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Matthew E. Lenoe

Agitation, Propaganda, and the 'Stalinization' of the Soviet Press, 1922–1930

Matthew E. Lenoe is assistant professor of history at the University of Arkansas/Little Rock. He received his Ph.D. in Russian and Soviet history from the University of Chicago in 1997. He has also worked as a stonemason, field hand, carpenter, dishwasher, janitor, house painter, bartender, translator, and language teacher.

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Between 1925 and 1933 the layout and tone of the Soviet central press underwent a plainly discernible change. Issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* from the period of the New Economic Policy or NEP (1921–1927) contain journalistic genres familiar to the American reader: the wire service report written in an "objective" style, the editorial commentary, the economic analysis, the short satirical piece about everyday life. The shrill declamation, exhortation, and didacticism of the same newspapers in the early 1930s, on the other hand, seem alien and bizarre. Exclamation marks, commands, military metaphors, and congratulations from Party leaders to factories for surpassing their production plans fill central Soviet papers from 1933. Sometimes the press castigates readers like a parent scolding naughty children, sometimes it lectures them like a teacher, sometimes it exhorts them to action, like a platoon leader urging his troops forward. Aggressive declamation about "Bolshevik tempo," "Bolshevik competition," "Fascist depravity," and "gargantuan victories of the proletariat" blares from the pages.

Changes in layout accompany changes in the style of language. Articles from the early thirties are shorter and the typeface of headlines is varied. Photographs, a rarity in 1925, are common in 1933. Overall, editions of *Pravda* from 1933 resemble contemporary high-circulation American newspapers in the arrangement of text, headlines, and photographs. Issues from the NEP era are comparatively dull, with single typeface headlines above columns of text that roll unbroken from page top to page bottom.

The task of this essay is to define more rigorously the difference between NEP "moderation" and Stalinist "shrillness" and explain how the central Soviet press moved from one to the other. Between the middle years of the NEP and the "high Stalinist" 1930s, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* shifted from relatively nuanced, complex coverage of news and Party policy to the presentation of Soviet society as an army at the command of the "generals" in the Politburo. The vehicle for this change was the *udarnaia kampaniia,* or "strike campaign," a form of militant agitation which both newspapers adopted between 1928 and 1931. Strike campaigns

were organized around particular tasks set by the Party leadership. They included editorials explaining the task, reports on implementation, collective letters from activists "in the field" swearing fealty to the Party leadership, and reprints of relevant Party decrees. Taken together these pieces presented the industrialization of the Soviet Union in military terms: worker activists were "soldiers of socialist construction" and construction sites and factory shop-floors were "the front." The strike campaigns of the early 1930s constituted a master narrative of heroic Party activists building socialism, a narrative that legitimized the rule of Party leaders and the sacrifices they demanded of the populace during the First Five Year Plan (1928–1932).

Editors and propagandists adopted the strike campaign because it simultaneously solved problems of political legitimation, information flow, and mass mobilization. The strike campaign fit news into the Central Committee's agenda while also appealing to Party cadres and mass readers with dramatic stories of activists battling to build the world's first socialist society. As part of the strike campaign, journalists organized socialist competitions and other production-related shop-floor events, generating their own news of "real life" in a bureaucratized and information-scarce Soviet environment. Through such reports the strike campaign also provided a controlled "public voice" for ordinary factory workers, presenting an appearance of massive support "from below" for the Bolshevik regime.

The strike campaign had its origins in the militant Bolshevik newspapers of the revolutionary years. Throughout the NEP era, so-called mass newspapers targeted at uneducated workers and peasants continued the militant traditions of Civil War journalism, even while *Pravda, Izvestiia,* and other "leading" papers aimed at more sophisticated readers moderated their rhetoric. In 1926–1927 the Party's demand that the press mobilize labor for the accelerating industrialization drive prompted editors and reporters at the mass newspapers to invent new forms of "organizational" journalism, like the "socialist competition" and the "production review." In its "mature" form (during the First Five Year Plan), the strike

campaign combined the militant rhetoric of the Civil War press with the new forms of "organizing" journalism created by Soviet journalists.

The story of the transformation of the Soviet press bears on the larger question of continuity and change between the NEP years and the "high Stalinism" of the 1930s and 1940s. To put the problem in its simplest form: Was Stalinism and Stalinist culture a radical break with earlier Bolshevik practices? Did Stalin and his allies in the Party leadership quash an earlier, softer, more pluralistic version of Bolshevism? On the surface, the large shift in the language and layout of central Soviet newspapers suggests such a sharp break. Yet a closer look reveals underlying continuities. Throughout their history the Bolsheviks had had two distinct visions of the Party's relationship with "the masses"—as a tutor in class consciousness and as a kind of military leader in the class struggle. As the Party's chief means of communication with the populace (apart from face-to-face agitation) the newspapers belonged in both these visions. Depending on the political situation, Bolsheviks used the Party press as tutor or as military leader. At the end of the Civil War, for example, Central Committee agitprop officials tried to gear down the newspapers' militant wartime rhetoric and adjust the press to the long-term task of educating a socialist citizenry. But throughout the NEP years, mass newspapers (as opposed to *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*) continued to play the role of military officer, exhorting the masses to battle with class enemies. The transformation of NEP moderation into Stalinist shrillness did not result from the shutdown of any putative NEP-era pluralism, but from the exigencies of the Party's forced draft industrialization drive, which prompted Bolshevik leaders to put the *entire* press, including *Pravda* and *Izvestiia,* on a militant, "mobilizational" footing. In setting aside the vision of the press as tutor for the masses, Party leaders did make a break with the NEP years, but in endorsing the press's role as platoon leader in the class struggle they also drew on long-established Bolshevik practices that had continued through the NEP era.

Defining the "Voices" of the Soviet Press

Western accounts place the development of the Soviet press network in the context of growing Party control over Soviet society and Joseph Stalin's rise to total power. They tell a story of rising circulations, the overcoming of "material difficulties" like the paper shortage, and a spreading network of local and provincial newspapers. Growing censorship culminated in nearly total ideological control under Stalin. The voices of opposition that had occasionally been heard in the press were silenced.[1] Soviet histories of the press also focus on the expansion of central control, but with an accent on the positive. Through the medium of the newspaper, "culture" spread into the countryside. The Party Central Committee defeated the "Left and Right Deviations" and ended "fractionalism." Like the Western accounts, Soviet histories describe increasing circulation, improving typographical equipment, and steadily rising budgets.[2]

The narrative of growing central control seems right, as far as it goes. It accurately describes the relationship of the Central Committee's Agitprop and Press Departments to the hundreds of provincial newspapers in the USSR.[3] *Krasnaia pechat'* (Red Press), the Press Department's organ between 1922 and 1928, was filled with guidance for local newspapers on layout, content, writing style, and correct political "line." Denunciations of specific newspapers for journalistic incompetence or political deviation were common. Constant injunctions against "bureaucratic" language, "sensationalism," trivial news coverage, and the airing of the Party's dirty linen bespoke the intense desire of Central Committee functionaries to maintain control over the local press. Through *Krasnaia pechat'* the Press Department pressured local and provincial papers to fall in line with ongoing propaganda campaigns, to devote more space, for example, to the "industrial crisis," or the alliance of workers and peasants, or the "scissors crisis."[4]

But the story of the Party leaders' expanding control over the press does not account for the change in tone of the *central* newspapers between 1925 and 1933, precisely because *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were already under tight Central

Committee control by the middle of the 1920s. As Bolshevik propagandists were fond of saying, these organs were the "megaphones" of the Party and the Soviet state. The Party defined *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* as the *rukovodiashchie organy,* the "leading" or "directing organs," of the government.[5] This definition played out in practice—the provincial press took their cues from these two newspapers. *Krasnaia pechat'* frequently complained that local journals were printing *Pravda* or *Izvestiia* material verbatim.[6] In 1925 one *Izvestiia* editor described his newspaper's function as provider of information and guidance for the local press: "When a provincial journalist opens a [central] newspaper, he wants to know what's happening in the Central Committee, what kind of resolutions and directives have been issued. We have to popularize these directives."[7] In 1924 *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* ranked first and second among newspapers in daily circulation, and the only periodical to surpass them in the twenties was *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* after 1925. Reader surveys done in the 1920s showed that *Pravda* was one of the most widely read papers in the USSR.[8]

Izvestiia and *Pravda* presented the news in close conformity to Central Committee instructions. Even a cursory comparison of *Izvestiia* with *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* (Communist Revolution), the organ of the Central Committee's Agitprop Department, or the Press Department's *Krasnaia pechat'*, shows that the *Izvestiia* editorial staff was following the Central Committee's agenda. On January 22, 1925, for example, *Izvestiia's* domestic coverage was entirely devoted to the anniversary of Lenin's death. Articles and editorials appeared on "Lenin's Precepts—A Communist Oath," "Lenin and the Komsomol," "Lenin on the Labor Union Movement," "The Party Without Lenin," and "A Cadet's Memories of Lenin." The newspaper reported on gatherings at workers' clubs, factories, villages, and soviets to mourn the dead leader. The single piece unrelated to the anniversary was on page 5, the text of Grigorii Zinoviev's speech to the first All-Union Conference of Teachers. *Izvestiia* closely followed the guidelines laid out in *Krasnaia pechat'* on January 7, 1925 for coverage of the anniversary. Themes suggested included "One Year Without Lenin," and "Lenin

and the Komsomol." Following the conventional categorization of the press by target audience, *Krasnaia pechat'* presented how-to-cover-the-anniversary articles for mass worker, peasant, Komsomol, and leading Party newspapers. For "politically illiterate" editors of provincial journals there was also a section on "Distinguishing Leninism from Trotskyism."

In 1933 too, *Izvestiia* followed the agenda of the Central Committee executive apparatus closely. The January 1933 edition of *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* opened with two articles by Stalin. "Results of the First Five Year Plan" emphasized the rapid growth of industrial production in the USSR compared to that in the bourgeois countries and asserted the need to wipe out the residuum of "hostile classes." "On Work in the Countryside" criticized shortcomings in the management of collective farms by local Party organizations. Other pieces on the results of the First Five Year Plan followed, as well as a notice that several Moscow economic enterprises had organized a socialist competition to see which could best fulfill the decisions of the January Central Committee Plenum. *Izvestiia's* edition of January 19, 1933, followed *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* in emphasizing problems at collective farms, rapid industrial growth, and the persistence of "hostile class elements" in the Soviet countryside. The front-page headlines were "Political Departments Must Decisively Improve the Work of Rural Organizations," "Let Us Strengthen Revolutionary Vigilance At Every Post! Smash the Class Enemy!" and "Under the Leadership of the Central Committee —To the Victories of the Second Five Year Plan." On the front page there also ran greetings from the Moscow and Leningrad Party organizations, promising to fulfill the directives of the January Central Committee Plenum and improve work in the countryside. On page 2 a spread of pieces on "Soviet, Economic, and Cultural Construction in Bashkiria" emphasized the growth of industry during the First Five Year Plan and denounced poor management and kulak sabotage at collective farms. At the bottom of page 2 a graph showed that the USSR was now number two in the world in total industrial production. Articles covering the high output of specific factories and other successes in socialist construction ran on pages 3 and

4. The single anomaly in this issue was a long article about a scientific expedition in the Pacific Ocean, printed on page 2.

In comparison with the "high Stalinist" rhetoric of the 1930s and 1940s, NEP journalese was relatively moderate in tone. But that moderation did not reflect the pluralism of NEP society at large, as some scholars have claimed.[9] If *pluralism* means open debate between individuals of differing political convictions, it is not an appropriate word to apply to Soviet society in the 1920s or to the central Soviet press. During the period covered by this essay, open polemics between opposing factions within the Communist Party rarely appeared in either *Pravda* or *Izvestiia*.[10] Writers in these newspapers could express opposition to Central Committee policies only in muted and indirect language. Even when they disagreed among themselves, Party leaders still strove to maintain an appearance of unity in the press and in public pronouncements. Underlying policy debates within the Party was a very stable base of common assumptions about the tools and goals of governance, including the necessity of maintaining Party unity and suppressing public dissent. This base of common assumptions about governance remained solid throughout both the NEP and Stalinist eras.

On the pages of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* the highest levels of the Party elite communicated with Communist activists and the "nonparty masses." The Party elite did not speak with a single voice, but editors and agitprop officials discouraged open debates in the high-circulation central newspapers. The loosening of central economic controls in the first years of the NEP made Party officials especially concerned with presenting a monolithic face to the rest of Soviet society. Resurgent "bourgeois" elements could interpret open dissent within the Party as a sign of weakness and expand their activities from the economic to the ideological and political spheres. The NEP "retreat" to decentralized economic policies might then turn into a rout in which the Party would disintegrate. Bolshevik leaders, accustomed to thinking about economic and social processes in martial metaphors, concluded that in the NEP, as in any retreat, discipline, and unity were necessary above all.[11]

It was in this anxious atmosphere that the 1921 Tenth Party Congress approved a ban on "fractionalism" within the Party. Individual Communists were still supposedly free to express dissent from the Party line but were forbidden to form organized fractions to push their own agendas. The ban on fractionalism was invoked against Leon Trotskii and his supporters in the winter of 1923–1924, when the chief editor, Nikolai Bukharin, blocked the publication of oppositional views in *Pravda*.[12]

Like other Party members, leading Communist journalists were very concerned with maintaining ideological and political discipline in the early years of the NEP. The expansion of private economic activity, they feared, would bring with it a return to the yellow journalism of the "bourgeois" mass circulation press—the stories of crime, sexual scandal, and the luxurious lives of the rich and famous with which prerevolutionary papers had titillated their readers. For the Bolsheviks, such stories were (like religion) an opiate that soothed the masses and smoothed the harsh realities of class exploitation. In 1922 and 1923 the journalists' trade-union organ *Zhurnalist* (Journalist) repeatedly censured Soviet papers for "sensationalism," attacking the private cooperative presses for publishing love stories (stigmatized as "pornography") and *Izvestiia* for reviewing operettas and advertising wines, jellies, and French restaurants. For Sergei Ingulov, chief editor of *Zhurnalist,* secretary of the journalists' trade union, and Central Committee press coordinator, the reappearance of "boulevard journalism" portended capitalist counterrevolution. The newspapers were resurrecting bourgeois ideology and catering to the "NEPmen," the new rich who had profited by the relaxation of economic controls.[13]

Prominent Bolshevik journalists reacted to the threat of a bourgeois resurgence by reaffirming the Party's right to silence opposition, a right first asserted in November 1917 when the Petrograd Soviet shut down "bourgeois" and "counterrevolutionary publications." In early 1923 the fourth conference of the journalists' trade union *(Soiuz rabotnikov pechati* or SRP) passed resolutions denying the right of remaining independent periodicals to criticize the Party.

Conference delegates condemned the idea of an independent press, affirming that the Soviet state would create its own "authentically healthy, authentically comradely, authentically proletarian criticism." In his commentary on the conference, Sergei Ingulov vilified a group of "Old Regime" writers at Leningrad's *Dom literatorov* (Literary Club or House of Writers). These men, who wrote for some of the few remaining independent journals in Russia, had argued that a private press could be useful to the Soviet state and the Communist Party by providing objective, outside criticism. Ingulov mocked their expectation that the New Economic Policy meant a relaxation of Party control in the cultural sphere. The *Dom literatorov* writers were mistaken, he wrote, if they supposed that the acronym NEP stood for *NEezavisimost' Pechati* or "Independence of the Press."[14]

In pursuit of an "authentically proletarian criticism," Ingulov and the SRP enthusiastically endorsed freedom of criticism for the Party press and its "worker/peasant correspondents." Worker/peasant correspondents, ordinary laboring folk who wrote to the newspaper with accounts of disorders in their factories and villages, were supposed to serve as a check on corrupt or power-hungry Communists. Ingulov expressed great faith in their ability to "control distortions" in Soviet society and provide a real check on the arbitrary power of state and Party officials. "Worker correspondents," he opined, "writing the full truth in clear language, do not have to use half-truths and hints."[15]

The journalists' enthusiasm for "genuinely proletarian criticism" contradicted Party leaders' determination to maintain unity during the NEP retreat. Within a few weeks of the SRP conference, the Central Committee Orgburo, one of the three leading Party executive bodies (the other two being the Central Committee Politburo and Secretariat) issued a secret directive stating that "the editorial staff of local newspapers . . . . is unconditionally subordinate to the [local] Party committee." This directive prohibited the publishing of critical material about a Party committee without the express permission of the committee itself.[16] The actual effect of the directive was to set up a hierarchy of criticism—a newspaper could find fault with Party organizations lower down the administrative

pyramid, but not with those on the same level or higher. Thus, *Pravda* could attack a provincial (*guberniia*) Party committee, but a provincial newspaper could not attack central Party organs. This hierarchy was not strictly observed, but it did provide high-ranking authorities with a powerful tool for silencing criticism "from below." Even within the Party the Central Committe leadership was tightly circumscribing freedom of expression.

The change in tone of the central Soviet newspapers, then, cannot be explained by the notion that various "voices," representing different groupings and ideological orientations within the Party, were silenced one by one, until only the Central Committee's "general line" remained. The different voices that the reader discerns in an edition of *Izvestiia* from 1925 do not reflect the political orientation of the writers. They are not the voices of Bukharinites, or Stalinists, or Zinovievites, much less Mensheviks or Kadets. Rather, they are the voices of the foreign correpondent writing a wire report, the editor exhorting citizens to buy "industrialization bonds," the satirist describing his visit to the provincial executive committee, or the Party leader explicating the meaning of the alliance between workers and peasants. They are voices that differ one from another because they come from different sources—a telegram from the TASS or ROSTA wire services, a speech by a Central Committee member, a communiqué from a city soviet press bureau—and are written for different purposes, with different audiences in mind. Jeffrey Brooks has put it this way: "Even when leaders agreed, the press accommodated many voices and several distinct discourses, each linked with types of authors and targeted audiences."[17]

Pinning down the components of the increasingly shrill rhetoric of the early thirties is not a question of pluralism, but of the various voices that arose from the interplay of information sources, subject, intended audience, and Bolshevik thinking about agitation and propaganda. Some of these voices were more shrill than others. A ROSTA or TASS telegram from the Far East looks to a Western reader like "objective" reporting, in part because no first person narrator intrudes, in part because concrete events, places, and persons, rather than abstractions, are

discussed; in part because of the paucity of valuative language; and in part because any judgments passed are likely to be qualified with "possibly," "may," or "might." On the most superficial level, the purpose of the article is to inform the reader of an important event. On the other hand, an editorial entitled "All Hail the Builders of the Avtostroi Factory!" will be larded with superlatives (*ogromnii*, *bystreishii*), words signifyng emotion (*entuziazm, ustoichivost'*), valuative vocabulary, and exclamation points. The purpose of this sort of editorial is not simply to inform, but to exhort industrial workers to greater efforts and transmit a sense of social solidarity in a common struggle.

One of the most characteristic (and shrillest) genres of Stalinist journalism was the exhortative article headlined with a direct or indirect command ("Let's Pick Up the Pace of Industrialization!") and narrated in the first person plural. This kind of article was really a directive for Party activists. It came with an easy-to-remember slogan and was often part of an agitprop campaign running for weeks, even months at a time. Typically such a piece described a Party directive, recounted successes and failures in its implementation, and gave instructions about how to proceed in the future. This genre, very prominent in editions of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* from the early thirties, also appeared in NEP-era issues, albeit much less frequently. Conversely, "neutral" wire service reports, quite common in 1925, had become rare by 1933. These two kinds of articles persisted over time, but the amount of space devoted to each changed.

I will identify the voice of a given Soviet journalistic piece by its *source*, its *intended audience,* and its *purpose* in the Bolshevik scheme of agitation and propaganda. The difficulty with using these criteria to identify individual voices is that they are merely indicators or tags. When readers sense that two pieces are written in the same voice they are responding to a complex network of syntactic and semantic cues. These might include sentence structure, transitivity of the verbs (are they verbs of mental process, mental state, physical action?), person of the narration, the presence or absence of modals of probability, opinion, desirability ("probably," "in my opinion," "unfortunately"), speech function of the verbs (a

command, for example), the use of concrete or abstract nouns, and the kinds of agents (who is acting—institutions, individuals, social classes?). All play a role in creating the impression of a single, discrete voice. It is possible to describe the complex net of syntactic and semantic attributes that define the voice of a single text, or even to compare the voices of several different texts. It is also possible to show change over time in the work of a single author by analysing the frequency of certain syntactic/semantic structures, for example verbs of different transitivities. But when looking at the composition of an entire newspaper, the multiplicity of authors, subject matter, targeted audiences, and purposes make such detailed linguistic analysis extremely difficult, if not impossible.

The ideas of M.A.K. Halliday, Roger Fowler, and other "functional linguists" are helpful in linking the micro semantic/syntactic properties of a text with macro attributes like source, intended audience, and purpose. Halliday is interested in elucidating how the situation in which a text is written or spoken, including the social and cultural environment, influences its syntactic and semantic structure. After Malinowski, Halliday calls the social, cultural, and physical environment in which text is produced the "context of situation." According to Halliday, "the context of situation, the context in which the text unfolds, is encapsulated in the text, not in a kind of piecemeal fashion, nor at the other extreme in any mechanical way, but through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organisation of language on the other."[18] He develops a framework of three categories with which to describe the context of situation. The "field of discourse" refers to the action that is taking place, such as buying a house or providing information about a new law. "Tenor" covers the identities, statuses, and social roles of the participants in the action. The "mode" of discourse denotes the way in which the language itself is embedded in the action in progress, the part which it plays. "Channel" (spoken or written) and "rhetorical" (expository, persuasive, didactic) are elements of the mode. These aspects of the context of situation are encoded in the text by grammatical features and lexicon. There are two interesting consequences of the strong (albeit not

complete) determination of text by context. First, context of situation can be inferred from grammatical and lexical features of the text (indeed, if it could not we would have difficulty understanding written texts at all), and second, people in similar situations will use similar language. A given situation will tend to evoke a specific set of words, intonations, and even sentence structures. Halliday dubs this body of lexical, grammatical, and phonological features a "register." He offers the international language of the air, in which pilots use a limited vocabulary and specific expressions unique to the situation of flying a plane, as a particularly clearcut example of a register.[19]

Halliday's work, together with Brooks' observation quoted above, suggest that in a given historical context newspaper articles from the same source, with the same intended audience, and for the same purpose, will generally contain similar vocabulary and grammatical structures. To use Halliday's terminology, they will be written in the same register. The concept of register justifies the use of attributes like source, audience, and purpose as a proxy for detailed linguistic analysis in defining voice. Based on the assumption that a similar source, audience, and purpose will elicit similar vocabulary and grammar structures, this essay will identify the voice of a newspaper piece by its source, purpose, and intended audience, along with a few discrete grammatical and lexical features, such as command-form verbs, narration in the first person plural, and military vocabulary.

The fact that Bolshevik use of the press was highly self-conscious facilitates definition of a given piece's purpose. Soviet journalists were aware of the possible uses of different genres in promoting the Party's agenda. They talked about their journalistic practice in terms of Lenin's theory of agitation and propaganda, which recognized various functions of the press—educating readers, motivating them to action with emotional appeals, and organizing them for political action or economic production. These functions were known respectively as "propaganda," "agitation," and "organization." In thinking about the effect of their work on readers, Soviet journalists used these categories, and this essay will also do so, defining the

purpose of a given newspaper piece as "propaganda," "agitation," or "organization."

I have attempted in this introduction to elucidate the categories that are useful in analyzing the change in tone of the central Soviet press in the late 1920s and to dispose of the notion that suppression of political dissent had anything directly to do with that change. The increasing shrillness of Soviet newspapers was the result of a shift in the distribution of different voices, not the shutdown of some putative NEP pluralism. To understand why Bolshevik journalists and propagandists chose to "turn up" some voices and "turn down" others, we need to look next at the theory of agitation and propaganda that informed their decisions.

