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Soldiers at War:

German Propaganda and Soviet Army Morale During the Battle of Leningrad, 1941–44

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> Our government has made more than a few errors, we experienced at moments a desperate situation in 1941–42, when our army was retreating because there was no other way out. A different people might have said to the government: "You have failed to justify our expectations. Go away. We shall install another government which will conclude peace with Germany." The Russian people, however, did not take this path.
>
> —*Stalin,* May 24, 1945

These words, spoken by Stalin at a victory celebration in the Kremlin, may be true, but the main question—why the Russian people "did not take this path"—remains to be answered. Indeed, what was behind this choice: Patriotism? Security agents ready to shoot down their own troops if they turned and retreated? German policy which made Russians fight against the Wehrmacht? Was the Soviet regime truly close to political collapse in 1941? Why did the great losses in the beginning of war and the severe situation during the siege of Leningrad not result in revolt?

Many questions about the Second World War remain to be answered. "The history of the Second World War has not yet been written. Today, though fifty years have elapsed since it ended, the passions it aroused still run too high, the wounds it inflicted still cut too deep, and the unresolved problems it left still bulk too large for any one historian to strike an objective balance," noted John Keegan.[1] Moreover, the influence of official Soviet ideology on the writing of history has kept quite a few topics off limits until recently. Many gaps remain in the history of the war, and even more views and interpretations have gone unstated.

For Russians the "Great Victory" over Germany has been a major source of national pride for two generations. Soviet historians insisted that their success derived from the superiority of the Soviet "socialist" system, that its method of mobilizing resources for war and the morale of its soldiers were superior to its "capitalist" counterparts. Until recently it was impossible to question the "political moral unity" of the Soviet people during the war, which was officially regarded as one of the "main resources" of the victory.

On the other hand, some in the West argue that Germany "missed" its chance to defeat Communism with the help of the Russians themselves.[2] Although most people agree that German propaganda was carried out on a grand scale and that its content was far from "innocuous," its influence on Soviet citizens and soldiers has not received any serious attention. Similarly, although information on desertion and treason in the army is now available, there is no study of the morale of Soviet soldiers during the war. Nor have scholars examined either the influence of German propaganda or of Soviet counterpropaganda on the Soviet military.[3] Despite the fact that the siege of Leningrad was the longest military campaign of World War II, only a few significant studies of it have been published in the West.[4]

This paper is based on an array of formerly classified materials: documents of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, the records of the military tribunals, the archives of Communist Party organs, and NKVD reports. German documents—leaflets, newspapers, journals, and other types of propaganda aimed at the Soviet military—are also available, as are German Security reports on the situation in Leningrad and in the army during the siege. A comparative analysis of these sources, Soviet and German, is essential if one is to try to form an objective judgment of the blockade.

This essay draws upon these two groups of sources in an effort to provide answers to two sets of important questions:

1. What was the morale of the Soviet military on the Leningrad front during the battle for the city and particularly during the critical months of 1941? Was there massive disloyalty among the troops during the siege? Did Stalin's famous remark

to American Ambassador W. Averell Harriman that "in the Red Army it takes more courage to retreat than to advance" refer to the troops defending Leningrad?[5] What moods did the Soviet security service (the special NKVD units called *osobye otdely*) and other political organs regard as "negative"? What measures—repressive or ideological—did the Soviet government employ to keep up morale and neutralize German propaganda during the battle for Leningrad?

2. Did the Germans really miss opportunities to take the city in the fall of 1941? Why did they not manage to link anti-Soviet sentiments at the front and in the rear? And, more specifically, how effective was German propaganda among Soviet troops?

Before the German Invasion

Before the war, both sides paid considerable attention to various issues regarding psychological and ideological warfare. The Germans considered propaganda activities to be primarily a form of applied psychology. During the 1930s, they studied not only political and social tensions within Soviet society, but also their psychological aspects. In case of war, the main goals of German propaganda were to arouse people's instinct for self-preservation and to induce homesickness so as to weaken morale and military discipline within the Soviet military. To achieve those goals, German propaganda experts recommended integrating attractive socialist ideas and slogans into their propaganda. "It would be a big mistake to fight Marxism without using, to some extent, Marxist poisoning."[6] From 1936, German intelligence worked very hard to devise ways to weaken the USSR.[7]

The Nazis were particularly interested in the possibility of establishing a "fifth column" within the Soviet Union, regarding whole strata of Soviet society—peasants, workers, and Soviet Germans (Volksdeutsche)—as possible

supporters of the Wehrmacht. In 1941, they published for "internal use only" a paper on German colonies in the USSR[8] that contained data on the history of Germans in Russia, their location, and the percentage of Volksdeutsche in rural and industrial areas of the USSR, including the Leningrad region.

For several years before invading the USSR, the Germans collected material on the activities of Soviet leaders, the mass media, literature, and pop art, as well as on tensions and problems in the USSR, intending to use this information in its wartime propaganda. In spite of all this work, the Germans overestimated political and social tensions in the Soviet Union. So convinced were they that their victory over the USSR would be quick that, in their propaganda and intelligence activities against the Soviet Union, they made little use of the Russian émigré diaspora. According to Russkii Obshevoinskii Soiuz documents in the Bakhmetiev Archive in New York, thousands of "white" officers who lived all across Europe had been looking for any opportunity to fight against Stalin on the side of Germans.[9]

On the eve of the invasion of the Soviet Union, the German army had eleven propaganda companies (Propagandatruppen) staffed by 2,250 people of high quality.[10] Three companies were subordinated to Army group North, whose goal was to capture Leningrad. Other institutions also played an active role in the propaganda war. Einsatzgruppe A (Unit A) of the German Security Service (S. D.) monitored the situation in Leningrad and within the Soviet military on the basis of information from its agents, Soviet POWs, and refugees.[11] The S.D.'s reports were regarded very highly by the German military command. Upwards of three-quarters of the S.D.'s assessments of Leningrad were provided by this unit, which played a key role in evaluating the effectiveness of German propaganda. German military intelligence on the Leningrad front was represented by Unit 1c, which was primarily concerned with military planning rather than with researching the morale of Soviet soldiers. Despite some institutional tensions between the German military command, the S.D., the Abwehr, and the German Ministry of Propaganda over propaganda activities on the Eastern front, we do not have evidence of any conflict of interest within Army Group North.

According to Plan Barbarossa, the German blueprint for conquering USSR, propaganda warfare should concentrate on the following ideas: (1) Germany began a preventive war against the Soviets; (2) The Wehrmacht is invincible and German armaments are the best; (3) Soviet military and political leadership is not capable of fighting successfully against Germany; (4) Soviet soldiers should surrender, and Germany will take care of Soviet POWs.

The main thesis of German propaganda, however, was that Germany was not fighting against the peoples of the USSR, but rather against a "Jewish-Bolshevik" government that eagerly desired world revolution; German soldiers wanted to rescue the Soviet people from Stalin's tyranny.[12]

The Soviet military was very concerned about German propaganda activities even before the outbreak of World War II. From 1940 to 1941, the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army was able to collect the information it needed on the structure, aims, and principles of the German military propaganda campaign.

