

The American Media and the Soviet Union at the Onset of  
U.S. Intervention in World War II

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1942 was a crucial year for America and the Soviet Union. For the past twenty years, the United States had been fearful of the U.S.S.R. and the possibility that communism would spread. However, World War II forced Americans to change their perceptions of Russia. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, which included the Soviet Union. Furthermore, with Hitler threatening to conquer Europe, America had to unite with the U.S.S.R. in order to defeat him. At this point, the U.S. supported a country that it had recently viewed as its enemy. But were Americans completely supportive of the Soviet Union during this time period, or did they remain suspicious of it? This paper will focus on the reaction of the American media to Russia within the first year after the United States entered the war. It will study articles from three major news publications: the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and *Time* magazine. The *New York Times* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* represented two distinct regions of the country (the East Coast and the Midwest, respectively), and *Time* magazine reached the nation as a whole.

Not surprisingly, the publications all showed support for the war effort and therefore stressed the important role of the U.S.S.R. in the conflict. In 1942, certain themes and attitudes were evident. The *New York Times* was trustful of the U.S.S.R. and even suggested that communism did not pose a particularly grave threat to the United States. In contrast, the *Chicago Tribune* was generally wary of the Soviet Union and Stalin. *Time* magazine was the most praising of Russia, as it emphasized the heroic ways in which the Soviets were fighting the Germans and how victory in the war depended primarily on the U.S.S.R. These different viewpoints were often subtle, but they demonstrated that the American press did not all share the same perception of the Soviet Union during the first year of the U.S.'s involvement in the war.

Historians have not extensively studied the response of American newspapers to the Soviet Union during World War II. Of course, many scholars have closely examined American-Soviet relations at this time. However, they have focused mainly on the diplomatic negotiations between Franklin Roosevelt and Josef Stalin. These studies emphasize the interactions between the two governments. Edward Bennett analyzes Roosevelt's response to the Soviet Union before and during the war. He asserts that even though the United States was concerned about Stalin, Roosevelt had to be sure not to antagonize the Soviet Union lest it become allied with Hitler.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. therefore was cautious in its relationship with the U.S.S.R. Warren Kimball has a similar analysis of American foreign policy in the early years of the war, and he notes that Roosevelt was careful not to upset Stalin.<sup>2</sup> Taking a different approach, Amos Perlmutter claims that Roosevelt's relationship with the Soviet Union was more of an actual alliance with Stalin rather than simple appeasement.<sup>3</sup> These historians all address how Roosevelt and other government leaders perceived the U.S.S.R. But there is little study of how other Americans felt about these issues. Did they agree with foreign policy at this time? Were they suspicious of Stalin and the Soviet Union? These are the types of questions that have received less attention from academics, and an analysis of the press's coverage of these subjects can reveal how the media presented such issues to the American public.

Nonetheless, some scholars have discussed how the media felt about the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union. Typically, this analysis is not as thorough as the historiography on

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<sup>1</sup> Edward M. Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990), xxii-xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Warren F. Kimball, "Anglo-American War Aims, 1941-43, 'The First Review: Edén's Mission to Washington,'" in *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance, 1941-45*, ed. Ann Lane and Howard Temperley (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1995), 5-8.

<sup>3</sup> Amos Perlmutter, *FDR & Stalin: A Not So Grand Alliance, 1943-1945* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 2-5.

Roosevelt and the American government's relations with Stalin. Whereas the diplomatic policies between the two countries are the primary focus of most historians, the reactions of the media, if mentioned at all, often receive a cursory glance. For example, Bennett briefly discusses that the U.S. government's foreign policy depended in part on how the public and media viewed Russia. He argues that much of the American press was not concerned with issues of self-determination in Eastern Europe and that it "refused to take sides on the Polish boundary question and regarded favorably 'the Soviet claims to Eastern Poland.'"<sup>4</sup> Perlmutter observes that the American population was anti-Stalin before the war, but once the two countries became allies, the media attempted to portray the Soviet Union as heroic.<sup>5</sup> Yet these arguments are mere footnotes compared to the scholarship on the government's interactions with the U.S.S.R. Bennett and Perlmutter mention how Americans responded to the Soviet Union, but fail to go into much depth on the issue.

