 25 years in prison by the MGB [Ministry of State Security – M.Z.]; his dissertation was burned. Eight years later, after the 20th Party Congress, he was released. But it was too late and too hard for him to enter a new graduate program and restart his dissertation. Life turned out to be fractured only because of a foreign name.<sup>908</sup>

The worst non-Russian nationality, in the view of Soviet chauvinism, was being a Jew, and the USSR led its ruthless discriminatory policies against Jewish citizens,<sup>909</sup> openly as in the

<sup>903</sup> “Ya ne sovershal bol'shih podvigov” [I haven't done any great feats], [http://broadcasting.ru/articles2/Litsa/ya\\_ne\\_sovershal\\_podvig](http://broadcasting.ru/articles2/Litsa/ya_ne_sovershal_podvig) [accessed 05.06.2023].

<sup>904</sup> Ibid.

<sup>905</sup> “Mamedov Enver Nazimovich - pervyj zamestitel' predsedatelya Goskomiteta SSSR po televideniyu i radio, diplomat i zhurnalist” [Enver Mamedov, First Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio, diplomat and journalist], *ourbaku.com*, <https://tinyurl.com/yp6wj795> [accessed 28.07.2023].

<sup>906</sup> RGASPI, f. 589, op. 3, d. 15978, vol. 1, ll. 61–6. Reference of the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On Maysky I.M., 11.12.1943, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/1026323> [accessed 04.12.2022].

<sup>907</sup> Tamas Kende, *Class War or Race War: The Inner Fronts of Soviet Society During and After the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2023), 4–5.

<sup>908</sup> Voslenskii, Nomenklatura.

<sup>909</sup> More on legal anti-semitic measures in: Leonid Garbuzov, “A Struggle to Preserve Ethnic Identity: The Suppression of Jewish Culture by the Soviet Union’s Emigration Policy between 1945–1985,” *International Law Journal* 23, no. 11: 159–77, <https://www.bu.edu/law/journals-archive/international/volume23n1/documents/159-176.pdf> [accessed 13.09.2024]; Tromly, Making the Soviet Intelligentsia, 84–92.

Stalinist times or more covertly during the later period. With the excuse of the so-called “anti-cosmopolitan” campaign of 1948-1953, many representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia were repressed under the guise of being pro-Western. Formally, the campaign was directed at anyone “fawning” over the West, and there was no policy of anti-Semitism, but there were significant restrictions for Jewish citizens on admission to universities, security forces, the Foreign Ministry, or the highest Party apparatus.<sup>910</sup> The campaign soon turned out to be directed predominantly against people of Jewish nationality, who became the main “cosmopolitans.”<sup>911</sup> State antisemitism was first hidden under the label of fight against Trotskyism, then with the “rootless cosmopolitans” [bezrodnye kosmopolity], and then – with Zionists.<sup>912</sup> Among the reasons for that were fears of Jewish sympathies for Israel (and, by extension, the West), as well as a general suspicion of intellectuals of Jewish origin. Already during the war, Georgii Aleksandrov, the head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department, criticized the magazine “Znamya” for having many non-Russian authors, especially Jews.<sup>913</sup> The postwar period was marked by hysterical outcry about Jews in high positions in the Soviet press:

Are Russian writers and journalists all so stupid that it is impossible to find magazine heads among them? Why do the Jews run the magazine? And they manage in such a way that in every issue of the magazine, most of the authors are Jews. [...] In all publishing houses, if not in the main [positions – M.Z.], then in fact in the first roles are Jews. In the Union of Writers, they are in charge, in the “Literaturnaya Gazeta” [Literary newspaper – M.Z.] – they are in charge, in the publishing house “Soviet Writer” – the chief editor is a Jew, in “Moskovsky Rabochiy” – a Jew, in “Molodaya Gvardiya” – a Jew. There is no escape from them!<sup>914</sup>

The very head of TASS in the first wartime years, Yakov Khavinson, fell one of the first victims of the antisemitic campaign. Khavinson was removed from his position as general director of TASS in 1943. The formal pretext for his removal was insufficient knowledge of foreign languages. Afterward, he was appointed as a columnist for *Pravda*, where he signed his articles on international topics as “Marinin,” “There was no place for Jewish surnames in

<sup>910</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>911</sup> S. A. Kuskova, “Kampaniya po ‘bor’be s kosmopolitizmom’ v gazete ‘Pravda’ (1945–1949 gg.) [Campaign to ‘Combat Cosmopolitanism’ in the Newspaper Pravda],” *Istoriya otechestvennykh SMI: Ezhegodnik* 2016, no. 1, vol. 1 (Moscow: Faculty of Journalism of Moscow State University, 2016): 61, <https://www.journ.msu.ru/upload/iblock/b91/b91bf076035dcca12bfd01ad49991c55.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2023].

<sup>912</sup> Voslenskii, Nomenklatura.

<sup>913</sup> Leonid Timofeev, 9.10.1942, Diary, *prozhito.org*, <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/40814> [accessed 23.12.2024]. However, not all Jewish citizens and authors were dismissed. Some survived, unscathed, like Ilya Ehrenburg. Anatoly Pinsky, *The Individual after Stalin: Fedor Abramov, Russian Intellectuals, and the Revitalization of Soviet Socialism, 1953–1962* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2011), 43.

<sup>914</sup> RGASPI, f. 77, op. 4, d. 73, ll. 7–11. Letter from L. Kraskova to A.A. Zhdanov ‘Against the dominance of Jews in the press’ as quoted in: *Stalin i kosmopolitizm, 1945–1953: Dokumenty* [Stalin and Cosmopolitanism, 1945–1953: Documents], edited by D. Nadzhafov (Moscow: Materik Publishing House, 2005), 185–6, [https://imwerden.de/pdf/stalin\\_i\\_kosmopolitizm\\_1945-1953\\_dokumenty\\_2005\\_ocr.pdf](https://imwerden.de/pdf/stalin_i_kosmopolitizm_1945-1953_dokumenty_2005_ocr.pdf) [accessed 17.09.2022].

*Pravda*, the central organ of the Communist Party of the USSR.”<sup>915</sup> The same went for the other Jewish workers of the press, with the Sovinformburo’s chief, Solomon Lozovsky, accused of having too many Jews in his organization in 1946,

Among the editors of various sections were many people who were unqualified both professionally and politically to work as editors dealing with the foreign press. There were a lot of, I suppose one could call them, ne'er-do-wells, who found a home at the Sovinformburo, and there were a lot of Jews. This stood out right away. The writing staff was overrun with them.<sup>916</sup>

The investigation of the Sovinformburo focused heavily on the Jewish presence in the organization, including its international branches. For instance, some were hired as English translators in England or as English-language typists in America, all employed by Lozovsky.<sup>917</sup> Lozovsky never denied hiring them, explaining that the materials needed to be translated into excellent English: “When a newspaper editorial office abroad receives an article in bad English or French, it goes right into the wastepaper basket.”<sup>918</sup> He just wanted to do his job the best he could by hiring people who had lived abroad, “But we needed people who knew foreign languages perfectly, and so I hired people who fit this criterion, even though their pasts were not altogether pure.”<sup>919</sup> Their background was not “pure” biographically, as they lacked a desired nationality and were therefore automatically suspected of illicit foreign ties. Khrushchev, in his memoirs, confirmed that there were many Jewish employees within Sovinformburo, but it was the intent, “Since the circles of the Jewish nation are very influential there [in the US - M.Z.], we also had quite a few Jews in the Sovinformburo who held a high position in the country.”<sup>920</sup> According to the Soviet leader, the organization was “useful and necessary” and made a big contribution to the victory.<sup>921</sup> Yet, Lozovsky was punished for doing his job well, as he himself sarcastically noted, “It’s like some kind of fairy tale – there was no Central Committee, no government, just Lozovsky and a couple of Jews who did everything. It’s astonishing.”<sup>922</sup> His frustration was noticeable throughout the whole investigation, with phrases like,

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<sup>915</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd’.

<sup>916</sup> Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir P. Naumov, eds., *Stalin's Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*, trans. Laura Esther Wolfson, *Annals of Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 114.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid.

<sup>918</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>919</sup> Ibid.

<sup>920</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, *Vremya. Lyudi. Vlast': Vospominaniya* [Time. People. Power: Memories] (Moscow: Informacionno-izdatel'skaya kompaniya ‘Moskovskie Novosti’, 1999), <https://rodon.org/hns/vlv/3.htm> [accessed 07.08.2024].

<sup>921</sup> Ibid.

<sup>922</sup> Rubenstein and Naumov, eds., *Stalin's Secret Pogrom*, 226.

During my time at the Sovinformburo, I met with I don't know how many hundreds of journalists. Chinese, French, Japanese, American, British, and others all came to see me, but the instant that American Jews arrived, I 'slipped up.' It's enough to make a hen burst out laughing. In addition, when Novick arrived, I no longer had anything to do with the committee. And who gave forty thousand for his reception? Suslov [Mikhail Suslov was at that point the chief of the Agitprop – M.Z.]. So is he a Jewish nationalist, too? That's hard to imagine.<sup>923</sup>

When it came to other news organizations, there were claims that Palgunov tried to protect his TASS employees from the antisemitic campaign ("I know that no one or almost no one was hurt."<sup>924</sup>) In fact, around 60 Jewish workers were dismissed, exiled, and imprisoned. The 1950 "Report of the Agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov on TASS Personnel" detailed many cases of "unreliable" TASS employees, all with Jewish surnames: Teitelbaum, Gurevich, Kanter, Shkarovskii, Lyubarskii, Yakobson.<sup>925</sup> Other news outlets did not go unscathed either: 40 Jews were dismissed from the editorial board of the newspaper *Trud*. Just one and a half years before, up to 50% of the newspaper's editorial staff were of Jewish nationality, but only about 20% of employees were Jewish after the "cleansing." Interestingly, even the Soviet-Jewish journalists themselves were intentionally oblivious (or at the very least downplaying) to Jewish identity and history, for instance, completely overlooking the background of Anne Frank in the case of Boris Izakov's writings<sup>926</sup> or *Pravda's* David Zaslavskii using an anti-Semitic slur regarding Israeli diplomats.<sup>927</sup>

The systematic persecutions could be carried out thanks to the so-called "5th paragraph" [pyataya grafa], a line in Soviet documents about one's nationality. Many Jewish people were discriminated against based on this line, or, as Yevgenii Kudryats jokingly put it, "invalids of the 5th group."<sup>928</sup> For the "fifth paragraph," Lyudmila Chernaya and Raisa Lert were dismissed from the work at the Foreign Broadcasting Department, and Boris Izakov was left practically abandoned despite his extensive input in Soviet international journalism. Mark Vilensky, having graduated from MGIMO, was not allowed to get a diplomatic spot,<sup>929</sup> while Genrikh Borovik and Valentin Zorin faced limited career opportunities because of their

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<sup>923</sup> Ibid, 270.

<sup>924</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd'.

<sup>925</sup> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 122, ll. 175–81. Dokladnaya zapiska Agitpropa CK M.A. Suslovu o kadrah TASS [A Memo from the Agitprop of the Central Committee to M.A. Suslov about TASS Personnel]. 23.03.1950, *Arhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*, <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69797> [accessed 05.05.2022].

<sup>926</sup> Gennady Estraiikh, *Jews in the Soviet Union: A History: After Stalin* (New York: New York University Press, 2022), 235.

<sup>927</sup> David Zaslavskii, "Diplomat s ulitsy Lilienblum," as described in Estraiikh, *Jews in the Soviet Union*, 289.

<sup>928</sup> Evgenii Kudryats, "Invalidy pyatoi gruppy" [Disabled of the Fifth Group], *Samizdat*, [https://zhurnal.lib.ru/k/kudrjac\\_e\\_w/behiderte.shtml](https://zhurnal.lib.ru/k/kudrjac_e_w/behiderte.shtml) [accessed 18.08.2022].

<sup>929</sup> "Vilenskii Mark Ezrovich", *rilut.me*, <https://www.rilit.me/authors/vilenskij-mark-ezrovich> [accessed 19.08.2022].

origin.<sup>930</sup> Mikhail Voslenskii, a non-Jew, recalled how thoroughly he was checked under suspicion of being one, “When in the spring of 1944 we – graduates of Moscow State University – were assigned to work and there was a question of taking me for service in the Kremlin or enrolling me in the Higher Diplomatic School, the *nomenklatura* personnel officers meticulously questioned: was I not a Jew? Are there no Jewish relatives?”<sup>931</sup> After some inquiries, the interviewer made sure that it was a “priest surname” in its origin, and “priests were never Jews.”<sup>932</sup> The same went for Yevgeny Primakov, as people spread the rumors that his real surname was Kirshenblat.<sup>933</sup>

Soviet leaders claimed that the proportion of Jews engaged in mental labor was much higher than their proportion in the population.<sup>934</sup> Jews were limited in their rights, for instance, to a doctoral title, a popular trend among *nomenklatura* workers at that time.<sup>935</sup> So, Raisa Lert, former *mezhdunarodnitsa*,<sup>936</sup> attempted to defend her dissertation in the 1950s, “The Academic Council unanimously praised this dissertation, but in a secret ballot, it was just as unanimously slaughtered. [...] As I was later told, because the Party Committee called for a boycott of the Jewess Raya...”<sup>937</sup> In the later Soviet years, there were decreasing numbers of Jews in *nomenklatura*: there were few of them in the Central Committee, Secretariat, or Politburo. The scientific community did not regard them highly. However, the two fields that were still “acceptable” were music and journalism, although to a limited extent.<sup>938</sup>

As time progressed, the anti-cosmopolitan campaign’s consequences remained. Still, the tides were turning for people who had been aggressively attacking their Jewish colleagues in the earlier years;<sup>939</sup> now, after Stalin’s death, they were the ones to be pressured for explanations. Some Jewish authors were restored to their positions, and *Pravda* workers Belyaev and Yerokhin, who attacked their Jewish colleagues in the late 1940s, were publicly shamed by the newspaper’s collective.<sup>940</sup> Within journalistic organizations, the levels of antisemitism

<sup>930</sup> Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents*, 43.

<sup>931</sup> Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>933</sup> Evgeny Primakov. *Memoirs*, 1958, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/671711> [accessed 22.09.2023].

<sup>934</sup> For instance, in the early 1960s, a number of so-called “economic trials” took place, the victims of which were mostly Jews.

<sup>935</sup> Delyusin confirmed that the postwar order has “cut Jews off from science to a certain extent.” *Rossiiskoe kitaevedenie – ustnaya istoriya*, 121.

<sup>936</sup> Raisa Lert has been publishing since the late 1920s (*Pravda*, *Rabochaya Moskva*, etc.), from 1941 worked in the editorial office of TASS counter-propaganda. She was fired in 1949 during the campaign against cosmopolitanism. Chernaya, *Kosoi dozhd'*.

<sup>937</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>938</sup> Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura*.

<sup>939</sup> Nina Pokrovskaya, *Diaries*, 17.01.1953, [prozhito.org](http://prozhito.org), <https://corpus.prozhito.org/note/320759> [accessed 18.03.2023].

<sup>940</sup> *Ibid.*

also depended on the particular chiefs. Natalia Sergeeva, for instance, rose to a high position on the hierarchical ladder and became an editor-in-chief, and she “had many Jews working for her: Lev Sheidin, Lev Bezymensky, and Lev Rovinsky. And there were even more Jews in the foreign editorial offices of the magazine, for which Sergeeva was also responsible with her head...”<sup>941</sup> On the other hand, as Ivan Drozdov wrote in his book, “At that time, in the late fifties, I joined *Izvestia*, which, as a veteran journalist told me, had been “pretty cleansed out” of Jews. Yes, cleansed out, but these people were still in many of the most important positions, and their influence was almost decisive.”<sup>942</sup> Both older and younger generations of newspaper journalists were antisemitic, and even a decade later from the “anti cosmopolitan” campaign, the damage was still visible, and central newspapers were noticeably “cleansed”.<sup>943</sup>

In the face of such a hunt based on names and the fifth paragraph, many Soviet Jews tried to conceal their identities. For some journalists, this meant adopting pseudonyms to “cover” their Jewish names in an attempt to avoid unnecessary attention. Isaak Erukhimovich transforming into Isaak Ermashev and Moishe Novomisskii into M. Ol’gin exemplifies the lengths to which they went to protect themselves from anti-Semitic prejudices. Daniil Yefimovich Melamid signed his works as D.E. or D. Melnikov “because the Jewish surname Melamid hurt the ears of his superiors,”<sup>944</sup> and Lazar’ Brontman became L. Ognev. While it is true that many journalists of that era (and especially earlier times) often operated under multiple aliases, most of them did it as old Bolsheviks for conspiracy purposes. They frequently engaged in illegal activities, which included crossing borders with fake documents and participating in various covert operations. Rolland Jacques Claude Abbiate, also known by numerous other names, including Francois Rossi, Dr. Benoit, Georges Quinn, Roland Smith, Pilot, and, finally, Vladimir Pravdin, has probably broken all the records for both

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<sup>941</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd’.

<sup>942</sup> Ivan Drozdov, *Poslednii Ivan* [The Last Ivan] (Saint Petersburg: LIO Redaktor, 1998), 25.

<sup>943</sup> The book was published in the late 1990s and clearly shows antisemitism of Ivan Drozdov, even 40 years later.

<sup>944</sup> Chernaya, Kosoi dozhd’.

conspiracy work and the number of names.<sup>945</sup> In the case of Jewish authors, they needed to hide their origins because of the inherent anti-semitic policies at that time.