In 1940, an information service on foreign countries and foreign armies was set up within the 7th Department of the Main Political Directorate. Similar intelligence units were created in all military districts (including Leningrad) near the Soviet border. During the war, the general staff's military intelligence provided these organs with information on German propaganda activities.[13]

On the eve of the war with Germany, the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army possessed analytical surveys of the organization and methods of propaganda warfare as practiced by Great Britain, Germany, and Italy as well as Russian versions (supplemented with annotations and comments) of the basic theoretical works on psychological warfare.[14] Special attention also was paid to the content of anti-Soviet propaganda, especially that published in Germany, in the belief that, in case of war, this anti-Soviet and anti-Stalin agitation would be expanded. German journals published in 1940–41 contained a number of articles on Stalin and the purges of 1934–38. According to D. Volkogonov, Stalin was interested in such information and also read many Russian émigré journals as well as translations of other articles published abroad about him and his policies.[15] It was not fortuitous that

a special article was added to the Service Code of the Red Army requiring that commanding officers' assistants for political affairs and all other political workers "study the content and methods of enemy propaganda and take all necessary measures to organize counterpropaganda among the troops and the local population."[16]

In The Beginning of the War

During the first six months after the war began in June 1941, the Germans produced fifteen different types of leaflets and appeals addressed to the soldiers and commanders on the Leningrad front and the citizens of Leningrad. All the material predicted the swift conquest of Leningrad and stressed the futility of continuing to defend it.

Although the Germans employed the same propaganda principles on the Leningrad front as elsewhere, the blockade and the famine, together with the protracted military struggle, encouraged the intensive use of psychological methods and the secret service. During the siege, the Germans distributed hundreds of thousands of leaflets, newspapers, posters, brochures, photographs of Hitler, and so on. In the printed materiel and in radio programs, the Germans emphasized the torment of death by starvation and the inevitability of the complete destruction of the population of Leningrad. They tried to terrify the people with the threat of new kinds of weapons, spread false information about the situation at the front, discredited members of the government and the leadership of the army, and distorted international events. During the worst days of the blockade, the leaflets suggested that if the city surrendered, it would be turned into an open city.

But all these activities began only in the fall of 1941. On August 23, Einsatzgruppe A for the first time since the invasion mentioned the situation around Leningrad and the morale of the newly formed armies of people's militia.[17] Its first detailed report on the situation in Leningrad was dated October 17, 1941.[18] At this

time, the Germans began to set up an intelligence network in Leningrad. The principal sources of information were refugees and POWs. The work of special agents was very difficult because of NKVD activities. The S.D. stated that only those agents who had a "good Bolshevik legitimacy" could survive. Not surprisingly, the Germans made some mistakes in evaluating the situation in Leningrad and within the military units in and around the city.

On June 22, 1941, the Central Political Directorate of the Navy issued a decree setting forth its views on counterpropaganda for the initial stages of the war. The decree called upon political organs, Communists, and Komsomol members "to sharply increase Bolshevik vigilance, prevent the possible infiltration of spies, saboteurs, and wreckers, impede the enemy's attempts to conduct propaganda, and to struggle mercilessly against alarmism and cowardice." The head of the directorate ordered officials to make it impossible for Leningraders to listen to anti-Soviet radio programs[19] and to try to prevent the spread of demoralizing rumors. The fleet's political organs were advised to remain in close contact with the Third Section (the security department) of the navy in order to promote the efficient exchange of information. Security departments of the army and the fleet were subordinated to military commissars who were supposed to instruct them regarding counterespionage, treason, counterrevolution, desertion, and other morale problems.[20] The military units of the NKVD watched constantly for signs of opposition and discontent among the military. The NKVD had an extensive network of secret agent which penetrated each unit of the army and the fleet and read all of the soldiers' and sailors' correspondence.

In a decree dated June 23, the Central Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army also suggested that political organs "develop and actively carry out measures to combat enemy agitation, destroy enemy leaflets and other printed matter, and systematically explain to personnel current events and the situation at the front."[21]

On June 24, 1941, Regimental Commissar Shikin, the assistant to the head of the Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Leningrad Military District, ordered the heads of all political departments in the various military formations to improve

Red Army morale and to instill faith in the might of the Red Army and the power of Soviet weapons. Shikin noted that certain individuals perceived the German army to be invincible and that every effort must be made to disprove this.[22]

In the first few weeks of the war, Soviet propaganda organs tried to discredit the central theses of German propaganda. After Molotov refuted the German claim that the war was "preventive" and the objectives of the war of national liberation given in Stalin's speech of July 3, 1941, had been clarified, Soviet counterpropaganda began to focus upon the maleficent policies of Germany. In a directive dated July 11, 1941, Commissar Kuznetsov, the assistant head of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army Corps, noted that, while Nazi propaganda slandered Red Army commanders and soldiers and claimed that the Red Army treated the civilian population very cruelly, "political workers have a large quantity of facts at their disposal which testify to the opposite: to the brutality and abuse which the civilian population and captured Red Army soldiers have suffered at the hands of the Germans, who torture, murder, and execute helpless people by firing squad." Kuznestsov ordered "all political organs to report systematically all known facts concerning the enemy's brutality toward and abuse of the civilian population and captured Red Army soldiers, including the names of the places where the events took place and a detailed description of the events themselves."[23]

Thus, from the first days of the war, Soviet military and civilian officials made clear their intention to conduct an uncompromising struggle against Nazi propaganda and anything that abetted it.

German propaganda did not play an appreciable role in the early weeks of the war. Its main ideas simply did not appeal to the soldiers of the Red Army. A letter sent to the editor of *Na strazhe Rodiny* (To the Defense of the Motherland) by S. P. Kruzhilov, an army commander and a candidate for party membership, describes the attitude of the majority of soldiers and junior commanders at the time. He wrote that the troops were in good spirits, that they were all talking about how they wanted to defeat the ignoble and hated enemy, but that there was one issue which troubled them all and which he asked the editor of the newspaper to address:

"Each commander and soldier in the Red Army knows that we have enough strength to repel the enemy. We know from Comrade Stalin's speech that we must not only defeat the enemy but must completely destroy him. But I don't quite understand the policies of our government. Each of us senses that this question remains unanswered. I ask you . . . to explain this troubling issue that lurks in the hearts of many commanders and soldiers of the Red Army."[24] This excerpt reveals both complete faith in Stalin and a clearly defined attitude to the government which, with its unintelligible policies, was the cause of all military failures. This method of explaining failures and mistakes by reducing everything to treachery, wrecking, or the mismanagement of individuals, had been ground into the collective consciousness by the regrettable trials of the 1930s and became even more pronounced during the course of the war when Stalin blamed the defeats of the initial period on a series of generals.