This paper expands upon the works of other scholars in that it examines the American response to the Soviet Union through specific means: newspapers and magazines. This essay covers an area that few other historians have studied in detail. Such an examination adds to the previous scholarship in important ways. By focusing on the media coverage, it is possible to determine how the American public was informed about the Soviet Union. How were the issues presented to ordinary Americans? Furthermore, this study assesses whether different parts of the United States had slightly different perceptions of the U.S.S.R. Most scholarship on this topic presents the American public as uniform in its opinions of Stalin and the Soviet Union. However, an investigation of various newspapers and magazines throughout the country can determine whether there were different opinions of the Soviet Union. Just how diverse was the public's

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<sup>4</sup> Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, 123.

<sup>5</sup> Perlmutter, *FDR & Stalin*, 102-106.

viewpoint? In general, Americans had a negative opinion of the Soviet Union originally, but they began to view it more favorably once the United States joined World War II. However, this paper contains a deeper analysis in order to determine if the reactions were more complex than this simple explanation. It extends beyond the actions of the government leaders and instead explores the thoughts and responses of the media. Since newspapers and magazines were popular in the United States at this time, the media coverage undoubtedly influenced the opinions of the broader American public.

In order to understand the effect that the press had on the public, it is first necessary to know how popular these specific publications were during the 1940s. The *New York Times* was perhaps the most important and widespread newspaper at this time. Throughout World War II, it published more columns of war coverage than any other American newspaper.<sup>6</sup> Also, in 1941, it had a weekday circulation of 455,000; therefore, it was widely read.<sup>7</sup> Of course, *The New York Times* was not the only prominent newspaper in New York. Other papers competed with the *Times*, but by the end of the war, the *New York Times* had the widest circulation. The *Times* was dedicated to covering the war in more depth than its competitors, which was a significant reason for its eventual success.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the articles that the *New York Times* published would have had a notable influence on the population in New York and the East Coast. The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, meanwhile, had a substantial effect on the Midwest. Although it had to compete with other newspapers in Chicago, it was still a prominent publication in that region of the United

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<sup>6</sup> Edwin Diamond, *Behind the Times: Inside the New New York Times* (New York: Villard Books, 1994), 48.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

States.<sup>9</sup> *Time* magazine, however, was not simply a regional publication. It was popular and widely read throughout the entire country. In 1941, *Time* had a circulation of nearly one million, and its sales doubled the next year.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the magazine was even more influential than the newspapers because it reached all parts of the nation.

The 1940s were a transformative time for the American media. Newspapers remained a popular form of communication, but they faced competition from other media outlets such as radio and film. However, *Time* magazine presented a new style of reporting that was different from that of newspapers such as the *New York Times* or *Chicago Daily Tribune*. A principal purpose of *Time* was not simply to inform its readers, but also to entertain them.<sup>11</sup> The writing was short and clear, and the publication summarized and interpreted the news in a manner that made evident the writers' opinions. Often, the news reflected the thoughts of the magazine's founder and editor-in-chief, Henry Luce.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, *Time* was generally more subjective than newspapers. Even though the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* still displayed their own views of the issues within their writing, they were not as clear or explicit as *Time* magazine.

When the United States first entered World War II, the nation's primary focus was on Japan. However, by early 1942, it quickly focused much of its attention on the Soviet Union's defense against the German army. At this point, the Nazis had already conquered Ukraine and had achieved gains across the entire front. Leningrad was under siege, and the Germans threatened to take Moscow. Stalin wanted to initiate counter-offensives so that the U.S.S.R.

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<sup>9</sup> John Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1969), 225.

<sup>10</sup> Norberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva, *Time: The Illustrated History of the World's Most Influential Magazine* (New York: Rizzoli International Publication, Inc., 2010), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Wiley Lee Umphlett, *The Visual Focus of American Media Culture in the Twentieth Century: The Modern Era, 1893-1945* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), 248.

<sup>12</sup> Angeletti and Oliva, *Illustrated History*, 22-23, 28.

would be attacking rather than only defending.<sup>13</sup> He also urged the United States and Britain to open a Second Front against Germany to take the pressure off the Soviet Union (though the Allies would not introduce this other front for two more years).<sup>14</sup> During that summer, the Russians lost territory in the southern part of the country, as the Nazis earned victories in the Caucasus and moved towards Stalingrad.<sup>15</sup> The American media reported extensively on this situation. As the Germans continued their invasion and the Soviets counter-attacked, the battles on this front were crucial for determining who would eventually win the war. Throughout the year, the American newspapers and magazines demonstrated their thoughts about the Soviet Union through the manner in which they covered these events.

