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ASSIGNMENT MOSCOW REPORTING ON RUSSIA FROM LENIN TO PUTIN, By Ayse Dietrich*, Published by I. B. Tauris, Bloomsbury Publishing, Written by James Rodgers, Year of Publishing: 2020. Subject Area: Memoir, Book Type: Journalism. Total Number of Pages: 237. ISBN: 978-0-7556-0115-8, hardback, \$27.00.

Assignment Moscow Reporting on Russia from Lenin to Putin is a book written by a former correspondent who spent his time in Russia and brought out the facts of a closed society, in which the Kremlin controls the sources of information. Newspapers, radio and television have been enlisted to serve the state, and paper supplies were strictly guarded. Local journalists who knew the truth couldn't publish it, but foreign journalists did. Rodgers believed that British and American reports on Russia had a disproportionate influence on the formation of audiences' views of the country.

The book is comprised of an Introduction and ten chapters. In the Introduction, the author states that his book is a reflection on his own work as a journalist. In the first chapters, Rodgers includes newspaper reports from the time; correspondents' memoirs, and unpublished letters and memoranda exchanged between correspondents, editors and others. In the later chapters, the author uses the same sources listed as well as interviews with former Moscow correspondents.

Chapter 1 deals with the coverage of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and highlights the great variation in how it was regarded by the reporters and their editors who were eyewitnesses to, and chroniclers of, events that would shape the remainder of the 20th century. In chapter 2 the author shows how many western journalists found themselves taking sides in the internal fighting that followed the revolution. Despite reporting the same events, many of these correspondents interpreted them differently, and, as a result, came to extremely divergent conclusions regarding them.

Chapters 3 through 5 cover the Stalin years, with chapter 3 examining the controversial lack of western journalistic coverage of the extreme famine in Russia which accompanied Stalin's agricultural reforms. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the topic of the coverage of the show trials of Stalin's purported "enemies". It demonstrates that one of their primary purposes was to create a strong impression both domestically, and internationally via western press coverage. The following chapter,

chapter 5, discusses the coverage of the Second World War from Russia, a rare period of cooperation between the communists and the capitalists to defeat their common enemy, Nazi Germany. In this chapter the author points out the fact that the Russians almost always kept western journalists away from the fighting may have negatively affected western reporting of the Soviets' role in defeating the Nazis. While many in the west underestimate the Soviet contribution to the Allied victory in Europe, in Russia this victory is regarded as being almost sacred.

Chapter 6 moves on to the post-war period when relations between Russia and the West deteriorated rapidly. As relations soured, the increasing restrictions imposed by the Soviets on western journalists during the Cold War resulted in a reduction in the number of western journalists in Russia. Some news services even questioned the value of maintaining journalists in a country that made reporting so difficult. The next two chapters the tumultuous years of the transition from communism to Russia under Putin through 2008. In addition to chronocling the coverage of the events of these years by the western press, it also follows the collapse of the euphoria that the end of communism had created.

Chapter 9 is dedicated to the reporting on the major events of Putin's first two terms through the Russian war in Georgia in 2008. The author discusses the techniques of media manipulation first used during this conflict, and argues that more sophisticated variants of them are currently in use. The final chapter, chapter 10, is a reflection on the experiences of Western journalists reporting from Russia today, discussing which aspects of reporting on Russia are new and which ones have been shared by journalists since the Russian Revolution.

In sum, Rodgers's memoir is based on newspaper reports from the time and interviews with former Moscow reporters. The author has made a great contribution to clarify a number of important aspects of Russian history, and his work would be of interest to historians, readers interested in understanding the practice of journalism and journalism students.

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