The statistics of the military tribunal for the period between June 22 and July 5, 1941, show only six instances of anti-Soviet agitation among the troops who defended the approaches to Leningrad. Moreover, these units were composed primarily of soldiers from the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia which had been incorporated into the USSR after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.[25] Nevertheless, a July 16 directive of the State Defense Committee testifies to the increasingly repressive nature of official policies. Appearing two days prior to the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, it granted the military councils of the various armies and military corps the right to impose the death penalty in certain extreme cases on those convicted by military tribunals.[26]

By the middle of July 1941, the reaction of Red Army soldiers to German propaganda was no longer as entirely negative as it had been at the war's beginning. The propaganda "of the sword" and the success of the Wehrmacht increased interest in the enemy as a whole and in its leaflets in particular. The political report of the Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Northern Front noted on July 15 that a typical reaction to the leaflets, which were being dropped by planes in large numbers, was to refuse to take them. However, some commanders and political workers

gathered the soldiers together and read them the contents of the leaflets rather than simply collecting them and destroying them (for example, Gubaev and Agapov, commanders of companies of the 115th infantry division; Azatov, the assistant to the political leadership of the 43rd infantry division; and junior lieutenant Slobodchikov, from the 123rd infantry division).[27] On the day that his report was turned in, Podzhidaev, the head of the Directorate of Political Propaganda for the Northern Front, sent an order to the heads of the political propaganda departments of the armies, corps, and divisions stating that to neglect counterpropaganda work was inadmissible and demanding that they organize the collection and destruction of enemy leaflets. He recommended selecting Communists from each subdivision to carry out this work.[28]

War in the Suburbs

In mid-August 1941, the situation on the Leningrad front had worsened noticeably, most especially on the southern approaches to the city. By August 8, the Wehrmacht had already begun to attack in the direction of the city of Krasnogvardsk, and by August 10 in the direction of Luga-Leningrad and Novgorod-Chudovsk. On August 16, German troops seized Kingesepp. This attack understandably affected the political mood and morale of the troops defending the region. The head of the Political Directorate of the Northern Front noted in an order dated August 18 that the Political Directorate had information proving that servicemen were including counterrevolutionary leaflets distributed by the Fascists in letters to their friends and relatives. The letters also contained items such as photographs of German soldiers and Nazi badges. Political organs were asked to explain to all servicemen that "such actions were impermissible and criminal because they brought harm to the country." Because some soldiers' letters to their relatives showed signs of depression and exaggerated the enemy's technical and numerical superiority and the number of Red

Army casualties, political organs were also assigned the task of explaining "what servicemen could write to relatives about and what they could not." It was recommended that the entire political apparatus work to prevent communications between the front lines and the rest of the country, study the mood of the soldiers, and take control of the activities and staffing of postal stations on the front.[29]

One sign of the worsening political mood and morale of the troops at the front was the continuous increase in the most dangerous forms of military crimes. While the military tribunal at the front had convicted 300 people from June 22 to July 15, from August 10 to August 24 it convicted 876. Moreover, 78 of these servicemen were convicted of various "counterrevolutionary" crimes: 147 of desertion, 69 of flight from the field of battle, and 128 of self-mutilation.[30] In other words, the military tribunal condemned them for the very actions that Fascist propaganda was encouraging.

In an August 30 political report, the Political Directorate of the Northwestern Front noted a dangerous rise in instances of self-mutilation. The military prosecutor's office brought charges against 24 people for such activities between August 15 and 20, and against 56 individuals between August 20 and 25. It was noted also that these statistics were far from complete. In many hospital subunits, about 50 percent of the wounded were suspected of self-mutilation. For instance, in Evacuation Hospital No. 61, out of a total of 1,000 wounded there were the following suspicious injuries: in the left forearm, 147; in the left hand, 313; in the right hand, 75. Many showed signs of having shot themselves.[31]

The Administration of the Commandant for the City of Leningrad also noted that about 4,300 individuals had been detained for leaving the front and making their way to the city between August 16 and 22. Those detained had primarily fled from the southern sections of the front; 1,412 of them turned out to be soldiers and commanders of the people's militia (*narodnoe opolchenie*). The guards monitoring the approaches to Leningrad seized the deserters entering the city not only singly but in groups.[32]

According to a report of the Military Censorship office (a subunit of the NKVD), the retreat of the Red Army caused increasing discontent among many soldiers. For the period from August 10 to August 30, 1941, Military Censorship detained 18,813 letters (1.6 percent of the total correspondence) that contained what the Soviet secret police deemed "sharply negative views" connected with failures of the Red Army. For instance, soldiers complained about the incompetence and cowardice of their commanders, stressed German superiority in quality and quantity of weapons (especially tanks and airplanes) as well as the lack of any military training of new units coming to the front, each of which resulted in big losses and inefficient counterattacks.[33]

The Political Directorate of the front attributed the growth of these "negative" phenomena among the troops to a loss of vigilance and the failure to check the credentials of personnel within the military units and subunits themselves.[34] A critical analysis of political propaganda work was never carried out. The Political Directorate expected the political organs to fulfill the functions typical of security organs. According to the leader of the Leningrad party organization and Stalin's brother-in-arms, A. Zhdanov, the secret police were to play the key role in the defense of the city. Notes in his diary from late August and early September 1941 highlighted his three main concerns: illegal work in Leningrad in case of German capture of the city; the necessity for improved collaboration with the chief of the Leningrad's NKVD, P. Kubatkin; keeping NKVD troops in the city of Leningrad.[35]

On September 4, 1941, a Red Army soldier, L. Ostrovsky, sent a letter to the editorial offices of *Na strazhe Rodiny* asking for an explanation of certain issues that troubled soldiers arriving from the front since, as he confessed, "we know little about politics." He raised questions about the retreat of Soviet airpower from the front, the Japanese threat to the USSR, and poor military preparation among troops in the rear. The letter also criticized Soviet foreign policy in the prewar period ("The Fascists are beating us with our own bread"). Ostrovsky saw treason in the high command, which "our Informational Bureau [the main governmental institution responsible for providing the people of the USSR and abroad with information during

the war] is hiding from the people," as another reason for the defeats. He also expressed lack of faith in the discipline at the rear. He noted that "in Leningrad and Moscow, there are all the preconditions necessary for the creation of a fifth column" and that "Leningrad will be cut off and surrendered because there are people among our Communist Party membership who are prepared to betray us."[36] Obviously the sheer number of questions and their character were the result of independent attempts to make sense of what was happening, attempts resulting from the passivity of the political apparatus.

In this way, the serious failings in the Soviet counterpropaganda work at the front became more and more self-evident. Radical changes in its organization were required. It is no coincidence that the organs of repression, which played a key role in insuring the steadfastness of the troops, also took the initiative in raising the question of improving ideological work as a whole.

The officers of the security department (*osobii otdel*) of the 23rd Army sent such a set of proposals to the commander of the Leningrad front in early September. These proposals were an attempt to answer the question "What is to be done?" by the military command to stem the troops' declining morale. Lotoshev and Nikolaev, the letter's authors, pointed out that, in part, agitational work among the army and the civilian population was boring and monotonous, and that, despite the large apparatus and the significant number of meetings held, the work itself remained defensive in nature. They emphasized that the Soviet people, and the soldiers at the front and in the rear, deserved to be spoken to directly and openly; they were driven to spreading rumors and gossip—to provocation—by the failure of the political apparatus to explain important issues that troubled them all. Lotoshev and Nikolaev also noted that it was appropriate to mercilessly and cruelly punish those who fought badly only after holding an open dialogue about the causes of the current situation. But what could the political workers at that time tell the servicemen? This question remained unanswered. When Tyurkin, the head of the Political Directorate of the front, sent a memo to A. Zhdanov, he did not even bring up the need to better inform personnel.[37] As for A. Zhdanov, he still relied mostly on secret police.