Most of the articles that the press published were simply informative; they reported on specific events in the war, such as how the Soviets were faring against the German invasion. Nevertheless, from all of this coverage, certain trends emerged in respect to the way in which the press portrayed the U.S.S.R. For example, the newspapers focused more on the war in Europe than the conflict against Japan. They recognized that the Soviet Union was busy battling the Nazis, and therefore they did not argue that the country ought to help the Americans fight the Japanese. Additionally, Russian heroism and unity between the Allied powers were common themes. This coverage demonstrated that the media publications were generally supportive of the Soviet Union at this time.

Such support was repeatedly evident in the stories from the *New York Times* during 1942. It published many articles that dealt with American-Soviet relations, in which the United States

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<sup>13</sup> John Erickson, "Stalin, Soviet Strategy and the Grand Alliance," in *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance, 1941-45*, ed. Ann Lane and Howard Temperley (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1995), 144.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-146.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

highlighted the need to aid Russia in order to defeat Germany. Not only did the U.S. try to help the U.S.S.R., it also praised Soviet heroism. The *Times* displayed such praise when it reported on certain cases in which Russia honored its citizens who had died in defense of their country. Recipients of this honor included people who died in the siege of Leningrad and specific individuals whom the Nazis killed. The tone of these *New York Times* articles suggests that the newspaper viewed the Russians in Leningrad as heroic. The soldiers' mood "was of high exaltation as they knelt and swore to give their lives if necessary to smash the blockade," and as the Soviets made advancements, "the heroic millions of Leningrad can now see some lightening of the menace that has hung over them."<sup>16</sup> This coverage was crucial because it almost admired the Soviet troops for their actions. Russia was not simply helping the Allies fight the war; it was doing so courageously and was therefore essential for achieving victory.

Much of the reporting on the Soviet Union during this time period was not particularly surprising. Since the United States was allied with Stalin against the Axis powers, it makes sense that the *New York Times* emphasized the unity between the two nations and their leaders. That the newspaper portrayed the people of the U.S.S.R. as heroic is significant in that it shows that the *Times* lauded the actions of the Soviets. It had moved past any distrust of the Soviet Union and was completely supportive of it, despite Russia's radically different political ideas. Even more surprising is that the *Times* began to publish stories that indicated less criticism towards Soviet ideology. Although the newspaper did not advocate communism by any means, it did suggest that communism did not pose an especially grave threat to the Allies.

Some of the *New York Times* articles implied that the Soviet system of government had an influence on success during the war. One editorial commented on the Russian view of why its

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<sup>16</sup> "Leningrad's Stand Honored in Russia," *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1942, 7.



citizens had sacrificed themselves during the war: “Only Socialism, it is felt here, can create that situation where every one fights . . . with the feeling that what the people are being called upon to defend belongs to them.”<sup>17</sup> Here, the *Times* presented a Soviet perspective of communism, in which the ideology itself was a principal reason for the relentlessness of the people. Furthermore, another story examined Russian culture during the war. It reflected on the popularity of Russian literature (such as *War and Peace*) and how the government praised individual heroes for their sacrifice to the country.<sup>18</sup> But the final sentences of this article are the most revealing. Noting that the Soviets had previously disapproved of the glorification of individual actions, the *Times* wrote that “It would be wrong to think that these modifications are sudden or temporary. They have been going on gradually for several years in preparation for national defense.”<sup>19</sup> This editorial did not mention communism, but it did refer to the Soviet system and the actions of the government. It was not critical of the Russians, nor did it suggest that they threatened America, but it instead admired how the preparations for war had created a positive effect for the Soviet people.

Perhaps the *New York Times* editorial that was the most explicitly dismissive of the threat of communism was published in April 1942. Its author was a former U.S. ambassador to Russia, Joseph E. Davies. The title of the editorial was “Is Communism a Menace to Us?,” and the answer to this question was an emphatic “no.” Davies studied the state of Russian communism. He argued that the U.S.S.R. did not have true communism as Marx and Engels had envisioned, because the nation was forced to use some capitalistic principles in order to undergo industrialization. Because of this rapid development in industry, the Soviet Union was able to

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<sup>17</sup> “May Day in Soviet Union to be Working Day,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1942, 4.

