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Recommended Citation

Parsons, Brandon, "Terror in Soviet Industry: Tensions between Managers, Workers, and the Secret Police, 1930s" (2021). *Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings*. 301.
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Terror in Soviet Industry: Tensions Between Managers, Workers, and the Secret Police, 1930s

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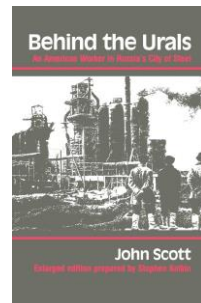
Introduction

In Soviet Russia, a wave of terror—arrests, investigations, and purges against suspected Communist threats, occurred under Joseph Stalin throughout the 1930s. Within industrialization, the managers were targeted for lack of production or inability to manage their workers. The Soviet secret police arrested, investigated, fired, and imprisoned the managers based on these accusations.

John Scott: Author of *Behind the Urals*, American Welder



John Scott's
Memoir,
published in
1942.



The Source

John Scott was an American welder in the prominent Soviet industrial city, Magnitogorsk, from 1931-1942. His memoir *Behind the Urals* (1942) details his work and observations of daily life in Stalin's Soviet Russia. Examining his chapter, "Purges and Administration" Scott describes how terror occurred, why managers were targeted, and how it affected industry. The context of this time period is the Soviet Union advancing quickly with industrialization through Stalin's leadership.

"All during the purge the people of the Soviet Union were told every day, in newspapers, over the radio, and in meetings, to cooperate with the [Secret police] and report any suspicious fact immediately."

This source provides relevant information from an industrial worker who witnessed terror firsthand and interprets the magnitude of its impact on industrial development and its employees. Although Scott was never charged or interrogated, he had personal connections to victims of terror in the industry and gained a perspective of how investigations carried out, how production was impacted by arrests, and the outcomes of terror after it concluded.

Conclusions

The Soviet secret police led terror against industrial managers during the 1930s. This source provides information on how they specifically carried out an agenda with investigations and sentencing the victims. My work provides an analysis from industrial worker memoirs and Stalin's speeches and letters to gain insight on economic policy from Soviet leadership and incidents of terror and the perspective of the working class. The significance of this work is adding to the interpretation of an unfortunate decade against the Soviet population and assesses how the secret police primarily led terror to ensure the fulfillment of objectives with industrialization.

Literature Cited

Scott, John. *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942.