Agitation, Propaganda, and the Functions of the Press

In *The Birth of the Propaganda State,* Peter Kenez argues that mass mobilization through agitation and propaganda was integral to the functioning of the young Bolshevik state. While affirming the importance of the Soviet agitprop apparatus itself, he believes that Bolshevik theories of agitation and propaganda had relatively little effect on practice. In particular, he claims that the central distinction between agitation and propaganda made first by Plekhanov and elaborated by Lenin is "not useful."[20] However, the fact that Bolsheviks sometimes used the two terms loosely does not mean that the distinction was not made in practice and in debates about practice. "Fighting agitation," which appealed to the masses' emotions with a few simple slogans, and "propaganda," which relied on measured explanation of complex problems, represented two poles of the Bolsheviks' relationship with "the people." Theorists and journalists in *Krasnaia pechat', Zhurnalist,* and *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* repeatedly articulated this distinction, although they were not always rigorous in applying the word "agitation" to one pole and "propaganda" to the other.

Throughout the 1920s Soviet newspapermen and agitprop officials carried on an active discussion about how best to use the press to influence the masses, a discussion that centered on the concepts of agitation and propaganda. At stake were the questions of how to make effective propaganda and what role the press would play in the new socialist society. The background to this discussion was Lenin's categorization of press function, made in his 1901 article, "Where to Begin." (Lenin borrowed the categorization from Plekhanov, who in turn had borrowed it from the German socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht.) In later discussions of the function of the press, Soviet journalists and theorists encapsulated this theory with one quote from Lenin's article: "The newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer."[21]

In *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) Lenin elaborated the distinction between agitation and propaganda.

> The propagandist dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalist nature of the crisis, the causes of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word he must present "many ideas," so many, indeed that they will be understood only by a few. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to his audience, say the death of an unemployed worker's family from starvation, the growing impoverishment, etc., and utilizing this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting a single idea to the masses, e.g., the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty; he will strive to rouse discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, leaving a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist.[22]

According to Lenin, propaganda involved extended theoretical explanations of the socioeconomic processes which underlay "surface" phenomena like

unemployment. By appealing to audience members' reason, the propagandist aimed to cultivate in them a whole new worldview. Propaganda was a process of *education* or *enlightenment* best suited for a relatively sophisticated audience. Within the concept, however, there also nestled the idea of tutelage, of raising the "cultural level" of the masses. For the Bolsheviks this meant teaching peasants and proletarians to read, drawing them into political life, transforming their world view, even instructing them in hygiene. Propaganda was thus linked with the long-term project of educating the downtrodden Russian masses to be worthy citizens of the coming socialist utopia.[23]

Agitation, on the other hand, motivated the masses to action by appealing to their emotions with short, stark stories. The agitator did not seek to enlighten his listeners, but to mobilize them. Agitation meant riling up the populace, motivating it to action by presenting selected facts and simple slogans. By definition it was more superficial than propaganda. Whereas propaganda was suited to the serious, long-range tasks of "cultural construction," agitation was considered appropriate for wartime or other crisis situations. When quick action was required, agitation was the tool of choice for unsophisticated or even ignorant audiences.

The link between propaganda and education on the one hand, and agitation and mobilization on the other, was explicit, as the definitions from the first edition of *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (1926–1940) demonstrate.

> PROPAGANDA—the explanation and dissemination of political world views, ideas, conceptions, and knowledge, a tool to educate the masses.

> AGITATION—the most important means of political struggle between the classes and parties. Agitation is the most vital tool of the militant political party, which strives to organize around itself, around its tasks, the energies of its class . . . . Agitation is a means of action on the consciousness and mood of the masses in order to attract them to the side of specific social-political

ideas . . . . By means of agitation the party, realizing the leadership of its class, becomes its organizer and chief.

Lenin's third function of the press, organization, was closely related to agitation. As originally formulated in "Where to Begin," the organizational function of the press referred to the fact that the task of producing and distributing an illegal newspaper would compel the Social Democrats, then an underground political party, to set up a network of correspondents, agents, and distributors. This network could then be used to carry out other revolutionary tasks.[24] In the prerevolutionary context of a secret, conspiratorial Party, the organizational function of the press had quite a different meaning from that which it would take on once the Bolsheviks governed Russia. After the Bolsheviks came to power, their propagandists (including Lenin himself) redefined the press's organizational function to mean the mobilization of labor to increase economic productivity. The years of the First Five Year Plan found reporters visiting the shop-floor to organize "socialist competitions," "production reviews," and "production meetings"; to elicit denunciations of shirkers and incompetents; and to collect workers' ideas for increasing efficiency. All this activity was supposed to raise productivity and contribute to the growth of Soviet industry. In contemporary commentary these forms of journalism were referred to as "organization" and sometimes "agitation."[25]

The transition from War Communism to the New Economic Policy was not just a temporary retreat from maximalist, statist economic policies, but also a shift from wartime agitation to peacetime propaganda, a commitment to the long-term project of educating citizens of the future Communist utopia. Aleksandr Etkind has noted how at the outset of the NEP era the realization that the road to socialism would be long led the Bolsheviks to undertake a new project, "the remaking of man." In the field of psychology, Etkind shows, this entailed a whole series of "psychological and pedagogical experiments."[26] For the mass press "the remaking of man" meant "Cultural Construction," instructing the masses in everything from politics to hygiene. It was necessary to drop the strident agitation of the Civil War,

which had aimed to mobilize the population around a few slogans, and begin to educate the people. In Bolshevik terminology, the press had to gear down from agitation to propaganda. In 1923, I. Vardin, editor of *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia,* described the difference between the Civil War and the early NEP: "Then [during the Civil War] the paper was an agitation sheet with an 'Official' section (of Party and state directives). The Soviet newspaper of our day doesn't have that deadly clichéd quality; it is free of the 'agit-drum,' and full of letters, articles, notes on the life of workers, peasants, Red Army men."[27]

As early as the spring of 1921, with the Civil War still winding down, the Party leadership was already directing the press to move from agitational, emotional appeals to more sophisticated propaganda. A Central Committee circular from April 4, 1921, laid out a program for the local press, including headings for various sections of the newspaper ("The Urban Economy, "Popular Education," "Red Army Life"). It also instructed local Party Committees that "by collecting facts about local construction, summing up and describing experience in local work, the province [*guberniia*] or county [*uezd*] paper should inculcate in the masses a can-do feeling, it should offer them practical, businesslike aid in overcoming obstacles and achieving positive results in local socialist construction. The agitation of general, abstract concepts should be replaced by an agitation of facts."[28]

During the early years of the NEP, publicists and Party leaders writing in *Krasnaia pechat'* and *Zhurnalist* focused on the educational/propagandistic function of the press. Central Committee officials regularly cautioned leading Party organs like *Pravda* to avoid the simplistic agitation of Civil War journalism. In a directive from February 6, 1924, for example, the Central Committee ordered that "the leading Party newspapers should orient the Party members politically, avoiding superficial 'agitationism' or a narrowly institutional approach to questions, giving instead more facts and planned-out, systematic illumination of them."[29] In the newspapers themselves, "Cultural Construction" was a dominant trope. In 1924 *Izvestiia* regularly published a special section under that rubric. Advocates of

"Cultural Construction" argued that in order to transform the Soviet Union from an agrarian into an industrialized nation, it was necessary to raise the masses' cultural level and prepare them for the complex political and productive tasks they would have to fulfill in a modern society. One example of this was a lead article in *Krasnaia pechat'* in 1924 entitled " The National Press Must Find Itself a Reader." The author, P. Popov, asserted that the newspapers of minority nationalities should be used "as a powerful tool of Communist enlightenment," in particular to teach literacy.[30]

During this period the Central Committe press journal *Krasnaia pechat'* constantly used the verb *osveshchat'*, to illuminate, in describing what newspapers did. The press was to illuminate the tasks of socialist construction, the importance of the alliance between workers and peasants, the new tax structure. Party propagandists believed that by using the searchlight of Marxist-Leninist theory to burn through the mystifying fog of culture and tradition, they could illuminate the world as it truly was, exposing the realities of class conflict and production relations. Once the laboring classes saw the mechanisms of their own exploitation they would naturally come to support the Party and Soviet power. The job of the Soviet press was to explain to its readers the old regime's machinery of oppression and the necessity of temporary sacrifices to stabilize Bolshevik rule and build socialism. Coverage of domestic economic issues by *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* in 1924 and 1925 reflected these assumptions. Articles on monetary reform, the alliance of proletariat and peasantry, state wage policy, and like topics cited a complex range of causes for economic difficulties.

A central part of the mass enlightenment project was the construction of a newspaper network differentiated by target audience. This network would include papers specially tailored to the varying reading abilities, interests, and education levels of different social classes in the population, in particular workers, peasants, Party officials, white-collar office employees, and national minorities (Jews, Poles, Germans, Armenians, Uzbeks, and others). The Central Committee itself would publish separate newspapers for Party activists (*Pravda*), factory workers

(*Rabochaia gazeta* or Worker Gazette), and peasants (*Krest'ianskaia gazeta* or Peasant Gazette). According to a February 6, 1924, circular from the Central Committee Press Department, the job of the newly differentiated press network was to spread knowledge among workers and peasants and "raise their cultural level." In addition, the peasant press was to explain to peasants the Party's rural policies, such as the tax in kind. The worker press was to explain to factory operatives Party policies in relevant areas such as wages. The leading press, charged with providing political guidance and explications of Central Committee policy for Party cadres, was cautioned to avoid "superficial agitation."[31]

Newspaper editors and Party agitators worried that they did not yet understand peasant and worker psychology well enough to educate effectively and explain government policies. After a national conference of rural newspaper editors decried the peasants' lack of trust in the rural press, *Krasnaia pechat'* ran a commentary on the problem. The author argued vehemently that if editors wanted to explain government policy persuasively, especially the tax on agriculture, they had first to understand the peasants' point of view. Explaining the necessity to rebuild industry over a period of years, and the consequent necessity of financing industrial investment by skimming surplus agricultural production from the countryside, was not enough. The peasants saw that the tax fell exclusively on them and felt that it was unfair. In a refrain repeated throughout the twenties and thirties, the author noted that "the peasant is not used to and does not know how to think abstractly." On the other hand peasants would not be deceived by "cheap propaganda of milk rivers with pudding shores when in reality the countryside is being squeezed by both arms of the 'scissors.'" Editors should not treat the peasants as "vulgar muzhiks." It was necessary to make political propaganda based on the real situation in the countryside, to explain to the peasant the long-term concrete benefits of industrialization. Instead of deceiving the peasant the rural and central press should work responsibly to construct Soviet society in the countryside. The piece closed with the accusation that peasant newspapers were "peddling

twaddle" and a plea that Communists recognize their own ignorance of rural problems.[32]

To communicate their message effectively, Party propagandists concluded that they needed more information about the reading habits and reading comprehension of "the laboring masses." Reader studies were an integral part of the NEP enlightenment project. Between 1924 and 1929 the Central Committee, the Moscow Party Committee, the Commissariat of Enlightenment, the journalists' trade union, the central state publishing house (GIZ), and various newspapers all sponsored studies of reader comprehension and newspaper readership. These studies aimed to discover what newspaper genres readers preferred, which newspapers they read, and what vocabulary and grammar structures were most difficult for them to understand. Although early Soviet reader studies were methodologically flawed (to name two problems, none selected random samples and few used anonymous questionnaires), they did represent a serious attempt to improve communication with workers and peasants.[33]

Agitprop officials also tried to establish better communication with "the masses" by expanding and institutionalizing the worker/peasant correspondents movement. During the years of revolution and civil war some Soviet newspapers, most prominently the Central Commitee organs *Pravda* and *Bednota* (The Poor Peasant), and the railwaymen's trade union paper *Gudok* (The Whistle), had published letters from blue-collar and peasant readers on a regular basis. As they set up a differentiated press network in 1922–1923, prominent editors and Central Committee officials also instructed the new mass newspapers, especially *Krest'ianskaia gazeta, Rabochaia gazeta,* and the various trade-union organs, to recruit and instruct regular correspondents from among ordinary factory workers and villagers. The worker/peasant correspondents would write to the newspaper about their daily work, the implementation of Party campaigns on the ground, production bottlenecks, and the activities of local "class-hostile elements." They would also expose corrupt or incompetent officials and managers. Apart from their "watchdog" function, worker/peasant correspondents would provide the Party with

intelligence about popular moods and local political, economic, and social developments. In turn, the Party (through the newspapers) would educate the correspondents, suggesting timely themes for their letters, instructing them in proper literary style, teaching them "political grammar," and in general fostering their transformation into a new intelligentsia loyal to the Soviet government.[34]

Behind the efforts of Soviet journalists to educate and indoctrinate the masses lay a sincere conviction that Soviet power was a benevolent power and that the masses would understand this if the press properly illuminated the political and economic situation. Peasants or "backward" workers were intelligent human beings. They were educable. It was necessary to meet them halfway when explaining government policy, to comprehend their point of view. This conviction was at work in the central press of the early and middle 1920s. *Izvestiia,* for example, ran a section devoted to explaining new laws and taxes to its readers, and its wire service reports frequently showed the Soviet government taking some action that would benefit the masses—feeding the hungry, rebuilding a washed-out bridge, and so on.[35]

Like other aspects of the NEP, the shift to a differentiated press network with a propagandistic/educational mission was controversial. Stalin himself spoke out on at least two occasions in favor of continuing the agitational/mobilizational orientation of the Civil War Bolshevik press. He first intervened in the spring of 1922, when Old Bolsheviks Konstantin S. Eremeev and Viacheslav Karpinskii organized the Central Committee's new mass worker newspaper, *Rabochii* (later renamed *Rabochaia gazeta*). Influenced by thinkers from the Proletarian Culture movement (*Proletkul't*) who advocated the construction of an entirely new, "genuinely proletarian" culture to replace the "bourgeois" culture of the old regime, Eremeev and Karpinskii wanted the new paper to be "a newspaper by the workers, and not a newspaper for the workers." Their orientation was propagandistic. The new paper would consist almost entirely of worker letters and "be a large, serious popular organ of propaganda and agitation, and not an agitational broadsheet of the type of the first years of the proletarian revolution."

Rabochii would cover questions of immediate relevance to workers, providing "popular illumination of questions of labor legislation . . . . work, life, the workers' struggle, and questions of general culture—the struggle with religious prejudices, anti-Semitism, and so on." To accomplish their mission Eremeev and Karpinskii wanted a high degree of editorial freedom from the Central Committee.[36]

Although the Eleventh Party Congress approved Eremeev and Karpinskii's plan for *Rabochii* on April 1, 1922, Stalin had already secured the Central Committee Orgburo's approval of an alternative project. The Orgburo directive ordered the editors to cut the paper's size to two pages in order to save paper. It also ordered them to model *Rabochii* on the "militant" Civil War newspapers *Bednota* and *Gudok*. Eremeev and Karpinskii, who felt that Stalin was forcing *Rabochii* into a superficial, agitational mode inappropriate for the long-term project of enlightening the workers, offered their resignations in protest. In early May, 1922, the Central Committee Secretariat replaced them with a new chief editor, N. I. Smirnov. Stalin, through his dominant position in the Central Committee's executive apparatus, thus secured the continuation of the militant, agitational style of Civil War journalism at the Party's own mass worker newspaper.[37]

Stalin reiterated his support for agitational/mobilizational journalism in a vituperative exchange with Sergei Ingulov on the pages of *Pravda* in May 1923. In this debate, Stalin contended that the paramount function of the press in Soviet society was mobilizing the masses around Party directives. "The press," he wrote, "is the single tool by which the Party daily speaks to the working class." According to Stalin, Civil War agitation exemplified what the relationship between the Party and the masses ought to be: "tens and hundreds of thousands of workers responding to the call of the Party press." Ingulov took issue with Stalin's narrow understanding of the relationship between the Party and the populace, arguing that the Party should not just speak *to* the masses; it should be engaged in a conversation with them. Through the worker and peasant correspondents who wrote to the newspapers the masses could advise and interrogate the Party. "Interaction" between the Party and the working classes was necessary. Ingulov also endorsed

the "denunciatory" or "control" function of the press, which he saw as another aspect of the "conversation" between rulers and ruled.[38]

As the Stalin-Ingulov debate suggested, the Party's commitment to propaganda and tutelage of the populace was an equivocal one, even at the apogee of the NEP mass enlightenment project. The Soviet regime faced several urgent problems—a hostile peasantry, industrial unrest, the perceived threat of invasion by capitalist powers, Party cadres' unhappiness with the NEP—and many Party leaders did not feel they could afford the luxury of a prolonged campaign to "raise the cultural level" of the masses. Mass mobilization and agitational rhetoric were immediate solutions to immediate problems.

It was the immediate problem of industrialization that provided the impetus for the press's retrograde movement from propaganda to agitation/mobilization. By 1925 the period of economic reconstruction following the Civil War was drawing to an end. Existing industrial plant was runnning at almost full capacity. Party leaders believed that in order to construct a modern socialist society and protect themselves from external attack they had to build up Soviet industry rapidly. Unfortunately the USSR had little internal capital and limited access to external capital. To accumulate funds for investment in new industry, the Bolsheviks decided on a campaign to increase the productivity of existing factories. The difficulty was to squeeze more production out of industrial workers without provoking resistance or rebellion. Party leaders' solution was the "belt-tightening" campaign of 1926.

The belt-tightening campaign, known in Russian as the *rezhim ekonomii,* propelled the Soviet press toward mass organizational journalism. At the very outset of the campaign, in late February 1926, the chairman of the Supreme Council on the Economy (VSNKh), Felix Dzerzhinskii, called on journalists to facilitate cost-cutting by putting factories "under the microscope," auditing their expenditures and production processes.[39] Throughout the spring and summer the Central Committee sent out circulars urging local Party press departments to promote belt-tightening through the newspapers. *Krasnaia pechat'* also ran Central

Committee instructions and regular evaluations of campaign coverage in the provincial press. From the earliest phase of the campaign the Central Committee Press Department urged newspapers to find ways to mobilize workers on the shop-floor and give them a voice in production decisions without risking breakdowns in "labor discipline." In an early spring speech to a meeting of the Moscow section of the journalists' trade union, for example, the chief of the Press Department, Sergei Gusev, exhorted newspapermen to utilize "their great army of worker and peasant correspondents" to uncover waste and expose incompetent or corrupt managers. The hope was that by offering workers some input into cost-cutting decisions, the press could defuse potential resistance to belt-tightening.[40]

In response to the Party's call, editors at mass worker and Komsomol newspapers pioneered new forms of "organizing" journalism, forms that would become the backbone of Soviet press coverage during the First Five Year Plan. All these involved direct intervention by newspapermen in the manufacturing process. In Tver', a textile center north of Moscow, Aleksei Ivanovich Kapustin, the editor of *Tverskaia pravda,* organized a series of audits of local factories, which he dubbed "production reviews" (*proizvodstvennye smotry*): reporters roamed the shop-floor, looking for bottlenecks and soliciting workers' suggestions for streamlining the production process. The Komsomol newspapers *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and *Smena* (Changing of the Guard, a Leningrad paper) began organizing and publicizing "contests" (*konkursy*) for maximum output between factories and individual workers. Such contests, renamed "socialist competitions," became a prominent feature of Soviet news coverage during the First Five Year Plan and after. *Ural'skii rabochii* (Urals Worker), a mass worker paper published in Sverdlovsk, pioneered the "exchange of production experience" (*pereklichka*), in which workers from different factories exchanged their work experience and suggestions for improving production. More or less simultaneously with several Komsomol newspapers, *Ural'skii rabochii* also began coverage of the production exploits of "strike brigades" of elite workers.[41]

The mobilizational journalism of the 1926 belt-tightening campaign was new in that reporters actually entered the factories and helped to "organize" production. Its rhetoric, however, was the agitational rhetoric of the Civil War, full of military metaphors and exhortations to action. By joining new forms of journalism like the socialist competition with the militant rhetoric of the Civil War, the press aimed not just to organize the shop-floor, but also to galvanize workers and activists by equating industrial production with the epic military struggles of the revolutionary years. This presentation of industrialization as war—indeed, as a kind of ritualistic replay of the Revolution and Civil War—would become the dominant metaphor of the First Five Year Plan.

The new style of organizing/agitational news work was called *massovost'*, literally meaning "massness," but translatable as mass journalism. The differentiation of the Soviet newspaper network in the early 1920s had laid the institutional base for mass journalism by establishing mass newspapers for workers, peasants, and youth. Because Party propagandists believed these target audiences to be ignorant and "dark," incapable of understanding complex, propagandistic appeals, journalists at the mass newspapers and the Komsomol organs were encouraged to continue the militant, agitational traditions of Civil War journalism. During the belt-tightening campaign of 1926 it was these mass journalists who created the new forms of mobilizational journalism. Between 1928 and 1930 many of these same journalists would transform *Pravda* and other central Soviet organs into militant mass newspapers, mobilizational tools of the Party.

Throughout 1927 the Central Committee Press Department urged newspapers to use the new techniques of mass journalism created during the belt-tightening campaign. Both *Pravda* and *Zhurnalist* published pieces holding up *Tverskaia pravda* and its production reviews as an example for other newspapers to follow.[42] *Zhurnalist* repeatedly hammered home the necessity of mobilizing workers and peasants to increase productivity, making an explicit connection between industrialization and the organizational role of the press. In April 1927 a lead editorial written by Sergei Gusev designated the main task of the press as

"attracting worker-peasant masses into socialist construction." He admonished the press to "unite the workers and the peasants for the tasks of large-scale economic construction, and not squeeze the peasantry into the narrow bounds of rural interests."[43] With his reference to "the narrow bounds of rural interests" Gusev was making a not-very-subtle jab at the central mass peasant newspaper, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta,* and more generally at propagandists who tried to understand "the peasant point of view." The demands of industrialization had superseded the gradualist project of enlightening the masses.

In the same issue of *Zhurnalist,* Sergei Ingulov confirmed that Soviet industrialization required the newspapers to take a more active role in monitoring and organizing production. In an editorial entitled "At the Turning Point" (*U perelomnoi cherty*), Ingulov observed that "the epoch of industrialization is tied up in the same bundle with a series of extremely important tasks in the construction of the USSR. In the face of these construction tasks, the functions of the press now amount to more than the role of social tribune, publicity instrument, or means of acting on the masses' ideas, they also include its role as a potent organizer of the masses."[44]

As part of their new emphasis on mobilization, Party leaders insisted that newspapers cleave as closely as possible to the Central Committee's agenda, devoting more space to coverage of Party propaganda campaigns. The Central Committee regularly instructed the press to enlarge and improve the "Party Life" sections of the newspapers.[45] This was also a refrain in *Krasnaia pechat'*, which constantly reprinted Central Committee resolutions and directives on the press and pointed the finger at those newspapers which did not fall into line. In November 1927 the Press Department sent a circular to all Party committees on improving the supervision of the press. It criticized the predominance of economic and financial news over ideological material and complained that the Party was giving insufficient guidance to local newspapers. Party committees were instructed to take a variety of measures, such as briefing reporters on the Central Committee agenda, issuing regular directives on coverage of Party life and socialist construction, and

bringing more Party members onto newspaper staffs. The Press Department instructed local Party organizations to compel newspapers to use more material from TASS, the central wire service, to call regular conferences between Party secretaries and newspaper editors, to pay close attention to the ideological orientation of the press, and to strengthen their supervision of the republic wire services and the press liaison offices of state institutions.[46]

With a renewed mobilizational drive underway, agitprop officials became more concerned with journalists' "political reliability." Increasingly they refused to tolerate those who took a passive or "neutral" attitude toward Soviet power. An issue of *Zhurnalist* in autumn 1927 opened with a denunciation of two "deviations" common among journalists. One was their "narrow workshop mentality"—the concept of the press as somehow separate from the Party. The second was editors' treatment of non-Party journalists as "bourgeois specialists," of whom no more than loyalty to the regime could be expected. Non-party journalists should be subject to the same expectations and discipline as Party journalists.[47] In October of the same year the Central Committee ordered the Press Department, in collaboration with Agitprop and the Commissariat of Enlightenment, to work up a revised plan for the professional training of journalists, so as to strengthen the "Communist education" of chief editors, assistant editors, and reporters.[48] As part of this new campaign to "Communize" Soviet newspapers, the Central Committee would also transfer young mass journalists from the provinces into the central press.

