

Soviet Historiography: The Release of the Soviet Archives and the Effect on the Totalitarian
Paradigm Concerning the Stalinist Regime

To what extent did the release of the Soviet Archives in the 1990s confirm the totalitarian
paradigm concerning the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union?

History

Word Count: 3919

Table of Contents:

Introduction	3
Famine of 1931-3	4
The Great Purges	8
Stalin's Ideology	12
Conclusion	16

Introduction

The academic study of the Stalin period began in the 1950s and quickly led to a shared paradigm of Soviet history as a totalitarian system.¹ The totalitarian paradigm viewed the Soviet system as monolithic, strictly hierarchical, and lacking any sphere of autonomous social and political activity.² Like all scientific paradigms, this view of the Stalinist system held capable explanatory power and encompassed counter examples for its time. Eventually, however, challenges to the totalitarian paradigm arose as historians began to investigate the Stalin era from the lens of society and politics rather than structural models of power.³ From this conflict arose two camps of Soviet historians in the 1970s: the traditional Sovietologists (sometimes called Cold Warriors) who adhered to the totalitarian model versus the revisionists who challenged it.⁴ Debates between these two historical schools over aspects of Soviet history such as victims of Stalinist terror were typically characterized by estimates with wide disparities in the millions.⁵ Lacking access to solid archival evidence (closed to historians by the Soviets), both sides claimed that should they become available, the empirical data would support their projections.⁶ By 1991, both sides were finally able to put their claims to the test. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened up long-closed Soviet Archives: an abundance of material in the state and military archives were declassified, the Communist Party's archives were opened to researchers, and the archives of the various Soviet provinces opened up as well.⁷ Historians of the Soviet

¹ J. Arch Getty and Robert T. Manning, eds. *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ Sarah Davies and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

⁵ J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn, and Viktor N. Zemskov. "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence." *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 4 (1993): 1017. Accessed November 2, 2020. doi:10.2307/2166597.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1018.

⁷ Sarah Davies and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

Union were inundated with the flood of new sources and data available, finally able to test their projections against empirical evidence.

For the purpose of this investigation into the release of the Soviet Archives and its effect on the totalitarian paradigm in Soviet studies surrounding Joseph Stalin, the specific topics that will be discussed are the Soviet famine of 1931-3, the Great Purges of 1936-9, and Stalin's ideological influence throughout his political career. The newly released information from the Soviet Archives challenged many previous assumptions held by the totalitarian paradigm surrounding these issues. This paper establishes the position that the release of the Soviet Archives in the 1990s rejects the totalitarian paradigm concerning the Stalinist regime in Soviet Russia. It will be proven that the Soviet Archive data supports the revisionist view that the famine of 1931-3 did not occur because of intentional design, that the Great Purges were characterized by general chaos rather than hierarchical commandism, and that Joseph Stalin was a genuine adherent to Marxist ideology rather than cynically using it as a tool of totalitarian manipulation.

Famine of 1931-3

In 1929, the Soviet Union began its first Five Year Plan, which aimed to lay down the basis of modern Soviet industry.⁸ In order to ensure the cities were fed and industrialization proceeded, the supply of market wheat had to be controlled by the state.⁹ As a result, the Soviets underwent a process of forcible collectivization of the countryside from 1929-1933, culminating in a famine that resulted in millions of deaths. Prior to the release of the Soviet Archives, this famine was typically characterized by traditional Sovietologists as artificial or man-made.¹⁰ The

⁸ Ludo Martens. *Another View of Stalin (Proles of the Round Table, 2019), 47.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰ Mark Tauger. "Natural Disaster and Human Actions in the Soviet Famine of 1931–1933" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* [Online], Number 1506 (1 January 2001), 1.

intentionalist interpretation of the famine adheres to the totalitarian paradigm and argues that the Stalinist regime intentionally imposed the famine to punish the aspirations of Ukrainians and Ukrainian nationalists.¹¹ The release of the Soviet Archives, however, cast doubt on the intentionalist interpretation.