During the Blockade

During the first half of September 1941, the situation at the front worsened to such an extent that the front's Military Council made emergency plans in case the enemy broke through the lines and entered the city.[38]

After the Germans broke through to the Finnish Gulf between Strelna and Uritsk on September 16, seizing Slutsk (Pavlovsk) and entering the center of the city of Pushkin, the front's War Council issued Orders 42 and 55, which demanded that commanders, political personnel, and the troops themselves steadfastly defend the positions they were then occupying and that they not abandon them without written orders from the Military Council of the front or the army.[39]

The noticeably worsening political mood and morale of the troops, particularly in the 42nd Army, was one reason for issuing such orders. The political reports filed by the Political Directorate of the front between September 15 and 18 specifically mentioned this problem. The last of these reports noted that the number of deserters streaming into Leningrad had increased because of a series of recent defeats. Between September 13 and 15, about 1,480 people were detained for suspected desertion in Leningrad; on the sixteenth and during the first half of the seventeenth, 2,086 servicemen were detained. As a result, the Military Council issued order No. 0035, which required all servicemen to register at the commandant's office. Failure to comply with this order was viewed as desertion, and any civilians helping to conceal such persons were to be turned over to the military tribunal.[40]

On September 19, the Military Council of the front issued order No. 0040 which called upon commanders of military units and the heads of the security departments to shoot on sight anyone fleeing from the field of battle for positions to the rear.[41] The Germans knew about this order from Soviet POWs and tried to incorporate it into their leaflets. The same day, the head of the Central Political Directorate of the Navy issued his own directive demanding strict compliance with directive No. 090 from Stalin and order No. 270 from the People's Commissariat of

Defense in connection with evidence of instances of treason. He stated that commissars fulfilling directive No. 090 and promoting "general vigilance" would be rapidly promoted to new positions and moved through the ranks. He ordered subordinates to activate oral and written propaganda campaigns concerning political vigilance and the inadmissibility of surrendering to the enemy.[42] This directive was, in fact, an answer to the above-mentioned proposals of Lotoshev and Nikolaev.

Ten days later, in an effort to stem an increase in treasonous activities, the head of the Political Directorate of the Baltic Fleet called upon his staff to explain to all naval personnel that "family members of those who went over to the side of the Germans and surrendered to the Germans would be immediately executed as family members of traitors of the Motherland."[43]

Thus, in their attempts to bolster the "internal front," political organs both in Moscow and in Leningrad relied mostly on repressive and administrative methods.

According to the Military Censorship reports, the morale of the troops defending Leningrad was patriotic. But 7,007 letters (3.8 percent of all correspondence) sent by soldiers of the 8th Army contained so-called negative sentiments. For instance, the lack of properly trained reserves and awareness of German encirclement were mentioned in about 4,200 letters. In 693 letters, soldiers confessed that they did not have enough cartridges and had attacked Germans shooting blanks. In 239 letters, servicemen expressed dissatisfaction with the shortage of warm uniforms and complained about bad food. In many cases, soldiers expressed the view that such problems resulted from their commanders' mismanagement and irresponsibility.[44]

The Germans detected the appearance of anti-Soviet sentiments among the civilians in Leningrad, receiving information that some youngsters had discussed the possibility of starting a riot against the regime. They quite realistically concluded, however, that it was unlikely to happen in the near future because of the lack of weapons. As for the military, German reports noted the decline in morale and the unwillingness of Soviet soldiers to fight. According to POWs there were widespread rumors among Soviet servicemen that the Germans treated POWs very well. Among

other notable developments in the Red Army, the Germans identified the strengthening of repressions against defeatists; the discontent of ordinary soldiers with the new system of promotion (based chiefly on Communist Party membership); the lack of ammunition; an increase of anti-Semitism; open discussions among rank-and-file soldiers over conditions of a peace agreement (e.g., loss of territory or a change of government).[45] German propagandists paid considerable attention to each of these topics.

Fraternization

One example demonstrates the extent to which Russian soldiers at the front succumbed to German propaganda. On October 5, the Military Council of the Leningrad front issued a special order concerning "fraternization." The order stated that several men from the second company of the 289th artillery-machine gun battalion of the 168th infantry division had gone over to the Germans (the Slutsko-Kolpinskii fortified region). The order stated that several German officers in soldiers' uniforms had approached the lines of this battalion on September 19 and suggested that a group of Red Army soldiers surrender. "Instead of using their superior numbers to seize the German agitators or kill them on the spot," the order stated, "the platoon commanders and the assistant to the platoon commissar along with several soldiers allowed the Germans to enter the front lines of defense and began negotiations with them. Traitorous "fraternization" began and five soldiers surrendered. On September 20, two Red Army soldiers visited the German trenches where they were informed that the turncoats did not want to return." After this "social call," another five men deserted.[46] The Germans and the soldiers of the Red Army began to move about in open view of each other on the territory this company defended. The order noted that "such events could only take place as a result of the treasonous behavior of individual commanders, commissars, and personnel of the

security departments, and in the absence of real Bolshevik political propaganda work in the military subunits." The order stated that those responsible for these events would be severely punished, and it warned against a repetition of such events in the future:

"6) all traitors attempting to betray their country, enter into negotiations with the enemy, or go over to the side of the enemy will be fired upon without warning and annihilated by every means possible; 7) the commanders and commissars of subunits where "fraternization" and treason occur will be arrested and turned over to the military tribunals for trial; 8) the security department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the Leningrad front will immediately arrest and try the family members of traitors to the motherland in accordance with statute 58-1 point "v" of the Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR;) 9) the head of the Political Directorate of the front will immediately verify the condition of party political work in the 55th Army and take decisive measures to improve propaganda work among the army's troops; 10) the commissars of the formations and subunits must significantly improve political propaganda work and instruction among the troops; 11) the commanders and commissars of formations and subunits are warned that they are personally responsible for each instance of treason; 12) the security departments must work effectively; 13) all those who abet traitors and those guilty of treason will be mercilessly annihilated for abetting the enemy. This order is to be distributed to the commanders and the political leaders of the companies."[47]

The First Winter: Declining Morale

These new measures did not seriously change the mood of those serving on the Leningrad front and in the Baltic Fleet. Between July and September the military

tribunal of the Baltic Fleet convicted 1,277 servicemen, but between October and December the number rose to 1,436, peaking in October.[48]

In mid-October, the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front also noted an increase in the number of incidents of treason. Most of the traitors had been transferred to the units of the front from the reserve units of other regiments, which had at one time been composed of deserters who had become separated from their units. However, part of the command and some political personnel also appeared to be infected with defeatist sentiments. For instance, Zubyakov, the commander of the technical company of the 290th communications battalion of the 42nd Army, systematically conducted anti-Soviet agitation and was discovered with German leaflets and a swastika.[49]