In the spring of 1928 Stalin and Party leaders around him pushed Soviet society into the "Great Break," forcing peasants onto collective farms and embarking on an accelerated industrialization drive. As part of the "Break" the Central Committee Agitprop Department fostered agitational/organizational journalism at *Pravda, Izvestiia,* and other newspapers which had previously had a relatively moderate, propagandistic orientation. Central Committee officials did this by urging newspapers to run mass journalistic events (production reviews, socialist competitions), directing them to retarget their coverage at lower-ranking Party activists and "culturally backward" workers, and transferring into the central press

newspapermen from *Tverskaia pravda, Ural'skii rabochii,* and other newspapers where mass journalism had been created. Between 1928 and 1931 these mass journalists, mostly young, militant Communists, transformed the central press into an instrument of the state's industrialization drive, putting paid to the NEP mass enlightenment project.

The Strike Campaign

The mass journalists' most important tool was the *udarnaia kampaniia,* or "strike campaign," a militant agitation campaign coordinated around a particular Party slogan or task. After 1926 the press integrated the organizing forms of mass journalism developed during the belt-tightening campaign into the strike campaign, a recognized type of agitation dating back at least to the Civil War. The language of the strike campaign, with its imperative headlines, military metaphors, grandiose superlatives, and vocabulary of class war, was an amalgam of elements that had entered the speech and writing of Bolshevik activists over a twenty- to thirty-year period. Even before the turn of the century, Russian revolutionary emigrés in Europe were picking up foreign loan words related to class struggle, strikes, and revolutions, such as *barrikady, avangard, organizovat',* and *proletariat.* During World War I and the Civil War a whole constellation of military terms, such as *front, liniia,* and *otriad* (detachment) entered the Bolshevik vocabulary. During the Revolution and Civil War, Bolshevik publicists also borrowed some phrases from popular speech, such as the sailors' peremptory command *Daesh'!* (Do It!)[49] All these elements came together in the Civil War agitation of the Soviet press.

The strike campaign was supposed to mobilize the masses, to get them to "close ranks" around the Party and undertake some task, such as raising productivity or paying the agricultural tax. In theory at least it involved every part of the Party's agitprop apparatus, and not just the newspapers. Local activists might organize discussion groups and exhibits, collect funds, teach adult education

classes, and distribute pamphlets or even "agit-toys" that taught children lessons about class struggle.[50] Because the strike campaign was aimed at readers with little or no education, it required a simple presentation, with easy language and straightforward thematic organization. Contributors to *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* and *Krasnaia pechat'* agreed that the ideal press campaign repeated a single slogan over and over, avoided difficult technical terms, continued for a prolonged period of time, and was maximally militant.

> The campaign material should be presented to the reader in an easily digestible form, in structure, in dimensions, in appearance, and so on. It is definitely necessary to avoid the superfluous use of specialist terminology or foreign words, and not to get into the ticklish technical side of matters, which the broad masses do not understand . . . . Technical questions must be balanced with organizational questions, which are closer and more comprehensible to the reader. It is also dangerous to run around after this or that topic. On the contrary, it is absolutely imperative that material . . . . be presented in a tight, businesslike way . . . . with special shock headlines, with pictures, sketches, and so on.[51]

The problem with the strike campaign was its shrill tone and superficiality. Critics polemicized against its "naked 'meetingism,' the striving, not to educate, not to explain, but to strew slogans around, to pound the war drums of agitation." In an article written for the 1929 anniversary of the October Revolution, Sergei Ingulov criticized mass journalists for the immoderate militance, sensationalism, and superficiality of their campaigns. Ingulov put his criticisms in the context of Soviet press history. After the crude agitation of the Civil War, he wrote, there had been a hangover of what he called "campaignism" into the NEP period. This was unfortunate, because wartime agitational journalism was not appropriate for the prolonged tasks of economic reconstruction and cultural enlightenment. But the disease of "campaignism" had infected the Soviet system and could not be

eradicated. "Our campaigns were loud . . .we shouted from the rooftops . . . . We developed the harmful habit of making an awful noise about our successes. Our press was too self-satisfied . . . . [It shouted] 'The *bedniak* and the *seredniak* must unite!' . . . 'We must isolate the kulak!'"[52]

The press, Ingulov complained, now did no more than "work up slogans" and run official campaigns. He went on to warn that, in the crisis of collectivization and industrialization, calmness, reasoned propaganda, and caution in publishing denunciatory material were all necessary, not hysterics, "self-promotion," "pathos," or "meetingism." He cited Lenin's warning that the heroic enthusiasm of the Civil War was actually dangerous in the new circumstances of the NEP, which required patience and circumspection. According to Ingulov, the same danger of excessive enthusiasm existed now, as the Party made the "Great Break." Ingulov's criticisms defined quite clearly the strike campaign and its place in Soviet thinking about agitation and propaganda. They placed the campaign's origins in the Civil War era and pinpointed its shrillness, militance, and mobilizational purpose.[53]

Theories of agitation and propaganda were put into practice in Soviet newspapers, as a comparison of 1925 issues of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* with *Pravda* or *Izvestiia* shows. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta,* targeted at newly literate peasants, was full of imperative headlines and simple slogans. A piece on preparing for the spring sowing would be titled "Prepare for Sowing and More Sowing!" Political commentary might be headed "What is Trotskyism? Trotskyism Is Lack of Faith in the Power of the Revolution." *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* presented a limited number of Party slogans in simple form. For example, one preoccupation of the Party leadership in 1925 was transforming the concept of the *smychka,* the alliance of peasant and worker that had made the Revolution of 1917 possible, into the concept of trade between the countryside and the city, the exchange of industrial goods for produce and grain. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* presented this straightforwardly as "*Gorod-derevne,*" or "From the City—to the Countryside." Sometimes headlines in the peasant newspaper were composed in imitation of informal popular speech,

as for example, *"Ekh zhizn' ty nasha kustarnaia!"* ("Hey, Life, You're Our Workshop!") or *"Doloi svistunov!"* ("Light-Fingers, Get Out!" referring to pickpockets and petty thieves).[54]

In 1925 such language and presentation was considered inappropriate for *Pravda* and *Izvestiia,* which were aimed at supposedly more sophisticated Party officials. However, 1925 issues of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* foreshadowed 1933 issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. Rural Party and Komsomol activists wrote to the paper, reporting their activities using military metaphors. Most of these reports followed a three-part formula: successes, failures, and tasks for the future. They had titles like "We're Succeeding" and "We Must Reform Our Party Cell." The newspaper also included the projections of a "shining future" that would become a defining trope of Socialist Realism and 1930s Soviet journalism. At the bottom of page 3 of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* on January 20, 1925, there appeared a drawing of a village at night, with lights shining from the windows of the houses; the caption read, "Just a few more years and Lenin's lamps will burn in every hut!" *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* also featured "ardent greetings" on the occasion of a conference or convention—a phenomenon rare in *Pravda* or *Izvestiia* of 1925. A comparison of the newspapers' coverage of the All-Union Teachers' Conference held in early 1925 is instructive. The peasant newspaper trumpeted "*Krest'ianskaia gazeta* Sends Ardent Greetings to the Conference of Red Teachers," while the leading organs simply headed their coverage, "The All-Union Teachers' Conference."[55] In terms of the Bolshevik theory of agitation and propaganda, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* was dominated by agitational journalism and the strike campaign, while coverage in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* was more propagandistic, educational, and informative.

We can use the working definition of voice sketched earlier in this essay to specify the characteristics of the strike campaign. It was actually a chorus of several voices, all singing the same Party slogan. Its *purpose* was to mobilize readers to carry out tasks set by the Party. Its intended *audience* was uneducated, backward workers and peasants. The grammatical and lexical indices of the strike

campaign were command or implied command-form verbs and the vocabulary of war and struggle. But the campaign material came from several different sources: the Bolshevik activist or factory worker writing in from the "front"; the Party leader delivering a triumphant speech to a conference; the correspondent reporting on successes and failures in "battle"; and the editor outlining the next "campaign." Different sources thus defined different voices, but the voices were united by a single target audience, a single purpose, a single Party slogan or task, and a single lexicon of war and struggle.

The strike campaign projected an image of the Party, and indeed of all Soviet society, as an army responding to the commands emanating from the "General Staff"—the Central Committee. The peculiar signature of the strike campaign was the use of military metaphors and militant vocabulary. Factory operatives and Party activists were "soldiers of socialist construction"; the factories, mineshafts, and collective farms "the front." Orders were couched in command-form headines. "Loyal soldiers"—worker correspondents, collective farm chairmen, Red Army soldiers—reported in from their posts at the "front," describing successes and setbacks and committing themselves to carrying out the orders of the center no matter what the cost. "Generals"—Stalin, Kirov, Molotov, Ordzhonikidze—visited the "front" to congratulate the "soldiers" and distribute medals. In this drama, editors played the role of lower-level officers, perhaps platoon or squad leaders, passing along the generals' orders, explaining them, exhorting the "soldiers" to carry them out effectively.

Between 1925 and 1933 the strike campaign came to dominate domestic coverage in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* (see appendix, tables 1 and 2). The proportion of total space devoted to campaign-related material increased by about 45 percent for *Izvestiia* and over 700 percent for *Pravda*. In 1933 over two-thirds of the domestic news was part of one campaign or another. Reports "from the front" giving accounts of victories and denunciations of shirkers and traitors took up far more space than in 1925. The central press in 1933 depended more heavily on verbatim transcriptions of Party directives and Party leaders' speeches. These took up just

over 25 percent of domestic coverage as compared to between 10 and 20 percent eight years earlier. Not only that, but in 1925 a significant proportion of this kind of Party material emanated from local organizations, while in 1933 almost all of it came from the Central Committee. In the meantime "Chronicle" material, the short news items about crimes, accidents, and cultural events which had filled the back pages of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* in 1925, virtually disappeared. In 1925 *Izvestiia*'s coverage of a flood in Leningrad took up half a page. In 1933 such an item would have merited no more than a tiny paragraph on the back page. The percentage of space devoted to other genres, such as economic analysis, popular science, and book reviews, also dropped. The strike campaign chorus was drowning out other voices.

The fighting tone of the headlines also increased dramatically during the period under study (see appendix, table 3). In 1925 about 10 percent of domestic headlines and headings in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* contained "strike" language. In 1933 over 40 percent did. Both newspapers printed more photographs and illustrations in 1933, and used a larger range of typefaces. Articles, other than transcriptions of Party leaders' speeches, were shorter. In essence, the domestic coverage of both central organs became one big campaign pushing breakneck industrialization and collectivization under the overarching slogan of "socialist construction." Daily departments like "On the Industrial Front" presented the struggle to accomplish these tasks as a war. Not only was more space devoted to official campaigns, but there was also a contraction in focus from a diverse Party agenda to an obsession with raising industrial and agricultural production.

Between 1928 and 1930 the strike campaign came to dominate *Pravda, Izvestiia,* and other central newspapers that had previously had a relatively moderate, propagandistic tone (such as *Trud* [Labor] and *Vecherniaia Moskva* [Evening Moscow]). Under pressure from the Party leadership to mobilize workers and activists for the regime's new crash industrialization program, reporters resorted to the strike campaign as their favored mode of agitational, organizational journalism. They abandoned the NEP mass enlightenment project. Taking the

broadest perspective, then, the increasing shrillness of the Soviet press in the late 1920s was connected with the exigencies of forced-draft industrialization and the Party's determination to use the newspapers as a mobilizational tool. Tightening the focus reveals a number of intertwined problems spooled around the central issue of industrialization. Propagandists and journalists adopted the strike campaign to move the newspaper "closer to the reader," to reach low-ranking Party activists and uneducated, backward workers. The strike campaign and related forms of organizational journalism like the socialist competition also solved problems of information flow for journalists, generating news from the shop-floor and the fields, not just from state and Party offices. Finally, the strike campaign presented a heroic narrative of "socialist construction" that legitimized the Party's rule, at least in the eyes of its own rank-and-file. The next sections of this essay will pick out these strands of the Soviet press's transformation and examine them more closely.

Closer to the Reader!

In January 1923, *Zhurnalist* published an article entitled "Why Are Our Newspapers So Dull?" Soviet editors in the 1920s were caught in a dilemma. They knew that their newspapers were boring, but they were not supposed to resort to ''sensationalism''—stories of sexual scandal, grisly crimes, the lives of the powerful and famous—to liven things up. Russian Marxists, and the Russian intelligentsia in general, had no doubt that yellow journalism and "boulevardism" facilitated the exploitation of the masses by distracting their attention from the realities of class struggle and wage slavery. But they could not get over the feeling that there was something to be plucked from the experience of the Western popular press apart from the forbidden fruit of "bourgeois sensationalism." Was the secret of the tabloids, they asked, their variegated and attractive layout, their photographs, or their content? Did they address issues relevant to workers' lives? The same

issue of *Zhurnalist* included an article about the British tabloid *The Daily Mail* and its owner Lord Northcliffe. The author concluded that Northcliffe's paper communicated effectively with the masses by explaining the problems of workers' daily existence in terms of bourgeois ideology. *The Daily Mail* explained individual success or failure in life in moral terms (diligence versus laziness, righteousness versus depravity) rather than economic ones (the capitalists' exploitation of the working class). Although these explanations were wrong, they did help the masses to make sense of their daily lives. Soviet journalism's job was to help the masses understand their daily lives by providing the *correct* explanations. This statement of the Soviet press's mission as education and enlightenment was in tune with the general atmosphere of early NEP journalism.[56]

Communicating effectively with the masses or, in the terminology of the time, "bringing the newspaper closer to the reader," was one of the central preoccupations of Soviet editors and writers. There was not much economic incentive to produce a newspaper which the populace would buy, for subsidies continued to be available for more important publications in spite of legal decrees putting the press on a "self-financing" basis. Yet the large number of reader studies done in the early to mid-twenties evidenced a sincere desire to reach the reader. The central newspapers were the leadership's most important link with local Party activists and the general population. They were essential tools for cultural construction and the building of socialism.

In order to fulfill their social and political functions, Soviet newspapers had to be both popular and salutary in content.[57] They had to sell without being sensational. For Soviet editors and writers this was a difficult conundrum. Educated Russians tended to believe that the masses would *not* select salutary reading material on their own, and Marxist doctrine reinforced their view of the masses as "dark" and "ignorant." Editors and publicists agreed that *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were unattractive to the mass reader because they were formated like the serious, "thick" journals of political and literary commentary. The masses were not ready for this. Their levels of culture and political consciousness were too low. The

problem of the boring newspaper, then, boiled down to the question of whether to change the presentation of the news so as to appeal to the reader, or to educate the reader to appreciate intellectually sophisticated commentary on economic, political, and literary life.[58]

Soviet journalists and propagandists sought solutions for the problem of the dull newspaper at several different levels, but without ever questioning the assumption that the functions of the press were didactic, persuasive, and mobilizational. One level was the layout, appearance, and thematic organization of the newspapers. Another was language. Linguists and journalists who studied newspaper language in the NEP period concluded that it was obscure, "bureaucratic," and difficult for the ordinary reader to understand. Journalists also tried to remedy the newspapers' "divorce from life"—their focus on bureaucratic activity and abstract ideological questions rather the daily life of peasants and workers. Between 1926 and 1930 editors and Party officials came to see the strike campaign and the associated organizational forms of journalism as one way of bringing the newspaper "closer to life." In particular, Party officials saw agitational/organizational journalism as an effective way for communicating with backward workers newly arrived from the countryside and "politically illiterate" rank-and-file Party activists.

In the early 1920s Bolshevik journalists were suspicious of any concessions to popular taste, even in the area of *tekhnika,* meaning layout, typeface, and external appearance. Many felt that a "serious political organ" should not have a flashy exterior. However, as early as 1923 contributors to *Zhurnalist* argued that the mass newspaper of the future would have to abandon the old "Soviet" layout for a less monotonous appearance based on the practice of American or Western European newspapers. In 1927 *Zhurnalist* reprinted excerpts from an American journalism text, *Editing the Day's News,* which explained how to lay out pyramid headlines (printed one atop another), streamer headlines (running the whole width of the page), and jump headlines (headings given extra emphasis by the blank white space around them). The author of *Editing the Day's News*, George Bastian, also

described how varied typefaces and photographs could be used to liven up a newspaper. *Zhurnalist* noted that even such staid organs as *Pravda* were beginning to use "American techniques" of layout.[59] By the end of the First Five Year Plan all the important mass circulation central papers had adopted many features of the "American system," publishing more photographs and varying the typefaces of their headlines.

Journalists' reluctance to cater to the masses also conflicted with the imperative to reach the reader in the area of newspaper language. Publicists were uncertain what kind of compromise to strike between simplifying their prose and educating the reader. Commentators agreed that the language of newspapers, and of public discourse in general, was difficult for barely literate peasants and workers to understand. Studies of the reading comprehension of Red Army soldiers, peasants, and sugar refinery operatives confirmed this opinion. These readers had particular difficulty with foreign loan words, even commonly used ones like *element, proekt, sotsialisticheskii,* and *monopoliia*. Complex sentences and passive constructions also confused them.[60]

Debate about the press's prose style began in May 1924 after the Thirteenth Party Conference called for the improvement of newspaper language through "an intelligent combination of maximal popularity and clarity of composition with seriousness and independence of content."[61] Participants in the discussion took Lenin's letter "On the Purification of the Russian Language" (1921) as their starting point. The question was precisely *what* needed to be purged from Russian literary and journalistic prose so as to make it more comprehensible to the masses. Lenin's letter, for example, was a diatribe against the superfluous use of foreign loan words.[62] But which foreign loan words were superfluous? Iakov Shafir, a specialist in reader surveys working for the Central Committee Agitprop Department, proposed that all borrowed vocabulary be replaced with Russian root words. To back up his project, he published a short dictionary of foreign loan words and Russian equivalents in *Krasnaia pechat'*. Other commentators pointed out that many of Shafir's Russian equivalents would be more obscure to the worker

or peasant reader than the loan words they replaced. Cutting foreign words alone was not going to make newspaper language any more comprehensible to the mass reader.[63]

Most members of a panel of prominent philologists and linguists put together by *Zhurnalist* in early 1925 agreed that a combination of improved style and literary education for the reader, rather than an all-out campaign against foreign borrowings, was the right medicine.[64] Mikhail Gus, a journalist and instructor at the Moscow State Institute of Journalism, formulated an alternative explanation of the difficulty of newspaper language. In his book *Iazyk gazety* (The Language of the Newspapers) he argued that the real problem with newspaper language was journalists' overuse of stereotyped syntactic formulae built around abstract nouns and verbal nominalizations. Examples of these formulae were phrases like *riad dostizhenii, zadacha stroitel'stva sotsializma, put' razvitiia,* and *liniia ukrepleniia partiinoi bditel'nosti*—"a series of achievements," "the task of socialist construction," "the road of development," "the line of increasing Party vigilance." Nominalization erased the verb's tense and the case of its complements, thus obscuring meaning. (A nominal phrase did not answer questions like: *Who* is constructing socialism? *Who* is being more vigilant against *what*?) Nominalizations tended to be used in passive clauses that did not indicate any specific doer. The nominalization of verbs, their attachment to abstract nouns ("the matter," "the task," "the question"), and their inclusion in passive clauses led to the production of very long, excessively complex sentences. These were often ambiguous and even grammatically incoherent. Nominalization, Gus argued, was the blockage that "constipated" newspaper language. In support of his claims he presented the results of a reading comprehension study demonstrating that sentences written in active voice were easier for Red Army soldiers to understand than corresponding sentences composed in passive voice.[65]

According to Gus the source of "constipated" newspaper language was the official language of Party resolutions imitated by journalists. The prose style of Party resolutions was in turn partly based on the official language of the

prerevolutionary bureaucracy. The use of auxiliary nouns like *delo,* which contributed nothing to meaning, was characteristic of tsarist chancellery documents. So Gus labeled the "constipated" prose style he was trying to describe "bureaucratic" or "chancellery" language. In order to make journalistic prose easier for the mass reader to understand, it was necessy to write shorter sentences and employ active voice, fewer nominalizations, and fewer filler nouns.[66]

Gus' diagnosis was widely accepted by journalists and publicists, in part thanks to a fortuitous coincidence. His label for the disease, "bureaucratic language," made his criticisms fit neatly into the Party's frequent campaigns against "bureaucratism" and "bureaucratic distortions." Commentators in *Zhurnalist* and *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* (The Press and the Revolution) took up his call for a battle against bureaucratic language.[67] In January 1929 the journalists' trade union set up a Bureau of Language Improvement headed by Gus at Moscow's House of the Press. The bureau published a newsletter, "The Beauties of Style," which instructed writers and editors in the characteristics and virtues of clear Russian prose.[68] My own survey of editors' prose style suggests that Gus's campaign against "chancellery language" was successful (see appendix, table 4). Between 1925 and 1933 the frequency of the "abstract noun + nominalization" construction in *Pravda* dropped from forty-two per thousand words to four, and in *Izvestiia* from nineteen per thousand words to six.