A critical insight from the release of the Soviet Archives was the vast extent of the famine, beyond that of Ukraine. From the archival data, it has been found that although the famine was devastating on Ukraine, deaths were also massive in the North Caucasus and Lower Volga regions.¹² Data from the Central State Archive of the National Economy of the USSR (TsGANKh) showed that the mortality rate in one Ukrainian *oblast* (the Soviet term for administrative divisions), Kiev, went from 16.2 per thousand in 1931 to 96.9 per thousand in 1933.¹³ This pattern of a dramatic increase in mortality rate in Ukraine was seen in other Ukrainian oblasts, with increases in mortality from 1932 to 1933 ranging from +41.4% in the Donetsk *oblast* to the +281.3% in the Kharkov *oblast*.¹⁴ However, Ukraine was not alone in experiencing large mortality increases. The lower Volga region experienced a death rate increase from 18.6 per thousand in 1930 to 59.4 per thousand in 1933.¹⁵ The North Caucasus similarly experienced a dramatic increase in mortality rate from 20.8 deaths per thousand in 1930 to 55.0 death per thousand in 1933.¹⁶ There are limitations to data from the TsGANKh, which excludes some regions of the USSR such as Kazakhstan.¹⁷ Later work by Kazakh historians Abylkkohozin, Kozybaev, and Tatinov, however, found that the famine was even more

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1

¹² J. Arch Getty, and Robert T. Manning, eds. *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*. (Cambridge University Press, 1993). 265.

¹³ S. G. Wheatcroft. "More Light on the Scale of Repression and Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union in the 1930s." *Soviet Studies* 42, no. 2 (1990): 361.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 360.

devastating in Kazakhstan, asserting that 1,750,000 Kazakhs perished between 1931-3, 42% of the entire Kazakh population.¹⁸ The documented large mortality increases throughout the various oblasti and regions of the USSR beyond the Ukrainian region rejects the assertion that the famine was intentionally targeted against Ukraine. The exact reasoning among historians concerning the cause of the 1931-3 famine, however, is still hotly contested following the release of the Soviet Archives.

Some historians, such as Mark Tauger, assert that the famine was mostly driven by poor weather conditions. According to sparse available weather data, many regions of the Soviet Union were struck with a drought in the summer of 1931.¹⁹ A Soviet study on droughts released in the Khrushchev era found that in the central and lower Volga, portions of Bashkiria, the don Basin, Ukraine, and the North Caucasus experienced rainfall 10% to 48% below normal in the winter of 1930-1 and 10% to 55% below normal in the spring of 1931.²⁰ Reports by the Canadian agricultural specialist Andrew Cairns also displays the dramatic effects of the drought on agriculture in the Soviet Union; 38 of 124 districts in the krai of Western Siberia had total crop failures in 1931.²¹ Other weather conditions affected the poor harvest and resulting famine, with a winterkill in Ukraine destroying at least 12% of fall-sown crops.²² There was also an extreme amount of rain in 1932 (an overall humid year) which resulted in damaged crops and reduced yields in the Volga, North Caucasus, and Ukraine.²³

¹⁸ J. Arch Getty, and Robert T. Manning, eds. *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*. (Cambridge University Press, 1993). 265.

¹⁹ Mark Tauger. "Natural Disaster and Human Actions in the Soviet Famine of 1931–1933" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* [Online], Number 1506 (1 January 2001), 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

In contrast to Tauger's meteorological approach to the 1931-32 famine, historians Davies and Wheatcroft emphasize mistakes in Soviet policy as causing the famine.²⁴ Davies and Wheatcroft argue that the Soviet policy of rapid industrialization was the principal cause of the famine, with production and investment plans being "unfeasibly high".²⁵ They also point out that Soviet policy makers had an overoptimistic assumption of a record harvest in 1931 because of the growth of agricultural machinery, which led to a slow response when it became increasingly clear a famine was occurring.²⁶ Although Soviet policymakers eventually lowered central grain collection targets and legalized collective farm markets in response to the famine, these changes were insufficient to prevent mass starvation.²⁷

A source that deserves an evaluation is S. G. Wheatcroft's article, *More Light on the Scale of Repression and Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union in the 1930s*, was cited on the mortality rates of various regions of the USSR in the years 1930-3. A value of the origin of the article is that Wheatcroft is a professor at the University of Melbourne with a research interest in the Soviet Union, making him an expert on the subject. A limitation of the origin is that the article was written in 1990, long before a bulk of the sources within the Soviet Archives were released, making it incomplete. A value of the purpose is that Wheatcroft seeks to evaluate the new evidence released by the Soviets to come to new conclusions, making his analysis more comprehensive than others of his time. A limitation of the purpose is that he is writing in the context of a debate between himself and historian Robert Conquest, which affects his presentation of materials. A value of the content is that Wheatcroft includes many tables displaying the new data provided by new archival evidence. A limitation of the content is that the