In a political report dated October 17, 1941, the Political Department of the forces guarding the rear lines of the front noted that the number of individuals caught with German leaflets had recently increased. The testimony of those detained indicated that large numbers of servicemen in the 8th Army were keeping enemy leaflets.[50]

In all, 967 instances of treason were reported in the units on the Leningrad front in October 1941.[51] In response, the head of the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front issued a special order stressing the necessity of "combating the enemy's disruptive propaganda." This order noted that the Nazis had launched a large agitational campaign directed against Leningrad, were distributing anti-Soviet leaflets with passes for surrender, had set up loudspeakers in their most forward positions, were sending soldiers to Red Army trenches, were agitating for Soviet soldiers to go over to the German side, and were using various provocations. The head of the Political Directorate pointed out that it was essential to sharply increase vigilance and to better prepare to combat provocation. He also suggested: (1) The heads of the political departments of the army should personally verify that agitational propaganda was succeeding. (2) The heads of all political organs should conduct broad-based agitational propaganda campaigns among the soldiers so as to expose the lies in enemy propaganda, selecting the best propagandists and agitators for this purpose,

and asking them to arrange discussions and to read articles from the press organs of the center and the front aloud to the soldiers. Every single enemy leaflet or radio program reaching the soldiers was to be discredited, its lies unmasked. Information published by the press about the enemy's brutality to servicemen and the civilian population of the occupied territory should be widely disseminated. (3) With the assistance of commanders and political workers, the heads of divisional political departments and divisional and regimental commissars should organize and carry out individual and group discussions concerning the vigilance of the soldiers of the Red Army in battle. They must warn soldiers about the enemy's methods of provocation. The order called on the political organs to teach every soldier to recognize the enemy before it was too late, to not give in to provocation, and to mercilessly exterminate provocateurs and traitors.[52]

Also, in order to combat treason in the 23rd Army, it was suggested that a brigade of specialists be sent to help the security departments conduct "trick surrenders." Specially selected soldiers were supposed to approach the German trenches with a white flag and then throw their grenades so that the Germans would routinely start shooting at Soviet soldiers attempting to surrender.[53] To some extent this tactic proved to be successful. The German security service reported that at least 50 percent of the Soviet troops were ready to surrender but were aware of mines in front of their trenches and feared the Germans would shoot them. In November, the "devious tricks" of German intelligence, the brutality in Nazi-occupied areas, and the importance of mercilessly annihilating spies, saboteurs, and German provocateurs were explained to troops at organized discussions.

Political workers and agitators also began to circulate certain articles from the press. "Vengeance, Merciless Vengeance for the Fascist Bandits," which was printed in *Leningradskaya Pravda,* made a particularly strong impression on Red Army soldiers and commanders. Staff in the political departments of the armies and the political apparatus of all regiments and divisions worked to popularize this article and to acquaint all soldiers with it. They noted that the article provoked an intense hatred of the Germans occupying Soviet territory and that the soldiers made many

statements and passed resolutions in which they vowed to annihilate the Fascist bandits at any price.

The measures taken to combat German agitation more effectively did not entirely eliminate anti-Soviet activities in the army, particularly in the 70th naval infantry brigade. The Germans exploited problems of supplying military units in its defeatist agitation.[54]

Soviet explanations for what it called the Wehrmacht's "temporary" successes were seriously criticized in German propaganda. For instance, an article was included in a leaflet published in the name of the Central Political Directorate of the Red Army which, according to the Germans, was "an excerpt from the diary of a dead soldier of the Red Army." It explained Soviet defeats by noting that: (1) the best cadres were liquidated during the Yezhov purges; (2) the Soviet people were psychologically unprepared for war ("it was all hat-throwing, hurrah-patriotism from top to bottom"); (3) the selection and advancement of personnel violated Leninist principles ("People judged us according to our class origin or, at best, by one success or contribution, not by our work"); and (4) the foreign policy of the Soviet government was "incorrect". In the name of this "dead soldier," the leaflet claimed: "We wander east despondently. The troops are throwing down their weapons . . . surrendering. The volunteers and partisans have proved themselves to be the least fit for battle, the most cowardly. Everything is so disorganized that criticism is useless. The English, apparently, only assist with empty words, the Americans—as well. The peasants do not always react hospitably to the troops. They send us to surrender . . . The collective farms fell apart immediately, as soon as the Germans arrived."[55]

In November, the low morale of servicemen on the Leningrad front was a particular concern of the political apparatus and the Soviet secret police. Despite some decrease in the number of cases of treason and anti-Soviet agitation among the troops, the Soviets sought to find new resources to neutralize German propaganda. In November, political organs at the front sought to instill hatred of the German occupiers in the troops. Steps were taken to collect material on the barbarism of the enemy. Information about the mass murder of civilians in Kiev and Odessa was

passed on to the troops at meetings, in the course of discussions, and in the press. On November 20, the head of the Political Directorate of the front demanded that political organs "show the troops and the commanders the true face of the cannibal-Hitlerites who dream of looting Leningrad and flooding it with the blood of the workers."[56]

Political workers also took measures to discredit the account given in German propaganda of the numbers of Soviet casualties. On November 26, the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, L. Mekhlis, ordered all newspapers serving the front and the army to publish material from the Soviet Bureau of Information on this issue. That material was also published in the central newspapers.[57] On November 22, the Military Council issued an order calling on commanders, political workers, and the security departments to increase the role of Communists and Komsomol members in combating treason and to carefully verify the loyalty of the troops.[58] This was very timely indeed. According to the Germans, in October and November, at least one-half of the ordinary Soviet soldiers on the Leningrad front had been discussing possible ways of deserting to the Germans. Some signs of hesitation over how to fight treason and defeatism on the Leningrad front existed even among NKVD officers. The S.D. reported about low morale even in the political apparatus. Some political workers believed that the Red Army could keep fighting against the Germans for Leningrad for no more than two weeks.[59] Meanwhile, the political departments of the army held meetings with the workers of the security departments and the office of the military prosecutor on November 23–24 to work out additional measures for combating defeatism and preventing treason.