Gus's project began as an attempt to use empirical studies to adjust newspaper prose to the mass audience's limited reading ability, but degenerated into prescriptions for "beautiful" style. This devolution illustrates how the condescension of educated Russians toward the "dark masses" and their "backward" culture helped to undermine the NEP mass enlightenment project as a whole. Defending the "beauty" and superior communicative efficacy of received Russian literary style, Party leaders, middle-level officials, and non-Party intellectuals all resisted any major adjustment of newspaper language in the direction of popular speech. As early as 1924, for instance, Mikhail Kalinin polemicized against the creation of a new, simpler prose for the peasant

newspapers.[69] At the beginning of 1929 Sergei Ingulov, then deputy chief of the Central Committee Agitprop Department, warned against understanding the slogan of *massovost'* (mass character) as a call to simplify Russian prose.[70]

One serious problem with stylistic reform was that the use of official and literary language indicated membership in the political elite and high educational achievement. Members of the intelligentsia would not give up their style of writing and public speech, believing that the language of the educated classes was somehow more pure, beautiful, and suitable for the expression of complex ideas than the language of the masses. Linguists recognized that dialectical differences reflected social structure,[71] but assumed that the language of the intelligentsia was naturally superior. Educated opinion, reinforced by a crude reading of Marx's notion that mode of production determines consciousness, held that peasants and backward workers could not think abstractly. This was supposed to be reflected in their language. One of the tasks Bolshevik educators set themselves in the NEP era was the creation of a new "Soviet intelligentsia" made up of workers and peasants who understood and controlled traditional Russian literary language. The worker/peasant correspondents movement was supposed to be a "school" for this new intelligentsiia, hence the importance agitprop officials attached to the proper instruction of correspondents in literary style and appropriate themes for composition.[72]

The worker/peasant correspondents were willing to learn. In fact, their behavior demonstrated the resiliency of the distinction between the educated intelligentsia and the "backward" masses. Advocates of the creation of a new "people's language" contended that worker/peasant correspondent letters should not be edited before being published in the newspaper. Their style should in fact be held up as a model for professional journalists to emulate.[73] The idea was utopian. In practice the opposite occurred. Worker/peasant correspondents eager to join the new elite wrote to the newspapers with the hope of being moved up through the Party's program of advancement for workers, getting an education and a white-collar job. They were eager to establish their level of culture by using whatever

elements of official or literary language they had mastered. Editors observed that the correspondents were imitating official style in their letters.[74]

Attempts to move the newspaper "closer to the masses" by creating a new prose style incorporating elements of common speech stumbled against the conviction of educated Russians that the language of official events and "serious" literature was naturally privileged. Stooping to an imitation of peasant or worker dialects would be to devalue language, to actually reduce its communicative efficacy. Indeed, the movement to simplify and improve prose style was in part a reaction to the vulgarisation of written language by uneducated "proto-intellectuals" who were entering the journalistic world. Even as stylistic reformers praised the directness and clarity of worker/peasant correspondent writing, they also asserted that mastery of official and literary language distinguished the "real" intelligentsia from "proto-intellectuals" who wrote like "philistines."[75]

When Soviet journalists did try to reach the masses with imitations of what they imagined popular speech to be, the results were poor, even comical. The condescension of the intelligentsia to the common people was laid bare in these attempts, which produced a childish argot bearing little resemblance to any real Russian speech. Examples of this can be found in *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* of 1925 ("Hey, Life, You're Our Workshop!"), a newspaper that was supposed to appeal to newly literate peasants. Peasant correspondents sometimes protested against this sort of baby-talk. In 1923 one peasant wrote to *Bednota*, another peasant paper, that "one must not make up, as a substitute for the common people's language, some kind of child's talk, which is supposed to be understandable to all peasants."[76]

Few intellectuals were self-conscious enough about their attitudes to understand the class function of official and literary language. However, one commentator in *Krasnaia pechat'*, Victor Iakerin, gave a remarkably cogent account of it. In an article titled "Language *of* the Worker and Language *for* the Worker," Iakerin first noted that workers were using elements of intelligentsia language to show their new mastery of high culture. He went on to point out that the use of official or literary language was less a matter of social class than of

situation. At home the educated person used a register much like workers' speech. But when he mounted the tribune to address an audience of workers, the same educated person would either be overcome by the solemnity of the occasion and speak in a pompous official register, or talk down to his audience like a teacher speaking to small children. Such baby-talk also appeared in the press. Iakerin gave some examples drawn from headlines: "Go Ahead, Stuff It In!" "Hey, Administrators, Listen Up! Close the Scissors!" Instead of confounding them with offical language or condescending to them with baby-talk, Iakerin urged journalists to address workers in the same register they used at home, outside the official sphere.[77]

At the end of the 1920s the voluntarist mobilization of the First Five Year Plan overtook sociolinguistics and empirical studies of the reader. After 1929 Soviet scholars and propagandists stopped doing serious studies of reading comprehension altogether. Scholarship on newspaper style became strictly prescriptive.

While moderates like Gus tried to approach the newspaper audience through careful study and patient dialogue, more militant journalists believed that the strike campaign was the best way to get "closer to the reader." By the late 1920s, with the "Great Break" approaching, the militants were ascendant. In place of reader studies, "Cultural Construction," and propaganda, journalists and Party officials increasingly favored militant agitation and strike campaigns. In the draconian conditions of the First Five Year Plan the Party needed a journalism that would mobilize the masses and restore the *elan* of the revolutionary years, not pedagogical projects or the study of readers' subjective tastes.

Militant journalists at the mass newspapers had long seen the strike campaign as a way to make the newspaper exciting without stooping to the vulgar sensationalism of the prerevolutionary boulevard press. As early as 1925, M. Levidov, a regular commentator in *Zhurnalist,* had argued that the strike campaign was actually a means of rehabilitating sensationalism in an acceptable form. Levidov felt that the fear of boulevardism had became an unhealthy obsession.

Soviet journalists wrote their pieces very cautiously, giving them titles like "On the Question of . . ." and "On the Occasion of . . . ." They "guaranteed their work against sensationalism, 'boulevardism,' and, coincidentally, against interest." "Why this petty bourgeois fear of boulevardism?" Levidov had asked, and went on, "Was not our revolution a *boulevard* revolution . . .?!" He endorsed the work of mass newspapers like *Rabochaia gazeta, Rabochaia Moskva,* and *Bednota,* recommending that *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* imitate their "militant strike character." His prescription for an interesting newspaper was short articles, concentration of important material on the front page, and militant agitational rhetoric.[78]

Officials of the Central Committee Press Department also displayed an on-again, off-again enthusiasm for the strike campaign, even in the middle years of the NEP. *Krasnaia pechat'* in 1924 encouraged the use of strike language, praising the militant headlines for a productivity campaign in the provincial paper *Permskaia zvezda* (The Perm Star).

Tanner! Before the War You Processed an Average of 127 Skins a Day!
Now You Process Only 108.
Fifteen Percent Are Missing. Get to Work!

Glass Worker! Ten Years Ago You Produced 0.64 Poods of Glass Per Day.
Now You Make Only 0.63. Four Percent Are Missing. A Little More Effort![79]

The contemporary Western reader may doubt whether the agitation campaign was any kind of a substitute for yellow journalism and sensationalism. Did it really attract readers? For ambitious youth, Communists, and aspiring Communists the answer may have been yes. In 1925 *Krest'ianskaia gazeta,* a newspaper dominated by campaigns and "fighting" language, had the highest circulation of any periodical in the Soviet Union.[80] For Party activists and others eager to enter the new political elite, the straightforward directives and slogans of the campaign were a quick and easy guide to Party policy.[81] For semiliterate

readers with a limited mental map of the world beyond their own province, the strike campaign could create an exciting sense of social solidarity and participation in events of great historical significance. Finally, there was the *millenarian* aspect of the strike campaign. The language and presentation of the campaign were suppposed to draw readers into participation in the opening of the millennium—the construction of socialism. Every soldier had a post in the battle to reach the "shining future."

However readers responded to the strike campaign, Central Committee officials and many journalists believed that it was the way to communicate with "backward" readers quickly and effectively. In the late 1920s that belief drove the transformation of the Soviet press. Beginning in 1926 and with increasing frequency thereafter, Agitprop officials and newspaper editors expressed concern about the political reliability of two key groups in the Party's support base: new Party members and "green" workers newly arrived in the cities from the countryside. In the minds of Bolshevik higher-ups, the new Party members who had joined since the end of the Civil War lacked the education and political literacy to understand the newspapers' messages. Letters to the newspapers and intelligence reports confirmed that the new members' comprehension of Party propaganda was unstable. Party propagandists had similar worries about rural immigrants pulled into the cities by the Party's industrialization program. Both new Party members and "green" workers would respond best to simple messages, such as the straightforward emotional appeal and vituperation of agitational mass journalism. Between late 1927 and 1930 a series of Central Committee decisions transformed central Soviet newspapers, retargeting them at the "green" workers and rank-and-file Party activists. In concrete terms this transformation meant the increased use by Soviet newspapers of the strike campaign.[82]

Creating the News: Reporters, Information Flow, and Mass Journalism

In addition to the difficult problem of appealing to the mass reader without resort to "bourgeois sensationalism," Soviet reporters in the twenties faced the task of defining what would constitute "news" under socialism. New stories did not just pop out at reporters. It was not self-evident what kinds of events were news and what were not. In the Soviet Union as elsewhere in the world, newspapers' production procedures, reporters' choice of sources, the availability of information, editors' guidelines for constructing a story, and journalists' own criteria for newsworthiness all helped determine what got into the newspaper. In *Manufacturing the News* (1980) Mark Fishman has shown how journalists' work routines, their reliance on government bureaucracies for information, and other institutional limitations shape the news in the United States. According to Fishman, overworked American reporters tend to rely on information already prepared and processed for them by state bureaucracies. To go out and seek alternative information costs too much time and money for reporters to do on a regular basis.[83] As we shall see, Soviet journalists in the mid-1920s faced a similar problem. In NEP Russia, state bureaucracies controlled information flow more tightly than in the United States today. By 1926 this control had become a real problem for Party officials and journalists who wanted to publish news of the ordinary workers and peasants who were "building socialism." The response was the creation of the new "organizational" techniques of mass journalism, namely the socialist competition, the production review, and "the exchange of production experience."

In the first years of the NEP, many Soviet bureaucracies began to institutionalize the distribution of information in press bureaus (*pressburo*), public relations departments that provided reporters with "prepared, clichéd information," stenographic reports, protocols, and communiqués. By 1926 commissariats, industrial trusts, and city soviets all had their own press bureaus. Managers used

them to refuse interviews and restrict access to meetings and conferences. Often the press bureau officials themselves refused to deal with reporters in person, but would only respond to questions presented in written form. In short, the bureaus protected management. Critics argued that they were contributing to the "bureaucratization" of Soviet society, protecting institutional interests against healthy criticism from the Party press. Commentators in *Krasnaia pechat'* and *Zhurnalist* complained that the press bureaus had "a monopoly on information."[84]

The press bureaus threatened the very existence of reporting as a profession. In the summer of 1925 the crisis was exposed in a public debate about the future of the Soviet reporter. The opening volley was fired by I. Alekseev, the editor of the Khar'kov Party organ *Proletarii* (Proletarian); in a piece entitled "Toward a Discussion About the Reporter" he argued that reporters had become superflous; most reportorial functions could be fulfilled by "a responsible courier" picking up documents prepared by press bureaus. Although some of Alekseev's opponents in Moscow, notably the journalists' trade union secretary, Sergei Ingulov, later accused him of advocating the abolition of reporting as a profession, his article actually argued for the redefinition, not the elimination, of reportorial work. Monitoring the state apparatus, Alekseev believed, was the job of worker/peasant correspondents, not reporters. To justify their position in the editorial hierarchy, reporters were going to have to seek out new, "creative" work methods. In advocating a redefinition of the reporter's job, Alekseev pointed the way toward the development of mass journalistic methods in which a reporter went directly to the shop-floor for news, rather than depending on information provided by the press bureaus.[85]

Alekseev's article sparked a debate about the reporter's role that continued from mid-1925 to mid-1926. In *Zhurnalist* and at meetings of the Moscow House of the Press's Association for Newspaper Culture, journalists discussed the declining importance of reporting in the Soviet press and the remedies thereof.[86] Although exchanges were often heated, participants concurred on many important points. Reporters, they claimed, had been converted into "couriers" by the press

bureaus' control over access to state institutions and by their low status in Soviet society.[87] Held in contempt by most officials, they found it nearly impossible to obtain interviews. Editors provided reporters with little or no guidance or support. Yet insofar as reporters had not taken the initiative to seek new sources of information, they bore some responsibility for their own predicament. If they were going to preserve their jobs, reporters would need to bypass the press bureaus and seek news on the shop-floor and in the fields.

Reporters blamed the press bureaus for blocking their access to senior officials, conferences, and meetings.[88] In 1925–1926 *Zhurnalist* and *Krasnaia pechat'* published a series of anecdotes about reporters' grueling efforts to make contact with senior sources. In February 1926 a reporter at *Gudok* described his attempt to get an interview with an important trust director, a "demi-Commissar." Initially refused access, the reporter spent days hanging around in the foyer of the "demi-Commissar's" building until he was able to slip into his office by posing as a foreign correspondent.[89] A second *Gudok* reporter spent two weeks pursuing a factory director before he cornered him in a stairwell.[90] Even a reporter from *Pravda,* the most prestigious newspaper in the USSR, was unable to get an interview with the *guberniia* Party secretary or the local newspaper editor during a one-week stay in Briansk.[91]

At meetings of the Association for Newspaper Culture, reporters also complained of a lack of attention from editors, right down to the level of the department heads, their direct bosses. There was a "wall," they claimed, between the editorial staff and the reporters. One commentator in *Zhurnalist* bemoaned the "unenviable" place of the reporter in the editorial offices: "In reality the reporter is a mere executor of orders. The department heads, who almost without exceptions have never reported and know nothing of the job, pay no attention to him. The department head does not know which reporter is attached to which institution, and often gives assignments which are either out-and-out impossible or inappropriate for the present moment. Let's not even talk about the editor—he has no time for

reporters. There are no 'production meetings' scheduled so the reporter has no forum . . . to discuss his doubts and difficulties or . . . share his experience."[92]

Relations between reporters and their department editors were often poor. Reporters received little guidance from editors. At editorial staff meetings they were usually not permitted to speak. Staff meetings between reporters and editors were so rare that *Pravda* reporters issued a categorical demand for a conference with editors at a December 1925 session of the Association for Newspaper Culture. Editors, on the other hand, complained that reporters showed no initiative. If not given very specific instructions, they sat around the editorial offices all day.[93] In general, relations between the two groups were hostile. According to one participant in the Press Club discussion, "the reporters bring in their material, hand it over silently and gloomily to the department secretary or the department head and make for the nearest café to drink tea. The department head looks over the material, throws part of it in the wastebasket, and sends part to the compositor. That's the end of it."[94]

One of the reasons that editors paid little attention to reporters was that they were too busy to do so. At the Moscow and central newspapers in the 1920s, senior editors were generally Old Bolsheviks with commitments to multiple posts in the state apparatus, as well as to Party work. In "Notebook" and "The Reporter's Page," regular departments in *Zhurnalist,* the editor was portrayed as a distant, distracted figure so overwhelmed by Party commitments that he had no time to guide his subordinates or examine their articles. Some editors did not know the names of all their staff. Frequently the editor left the newspaper offices early because he had a lecture to deliver or some Party meeting to attend. One "Notebook" told of an unnamed Moscow editor who worked at the *guberniia* Party and Executive Committees and also belonged to VTsIK, the All-Union Central Executive Committee. Since he usually had to speak at workers' meetings and other public events in the afternoons and evenings, this man arrived for work very early in the morning to write the day's editorial. Another editor complained that he was often up until three or four in the morning at Party functions and back at the

editorial offices by seven a.m. Bukharin, the editor of *Pravda,* was described as hiding in the concierge's booth outside the newspaper offices so as not to be disturbed while he scribbled an editorial on an envelope.[95]

Senior editors at central newspapers often occupied several official posts simultaneously. Maksim Savel'ev, who was an editor at *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta* (the Industrial and Trade Gazette, where he served before 1928), *Izvestiia* (1928–1930), and *Pravda* (1931), served also at various times as editor of two journals, head of the state industrial publishing house (Promizdat), vice-chairman of the Communist Academy Presidium, director of the Lenin Institute, Central Committee administrator, and Central Committee member.[96] In February 1926, Boris Efimov, a well-known illustrator and cartoonist for the Soviet newspapers, caricatured *Izvestiia's* editor Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov in *Zhurnalist.* At the time, Skvortsov-Stepanov was in Leningrad running a purge of *Leningradskaia pravda* while on temporary leave from *Izvestiia.* In the caricature, he held a pen tucked under his arm and four suitcases labeled with the names of the various publications he was editing at the time. In addition to *Izvestiia* and *Leningradskaia pravda,* these included the newspapers *Krasnaia gazeta* (Red Gazette), *Novaia vecherniaia gazeta* (New Evening Gazette), and *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta* (Evening Red Gazette), plus the journals *Begemot* (Hippopotamus), *Krasnaia panorama* (Red Panorama), *Krasnaia niva* (Red Field), and *Novyi mir* (New World).[97]

To fill the newspaper, overloaded editors sometimes depended on stenographic reports of Party leaders' speeches, resolutions, directives, and other official documents which required little or no editing. Press bureaus were more than happy to provide such "canned" material. As one writer for *Rabochaia gazeta* noted, the press bureaus' "protocols and summary reports" were easy filler for reporters and editors. There was simply no incentive to go out and find more interesting stories, such as profiles of exemplary workers.[98] Overworked editors preferred the press bureaus' material because it was uncontroversial, easy to edit, and did not require reporters to exercise their often scant literary skills.

Reporters' low social status may have contributed to their poor relations with editors. Intellectuals in prerevolutionary Russia had long denigrated the commercialism of the mass press, despised the corruption of reporters who took bribes in exchange for favorable coverage, and dismissed writing for the commercial press as a vulgar sellout. According to Louise McReynolds, the leading scholar of prerevolutionary Russian newspapers, "the same easy dismissal of commercial culture as beneath their dignities led intellectuals . . . in Russia to ridicule newspaper journalists."[99] Bolsheviks and other Russian socialists tended to share the intelligentsiia's disdain for reporters and for the boulevard journalism they produced. These attitudes carried over into the postrevolutionary years, when reporters were habitually denigrated as "yellow journalists" and "sensation chasers." In the Bolshevik mind, the word "reporter" conjured up an image of the bourgeois newspaperman catering to the "philistine" tastes of *declassé* urban masses with "pornographic" stories of the sexual adventures and luxurious lives of the rich and famous. These attitudes made the reporters' work more difficult not just in the editorial offices, but at the state institutions where they went to gather information. Apparatchiks feared reporters' capacity to damage their institution while at the same time despising them. Distrust and derision infected their relations with low-ranking journalists. One reporter from *Pravda,* Dimin, lamented official distrust of the newspapers at a House of the Press discussion: "Institutional distrust of the reporter and the newspaper harms work, and the responsibility for this lies with the directors of the institutions. Three quarters of us [reporters] have never met the directors of the institutions we serve face to face."[100]

Prejudice against reporters was connected with the taboo against "bourgeois sensationalism." Both contributed to the increasing predominance of dull, "bureaucratic" material in the Soviet press. Throughout the NEP era it was precisely those newspapers with the liveliest, least official "Chronicle" departments that retained the largest numbers of reporters from the prerevolutionary era. These were also the papers that came under the heaviest attack for boulevardism and yellow journalism. *Vecherniaia Moskva,* Leningrad's *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta,*

and *Izvestiia* were the most conspicuous of these.[101] A 1930 Central Control Commission report on the staff of *Vecherniaia Moskva* identified four reporters and writers who had worked for the prerevolutionary Odessa newspapers *Odesskie izvestiia* (Odessa News), *Poslednye izvestiia* (Latest News), *Odesskaia pochta* (Odessa Post), and *Odesskie novosti* (also best translated as Odessa News).[102] According to A. Kliachkin, who reported on the cinema for *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta* (Evening Red Gazette), several reporters from the prerevolutionary Petersburg press worked at that paper's City Information Department in the mid-twenties. In his memoirs, Kliachkin names two, Vladimir Elesin, whose "speciality was accidents and fires," and Martyn Dvinskii, who reported on the local academic and artistic scene.[103] Both *Vecherniaia Moskva* and *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta* came in for very harsh criticism from Soviet agitprop officials and journalists at other newspapers. In the April 1926 edition of *Zhurnalist,* for example, V. Verner, an editor from the central cooperative newspaper *Kooperativnaia zhizn',* launched a vicious attack on *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta,* calling it "a boulevard newspaper," and "for people of the past and people without a future." According to Verner, the paper's stock in trade was stories about the market for precious stones, murder trials, prostitution, "abortions, violence, a 16-year-old boy and his 17-year-old girl lover, two women and one man, two men and one woman, etc., etc., and 'special methods for the restoration of sexual function.'" Its audience was idle members of intelligentsiia, "people of the past," women without productive work, *declassé* lower-class youth "under the influence of the streets and the NEP." In short, a thoroughly unsavory newspaper.[104]

Pressure from the Bolshevik agitprop apparatus to devote maximal space to the Party's agenda also contributed to the squeezing out of less politicized forms of journalism like the "Chronicle" and theater/literary reviews. Editors sought material that fit under the "agit-morals" and slogans endorsed by the Party. One feuilletonist recorded how this pressure affected the day-to-day routine of the editorial offices in an imaginary dialogue between a reporter and an editor. The conversation exemplifies the way in which dull, press bureau material fitting within

the framework of official propaganda campaigns could edge out more "sensational" items about fires, accidents, scandals, and crime.

[Reporter]: "The fire brigade was on the way. But the horses couldn't make it—they were staggering. The firemen left them behind and ran on alone. They reached the fire long before their equipment. The problem was that the horses were dying of hunger."
[Department Editor]: "No, Comrade, we can't print that."
"But it's fact, a true story."
"Even so . . ."
"Well, what do you want then?"
"Socialist Construction."
"We don't have any 'Socialist Construction'! All we've got are protocols, conferences, agendas!"
"Fine. Print them."[105]

As editors struggled to promote the Party's agenda and enliven their newspapers without turning to the sensationalism of the prewar press, the reporters were easy, powerless scapegoats for their difficulties. In a February 1926 *Zhurnalist* article, *Pravda* feuilletonist Mikhail Kol'tsov claimed that the debate on the reporter's role in the Soviet press had begun with higher-ups' "decision to punish the 'hack chroniclers'" for the poor quality of Soviet domestic news. According to Kol'tsov, editors were blaming the reporters for problems that were really the fault of the press bureaus and Party agitprop officials. To drive the reporters' "guilt" home, the House of the Press had even organized a show trial of reporters who had made particularly egregious mistakes.[106]

But in the debates sponsored by the House of the Press, reporters defended themselves vigorously, blaming the press bureaus for choking off information and editors for indifference and even collusion with the bureaus. In February or early March 1926, a Moscow Conference of Information Personnel (Moskovskaia

konferentsiia rabotnikov informatsii) was held at the Press Club. Eighty-one of the voting delegates were reporters, nineteen were Information Department editors, and seven were editors. The delegates represented twenty-five newspapers and publishing houses. Non-Party reporters with relatively long tenures in newspaper work dominated the conference (among the eighty-one reporters there were only eleven Party and five Komsomol members, and their average length of experience in newspaper work was nine years). Not surprisingly given its composition, the conference passed a series of resolutions defending the reporter, calling for a battle with the press bureaus' "hack work," more frequent meetings with editors, the establishment of a professional organization for reporters, and improved compensation.

During the conference, delegates also discussed ways of improving reporting, bringing it "closer to life," and getting around the press bureaus. Several praised Lenin's 1918 article, "On the Character of Our Newspapers," which chided the press for publishing too much "political chatter" and too little concrete news of how ordinary people were building communism. The writer Mezhericher, of *Rabochaia gazeta,* called for covering "facts from the life of the broad masses who are building our state," rather than the "protocols" and "summary reports" provided by the press bureaus. Lev Sosnovskii, the well-known *Pravda* feuilletonist, claimed that factory wall-newspapers were already producing the kind of journalism Mezhericher demanded and that these should be the model for the big central newspapers. Sosnovskii had particular praise for *Martenovka,* the factory newspaper at the Hammer and Sickle plant in Moscow. *Martenovka,* he said, exemplified Soviet journalism as it should be, with "merciless exposure . . . of the factory's shortcomings" and coverage of ordinary workers' achievements. *Martenovka*'s full-time staff worked with dozens of worker correspondents to gather concrete news about production. This, Sosnovskii argued, was the model for the future. S. A. Volodin, a *Pravda* reporter and later editor at *Rabochaia gazeta* (1928–1929) and *Vecherniaia Moskva* (1930), agreed with him. Mezhericher, Sosnovskii, and Volodin, all writers for Central Committee newspapers, were

sketching a vision of the future of Soviet reporting, a vision of collaboration with shop-floor "correspondents" to clear production blockages, keep an eye on management, and publicize the achievements of ordinary workers. Within months this future would begin materializing as "mass journalism."[107]

Between the editors' and officials' view that lazy reporters and sensation-seeking "hack chroniclers" were responsible for the poor quality of Soviet domestic news, and the reporters' opinion that the press bureaus were at fault, the reporters' position seems more plausible. Soviet institutions were developing barriers against the outflow of information, among them the press bureaus. In part this was a reaction to the regime's deliberate use of denunciation as a tool of governance. For market competition and a formal system of checks and balances within the state apparatus, the Bolsheviks had substituted surveillance from above and denunciation from below, hoping to keep incompetence and corruption in check. The natural reaction of state enterprises and institutions was to put up obstructions to the flow of information. N. Valevskii, a commentator published in the March 1926 issue of *Zhurnalist,* summarized the process well when he wrote that "our institutions have dug in behind the barrier of their press bureaus against Vladimir Il'ich's motto: 'Hunt out the unfit.'"[108]

By the spring of 1926, then, editors, reporters, and agitprop officials were all worried about the poor quality of domestic news coverage, which was degrading into a heap of official protocols, directives, stenograms, and institutional communiqués. The alternative represented by the old school of prerevolutionary reporters—stories on fires, accidents, crimes, trials, and society scandals—was not acceptable. The regime needed a new kind of local, domestic news that would show the "laboring masses" how ordinary people like them were engaged in the battle to build a socialist society. Through this new kind of news the "black hands," the tillers and manual laborers, would speak, criticizing corrupt or incompetent bosses and expressing their commitment to building socialism. The industrial belt-tightening campaign of 1926 provided the impetus for creating this new kind of news.