²⁴ R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft. "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33: A Reply to Ellman." *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006): 626. Accessed January 29, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451229>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 626.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 627.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 627.

data from the archives has slight inconsistencies and sometimes excludes certain aspects (i.e. Kazakhstan mortality rates). Despite this limitation, Wheatcroft maintains that “Although there is some slight inconsistencies between parts of these data, the overall pattern is clear”.²⁸

Regardless of the approach taken by specific historians (whether one emphasizes weather or Soviet policy errors), the consensus of historians following the release of the Soviet Archives rejects the intentionalist interpretation of the famine of 1931-3. The data from the archives reveals that many places other than Ukraine, including Kazakhstan, the North Caucasus, and the Volga region were all devastated by the famine.²⁹ The large extent of the famine, therefore, rejects the idea that Ukraine was specifically targeted by the Soviet government. The conservative historian and leading expert on Stalin, Stephen Kotkin, summarizes his view on the famine, “There is no question of Stalin’s responsibility for the famine. His policies caused the famine...However there is no documentation that he intended to starve Ukraine or that he intended to starve the peasants. On the contrary, the documents that we do have on the famine show him reluctantly, very grudgingly, belatedly, releasing emergency food aid”.³⁰ The release of Soviet archival material rejects the totalitarian paradigm’s intentionalist interpretation of the famine of 1931-33, but the exact reasoning and causes of the famine remain contested.

The Great Purges

The Great Purges was an eruption of political repression in the Soviet Union that is often thought to have begun in 1934 with the assassination of Politburo member Sergei Kirov.³¹ The

²⁸ S. G. Wheatcroft. "More Light on the Scale of Repression and Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union in the 1930s." *Soviet Studies* 42, no. 2 (1990): 357.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 361.

³⁰ Richard Aldous and Stephen Kotkin, "Stephen Kotkin on Stalin" *The American Interest* (podcast), November 7, 2017, accessed January 29, 2021, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/podcast/episode-184-stephen-kotkin-stalin/>.

³¹ J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn, and Viktor N. Zemskov. "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence." *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 4 (1993): 1018. Accessed November 2, 2020. doi:10.2307/2166597.

repression first struck former political dissidents in 1935-1936 and reached its peak in 1937-1938.³² This repression targeted members of the Communist Party, military high command, and the state bureaucracy.³³ The view of traditional Sovietologists on the Great Purges reflects the totalitarian paradigm: it was a bloody, top-down organized affair resulting in tens of millions of victims in the penal system.³⁴ Examples of traditional Sovietologists and their estimates surrounding victims of repression of 1937-1938 total arrests include Dmitirii Volkogonov's 3.5-4.5 million, Robert Conquest's 7-8 million, Anton Antonov-Ovseenko's 18.8 million, and Ol'ga Shatunovskaia's 19.8 million.³⁵ However, the newly available archival evidence shows the repression took place on a much different scale. A 1953 statistical report on cases initiated by the NKVD (Soviet secret police) found that 1,575,259 people were arrested in the period of 1937-38.³⁶ Even when accounting for the fact this number does not comprise the total number arrested (because many sentences were non-custodial and the Soviet government was more likely to detain suspects during the height of the Purges), the historians examining the archival evidence state that the highest estimate for arrests in 1937-1938 should be 2.5 million.³⁷

This naturally leads to questions concerning the value and limitations of the studies examining the Soviet Archives and the Soviet Archives themselves. A value of the origin of the study *Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence* is that the authors, J. Arch Getty, Gabor T. Ritterspoon, and Viktor N. Zemskov, are historians of Soviet studies who are deeply embedded within the historical debate and have a professional framework of interpreting the wealth of data from the archives. A

³² Ibid., 1017.

³³ Ibid., 1018.

³⁴ Ludo Martens. Another View of Stalin (*Proles of the Round Table*, 2019), 147.

³⁵ J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn, and Viktor N. Zemskov. "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence." *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 4 (1993): 1022. Accessed November 2, 2020. doi:10.2307/2166597.