Thus, the exclusion of journalists based on gender and nationality created significant barriers to their professional development. Women and members of national minorities often found it difficult to enter the media field, despite their professional qualifications. Many of them were hired for these positions at the country's lowest point – immediately after the multiple waves of repression and the following outbreak of the war, when a rapid search for anyone who could fill in the positions took place. However, after the war, with the return to a more stable situation, many of these journalists were once again excluded from the profession. Political and social changes and prejudice against certain groups of people forced these professionals to seek other, “more acceptable” career paths, often leaving them unable to continue working in their field. This exclusion was a clear sign that those hired out of emergency were never on an equal footing with other colleagues. Thus, the USSR was trying to be very careful about its foreign postings and filter out the people who could be damaging to its mission based on their identity. Despite such measures, the failures still occurred.

Aside from the aggressive forms of intentional exclusion, the Soviet policies focused on strategic inclusion whenever it was beneficial for the state. Identity politics spread into foreign affairs, and a form of it in Soviet journalism was the delegation. Those did not require employees to stay abroad for extended periods, yet the choice of delegations was always strategic. Sometimes, the candidates for foreign trips were picked by Soviet ambassadors as experts in the local tastes and demands.<sup>946</sup> Naturally, the most prominent and well-known journalists had to be included. Then, some proteges and promising journalists could be included to see them in action and to introduce them to the world. However, the politics of representation and constructed diversity had to come into play. Planning for bigger and even smaller delegations always strove to represent a wide range within Soviet journalism. The artificial diversity-making went as follows: the delegations ought to include women and

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<sup>945</sup> Abbiat's/Pravdin's career was one for the books. For example, in 1937, he was responsible for the assassination of a defector named Ignace Reusz. From 1941, he served as an employee of the TASS New York bureau, where he eventually rose to the position of bureau chief from 1944 to 1946. There, he recruited more people for journalism/espionage, as evidenced by many now-published reports. “Samuel Krafzur Papers,” *New York University Libraries*, [https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/tamwag/alba\\_267/](https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/tamwag/alba_267/) [accessed 05.11.2023], “Venona: 6 May 1944 – Joseph Katz,” *National Security Agency*, [https://www.nsa.gov/portals/75/documents/news-features/declassified-documents/venona/dated/1944/6may\\_katz.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/portals/75/documents/news-features/declassified-documents/venona/dated/1944/6may_katz.pdf) [accessed 05.11.2023]; “Insidious Spies or Valiant Scouts? Joseph Katz,” *Topwar.ru*, <https://en.topwar.ru/144686-kovarnye-shpiony-ili-doblestnye-razvedchiki-dzhozef-kac.html> [accessed 05.11.2023]; “Olga Borisovna Pravdina (alias “Margaret”) and Vladimir Sergeevich Pravdin (alias “Roland”)”, *UK National Archives*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/record?catid=8569764&catIn=6> [accessed 05.11.2023].

<sup>946</sup> Nagornaya and Raeva, *Iskusstvo ‘sochetat’*.

representatives of non-Moscow media. Some of this strategizing happened without mentioning any concrete names, just the localities or groups that needed to be represented. For instance, when planning the delegation for the International meeting of journalists in Helsinki, the Organizational Bureau initially wanted to include prominent Soviet journalists such as Daniil Kraminov, Konstantin Simonov, and Boris Burkov, as well as lesser-known female correspondent Shul'gina or Ukrainian editor-in-chief Sidorenko. In reality, the first to be appointed (and the head of delegation) was Nikolai Palgunov, the head of TASS and the Chairman of the Organizing Bureau of the Union of Soviet Journalists.<sup>947</sup> Then, Palgunov pointed out the need for incorporation of the republican press: "It is obvious that the delegation should represent the Soviet press to the fullest extent possible; therefore, not only representatives of the center press organs but also representatives of the press of our Union republics should be recommended for membership."<sup>948</sup> There were supposed to be unnamed representatives from Belarus, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and two representatives from different regions of the Russian Federation: one from the Leningrad region and one from some other region. According to the discussants, it was advisable to include a representative of a grass-roots multi-circulation newspaper, for instance, from the newspaper of the Moscow automobile plant ZIS or the newspaper of the plant Serp and Molot – "Martenovka". This way, the entire cohort of Soviet journalists was on display – creating an image of a progressive, non-discriminatory state, with journalists of different genders and from different regions. Then, another composition was proposed,<sup>949</sup> including Palgunov, Kraminov, Simonov, Sofronov, Kurtynin, Burkov (all from the central news outlets), Sidorenko (Ukrainian SSR), Ivanova (female), Zimanas (Lithuanian SSR), Pizans (Latvian SSR), Zdorovenin (Belarusian SSR), Vezirov (Azerbaijani SSR), Rakhimov (Uzbek SSR), and Pronin (Deputy General Secretary of the International Organization of Journalists). In addition, one editor of a regional rural newspaper and one editor of a factory newspaper had to be included in the delegation from the Russian Soviet Republic.

Furthermore, Palgunov proposed another delegation to Berlin for 2 weeks: this contingent had a narrower range, although a republican newspaper journalist and a woman were still included.

On the other hand, the delegation had to be picked out extra carefully – Berlin in 1959 was the scene of many arguments, and only the most prepared propagandists could respond

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<sup>947</sup> GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 1, l. 29. Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Organizing Bureau of the Union of Soviet Journalists dated April 10, 1956.

<sup>948</sup> Ibid.

<sup>949</sup> Ibid.

properly to anticipated provocations and media attacks. Pavel Naumov was the editor of the newspaper *Pravda* in socialist countries and had to become the leader of the group.<sup>950</sup> Then, the group was comprised of Nikolai Bykov, an essayist for *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Nikolai Puzikov, editor of *Minskaya Pravda*, Mikhail Rossovsky, editor of *Trud* (Propaganda Department), Zinaida Smirnova, editor of the magazine *Soviet Woman* (in German), special correspondent of the newspaper *Pravda* of Ukraine, Melor Sturua, *mezhdunarodnik* of the *Izvestia*, and Vasilii Sokolov, a special correspondent of *Krasnaya Zvezda*.<sup>951</sup>

The Soviet editors were also welcoming an opportunity to utilize the power of authors' identities as a propaganda tool in its own right. Amidst the anti-Jewish persecution within the USSR, the Soviet state deployed a Jewish freelance journalist, Solomon Rabinovich, who spent years in the Gulag and then worked for Sobinfomburo. Later, his identity was exploited to challenge rumors of antisemitic Soviet policies, although he was not even on a permanent roster of the organization. In just one year, he submitted eighteen articles to the American-Jewish press, including 'Morgen Freiheit,' New York magazine.<sup>952</sup> Through his articles, Rabinovich painted a picture of the supposed equality enjoyed by Soviet Jewry,<sup>953</sup> as his writing tried to show the absence of the so-called Soviet Jewish question. However, the reality often contradicted these assertions. Therein lay the strategy of the Soviet editors: with limited means for outsiders to verify the situation, no one could challenge Rabinovich's version of events. As a Jewish insider, he resonated within the New York Rabbinical community and various Jewish-American organizations. Rabinovich was not the first Jew to address American audiences: Ilya Ehrenburg, in his war texts, wrote directly, "I am now appealing to the Jews of America as a Russian writer and a Jew. There is no ocean to hide behind."<sup>954</sup> With calculated cynicism, the Soviet officials noticed that such a strategy bore fruit: the American-Jewish population came to believe the narratives presented, and this

<sup>950</sup> Ibid, d. 19, l. 10.

<sup>951</sup> With years passing and officials gaining more experience and knowledge about the outside world, it was deemed highly desirable that the composition of delegations was selected well in advance and that the purpose of the trip be defined more specifically. With further discussions of regular exchange programs between different unions of journalists, it was established that the delegations should not be large (no more than 5-7 people), "otherwise their stay is more of a festive rather than business nature." So, the Germans sent a group of five journalists to study the experience of the Soviet press, but not in general to familiarize themselves with the country. They were focused on that task, and when we offered any excursions, they replied that they were not tourists. So, the purposes of exchanges were also reconsidered, given the experience of previous groups. Over time, the officials were mastering the pretense game, polishing the best strategies of representation. GA RF, f. 10124, op. 1, d. 19, l. 158. On the contacts with the GDR media: Comments and suggestions.

<sup>952</sup> Estraiikh, *Jews in the Soviet Union*, 71.

<sup>953</sup> GA RF, f. R-9587, op. 1, d. 7, l. 35. Reference Materials of APN in France.

<sup>954</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, "To the Jews," *Izvestia*, August 26, 1941, as quoted in Joshua Rubenstein, "Il'ia Ehrenburg and the Holocaust in the Soviet Press," in *Soviet Jews in World War II: Fighting, Witnessing, Remembering* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 39. Overall, the Soviets actively used Jewish Antifascist Committee to raise funds and attract the attention of the foreigners to the Eastern Front.

policy of using certain authors as emissaries of Soviet narratives proved a resounding success.

Other internationally oriented organizations also supported these selection principles and used their members' identities as propaganda tools. Women were sent on international trips to showcase the Soviet gender equality and diversity, despite the real state of things.<sup>955</sup> To be entrusted with such a mission, women representing the USSR needed to be ideologically savvy. For instance, when it came to formal requirements, women preparing to represent the Committee of Soviet Women needed to be graduates of the Higher Party School under the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), the Academy of Social Sciences, as well as leading journalists (mainly employees of the magazine "Soviet Woman"), and trade unionists.<sup>956</sup> Wives of ambassadors also got involved, having to read ready-made speeches and organize parties.<sup>957</sup> On top of their educational background and personal ties, the selection of delegates to represent the Committee of Soviet Women was carried out on a national-territorial basis.<sup>958</sup> While the main female activists were concentrated in Leningrad and the Ukrainian SSR, the identities of women from other republics were strategically instrumentalized. Soviet Central Asian women, for instance, were used for establishing and maintaining foreign contacts, especially with former colonial territories, given the imagined shared pasts, and they were the ones to establish correspondence with the Asian and African women's movement.<sup>959</sup>

On the other hand, outside the USSR, officials struggled to fill Soviet posts in international organizations on time. For instance, UNESCO was begging for new Russian-speaking interpreters, as the positions had remained vacant for months.<sup>960</sup> As a solution, UNESCO offered hiring "the Whites" – meaning white emigres, opposed to the Soviet regime since the Civil War. This was extremely undesirable for the Soviet leadership: those were considered ideological enemies of the regime, and allowing them to hold official positions in

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<sup>955</sup> Moreover, such strategies made other countries respond to this criticism and involve more women in foreign affairs. Helen McCarthy, "Petticoat Diplomacy: The Admission of Women to the British Foreign Service, c.1919–1946," *Twentieth Century British History* 20, no. 3 (2009): 285–321.

<sup>956</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 28, d. 1, ll. 23–5; Ibid. d.3, l. 2; Ibid, d. 7, l. 93; Ibid, d. 18, l. 32 as quoted in Nagornaya, Zhenshhiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii, 459.

<sup>957</sup> Wives of journalists were usually utilized as typists if they were even taken abroad in the first place, unlike American wives of diplomats who saw it as a job to network and create a certain image Molly M. Wood, "Diplomatic Wives: The Politics of Domesticity and the 'Social Game' in the U.S. Foreign Service, 1905–1941," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (2005): 142–65; GA RF, f. R-7928, op. 3, d. 532, l. 17 as quoted in Nagornaya, Zhenshhiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii, 460; James Peter Young, *Bolshevik Wives: A Study of Soviet Elite Society* (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2008), <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/2694> [accessed 03.08.2024].

<sup>958</sup> Nagornaya, Zhenshhiny v strukturah sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii, 460.

<sup>959</sup> GA RF, f. R-7928, op. 3, d. 532, l. 35 as quoted in ibid.

<sup>960</sup> GA RF, f. 9518, op. 1, d. 48, l. 101. From the Diary of Yuri Beburow, a Recording of a Conversation with the Deputy Head of the UNESCO Staff Bureau, Bolla.

international organizations in “Russian” posts would have been perceived as a political blow. It was of fundamental importance to the USSR that Soviet citizens occupy all Russian-speaking positions to prevent the “distortion” of the country's position. At the same time, international organizations could not wait indefinitely, so they used pressure tactics. If the USSR did not send specialists, these positions would be filled by other forces hostile to it. The Soviet officials saw it as a priority to find anyone for the positions, but let the emigres take those.

Thus, the USSR strictly regulated not only its citizens' access to the outside world but also what foreigners saw and learned about the Soviet state. After all, it was important to show that the values the country was propagating in the global arena were being upheld, painting a picture of gender and national equality. The choice of people who could travel abroad and of whole delegations became a crucial element of such projections, without risking more fundamental failures: those trips were much shorter than regular foreign appointments and carried lower stakes when mistakes occurred.

### **5.3. Materialism beyond Marx**

On top of the gender and national identities, as well as behaviors abroad, many potentially fitting candidates were feeling the narrowing window of opportunity. Without repressions, the elite were “accumulating,” and there were fewer positions to enter. Even those who technically had opportunities in the profession – such as men from the “right” background – still faced difficulties, as other factors also limited their access to prestigious positions. The lack of housing and the shortage of available spots affected everyone in the field, especially those in vulnerable positions early in their careers.

One of the central issues for non-*nomenklatura* (or future *nomenklatura*) *mezhdunarodniki* became a problem of housing, which Mikhail Zoshchenko already in the 1930s called *kvartirnyi vopros* – literally “apartment issue.” Students from outside of Moscow tried their luck submitting their documents to the capital’s universities in hopes of flourishing careers. Those establishments only had limited dormitory capacities, so oftentimes students were struggling with finding accommodation for their prospective study time.<sup>961</sup> The propaganda chiefs were acutely aware of the issue at hand: many talented students from provincial cities and villages studied in Moscow universities without an official registration, known as

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<sup>961</sup> Six, *The Party Nobility*, 326. This was the case for more provincial localities, too, where young graduates could maybe count on renting a corner with some other family. Remington, *Politics and Professionalism*, 492.

*propiska*.<sup>962</sup> This lack of permanent registration was challenging for students seeking jobs in the capital, and many simply could not stay in Moscow after graduation. After all, many organizations were reluctant to hire graduates without a *propiska* due to the bureaucratic complexities of providing housing for such workers. For instance, Boris Chekhonin, upon graduation, was not desired by any organization, as “no one wanted to hire a nonresident [inogorodnii – M.Z.], even more so without acquaintances, phone recommendations, and housing.”<sup>963</sup> Only a few central government agencies had a quota for residence registration, but they rarely applied it to fresh graduates.<sup>964</sup> Artyom Melikyan, while working for TASS, had no place provided by the organization, so he “had to rent a room, often spent the night at work. Six months later, I was given a room in the TASS departmental house.”<sup>965</sup> Vice-Minister Orlov, for instance, confessed that the issue of graduates’ lodging

[...] is a very painful question. They study at the Institute for only six years, but they come to our organization for a lifetime, and we must provide them with dwellings. Every year, we employ 60–70 people, and 50 of them do not have flats. We have a crisis with housing, even though the Moscow City Council gives us apartments, and we ourselves are building as well.<sup>966</sup>

A 1960 graduate of MGIMO, Anatolii Ivanov, admitted that many of his classmates had to either return to their home regions or faced considerable difficulties in finding jobs, despite having graduated from such a prestigious institution.<sup>967</sup> The limited options for job placements after graduation exacerbated the issue, as not many organizations were willing to navigate the troubles associated with *propiska*. People from cities outside Moscow were more likely to be appointed as translators. This trend emerged because there was a preference for “nonresident” graduates for such roles. As translators, these nonresident graduates could be assigned to roles that did not require a permanent base in Moscow.<sup>968</sup> This allowed organizations to circumvent the complications of dealing with *propiska*, while still making use of the valuable skills and education these graduates had acquired. Thus, some MGIMO graduates who were first stationed in Egypt had rather surprising career paths, as they had to take up any job offers they could find, and they agreed to work on other parts of the African continent, as they could not return to Moscow without registration.<sup>969</sup> In fact, it was easier to

<sup>962</sup> Cynthia Buckley, “The Myth of Managed Migration: Migration Control and Market in the Soviet Period,” *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (January 1, 1995): 896–916.

<sup>963</sup> Chekhonin, *Zhurnalistika i razvedka*.

<sup>964</sup> Ivanov, V Yegipte, 5.

<sup>965</sup> Artyom Melikyan, “Armeniya ne mozhет zhit' bez Rossii” [Armenia Cannot Live Without Russia], *Noev kovcheg* 313, №2 (2019), <https://noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2019-02/6443.html> [accessed 06.05.2023].

<sup>966</sup> TSAOPIM, f. 538, op. 1, d. 88, l. 117. Minutes of the general party meeting of the MGIMO party organization, 26/04/1963 as quoted in Six, *The Party Nobility*, 326.

<sup>967</sup> Ivanov, V Yegipte, 5.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid, 9.

find a position in Africa than in Moscow. Boris Fetisov, after graduating from the institute, became *Izvestia's* correspondent, first in Algeria and then in East Africa; Vladimir Korochantsev, having been demobilized from the army, got a job at TASS's African editorial office. During his years at the Agency, he traveled throughout tropical Africa, wrote six books on the lives of the peoples of this part of the continent, and actively collaborated with the editorial board of the magazine "Asia and Africa Today." Another graduate, Yuri Ustimenko, also joined TASS, first as a correspondent in Zanzibar and then in the USA. Moreover, graduates had to resort to creative solutions to stay in the Soviet capital. One of such findings was marrying local women who had Moscow registration, as marriage to a Moscow spouse meant getting propiska there, too, to overcome the barriers posed by the system.<sup>970</sup> Some even managed to bounce back after returning to their regions – Dmitrii Tulaev returned to Gorkii, worked at a local newspaper, married a Muscovite, and then was employed at the Committee of Youth Organizations. Later, he worked as a correspondent for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in Czechoslovakia and was an employee of the *Novosti* Press Agency.