In the 8th, 42nd, and 55th Armies, meetings with the editors of divisional newspapers were held to discuss means of counteracting enemy agitation and defeatism. The number of agitators in the subunits and units increased, the loyalty of personnel was verified, "Westerners" were removed from their posts.[60] Commanders and political workers also began to spend more time with the troops and to address their needs.[61] V. Molotov's remarks about enemy brutality toward POWs were also widely used in propaganda work, although they were of limited

effectiveness at this time. The S.D. reported that, according to POWs, the vast majority of soldiers believed in a good life in German captivity.[62]

Soviet and German views on the morale of troops defending Leningrad were quite obviously different. Both sides tried to find (and report to Moscow and Berlin respectively) any kind of "positive" change in the mood among soldiers. For instance, while a report by the Political Directorate of the front noted that the above-mentioned measures resulted in an increase in the vigilance of the troops and in the number of instances when soldiers themselves would prevent their fellows from going over to the enemy by firing on them, an S.D. report from the same period stressed that Soviet POWs never mentioned cases of soldiers shooting at those who were deserting to the Germans.[63] The Soviets reported on improving morale on the basis of criminal statistics (e.g. the decrease in the number of cases of treason, which remained relatively high: in October, 967 men; in November, 552; in the first half of December, 120),[64] while Germans assumed that there was massive unwillingness to fight in the Red Army. On November 7, 1941, the S.D. reported that the soldiers and civilians who went over to the German side expressed the common view that the Russian soldier had no wish to fight any longer because of the hopelessness of the situation. Only terror and special units ready to shoot retreating troops made Soviet soldiers go on fighting. In this respect, the S.D. urged the necessity of a new operation to defeat the encircled 8th Army so as to make Leningrad finally surrender.[65]

To account for the decline in the number of cases of treason in late 1941, one can suggest the following. First, despite the S.D.'s recommendations, the German Command decided to change the strategy in the battle for Leningrad and started a "trench war."[66] In this situation, Soviet soldiers hardly had any opportunity to desert. Second, when the Germans halted their attacks, the Soviet secret police had time to improve their control over servicemen.

Even in these new circumstances the Germans tried to improve their propaganda. On November 21, the S.D. reported that the staff of the 50th corps paid a visit to the headquarters of Einsatzgruppe A to look at drafts of new leaflets

addressed to the soldiers on the Leningrad front. The S.D. stressed that this propaganda was the product of cooperation with reliable people from Leningrad.[67] And German propaganda continued to influence certain individual soldiers. The leaflets that the Germans dropped on the territory of the 1st battalion of the 56th infantry regiment on November 25 succeeded in interesting the soldiers—they read them, hid them from the political leaders, and even discussed them at their political information meetings.[68] A. Grezov, the military prosecutor of the Leningrad front, submitted a report on November 30 that described the destruction of German leaflets and the subsequent transfer of fifty two men from the units of the 48th infantry division of the Primorsky group.[69]

In the lengthy "methodical instructions" for the investigation of cases of treason, the military prosecutor of the Leningrad front recommended considering the "keeping of Fascist leaflets as good evidence for convicting a suspect of treason."[70] This document, however, demonstrated an important new aspect of the activities of the Soviet repressive organs. The shock of the first months of the war was over. In light of the new situation at the front (i.e., the German strategy of trench warfare), the secret police and the prosecutor's office tried to act on every case of antistate crime in accordance with the penal code.

The morale of the troops on the Leningrad front as a whole in December 1941, had improved; the number of cases of treason, desertion, and anti-Soviet agitation were insignificant. In this respect, German propaganda failed to achieve its desired results. The failure of the blitzkrieg led to the first crisis in German propaganda warfare. "The propaganda of the sword" no longer worked as effectively as it had in the beginning of the war. New tactics and slogans were needed. German propaganda tried to use the difficult conditions suffered during the first winter of the blockade (1941–1942) to its advantage. Alongside the propaganda of fear, which remained important, the Germans began to draft leaflets with a new sentimental-lyrical tone. They also began to disseminate misinformation about Russia's political and international condition as well as military misinformation.

Meanwhile, reports from the political organs of the army and the fleet testify to the patriotism of the majority of the soldiers and sailors. The morale of the military improved after the first great victory of the Red Army near Moscow. Besides, several attempts by the Red Army to break through the blockade of Leningrad at the end of 1941 refuted one of the main German propaganda theses: that the Soviet Union was not capable of increasing its military might to the extent of significant offensive operations.

But all was hardly rosy on the Leningrad front during the blockade: 10.7 percent of servicemen of the 23rd Army continued to express discontent in their correspondence, which they believed resulted from mismanagement and "unfairness" by commanders.[71]

The "Frozen" Fleet

A complex of military, socioeconomic, and psychological factors combined to produce various anti-Soviet attitudes in individual soldiers. The documentary evidence at our disposal allows us to examine fairly thoroughly the way this issue manifested itself in the Baltic Fleet.

Krasnikov, the military commissar of the Submarine Brigade, gave a speech at a meeting of the political workers of the Baltic Fleet on August 13, 1942, during which he noted that, during the winter of 1941–1942, a mood of confusion had taken hold of administrative personnel and had given rise to defeatist sentiments. These personnel showed a loss of faith in the ability of Soviet submarines to conduct offensive maneuvers in the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea and tended to overestimate the danger of encountering mines. Their attitudes contributed to the passivity of the brigade in 1941 when, over the course of a six-month period, it managed to sink only ten transports with a total displacement of 90,000 tons. In January and February 1942, however, the brigade managed to sink twenty transports

(170,000 tons). Propaganda work among both servicemen and the brigade's leadership helped to bring about this positive change. During this period, the brigade also remained under the constant attention of the War Council, which issued two special orders for its benefit.[72]

The head of the security department of the fleet sent a report to the Political Directorate of the Baltic Fleet which stated that 145 notable anti-Soviet incidents had been uncovered during the last week of January 1942. In the first half of February, another 167 such incidents took place. Moreover, there were a total of 400 "negative" developments among servicemen in the Baltic Fleet during the first half of February. Between February 23 and February 28, another 88 anti-Soviet incidents were reported. The violations that occurred between February 1 and 15 can be broken down as follows: defeatist and treasonous pro-Fascist moods, 42; slanderous statements and provocations, 35; "negative" attitudes about the food supply, 55; other anti-Soviet developments, 35.[73]

A survey of the political attitudes and morale of the servicemen of the Baltic Fleet from February 23 to February 28, noted that Red Army successes and improvements in the supply of provisions had a positive effect on morale, significantly reducing the number of anti-Soviet incidents. Those incidents which did occur could be broken down into the following subgroups: provocations and slanderous statements, 31; defeatist attitudes, 15; negative statements about the food supply, 15; other (cowardice, negative attitudes to commanders, anti-Semitism, etc.), 19.[74] While earlier in the war, slanderous statements and provocations had tended to consist of rumors about enormous numbers of casualties and the hopeless position of the garrison and the workers of Leningrad, in February they began to focus on something new—the incompetence of the Soviet government and the high command of the Red Army. Typical of this second group were the following: "Everyone now sees that those difficulties which the population of Leningrad is experiencing are the result of treason in the army's high command and the incompetence of the Soviet government" (a sailor in a battalion of wounded from the crew of the *Altukhov,* the Leningrad Fleet); "The blockade of Leningrad was intentional and our government

is completely to blame for it" (Savinov, a student from the Junior Officers' Naval Academy); "Our government has destroyed the historic city of Leningrad. It was stupid to brag about the Soviet government, to say that it was fighting for the good of the people. It is really only fighting for its own prosperity" (Belitsky, assistant petty officer at the headquarters at the Baltic Fleet).[75]

German agitation campaigns conducted in late February attempted to spread rumors among the servicemen of the Baltic Fleet that the Germans planned an attack in the spring which would, of course, lead to the defeat of the Red Army.[76] Certain statements made by Soviet servicemen during this period almost exactly repeat the arguments of German propaganda, claiming that the Germans were storing up their strength in the winter for a spring assault, that reserves would play a decisive role in the coming battle, that German aviation was superior, and so forth. For instance, the following statement was made on the destroyer *Threatening*: "Our army is exhausted and the Germans are not attacking, they are storing up their strength." In one of the batteries of the 13th separate artillery formation, political leader Sokolov announced: "The side with the best reserves will be victorious. Our reserves are bad and our people physically weak. When spring comes, Hitler will come to life, sending over his airplanes which will crush us."[77]

While we cannot be absolutely sure that such attitudes were the result of German propaganda, there are good reasons for thinking that this might be the case. It is significant that the leaflets and radio programs that reached the defenders of Leningrad echoed the ideas and attitudes of individual servicemen and were, to a certain extent, successful.