³⁶ Ibid., 1022.

³⁷ Ibid., 1023.

limitation of the origin is that the authors themselves adhere to the revisionist side of the Soviet debate, influencing their interpretation of data to favor their side. A value of the purpose is that the authors are deliberately studying the Soviet Archives on the Great Purges and in order to contrast its empirical evidence with the previous assumptions by Sovietologists. A limitation of the purpose is that the study is one of the first to explore the Soviet Archives and therefore will require further research to elucidate. A value of the content is that the authors utilize empirical data released from the formerly closed sections of the Central State Archives of the October Revolution of the USSR (later reorganized into the State Archive of the Russian Federation), tapping into sources that previous historians were unable to access.³⁸ A limitation of the content is that the authors had to form their overall estimates of number of victims from fragmentary and dispersed record keeping and that the records were routinely tampered with by camp commandants.³⁹ The authors argue the tampering would either inflate or deflate the data; data may have been inflated to receive higher budgetary allocations or deflated in order to secure easily obtainable production targets.⁴⁰ However, despite these limitations, the authors still maintain that “Although the above-mentioned circumstances cannot guarantee exactitude, there are good reasons for assuming the data are reliable on the population of strict regime camps, on orders of magnitude, and on the general orientation of penal policy”.⁴¹

Besides the general scale of the arrests, the information from the Soviet Archives challenged previous assumptions about the Great Purges. With demographic data available for the Soviet penal populations, the data reveals that most of the victims of the penal system were arrested for non-political related crimes.⁴² It also revealed that in the 1939 camp populations,

³⁸ Ibid., 1018.

³⁹ Ibid., 1045-46.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1046.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1047.

⁴² Ibid., 1030.

Russians, Belorussians, Turkmen, Germans, and Poles were overrepresented in penal populations while Ukrainians, Jews, and Central Asians were underrepresented, likely indicating that the Great Purges targeted Party elites over a specific ethnic group.⁴³ The authors conclude that there was a general chaos during the Purges, with the central government often underestimating the scale of repression and regional governments often exceeding the central government's directives.⁴⁴

The findings from the Soviet Archives challenge the previous assumptions of traditional Sovietologists concerning the nature of the Great Purges, particularly contradicting the totalitarian paradigm. Rather than the Great Purges being characterized by top-down hierarchical repression, it was generally undertaken with chaotic regional repression often exceeding the central government's directives.⁴⁵ In terms of numbers of victims, the authors conclude that "The long-awaited archival evidence on repression in the period of the Great Purges shows that levels of arrests, political prisoners, executions, and general camp populations tend to confirm the orders of magnitude indicated by those labeled as 'revisionists' and mocked by those proposing higher estimates".⁴⁶ Despite the findings of the Soviet Archives in relation to the Great Purge being released and found in favor of revisionists, the debate between the two sides still remains, albeit less intensely. This is because while the archives revealed the number of convicts in the GULAG was lower than the traditional Sovietologist estimated, they also revealed that the number of persons executed or exiled during the Great Purges was higher than the revisionists estimated.⁴⁷ As a result, both try to claim that their side "won" the age-old debate in Soviet studies.

⁴³ Ibid., 1027-28.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1043.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1043.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1043.

⁴⁷ Sarah Davies and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

Although both sides of the Soviet studies debate claim that the archives vindicate their side of the argument, the wealth of evidence from the Soviet Archives supports the revisionist challenge to the totalitarian paradigm of Soviet studies. Rather than being a carefully executed, top-down movement of political repression (according to the totalitarian paradigm), the archives have generally revealed an image of chaos between the central and regional governments, regional governments often exceeding central directives, and the number of non-political detainees often exceeding political detainees within the penal system. Although there may be doubts about the specific numbers in the archives, they indeed reveal that the general scope of the Great Purges is more similar to the estimates of the revisionists rather than the traditional Sovietologists. As a result, in relation to the 1936-1939 Great Purges, the release of the Soviet Archive data supports the rejection of the totalitarian paradigm established by traditional Sovietologists.