Nevertheless, many graduates also went with a more "traditional way" and found positions thanks to connections: friends found jobs through connections,<sup>971</sup> for instance, in foreign broadcasting on the radio.<sup>972</sup> Valid Atamali got a job at the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations, and, in his turn, recommended his friend to the Publishing House of Literature in Foreign Languages.<sup>973</sup> In this light, influential and caring chiefs became a magnet for journalistic talent, as the financial well-being of news outlets and, of course, of their workers

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<sup>970</sup> Marriage was also an effective way of getting promoted, as *nomenklatura*, established in their positions, was not necessarily ready to give up on their positions and, moreover, wanted to secure the future of those around them through marriage, friendships, patronage, etc. Gil Eyal and Eleanor Townsley, "The Social Composition of the Communist Nomenklatura: A Comparison of Russia, Poland, and Hungary," *Theory and Society* 24, № 5 (1995): 723–50; Vera Tolz, "Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: The Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (February 2002): 87–105.

<sup>971</sup> One of the side effects of solidification of *nomenklatura* was the widespread use of connections, which, in its turn, led to the retention of inefficient workers: after all, many got their positions through personal ties and were harder to fire without getting into conflicts with other co-workers or even organizations. Harasymiw, *Nomenklatura*, 497–8.

<sup>972</sup> Many connections were established during their studies at university as well as through professional engagements in Moscow or abroad, through both official assignments and leisure activities. The Central House of Journalists located on Nikitsky Boulevard in Moscow was also frequented by many journalists. The location gained renown for its bar-buffet and dining facilities for cohorts of the literary community, who would often visit following the end of their workday for a drink. Access to the establishment was exclusive to individuals with membership in the Union of Journalists. Plus, the Union, in addition to having its own vacation residences in the South, occasionally facilitated the placement of its members at the International House of Journalists in Varna, Bulgaria. In that context, it was easier to engage in a meaningful conversation among members of one's own community. Through such establishments, connections were built between the journalists who later were ready to help each other.

<sup>973</sup> Pravdina, *Razgovor so svoimi*, 57.

depended on their heads. Adzhubei, for instance, although he was a son-in-law of the leader of the Soviet state, he never criticized *Mossovet* [Moscow City Council] on the pages of his newspaper.<sup>974</sup> Thanks to this agreement, *Izvestia* journalists received good living conditions in the capital, which, in turn, helped to retain or attract plenty of young talent.<sup>975</sup>

Finally, *propiska* was also an issue for journalists who came back to the USSR: they were frequently enticed to resign from their positions at the news organizations, and the primary factor behind this was inadequate housing conditions. These professionals were not given adequate accommodation and had to contend with bureaucratic obstacles to secure sufficient living space. As experienced specialists with international experience were greatly missed within the propaganda system, TASS and VOKS directors had no choice but to seek assistance from the Council of Ministers to address the issue of high staff turnover.<sup>976</sup> In despair, they underlined the need for more living space for their workers, as the brain drain, otherwise, was already hard-hitting for these two not-so-prestigious organizations. Mosgorispolkom was to create 25 apartments in the first half of 1958.<sup>977</sup> While the number seems low, those apartments were allocated to those employees who had no place to live in Moscow upon their return from foreign assignments. It was a practical measure to support the returning staff and to prevent the brain drain of those with foreign experience.

All in all, Soviet journalists faced many challenges when trying to climb (or even get onto) the career ladder: a lack of accommodation and financial constraints made securing even entry-level positions much harder for people outside Moscow. Many were struggling to stay in the capital. They had to abandon either their dreams of building an international career or pick up any assignment at any organization they were offered, regardless of their educational profile. Taking those practical challenges into account sheds light on the mishaps in the Soviet State's international operations and the mismanagement of its cadres.

## Conclusions

While Marxism-Leninism was the supposed basis of the Soviet news system, in practice, efficiency and pragmatism often took precedence over ideological proclamations. Real-life circumstances frequently overshadowed ideology. First, the Party officials had to carefully

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<sup>974</sup> Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

<sup>975</sup> Another useful connection was the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Trade Department that “favored [the newspaper] with currency for the purchase of imported printing equipment or desks for journalists.” Silantiev, *Rovesnik SSSR*.

<sup>976</sup> GA RF, f. 5446, op. 88, d. 1832, l. 44. TASS income and expense estimates for 1954.

<sup>977</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 35, ll. 22–3. Letter To the Central Committee of the CPSU, Palgunov, March 22, 1957.

filter through their options and choose people who they thought would represent the country in the best light or from the best angle. Following this, more exclusionary practices were introduced, as the state could now be more “picky” about whom it assigned to foreign posts. In most cases, the choice was obvious: male graduates of prestigious universities. Yet, normally, most of the workers in the news system did not belong to the official selection: they did not occupy any significant positions on the career ladder, nor did they have any privileges associated with it. They also did not have any special access to foreign travel, accommodation, or any prestigious jobs. Even the most elite institution, like MGIMO, could not guarantee career prospects. Exceptions also occurred, with officials strategically including normally ostracized social groups to project their supposed gender and national equality.

On the other hand, the strict system of elite creation was balanced out by the people in it. The authoritarian nature of the Soviet Union manifested itself not only in an atmosphere of constant fear of repression under Stalin, but also in the deep centralization of power. This centralization, contrary to popular belief, did not just mean comprehensive control. On the contrary, in an overgrown, hierarchically structured system, zones of invisibility often arose in which oversight weakened, and accountability disappeared. It was difficult for a massive state machine devoid of independent institutions of verification and feedback to monitor what was happening in all its “corners,” and therefore much had fallen out of the field of view of the authorities, remaining on the periphery of their attention. Thus, unofficial connections, such as family and friendship ties, regulated the job market, often to the disadvantage of the state’s foreign mission. Such strategies blocked entrance to the field of potentially more fit and talented candidates, based on identity, material conditions, or useful ties.

### **Conclusions**

Earlier decades of the Soviet state did not create an environment for international journalism to develop on Soviet soil. Social engineering, purges, and World War II inflicted lasting damage across multiple professional sectors, including those related to foreign affairs. Thousands of people lost their jobs and lives, as new experts perished in prison camps. This disruption resulted in a prolonged shortage of expertise, broken networks, accelerated social mobility, and the widespread reliance on recent graduates and remaining specialists as ad hoc solutions to address the most acute gaps. Thus, by 1946, the Soviet Union was in no way prepared for what was to come.

The start of the Cold War is traditionally characterized by the world's political divide, with a focus on differences between the blocs. There is an illusion of the Soviet *Sonderweg* – a completely separate path to development, thanks to self-imposed isolation in the state's first decades and a new idea of communist modernity. Yet, the USSR, even during its most isolationist policies, remained part of global politics and the economy, albeit internal and external factors limited its operational scope. With the start of World War II, the USSR's global involvement skyrocketed, and the state's hands were untied, drawing all eyes to the Eastern Front and providing a window of opportunity for Soviet leaders to introduce a series of changes. Many journalists and other experts posted abroad sounded the alarm about the current state of Soviet propaganda abroad, and the Moscow officials finally started to listen. This period was marked by the Soviets' adjustment and a learning curve about the world, reorienting the whole news apparatus to the new rails of presenting the state in the most favorable light. Very soon, however, practice has shown that neither human resources nor institutional mechanisms were sufficiently prepared for the new challenges of scaling up the operations abroad.

Through *mezhdunarodniki*, the dissertation unveils a new analytical dimension of the Cold War, with the rapid personnel transformation to compete globally. Focusing on the possibilities and limits of the professionalization of Soviet international journalists, the study identifies the parameters that determined correspondents' professional status. The complex set of requirements included language training, specialized or related education, regional specialization, party membership, and a corresponding biography. A complete set of such characteristics could rarely be found in one person: something was always amiss, creating leeway and compromise both on the institutional and personal levels. Thus, some *mezhdunarodniki* wrote for the radio, some for the press; some graduated from prestigious colleges, while others picked up a pen and started writing while working at a factory. Journalists with fundamentally different paths coexisted within a single professional community, united by the common task of promoting the USSR's global vision of the future. The study analyzes this range of educational and institutional mechanisms for training international journalists and identifies internal limitations. Attempts to create systematic training programs for foreign correspondents are considered, highlighting both the weaknesses of Soviet planning in international relations and the reluctance of institutions to establish a stable professional body. On paper, universities had to secure jobs for their graduates, but in reality, even the most prestigious institutions could not guarantee jobs aligned with their training and social standing. Thus, instead of in-depth training for

specialists, the focus was on universalizing practices, seen as a means of addressing the personnel shortage. The education system enabled a certain hiring design, endorsing broader specializations and training students in at least the basics of other fields. On the other hand, graduates also had to champion their supposed universality, given the universities' broken distribution system. The students adapted to the requirements of being universalists and doing what they were asked to do, be it learning a completely new language and disregarding all their previous knowledge, or going into a field they did not see themselves in just to get by. However, such a strategy proved ineffective: versatile personnel could not replace specialists with more focused training. Left to their own devices, the graduates had to resort to the most creative measures: finding connections at different workplaces, marrying Muscovites, or doing PhDs to win time.

Yet, in many ways, gradual professionalization was reflected in a departure from other occupations, alongside a growing demand for higher education. Practitioners advocated for a separation, both in symbolic terms and in working methods, from diplomats and writers, among others, in pursuit of professional autonomy, greater efficiency, and institutional acknowledgment. Although a dedicated department of international journalism was not established until 1967, training in related fields had already become essential. Unlike the 1920s and 1930s, when rowing instructors or tractor specialists could enter (and succeed in) the profession, such trajectories had become largely unthinkable for newcomers in the postwar years. At the same time, specialization intensified, with journalists gradually finding their topical (sports, economics, etc.), genre (reporting, feuilletons, etc.), or geographic (Americanists or Arabists, etc.) niches. There were also formal signs of a profession being recognized by the state, such as the foundation of the professional union just for the journalists.

On the other hand, the research also examines the structural limitations of professional development and mobility within the Soviet context. The study reveals the stratification of the Soviet journalistic community, emphasizing the mechanisms of inequality that shaped the profession's structure. Aside from work in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, the field of international journalism had an insignificant societal weight, low pay grade, and was seen as a compromise and even an exile, for instance, for failed career diplomats or former students. Within the international media, disparities were also visible: radio was seen as the least prestigious employer, news agencies were portrayed as a graveyard of young talent, and only federal newspapers were worthy of career-hungry journalists. Yet, many paths were predetermined not only by the level of formal training and individual merits, but also by social parameters:

gender, nationality, and biography, which served as filters for access. Because of it, Soviet international news organizations were plagued by brain drain, contributing to unpredictability within bureaucratic structures and insufficient performance.

In this sense, international journalism in the USSR was a microcosm of the broader Soviet social hierarchy. Journalists in the USSR were divided along lines of access, privileges, and symbolic capital within the *nomenklatura* elite, forming a hierarchy that opposed the elite and a wider range of people involved in the field. Such inequality among professionals broadens the discussion of Soviet elite studies. It raises questions about its effects, since *nomenklatura* workers dictated the Soviet representation and performance of the organizations entrusted to them. Having control within their vertical of power, media managers surrounded themselves with often incompetent but loyal cadres who could soften their potential fall but did not improve the performance of the establishments entrusted to them. By giving away patronage positions, the officials created a vacuum in the middle- and higher-ranking posts, preventing experts from occupying niches worthy of their time and effort. In fact, the Soviet government unknowingly established a system of social relations in which informal networks played a key role in citizens' daily lives. These networks were a response to the command economy's deficits and to political pressure from the state. They became alternative channels for resource allocation and a survival mechanism. At the same time, such practices undermined the effectiveness of institutions, creating a parallel system based not on rules, but on personal relationships. Over time, mutual obligations became the most reliable way to succeed in Soviet society. Hence, the research goes beyond the typical trope in elite studies of the USSR, seeking to expose its inner contradictions and heterogeneity despite ideological proclamations of a classless society. This study's purpose is rather to depict a complex society beyond the usual elite vs. rank-and-file dichotomy. Through a careful examination of just one professional group, the analysis highlights a more multi-step structure and the gradient of near-elite circles. After all, people in the international press, often assumed to be cemented into the Soviet elite, were a heterogeneous group in their origins, social backgrounds, and ways of ascending to *nomenklatura* roles. The range within the group was logically reflected in its access to resources, people, and opportunities, making it impossible to unify them under a single umbrella definition based on material conditions or to treat them as a separate class.

The origins of this stratification can be explained by the USSR's dual position in the international arena – between a desire for cultural and ideological superiority and a fear of its own inferiority. Under these conditions, international journalists were seen as bearers of the values of the Soviet project and at the same time as objects of strict control. Fitting into the

correct model of citizen behavior opened many doors for the journalists, who later used those opportunities to their own advantage. Thus, while Soviet institutions set normative horizons and prescribed acceptable career paths, journalists filled them with meaning and found their own benefits. Patronage in hiring, transitions between organizations, and adaptation to regional or international specifics directly affected the success of state-set tasks. This tension between structure and subjectivity created both the institutional determinants and the specifics of professionalization. From a human-centered standpoint, decision-making mechanisms, professional restrictions, and the reasons for the limited effectiveness of individual reform initiatives are identified. The focus on the biographical dimension enables the reconstruction of the social and educational composition of the personnel corps, the identification of channels of professional mobility, and an assessment of the importance of personal resources in the functioning of journalistic organizations.

This perspective goes beyond the limits of institutional history and reveals individual strategies. The analysis helps explain the variability of Soviet international propaganda results, revealing both the institutional advantages and vulnerabilities of the state-controlled media apparatus. This area of research also made it possible to assess the limits of professionalism development in an environment where recruitment, career advancement, and professional mobility trajectories were largely determined by exogenous factors rather than solely by professional competencies. As a result, it became possible to identify the internal contradictions of a socialist state that focused on broadcasting its own ideals abroad while limiting the autonomy of those who directly carried out this mission.

Thus, the dissertation traces the evolution of Soviet international journalism as a professional field amid transformations in political, cultural, and institutional life. The analysis of career trajectories led to the conclusion that the process of professionalization of international journalism in the USSR remained incomplete. The formation of the corps of *mezhdunarodniki* was not a movement towards stability. On the contrary, it was a reflection of the contradictions of a system that sought only an image of competence, thereby limiting the conditions for sustainable development. The very history of *mezhdunarodniki* appears ambivalent: they simultaneously served as tools of state policy and as agents of personal mobility and strategies for self-realization. Finally, since international journalism in the Soviet Union took on various forms and modalities, its effectiveness cannot be explained solely by reference to propaganda directives or ideological imperatives. Rather, it was the interaction among systemic constraints, professional practice, and individual adaptations that

resulted in the profession becoming both indispensable to the Soviet global project and permanently limited by it.