As already noted, the goal of the belt-tightening campaign was to increase productivity, thereby maximizing profits that could be reinvested in industry. The problem was to mobilize rank-and-file workers and convince them to accept sacrifices—stagnating wages and more work—to achieve the long-term goal of building up Soviet industry. At the outset of the campaign Felix Dzerzhinskii, chairman of the VSNKh, and Sergei Gusev, head of the Central Committee's Press Department, saw newspapers as a vital part of the solution. At meetings in March 1926 Dzerzhinskii and Gusev urged journalists to cover the campaign *on the shop-floor* and give workers a channel for controlled criticism of management inefficiencies. This limited input into production decisions, they hoped, would give workers a sense that they themselves had a stake in improving productivity.[109]

Coverage of the belt-tightening campaign had to be shifted away from trust offices and factory management onto the shop-floor. Newspapers that began the campaign by interviewing trust chairmen and factory managers, such as *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta* and *Ural'skii rabochii,* quickly came under attack.[110] Reporters then began to seek out interviews with workers, soliciting their suggestions for streamlining production. Aleksei Kapustin, the editor of *Tverskaia gazeta,* took news from the shop-floor a step further in May 1926, when he and his staff pioneered the "production review," in which reporters roamed the shop-floor talking to workers, foremen, and mechanics about the production process and how to improve it. The newspaper then published workers' suggestions for raising productivity along with factory managers' comments on them. The journalists also published profiles of individual workers and organized "production meetings" at which workers and management discussed possible changes in the production process. The entire campaign was coordinated with the factory's Party cell, its trade-union committee, management, and regional Party and Soviet officials. In this way the workers' ideas were carefully screened prior to publication.[111]

Kapustin's "production review" and the other forms of organizing mass journalism pioneered during the belt-tightening campaign (socialist competitions, coverage of strike brigades, exchanges of production experience) generated the carefully screened news from the shop-floor that Party officials demanded. In organizing a socialist competition or a production review, reporters produced their own news, bypassing the press bureaus entirely. The various forms of mass journalism thus solved problems of information flow. They were fundamentally media events, something akin to today's "photo opportunity." In a socialist competition, for example, newspaper editors would contact the enterprises involved, arrange meetings between managers, and mediate the signing of a contract setting the terms of the contest. Reporters would visit the enterprises, organizing "production meetings," helping workers to produce their own "wall-newspapers," and collecting workers' suggestions for raising productivity. They would then report on the course of the competition, the results, and their own organizational role. In such mass journalistic events the newspaper both "mobilized the masses" by organizing workers for more efficient production and moved "closer to life," bypassing the press bureaus and the official bureaucracies.

In addition to its organizing/mobilizating function, then, mass journalism was a conscious attempt by the press and Party officials to solve problems of information flow, beat the "bureaucratization" of Soviet society, and generate news of ordinary workers on the shop-floor. Mass journalism rejuvenated the reportorial profession and satisfied Party leaders' demands that newspapers mobilize the working class and provide news from the shop-floor. After 1926 mass journalistic events like socialist competitions and production reviews became integral parts of each strike campaign. As mass mobilizer and generator of news from the shop-floor, mass journalism would become the ideal vehicle for the "super-campaign" to fulfill the First Five Year Plan.

Mass Journalism Transforms the Press, 1928–1930

From the beginning of the belt-tightening campaign in the early spring of 1926, the Central Committee Press and Agitprop Departments had supported newspapers' experiments in mass mobilizational journalism. Support continued through 1927, with articles in *Pravda* and *Zhurnalist* holding up Aleksei Kapustin's production reviews as an example for all Soviet newspapers to follow.[112] During 1926–1927 the Komsomol Central Committee also urged its newspapers to organize and report on production "contests" (*konkursy*), production meetings, factory wall-newspapers, and other forms of mass journalism.[113]

The Central Committee leadership's decision in the winter of 1927–1928 to make the "Great Break," to collectivize the peasantry and accelerate investment in industry, prompted Party agitprop officials to solidify the weak points in the Bolshevik's base of social support, ordinary Party activists and "green" workers newly arrived in the cities. In early 1928 concern with getting the Party's message to these groups motivated a tremendous expansion of mass journalism throughout the Soviet press. Documents from the Party Central Committee and the Moscow *guberniia* Party Committee show worried agitprop officials taking a series of steps to shore up rank-and-file activists' and new workers' support for the regime, including the retargeting of many press organs. The ultimate effect was to homogenize high-circulation papers, ending their differentiation by target audience.

The resolutions of the Fifteenth Party Congress, which met in December 1927, warned that the growth of the USSR's "productive forces" was sharpening class contradictions, forcing desperate "private-capitalist layers of the city and countryside" to greater efforts to propagandize "backward strata among artisans and craftsmen, peasants, and workers." To break the influence of the "private-capitalist" social groups on "backward" workers and

peasants, the Party had to "intensify the struggle on the ideological and cultural fronts." The Congress also noted the imperative of "Leninist unity and proletarian discipline in the Party's ranks, along with continuous work to raise members' ideological-theoretical and cultural levels," especially in view of the influx of workers "from production" into the Party during the 1927 "October Levy" of new Communists.[114]

Between July 1928 and April 1929, Central Committe agitprop officials made a number of decisions with the overall aim of retargeting the press at new workers and politically illiterate Party activists. In a resolution drafted by an Agitprop Department commission and dated July 23, 1928, the Central Committee criticized the Communist youth and children's press (that is, the Komsomol and Pioneer press) for nearly complete failure to reach "the new strata of young workers" from the countryside. Youth periodicals were to strengthen the "Party education" of readers. Unpublished material attached to the resolution noted that the Komsomol press "almost completely fails to serve the new worker who has just entered production, [and] does little serious Party-political education work."[115]

Also in July 1928 the Central Committee Secretariat approved a plan to publish a new "mass critical-bibliographical journal" aimed at "middle-level" Party agitators and propagandists, university students, and "the broad stratum of Soviet activists." According to the Agitprop Department report on the plan, existing literary/bibliographical journals, especially *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* (The Press and the Revolution), served a very narrow, specialist readership of "intelligentsiia" and "book lovers," but were beyond the comprehension of the "average reader" (*chitatel'-seredniak*). The new journal's chief task would be "to struggle mercilessly with distortions of the Leninist-Marxist line" in literature, guide readers' choice of books, and combat their "illiteracy" and "ignorance." In December the plan was implemented with the founding of *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary Gazette), the journal of the Federation of Soviet Writers.[116]

A third move in the retargeting of the press was the Central Committee Secretariat's April 1929 resolution, "On the Newspaper *Bednota*." During the Civil War era *Bednota* had been the Central Committee's paper for ordinary peasants, but when *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* began publication in late 1923, it was retargeted at rural officialdom. In the April 1929 resolution, drafted by Sergei Ingulov (then deputy director of the Agitprop Department), the Secretariat ordered *Bednota* to give more coverage to collectivization and kulak opposition to Soviet power, to simplify its language to make it more accessible to the ordinary peasant, and to undertake more "mass work," such as reader conferences and instructional meetings with peasant correspondents. Ingulov's unpublished report to the Secretariat indicated that the resolution's goal was to make *Bednota* more accessible to village Communist activists and not just to rural officials. The paper had to revive its earlier "mass popular" approach.[117]

Inside the Moscow Party Committee, too, agitprop officials were concerned about the problem of reaching "green" workers and rank-and-file Party activists. A January 1928 report from the Moscow Agitprop Department asserted the need to publish a pamphlet summarizing the resolutions of the Fifteenth Party Congress in simple terms for semiliterate workers recently inducted into the Party. Available literature was incomprehensible to this group: "it is difficult for the majority just to read the newspaper, much less analyze it."[118] A June 1928 report from the Information Department based on similar material (comments and questions to Party agitators at workplace meetings), warned that workers who retained close ties with their villages had a hostile attitude toward the Party's rural policies in general: "'peasant' moods are making themselves strongly felt among workers connected with the countryside."[119] In response to such alarms the Moscow Committee Agitprop Department had already (January 1928) undertaken to publish a new journal for workplace activists, to be called *Massovik* (Mass Activist). According to the department the journal was necessary because *Sputnik Agitatora,* the

Central Committee journal for workplace activists and agitators, "was not always appropriate for comprehension and practical use by the great mass of lower-level cell activists and especially those newly recruited."[120]

Agitational rhetoric and mass journalism were the Party's tools of choice for reaching backward activists and workers, as Sergei Ingulov made clear in a report to the Central Committee's Orgburo in the summer of 1928. He evaluated the press's use of "mass work"—socialist competitions, production reviews, exchanges of production experience, roving editorial offices, and other forms of "public meetings and production conferences"—to "attract the most broad mass of laborers into active participation in socialist construction." According to Ingulov, mass journalism was supposed to "mobilize the masses around core political slogans and economic campaigns," encourage the masses to offer constructive criticism of management, *"attract the most backward and passive laboring strata into civic-political life,"* and *"activate local Party, Soviet, trade-union, and civic organizations."* In short, the purpose of mass journalism was to pull "backward" workers and peasants into the Party's sphere of influence and mobilize activists to carry out Party tasks.[121]

In his report, Ingulov also praised the work of the newspapers that had pioneered mass journalism, especially *Tverskaia pravda, Ural'skii rabochii, Luganskaia pravda,* and *Komsomol'skaia pravda.*[122] These newspapers were an important source for the young cadres of mass journalists who transformed *Pravda* and other central organs in 1928–1930. Already in 1927 the Central Committee had begun transferring journalists from these newspapers into the central press. Transfers would continue steadily through 1930. More than any specific directives, it was these transfers, and the Central Committee's general encouragement for mass journalism and agitation, that catalyzed the transformation of the central Soviet newspapers.

One early transfer into the central press was Aleksei Kapustin, editor of *Tverskaia pravda* and inventor of the production review. In early 1928 the

Central Committee made Kapustin assistant editor of the mass worker newspaper *Rabochaia Moskva,* but almost immediately shifted him to *Pravda,* where he first headed the "Worker Life" department and later served as assistant editor of the economic news department. During his tenure at *Pravda,* Kapustin not only organized production reviews, socialist competitions, and "mobile editorial offices" (at which *Pravda* journalists produced workplace newspapers), he represented the paper at sessions of the Central Committee Agitprop Department.[123] Other *Pravda* cadres who began their careers in the Tver' press were Petr Nikolaevich Pospelov, who became a member of the central organ's editorial staff in 1931; Ivan Riabov, a reporter for the Agricultural Department starting in 1929; and correspondents Vasilii Khodakov, Boris Polevoi, and Lev Khvat.[124] Other central newspapers also received cadres from Tver'. Andrei Nikolaevich Troitskii, appointed chief editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in March 1930, began his career as secretary of the Tver' *guberniia* Komsomol Committee in 1920.[125] Denis Kondrat'evich Liakhovets, a reporter who had served as an editor and department chief at *Tverskaia pravda,* went to work at the central cooperative newspaper, *Kooperativnaia zhizn',* in August 1927. There he headed a group of young reporters who attacked the paper's senior administrators and strove to introduce mass methods of journalism.[126]

The Urals *oblast'* press, especially the Sverdlovsk Party newspaper *Ural'skii rabochii* and the Komsomol organ *Na smenu,* also fed young mass journalists into the central press. In February 1929 the Central Committee brought A. N. Gusev, the chief of the Urals *oblast'* Agitprop Department, into its own Agitprop Department as assistant head.[127] F. A. Mikhailov, a former editor of *Ural'skii rabochii* (1928) and the Urals *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* (1926–1927), became an assistant editor at *Bednota* in 1929, and then chief editor of the Central Committee's new agricultural newspaper, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennyi rabochii* (Agricultural Worker) in 1930.[128] In the winter of 1929–1930 Viktor I. Filov and A. Tsekher, former editor and assistant editor

of *Ural'skii rabochii,* took up the same positions at the central mass worker paper *Rabochaia gazeta.*[129] N. Naumov, secretary of *Pravda's* Komsomol cell during 1928–1929, had organized shock brigades and production reviews for the Urals Komsomol newspaper *Na smenu* in 1927.[130] An entire cohort of reporters moved with *Na smenu* chief editor V. M. Bubekin to the central Komsomol organ *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in 1930.[131]

Another important feeder of mass journalists to the central press was the Donbass coal mining region, especially the Lugansk mass worker paper, *Luganskaia pravda,* and the "youth correspondent circles" organized in the mines by reporters from *Komsomol'skaia pravda.* Iurii Zhukov, who after World War II became chief editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and then *Pravda,* began his career in 1927 or 1928 at *Luganskaia pravda.* Other editors and journalists at *Luganskaia pravda* who went on to work at *Pravda* in the early 1930s were Mikhail Garin and Boris Gorbatov. A. P. Selivanovskii, who edited *Luganskaia pravda* in 1925–1926, became assistant editor of the Komsomol literary journal *Molodaia gvardiia* in 1929 and was also secretary of the proletarian writers' association VOAPP from 1927 to 1931.[132]

The young journalists promoted into the central press in the late 1920s differed from senior editors and veteran reporters in a number of important ways. Whereas senior editors were often Old Bolsheviks or veterans of other pre-1917 socialist parties who had experienced the Revolution and Civil War as adults, the young Communist journalists had been teenagers or even children during those years. Those over the age of fourteen or fifteen had generally joined the Party or the Komsomol during the Civil War and served at the front, often as political propagandists with Red Army units. After the war they had moved into junior positions in the Party press or agitprop apparatus. In the mid-twenties many more successful members of this cohort studied for a year or two at one of the new Party universities in Moscow, the Institute of Red Professors, the Communist

Academy, or the Sverdlov Communist University.[133] Still younger reporters, those who entered the Party or Komsomol after the end of the Civil War, had begun press work as volunteer worker correspondents for factory newspapers. Data from a 1929 survey by the journalists' trade union showed that while most members had begun their careers in some kind of office work, and had fathers who had also been white-collar workers, between one-third and one-half of all Communists and Komsomols entering newspaper work after 1926 had first done blue-collar labor. In other words, a substantial cohort of young Communists joined the journalistic profession from the shop-floor in the late 1920s. This group appears to have concentrated initially in the newspapers' Departments of Mass Work, which handled the instruction of worker/peasant correspondents and the organization of socialist competitions, production reviews, and other mass events.[134]

The younger reporters who spearheaded the development of mass journalism were militant young Communists who saw themselves as warriors in the vanguard of the socialist revolution. According to a 1929 survey, the membership of the journalists' trade union as a whole was quite highly educated (less than 2 percent had failed to complete secondary school), but only 12.8 percent of all members had taken Party political education courses. However, about one-third of all Communist journalists who had joined the Party since 1920 had had Party political education. Compared to other journalists, the young Communists were highly politicized. They also lacked any specialist education in journalism or an experience of work in the prerevolutionary "bourgeois" press that might have strengthened their sense of themselves as professionals and diluted their Party identity.[135]

The Party leadership more or less consciously created this new cohort of militant young journalists. Through political education, the promotion of workers from the shop-floor to newspaper work, and the campaign to "Communize" journalism, Bolshevik officials opened up a broad career track.[136] Party leaders' promotion of mass journalism at key industrial sites

in the USSR (especially the Urals *oblast'* and the Donbass, but also Leningrad and the Moscow/Tver' textile region) provided the young Communist reporters with a chance to prove themselves and advance professionally. As the Soviet leadership felt its way through the confusion and ambiguities of the NEP era, centers of heavy industry became not just foci for Bolshevik energy and investment, but "sacred" amphitheaters where elite young Communist cadres played out a ritual "battle" to industrialize the USSR. The ambiguities of NEP Russia were banished from these sites so that the Party, the avant-garde and driving force of modern history, could storm the heights of the future without interference from disordered crowds of peasants, traders, and intellectuals clogging the attack routes.

For mass journalists the mobilization of labor through socialist competitions, production reviews, and raids was a replay of the Civil War which many of them had missed. In a speech to an April 1928 Moscow *guberniia* conference of the Komsomol, Taras Kostrov, the editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* recognized the longing of many young Communists for a renewal of "hand-to-hand combat with the class enemy." He urged Communists to sublimate this longing in "the unrelenting work of construction, of everyday work."[137] Mass journalism and mass journalists took on precisely the task set by Kostrov, reviving the revolutionary *élan* of the Civil War through work to industrialize the USSR. Mass journalists' ubiquitous use of military metaphors and their imitation of Civil War agitational rhetoric leant color and emotion to that revival.

From 1928 the younger generation of Soviet journalists exercised increasing influence over newspaper content. With the tacit support of the Central Committee leadership, younger editors committed to mass journalism, agitation, and strike campaigns edged out Old Bolsheviks and moderate advocates of propaganda and enlightenment. The Information Departments that ran "Chronicles" of accidents and crimes were closed down or reorganized; reporters who had worked in the prerevolutionary bourgeois

press were purged. At each newspaper the process of transformation was different. At *Pravda,* Leonid Kovalev, the Party cell secretary and head of the Department of Party Life, led an insurrection against chief editor Nikolai Bukharin and veteran journalists in the Departments of Information, International News, and National Life. At *Izvestiia,* editor Ivan Gronskii managed to control insurgent young Communist reporters and orchestrate the transition to agitational mass journalism himself. At *Vecherniaia Moskva,* a wholesale purge of the editorial offices cleared the way for the introduction of mass journalism and the appointment of a new chief editor.

The Central Committee's declaration of a "self-criticism" campaign in April 1928 set the stage for insurrections at *Pravda* and many other Soviet newspapers by the mass journalists. The slogan of "self-criticism" itself was a misnomer, for it did not refer to an individual criticizing his or her own behavior (as it did in the Chinese Cultural Revolution), but to citizens' duty to criticize the "shortcomings" of Soviet and Party institutions openly and constructively. According to a June 3 front-page editorial in *Pravda,* "self-criticism" was a call for ordinary workers, peasants, and Party members to beat down the "cumbersomeness, inertia, and horrendous red-tape" of the state/Party apparatus and rein in corrupt provincial Party organizations. At central newspapers, disaffected groups, including not just young Communist journalists but also printers and lower-level office staff, took the campaign as license to vent their frustrations with senior editors and administrators. At many editorial offices, journalists and other employees revived or revitalized their in-house newspapers, using them as a forum for criticism of their bosses.

At *Pravda* the mass journalists' insurrection intersected with the action of the Central Committee to remove Nikolai Bukharin and his protegés from the editorial staff. Bukharin and other so-called Right Oppositionists within the Party were opposed to the course of forced collectivization and industrialization chosen by Stalin and his allies. As early as the spring of

1928, officials of the Central Committee Agitprop Department were using Leonid Kovalev, a young mass journalist recently appointed deputy chief of the Department of Party Life, to undermine Bukharin's authority. In February, Kovalev worked with Agitprop Department supervisors to draft a proposal that allowed *Pravda* department heads to bypass Bukharin and set *Pravda's* agenda in direct collaboration with high-level Central Committee officials. Stalin himself approved the proposal.[138] By the fall of 1928 Kovalev was the Central Committee's key contact inside the *Pravda* editorial offices, controlling staff appointments through Sergei Ingulov, head of the Central Committee's newly created Newspaper Section (a subsection of the Agitprop Department).[139]

In August and September 1928 the Politburo directed a shakeup of the *Pravda* editorial staff apparently aimed at weakening the position of Bukharin and his associates on the editorial staff. G. Krumin and M. Savel'ev, the former chief editors of the central financial/economic newspapers *Ekonomicheskaia zhizn'* and *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta,* were placed on the editorial board, while Kovalev was elected Party cell secretary and made chief editor of the Department of Party Life.[140] Junior mass journalists in the *Pravda* apparatus benefited from the shakeup. In its aftermath Kovalev appointed a new "production commission," made up of *Pravda* employees, which would review the organization of the news departments, enforce labor discipline, and "rationalize production."[141] Using the in-house newspaper *Pravdist,* Kovalev's production commission pushed the mass journalists' agenda aggressively. From October 1928 until October 1929, young Communist journalists based in the Departments of Party Life, Worker Life (headed by Aleksei Kapustin from *Tverskaia pravda*), and Mass Work pressed for the expansion of coverage from the shop-floor, the organization of production reviews and socialist competitions, and the structuring of news around Party slogans. All this was to be at the expense

of other departments dominated by veteran newspapermen—International News, National Information, and the court section.

The most militant and vocal mass journalists at *Pravda* were the writers Bulyzhnik and Tanin, who specialized in reporting on production reviews, socialist competitions, and exchanges of production experience (*pereklichki*). Both probably wrote for the Department of Mass Work. In the winter of 1928–1929 and the succeeding spring, Bulyzhnik and Tanin participated in a series of debates at *Pravda* and the Moscow House of the Press, arguing for a "campaigning, organizing" journalism based on mass journalism and the agitation campaign. The entire newspaper, they argued, should be structured around a limited number of ongoing Party agitation campaigns. All of *Pravda's* news departments should coordinate their coverage around the same Party slogans. Bulyzhnik and Tanin reviled "the bureaucratic school" of journalists who advocated calm presentation of facts as opposed to "live, militant work." In place of neutral information gathered in "haphazard fashion" (*samotekom*), they believed in the "campaign," in which journalists concentrated material in militant headlines and generated news through "sallies" into the factory. Bulyzhnik demanded coverage of Soviet industry and actual factory production, rather than jewelry thefts, brawls, or the construction of new sports stadia. He praised *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and the Central Committee's mass worker newspaper *Rabochaia gazeta* for their mobilizational activities and their selection of "live, new topics" for coverage.[142]

More senior mass journalists, including Kovalev, Kapustin, and N. Naumov, backed up Bulyzhnik and Tanin in their advocacy of "the campaign." In a January 1929 issue *Pravdist,* Naumov referred to the agitation campaign as "the highest form of newspaper work."[143] The lead editorial in the same issue, probably written by Kovalev, recommended improvements in the "campaign" (more concrete stories from daily life, less repetition of Party slogans), but nonetheless endorsed the concept of

coordinating all news coverage around a limited number of Party slogans.[144] Aleksei Kapustin contributed to the improvement of the campaign with his suggestion that journalists solicit from workers "collective letters" endorsing a particular Party slogan, committing to enthusiastic participation in production campaigns, or declaring loyalty to Soviet power. These letters were superior in "political quality" to the letters individual workers wrote on their own.[145]

Kapustin's solicitation of collective letters represented a novel method of handling reader correspondence. Rather than depending on individual letters coming into the editorial offices "spontaneously" (*stikhiino*) and "haphazardly" (*samotekom*), the journalist went out to the factories or the fields to "organize public opinion," that is, to collect signatures on a letter he or she had already written. Whereas two long-standing *Pravda* departments, the Bureau of Investigation and the so-called Worker/Peasant Inspectorate's Page, worked with individual letters, the new Department of Mass Work and Kapustin's Department of Worker Life generated collective letters of superior "political quality" for publication. In late January or early February 1929, Kovalev's production commission endorsed the latter approach when it ordered *all* correspondence to be processed by the Department of Mass Work.[146] This is not to say that readers stopped sending in individual unsolicited letters, complaints, and denunciations, or that newspapers stopped investigating them. But increasingly, published letters were solicited by journalists gathering material for a particular agitation campaign.