<sup>18</sup> “Soviet’s Social Outlook Altered in Fixing Public Interest on War,” *New York Times*, April 25, 1942, 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

defend itself from the German invasion.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, not only was the Soviet state not really communist, but also its system was crucial for fighting the war. Davies then examined the conditions that were necessary for communism to emerge. He concluded that “Russian communism . . . [had] nothing to offer [the United States]” because “conditions [were] certainly not ripe for it yet, nor [were] conditions even possible to conceive that would be so bad, so desperate, as to cause our people to turn to communism as a relief.”<sup>21</sup> He listed economic and social factors that would prevent this ideology from spreading to America, which included private property and a deeply religious people.<sup>22</sup> Finally, Davies argued that it was far more important to defeat Hitler, and an irrational fear of the menace of communism would only aid the Nazis.<sup>23</sup> This editorial is crucial for several reasons. It reflected the mindset that Hitler was more dangerous than communism at that time, which was a common viewpoint during the war. But it extended beyond the attitudes of most Americans by claiming that communism did not even pose a legitimate threat to the United States. Thus, the perception of the Soviet Union, based on the reports of the *New York Times*, had shifted dramatically since the U.S. had entered the war. Obviously, not all Americans held the same beliefs about the U.S.S.R. as Davies, but this editorial, along with others from the same period, shows that the *Times* was generally more trustful of the Soviet Union and less fearful of communism.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune*'s coverage during 1942 contained many similarities in its overall perception of Russia as the *New York Times*, but it also had a few crucial differences. Much of the *Tribune*'s reporting dealt with simple information about how the war was progressing and what diplomatic policies the American government was enacting. The content

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph E. Davies, “Is Communism a Menace to Us?,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1942, SM3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, SM3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, SM3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, SM3.

and tone of these articles are not surprising. They underscored the attempts of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union to remain united and supportive of each other in order to defeat Hitler. Furthermore, like the stories from the *Times*, they noted the heroism of the Soviet citizens and Russia's important role in defending against the German invasion. Nonetheless, the most intriguing articles of the *Chicago Tribune* from this year were about the impact that the Soviet Union and communism would have on the United States. As the year progressed, the articles displayed a fear of communism and distrust of the Soviet state.

In February, President Roosevelt vetoed a bill that would have required the registration of the communist party.<sup>24</sup> The *Chicago Daily Tribune's* coverage of this event clearly reflected the tensions over the issue of communism in America. The article cited the thoughts of different government leaders on this subject. Congressmen who supported the law believed that it was necessary to expose communists within the American government who threatened to undermine the country. In contrast, Roosevelt reasoned that the bill could harm the U.S.'s relationship with foreign countries.<sup>25</sup> The *Tribune* provided a deeper analysis of America's views of communism. From this article, it is clear that the United States government was divided on whether communism constituted a real threat to the country. Nonetheless, President Roosevelt believed that unity with other nations took precedence over the potential threat of communism within the U.S., indicating that the highest officials within the government were willing to trust the Soviet Union.

In this previous article, the *Chicago Tribune* demonstrated that some American government officials were concerned about communism, whereas Roosevelt was more

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<sup>24</sup> Chesly Manly, "Bill to Register U.S. Communists Vetoed by F.D.R.," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 10, 1942, 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

dismissive of this threat. In May 1942, the *Tribune* revealed that it was critical of Roosevelt's attitude towards his conservative opponents. Leading up to the midterm elections, Roosevelt's administration had urged the defeat of congressmen who had resisted the president's pre-war intervention plan. The newspaper claimed that these actions were "the activity of the alliance between the Roosevelt administration and other left wing groups to purge congress of pre-war noninterventionists and right wingers."<sup>26</sup> The tone of this article showed that the *Tribune* disapproved of the president's attempts to remove members of Congress. It continually used the word "purge" to describe these events and argued that the goal of the administration was "the repudiation of prewar noninterventionist senators and representatives by their constituents who at the time gave ample evidence of overwhelming support."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the article claimed that the president targeted members of Congress who "opposed the Roosevelt intervention policy or incurred the displeasure of the communists and other left wingers on social and economic legislation."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the *Tribune* viewed this "purge" as strictly a political move in which left-wingers had influenced the administration's actions. Even though the issue did not directly involve the Soviet Union, it showed that the newspaper was distrustful of the president's relationship with communists and leftist groups.