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## Appendix

**Table of *Mezhdunarodniki***

During the course of my research, I have encountered several *mezhdunarodniki*. To record and systematize the collected material, I compiled a table, which includes basic data, ordered by the years of their graduation. This principle allowed not only to establish the chronology of those specialists entering into the labor market, but also to trace the general dynamics of their professional development. This set of empirical data confirms the key points of my research and demonstrates the gradual process of professionalization of the group. The education's variety and the range of places of employment indicate the expansion of the range of professional competencies and variability in career trajectories – from journalistic and academic to administrative and diplomatic positions. This showcases the porosity of the Soviet apparatus of international personnel, where workers used the structural features of the system in their own interests, profiting from them to advance their career and strengthen their professional status. However, it should be noted that the table also includes a number of people about which very little is known. As a rule, these are persons who held lower or auxiliary positions, which leads to the fragmentary nature of the information about them. For many, there is no information about education, previous or subsequent career experience, or specific jobs. Nevertheless, even with these limited data, the social stratification within the studied group and its internal hierarchies are visible. Most of the information was obtained from official documents, as well as from memoirs and books where foreign correspondents were mentioned by their colleagues or contemporaries. These sources, despite their heterogeneous nature, make it possible to identify more people involved and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of who shaped the field.

| Name                | Graduation Year  | Education                                                | Places of Work                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ilya Ehrenburg      | 1907             | Expelled from a Moscow gymnasium                         | Writer, <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Spain), correspondent of <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> during WWII, Sovinformburo journalist                                     |
| David Ikhok         | 1909             | Faculty of Medicine in Odesa                             | Editor of <i>Izvestia</i> , editor at <i>Pravda</i> , headed its Foreign Department; head of the Foreign Department of TASS, <i>Izvestia</i> , and “Moscow News” |
| David Zaslavskii    | 1910             | St. Vladimir's Imperial University in Kyiv (Law Faculty) | Bund publications, <i>Pravda</i> , <i>Izvestia</i>                                                                                                               |
| Ivan Novokhatnyi    | Circa 1917       | Moscow Higher Technical College                          | Specialist in Oriental Studies, TASS correspondent (Iran)                                                                                                        |
| Nikolai Makharinets | Bef. 1917? 1920s | Church school, Leningrad Journalism Institute            | Kryvyi Rih Metallurgical Plant, local press, TASS correspondent (Poland, Czechoslovakia)                                                                         |
| Lev Rovinskii       | 1917–1918        | Moscow State University                                  | Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Pravda</i> , Editor-in-Chief of <i>Izvestia</i> , Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Novoe Vremya</i>                                     |

|                                    |             |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vladimir Aboltin                   | 1921, 1925  | 6-month intelligence courses, the Red Army Military Academy (the Oriental Faculty)                                                   | Red Army soldier; People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR; regional press; Acting Consul General of the USSR in Harbin, scientific and teaching activities at the Institute of Oriental Studies, TASS correspondent (China), Deputy Director for Research at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Yakov Khavinson (Marinin)          | 1922, 1932  | The 1st Moscow State University, the History-Party Department of the Institute of the Red Professorship (Faculty of Social Sciences) | Head of the Party Literature Department of <i>Gosizdat</i> , Deputy Head of the Culture and Propaganda Department, editor of the journal "Bolshevik Press", head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Leningrad City Party Committee, 1st deputy head and executive head of TASS, a member of the Sovinformburo, an editorial staff member of the <i>Pravda</i> , International columnist for <i>Pravda</i> , editor-in-chief of the journal "World Economy and International Relations"                                             |
| Nikolai Palgunov                   | Circa 1924, | Yaroslavl University (Agricultural Faculty); transferred to the Pedagogical Faculty, TASS short courses                              | Head of the Organization and Instruction Department of the Yaroslavl Provincial Committee; editor of local newspapers, correspondent of TASS (Persia, Finland, France), Head of the Press Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Head of TASS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Yuri (Georgii) Frantsev (Frantsov) | 1924        | Leningrad University (Social Sciences)                                                                                               | Director of the Museum of the History of Religion of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Director of MGIMO, Head of the Press Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Editor-in-Chief for Foreign Policy Affairs of <i>Pravda</i> ; <i>Voprosy Filosofii</i> ; Chief Editor of the journal "Problems of Peace and Socialism"                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Vladimir Rogov                     | 1926, 1927  | The Academy of Communist Education in Moscow (Working Faculty), the Institute of Oriental Studies                                    | Research Fellow at the World Economic Institute, TASS correspondent (Chongqing, China), head of the TASS office (China), head of the TASS office (England), Deputy Foreign Information Editor of <i>Izvestia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Boris Ponomaryov                   | 1926, 1932  | The Moscow State University (Ethnological Faculty); the Institute of the Red Professorship                                           | Deputy Director of the Institute of the Red Professorship; Director of the Institute of Party History; political correspondent and assistant to the head of the Executive Committee of the Comintern; Deputy Head of the Department of International Information of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b); Head of the Sovinformburo; the first deputy head of the Department of Foreign Relations; Head of the Department for Relations with Foreign Communist Parties, Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU |
| Aleksei Rumyantsev                 | 1926, 1933  | Kharkiv Institute of National Economy, Research Institute of Industrial Economics and Organization                                   | People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the Ukrainian SSR, Head of the Science and Culture Department of the CPSU Central Committee; editor-in-chief of the journal <i>Kommunist</i> ; editor-in-chief of the journal "Problems of Peace and Socialism"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Vladimir Khvostov                  | 1926        | Kazan Pedagogical Institute, postgraduate studies at the RANION Institute of History                                                 | Director of the Higher Diplomatic School of the NKID, member of the Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; one of the founders and the first editor-in-chief of the <i>Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> magazine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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| Viktor Poltoratskii                 | 1927, 1933       | The Worker's Faculty; the Yaroslavl Pedagogical Institute (the Literary Faculty)                                                                                                                                             | Locomotive depot; regional press; special correspondent of <i>Izvestia</i> , the editor-in-chief <i>Nash sovremennik</i> , <i>Literatura i zhizn'</i> , editor of the Literary Department of <i>Izvestia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Iosif Ovadis (Chernov, Maks, Yudya) | 1929             | The Frunze Military Academy (Faculty of Oriental Studies)                                                                                                                                                                    | Executive editor of <i>Izvestia</i> (Stavropol), the General Staff of the Red Army; TASS correspondent (Afghanistan, China), intelligence worker (China); Head of the Editorial Office of Radiotelegraphic Information for Foreign Media of the TASS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Mikhail Tseitlin (Mikhaylov)        | 1920s            | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | The secretary of the editorial office of <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> ; the international service of the Soviet radio; editor of the international section of <i>Izvestia</i> , professor at MGIMO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Vladimir Kudryavtsev                | 1920s            | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Political observer for <i>Izvestia</i> , deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, member of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Council of nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Vladislav Pavlovich/V. Grot         | 1920s            | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | "Active journalist", worked for the Polish section of the Radio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Vasilii Proskurin                   | 1920s            | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Wrote for Romania, Korea, and China                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Boris Polevoi (Kampov)              | 1920s            | Technical school in Tver                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Regional press, writer, a correspondent for <i>Proletarskaya Pravda</i> , a correspondent for <i>Pravda</i> , Chairman of the Board of the Soviet Peace Committee, Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vladimir Druzhinin                  | 1930             | Leningrad University (Ethnographic Department of the Geography Faculty)                                                                                                                                                      | Regional press, Radio Committee of Leningrad; Member of the Union of Writers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Boris Burkov                        | 1930, 1931, 1951 | Bogoroditsky Agricultural Technical School; All-Union Agropedagogical Institute in Moscow; postgraduate program of the Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks | Regional press, Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Editor-in-Chief of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , Editor-in-Chief of <i>Trud</i> , Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Pravda</i> , Chairman of the Board of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Konstantin Zinchenko                | 1931             | Moscow Oil University                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Engineer at the Neftegaz plant, senior researcher at the Institute of Combustible Minerals of the USSR Academy of Sciences; 1st Secretary of the USSR Embassy (England); adviser to the USSR Embassy (England); Head of the Press Department of the NKID; Head of the Department of Latin American Countries at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Head of the II European Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Senior Adviser to the USSR Mission to the United Nations; executive editor of the Translation department, head of the International department, executive secretary and member of the editorial board of the <i>Novosti</i> magazine; Executive Secretary of the editorial Board, member of the Editorial Board of <i>Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> ; Head of the Department for Work with Foreign Correspondents and Press Delegations, Secretary of the Party Organization, Head of the Press and Information Department |

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|                        |             |                                                                                                               | of the USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Yuri (Georgii) Zhukov  | 1932        | Lomonosov Moscow Automobile and Tractor Institute                                                             | Assistant train driver, regional press, correspondent of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Novy Mir</i> ; editorial staff member of <i>Pravda</i> , <i>Pravda's</i> correspondent (France), Chairman of the Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries; the host of the author's television program; member of the Union of Writers; translator; Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Chairman of the Soviet Peace Protection Committee, President of the friendship society "USSR – France" |
| Sergei Borzenko        | 1933        | Kharkiv Polytechnical Institute                                                                               | Regional press, served during WWII; <i>Pravda</i> , reported from Germany, India, Korea, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, Syria, Egypt, Libya                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Aleksandr Kritiskii    | 1933, 1936  | The Communist Institute of Journalism, the central editorial courses at the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) | <i>Krasnaya zvezda's</i> correspondent, Deputy editor-in-chief of the <i>Novy Mir</i> magazine, then editor of the international section of <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Daniil Kraminov        | 1933 (1939) | Leningrad Institute of History, Philosophy, and Linguistics                                                   | Regional press; TASS correspondent (Sweden, Lithuania, UK); Head of the TASS bureau (Berlin); Editor of the American Countries department of the <i>Pravda</i> ; editor-in-chief of the weekly <i>Za rubezhom</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Evgenii Litoshko       | 1935        | Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages                                                                         | Foreign Department of <i>Izvestia</i> ; senior instructor of the political Department of the 2nd Far Eastern Front; correspondent of the All-Union Radio; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (USA); editor of the Department of American Countries and a member of the editorial board of <i>Pravda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Aleksandr Novogradskii | 1936        | The State Institute of Cinematography                                                                         | Editor of the All-Union Committee on Radio Broadcasting, screenwriter; TASS correspondent (Vienna); Chairman of the All-Union Commission of Theory and Criticism of Cinema of the Union of Cinematographers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Pavel Mikhalyov        | 1937, 1940  | Vyazma Pedagogical College, Tambov Aviation College                                                           | Pilot, served in war, wrote multiple books and articles on foreign affairs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Vasilii Zakharchenko   | 1937, 1941  | The Moscow Power Engineering Institute, the Literary Institute                                                | One of the leaders of the Soviet Committee for the Protection of Peace; editor of <i>Sputnik</i> (Brussels)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Ivan Filippov (Yudin)  | 1938        | Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History                                                        | TASS correspondent (Berlin), Head of the Sovinformburo sector; an employee of the office of the political adviser to the Soviet military administration in Germany; diplomatic worker (Hungary, Finland), ambassador (Luxembourg, Sierra-Leone), Foreign Affairs Central Apparatus worker                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Leonid Velichanskii    | 1938        | Moscow State University (History Faculty)                                                                     | TASS correspondent (Greece), <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Sergei Tikhvinskii     | 1938        | Leningrad State University (Chinese Department of the Faculty of Philology)                                   | Diplomatic service in China, Japan, Great Britain, and at the UN General Assembly; NKVD, KGB, translator; Head of the Asian Countries Department of the State Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries; professor at MGIMO,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                                |                     |                                                                                                        | member of the editorial board of the journal “Problems of the Far East”, editor-in-chief of the journal “New and Modern History”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Zinovii Sheinis                | 1938                | All-Union Communist Institute of Journalism                                                            | Head of the Foreign department of the <i>Trud</i> ; the Radio Committee; <i>Progress</i> publishing house                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Valentin Berezhkov             | 1938                | German school in Kyiv, evening department of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (engineer)                 | Tourist guide, engineer, fleet; translator for the Red Army, assistant to Molotov at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin; worked for <i>Novoe vremya</i> ; First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Washington                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Vasilii Sitnikov               | Circa 1938, 1955    | Leningrad Institute of Communications, Higher Diplomatic School                                        | TASS correspondent (Germany); worked in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany, a cover correspondent, head of the TASS department, 1st Secretary of the USSR Mission to the GDR; Head of the Information Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU; Deputy Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Georgii Ratiani                | Betw. 1938 and 1941 | Leningrad State University                                                                             | Worked in Algeria at the Embassy of the USSR, Soviet embassy in France, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (France), editor of <i>Pravda</i> in the American countries department, and political observer for <i>Pravda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Aleksandr Alekseev             | 1939                | Faculty of History at Moscow State University                                                          | Translator in Spain, employee of the USSR Embassy in Iran; USSR representative Office at the French Committee for National Liberation in Algeria; cultural attache of the USSR Embassy in France; representative of the Sovinformburo; editor of “Études soviétiques”; the first secretary of the USSR Embassy in Argentina, employee of the USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the head of the Latin American Countries Department of the USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Ambassador to Cuba, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Chairman of the Board of the APN |
| Vitalii Korionov               | 1930s, circa 1943   | Moscow Communist University named after Sverdlov, Higher Party School under the CPSU Central Committee | First Deputy Head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the CPSU Central Committee; political observer for <i>Pravda</i> ; Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of Latin America; member of the Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Aleksei Leontiev               | 1930s               | Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History                                                 | Poet, columnist for <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Yakov Makarenko/<br>Makarenkov | 1930s               | Vyazma Pedagogical Technical School, Gorky Literary Institute                                          | Local press, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent at war, Deputy editor of <i>Pravda</i> for the socialist countries section, writer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Oleg Orestov                   | 1930s               | Unknown                                                                                                | Translator, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Mikhail Kosov                  | 1930s               | Unknown                                                                                                | TASS correspondent (Denmark)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Aleksandr Vishnevskii          | 1930s               | Unknown                                                                                                | TASS correspondent (Italy)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Ivan Yanchenko                 | 1930s               | Unknown                                                                                                | TASS correspondent (Egypt)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| Vadim Sinel'nikov               | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (China)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Aleksandr Yegurnov              | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Isaak Lapitskii                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent, observer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Vasilii Medov                   | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Pavel Kuznetsov                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (England)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Fyodor Nosov                    | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Australia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Evgenii Agishev                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Belgium)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Boris Averchenko                | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | Served in the war, editor of <i>Pravda</i> for the socialist countries section                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Aleksei Pronin                  | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (India)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Aleksandr Lubo                  | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Romania)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Georgii Afrin                   | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Netherlands)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Sergei Poletaev                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Finland)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Lev Skomorokhov/<br>Lev Almazov | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | <i>Izvestia</i> , <i>Trud</i> , Radio (Indonesia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Aleksei Chikanov                | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | TASS correspondent (Switzerland)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| naum Dymarskii/ D.<br>naumov    | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | <i>Pravda</i> , Moscow News, Radio, sports coverage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| V. Vashedchenko                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (USA); TASS correspondent (Libya, Canada)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Shalva Sanakoev                 | 1930s                  | Unknown                                                                                                                                  | First Deputy Chairman of the Board of <i>Znanie</i> ; editor-in-chief of <i>Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'</i> ; head of the Department of International Journalism at MGIMO, diplomat                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Aleksandr<br>Porozhnyakov       | 1930s,<br>1960s<br>(?) | Odesa Electrotechnical Institute, Moscow Artillery Academy, Higher Academic courses of the GRU, the Literary Institute named after Gorky | Translator, KGB agent, worked in India and Pakistan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Pavel Bulushev                  | 1930s                  | School education                                                                                                                         | Poet, journalist, correspondent of the Leningrad branch of TASS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Georgii Bespalov                | 1930s                  | The Institute of the Red Professorship                                                                                                   | Responsible secretary of the Comintern; responsible editor of "Youth International"; underground work in Germany, China; Head of the Information Department of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany; Deputy Head of the Sovinformburo; Deputy Chairman of the All-Union Committee of Radiobroadcasting; Deputy Head of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Member of the editorial board of the magazines <i>Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> , <i>Sovremennyi</i> |

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|                               |                 |                                                                                                                                                      | <i>vostok, Azia i Afrika segodnya</i> ; editor of <i>Inostrannaya literatura</i> publishing house                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sergei Kruschinskii           | 1930s           | Unknown                                                                                                                                              | Correspondent of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> ; served in the War; correspondent for <i>Pravda</i> (Czechoslovakia, Hungary); covered the Nuremberg Trials                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Isaak Ermashev (Erukhimovich) | 1930s           | Unknown                                                                                                                                              | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> and <i>Rabochaya Moskva</i> ; headed the foreign department of <i>Pravda</i> ; a special correspondent (the UK), worked for <i>Ogonyok</i> , <i>Oktyabr'</i>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Ilya Mokretsov                | 1930s           | Unknown                                                                                                                                              | Regional press, a correspondent of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Krasnoe Znamya</i> , head of the TASS department in Stockholm, KGB officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Aleksei Berkov                | 1930s           | Unknown                                                                                                                                              | TASS correspondent (Yugoslavia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Aleksei Lukovets              | 1930s/<br>1967  | 10 years of school, Higher Party School under the Central Committee of the CPSU                                                                      | Regional press, <i>Pravda</i> (Warsaw), deputy editor-in-chief of <i>Pravda</i> , the magazine "Workers' and Peasants' Correspondent"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Grigorii Rassadin             | 1940            | Leningrad Communist Institute of Journalism                                                                                                          | Fought in the war; was at diplomatic work in Iran; a senior employee of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (USA, France); editor of the newspaper <i>Sovetskaya Rossiya</i>                                                                                                                                                       |
| Daniil Melamid (Melnikov)     | 1940            | Moscow State University (History Department)                                                                                                         | TASS, executive secretary of the World Economy and World Politics magazine; a political observer for Sovinformburo, head of the department and a member of the editorial board of <i>Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> ; the head of the Sector of International Political Problems of Europe at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences |
| Lev Sheidin (Sedin)           | Bef. 1941       | Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History                                                                                               | Regional press; member of the Editorial Board of the <i>Novoe Vremya</i> magazine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Vasilii Zhuravskii            | Bef. 1941, 1945 | Voronezh Pedagogical Institute (Faculty of Literature and Russian Language), switched to the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Central Newspaper Courses | Writer, <i>Pravda's</i> correspondent (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Olga Chechetkina              | Bef. 1941       | Unknown                                                                                                                                              | Correspondent of the <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , editor of the Foreign Information Department; correspondent for <i>Pravda</i> (Vietnam, Italy); political observer for <i>Pravda</i> ; Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Soviet Women; Secretary of the Soviet Peace Protection Committee; Member of the USSR Writers' Union                                                    |
| Vladimir Khatuntsev           | Bef. 1941       | The Pokrovsky Workers' Faculty; the All-Union Communist Institute of Journalism; Moscow State University (History Faculty)                           | Reporter for the Editorial Office of Information for Foreign Countries; senior editor of the Department of International Information for Radio Broadcasting; TASS correspondent (Finland); Deputy General Director of TASS; Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Trud</i>                                                                                                                    |