Stalin's Ideology

Prior to the release of the Soviet Archives, much of the work dedicated to Stalin's ideology took it for granted that he was a pragmatic politician solely interested in power and only superficially committed to Marxist ideology.⁴⁸ A prevailing model surrounding Stalin's political thought was championed by historians Richard Pipes and Robert Tucker: the model of continuity.⁴⁹ Pipes and Tucker emphasize that Stalinist ideology was far more influenced by Russian tradition as a patrimonial state than the imported German Marxist ideology.⁵⁰ In practice the model of continuity states Stalinism was simply a reversion (or continuation) of old models of Russian autocracy inspired by figures such as Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sarah Davies and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11-12.

⁴⁹ Erik van Ree. *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth Century Revolutionary Patriotism*. (Routledge, 2003), 9-10.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Supporters of this model point towards similarities between the Stalinist and Tsarist regimes: the presence of strong states, the organization along the lines of bureaucratic centralism, and the tendency of the state to achieve goals through mass mobilization.⁵² The challenge to the model of continuity was the model of discontinuity, championed by historians Martin Malia and Stephen Kotkin.⁵³ The model of discontinuity states that despite there being some similarities between the Tsarist and Stalinist regime, the differences are so substantial that they need to be classified as separate systems.⁵⁴ Supporters of this model point towards the Soviet state's destruction of private property, complete state ownership of industry, and collectivization of agriculture.⁵⁵

The availability of the archival sources afforded access to resources on this debate over Stalin's ideology and its influences. The totalitarian paradigm generally assumed that Stalin's Marxist ideology was only cynically utilized in order to legitimize his thirst for political power.⁵⁶ If one accepted this paradigm at face value, the expectation would be that Stalin would only use Marxist language publicly, but not privately. However the availability of Stalin's personal correspondences and top secret documents has revealed that rather than containing Stalin's ulterior motives, they are instead saturated with the same Marxist language, categories, and frames he would use in public.⁵⁷ Beyond Stalin's personal correspondences and archived secret documents, the availability of Stalin's personal library reveals his personal interests and whether or not he was truly influenced more by Russian tradition than German Marxist thought.

Stalin's personal library contained around 19,500 books by the time he died with 14,000 of them (mostly composed of reference books or literary works) being given to various libraries

⁵² Ibid., 10.

⁵³ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 10-11.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁶ Sarah Davies and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 272.

after his death.⁵⁸ The remaining 5,500 books are available at the former library of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and give an impression of Stalin's ideological influences.⁵⁹ Of these 5,500 books, 390 of them contain Stalin's handwritten notes with three-fourths of the 390 surrounding communist ideology and the rest concerning history, economics, and war.⁶⁰ Most of Stalin's annotated books were written by materialists, socialists, or Marxists with sixty-nine works by Lenin, twelve by Marx, eight by Trotsky, and so on.⁶¹ From the general population of the 5,500 books, nothing was written by Slavophiles, pan-Slavists, or Russian conservatives.⁶² The complete lack of any Russian traditionalist thought in Stalin's personal library challenges the notion that his ideology was mostly informed by Russian tradition. In fact, Stalin's handwritten notes in the margins reveal a grand admiration for Marx and Lenin.⁶³ His notes also show that he was well aware of ideological conflicts with his predecessors, revealing he critically engaged with the books he read. For example, in his 1935 copy of Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, he comments beside Lenin's quotation of Engels on the role of the state as an instrument of class oppression "No!" and "under capitalism".⁶⁴ In the same copy, his notes reveal a general distaste for Engels's contribution to Marxist thought on the state such as his comment, "Marx = better than Engels" on the margins.⁶⁵

The book cited frequently concerning Stalin's personal library, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth Century Revolutionary Patriotism* by Erik van Ree, deserves an evaluation of its values and limitations. A value of the origin is that Erik van Ree is a lecturer

⁵⁸ Erik van Ree. *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth Century Revolutionary Patriotism*. (Routledge, 2003), 259.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

at the Institute for East European Studies of the University of Amsterdam with his main field of interest being the history of the USSR. He spent years extensively researching Stalin and is an expert on the subject.⁶⁶ A limitation of the origin is that Erik van Ree's perspective, despite understanding the nuances of Stalin's political thought, is ultimately negative toward him, referring to Stalin as "above all a criminal and a mass murderer".⁶⁷ A value of the purpose of the book is that it was written as one of the first systematic studies of Stalin's political thought. However, this is also a limitation of the purpose because it is pioneering the field of Stalin's ideology and thus does not have the benefit of interacting with other studies on the same topic. A value of the content is that Erik van Ree uses the new documentation surrounding Stalin's private library with his handwritten notes. A limitation of the content is that Stalin's library does not reflect all of his ideological influences. His collection of books began in 1917, but his reading as a student at the Tbilisi seminary remains uncertain.⁶⁸