Comments reflecting dissatisfaction with provisions were usually expressed in the form of conversations about the high death rate among the population of Leningrad and inequities in the distribution of provisions between officers and ordinary servicemen. In February 1942, a total of sixty four people from the Baltic Fleet were arrested for conducting anti-Soviet agitation.[78]

The statistics of the military tribunal of the Baltic Fleet give a fairly accurate picture of the morale of the troops defending Leningrad from the beginning of the war to March 1942:

Table 1
Number of Persons Convicted by the Military Tribunal of the Baltic Fleet

Time Period	Number
July—September 1941	1,277
October—December 1941	1,436
January—March 1942	1,170

Table 2
Percent of Total Convicted from the Beginning of the War to March 1, 1942

Month	Number	Percent
January 1942	511	13.2
February 1942	349	9.0
March 1942	310	8.0

As shown in table 1, the number of people convicted by the tribunal of the Baltic Fleet decreased in the quarter from January to March 1942. This decrease was, to a large extent, due to the fact that a naval infantry brigade which had earlier been kept in reserve by the Baltic Fleet was transferred to the Leningrad front. But the noticeable improvement in February–March (table 2) was also accompanied by a

number of negative developments. The percentage of people in leadership positions convicted for counterrevolutionary crimes grew: from June 1941 to March 1942, 13 percent of the commanders convicted by the military tribunals had committed this kind of crime. In the first quarter of 1942, the average percentage had already climbed to 14.4.[79] This increase may be explained by rapid promotions to command positions after the "trials" of the 1930s. This turnover in personnel left commanders less politically prepared and fostered a distrust of them both from above and from below, making their already difficult position all the more unstable. Moreover, any statement criticizing the status quo could, as we have already noted, qualify as "counterrevolutionary" or "anti-Soviet." As difficulties grew, the number of explanations for the situation on the Soviet-German front and in Leningrad among leadership personnel also naturally increased.

Finally, one can say that despite the general decrease in the number of individuals convicted of counterrevolutionary crimes in the first quarter of 1942, as compared to the third and fourth quarters of 1941 (118, 107, and 300 people respectively), one-third of the people convicted in January–March were Communists or Komsomol members, something that was also troubling the regime.[80] For this reason, the situation in this period should be considered relatively tense. These conclusions also describe the morale among the troops of the various army units. Their military conditions and food supply basically corresponded to conditions for the ground units of the Baltic Fleet. The type of propaganda work carried out in the army also was similar.

"General Winter Is Melting"

In spring 1942, German propaganda continued to worry the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. On April 12, the head of the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front, Tyurkin, forwarded to the heads of the political departments of the army and the operational groups of the front another set of instructions from his

superior in Moscow, L. Mekhlis: "Commanders and political workers must quickly and decisively block all attempts by the enemy to distribute propaganda to our troops. All leaflets, enemy appeals, must be immediately collected and destroyed by political workers. Saving and reading Fascist leaflets should be viewed as anti-Soviet activity."[81] This concern was caused by the heavy emphasis which the Germans placed on propaganda.

German propaganda continually expanded to embrace new topics, and its quality constantly improved. It predicted a victorious German offensive in the spring (the leaflet "General Winter Is Melting"), sought to frighten the soldiers with announcements of new German tanks, discussed the defeat of the Red Army's winter assault (the leaflets "The Wall of Blood," "News from Our Motherland," statistics about Red Army casualties). It also began to incorporate more anticapitalistic, revolutionary, and patriotic slogans and phrases. In their leaflets the Germans pointed out that "fraternization" had been a popular slogan in 1917 and then went on to create new slogans: "Fraternize with German Soldiers! Long Live the New Revolution of the Red Army and All the Workers of the Soviet Union!" This slogan was somewhat irrelevant for the population of Leningrad, who were exhausted by the blockade and could not engage in any possible anti-Stalin action initiated by the military.

The idea that the USSR had embraced a system of state capitalism and that "the people were groaning under the yoke of the Jews and commissars" was repeated in many different ways. The Germans also tried to make use of the slogan "the patriotic war"—they called on soldiers to join in "the great patriotic war against Stalin, the Jews, and the tricksters of the press." In fact, the Nazis tried to play on the patriotic feelings of the soldiers in a number of ways. They tried to group famous Russian military leaders and traitors together and then convince the troops that the actions suggested were in the best of traditions.

The Germans even more stubbornly worked to inflame the peasantry's desire for private landowning. With this aim, they disseminated information about "the land

law" of February 15, which abolished collective farms in occupied territory, and the "wonderful" life of the German peasantry.

Old themes continued to appear in German propaganda: the "invincibility" of the Wehrmacht, the "wonders" of German captivity, the unbelievable achievements of national socialism in all spheres of life. "Nazi" or "real" socialism was constantly contrasted with Stalinist socialism which was "perched at the edge of the abyss." Germans still hoped to create a rift among the soldiers of the Red Army, their political leadership, and their military commanders by contrasting starvation in the rear and in Leningrad with well-provisioned political leaders. Almost all the leaflets were written in an anti-Semitic spirit.[82]

Frequently, German propaganda imitated Soviet propaganda directed at the German troops. For instance, imitating the work of the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front, the Germans published four sentimental-lyrical leaflets describing the suffering of a Soviet family between April and June 1942. In April 1942, a Soviet leaflet for German soldiers pointed out that there were anti-Nazi elements among them and suggested creating committees to struggle against the war; it also urged them to memorize the names of members of the Gestapo and the S. S. In May, the Germans distributed a leaflet in Leningrad and to sections of the front that mentioned a supposed opposition in the Red Army with a membership including "many red commissars" and groups "connected with the German command." This leaflet suggested that soldiers join these "cells"; memorize the names of the "leaders and NKVD agitators; and record all incidents of arbitrary rule, the use of force, and attempts to destroy the national wealth by detachments responsible for leaving nothing behind for the Germans."[83] Moreover, again following the example of Soviet propaganda directed at German soldiers, the Germans incorporated many letters and appeals from POWs and deserters. The Germans also designed some leaflets to look like documents from the leadership of the Red Army or individual units.[84]

German leaflets gradually came to look more professional. Many were printed on colored paper. They frequently contained drawings and caricatures and sometimes were written in verse. The language of the leaflets also showed the stamp

of Soviet propaganda. The mistakes and typos common in leaflets at the beginning of the war almost entirely vanished. The leaflets came in various formats, from tiny books that functioned as passes to leaflets the size of a newspaper page.[85]

A New Stage in the Struggle for Unity Among the City's Defenders

In May 1942, the struggle against German agitation intensified. The journal for the registration of orders and directives from the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front lists May 7 as the date when order No. 0018, "Concerning the Struggle with German Agitation Among Our Troops and Political Propaganda Work with the Soldiers of the Red Army," was issued.[86]

On May 22, the head of the political department of the Leningrad group of troops at the Leningrad front, Kulik, sent a memo to A. Kuznetsov, a key member of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front, which outlined the negative political attitudes in the units in which he worked.