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| Aleksei Leontiev  | Bef. 1941             | Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History                                                                                                        | Poet, <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> journalist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Viktor Volsky     | Bef. 1941, 1949       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Economics)                                                                      | Served in WWII; journalist at <i>Trud</i> ; senior researcher at MGIMO; the head of the Department of Economic and Political Geography of Capitalist and Developing Countries of the Geographical Faculty of Moscow State University; Director of the Institute of Latin America of the USSR Academy of Sciences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Nikolai Zabelkin  | Bef. 1941, 1951       | Chelyabinsk Power Engineering College; Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                           | Sovinformburo, <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency; headed the APN bureau (Hungary)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Oleg Ignatiev     | Bef. 1942, circa 1950 | Astrakhan Higher Naval School; Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                   | Served in WWII; litsotrudnik of the Foreign Department of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> ; 2nd Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Argentina (Argentina) and press attache of the Embassy; inspector of the Latin American Countries Department of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries under the USSR Council of Ministers; member of the editorial board, editor of the Foreign Department of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> ; the Brazilian Political News Agency (Rio de Janeiro); <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Vietnam, Laos, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Argentina, Brazil, Portugal, Afghanistan)                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lev Bezymenskii   | Circa 1942, 1948      | Moscow Institute of Philosophy, History and Literature (Philosophy Department); the Military Institute of Foreign Languages (courses of military translators) | Military interpreter; <i>Novoe Vremya</i> correspondent (GDR, Switzerland)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Viktor Shragin    | 1942                  | Moscow State University                                                                                                                                       | Sovinformburo; the editorial office of the newspaper <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> ; editor in the USSR State Television and Radio system, a political observer on international issues on Central Television                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Mikhail Kharlamov | Circa 1942            | Moscow Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature (history teacher); Higher Party School                                                                 | Executive secretary of the editorial office of the Radio Committee under the SNK of the Belorussian SSR; head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department; head of the External Relations Sub-Department; Deputy Chairman of the Radio Broadcasting Committee; Head of the Department of People's Democracies, editor and member of the editorial board of <i>Pravda</i> ; First Deputy Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Chairman of the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers on Radio and Television; Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Publishing House of Political Literature; Head of the Historical and Diplomatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR |
| Evgeny Popov      | After 1942            | Military Institute of Foreign Languages                                                                                                                       | TASS correspondent (Hungary), intelligence officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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| Nikolai Pollak-Polyanov | 1943                    | Moscow State University                                                                                                             | <i>Izvestia, Ogonyok</i> , poet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Yuri Yudanov            | Circa 1943, early 1950s | Aviation Technical School; Institute of Foreign Trade; Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Worker at a pipe foundry, engineer and team leader at the General Directorate for Soviet Property in Austria; editor at <i>Sotsekgiz</i> (Publishing House of Socio-economic Literature); head of the International Department at <i>Ekonomicheskaya gazeta</i>                                                                                                                                                    |
| Yuri Yasnev             | Bef. 1945, 1953         | Novosibirsk Aviation Technical School/ Military Institute of Foreign Languages, V. I. Lenin Military-Political Academy              | Math teacher (Novosibirsk); work for the newspaper “For a Lasting Peace, for People's Democracy” (Rumania), <i>Pravda's</i> Deputy Editor-in-Chief for Foreign Departments, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), head a section in the journal of communist workers' parties, “Problems of Peace and Socialism” (Czechoslovakia) |
| Ivan Beglov             | 1946, 1949              | Higher Party School; Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU                                             | TASS correspondent (USA), Head of TASS Bureau (USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Nikolai Karev           | 1947                    | Higher Diplomatic School                                                                                                            | Served in the army in WWII; TASS correspondent (USA); <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (USA); Editor-in-Chief of the Main Editorial Office of Radio Broadcasting (USA and England)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Yakov Lomko             | Circa 1948              | Leningrad State University (Physics Department); Higher Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR            | Military newspapers; Sovinformburo (editor, political commentator, head of the department, deputy head); headed the joint editorial board of the newspapers “The Moscow News” and “Les Nouvelles de Moscou”, as well as the magazines “Culture and Life” and “XX Century and the World”                                                                                                                            |
| Boris Strel'nikov       | 1948                    | Central Komsomol School (Journalism Department)                                                                                     | Served in the war; <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Vietnam, USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Valerii Lednev          | 1948                    | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                        | Translator, <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta's</i> special correspondent (Department of the Countries of People's Democracy); deputy executive secretary at “Soviet Art”; <i>Sovetskaya Kultura's</i> literary editor; <i>Izvestia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vadim Ardatovsky        | 1948                    | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                        | Radio; political observer for the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vladimir Yermakov       | 1948                    | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                        | Radio; International Department of <i>Pravda</i> (Italy, Portugal); political observer of APN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Yaroslav Shavrov        | Bef. 1949               | Unknown                                                                                                                             | <i>Izvestia; Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> ; Dean and founder of the International Journalism faculty at MGIMO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Ilya Dzhirkelov         | Circa 1949              | KGB school                                                                                                                          | Writer, KGB agent (Romania, Turkey, Iran), TASS correspondent (Sudan, Tanzania); information officer for the World Health Organization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Dmitrii Goryunov        | 1949                    | Higher Party School                                                                                                                 | Regional press; Central Committee of the Komsomol, editor-in-chief of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , deputy editor-in-chief of <i>Pravda</i> ; Director General of TASS;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                      |      |                                                                                                                                                                        | Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR (Kenya); Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR (Morocco)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Igor Latyshev        | 1949 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (Japanese Department of the Far Eastern Faculty)                                                                                  | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Japan), Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Spartak Beglov       | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                           | Sovinformburo; the editor-in-chief of the “Soviet Weekly” (London); Deputy, First Deputy Chairman of the Board of the APN; political observer; head of the APN group of political observers, APN’s own correspondent (UK)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Georgii Zubkov       | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                           | Moscow News and <i>Molodezh’ mira</i> ; State Television of the USSR (Foreign Broadcasting); All-Union Radio and Central Television                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Melor Sturua         | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                           | Special correspondent for <i>Izvestia</i> in the East; <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (UK, USA); Deputy editor of <i>Izvestia</i> for the International Department                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Vadim Nekrasov       | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                           | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (England), editor in the department of European Countries; editor-in-chief of <i>Kommunist</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Vsevolod Parkhit’ko  | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Charles University/Prague (Czech Philology)                                              | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Sovetskaya Rossiya</i> , <i>Moskovsky Komsomolets</i> ; collaborated with the magazines “World Student News” and “Problems of Peace and Socialism”; taught at MGIMO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Mikhail Domogatskikh | 1949 | Voronezh State University (Faculty of History and Philology); central newspaper courses; Higher Diplomatic School, trained in Tokyo, then studied at Peking University | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (China)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Georgii Arbatov      | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Law Faculty)                                                                             | Senior scientific editor at the Publishing House of Foreign Literature; head of the department in the magazines <i>Voprosy filosofii</i> , <i>Novoe Vremya</i> ; consultant in the magazine <i>Kommunist</i> ; columnist at “Problems of Peace and Socialism”; Head of the sector of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences; consultant, then head of the group of consultants of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU; Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada of the USSR Academy of Sciences/RAS (ISKRAN) |
| Villiam Pokhlyobkin  | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Foreign Affairs)                                                                         | Head of the <i>Skandinavskii sbornik</i> magazine; Member of the Editorial Board of the journal “Scandinavica” (London-New York)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vladimir Nikolaev    | 1949 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                           | Correspondent (Vietnam, France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| Nikolai Pastukhov      | Circa 1949 | Higher Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                                | TASS correspondent (India), <i>Pravda</i>                                                                                                                        |
| Aleksei Krivel         | Circa 1949 | Soviet Party school in Moscow (Journalism department)                                                                                                           | Regional press, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Mongolia)                                                                                                           |
| Boris Chekhonin        | Circa 1949 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                                                                                                            | The International Department of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions; Interpreter (Japanese), <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Japan), TASS               |
| Viktor Maevskii        | 1940s      | Moscow Pedagogical Institute; Higher Diplomatic School                                                                                                          | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (UK), reported from New Zealand, Australia, etc.; <i>Pravda</i> 's political observer                                                |
| Aleksei Krivel'        | 1940s      | Moscow Soviet Party School (Journalism Section)                                                                                                                 | Regional press, fought in the war, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Mongolia)                                                                                        |
| Mai Podklyuchnikov     | 1940s      | Moscow State University (Journalism Faculty)                                                                                                                    | Served in the war, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (GDR, Austria)                                                                                                    |
| Konstantin Maslov      | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | Published in "Nouvel de Moscou", "Moscow News," worked for the Radio (Arabic section)                                                                            |
| Lev Strzysowski        | 1940s      | The Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; the Institute of Journalism at the University of Münster | Correspondent of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Pravda</i> 's editor in the International Information Department; Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at MGIMO   |
| Erik Alekseev          | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Trud</i> correspondent (France); Head of the Editorial Department of the International Labor Movement                                                         |
| Vladimir Dudinskii     | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | Specialized in problems of socialism, one of the founders of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance                                                          |
| Georgii (Yuri) Kalugin | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | Professional rowing instructor, TASS correspondent (Brazil), translator                                                                                          |
| Sergei Pakin           | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Krasnaya zvezda</i> , <i>Sovetskii flot</i> , <i>Komsomolskaya pravda</i> , Sovinformburo                                                                     |
| Viktor Strizhko        | 1940s (?)  | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | Served in the war, "Kraj Rad" editor                                                                                                                             |
| Yuri Goloshubov        | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Scandinavian countries)                                                                                                           |
| Anatoly Kurov          | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (China)                                                                                                                              |
| Mikhail Odinets        | 1940s      | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Budapest)                                                                                                                           |
| Yulii Yakhontov        | 1940s      | Military Institute of Foreign Languages of the Red Army                                                                                                         | The central office of the Ministry of Defense, translator at Military Publishing House, <i>Za rubezhom</i> newspaper, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Finland, FRG) |
| Natalia Sergeeva       | 1940s (?)  | Unknown                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Novoe Vremya</i> , reported from Vietnam, editor-in-chief of <i>Novoe Vremya</i>                                                                              |

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| Mikhail Sagatelyan | 1950       | Naval Academy; Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                      | <i>Izvestia</i> (Foreign department); the weekly <i>Novoe Vremya</i> ; correspondent for the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency in Washington                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Leonid Kolosov     | 1950       | Institute of Foreign Trade                                                                                                                                       | Currency Department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the USSR as a senior consultant; trade mission (Italy); KGB, <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Italy); Deputy Editor of the Foreign Department of <i>Izvestia</i> and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the <i>Nedelya</i> supplement; <i>Izvestia's</i> own correspondent (Yugoslavia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Boris Kotov        | 1950       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                     | <i>Trud</i> correspondent (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Nikolai Portugalov | 1950       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                     | KGB agent, APN correspondent (FRG); active member of USSR–FRG Friendship Society                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Georgii Dadyants   | 1950       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                     | Propaganda Office of the Savelovsky railway station in Moscow; worked for the newspaper <i>Sovetskaya Rossiya</i> ; the head of the APN bureau (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Karen Khachaturov  | 1950       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                     | Deputy Chairman of the Board of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency; publicist, specialist in Latin America                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Valentin Falin     | 1950       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                     | Locksmith; employee of the Soviet Control Commission in GDR; Information Committee at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (senior assistant, assistant, senior assistant, deputy head of the department); referent to the Information Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU; USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; head of the third European Department; political observer of <i>Izvestia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Lev Delyusin       | 1950       | Moscow Oriental Studies Institute (Chinese Department)                                                                                                           | Librarian at the Herzen Children's Library; accountant at a collective farm in the Chelyabinsk region; served in WWII. <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (China); consulting editor of the international journal <i>Problems of Peace</i> ; a consultant in the Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Relations with the Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries; the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System of the USSR Academy of Sciences (Deputy Director for research), founder of the Institute of the Far East of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the Head of the China Department at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences |
| Nil Lenskii        | 1950, 1956 | Military Institute of Foreign Languages (“Instructor for work among the troops and population of the enemy”); the Military Diplomatic Academy of the Soviet Army | The 1st Operational Directorate of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR; a senior lecturer at the VDA; TASS correspondent (France); the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| Albertas Laurinčiukas | 1950, 1959 | Siauliai State Pedagogical Institute (Faculty of Physics and Mathematics); Vintas Kapsukas Vilnius State University (Faculty of Journalism) | “The Soviet teacher”, <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> ; special correspondent for the newspapers <i>Sel'skaya Zhizn'</i> , <i>Moskovskie Novosti</i> , and <i>Pravda</i> (USA); editor of the newspaper “Tiesa” ( <i>Pravda</i> in New York)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Yuri Paporov          | Bef. 1950s | Unknown                                                                                                                                     | Correspondent (Latin America), KGB agent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Vladimir Tolstikov    | Circa 1950 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Served in WWII; Sovinformburo; International Department of <i>Trud</i> ; commentator on State Television; political commentator on Central Television and All-Union Radio, correspondent (UK and USA); professor at the MGIMO Department of International Journalism                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Gennadii Shishkin     | Circa 1950 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Turner at the factory; served in WWII; TASS correspondent (USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Vladimir Dunaev       | Bef. 1951  | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (International Law Faculty)                                    | International Department at <i>Trud</i> ; Gosteleradio correspondent (UK, USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Mark Vilensky         | Circa 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Head of the International Department at <i>Krokodil</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Sergei Afonin         | Circa 1951 | Oriental Studies Institute (Vietnamese sub-department)                                                                                      | TASS correspondent (Vietnam), <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> correspondent (Vietnam)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Artyom Melikyan       | Circa 1952 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | TASS correspondent (USA, England, Ireland, Canada)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Volf Sedykh           | 1951       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Editor, columnist, head of the French editorial office of Foreign Broadcasting; responsible employee of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, curator of the French Communist Party; head of the sector of Developed Capitalist Countries of the Department of International Information of the Central Committee of the CPSU; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (France); Director of the <i>Progress</i> Publishing House; political observer for APN            |
| Yevgeny Ambartsumov   | 1951       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Editor of <i>Novoe Vremya</i> ; senior researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences; the editor of the journal “Problems of Peace and Socialism”; worked in various institutes in the USSR Academy of Sciences; Deputy Director of the Institute of the International Labor Movement, head of the sector of the Institute of Concrete Social Research, Department of the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System |
| Nikolai Kurdyumov     | 1951       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                | Foreign Department of <i>Trud</i> ; the editorial board of <i>Trud</i> and “Soviet Culture” (USA); Deputy-editor of <i>Pravda</i> in the Department of American Countries, correspondent (USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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| Vladimir Iordanskii  | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                      | Head of the TASS office (France); deputy editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper <i>Za rubezhom</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Vitalii Kobysh       | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                      | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Panama, England, USA); head of the sector of the International Information Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU; political observer at <i>Izvestia</i> ; worked for the radio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Leonid Kamynin       | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                      | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Stanislav Kondrashov | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Faculty of History) | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Egypt, USA); political observer for <i>Izvestia</i> , hosted the <i>Mezhdunarodnaya Panorama</i> program on television                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Vsevolod Ovchinnikov | 1951 | Military Institute of Foreign Languages of the Red Army (Chinese Department)                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (China, Japan, UK); reported from the USA, Nicaragua, Mexico, Indonesia, and India; host of the weekly program <i>Mezhdunarodnaya Panorama</i> on the Central Television                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Nikolai Shishlin     | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Faculty of History) | <i>Znanie</i> Society; senior lecturer at the Moscow Textile Institute; head of the group of consultants of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU for relations with Communist parties of capitalist countries; Head of the Information Sub-Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Relations with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries; a consultant to the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU; a political observer for <i>Pravda</i> |
| Stanislav Kondrashov | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Faculty of History) | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Egypt, USA, Lebanon, Sudan, Morocco), <i>Mezhdunarodnaya Panorama</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vitalii Zhurkin      | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Faculty of History) | State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of the USSR; editor-in-chief of the Main Propaganda Editorial Office; deputy editor of the Asia and Africa Department of <i>Pravda</i> ; counselor at the USSR Embassy in India                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Igor Belyaev         | 1951 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                                              | Sovinformburo correspondent (Syria, Lebanon); <i>Pravda's</i> editor (Department of Asia and Africa); Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the editorial office of <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> ; specialist in economic history and international relations of the Arab countries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Leonid Cherkasskii   | 1951 | The Military Institute of Foreign Languages (Oriental Faculty)                                    | Specialist in China, translator                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Eduard Rozental'     | 1951 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                      | Taught philosophy and social psychology at universities in Switzerland, Mali, and Congo; reported from France, Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Greece; political observer for APN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| Vladimir Osipov    | 1951       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                        | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Vietnam, Canada, UK)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sergei Vishnevskii | 1951       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                        | <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> (International Department), <i>Za prochnyi mir, za demokratiyu</i> (editorial office); <i>Pravda</i> , specialist in America                                                                                                                               |
| Leon Bagramov      | 1952       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (History)                              | Reported from Canada; a specialist in Canada, one of the founders of the Canadian Studies                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Genrikh Borovik    | 1952       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                        | Pyatigorsk Theater; electrician's assistant; <i>Ogonyok</i> (reported from Hungary, Poland, China, Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia); APN correspondent (Cuba, USA), <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> (USA); political observer for Gosteleradio                                              |
| Vasilii Chichkov   | 1952       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                        | Served in WWII; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Latin America); deputy editor-in-chief of the magazine <i>Vokrug sveta</i>                                                                                                                                                           |
| Nikolai Khokhlov   | 1952       | Course attendant at the Oriental Department of the Higher Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Regional press; covered the final stage of the Korean War; worked for the English-language Soviet magazine "News"; <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Congo, Ghana, Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya, Libya, Afghanistan, Tanzania, Pakistan, and other countries of Asia and Africa) |
| Aleksandr Kislov   | 1952       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (International Law Faculty)            | Head of the TASS office (New York, Washington); correspondent (Switzerland, Egypt); Institute of the USA and Canada of the USSR Academy of Sciences                                                                                                                               |
| Yuri Voronov       | 1952       | Leningrad State University (Faculty of Journalism)                                                                  | Head of the Student Youth Department of the Leningrad newspaper <i>Smena</i> ; editor-in-chief of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> ; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (GDR, West Berlin)                                                                                                    |
| Valid Atamali      | Circa 1952 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                                                                | VOKS, head of APN office (Lebanon)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Vladimir Katin     | 1953       | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                                                                | APN correspondent (Near East)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Boris Korolyov     | 1953       | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                                                                | Sovinformburo, Political observer of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency; APN correspondent (Burma, Canada, Greece, Ireland)                                                                                                                                                          |
| Boris Pankin       | 1953       | Lomonosov Moscow State University (Department of Journalism)                                                        | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> correspondent; editor-in-chief; Chairman of the Board of the All-Union Copyright Agency; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary (Sweden)                                                                                                        |
| Gennady Gerasimov  | 1953       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (International Law Faculty)            | Central Committee of the CPSU; one of the hosts of the TV program <i>Mezhdunarodnaya Panorama</i> ; the editor-in-chief of <i>Moskovskie Novosti</i> ; Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR                                                |
| Enver Mamedov      | 1953       | First Moscow State Institute of Foreign Languages                                                                   | Press attache at the Soviet embassy (Italy); editor-in-chief of the Main Editorial Office of broadcasting to the USA, England, and Latin America; Ministry of Foreign Affairs;                                                                                                    |