The availability of new archival materials such as Stalin's private correspondences and the documentation of his personal library reveals that Marxist theory was important to his ideology. Even in copies from 1950 and 1951, the old Stalin was marking passages on materialist philosophy and Marxist ideology.⁶⁹ The totalitarian model, which argued that Stalin only cynically used ideology for personal power, was rejected by the new archival material which revealed he used the same Marxist language in private as he did in public. In addition, the composition of his library rejects the continuity model of Stalin's ideology. While the continuity model upheld the idea that Stalinism was mostly a continuation of old Russian traditionalism, the release of his library revealed that he had no books written by Slavic nationalists or Russian

⁶⁶ Ibid., viii.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 258-259.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.

traditionalists and that a majority of his books were written by Marxists.⁷⁰ Although he outwardly spoke in positive terms surrounding Russian historical figures such as Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great, his appreciation was limited to the extent it fit to his Marxist framework.⁷¹ As a result, both the model of continuity and the totalitarian paradigm surrounding Stalin's political ideology are rejected by the release of new archival material.

Conclusion

The transformation which occurred within Soviet historiography due to new access to archival evidence reflects the dynamic way historians investigate the past and come to new conclusions; historical paradigms that had previously been sufficient to encompass evidence are replaced with more comprehensive interpretations. The release of the Soviet Archives following the collapse of Soviet Union led to a complete rethinking of the previously-established totalitarian paradigm. Revisionists who had challenged the totalitarian paradigm now had the support of previously unavailable empirical data, bolstering their argument against traditional Sovietologists. As more data became available, clearer pictures emerged of life in Stalinist Russia as well as of the man himself.

Archival data on mortality rates in the Soviet Union found that the famine of 1931-3 affected areas beyond Ukraine, rejecting the totalitarian paradigm's intentionalist interpretation that it was man-made to target Ukraine in particular. In terms of the Great Purge of 1936-9, the Soviet archival data also supports the lower-ended estimates by the revisionists and rejects the higher estimates by traditional Sovietologists. Finally, the release of Stalin's personal library, largely Marxist works with annotations, rejects the totalitarian paradigm's assumption that he only cynically adhered to Marxism. It also rejects the notion that he was mostly influenced by

⁷⁰ Ibid., 260.

⁷¹ Ibid., 16-17.

Russian traditionalism; none of his books were written by Slavic nationalists or Russian traditionalists. The overwhelming body of evidence in the newly-released Soviet archival material, ranging from Stalin's personal library to previously closed state and provincial archives, has completely rejected the previously dominant totalitarian paradigm within Sovietology surrounding the Stalinist regime in Soviet Russia.

Bibliography

- Aldou, Richard, host. "Stephen Kotkin on Stalin." *The American Interest* (podcast), November 7, 2017, accessed January 29, 2021, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/podcast/episode-184-stephen-kotkin-stalin/>.
- Davies, Sarah, and James Harris, eds. *Stalin: A New History*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Davies, R. W., and Stephen G. Wheatcroft. "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33: A Reply to Ellman." *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006): 625-33. Accessed January 29, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451229>.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, ed. *Stalinism: New Directions*. Taylor & Francis, 2000.
- Getty, J. Arch, Gábor T. Rittersporn, and Viktor N. Zemskov. "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence." *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 4 (1993): 1017-049. Accessed November 2, 2020. doi:10.2307/2166597.
- Getty, J. Arch, and Robert T. Manning, eds. *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*. Proles of the Round Table, 2019.
- Tauger, Mark. "Natural Disaster and Human Actions in the Soviet Famine of 1931–1933" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* [Online], Number 1506 (1 January 2001)
- Ree, Erik van. *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth Century Revolutionary Patriotism*. Routledge, 2003.
- Wheatcroft, S. G. "More Light on the Scale of Repression and Excess Mortality in the Soviet

Union in the 1930s." *Soviet Studies* 42, no. 2 (1990): 355-67. Accessed January 29, 2021.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/152086>.