If mass journalism was to expand, then it had to do so at the expense of other departments and journalistic genres. During 1928–1929 the Soviet press as a whole faced a severe paper shortage, and *Pravda's* size was actually *cut,* from eight pages to six, and occasionally even to four. Space on the page was at a premium.[147] In *Pravdist,* Kovalev and others mounted attacks on *Pravda*'s Department of National Information (which ran the

newspaper's "Chronicle"), the Department of International News, and the Department of Legal Consultation and Court News. Critics of these departments complained that *Pravda* devoted too much space to haphazard items of local news and to the arcana of foreign affairs: the Little Entente, the Big Entente, "whether Chamberlain [the English Prime Minister] sneezed yesterday." In place of such coverage, they argued, *Pravda* ought to be running the hottest national news: coverage of industrialization, work at the big provincial dam and factory construction sites, rural electrification, grain procurements, and collectivization.[148]

The summer of 1929 saw the final transformation of *Pravda* into a mass newspaper. By this time Leonid Kovalev in the Department of Party Life and Aleksei Kapustin in the Department of Worker Life were practically running the newspaper.[149] Between late June and late July the Politburo replaced Bukharin with an editorial bureau (N. Popov, G. Krumin, and Emel'ian Iaroslavskii), while Kovalev's production commission conducted a final review of the editorial office's internal organization. There was also a purge of the newspaper's Party organization during which the heads of the Departments of National Information and Court News came in for harsh criticism for running politically "neutral" material and failing to "organize the worker/peasant masses around Party tasks." In the wake of the purge and the production review, the new editorial bureau reorganized the editorial offices, folding the Departments of National Information and Rural Life into Aleksei Kapustin's Department of Worker Life (renamed the Department of National Life).[150] Although there would be later restructurings of the *Pravda* editorial offices during the First Five Year Plan, the July 1929 reorganization was the key moment in the conversion of *Pravda* into a mass organ.

Taken together, the debates and institutional changes at *Pravda* between October 1928 and August 1929 describe the course of transition from enlightenment NEP journalism to mass mobilizational journalism. The new journalism would eschew the "mere registration of facts" and go out

instead to the fields, the construction sites, and the factories to "organize public opinion" by soliciting collective letters and manufacturing news events like socialist competitions. The transition to mass journalism entailed a redesignation of the proper sites for news. Stories had to come from the factories, collective farms, and construction sites where Party and proletarian cadres were battling to build socialism, not from institutional press bureaus, city streets, or the courts. Mass journalism also had to have a militant, even martial tone. It had to take stands on everything, indicating to its readers correct attitudes and ideological positions with a spate of superlatives and valuative vocabulary. Most of all, it had to mobilize its audience to close ranks around the Party leadership, to carry out the tasks designated by the Party Central Committee.

Other newspapers' trajectory toward mass journalism differed from *Pravda*'s. At *Izvestiia,* where Ivan Gronskii, assistant editor and *de facto* boss of the newspaper between 1928 and 1934, was in Stalin's camp, the path was smoother. Because of his good relationship with Stalin and his readiness to turn *Izvestiia* into a mobilizational mass newspaper, Gronskii was able to keep rebellious young Communist reporters at his paper under control in 1928–1929 and manage a gradual transition.[151] The shift actually began at the end of 1926, when Gronskii merged the newspaper's Moscow News department, which ran an extensive "Chronicle" of nonpolitical city news, with the USSR news department. In the process he fired the Moscow department staff, most of whom were veterans of the prerevolutionary mass circulation paper *Russkoe slovo*. In late 1927 *Izvestiia* switched from a territorial division of news items (Khar'kov, Leningrad, the Urals, and so forth), to categorization by "shock themes" chosen by the Central Committee Agitprop Department (grain procurements, the campaign for labor discipline). Miscellaneous urban news in *Izvestiia* was largely replaced by national news coordinated according to the Party's agitprop agenda.[152]

In August 1929, immediately after the final victory of mass journalists at *Pravda,* Gronskii headed an editorial commission that reviewed *Izvestiia's* news departments, restructuring them so as to give the paper more of a "mass character." In their report to the Gronskii commission, editors of the Department of Soviet Construction engaged to do more stories on provincial soviets' role in promoting industrialization and collectivization and less on "specifically 'soviet'" topics like the redrawing of *raion* (county) boundaries. In addition they proposed to send their staff out to the provinces to recruit correspondents and to model their department on *Pravda*'s Department of Party Life, now leading the mass journalistic revolution in the Soviet press.[153]

The Gronskii commission also revamped the work of *Izvestiia's* Information Department, criticizing its editors for failing to cultivate ties "with the Party-Soviet community." In future, the Information Department was to "be in direct connection with the masses," cover "the experience of the localities," and set an agenda of "sharp" issues. To implement these demands, the department would immediately recruit worker/peasant correspondents at large industrial enterprises, construction sites, and collective farms. Three months after the commission concluded its review, the *Izvestiia* editorial board reinforced its instructions by ordering the Information Department to send *all* its reporters and writers out to factories and collective farms to cover "the life of the enterprises and their lower-level production cells." With the Gronskii commission's changes in editorial work methods, *Izvestiia's* transition to mass journalism was complete.[154]

At *Vecherniaia Moskva,* the most "sensational" and nonpolitical of the high-circulation, Moscow-based newspapers, the introduction of mass journalism was sudden and catastrophic. In late December 1929 the Central Committee Secretariat replaced the newspaper's chief editor with S. A. Volodin, secretary of the *Rabochaia gazeta* Party cell, former *Pravda* reporter, and a vocal advocate of mass journalism. That summer the Party's

Central Control Commission (TsKK) investigated and purged the *Vecherniaia Moskva* editorial staff, recommending disciplinary action against ten journalists, at least four of whom had worked in the prerevolutionary Odessa press, and only three of whom were Party members. The assistant editor, Voroshilin, and a senior writer, Zubov, were fired. The case of Mlechin, head of the Information Department, was referred to the Moscow Control Commission for further investigation. Available sources do not indicate the fate of the other seven journalists, but some, if not all, probably lost their jobs. Volodin's appointment and the purge of veteran non-Party journalists coincided with *Vecherniaia Moskva's* adoption of militant agitational rhetoric and mobilizational mass journalism.[155]

There was opposition to the expansion of the agitation campaign and mass journalism from reporters or journalists and agitprop officials who believed in a more subtle, propagandistic approach to the reader. Most prominent among these was Mikhail Gus, whose work on newspaper language has already been mentioned. In debates at Moscow's House of the Press, in *Pravdist,* and in *Zhurnalist,* Gus castigated the mass journalists, arguing that news ought to be based on carefully selected facts, not "hysterics." In April, he launched an attack on *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* one of the most militant mass newspapers, for its "campaignism," "blather," and "noise." He accused the paper's writers of not knowing how to discuss facts calmly, "with circumspection," without "false pathos and agitational superficiality." The most effective way to influence the reader, Gus asserted, was to sustain coverage of important themes over time, select information systematically, and take a measured tone. If Gus could be said to have a slogan, it was "Information, not Agitation."[156]

Gus and another moderate, V. Gintsberg, the editor of the Minsk Party organ *Minsk rabochii,* also censured a second, well-known Komsomol mass organ, Baku's *Vyshka* (The Derrick), whose work had been endorsed by the Central Committee and *Zhurnalist.* According to one favorable

commentator in *Zhurnalist, Vyshka's* reporters modeled their reader conferences, exhibits of workers' art, and agitational theater group on the agit-trains and agit-theater of the Civil War, as well as on Kapustin's production reviews at *Tverskaia pravda*. Gus and Gintsberg, however, were skeptical of *Vyshka's* achievements. Gus charged the paper with "disdain for the page," of replacing newspaper work with "agitation and political education work." Gintsberg asked how the trips made by *Vyskha* reporters to factories and oil derricks were different from "regular visits of agitators from the Party Committee." "A new school of newspapermen has formed—their alpha and omega is mass work unconnected with the newspaper page itself, independent of it. If all the paper factories were to close, if not a single gram of paper were left in the country, the adepts of this school would notice nothing strange, as long as there remained an automobile with gasoline, a harmonica player, an accordion, agitators. That's all they need."[157]

Mass journalists, including *Pravda's* Bulyzhnik and the editors of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* counterattacked. In June 1929 a member of the editorial staff at *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* wrote to *Zhurnalist* that, "the method of presenting information proposed by Gus . . . finds partisans among non-Party journalists whom we would not let over the threshold of our editorial offices. They are mere 'registrars,' they only know how to transcribe circulars and protocols. They cannot synthesize information." Throughout most of 1930 *Komsomol'skaia pravda* continued to savage advocates of "information" at the State Institute of Journalism, accusing them of opposing collectivization, sympathizing with the Right Opposition, and espousing a "bourgeois theory of newspaper studies."[158]

In the first half of 1930 the moderates came under increasingly heavy fire from commentators in *Zhurnalist*. Supporters of mass journalism attacked Gus, V. Kuz'michev, N. Rubakin, and A. Kurs, a former editor of the Siberian newspaper *Sovetskaia sibir'* and an instructor at the State Institute

of Journalism. Gus and Kurs both advocated "information," empirical study of the reader, and emulation of some bourgeois journalistic techniques. Both opposed hysterical agitation. Kuz'michev and Rubakin were scholars of reader response who had published works arguing that reading was an active process in which readers "constructed" meaning using their own "individual and group mental dispositions" as tools. Their work implied the necessity of careful reader studies. In order to head off the possibility of misreadings and ensure that readers were interpreting the Party's message correctly, journalists and agitprop specialists needed to understand their "mental dispositions" and present information accordingly. In terms of the Bolshevik theory of agitation and propaganda, Gus, Kurs, Kuz'michev, and Rubakin were taking a quintessentially propagandistic position, advocating careful tutoring of the reader.[159]

Critics assaulted the moderates for undervaluing the organizational function of the press and exaggerating the importance of *vospitanie* (education or tutelage). The idea that the propagandist had weak or indifferent control over reader interpretation threatened the very notion of propaganda with the possibility of unstable, multiple readings. The study of reader response was the study of the "subjective sphere of 'subjective projections,' of tastes, interests and fashions." "Catering" to reader tastes was "frivolous" when compared to the overriding task of organizing the masses "around the Party, around concrete slogans." Moreover, reader studies threatened the Party's authority with the implication that Marxist theories of history and society might be incomplete. Advocates of mass journalism considered that the Party already had a theory (Marxism-Leninism) that gave it a complete account of historical change and social process; further study was unnecessary. In their vision, the Party leadership would act in accordance with this theory, guiding the further development of society. All that Party activists and the masses had to do was follow instructions, not understand them. Thus, mobilization was the tantamount

task, and tutelage was a waste of time and energy. This mentality was strengthened by Party leaders' sense of urgency and their fear of imminent attack from without and revolt from within.[160]

In October 1930 the GPU (the state security police) accused Kurs and other instructors at the State Institute of Journalism (renamed the Communist Institute of Journalism), of connections with Syrtsov and Lominadze, two prominent Party members under investigation for opposing forced collectivization. Mikhail Gus may well have been among the accused. The Party's Central Control Commission expelled Kurs from the Party and he lost his position at the institute. Gus too lost his teaching job at around this time. His "theory of information" was dubbed the "Gus-Kurs Deviation in Newspaper Studies." With this label Party agitprop officials and mass journalists marked off a new journalistic orthodoxy, an orthodoxy that excluded reader studies, rejected the neutral presentation of "information," and denied the need to differentiate newspapers by target audience.[161]

Conclusion

The strike campaign as it came to dominate the Soviet press during the First Five Year Plan combined martial vocabulary and metaphors drawn from the revolutionary years with the organizing forms of journalism invented in 1926 and after—the socialist competition, the production review, the exchange of production experience. With this amalgam, Soviet journalists achieved a kind of propaganda alchemy, transmuting the campaign to industrialize the USSR into the armed clashes of the Civil War, when the Bolsheviks had faced the "class enemy" in open combat. At least in the press, the First Five Year Plan became a ritualistic replay of the Civil War. Socialist competitions and production reviews did not just serve directly to mobilize labor, they also set up the battlefield on which Party and worker

activists would struggle to fulfill the plan. Journalists used them to generate images of heroic combat that could replace the humdrum protocols and reports generated by bureaucratic press bureaus.

The Central Committee's promotion of mass journalism after 1926 represented a choice of mass mobilization over mass tutelage and enlightenment. Why did Party leaders and agitprop officials opt for mobilization? In part it was their sense of crisis as the Soviet Union made the "Great Break," embarking on a course of collectivization and industrialization that threatened to alienate both peasants and workers. In addition to the threat of internal disorder, Party leaders expected an invasion by the capitalist powers in 1927-1928. The urgency of the moment was compounded by Bolshevik officials' (and Russian intellectuals') tendency to see "the masses" as ignorant, "dark," and "uncultured." Stalin, like many other Soviet leaders and newspaper editors, had the sense that ordinary laboring folk, including the Party's newly recruited cohort of workers and peasants, would respond better to easily understood orders and emotional appeals than to patient, reasoned explanations of Party policy.[162]

At the core of the choice was the problem of mobilizing the rank-and-file Party members to carry out instructions from the center. The real target of the strike campaign, as Leonid Kovalev recognized in a January 1929 editorial in *Pravdist,* was Party members and the state apparatus. For activists and officials the campaign's imperative headlines provided simple ideological instruction and an easy guide to the Central Committee's agenda.[163] But also, through its coverage of heroic exploits in the shop-floors and the fields, the strike campaign showed ordinary Communists a vision of themselves as heroic warriors fighting to build socialism. Ken Jowitt has postulated that in Leninist regimes party leaders' charismatic authority depended on their successful designation of a "credible . . . social combat task" for rank-and-file Party cadres to fulfill.[164] During the First Five Year Plan, Stalin and his junior allies in the leadership were able to legitimate

their authority within the Party by designating just such a "social combat task," the industrialization of the USSR. Industrialization would not only protect the Soviet Union from foreign invaders, it was also the first step in the construction of a utopian Communist society. The strike campaign was the vehicle by which Party leaders inculcated the glory and necessity of industrialization into their rank-and-file cadres.

Yet agitation and mass journalism were not simply imposed on the Party press from above by Stalin and his lieutenants. The development of mass journalism was a collaboration in which Party leaders and Central Committee agitprop officials set up general problems of agitation and propaganda for solution by editors and journalists. Party leaders provided overall guidance, but the newspapermen themselves created the specific solutions. This in turn suggests that the strike campaign, mass journalism, and the portrayal of ordinary Communists as heroes of industrialization had real appeal for Party cadres. After all, the young journalists who created mass journalism and appropriated the agitational rhetoric of the Civil War were themselves ordinary Party cadres. Seen from this angle the rise of the strike campaign, and of "high Stalinist culture" as a whole, looks less like an imposition by Stalin and a small group of high-level agitprop officials than an extension and evolution of NEP-era Bolshevik political culture.

The story of the strike campaign and the "Stalinization" of the Soviet central press suggests that there were strong continuities between NEP-era Bolshevism and "high Stalinism." At mass newspapers in the center and in the provinces, Communist journalists continued and extended the practices of agitational Civil War journalism throughout the NEP era. With the "Great Break" of 1928–1932, these practices once again came to dominate Soviet newspapers. In the NEP era itself both moderate advocates of propaganda/mass enlightenment and militant believers in agitation/mass mobilization shared a hostility to pluralism and a condescension, even contempt, for "the dark masses." What changed in Soviet journalism

between the NEP and the First Five Year Plan was not the Party's theories about agitation, propaganda, and the press, but Party leaders' orientation within those theories. Giving up on enlightening the masses through propaganda, they opted for the simpler mobilizational journalism of the Civil War. A whole list of causes contributed to that decision, among them Bolshevik leaders' fear of enemies within and without, rank-and-file activists' preference for a militant Party, and the masses' resistance to tutelage. From this historic distance the NEP mass enlightenment project looks like a brief and doomed interregnum, lasting perhaps from 1922 to 1925, and not a serious alternative to "high Stalinism."

Appendix

Table 1. Content Analysis of *Izvestiia,* 1925 and 1933

	1925	1933
1. Total space (in square inches)	16,679	11,279
2. Total domestic coverage (in square inches)	12,492	9,329
3. Editorials, commentary on campaigns in progress, as percentage of total domestic coverage	19.2 %	18.0 %
4. Resolutions, directives, decrees of Party or Central Executive Committee, lectures, speeches of prominent Party leaders	19.9 %	26.5 %
5. Reports on campaigns in progress, successes, setbacks, shirking, tasks for the future	7.9 %	14.8 %
6. "Loyal soldiers" reporting in, swearing to fulfill orders from the center	0.0 %	5.1 %
7. Greetings and congratulations from Party leaders to Red Army and Party activists; the "loyal soldiers" building socialism	0.4 %	3.8 %
8. Campaign material as a percentage of total domestic coverage	**47.3 %**	**68.2 %**

Table 2. Content Analysis of *Pravda,* 1925 and 1933

	1925	1933
1. Total space (in square inches)	15,706	10,345
2. Total domestic coverage (in square inches)	12,894	8,407
3. Editorials, commentary on campaigns in progress, as percentage of total domestic coverage	10.5 %	13.1 %
4. Resolutions, directives, decrees of Party or Central Executive Committee, lectures, speeches of prominent Party leaders	11.2 %	27.7 %
5. Reports on campaigns in progress, successes, setbacks, shirking, tasks for the future, etc.	6.5 %	20.0 %
6. "Loyal soldiers" reporting in, swearing to fulfill orders from the center	0.0 %	8.3 %
7. Greetings and congratulations, from Party leaders to Red Army and Party activists; the "loyal soldiers" building socialism	0.0 %	1.9 %
8. Campaign material as a percentage of total domestic coverage	**10.3 %**	**78.8 %**

Explanation of appendix tables 1 and 2: Issues of *Izvestiia* from January 6, 14, 22, 30, February 7, 15 and 23, were surveyed for both 1925 and 1933. I followed the same procedure for *Pravda,* except that the February 23, 1925, issue was unavailable. In its place I used February 22. By taking editions at eight-day intervals I included every day of the week in my survey.

Rows one and two (total space and total domestic coverage) do not include advertising. Rows three through eight all refer to material related to campaigns in progress. I determined which these were by referring to the relevant issues of *Krasnaia pechat', Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia,* and to *Reshenitia partii o pechati.* Row five for 1925 is a minor exception to this rule. Here I counted all verbatim printings of Party resolutions, as well as of speeches and lectures by Party leaders, in both 1925 and 1933. In 1933 all this material dealt directly with campaigns in progress. In 1925 a small percentage of it, mostly from local Party organizations, did not. Thus, my total figure for percentage of domestic space devoted to campaigns in 1925 is somewhat exaggerated. The jump in space devoted to campaigns from 1925 to 1933 is actually larger than this survey shows.

Campaigns sanctioned by the Central Committee in January and February 1925 had as their goals celebrating the anniversary of Lenin's death and the Red Army holiday, raising productivity through the "scientific organization of labor," encouraging mass participation in elections for local and provincial soviets, strengthening the *smychka* between worker and peasant, forming an alliance between "poor" and "middle" peasants, publicizing the electrification of the countryside, and preparing for the spring sowing. In 1933 the campaigns in progress were the anniversary of Lenin's death, the Red Army holiday, and "socialist construction," by which was meant raising industrial production, building infrastructure (bridges, telephone network, electrical net), the promulgation of the Second Five Year

Plan, and increasing the harvest. The number of themes and slogans presented by the newspapers in 1933 was fewer than in 1925.

Row three refers to articles and commentary by editors or by Party leaders, literati, or academics who wrote a piece expressly for the newspaper. Row four refers to verbatim transcriptions of speeches or to the printing of resolutions, directives, and laws. This is the voice of the government speaking directly to the reader. In row five I included denunciations of failures and sabotage in campaign-related work, descriptions by correspondents "from the front" of work in progress, and reports of successes. The "loyal soldiers" of rows six and seven are the Party activists, local leaders, Red Army soldiers, collective farmers, and factory workers building socialism at the ground level. The reports I counted in row six differ from worker/peasant correspondent letters in that they are signed collectively (not by an individual) and always include a commitment to fulfill the center's orders faithfully.

These numbers demonstrate that *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* relied increasingly on verbatim transcriptions of Central Committee and Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) documents and leadership pronouncements to fill space (row four). They also show a dramatic jump in the percentage of space given to coverage of campaigns and slogans promulgated by the Central Committee. In connection with the monolithic campaign to build socialism, two essentially new forms of "journalism" appear in 1933: the collective letter of "loyal soldiers" committing themselves to carry out orders, and the greetings and congratulations of the leadership to these same "soldiers." Also notable is the paucity of worker/peasant correspondent letters.

Table 3. The "Strike" Index: Percentage of Headlines Containing Militant Vocabulary, 1925 and 1933

A. *Pravda*

	1925	1933
1. Total number of headlines	808	278
2. Total number of "strike" headlines	84	134
3. "Strike" headlines as percentage of total	**10.4 %**	**48.2 %**

B. *Izvestiia*

	1925	1933
1. Total number of headlines and headings	801	234
2. Total number of "strike" headlines	67	100
3. "Strike" headlines as percentage of total	**8.4 %**	**42.7 %**

C. *Krest'ianskaia Gazeta*

	1925
1. Total number of headlines and headings	313
2. Total number of "shock" headlines	134
3. "Shock" headlines as percentage of total	**42.8 %**

Explanation of appendix table 3: The "strike" index was constructed by first counting the total number of domestic headlines and headings in the same twenty-eight issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* used for tables 1 and 2. I then counted domestic headlines and headings containing *boevoi,* or "militant/fighting" language, and computed their frequency as a percentage of all domestic headings. Fighting language includes the use of command form or implied command form

(*nuzhno, nado, dolzhen* constructions, as well as phrases like *Gazetu—v derevniiu*!), and vocabulary of war and struggle (*borba, front, pobedit'*).

The central press in 1925 contained a far higher number of "Chronicle" items than in 1933. These were summary descriptions of local events, such as a blizzard, a library opening or a fire, no more than a paragraph or two long, always appearing toward the back of the paper. The omission of these items, plus the change from an eight-page format to six pages, accounts for the big drop in the total number of headings between 1925 and 1933. I did not count "Chronicle" headings in 1925 or 1933 that were the same type size as the regular text.

Pravda and *Izvestiia* both show a large jump in "strike character" (*udarnost'*) over the period discussed in this paper. It is also important to note that *Krest'ianskaia gazeta,* a newspaper aimed at peasants less "politically conscious" and with poorer reading skills than the readers of *Pravda* or *Izvestiia,* had a high index of "strike character" already in 1925.

Table 4. Analysis of Vocabulary and Constructions in Editorials, 1925 and 1933 (frequency per thousand words)

A. *Pravda*

	1925	1933
1. Sample size	1,286 words	1,301 words
2. Frequency of foreign loan words	106	94
3. Frequency of "empty" noun + nominalization const.	42	4
4. Frequency of vocabulary of war or battle	47	31
5. Frequency of superlatives	6	2
6. Average sentence length	19 words	18 word

B. *Izvestiia*

	1925	1933
1. Sample size	1,234 words	1,372 words
2. Frequency of foreign loan words	89	116
3. Frequency of "empty" noun + nominalization const.	19	6
4. Frequency of vocabulary of war or battle	24	27
5. Frequency of superlatives	7	4
6. Average sentence length	22 words	21 words

Explanation of appendix table 4: Four editorials from each year and each newspaper were sampled. All were on the first or second page of the newspaper, and all dealt with domestic affairs. For each year and each newspaper three editorials on economic matters and one on Red Army Day were surveyed. Starting from the fourth or fifth paragraph of each piece, full paragraphs were included in the survey until the word count passed 300. For *Pravda,* the dates surveyed were: January 6, 20, February 7, 22, 1925; January 6, 22, February 7, 23, 1933. The dates for *Izvestiia* were: January 6, 24, February 8, 22, 1925; January 6, 22, February 7, 23, 1933.