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|                        |            |                                                                                                                                                    | adviser-envoy of the USSR Embassy (Washington); editor-in-chief of the magazine "USSR"; Editor-in-chief, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Sovinformburo; First Deputy Chairman of the Board of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency (APN), political observer of the APN; Deputy Chairman of Gosteleradio; political observer of the APN                                                                                                             |
| Evgenii Primakov       | 1953       | Institute of Oriental Studies                                                                                                                      | Senior Researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations; Gosteleradio correspondent (executive editor of broadcasting to Arab countries); <i>Pravda</i> columnist (Asian Countries department); <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Egypt); Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences; Professor at the Diplomatic Academy; member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| Yuri Karyakin          | 1953       | Moscow State University (Faculty of Philosophy)                                                                                                    | Scientific editor in the journal "History of the USSR", "Problems of Peace and Socialism"; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Anatolii Krasikov      | 1954, 1955 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; courses in foreign languages at MGIMO (Italian language translation) | TASS editor and correspondent (Italy, Vatican); head of the TASS bureau (Italy); head of the TASS bureau (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Tomas Kolesnichenko    | 1954       | Moscow State University (Faculty of History); the Higher Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR                          | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Central and South Africa, Great Britain, USA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Farid Seyfull-Mulyukov | 1954       | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (Arabic Department)                                                                                           | <i>Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'</i> ; publishing house of Oriental literature; magazine "Modern East"; political observer for Central Television and Radio Broadcasting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Anatolii Potapov       | 1954       | Moscow State University (Faculty of Philology)                                                                                                     | Published in <i>Ogonyok</i> , Sovinformburo, <i>Novoe Vremya</i> ; political observer of the Committee on Radio Broadcasting under the Council of Ministers of the USSR; a correspondent for the USSR State Television in France; a political observer for Central Television and All-Union Radio                                                                                                                                                      |
| Viktor Sharapov        | 1954       | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (Chinese Department)                                                                                          | KGB agent; International Department of <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> ; employee of the <i>Druzhba</i> magazine (China); <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (China); Chinese Direction in the Department of Socialist Countries of the Central Committee of the CPSU; an assistant to the chairman of the KGB                                                                                                                                                         |
| Boris Gurnov           | Bef. 1955  | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (International Law Faculty)                                           | Foreign department of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , correspondent (GDR, Great Britain, France); correspondent for <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> (Vietnam); host at the Central Television Station; employee of <i>Pravda</i> ; then editor of the Foreign Department for <i>Sel'skaya zhizn'</i>                                                                                                                                                         |
| Andrei Kruschinskii    | Circa 1955 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies; Lomonosov Moscow State                                                                                       | Translation Bureau of the Office of Foreign Specialists at the State Council of the People's Republic of China; <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> correspondent (Poland, Nepal, China, Vietnam, Mongolia, North Korea, Czechoslovakia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                     |            | University (Faculty of History)                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Nikolai Efimov      | 1955       | Moscow State University (Department of Journalism)                                                                                                     | Editor of the British Press Department of the Sovinformburo; Editor of the representative office of the Sovinformburo (UK); Executive Secretary, editor-in-chief of the joint editorial office of newspapers for England and Norway, the main editorial office of periodicals in Western Europe and North America of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency; Editor-in-chief of periodicals for England, the Main editorial office of the North American APN; Advisor to the USSR Embassy in Great Britain, head of the bureau of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency in Great Britain; Chief editor of the newspaper "Soviet Weekly" (UK) |
| Pavel Mikhalyov     | 1955       | Leningrad State University                                                                                                                             | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda's</i> correspondent (UK); <i>Sovetskaya Kultura</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Arkadii Maslennikov | 1955       | Moscow State University (Department of Economics)                                                                                                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (India, Pakistan, England)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Igor' Fesunenkov    | 1955       | Moscow Historical and Archival Institute                                                                                                               | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> and <i>Gosteleradio</i> (Latin American Department); <i>Gosteleradio</i> correspondent (Brazil, Cuba, Portugal, Italy); political observer for TV programs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Igor' Sinitsyn      | 1955, 1973 | Started education at MGIMO, had to switch to Moscow Regional Pedagogical Institute, Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU | <i>Moskovskii komsomolets</i> ; Sovinformburo correspondent (Northern Europe), APN department (Western Europe), APN correspondent (Finland, Sweden, Germany)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Oleg nakropin       | Bef. 1955  | Unknown                                                                                                                                                | <i>Novy mir</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sergei Zykov        | Bef. 1956  | Unknown                                                                                                                                                | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (France)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Oleg Feofanov       | Bef. 1956  | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                           | Sovinformburo; the press secretary of the USSR Embassy (Canada); editor-in-chief of <i>Sputnik</i> ; Institute of the USA and Canada of the USSR Academy of Sciences; taught at the Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Journalism Faculty of Lomonosov Moscow State University                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Boris Pyadyshev     | 1956       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                           | Advisor to the USSR Embassy in the UK; Deputy Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Otto Lacis          | 1956       | Moscow State University (Department of Journalism)                                                                                                     | Regional press; editorial office of <i>Ekonomicheskaya gazeta</i> ; a literary employee, special correspondent, and economic columnist for <i>Izvestia</i> ; Head of the Editorial Department of the international journal "Problems of Peace and Socialism"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Ivan Shchedrov      | 1956       | Moscow State University (Department of Foreign Far East, History Department)                                                                           | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| Feodosie Vidrașcu              | 1956       | Republican Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova (Department of Journalism); the Higher Party School of the CPSU Central Committee in Moscow | Instructor of the Komsomol District Committee; the press sector of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova; Chairman of the Committee on Radio and Television at the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR; <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Rumania); writer |
| Ashraf Akhmedzyanov            | 1956       | Moscow State University                                                                                                                                                        | Researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences; a translator from Urdu and Hindi at the Bhilai Metallurgical Plant (India); an employee of the Asia and Africa Today magazine; TASS correspondent (Iran), <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, India)              |
| German Baikov                  | 1956, 1960 | Military Institute of Foreign Languages (unfinished), Moscow State University (Journalism Department)                                                                          | TASS correspondent (Iran)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Lollii Zamoskii                | 1957       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                                   | KGB agent, Radio editorial office (Italy); <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Italy); correspondent for <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> (France)                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Yuri Gavrilov                  | 1957       | Moscow State University (History Department)                                                                                                                                   | TASS correspondent (China); Member of the Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU; Lecturer at different Moscow universities                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Iona Andronov                  | Bef. 1958  | Institute of Oriental Languages at Moscow State University (Oriental History)                                                                                                  | <i>Novoe Vremya</i> correspondent (India, Nepal, Indonesia, China, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, USA, Nicaragua, Afghanistan); KGB agent                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Igor Golembiovskii             | Circa 1958 | Tbilisi State University (Faculty of Philology: Spanish and Literature)                                                                                                        | Regional press, instructor of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Komsomol Central Committee, <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Mexico)                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Vladimir Pozner                | 1958       | Moscow State University (Faculty of Biology and Soil Sciences)                                                                                                                 | Translator; <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency (APN) commentator for the Main Editorial Office of Radio Broadcasting (USA, UK); editor in the magazine "USSR"; Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting                                                                                                                   |
| Karen Karagezian               | 1958       | Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages, Heidelberg University                                                                                                 | Professional translator at the Institute of Social Sciences in Moscow; editor, columnist, head of the European Countries Department, and a member of the editorial board of the weekly <i>Za rubezhom</i> , <i>Novoe Vremya</i> correspondent (FRG)                                                                      |
| Vladimir Bolshakov             | 1959, 1960 | M. Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages (Translation Department), Military Diplomatic Academy (Faculty of Foreign Languages)                                                  | <i>Za rubezhom</i> , <i>Smena</i> , <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , <i>Pravda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Vladimir Kulikov (Gao Lin Wey) | 1959       | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                                                                   | Publicist, translator, orientalist, correspondent of the Central Television of the USSR (China)                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| Vladimir Lukin          | 1959               | Lenin Moscow State Pedagogical Institute (History Department)                | Researcher at the State Historical Museum of the USSR, the Museum of the Revolution; Senior referent of the Czechoslovak editorial board of the journal “Problems of Peace and Socialism” (Prague); Head of the Far Eastern Policy Sector of the Institute of the USA and Canada of the USSR Academy of Sciences |
| Vladimir Katin          | 1950s, before 1954 | Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies                                         | Political commentator of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency (APN); APN correspondent (Middle East); head of APN bureau (France)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Nikolai Progozhin       | 1950s              | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | <i>Inostrannaya Literatura, Pravda</i> (North, West, and Equatorial Africa, Italy)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Oleg Kitsenko           | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (India), specialist in China                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Igor’ Biryukov          | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> (deputy editor of the International Department); correspondent in Czechoslovakia                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Igor Mel’nikov          | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (FRG, Austria)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Oleg Losoto             | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Poland)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Gennady Vasil’ev        | 1950s              | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | TASS correspondent, <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (North Korea, the United States, England)                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lev Volodin             | 1950s              | Moscow State University (Journalism Department)                              | Editor of the “Youth of the World” magazine (Budapest); Foreign Department of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> and <i>Pravda</i> ; <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (France)                                                                                                                                             |
| Lev Stepanov            | 1950s              | Moscow State University (Economics Department)                               | Publishing House “Foreign Literature”; <i>Novoe Vremya</i> ; USSR Embassy in India; the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences; Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the journal MEIMO; “Problems of Peace and Socialism”                                                   |
| Gennadii Zafesov        | 1950s              | Moscow State University (Law School)                                         | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Cuba and the countries of Central America, Italy); Deputy editor of <i>Pravda</i> in the International Information Department                                                                                                                                                       |
| Vladimir Chernyshev     | 1950s              | Moscow State University                                                      | Correspondent (Spain)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Friedrich Rumyantsev    | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | Correspondent (Germany)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Aleksandr Ter-Grigoryan | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | All-Union Radio; <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> correspondent (China); <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Hungary, Nepal)                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Konrad Smirnov          | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | Assistant to the Chairman of the KGB of the USSR Andropov; <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Pavel Demchenko         | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | Head of the Middle East section of <i>Pravda</i> , <i>Pravda</i> correspondent in Asia and Africa                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Viktor Tsoppi           | 1950s              | Unknown                                                                      | APN correspondent (Algeria)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yuri Kornilov          | Bef.<br>1960  | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Literaturnaya gazeta</i> , TASS correspondent, TASS' political observer                                                                                                                             |
| Oleg Skalkin           | Bef.<br>1960  | Unknown                                                                      | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (India, Australia)                                                                                                                                                         |
| Vladimir Korotchanstev | Circa<br>1960 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | TASS correspondent (Madagascar, Mali, Cameroon)                                                                                                                                                        |
| Yuri Ustimenko         | Circa<br>1960 | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | TASS correspondent (Egypt, Zanzibar, UK, Ireland, Ethiopia, USA)                                                                                                                                       |
| Evgenii Rusakov        | 1960          | Institute of International Relations of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (USA)                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Yuri Babayants         | 1960          | Rostov State University                                                      | KGB agent, TASS correspondent (France, Portugal)                                                                                                                                                       |
| Vladimir Chimbir       | 1960,<br>1969 | Chisinau State University, Higher Diplomatic School                          | KGB agent, <i>Novoe vremya</i> correspondent (Peru)                                                                                                                                                    |
| Vladlen Krivosheev     | Bef.<br>1961  | Moscow Pedagogical Institute                                                 | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Czechoslovakia)                                                                                                                                                         |
| Andrei Itskov          | Bef.<br>1961  | Unknown                                                                      | KGB officer, <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (USA), executive secretary of the Foreign Section of the Soviet Union of Journalists                                                                        |
| Boris Tumanov          | 1961          | Moscow State University (School of Journalism)                               | TASS correspondent (French-speaking African countries)                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sergei Kulik           | 1961          | Moscow State Pedagogical University (Geography Faculty)                      | Censor at <i>Glavlit</i> ; TASS editor of the Editorial Office of the countries of Tropical Africa; TASS correspondent (Senegal, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Algeria, Kenya, etc.); TASS political observer |
| Leonid Mitrokhin       | Bef.<br>1962  | Candidate of Historical Sciences, unknown university                         | APN correspondent (India), head of APN bureau; advisor on counter-propaganda at the USSR Embassy in India                                                                                              |
| Boris Vasil'ev         | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | TASS correspondent (Burma), TASS counselor at the Bakhtar agency (Afghanistan)                                                                                                                         |
| Pyotr Yegorov          | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | TASS correspondent (Lebanon)                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Pavel naumov           | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | Columnist of <i>Pravda</i> and <i>Za rubezhom</i>                                                                                                                                                      |
| Daniil Yusupov         | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | APN correspondent (Syria)                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Anatolii Pis'mennyi    | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | TASS correspondent (Yemen)                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Valentin Osipov        | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                      | TASS correspondent (Iraq)                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sergei Svirin            | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | Supposed KGB agent, TASS correspondent (Thailand)                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Veniamin Shurygin        | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Indonesia)                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Aleksei Silenin          | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent (Cambodia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Nikolai Filatov          | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent (Morocco)                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Konstantin Vishnevetskii | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (United Arab Republic)                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Oleg Bogushevich         | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | APN correspondent (Tunisia)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Fyodor Obolentsev        | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent (Libya)                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vladimir Popov           | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent (Turkey)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Yuri Trushin             | Bef.<br>1962  | Unknown                                                                                                 | <i>Za rubezhom</i> correspondent                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Anatolii Druzenko        | 1962          | Moscow State University<br>(Faculty of Journalism)                                                      | <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Poland), editor of the department, member of the Editorial Board                                                                                                                                                 |
| Aleksei Vasil'ev         | 1962          | Institute of International Relations of the USSR<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>(Eastern Department) | Assistant to Viktor Maevsky (political commentator for newspaper <i>Pravda</i> ), <i>Pravda</i> correspondent (Vietnam, Turkey, Egypt), <i>Pravda's</i> political observer, Director of the Institute of Africa of the USSR Academy of Sciences |
| Vitalii Ignatenko        | 1963          | Moscow State University<br>(Faculty of Journalism)                                                      | Correspondent, First Deputy editor-in-chief of <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> , Deputy Director General of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS)                                                                                         |
| Aleksandr Pumpyansky     | 1963          | Institute of International Relations of the USSR<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs                         | <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Vladimir Kuzar'          | After<br>1963 | Military Institute of Foreign Languages                                                                 | <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Vladimir Astafiev        | Bef.<br>1964  | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent (Kenya), APN                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ilya Dudinskii           | Bef.<br>1964  | Unknown                                                                                                 | <i>Pravda</i> correspondent for socialist countries; Deputy Director of the Institute of World Socialist Economics. systems of the USSR Academy of Sciences                                                                                     |
| Mikhail Rostarchuk       | Circa<br>1964 | Unknown                                                                                                 | TASS correspondent, <i>Izvestia</i> correspondent (Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan)                                                                                                                                                    |
| Vladimir Ovchinnikov     | Circa<br>1964 | Institute of Oriental Languages                                                                         | Moscow Radio (Africa), Head of the Bureau of the <i>Novosti</i> Press Agency in Tanzania and Uganda, APN correspondent (Rwanda and Burundi); diplomat, First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Ethiopia                                       |

## Abstract

Die Ära Chruschtschows war geprägt von einer Liberalisierung vieler Lebensbereiche, darunter auch dem Wunsch der Sowjetunion nach Interaktion mit der Außenwelt. Dies zeigte sich in Austauschprogrammen und internationalen Gipfeltreffen, mit der Hoffnung der Behörden, ihren Einfluss in das Europa der Nachkriegszeit und in die ehemaligen Kolonialgebiete auszuweiten. Angesichts des Beginns des Kalten Krieges erforderte eine Öffnung gegenüber der Welt eine Änderung des Propagandaansatzes, und die Mitarbeiter der sowjetischen internationalen Nachrichtenorganisationen standen an der Spitze einer dringend notwendigen Transformation. Diese als *Mezhdunarodniki* oder internationale Nachrichtenmitarbeiter bekannten Personen stellten die traditionellen sowjetischen Methoden des Umgangs mit Informationen in Frage und lehnten sie ab. Nikolai Palgunov, Yuri Zhukov, Daniil Kraminov, Boris Burkov, Melor Sturua, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov und zahlreiche andere traten als prominente Persönlichkeiten der sowjetischen internationalen Propaganda in Erscheinung und engagierten sich aktiv in bedeutenden Propagandaorganen wie der Telegraphenagentur der Sowjetunion (TASS), dem Sowjetischen Informationsbüro (Sovinformburo), der Nachrichtenagentur Novosti, den Zeitungen *Pravda*, *Izvestia* und *Trud*. Diese Personen waren verschiedenen Organisationen angeschlossen, bemühten sich jedoch gemeinsam darum, Informationen über die UdSSR weltweit zu verbreiten.