One article in particular from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* most clearly demonstrated its misgivings towards the Soviet Union. Titled "At Loose Ends with Russia," this editorial was critical of the Russians and the American diplomatic relations with Stalin. It began with a bold assertion: "Relations with Russia are not improved by what happens from day to day. Each new

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<sup>26</sup> Arthur Sears Henning, "New Deal-Red Alliance to get Test at Polls," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1942, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

touch of allied diplomacy and strategy makes them worse.”<sup>29</sup> The article argued that the Soviets were not fighting the Germans in order to help Britain or the rest of Western Europe. Instead, they became involved in the conflict because “the dealings of Hitler and Stalin came to a bad end for both of them.”<sup>30</sup> Finally, the author maintained that Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill were not working together well. Although all of the leaders wanted to defeat Germany, they each had their own plans for doing so and did not have a grand strategy for winning the war.<sup>31</sup> The arguments of this editorial contrasted sharply with the ideas that most other articles had promoted. According to this author, the Allies were not really united, but were instead self-interested. The Soviet Union was not heroic, and the relationship between it and the United States was worsening. Also, it is essential to note that this article clearly stated the viewpoint of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on the issue of American-Soviet relations. Unlike the *New York Times*, this newspaper did not portray the two countries as united, but rather it was concerned about the actions of Stalin and the Soviet Union.

The coverage of *Time* magazine in 1942 differed from that of the *New York Times* and *Chicago Daily Tribune* in that it was more consistent in respect to Russia. Each week’s edition contained a detailed analysis of how the war was progressing on the different fronts, which included how the Soviets were faring against the German invasion. Most of the time, *Time*’s reporting was informative and technical, as every week updated the public on any new developments in the conflict. But from the publications, certain themes were apparent. Throughout the year, *Time* repeatedly emphasized that the Soviet Union was crucial in order for the Allies to defeat Germany. When Hitler began to gain momentum, the magazine predicted

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<sup>29</sup> “At Loose Ends With Russia,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1942, 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

what would happen if Russia fell: “The best and only present chance to destroy the main German armies will be gone; the Allies will then have lost their best chance to defeat Germany and win World War II.”<sup>32</sup> Victory in Europe therefore depended almost entirely on the Soviet Union at that time. This idea was reiterated in other editions from that year. One article described in more exact terms what the Allies would have lost if Germany had conquered Russia. Losses would have included manpower, air power, oil, and industry. Considering that the Soviet Union accounted for a large proportion of the soldiers and industry in Europe, such a defeat would have been a severe blow to the Allies.<sup>33</sup> Another story reported that the Red Army felt confident about its chances against the Germans. It then noted that this confidence was encouraging for the British and Americans because “if Russian confidence was justified, victory might be in sight. If not, the long night of war might grow darker and colder than ever.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, the rest of the Allies were relying on Russia. This sentiment was apparent in many editions of *Time* throughout the entire year. The magazine understood and stressed that the United States needed to support Russia because the key to victory in World War II lay with the Soviet Union and its ability to hold off the Nazi invasion.

Additionally, *Time* frequently portrayed the Russians as heroic in their struggle against Germany. Since it was vital that the Soviet Union defend itself from Hitler, the publication praised the country for its successes. It declared that Russia’s Chief of Staff Boris Shaposhnikov was a great military mind on whom Stalin relied, and that these two men deserved credit for any victories against the Germans.<sup>35</sup> In a different article, descriptions of Russian attacks on the Nazis signified that the Soviets had battled well. It used phrases such as “they fought savagely

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<sup>32</sup> “Hitler is Winning,” *Time*, July 13, 1942, 20.

<sup>33</sup> “If Russia Fell,” *Time*, August 3, 1942, 20.

<sup>34</sup> “Confidence,” *Time*, May 4, 1942, 18.

<sup>35</sup> “What Will Spring Bring?,” *Time*, Feb. 16, 1942, 26.

from Kerch on Crimea's eastern tip to the snowbound Leningrad pocket," "they also fought effectively," and "Russian pilots worked hardest at knocking down transport planes with supplies for the German 'centers of resistance.'"<sup>36</sup> The word choice in this story implied that the Russian soldiers were strong fighters whose will enabled them to emerge victorious. Finally, a feature from June 1942 referred to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and compared the German attack to Napoleon's invasion of Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also asserted that "in spirit, in the will to win or die, the Red Army has no superior."<sup>37</sup> Such a statement offered high praise to the Russian soldiers and their determination to fight. It credited the Soviets themselves with having the capability to win the war because of their heroic qualities. In this sense, *Time* magazine viewed the Soviet Union more admirably than the *New York Times* or *Chicago Daily Tribune* did. Even though those newspapers emphasized the need for unity with the Soviet Union, they were not as explicit as *Time*. Furthermore, *Time* displayed more trust in Russia and focused more on the outcome of the war rather than the potential threat of communism.