Row two counts modern borrowings from Western European languages. Row four includes words like *"borba," "boets," "front," "vrag," "stremliat'si,"* and vocabulary of emotion such as *"geroicheskii"* and *"entusiazm."* "Superlatives" in row five signifies grammatical superlatives such as *"gramadneishii"* and adjectives like *"velikii," "ogromnyi," "kolosal'nyi,"* etc. The "'empty' noun + nominalization" construction of row three refers to phrases like *"liniia ukhudsheniia material'nogo polozheniia," "vopros raboty komsomola," "zadacha rasshirenii,"* and *"borba za podniatie proizvoditel'nosti truda,"* the use of which Gus decried in *Iazyk gazety.*

Most of the changes recorded between 1925 and 1933 are statistically insignificant in a sample of this size. Three important conclusions can nonetheless be drawn. The dramatic drop in the frequency of the empty noun plus nominalization construction suggests that editors of newspapers did indeed change their style in accordance with the recommendations of Gus and others. In 1933 the prose style of editorials shows far less use of passive voice and abstract, "empty" nouns like *"moment," "otnoshenie," "oblast',"* and *"put'."* It does not appear that editors significantly changed their use of foreign loan words. Finally, the frequencies of militant vocabulary and superlatives suggest that while "strike character" in *headlines* increased greatly between 1925 and 1933 (see appendix table 3), the "fighting tone" of editorials did not change significantly. Probably other kinds of texts, such as collective letters from "loyal soldiers" or reports from the "front" had more "strike character" (a higher frequency of militant vocabulary, martial metaphors, superlatives, etc.) than editorials.

Biographical Glossary

Selected biographical information on Soviet journalists and agitprop officials of the 1920s and early 1930s has been culled from Semen Gershberg, *Rabota u nas takaia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), and the *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia,* 1941 and 1975 editions.

Gusev, Sergei Ivanovich - Born 1874. Involved in revolutionary movement from 1897. Led strike in Rostov, emigrated to Geneva where he joined Lenin's faction of the Democratic Socialist Party (1903–1904). In 1926–1927 director of the Central Committee Press Department; in 1930 member of Presidium of the Komintern Executive Committee.

Il'ichev, Leonid Fedorovich (1906–1962) - Became Party member in 1924. Graduated from Institute of Red Professors in 1937, joined the editorial staff of *Pravda*. Also editor at *Izvestiia* and *Bolshevik* (1938–1958). Director of Foreign Ministry Press Department, 1956–1958. Director of Central Committee Department of Agitation and Propaganda.

Ingulov, Sergei Borisovich - Born 1893, joined Party in 1918. Secretary of Odessa *guberniia* Party Committee, 1920; deputy director of Kharkov Agitprop Department, 1921. From 1923 to 1930 Central Committee member, director of Agitprop Department Pressburo, deputy director of Agitprop Department, editor of *Zhurnalist,* secretary of Central Bureau of journalists' trade union. Relieved of *Zhurnalist* post in early 1930. From 1935 headed Glavlit censor. Purged in 1938.

Kapustin, Aleksei Ivanovich - A typesetter at St. Petersburg newspapers for twenty years prior to the Revolution. Joined the Party immediately after the October Revolution. Tver' *guberniia* agitprop official and editor of *Tverskaia pravda* 1919–1928. Pioneered the "production review" during the "belt-tightening campaign" of 1926. After 1928 headed Departments of Worker Life and Economics at *Pravda*.

Kerzhentsev, Platon Mikhailovich - Born 1881. Became Party member in 1904, worked underground as Bolshevik journalist in Petersburg and Kiev 1906 to 1911. In emigration, 1912–1917. Editor-in-chief of *Izvestiia,* 1918-1920; head of ROSTA wire service, 1919; ambassador to Sweden, 1921-1923. In 1923-1924 at Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, also editor at *Pravda*. Ambassador to Italy, 1925-1926. During 1928–1930 was deputy director of the Central Committee Agitprop Department, and in 1930 deputy director of Communist Academy.

Khodakov, Vasilii Iakovlevich - Born 1903, joined Party in 1922. In 1917 Komsomol organizer, in 1919 organized first Party cells in Bezhetska, also delegate to first Tver' *guberniia* Komsomol conference. Editor in Tver', 1926, assigned to Agitprop Department, Tver' *guberniia* Party Committee. From 1928, employed at various newspapers in the Crimea. Roving correspondent for *Pravda* in the early 1930s.

Knorin, Vil'gel'm Georgevich (1890–1938) - Was a worker, joined Party in 1910, but active in revolutionary movement from 1905. Secretary of Minsk Soviet, 1917. Did Party work in Smolensk, Minsk, Vilnius, 1918–1922. Deputy director of Central Committee Information Department, director of Moscow Party Committee Agitprop Department, 1922–1925. In 1927–1928, secretary of Belorussian Central Committee; 1928–1935, member of Comintern Executive Committee; 1932–1934, *Pravda* editor; 1934–1937 editorial staff of *Bolshevik.*

Kol'tsov, Mikhail (1898–1942) - Worked in journalism from 1916; joined Party in 1918; began writing for *Pravda* in 1922. Famous feuilletonist, covered Spanish Civil War. Purged in 1938.

Krinitskii, Aleksandr Ivanovich (1894–1937) - Entered Party in 1915 while student at Moscow University's Faculty of Natural Sciences. In 1918 director of the Southern Front's Agitprop Department; in 1919 secretary of the Saratov *guberniia* Party Committee; in 1921 director of the Moscow Party Committee Orgburo. From 1922 to 1924, secretary of the Omsk, Donetsk *oblast'* Party Committees. During 1926–1929, director of the Central Committee Agitprop Department; 1930–1932 deputy director of Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate; 1930–1935, editorial staff of *Bolshevik.* Editor at *Pravda,* 1931.

Krumin, Garal'd Ivanovich (1894–1943) - Joined Party in 1909. Father was a teacher. In 1918, editor of *Narodnoe khoziastvo*; 1919–1928 edited *Ekonomicheskaia zhizn'*. From 1931 to 1935, editor at *Pravda.*

Mekhlis, Lev Zakharovich (1889–1953) - Son of an office worker. Member of Zionist organization, 1907-1910; joined Party, 1918. Party work in Red Army, 1918–1920. In 1930, graduated from Institute of Red Professors. On editorial board of *Pravda,* 1931 (*de facto* head editor until 1938).

Os'mov, Ivan Vladimirovich - Son of mechanic and cleaning lady. Joined Party in 1917, sent notes on life at the front to *Pravda* while serving as a soldier in the Red Army

during the Civil War. From 1923 edited various Komsomol newspapers. In 1931, deputy editor of Economics Department at *Pravda*.

Pishenina, Liubov - Peasant woman, took course to become a tractor driver at age fifteen, worked at Machine Tractor Station beginning in 1931. *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* published a short story by her and invited her to Moscow to study at the Communist Institute of Journalism. After three-year course worked at *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* and then *Pravda* in mid-1930s.

Popov, Mikhail - Born 1902 to peasant family. Joined Party in 1920. In 1918, organized local youth union, joined Red Army. In 1921, secretary of Archangel'sk *guberniia* Komsomol organization. In 1922, edited Komsomol paper in Archangel'sk. Came to *Pravda* in 1927, worked first on the "Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate Page" and later under Kapustin in the Economics Department. Head of roving *Pravda* editorial board covering the Donbass coal mines in the early thirties. Author of front-page editorials

Popov, Nikolai Nikolaevich - Joined Party in 1919, but was previously a Menshevik, from 1906, and member of the Menshevik Central Committee until 1919. In 1920, on the editorial staff of newspaper *Kommunist* in Kharkov. In 1921, *guberniia* Party Committee secretary. In 1924–1926, editor-in-chief of central Party journal *Kommunist*; rector of Institute of Marxism. Central Committee administrative assignment, 1928–1929; historian, editorial staff of *Pravda,* 1929–1933; member of Politburo, Orgburo, 1933–1937. Delegate to the Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth through Seventeenth Party Congresses.

Pospelov, Petr Nikolaevich - Born 1898, joined Party in 1916. Son of a bureaucrat. During 1917 engaged in Party and trade-union activism in Kalinin. In 1920–1924, *guberniia* trade-union and soviet work, director of *guberniia* Agitprop Department in Tver'. From 1924 to 1926 was "instructor" at Central Committee Agitprop Department. In 1930 graduated from the Economics Department of Institute of Red Professors. On editorial staff of *Bolshevik, Pravda,* and director of *Pravda* Department of Party Life, 1931–1934. In 1934–1937, member of Party Control Commission; 1937–1940, deputy director of Central Committee Agitprop Department; 1940–1949, *Pravda* editor-in-chief.

Pototskii, Avgust Vladimirovich - Born in 1892; joined Party in 1910; editor of *Gudok* from late 1922. In December 1925 sent to Leningrad with Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov to purge Zinovievite oppositionists from the Leningrad press. *Pravda* editor in 1931.

Riabov, Ivan - [Reporter for Agricultural Department *Pravda,* 1931]. Began his journalistic career at *Tverskaia pravda* in the 1920s, edited the Tver' Komsomol organ. At *Pravda* at least as early as 1929, elected to governing bureau of newspaper's Party cell, July 1929. Reporter for Agricultural Department, *Pravda,* 1931.

Ryklin, Grigorii Efimovich (1894-1975) - Journalistic work from 1918. Joined Party in 1920. On editorial staffs of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* in early thirties, editor of *Krokodil,* 1938–1948. Frequent contributor to *Krasnaia pechat', Zhurnalist,* and *Izvestiia* during period under study.

Savel'ev, Maksim Aleksandrovich (1884-1939) - Joined Party in 1903. Of gentry origins. In emigration in Germany, 1907–1910; from 1910 in St. Petersburg. Prerevolutionary member of *Pravda* editorial staff. From 1917, chief editor of Bolshevik paper *Rabochii put'.* Editor at *Ekonomicheskaia zhizn',* 1918, and *Kommunist,* 1919. In 1920, secretary of Turkestan regional Party Committee. In 1921–1922, member of Supreme Council on the Economy. Editor of *Narodnoe khoziaistvo,* 1922–1928; editor *of Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta,* 1926–1927; chairman of the Industrial Publishing House (Promizdat), director of the Lenin Institute, and editor-in-chief of *Izvestiia,* 1928-1930; editor-in-chief of *Pravda* briefly in 1931. From 1932, head of the Communist Academy. During 1936–1939, deputy director of Marx-Engels Institute.

Shcherbakov, Anatolii - Reporter in *Pravda* Economics Department, promoted to *Pravda*'s apprentice school in 1929 or 1930 from factory where he had edited wall newspaper. Had recently graduated from a construction technical school (*tekhnikum*).

Skvortsov-Stepanov, Ivan Ivanovich (1870–1928) - Revolutionary activist from 1891, exiled to Siberia in 1907. After February Revolution, editor of Moscow Soviet *Izvestiia,* on editorial staff of *Sotsial-demokrat.* In 1919–1920, worked in All-Union Soviet of Cooperatives, Trade Union Central Executive Committee. Assistant chief of Gosizdat, the government publishing house, 1921; editor of *Izvestiia,* 1925–1928. In 1926, sent to Leningrad to purge press after Zinovievite Opposition took control of *Leningradskaia pravda.* In 1927, second editor-in-chief at *Pravda,* member of Communist Academy Presidium, director of Lenin Institute.

Steklov, Iurii Mikhailovich (1873–1941) - Social Democrat from 1888, fled Russia in 1899, worked at journal *Zaria.* Took part in 1905–1907 revolution, exiled in 1910. Worked at *Zvezda* and *Pravda* before revolution. On Executive Commitee of Petrograd

Soviet, 1917; editor of *Novaia zhizn'*. Edited *Izvestiia,* 1917–1925, but fired in financial scandal. Later did administrative and scholarly work.

Stetskii, Aleksei Ivanovich (1896–1938) - Son of a government bureaucrat, matriculated at Petrograd Polytechnical Institute in 1915, joined Party in 1915. After February Revolution worked as agitator in Petrograd, participated in October Uprising. Posted to Red Army, 1918–1920; studied at the Institute of Red Professors, 1921–1923. During 1926–1930, director of the Press and Agitprop Departments of the Central Committee's Northwest Bureau and the Leningrad *gubernia* Party Committee. Director of Central Committee Agitprop Department, 1930–1936; editorial board of *Pravda,* 1931.

Notes

1. Scholarship on the history of the Soviet press to 1930 includes Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Jeffrey Brooks's articles: "The Breakdown in Production and Distribution of Printed Material, 1917–1927," in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, eds., *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 151–74; "Public and Private Values in the Soviet Press, 1921–28," *Slavic Review* 48, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 16–35; and "Official Xenophobia and Popular Cosmopolitanism in Early Soviet Russia," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 5 (Dec. 1992): 1431–48. These works, along with recent dissertations by Steven Coe on the peasant correspondents' movement and Julie Kay Mueller on NEP newspapers and newspapermen all describe a period of decentralization, relative journalistic autonomy, and "civic activism" by worker/peasant correspondents followed by the tightening of central control in the last years of the NEP (1926–1927). See Steven Coe, "Peasants, the State, and the Languages of NEP: The Rural Correspondents Movement in the Soviet Union, 1924–1928" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1993), and Julie Kay Mueller, "A New Kind of Newspaper: The Origins and Development of a Soviet Institution, 1921–1928" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1992). Mark Hopkins, in *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (Western Publishing Company, 1970) provides a good summary history of the early years of the Soviet press.

2. See, for example, K. Berezhnoi, *K istorii partiino-sovetskoi pechati* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1956); R. A. Ivanova, *Partiinaia i sovetskaia pechat' v gody vtoroi piatiletki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstevennogo universiteta, 1961); and A. L. Mishuris, *Partiino-sovetskaia pechat' v period borby za stroitelstvo sotsializma* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1964).

3. Between 1922 and 1924 the Central Committee Department of Agitation and Propaganda contained a Press Subdepartment (*Podotdel pechati*). In 1924 an independent Press Department was set up and operated until 1928. In early 1928 the Department of Agitation and Propaganda absorbed the Press Department, which was converted into a Newspaper Section (*Gazetnyi sektor*). In 1930 the Department of Agitation and Propaganda was reorganized and renamed the Department of Culture and Propaganda. I will generally refer to the Central Committee Agitprop Department, or the Department of Agitation and Propaganda.

4. See, for example, *Krasnaia pechat'* (*KP*), Jan. 20, 1924.

5. See *KP,* Feb. 28, 1925: 58-61. Also see *KP* 1926, no. 11 (June): 11.

6. Vareikis, among others, mentions this in *KP*, 1925, no. 23 (Nov.): 31. See also *KP*, 1926, nos. 17-18 (Sept): 22.

7. *KP*, Mar. 10, 1925: 14.

8. For circulation figures see Brooks, "The Breakdown in Production," p. 167, or issues of *KP* from 1924 or 1925. A reader study of students at higher educational institutions using the *guberniia* Political Education library in Saratov reported that among 180 respondents, 119 read *Saratovskie Izvestiia*, 80 *Pravda*, and 71 *Izvestiia.* Next in popularity was *Rabochaia gazeta*, with 9 readers (*KP*, Jan. 23, 1925, 71). A study of the reading habits of workers at a Kiev arsenal showed that 60 read the local *Proletarskaia Pravda*, 22 read *Pravda,* and only 1 read *Izvestiia.* A 1920 survey of 450 Red Army soldiers (N. A. Rybnikov, ed., *Massovyi chitatel' i kniga* [Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925]), showed that the three most popular newspapers were *Bednota* (86 readers), *Pravda,* (71), and *Izvestiia* (76). Moscow factories in the late twenties had a different readership distribution. A study reported in *Zhurnalist* (*Zh*), 1929, no. 10 (May 15): 310, broke down the total number of newspapers received at several Moscow enterprises employing 45,744 workers. The breakdown follows (numbers are percentages of total subscriptions at all enterprises studied):

Rabochaia Moskva	33.6 %
Rabochaia gazeta	27.2 %
Golos tekstilei	23.2 %
Pravda	5.7%
Izvestiia	7.8%
Komsomol'skaia pravda	2.5 %

9. See Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 125: "Economically, intellectually, and culturally, NEP Russia became a relatively pluralistic society."

10. One notable exception can be found in *Izvestiia*, Jan. 20, 1925. An open letter from Leon Trotskii to the Central Committee was published next to the Central

Committee's response.

11. "The atmosphere of relaxation fostered in the country by NEP triggered an opposite course inside the Party" (Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, 126).

12. *Ibid.*, 155-58.

13. *Zh*, Sept. 1, 1922, 5-9, 52-53; Sept. 15, 1922, 38.

14. See *Zh*, Mar./April, 1923, 4-8, for Ingulov's commentary. Some of the "Old Regime" writers mentioned were A. Petrishchev, Izgoev, and Prokopovich. Two of the independent newspapers were the Menshevik *Den'* and *Russkoe bogatstvo*. For Lenin's views on the freedom of the press and a brief account of the Bolshevik closure of opposition newspapers after the October Revolution, see Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 35-44 and Hopkins, *Mass Media*, 62-67.

15. *Zh*, Mar./April, 1923: 8.

16. Vladimir Shishkin, "Belye piatna istorii, ili tainy sovetskoi partokratii," *Posev*, 1990, no. 5 (Sept./Oct.): 119-23.

17. Brooks, "Official Xenophobia," 1435.

18. For a useful summary of Halliday's notion of "context of situation" couched in layman's language, see his *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 3-14. This quote is from page 11.

19. *Ibid.*, 12, 38, 39.

20. Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 8.

21. On Lenin's views about the press's function in society, see Hopkins, *Mass Media*, 57-60, and Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 7, 25-29.

22. Quoted in Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 7.

23. See *ibid.*, 25-29, and Hopkins, *Mass Media*, 57-60.

24. See Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 26.

25. Some Soviet discussions of press function in the 1920s included a fourth function, *izoblichenie* or *razoblachenie*, the criticism and control of government bureaucrats (e.g., Sergei Ingulov's front-page article in *Pravda*, May 9, 1923). The press would act as a control mechanism, a check on arbitrary power. Worker/peasant correspondents writing to the editorial office from their factory or village would provide information and denunciations, which the paper would publicize or forward to the proper control organ of the government, such as the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate.

26. Aleksandr Etkind, *Eros nevozhmozhnogo: Istoriia psikhoanaliza v rossii* (St. Petersburg: "Meduza," 1993), 218-19.

27. *Kommunisticheskaia revoliutsiia* (*KR*), 1923 (no. 4): 5.

28. *Resheniia partii o pechati* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1941), 22.

29. *Ibid.*, 56.

30. *KP*, Jan. 20, 1924, 1-3.

31. For the Feb. 2, 1924, Central Committee Press Department circular, see Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia i izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii (hereafter RTsKhIDNI), f. 17, op. 6, d. 865, l. 3. For the establishment and work of the Central Committee Agitprop Department's commission to plan a state newspaper network differentiated by audience, see f. 17, op. 112, d. 261, l. 22; d. 275, ll. 13, 20-21, 25. The commission was set up in December 1921.

32. *KP*, Jan. 20, 1924, 6-8.

33. On early Soviet reader studies, see I. P. Lysakova, *Tip gazety i stil' publikatsii. Opyt' sotsiolingvisticheskogo issledovaniia* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1989), 5-10; Jeffrey Brooks, "Studies of the Reader in the 1920s," *Russian History* 9, pts. 2-3, (1982): 187-202; Mikhail Gus, Iu. Zagorianskii, and N. Kaganovich, *Iazyk gazety* (Moscow: "Rabotnik prosveshcheniia," 1926); Iakov Shafir, *Gazeta i derevnia* (Moscow: "Rabotnik prosveshcheniia," 1923); idem, "Chitatel' *Rabochei gazety* v tsifrakh," *KP*, 1925, no. 26 (Dec.): 37; M. Charnyi, "O *Vechernei Moskve* i ee chitatel'," *Zhurnalist*, 1926, no. 10 (Oct.): 42-43; B. Kamenskii, "Chitatel'skie massy

pod mikroskopom," *Zhurnalist*, 1929, no. 10 (May 15): 310–11.

34. On the Party's efforts to institutionalize the worker/peasant correspondents movement, see Coe, "Peasants, the State, and the Languages of NEP," 91–162, and Mueller, "A New Kind of Newspaper," 264–315. For 1923–1924 Central Committee Agitprop Department correspondence with newspapers on the movement, and instructions regarding same, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 60, d. 906, l. 26; d. 907, ll. 5–9; d. 935, ll. 1–102.

35. See "Vozrozhdenie golodavshego Povol'zhia," *Iz*, Jan. 8, 1924.

36. On Eremeev and Karpinskii's plan for *Rabochii*, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 112, d. 325, ll. 20–21; op. 60, d. 849, ll. 148–49.

37. On the Central Committee's instructions to the *Rabochii* editors and their replacement, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 112, d. 296, l. 3; d. 301, l. 2; d. 325, ll. 2, 20–22.

38. *Pravda*, May 5, 1923; May 9, 1923; I. Stalin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1946), 5: 281–90.

39. See Semen Gershberg, *Rabota u nas takaia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), 23; Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter GARF), f. 374 s.ch., op. 27s., d. 1069, ll. 13–14.

40. *Zh*, no. 5 (May), 1926: 49–51.

41. On *Tverskaia pravda*'s development of the production review, see Gershberg, *Rabota*, 22–24, and "Novaia forma gazetnoi raboty," *Pravda*, Mar. 11, 1927, 3. On early shock brigades and production contests organized by Komsomol newspapers, see L. S. Rogachevskaia, *Sotsialisticheskoe sorevnovanie v SSSR: istoricheskie ocherki, 1917–1970* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1977), 72–79. For the earliest *Ural'skii rabochii* (*UR*) coverage of Komsomol shock brigades and production contests, see *UR*, July 20, 1927, 2, and July 29, 1927, 4.

42. "Novaia forma gazetnoi raboty," *Pravda*, Mar. 11, 1927, 3; *Zh*, 1927, no. 12 (Dec.): 57.

43. *Zh*, 1927, no. 4 (April): 3

44. *Ibid.*, 9

45. For an example from 1926, see *Resheniia partii o pechati*, 102.

46. *Zh*, 1927, no. 11 (Nov.): 54–55.

47. *Ibid.*, 1927, nos. 9–10 (Sept./Oct.): 4–5.

48. *Resheniia partii o pechati*, 112–13.

49. A. M. Selishchev, *Iazyk revoliutsionnoi epokhi* (Moscow: "Rabotnik prosveshcheniia," 1928), 28–29, 85–92.

50. *KR*, 1923, no. 3: 84–95. One wind-up "agit-toy" had a priest and a tsar who struck an anvil with hammers. The anvil was a peasant's head.

51. *Ibid.*, *KR*, 1925, nos. 21-22 (Nov.), 1925: 24. In the August/September 1925 edition of *Zhurnalist*, pp.77–81, the campaign was defined: "In essence the newspaper campaign is a large-scale agitation campaign. For this reason it should have a limited number of slogans, or even better, one slogan. The most vital and important medium for carrying out the campaign is information. One must fix the attention of the reader on certain facts . . . without special commentary. The second medium is illustrations, especially caricatures; the third is articles."