Das Hauptargument dieser Dissertation besteht darin, dass sowjetische journalistische Organisationen keine "gesichtslosen" Ämter waren, die direkt mit dem Staat verbunden waren, sondern vielmehr eine Gruppe von Individuen, die ihre eigene Agenda hatten. Aus diesem Grund liegt mein Interesse an der Untersuchung der Organisationsstrukturen und der Personen, die zwischen 1945 und 1964 in ihnen tätig waren, sowie ihrer Aktivitäten, welche über die Grenzen der Sowjetunion hinausgingen. Durch den Fokus auf Menschen, die im Nachrichtenbereich tätig waren, beleuchtet die Dissertation die "andere Seite" des Systems und erklärt, warum bestimmte Entscheidungen getroffen wurden, welchen Herausforderungen die Menschen gegenüberstanden und warum die Versuche, die Organisationen zu reformieren, nicht so erfolgreich waren, wie die Beamten gehofft hatten. Darüber hinaus stellen sich neue Fragen, wenn Menschen in den Vordergrund der Analyse gerückt werden: Welche Ausbildung hatten sie, welche Identität besaßen sie und welche Hürden mussten sie nehmen, um als wertvolle Kader angesehen zu werden? Die Humanisierung der sowjetischen Nachrichten trägt dazu bei, die Handlungsfähigkeit der Beteiligten in den Vordergrund zu rücken, was in Studien über die UdSSR oft übersehen

wird: Sie hatten die Wahl zwischen einer Beförderung und dem Verbleib in ihrer Position, einem Wechsel zu anderen Organisationen oder anderen Regionen usw. Durch solch einen Blickwinkel wird deutlich, dass diese Menschen nicht nur Räder im Getriebe der sowjetischen Propaganda waren, sondern ein unverzichtbarer Bestandteil des Erfolgs des Staates auf der internationalen Bühne. Aus dieser Perspektive kann in der Doktorarbeit ein neues Verständnis zwischen Pragmatismus und Ideologie entstehen, da der Staat seine Propagandisten entschädigen musste, wodurch die Frage der Privilegien und der Nomenklatura ins Spiel kam.

Die zentrale Problematik der Arbeit dreht sich somit um die Identität und den Charakter derjenigen, die in der UdSSR im Bereich des internationalen Journalismus tätig waren: ihren sozialen und bildungsbezogenen Hintergrund, ihre beruflichen Erwartungen und die Perspektiven, zu denen sie ermutigt wurden oder die sie einnehmen durften, sowie die institutionellen Beschränkungen, denen sie unterlagen. Schließlich ist die berufliche Laufbahn eines Journalisten, erst recht eines internationalen Journalisten, unvorhersehbar. Je nach Herkunftsland gab es sehr unterschiedliche Anforderungen und Erwartungen: Für einige standen Fremdsprachenkenntnisse im Vordergrund, für andere hingegen waren Loyalität gegenüber der Zeitung und journalistische Fähigkeiten von höchster Priorität. So sprachen amerikanische Auslandskorrespondenten selten die Zielsprachen ihres Einsatzortes, während Redaktionen aus Deutschland versuchten, Reporter mit Sprachkenntnissen zu finden. Die beruflichen Standards variieren in verschiedenen Bereichen: die vermeintlichen Werte hinter ihrer Berichterstattung, die erwartete Häufigkeit und Intensität der Berichterstattung, die Ansichten zur Informationsfreiheit und Zensur – all diese Faktoren spielten bei den Unterschieden innerhalb des Berufs eine Rolle. Selbst innerhalb eines Landes hatten Journalisten sehr unterschiedliche Hintergründe und Werdegänge, dennoch gehörten sie alle derselben Berufsgruppe an: Einige schrieben für den Rundfunk, andere für die Presse; einige hatten renommierte Hochschulen absolviert, während andere schlicht zur Feder griffen und neben ihrer Arbeit in der Fabrik zu schreiben begannen.

Die Untersuchung von Kriterien der Professionalität sowjetischer Auslandskorrespondenten beleuchtet nicht nur die persönliche Dimension, sondern offenbart auch die umfassendere Dynamik des Systems, in dem sie tätig waren. Sie hilft dabei, die unterschiedlichen Erfolge und Misserfolge der sowjetischen internationalen Propaganda zu erklären, und hebt sowohl die Stärken als auch die Schwächen eines staatlich kontrollierten Medienapparats hervor, dessen Aufgabe es war, auf dem globalen Marktplatz der Ideen zu konkurrieren. Gleichzeitig ermöglicht die Fragestellung eine Einschätzung, inwieweit sich eine professionelle Ethik

unter Bedingungen entwickeln konnte, unter denen Einstellung, Beförderung und Karriereverlauf durch verschiedene Faktoren bestimmt wurden, die nichts mit journalistischer Leistung zu tun hatten. Auf diese Weise zeigt die Studie die strukturellen Grenzen auf, die die Professionalisierung des Journalismus in der UdSSR eingeschränkten, und deckt damit die inneren Widersprüche eines sozialistischen Staates auf, der seine Ideale im Ausland verbreiten wollte, gleichzeitig aber die Autonomie derjenigen begrenzte, die mit dieser Mission betraut waren. Daher ist die Professionalität von einfachen oder internationalen Journalisten schwer zu fassen, da die Kriterien für den Beruf selbst innerhalb eines einzelnen Staates so unterschiedlich waren.

Chronologisch umfasst die Studie zwei entscheidende Nachkriegsjahrzehnte, nämlich die Zeit von 1945 bis 1964. Es war die Zeit, in der der entscheidende Wandel stattfand – vom Beginn des Kalten Krieges und der Gründung der journalistischen Elite in der *Pravda* bis zur allmählichen Schaffung der Grundlagen für die Stagnationsära unter Breschnew. Darüber hinaus hilft der Umfang der Analyse dabei, die langfristigen Auswirkungen der menschenorientierten Reformen der 1940er Jahre aufzudecken und nachzuvollziehen, wie diese erst Jahre später Früchte trugen, beispielsweise in den Anpassungen im Bildungswesen oder Einstellungsstrategien. Deshalb war es unerlässlich, einen längeren Zeitraum einzubeziehen, um die Ergebnisse der genannten Entscheidungen sowie die vorgenommenen Änderungen, Dynamiken und Korrekturen zu erkennen. Der Endpunkt – 1964 – ist der logische Abschluss der Saga der Versuche, die Kader zu verändern. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war die sowjetische Elite fest in ihren Positionen verankert, alterte und wurde konservativer, wodurch sie den meisten Neueinsteigern den Zugang zu Beförderungen versperrte.

Die Recherche basierte auf einer Vielzahl von Quellen: Archivdokumenten aus mehreren Moskauer Archiven, digitalisierten Online-Dokumenten, Memoiren und Tagebüchern der beteiligten Personen sowie Interviews. All diese Quellen stellten jeweils ihre eigenen Herausforderungen dar, trugen jedoch dazu bei, ein Gesamtbild zu rekonstruieren, das über einzelne individuelle Vorurteile hinausgeht. Durch die Nutzung einer Vielzahl an Quellen ergibt sich die Möglichkeit, die Phänomene der Arbeit im Bereich des internationalen Journalismus miteinander zu vergleichen und detaillierter zu rekonstruieren, da die Quellen auf verschiedenen Ebenen erstellt wurden: von staatlichen Organisationen und von Menschen in verschiedenen Epochen. Natürlich waren ihre Standpunkte und Schwerpunkte in den verschiedenen Kontexten ihrer sowjetischen und postsowjetischen Existenz verwurzelt, wodurch bestimmte Details ihrer Arbeit besonders hervorgehoben wurden. Anhand dieser Dokumente werden die Ungleichheit der Chancen, die schlechten Bedingungen und der

ungleiche Zugang zu diesem Beruf deutlich. Schließlich konnte nicht jeder Teil der Elite sein. Folglich liegt die Methodik dieser Dissertation an der Schnittstelle von Politik- und Sozialgeschichte und verdeutlicht die Notwendigkeit, sowohl strukturelle Rahmenbedingungen als auch das Handeln einzelner Akteure in den Blick zu nehmen. Einerseits war es notwendig, den politischen Kontext zu rekonstruieren, der die Nachfrage nach einem professionalisierten Bereich des internationalen Journalismus hervorgebracht hat, und die institutionellen und ideologischen Veränderungen nachzuzeichnen, die einen solchen Beruf ermöglicht haben. Andererseits musste die Analyse das soziale Gefüge der beteiligten Personen als zentrale Komponente für das Verständnis der journalistischen Praxis unter sowjetischen Bedingungen genau berücksichtigen. Die Studie stellt daher eher die Auslandskorrespondenten als abstrakte Institutionen in den Mittelpunkt. Dennoch dürfen Institutionen und Strukturen nicht außer Acht gelassen werden: Sie griffen ständig ein, nicht nur indem sie Grenzen setzten, sondern auch indem sie die Lebenswege einzelner Menschen formten. Das Projekt ist daher als Dialog, als ständiger Austausch zwischen Struktur und Handlungsfähigkeit konzipiert, in dem untersucht wird, ob es das System ist, das den Journalisten hervorbringt, oder der Journalist, der das System belebt. Während Menschen Institutionen bevölkern und sie mit Ehrgeiz, Kreativität und Misserfolgen erfüllen, legen die Strukturen wiederum die zulässigen Horizonte fest, schaffen Grenzen für den Aufstieg, schreiben Karrierewege vor und bestimmen die Agenda, die Journalisten legitimerweise verfolgen können. Diese Spannung erforderte einen methodischen Ansatz, der sich nicht auf eine einzige Disziplin beschränkte.

Neben der politischen und sozialen Geschichte bezieht die Studie auch Elemente der Soziologie und Medienwissenschaft ein, um die vielfältigen Dimensionen der Forschungsfrage zu erfassen. Diese Perspektiven ermöglichen es, nicht nur die strukturellen Bedingungen des sowjetischen Journalismus zu analysieren, sondern auch das Konzept der Professionalität selbst: welche Merkmale es in diesem Kontext mit sich brachte, wie diese Eigenschaften ausgehandelt und eingeschränkt wurden und welche Anforderungen das Feld an diejenigen stellte, die darin arbeiteten. Die Medienwissenschaften lieferten den notwendigen Kontext und den imaginären Rahmen, um die "Norm" in verschiedenen Regionen, Epochen und Kontexten zu verstehen und mögliche Variablen und Abweichungen zu identifizieren. Da der internationale Journalismus in der Sowjetunion vielfältige Formen und Modalitäten annahm, lässt sich seine Wirksamkeit nicht allein mit Propagandavorgaben oder ideologischen Imperativen erklären. Vielmehr wurde er durch ein Zusammenspiel von systemischen Beschränkungen, beruflichen Praktiken und individuellen Anpassungen

vermittelt, was zu einem Beruf führte, der für das globale Projekt der Sowjetunion unverzichtbar war und gleichzeitig ständig von diesem eingeschränkt wurde.

Die Literatur, die sich mit verwandten Themen und Fragen befasst, ist vielfältig, da die Forscher viele verschiedene Blickwinkel eingenommen haben, um die Tiefen des internationalen Journalismus in verschiedenen Regionen und Epochen zu ergründen. Zuerst wurde die Wahrnehmung dieser Personen und Organisationen in wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten stark vom Kalten Krieg beeinflusst. Lange Zeit wurde die Literatur von der sogenannten Sowjetologie dominiert, d. h. amerikanischen Studien über die UdSSR. Diese Forschungsarbeiten waren angesichts der Rivalität zwischen den USA und der Sowjetunion tendenziell negativ voreingenommen. Folglich basierte die Beurteilung der sowjetischen Presse oft auf einem angloamerikanischen Ideal von Nachrichten und Nachrichtenagenturen, und Studien über die sowjetische Presse waren aufgrund fehlender Quellen und der Spiegelung diametral entgegengesetzter Überzeugungen in den kritischen/theoretischen Ansätzen dieser Werke verzerrt. Während die amerikanische Presse als frei von jeglicher Voreingenommenheit dargestellt wurde, wurde die sowjetische Presse auf die Rolle eines Werkzeugs totalitärer Führer reduziert und als Teil einer allmächtigen und homogenen Propagandamaschine beschrieben. Nach dieser Interpretation spielten Pressevertreter eine zusätzliche Rolle als Diener der Partei, und ihre Aufgabe bestand lediglich darin, den Anordnungen zu folgen. Aus diesem Grund wurden viele Organisationen und Prozesse lange Zeit von Forschern abgelehnt oder gering geschätzt. Langsam entwickelte sich ein anderes Verständnis der UdSSR, das komplexer war als die Schwarz-Weiß-Darstellung der 1940er bis 1960er Jahre. Mit dem Zugang zu Quellen, die die Menschen hinter diesen Organisationen endlich sichtbar machen, eröffnen sich neue Perspektiven. So reflektiert die moderne Forschung mehr über die sowjetischen Nachrichten und die Menschen darin, hebt die Handlungsfähigkeit hervor und lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Supermächten, anstatt ihre Darstellungen zu polarisieren. Neuere Forschungen zum Kalten Krieg konzentrieren sich auf die Handlungsfähigkeit von Journalisten und Beamten als staatliche Experten und Vermittler und deren Auswirkungen auf die staatliche Politik. Sie widmen ihren Netzwerken und ihrer Agenda als Experten des Kalten Krieges, Zensoren, Reformern der Presse, Kämpfern für die Sowjetisierung usw. viel mehr Aufmerksamkeit. Beispielsweise konzentrierten sich neue Studien auf die Diskussionen und Möglichkeiten der Entstalinisierung, die Arbeitsweise amerikanischer und sowjetischer Auslandskorrespondenten oder die Professionalität sowjetischer Journalisten. Unter Verzicht auf das totalitäre Paradigma werden Journalisten hier als staatliche Akteure betrachtet, die

Wege fanden, ihre Anliegen gegenüber Beamten zu kommunizieren, oder selbst Beamte wurden. Andererseits neigt die russische Geschichtsschreibung dazu, die Presse der Tauwetterperiode weitgehend zu übersehen und sich vorwiegend auf den Zweiten Weltkrieg und seine Auswirkungen auf den sowjetischen Staat zu konzentrieren. Viele Forscher sind eng mit den russischen staatlichen Institutionen verbunden und wiederholen die heroischen Erzählungen des Krieges, wobei sie das sowjetische Nachrichtensystem und Stalin loben. Darüber hinaus basieren viele Studien auf Organisationen, die „nach innen“ arbeiten – d. h. von und für sowjetische Bürger. Leider gibt es nicht viel kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den Quellen zur internationalen Berichterstattung. Dennoch kann die Untersuchung international orientierter Journalisten als Ergänzung zu den Aspekten des Konflikts im Kalten Krieg dienen, da sie Debatten über Pragmatismus jenseits der Hardliner-Politik der Partei anregen und den Kurs der sowjetischen Außenpolitik und Entscheidungsfindung verändern.

Da diese Dissertation den Menschen in den Mittelpunkt ihrer Analyse stellt, beginnt die Erzählung mit der Revolution, die sowohl einen politischen Bruch als auch einen sozialen Wendepunkt darstellt. Eine bedeutende Anzahl von Journalisten, deren Karrieren in dieser Studie untersucht werden, trat während der Revolutionsjahre oder in den folgenden Jahrzehnten der 1920er und 1930er Jahre in den Beruf ein. Ihr Berufsleben spielte sich vor dem Hintergrund einer sich rasch wandelnden politischen Landschaft, wiederholter Versuche institutioneller und pädagogischer Experimente und, was vielleicht am folgenreichsten war, wiederkehrender Säuberungsaktionen ab, die die Grenzen akzeptablen beruflichen und persönlichen Verhaltens ständig neu definierten. Das Kapitel mit dem Titel „Exodus of the Fittest“ rekonstruiert die Chronologie der Professionalisierung des Journalismus und geht der Frage nach, warum die Etablierung stabiler beruflicher Standards und Identitäten vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg letztlich unmöglich blieb. Das Haupthindernis lag in den bewussten und anhaltenden Bemühungen des Staates, die Gesellschaft von oben herab neu zu strukturieren. Diese Bemühungen führten zu außergewöhnlichen Mustern sowohl der Aufwärts- als auch der Abwärtsmobilität: Einzelpersonen konnten aus den untersten sozialen und beruflichen Schichten in Positionen mit beträchtlicher Autorität aufsteigen und umgekehrt ebenso schnell wieder entfernt werden. Ebenso konnten Journalisten aus Provinzstädten in das symbolische und politische Zentrum Moskau versetzt werden, nur um dann durch nachfolgende Kampagnen wieder verdrängt zu werden. Solche Formen künstlich herbeigeführter Mobilität waren weder zufällig noch willkürlich, sondern stellten eine explizite und bewusste Politik des Sowjetstaates dar. Diese Politik hatte tiefgreifende Folgen: Sie ermöglichte eine rasche Durchlässigkeit von Einflusspositionen, untergrub aber gleichzeitig die Stabilität von

Karrieren, Institutionen und beruflichen Identitäten. Für viele war dies ein Prozess, der nicht nur ihr Leben und ihre Karriere prägte, sondern auch entscheidend einschränkte und damit Prekarität in die Struktur ihrer beruflichen Existenz einbettete.