Even when the U.S.S.R. suffered losses, *Time* still emphasized that there were some moral victories. Although the city of Sevastopol on the Black Sea fell in the summer of 1942, at least the Germans were not able to conquer it in time for the one-year anniversary of the invasion (which had been a political goal for Hitler).<sup>38</sup> The Germans advanced, but the Soviet Union could still stop them:

After twelve months the Germans had occupied about 7% . . . of Russia's land, but they had not conquered Russia. They had destroyed or captured upwards of 4,500,000 Red soldiers, 15,000 Red tanks, 9,000 Red planes. But they had not destroyed the Red Army. . . . But they had not captured Leningrad . . . The swastika flew within 115 miles of Moscow. But the Germans had not taken the

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<sup>36</sup> "Spring is Coming," *Time*, March 16, 1942, 24.

<sup>37</sup> "The Time is Now," *Time*, June 29, 1942, 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

U.S.S.R.'s heart and capital, the vast railway system which rays out from Moscow and serves most of Russia.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, *Time* was optimistic that the Soviets could eventually defeat the Nazis. Despite all of their gains up to that point, the Germans had not yet taken several major cities nor had they broken the will of the Russian people. Even as the publication reported on the victories that the Germans had achieved, it still reminded its readers of how the Soviet Union had limited the invasion and stressed that the determination of the Russian soldiers could enable them to emerge victorious. The *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* did not display as highly or clearly such confidence and optimism towards the Soviet Union's ability to win the war. Of the three publications, *Time* portrayed the Soviet Union in the most positive and heroic manner.

There are several factors that could explain why these publications reported on the U.S.S.R. in slightly different manners. The clearest explanation is that the depiction of the Soviet Union depended on the ideology of that particular newspaper or magazine. At this time, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* was conservative. It had criticized President Roosevelt and his administration, and it was anti-communist.<sup>40</sup> These viewpoints help demonstrate why the *Chicago Tribune* was more suspicious of the Soviet Union during World War II. Since the newspaper was strongly opposed to communism, it is understandable that it would criticize Russia and claim that the country was self-interested. Furthermore, the *Tribune's* negative opinion of Roosevelt may explain why it published an editorial that argued that the Allied leaders were not united. As an opponent of Roosevelt and his ideology, the publication was more willing to disapprove of his policies. The *New York Times*, though obviously not pro-communist,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>40</sup> Tebbel, *Compact History*, 225.



was generally more liberal and supportive of President Roosevelt during this time period.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, it did not share the same suspicion as the *Tribune* and was more supportive of unity between the United States and the Soviet Union.

*Time* magazine's coverage of the U.S.S.R. can best be understood from the ideology of Henry Luce. Luce was a strong supporter of the war, and he had wanted the United States to join World War II prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>42</sup> Frequently, he ensured that his own opinion and interpretation of the news were evident in the magazine. For example, *Time* chose Stalin to be man of the year twice, in 1939 and 1942. In 1939, Luce was upset that Stalin had signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler. Therefore, the *Time* magazine cover for that year depicted Stalin as a villain, with an arrogant expression on his face.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, the cover for 1942 showed him more heroically, with a benevolent facial expression. At this time, Luce supported Stalin because the Soviet Union was fighting against Hitler.<sup>44</sup> Luce's attitude towards the war explains why *Time* magazine was more praising of the U.S.S.R. than the other publications were. Just as the front cover in 1942 portrayed Stalin as a hero, the news stories extended such praise to the Russian soldiers. Since Luce was so supportive of the war against the Nazis, *Time* magazine repeatedly commended the country that fought against them.

Overall, there were some important distinctions in the way that the three different publications reported on the U.S.S.R. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* was more suspicious of Russia and communism than the *New York Times* was, whereas *Time* magazine clearly praised it the most heavily. This analysis shows that a variety of viewpoints about the Soviet Union existed among the American press during the first year of the United States' involvement in the war.

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<sup>41</sup> Diamond, *Behind the Times*, 289-290.

<sup>42</sup> Angeletti and Oliva, *Illustrated History*, 85.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

Even though all of the publications were supportive of the war effort, some of them remained more skeptical of the Soviet Union than others. It is important to understand the media's portrayal of Russia at this time because newspapers and magazines had a profound impact on the American people. Examining the role of the media helps explain how the country as a whole perceived these issues. From the study of these three publications, it is evident that the United States was not uniform in its opinion of the U.S.S.R. Instead, the media displayed diverse views about the Soviet Union's new role as an ally of the United States.

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