52. *Zh*, 1929, no. 21 (Nov. 1): 642–44.

53. *Ibid.*

54. These examples are drawn from my survey of the first seven issues of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* (*KG*) available from 1925: Jan. 6, 13, 20, and 27; Feb. 3; April 28; and May 5. See appendix table 4, for a measurement of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*'s "strike index" and a comparison with *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*.

55. "*U nas uspeshno*" and "*Nashu iacheiku nado perestroit*"' are from Jan. 6, 1925. The "ardent greeting" appeared on Jan. 13, 1925.

56. *Zh*, 1923, no. 3 (Jan.): 21–26

57. See, for example, a lecture by Slepkov, the first editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, reprinted in *KP*, Sept. 10, 1925, 36-39. Also see Anatolii Lunacharskii's speech reprinted in *Zh*, 1924, no. 15: 9-11

58. On the prerevolutionary attitudes of the intelligentsia toward the popular press, see Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), chap. 5. M. Levidov, in *Zh*, 1925, no. 5 (May): 42, also rooted the disdain among Soviet journalists for "boulevardism" in the prejudices of the prerevolutionary intelligentsia.

59. *Zh*, 1923, no. 4 (Feb.): 29; 1927, no. 1 (Jan.): 20. See also George C. Bastian, *Editing the Day's News* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), chaps. 11 and 12.

60. The results of reading comprehension studies by the Industrial Psychology Laboratory of the Commissariat of Trade, in collaboration with Moscow University's Institute of Experimental Psychology, were published in *Zh*, 1924, no. 14 (Aug./Sept.): 15-19. The subjects were Red Army soldiers. Brooks cites studies of the reading comprehension of sugar refinery workers in Voronezh in "Public and Private Values." M. Gus investigated the reading comprehension of Red Army soldiers in the Kharkov garrison. The results of his research are described in *Iazyk gazety*, 115-38.

61. *Resheniia partii o pechati*, 67.

62. See *Zh*, 1925, no. 1 (Jan.): 12, for a reprint of Lenin's letter.

63. See for example M. Gol'din's letter to the editor in *KP*, Feb. 28, 1925, 20.

64. *Zh*, 1925, no. 2 (Feb.): 5-10.

65. Gus, *Iazyk gazety*, passim.

66. *Ibid.*, 225.

67. *Zh*, 1929, no. 7 (April 1): 212-13; 1929, no. 9 (May 1): 282; *Pechat' i revoliutsiia*, 1927 (Jan./Feb.): 5-18.

68. *Zh*, 1929, no. 2 (Jan. 15): 56.

69. Berezhnoi, *K istorii partiino-sovetskoi pechati*, 78.

70. *Zh*, 1929, no. 1 (Jan. 1): 1.

71. See "Dva iazyka," *Zh*, 1924, no. 14 (Aug./Sept.): 15.

72. See *ibid.*, 1929, no. 13 (July 1): 403; no. 3 (Mar.), 1925, 5–13; no. 2 (Feb.), 1925: 8.

73. This was one recommendation made by Gus's in *Zh*, 1929, no. 4 (Feb. 15): 109.

74. This phenomenon was often remarked upon. For one example, see A. Meromskii, "The Language of the Peasant Correspondent," *Zh*, 1929, no. 13 (July 1): 400.

75. Denunciations of the "vulgarization" of language by new "proto-intellectuals," and of *obyvatel'skii* or "philistine" prose, are frequent in the discourse on style. See, for example, Smirnov-Kutacheskii's article in *Pechat' i revoliutsii*, 1927, (Jan./Feb.): 5–18.

76. Berezhnoi, *K istorii partiino-sovetskoi pechati*, 78.

77. *KP*, May 25, 1925, 25–27.

78. *Zh*, 1925, no. 5 (May): 41–42; 1923, no. 4 (Feb.): 55–56.

79. *KP*, Jan. 23, 1924, 21.

80. Most 1925 issues of *Krasnaia pechat'* give circulation figures for the major central newspapers on their back page.

81. See Brooks, "Public and Private Values," 28, on the role of newspapers in educating local activists in the language of public life.

82. For discussions of the need to retarget the central newspapers to reach lower-level Party activists and new workers, see Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii goroda Moskvy (TsGAOD g. Moskvy) f. 190, op. 1, d. 1, l. 60 (Party cell of *Rabochaia gazeta*, April 1926); f. 3, op. 9, d. 79, ll. 13–13ob. (Jan. 1928 intelligence report to Moscow *guberniia* Party Committee on "Party-Organizational Questions"); f. 3, op. 10, d. 18, ll. 1–38 (conference of Moscow agitators and

propagandists in February 1929).

For letters from Party members expressing confusion about Party policies or warning that other Party activists were not understanding the press, see Matthew Lenoe, "Reader Response to the Soviet Press Campaign Against the Trotskii-Zinov'ev Opposition, 1926–1928," *Russian History*, nos. 1–2, 1997 (forthcoming).

For Central Committee decisions retargeting the central press, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 717, ll. 23–55 (April 1929 Orgburo decision ordering *Bednota* to simplify its language and explain Party policies more clearly to rural Party activists); f. 17, op. 113, d. 637, ll. 8–18 (July 1928 Orgburo decision on "Measures for Improving Youth and Children's Press").

83. See Mark Fishman, *Manufacturing the News* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), in particular pp. 3–16.

84. *KP*, 1926, no. 16 (Aug.): 36–38.

85. See Ingulov's opening speech to the Moscow Conference of Information Specialists (Moskovskaia konferentsiia rabotnikov informatsii) for his attack on the "Ukrainian comrades" supporting abolition of the reportorial profession (*Zh*, 1926, no. 3 [Mar.]: 32). For a summary of and quotes from Alekseev's article in *Proletarii*, see "Otkliki na diskussiiu," *Zh*, 1926, no. 4 (April): 69.

86. *Zh*, 1925, no. 3 (Mar.): 21; no. 6–7 (June/July): 34–37, 87.

87. For a characterization of the reporter as a "courier" see "O masterakh i podmasteriakh tsekha informatsii," *ibid.*, 1926, no. 3 (Mar.): 21. See also the summary of I. Alekseev's article run in *ibid.*, 1926, no. 4 (April): 69.

88. *KP*, 1926, no. 16 (Aug.): 40, cited a case in which the People's Commissariat of Agriculture Press Bureau prevented reporters from attending a conference of *vydvizhentsy* (persons promoted from the worker or peasant "rank-and-file" in accordance with Soviet affirmative action policies).

89. *Zh*, 1926, no. 2 (Feb.): 56–57. In the case in question, an actual foreign correspondent was waiting in the foyer for an already scheduled interview with the "demi-Commissar," but had to go to the bathroom. While he was gone, the *Gudok* reporter got into the trust director's office by posing as him. The *Gudok* reporter's outrage was obviously increased by the ease with which the foreign newspaperman, who

was from a minor power ("such as Greece") got access. Russian reporters frequently complained that foreign correspondents had better access to Soviet institutions than they did.

90. *KP*, 1926, no. 16 (Aug.): 36.

91. *Zh*, 1925, no. 1 (Jan.): 21–22.

92. *Zh*, 1926, no. 2 (Feb.): 55. Soviet enterprises were supposed to hold regular "production meetings" at which lower-level personnel could offer suggestions for improving work or criticize management procedures they were unhappy with. The production meeting was expected to be a forum for compromise between management and labor.

93. *Ibid.*, 1925, no. 12 (Dec.): 34–41; 1929, no. 8 (April 15): 247.

94. *KP*, 1926, no. 16 (Aug.): 34–35.

95. *Zh*, 1923, no. 3: 33–34; Sept., 1922: 28–29; 1924, no. 12 (June): 23–24; 1924, no. 14 (Aug./Sept.): 53; 1925, no. 12 (Dec.): 32–33; 1927, no. 2 (Feb.): 42–43.

96. *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1975), entry for "Savel'ev."

97. *Zh*, 1926, no. 2 (Feb.): 2.

98. *Zh*, 1927, no. 2 (Feb.): 42; 1923, no. 5 (Mar./April): 36; 1923, no. 3 (Jan.): 34; 1926, no. 3 (Mar.): 33.

99. Louise McReynolds, *The News Under Russia's Old Regime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 162.

100. *Zh*, 1926, no. 2 (Feb.): 46. For the image of bourgeois newspapermen, see *ibid.*, 1926, no. 3 (Mar.): 20.

101. At *Izvestiia* until the end of 1926 the "Department of Moscow Information" was headed by Konstantin Matveevich Danilenko, formerly the Moscow news editor for the popular prerevolutionary paper *Russkoe slovo*. Danilenko had brought "nearly his entire staff," fifteen or more reporters, with him to *Izvestiia*. See Ivan Gronskii, *Iz proshlogo*

. . . *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: "Izvestiia," 1991), 110.

102. GARF, f. 374 s.ch., op. 27s., d. 1931, l. 72.

103. A. Kliachkin, "'Fitili' i 'gvozdi': iz zapisok reportera," in I. M. Afonichev, ed., *O vremeni i o sebe. Iz zhurnalistskikh bloknotov* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1984), 254.

104. V. Verner, "Bezprizornye gazety: *Vecherniaia krasnaia gazeta*," *Zh*, 1926, no. 4 (April): 55–56. "People of the past" is a direct translation of *byvshie liudi*, which referred to members of defunct social classes — the bourgeoisie, priests, nobles, and so on.

105. *Zh*, 1923, no. 3 (Jan.): 34–35.

106. Mikhail Kol'tsov, "Ne s toi storony," *ibid.*, 1926, no. 2 (Feb.): 11.

107. *Ibid.*, 1926, no. 3 (Mar.): 32–40.

108. *Ibid.*, 1926, no. 3 (Mar.): 19. Lenin's motto, *"travit' negodnogo,"* refers to the use of denunciation and unmasking to expose incompetence and corruption within the state apparatus.

109. On Dzerzhinskii's meeting with Moscow newsmen, see Gershberg, *Rabota*, 23; *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta*, Mar. 2, 1926, 1; Mar. 4, 1926, 1. On Gusev's speech to a conference of the Moscow section of the journalists' trade union (SRP), see *Zh*, 1926, no. 5 (May): 49–51

110. In early March the central trade-union organ *Trud* criticized *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta*'s coverage of the belt-tightening campaign for being too management oriented and ignoring ordinary workers (see *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta*, Mar. 4, 1926, 3). On April 23, 1926, *Ural'skii rabochii* ran a self-critical front-page article, "Overcoming the Formal Approach (On Some Results of the Belt-Tightening Campaign)," which called for coverage of "the broadest strata of workers, peasants, and office workers."

111. On Kapustin's pioneering of the production review, see "Novaia forma gazetnoi raboty," *Pravda*, Mar. 11, 1927, 2; Gershberg, *Rabota*, 23–24.

112. See "Novaia forma gazetnoi raboty," *Pravda*, Mar. 11, 1927, 2; *Zh*, 1927, no. 12 (Dec.): 57.

113. See, for example, the Komsomol Central Committee Press Department's April 14, 1927, resolution following a presentation by the Moscow Komsomol Committee's Press Department in Tsentr khraneniia dokumentov molodezhnykh organizatsii (TsKhDMO), f. 1, op. 23, d. 737, ll.1–2.

114. *O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Pravda," 1954), 374–75.

115. *Ibid.*, 377; RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 637, ll. 7–22. Quote is from l. 14.

116. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 639, ll. 169–73; d. 694, ll. 166–67.

117. *O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati*, 382–85; RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 717, ll. 23–55. See especially ll. 30–31 for Ingulov's statement of the need to adjust *Bednota* to rural activists' reading level. His draft of the resolution archived at RTsKhIDNI contains an unpublished supplementary point on simplifying the newspaper's language.

118. TsGAOD g. Moskvy, f. 3, op. 9, d. 79, l. 13 ob.

119. *Ibid.*, l. 61.

120. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 585, ll. 122–26.

121. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 643, ll. 55–68 ob., especially l. 58 ob. Emphasis added.

122. *Ibid.*, ll. 55 ob.–56 ob., 60–61.

123. See Gershberg, *Rabota,* 9, 26–27; RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 804, l. 12. For evidence of Kapustin's attendance at a high-level session of the Agitprop Department on Sept. 3, 1929, see GARF, f. 374 s. ch., op. 27s., d. 1898, l. 63.

124. On Pospelov, see Gershberg, *Rabota*, 38, and *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, 1975 ed., s. v. "Pospelov." On Riabov, Khodakov, Polevoi, and Khvat, see Gershberg, *Rabota,* 26, 52, 144, 187, 273–77.

125. On Troitskii's biography and appointment as chief editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 831, l. 8, and M. Dubrov, "Zametki nakanune iubileiia," 1975, TMs, editorial office library of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Moscow.

126. On Liakhovets's career at *Tverskaia pravda* and *Kooperativnaia zhizn'*, see GARF, f. 374 s. ch., op. 27s., d. 1567, ll. 8–8 ob., 127.

127. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 699, ll. 88–90.

128. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 637, ll. 124–26; op. 114, d. 295, l. 116; *Ural'skii rabochii*, Mar. 16, 1926, 6 (Mikhailov's comments at the March 1926 plenum of the Urals *oblast'* Party Committee).

129. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 826, l. 9; d. 852, l. 7.

130. I assume that the N. Naumov who headed *Pravda*'s Komsomol cell in 1928–1929 was the same N. Naumov who authored two articles in *Raboche-krest'ianskii korrespondent* in the fall of 1927 on "The Wall Newspaper in the Struggle for Rationalization" and "How to Organize a Production Review Using the Wall Newspaper" (see Mueller, "A New Kind of Newspaper," 322, nn. 98, 103). I also assume that this Naumov was the same person as the Naumov elected a candidate member of the Urals *oblast'* Party Committee in March 1926 (*UR*, Mar. 7, 1926, 2) and the Naumov who organized strike brigades in Zlatoust *okrug* in the fall of 1927 (*UR*, Dec. 28, 1927, 3).

131. See Boris Baianov, "Moia rabota v *Komsomol'skoi pravde*," Aleksei Abramenkov, "Donbass, Khar'kov, Moskva," "Iarkii i samobytnyi (neskol'ko stranits o Vladimire Bubekine," "I. Stanevskii: Kratkie svedeniia," all unpublished typed manuscripts in the editorial office library of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Moscow. See also RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 831, l. 8; op. 114, d. 308, l. 243.

132. See Iurii Zhukov, *Liudi tridtsatykh godov* (Moscow: "Sovetskaia Rossiia," 1966), 41–43; RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 800, ll. 3, 106; op. 114, d. 264, ll. 5, 89 ob.; Gershberg, *Rabota*, 189.

133. For outline biographies of some typical mass journalists, see Biographical Glossary. Also see Gershberg's account of *Pravda* correspondent Mikhail Popov's career in *Rabota*,121–22, and M. Dubrov's description of the *Komsomol'skaia pravda* editor

Andrei Nikolaevich Troitskii in "Zametki nakanune iubileiia," pp. 4–5.

134. According to the 1929 SRP data, 59.9 percent of the union members surveyed (4,998 persons, or about three-quarters of total membership) had begun their working lives in white-collar positions outside the press, 17.8 percent had begun in the press, 16.7 percent had begun in blue-collar work, and only 4.5 percent had begun working in agriculture. Of 886 who began their careers in the press, only 7.9 percent came from worker families, 15.1 percent from peasant families, and 67.1 percent from white-collar/professional families. In contrast, among Communist journalists who entered newspaper employment in 1927–1928, 35.9 percent had first done blue- collar work. Among those Communist journalists who began newspaper careers in 1929 the percentage of former proletarians was even higher: 51.8 percent. See GARF, f. 5566, op. 6, d. 27, ll. 11, 21.

135. See GARF, f. 5566, op. 6, d. 27, ll. 14, 17–18. Although Soviet agitprop officials had taken some steps to organize professional training for journalists, such as founding the State Institute of Journalism (GIZh) in Moscow and running evening courses at the Moscow House of the Press and newspaper editorial offices, the SRP survey showed that only a small percentage of working reporters (6.8 percent) had taken courses in journalism.

136. On the campaign to "Communize" the journalistic profession, see *Zh*, 1927, nos. 9–10 (Sept./Oct.): 4–5; 1927, no. 11 (Nov.): 54–55; *Resheniia partii o pechati*, 112–13; and stenograms of the discussion at the Third Plenum of the SRP's Central Bureau (Jan. 1929) in GARF, f. 5566, op. 5, d. 48, ll. 1–41.

137. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, April 24, 1928, 2.

138. See RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 685, ll. 27–30 ob.

139. "O 'Periakh iz khvosta.' Mysli vslukh," *Pravdist*, Dec. 5, 1928, 3.

140. On the August 1928 appointment of Krumin and Savel'ev to the *Pravda* editorial board, see the Politburo's September 6, 1929, resolution, "On *Pravda*'s Editorial Staff," reprinted in Gosudarstvennaia arkhivnaia sluzhba Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia I izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii, *Pis'ma I. V. Stalina V. M. Molotovu, 1925–1936 gg.* (Moscow: "Rossiia molodaia," 1996), 132–34. On Kovalev's election as Party cell secretary, see *Pravdist*, Oct. 31, 1928, 4, which mentions the election of a new Party cell bureau. Kovalev may have been Party cell secretary at

Pravda earlier, but I have not found evidence of this.

141. *Pravdist*, Nov. 21, 1928, 3.

142. For examples of Bulyzhnik and Tanin's work, see *Pravda*, Jan. 1, 1929, 3, 5. For the debates on mass journalism and the "campaign," see *Pravdist*, Dec. 29, 1928, 3; Feb. 9, 1929, 3; Feb. 20, 1929, 3.

143. *Pravdist*, Jan. 12, 1929, 3.

144. *Ibid.*, 1.

145. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1929, 2.

146. *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1929, 3.

147. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 584, l. 3; "Na novye puti," *Pravdist*, Dec. 19, 1928, 1.

148. See *Pravdist*, Oct. 31, 1928, 3; Nov. 10, 1928, 1; Nov. 14, 1928, 3; Nov. 17, 1928, 2; Dec. 5, 1928, 2; Dec. 12, 1928, 1; Dec. 19, 1928, 1; Dec. 22, 1928, 2; Jan. 30, 1929, 1; June 22, 1929, 1; June 29, 1929, 1; July 9, 1929, 2-3.

149. See *Pravdist*, June 22, 1929, 1, for the assertion that Kapustin was running *Pravda*. In September 1929, Nadezhda Allilueva, Stalin's wife, reported to her husband that Kovalev enjoyed more "authority" at *Pravda* than the putative members of the editorial bureau—Popov, Krumin, and Iaroslavskii. See "Nadezhde Sergeevne Alliluevoi lichno ot Stalina," *Rodina*, no. 10, 1992: 52.

150. See *Pravdist*, June 22, 1929, 1, 3; June 29, 1929, 1; July 9, 1929, 1; July 24, 1929, 1, 4; *Pis'ma I. V. Stalina V. M. Molotovu*, 129-30.

151. On Gronskii's relationship with Stalin and his management of "insurrection" at the editorial offices, see Gronskii, *Iz proshlogo*, 118-21, 132-34. On his handling of a late 1928 incident in which young Communist reporters used the suicide of a lower-ranking employee as an occasion for an attack on senior editors, see TsGAOD g. Moskvy, f. 420, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 2-6, 12. On the firing of one of the reporters, Safonov, see *Zh*, 1929, no. 4 (Feb. 15): 106. On Gronskii's rejection of young Communist journalists'

demands for a purge of non-Party newspapermen, see TsGAOD g. Moskvy, f. 420, op. 1, d. 56, ll. 1–1 ob.

152. See Gronskii, *Iz proshlogo*, 110; GARF, f. 1244, op. 1, d. 12, ll. 41, 56–57; d. 17, ll. 5–17; Anatolii Mironovich Danilevich, "Gazeta '*Izvestiia.*' Stanovlenie. Tipologiia (1917–1927 gg.)" (Ph.D. diss., Moscow State University, 1978), 69–70, 116.

153. GARF, f. 1244, op. 1, d. 31, ll. 6–11.

154. *Ibid.*, ll. 13–14, 45.

155. On the Secretariat's approval of Volodin's appointment as chief editor of *Vecherniaia Moskva*, see RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 826, l. 5. On the purge at *Vecherniaia Moskva*, see *Zh*, 1930, no. 13 (July): 24; GARF, f. 374 s.ch., op. 27 s., d. 1931, ll. 71–72. On the transformation of *Vecherniaia Moskva*, see issues of the paper from October 1929 through March 1930.

156. *Zh*, 1929, no. 8 (April 15): 232; *Pravdist*, Jan. 12, 1929, 1; Feb. 9, 1929, 3.

157. *Zh*, 1929, no. 7 (April 1): 211. See also 1929, no. 4 (Feb. 15): 118, 131.

158. *Zh*, 1929, no. 12 (June 15): 372. See also *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 7, 1930, 2; Aug. 23, 1930, 2; Oct. 24, 1930, 2.

159. See M. Gus, "Gazeta i chitatel'," *Zh*, 1930, no. 5 (Mar. 1): 157–58. See also the exchanges of opinion about pedagogy at the State Institute of Journalism in *Zh*, 1930, nos. 7–8 (April): 11–12; 1930, nos. 11-12 (June): 24–27; 1930, no. 13 (July): 30–35. For a summary account of Kuz'michev and Rubakin's work, see Vadim Volkov, "The Politics of Reading in the Soviet Union, 1920s–1930s: Reflections on the Privatization of Life," paper presented to the Conference on Soviet Letters to Authority, April 6–7, 1996, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., pp. 8–10.

160. M. Bochacher, "O metodologii gazetovedeniia," *Zh*, 1930, no. 5 (Mar. 1): 156; P. Cherepenin, "K informatsii," *Zh*, 1930, nos. 7-8 (April): 14–15; B. Reznikov, "Polemicheskie zametki," *Zh*, 1930, no. 14 (July): 19–23; and V. Kugel's review of V. Kuz'michev's *Organizatsiia obshchestvennogo mneniia* (*Zh*, 1930, no. 6 [Mar. 15]: 192).

161. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Oct. 24, 1930, 2. For details of the attacks on Gus, Kurs, and other State Institute of Journalism instructors in 1930 by mass journalists from *Rabochaia gazeta*, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, and other mass newspapers, see *Zh*, 1930, nos. 7–8 (April): 11–12; 1930, nos. 11–12 (June): 24–27; 1930, no. 13 (July): 30–35; *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 7, 1930, (no. 130), 2; Aug. 23, 1930, (no. 207) 2; Oct. 24, 1930, (no. 269) 1. On the "Gus-Kurs Deviation," (referred to as the "Hus-Kurs Deviation due to a transcription error), see A. Kotlyar, "Newspapers in the USSR: Recollections and Observations of a Soviet Journalist," East European Fund, Research Program on the USSR, Mimeographed Series No. 71 (New York: East European Fund, 1955), 55. On the denial of the need for a press network differentiated by target audience, see "V Kul'tprope TsK VKP(b)," *Bol'shevistskaia pechat'*, no. 1 (Jan.), 1934: 48, where "the tendency to oppose a newspaper's 'leading' character to its 'mass' character" is labeled a "deviation."

162. In June 1926 Stalin expressed his own view that worker readers would respond best to simple-minded accusations against the Trotskii-Zinov'ev Opposition, rather than explanations of the policy differences between the Opposition and the Central Committeee. See *Pis'ma I. V. Stalina V. M. Molotovu: 1925-1936 gg.*, 72–74.

163. See *Pravdist*, Jan. 12, 1929, 1. I am assuming that Kovalev, the editor of *Pravdist*, wrote this lead editorial. It is however possible that another editor was the author.

164. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 88–91, 140–51.