Das zweite Kapitel, "Pillars of Change," untersucht die grundlegenden Veränderungen, die den sowjetischen Journalismus in der Nachkriegszeit neu geprägt haben, und bewertet, wie sich diese Veränderungen auf breitere soziale und institutionelle Prozesse ausgewirkt haben. Dieses Kapitel konzentriert sich auf drei miteinander verbundene Entwicklungen. Die Erste betrifft die Aufnahme von Medienmanagern in die Reihen der Nomenklatura, was sowohl die institutionelle Konsolidierung des Journalismus als Beruf als auch seine tiefere Integration in die Mechanismen der staatlichen Regierungsführung signalisierte. Die zweite Entwicklung konzentriert sich auf das zunehmende Interesse des Staates an der Bewertung der Wirksamkeit seiner Propaganda im Ausland, eine Veränderung, die nicht nur die Verschärfung des Kalten Krieges widerspiegelte, sondern auch die Anerkennung unterschiedlicher Vorlieben und Meinungen der ausländischen Leserschaft als einen wichtigen Faktor in der sowjetischen Außenpolitik. Die dritte Entwicklung konzentriert sich auf die institutionellen Umgestaltungen nach dem Tod Josef Stalins, die neue Möglichkeiten für organisatorische Umstrukturierungen schufen, aber auch die anhaltende Fragilität der beruflichen Autonomie in diesem Bereich offenbarten. Zusammen bestimmten diese drei Dynamiken – künstliche Schaffung einer Elite, externe Bewertung und institutionelle Umstrukturierung – den Verlauf des sowjetischen Journalismus der Nachkriegszeit und prägten entscheidend seine operative Leistungsfähigkeit. Sie schufen die strukturellen Bedingungen, unter denen Journalisten arbeiteten, und bestimmten damit sowohl die Erfolge als auch die Misserfolge der sowjetischen internationalen Berichterstattung für die kommenden Jahrzehnte. Indem diese Entwicklungen in einen größeren Zusammenhang gestellt werden, argumentiert das Kapitel, dass die Nachkriegsjahre die Grundlage für die nachfolgenden Veränderungen im internationalen Journalismus im sowjetischen Projekt bildeten.

Das folgende Kapitel "Professionalization? Journalists' Career Trajectories" untersucht die Entwicklung der bildungs- und institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen, die zur Vorbereitung künftiger *Mezhdunarodniki* geschaffen wurden, und beleuchtet gleichzeitig die Mängel und Unstimmigkeiten dieser Bemühungen. Das Kapitel zeichnet die Versuche nach, systematische Ausbildungsmechanismen für Auslandskorrespondenten zu etablieren, und zeigt, wie diese Initiativen sowohl die Kurzsichtigkeit der sowjetischen Planung im Bereich der Außenpolitik als auch die allgemeine institutionelle Zurückhaltung – oder zuweilen sogar die völlige

Ablehnung – bei der Förderung eines vollständig professionalisierten Korps internationaler Journalisten offenbarten. Anstatt Korrespondenten mit umfassenden sprachlichen, kulturellen und analytischen Kompetenzen auszubilden, betonten die sowjetischen Institutionen oft den gewünschten Universalismus der zukünftigen Absolventen, in der Hoffnung, sie zur Schließung der dringendsten Lücken in Kaderfragen einsetzen zu können. Diese Hoffnungen wurden jedoch schnell von der Realität zunichte gemacht: Kein Universalist würde jemals so effizient sein wie jemand, der eine präzisere Ausbildung hatte und genau in diesem Bereich eingesetzt wurde. Es stellte sich heraus, dass viele der sowjetischen Korrespondenten eine gezieltere Ausbildung und ein allgemeines Verständnis für fremde Länder benötigten, was bald zu einer langsamen und schmerzhaften Trennung von anderen Arbeitnehmern und einer Kristallisierung des journalistischen Berufsstandes führte. Über die Bildungsdefizite hinaus unterstreicht das Kapitel die strukturellen Grenzen der sozialen Mobilität innerhalb des Berufsstandes. Während der Journalismus in der Sowjetunion theoretisch für Personen unterschiedlicher sozialer Herkunft offen war, blieb der Zugang zu den prestigeträchtigsten und einflussreichsten Positionen stark eingeschränkt. Die Karrierewege wurden nicht nur durch die formale Ausbildung und die individuellen Leistungen geprägt, sondern auch durch eine komplexe Reihe von Variablen, darunter politische Patronage, institutionelle Zugehörigkeit, persönliche Netzwerke und die Konfrontation mit wechselnden ideologischen Kampagnen. Infolgedessen war der Weg zum professionellen Auslandskorrespondenten mit Hindernissen, Unsicherheiten und Schwachstellen gepflastert. Indem es die individuellen Karrierewege in diesen breiteren institutionellen und politischen Kontexten verortet, argumentiert das Kapitel, dass die Professionalisierung des internationalen Journalismus in der Sowjetunion im Grunde unvollständig blieb. Anstatt einer linearen Entwicklung hin zu mehr Stabilität verdeutlichte die Entwicklung der *Mezhdunarodniki* die Widersprüche eines Systems, das gleichzeitig versuchte, im Ausland ein Bild der Kompetenz zu vermitteln, während es systematisch genau die Bedingungen untergrub, die für die Entwicklung professioneller Fachkompetenz notwendig waren.

Das Kapitel “*Mezhdunarodnik as a Vocation*” steht in einem stillschweigenden Dialog mit dem Weber'schen Konzept der Rationalisierung bürokratischer Strukturen. Das sowjetische Bürokratiemodell weist eine porösere, fließendere und bisweilen widersprüchliche Konfiguration auf. Anstatt als streng rationalisierter Apparat zu fungieren, der ausschließlich dem Zweck dient, die Ideale des Staates zu fördern, war die sowjetische Bürokratielandschaft durch sich überschneidende Zuständigkeiten, labyrinthische institutionelle Strukturen und Praktiken gekennzeichnet, die politische Zweckmäßigkeit und ideologische Ziele über

organisatorische Kohärenz stellten. Dieses System war nicht durch strenge Grenzen gekennzeichnet, sondern durch Fluidität und Durchlässigkeit zwischen den institutionellen Bereichen, was gleichzeitig den Bedürfnissen des Staates diente und Raum für individuelle Aufstiegsstrategien schuf. Diese institutionelle Durchlässigkeit ermöglichte es Einzelpersonen, relativ leicht zwischen verschiedenen Berufsfeldern zu wechseln.

So rekrutierte sich das Personal des sowjetischen internationalen Journalismus aus einem bemerkenswert vielfältigen Spektrum von Hintergründen. Schriftsteller, Zeitungsjournalisten, Diplomaten und sogar Geheimdienstmitarbeiter trafen sich im selben Bereich und schufen ein heterogenes berufliches Umfeld. Manchmal bereicherte diese Vielfalt die journalistische Praxis, da der Staat bestrebt war, sogenannte “universelle Experten” heranzubilden, die in der Lage waren, eine Vielzahl von Aufgaben im Ausland zu bewältigen. Dieses Konzept war jedoch weniger ein bewusster Versuch, berufliche Hybridität zu schaffen, als vielmehr eine pragmatische Lösung für strukturelle Mängel. Das System wurde bewusst so aufgebaut, dass es den Mangel an Fachkräften so schnell wie möglich beheben konnte, wobei es sich auf die für die sowjetische Gesellschaft charakteristische hohe soziale Mobilität stützte. Wenn Personal benötigt wurde, wurde es aus benachbarten Bereichen rekrutiert und zu den für die Durchsetzung der sowjetischen Politik notwendigen Werkzeugen geformt. So konnten Journalisten je nach sich ändernden politischen Prioritäten und den unmittelbaren Bedürfnissen des Staates in eine Vielzahl von Positionen und Fachgebieten versetzt werden. Aus Sicht der sowjetischen Führung war diese Flexibilität ein wertvoller Mechanismus für die strategische Umverteilung von Humankapital, der sicherstellte, dass qualifiziertes Personal dort eingesetzt werden konnte, wo es am nützlichsten war. Diese Dynamik diente jedoch auch den Interessen der Einzelnen, die sich in diesem System bewegten. Absolventen und junge Fachkräfte versuchten, ihre Aussichten zu maximieren, indem sie ihre institutionellen Zugehörigkeiten diversifizierten. Durch den Wechsel zwischen verschiedenen Organisationen erhöhten sie nicht nur ihre Chancen auf eine feste Anstellung, sondern verbesserten auch ihre materiellen Lebensbedingungen, steigerten ihr berufliches Ansehen und erhielten Zugang zu symbolischen Belohnungen, darunter die Möglichkeit, ins Ausland zu reisen. Das Kapitel hebt daher hervor, dass Journalisten keine passiven Räder im Getriebe einer bürokratischen Maschine waren. Sie behielten ihre Handlungsfähigkeit, trafen Entscheidungen innerhalb der Grenzen des Systems und verfolgten Strategien, die es ihnen ermöglichten, sich an die Umstände, in denen sie sich befanden, anzupassen und diese gelegentlich sogar auszunutzen. Die Darstellung dieser Möglichkeiten und alternativer Wege unterstreicht, dass die Sowjetbürger selbst unter restriktiven Bedingungen

Handlungsfähigkeit ausüben und sich Freiräume schaffen. Auf diese Weise war die Fluidität der sowjetischen bürokratischen Ordnung sowohl eine Einschränkung als auch eine Ressource: Sie spiegelte die instrumentelle Nutzung des Humankapitals durch den Staat wider und bot gleichzeitig ambitionierten Fachkräften Strategien, um innerhalb eines restriktiven Systems kulturelles, soziales und materielles Kapital anzuhäufen. Letztendlich zeigt das Kapitel, dass der Beruf des *Mezhdunarodniki* eine einzigartige Formation war. Sie entstand an der Schnittstelle zwischen staatlichen Imperativen und individueller Handlungsfähigkeit innerhalb eines Systems, in dem bürokratische Strukturen weniger rationalisiert als vielmehr anpassungsfähig, weniger stabil als vielmehr kontingent und eher auf die grassierende Bürokratisierung als auf administrative Effizienz ausgerichtet waren.

Das letzte Kapitel “Of Gods and People: Nomenklatura and the Rest” untersucht die Schichtung der sowjetischen Medienkreise, wobei besonderes Augenmerk auf die Formen der Ungleichheit gelegt wird, die den Beruf des Journalisten prägten. Es wird argumentiert, dass dieser Bereich nicht durch eine einheitliche berufliche Identität gekennzeichnet war, sondern vielmehr entlang der Linien von Zugang, Privilegien und symbolischem Kapital gespalten war, wodurch eine Hierarchie entstand, die die Elite der Nomenklatura vom breiteren Journalistenkorps trennte. Das Kapitel beginnt mit einer Untersuchung der zugrunde liegenden Motive für diese Schichtung. Von zentraler Bedeutung war dabei das ambivalente Selbstverständnis der Sowjetunion auf der Weltbühne. Einerseits versuchten die sowjetischen Behörden, ein Bild ideologischer und kultureller Überlegenheit zu vermitteln, andererseits waren sie sich der Schwachstellen, die durch die internationale Beobachtung offenbart wurden, sehr bewusst. Da sich die Sowjetunion auf der Weltbühne sowohl als Vorbild als auch als Konkurrent positionierte, wurde das Verhalten ihrer Bürger im Ausland – insbesondere derjenigen, die mit der Vertretung des Landes in offizieller oder halboffizieller Funktion betraut waren – streng kontrolliert. Von Journalisten, die im internationalen Kontext tätig waren, wurde erwartet, dass sie die Werte des sowjetischen Projekts verkörperten und sowohl als Informationsvermittler als auch als Vorbilder für idealisiertes sowjetisches Verhalten fungierten. Die Analyse wendet sich dann den zusätzlichen Kriterien zu, die den Zugang zum Beruf bestimmten. Über die Anforderungen an die fachlichen Fähigkeiten hinaus dienten Faktoren wie Geschlecht, Nationalität und persönliche Biografie oft als entscheidende Filter. Diese Kriterien fungierten als implizite und explizite “Ausschlusskriterien,” die viele ansonsten qualifizierte Kandidaten vom Beruf ausschlossen. Für einige war der Journalismus eher eine zweitrangige Option als eine Karriere erster Wahl, die sie erst nach dem Ausschluss aus prestigeträchtigeren und politisch geschützten

Bereichen wie der Diplomatie ergriffen. Diese Dynamik verstärkte den ungleichen Status des Journalismus innerhalb der allgemeinen sowjetischen Berufshierarchie und führte gleichzeitig zu einer Stratifizierung des journalistischen Feldes selbst. Abschließend befasst sich das Kapitel mit den materiellen Bedingungen der journalistischen Arbeit und untersucht, wie der Zugang zu Ressourcen, Privilegien und Möglichkeiten für Reisen oder materielle Belohnungen die Spaltungen innerhalb des Berufsstandes weiter vertiefte. Elitejournalisten, die in die Nomenklatura eingebettet waren, genossen erhebliche Vorteile, während andere auf weniger prestigeträchtige Positionen mit begrenztem Zugang zu solchen Vorteilen beschränkt blieben. Die daraus resultierenden Ungleichheiten prägten nicht nur die beruflichen Laufbahnen, sondern auch die Lebenserfahrungen sowjetischer Journalisten und unterstrichen, inwieweit der Bereich in umfassendere Muster der sozialen und politischen Schichtung eingebettet war. Indem es diese Dynamik nachzeichnet, verortet das Kapitel den sowjetischen Journalismus innerhalb des größeren Systems der sowjetischen Ungleichheit und zeigt, wie der Berufsstand die hierarchischen Strukturen des Staates reproduzierte.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass diese Dissertation die Entwicklung des sowjetischen internationalen Journalismus sowohl als Berufsfeld als auch als soziales Phänomen nachgezeichnet und ihn in den Kontext der umfassenderen Veränderungen des politischen, institutionellen und kulturellen Lebens der Sowjetunion von der Revolutionszeit bis in die Nachkriegsjahrzehnte gestellt hat. Indem sie die Lebenserfahrungen von Journalisten mit ihren Karrierewegen, institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen und sich wandelnden Möglichkeiten in den Vordergrund stellte, versuchte die Dissertation zu beleuchten, wie der sowjetische Staat die Entwicklung der *Mezhdunarodniki* gleichzeitig förderte und einschränkte. Die Analyse hat gezeigt, dass die Professionalisierung keineswegs gefördert wurde, sondern dass die journalistische Identität unvollständig und umstritten war. Einerseits gelang es den Bildungsrahmen und Ausbildungsprogrammen nicht, technisch versierte, autonome Auslandskorrespondenten hervorzubringen, wie sie in anderen Kontexten vorgesehen waren. Andererseits ermöglichte die Durchlässigkeit der sowjetischen Bürokratiestrukturen sowohl dem Staat als auch Einzelpersonen, den Journalismus als flexiblen Bereich für die Umverteilung oder Anhäufung von Humankapital zu behandeln. Diese Dualität zwischen staatlicher Kontrolle und individueller Strategie war konstitutiv für den Beruf selbst. Darüber hinaus offenbarte die Schichtung innerhalb der sowjetischen Medienkreise die tiefen Ungleichheiten, die den Beruf prägten, vom Zugang zu prestigeträchtigen Organisationen bis hin zu den materiellen Vorteilen und dem symbolischen Kapital, das der journalistischen Elite zuteil wurde. Durch die Aufdeckung der Schnittstelle

zwischen ideologischen Anforderungen, sozialen Hierarchien und persönlichen Biografien zeigt die Dissertation, dass der Journalismus niemals ein gleichberechtigtes Feld war, sondern vielmehr ein Mikrokosmos der umfassenderen sowjetischen Muster von Privilegien und Ausgrenzung.

Zusammengenommen stellen diese Erkenntnisse eine einfache Erzählung über die Professionalisierung des Journalismus in der Sowjetunion in Frage. Hierfür zeichnet sich die Geschichte der *Mezhdunarodniki* als ambivalent ab: geprägt von der Instrumentalisierung der Humanressourcen durch den Staat, eingeschränkt durch politische und ideologische Zwänge, aber auch kreativ gestaltet von Individuen, die nach Prestige, Mobilität und Möglichkeiten suchten, die anderswo nicht verfügbar waren. In diesem Sinne war der sowjetische internationale Journalismus nicht nur ein Spiegelbild der sowjetischen Gesellschaft, sondern ein aktiver Ort, an dem Fragen der Ideologie, Bürokratie, Mobilität und Ungleichheit verhandelt wurden. Indem diese Dynamik in einen breiteren theoretischen Diskurs über das Wesen des sowjetischen Regimes eingebettet wird, trägt diese Dissertation zu einem differenzierteren Verständnis des sowjetischen Projekts bei. Sie zeigt, dass die Geschichte des sowjetischen internationalen Journalismus nicht einfach eine Erzählung von Propaganda ist, sondern eine Geschichte von Menschen – Individuen, die zwischen staatlichen Zwängen und persönlichen Bestrebungen gefangen waren, in einem System, das gleichzeitig streng hierarchisch und zutiefst instabil war.