This document is interesting because it allows us to broaden our understanding of the morale of the troops defending Leningrad and to discern the level of effectiveness of German propaganda with a fair degree of certainty. Kulik's memo points out that a significant number of negative political statements concerned the outcome of the war. Individual commanders and soldiers expressed dissatisfaction with the war, did not believe in the ultimate victory of the USSR, and overestimated the strength of the enemy. I. G. Soloviev, the commander of the military provisions platoon of the 2nd artillery regiment of the 55th Army and a military technician of the first rank (higher education), said in a conversation with fellow servicemen that Stalin had conducted policy inconsistently: in the beginning of the war he had promised to destroy all Germans, but in order No. 55 had limited himself to destroying those who did not surrender. This "inconsistency," Soloviev deduced, had

arisen because the USSR "had lost 40 percent of its industry" and was not in any condition to fight the Germans. He believed that the USSR was more interested in peace than the Germans. Soloviev also criticized the new system for inducting commanders and soldiers who had distinguished themselves in battle into the party: "We are making a mistake by accepting these illiterates into the party. These Communists are filling posts with large amounts of responsibility and are making many mistakes. This is not just the case in the army." In terms of prewar policy, Soloviev thought that removing Litvinov from his post as People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs was also a mistake. Litvinov "would not have allowed the USSR to get so close to Germany."[87] Chulkov, a soldier from the 147th infantry regiment, said that "if it were not for the policies of the Communists and the Jews, there would be no war. The Communists and the Jews are sitting in the rear in high posts while we fight for them." The desire to end the war as quickly as possible, and "regardless of the result," was expressed by Umansky, a soldier of the 11th battery of the 169th artillery regiment of the Leningrad antiaircraft army; Borovik, a soldier of the 84th communications regiment; and others.[88]

A significant number of these political statements concerned the fate of Leningrad and lifting the blockade. Rumors were spread which said that Moscow was secretly negotiating with the United States, Great Britain, and Germany to turn Leningrad into an open city, an international port. According to rumors, the enemy blockade of Leningrad was unbreakable, and the Germans would storm the city from the sea anyway. Dissatisfaction over the conditions of workers living in Leningrad and the regions surrounding it continued, although recently, as Kulik noted, such sentiments had lessened noticeably. The following kinds of statements were characteristic. "The people are dying in Leningrad. The women are refusing to go to work and are almost ready to announce a strike. On the front things are very bad. Soldiers are surrendering to the Germans in groups," said Yastrebov, a soldier of the 56th reserve infantry regiment of the 36th reserve infantry brigade. Matveev, a soldier of the 6th infantry regiment, told his fellow servicemen, "We won't be living

in Leningrad for long. There will be a revolution and they'll chase all of us workers out of Leningrad."[89]

A third group of so-called negative political sentiments was expressed by those who openly wanted to desert. Marukhin, a soldier of the 268th infantry division, told some soldiers that he had met a comrade recently who had been a POW for a while. The Germans had treated him very well and told him, "Go back to your own side and bring more soldiers of the Red Army over to us. After the war you'll all receive land, medals, and privileges." Alekseev, a soldier from the mine battalion of the independent infantry brigade of the troops for internal defense, said, "The regulations in the Red Army are bad. It's better to go over to the Germans. Moreover, I might see my parents there." Kulik's report also noted that German propaganda was most widely distributed to the units of the 90th infantry division and to the naval infantry brigade where there had been several incidents of treason.[90]

This description of these political attitudes among the troops of the Leningrad garrison shows that certain assertions incorporated into Fascist propaganda touched a nerve among the soldiers defending the city. The references to "negotiations in Moscow" to turn Leningrad into an open city are one example. Many of these statements and ideas may have been less the fruit of German propaganda than an independent analysis of the events taking place or a response to extremely difficult conditions in Leningrad during the blockade.

In the opinion of Dorman, the chairman of the military tribunal of the Baltic Fleet, improvements in the food supply, large-scale Soviet propaganda work among the troops, and a whole series of severely repressive measures introduced in April 1942 led to a reduction in the number of crimes in May of that year. However, the number of people convicted of counterrevolutionary crimes and desertion remained stable and troubling. Out of a total of 350 people tried by the military tribunal of the Baltic Fleet in May, 35 were punished for desertion of all types, 43 for anti-Soviet agitation, and 17 for treason, attempted treason, or failing to report knowledge of such crimes to the authorities.[91] Such problems also continued in the units on the Leningrad front. Statistics concerning negative developments in the Primorsky

operational group, one of the least fortunate of the units of the Leningrad Front, testify to this.

Table 3
Number of Crimes Reported in Primorsky Operational Group, 1942

Nature of crime	April	May	June
Treason	17	31	26
Desertion	6	11	11
Self-mutilation	3	8	7
Anti-Soviet agitation	26	36	65

Table 3 indicates that a significant increase in cases of treason and anti-Soviet agitation took place and that, moreover, the number of these kinds of crimes nearly doubled between May and June.[92] This drop in morale among the defenders of Leningrad can be attributed to the continuation of the blockade, the Wehrmacht's successes in the southern section of the Soviet-German front, and the defeat of the 2nd Army. Enemy propaganda focused on these events during the summer of 1942. The Germans tried to refute assertions in Soviet propaganda that the Wehrmacht was committing acts of brutality and was looting and pillaging Russia. They also denied intending to restore the Russian monarchy and turn over Russian land to German landowners. It was in answer to such accusations that the Germans began to advertise "the new land law."[93] In its leaflets, the enemy tried to prove that the people and a number of political organizations in the occupied territories supported the Germans. The leaflets that were dropped on the Leningrad front purported to be "resolutions" from meetings of workers, women, and collective farm workers who supported the German authorities. One of these leaflets was signed in the name of "the Council of Revolutionaries of Liberated Russia" by P. M. Morozov, I. D. Soloviev, and F. M. Karasev.[94] With the exception of those leaflets directed at minority groups and

victims of the Stalinist purges, German propaganda addressed more general political issues.[95]

The High Point of Soviet Fears of German Propaganda

No real innovations in the struggle against German propaganda took place in the summer of 1942. Orders continued to call for the destruction of all enemy leaflets. On July 13, the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front again reminded political organs about directive No. 039.[96] The head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army attempted to tighten existing procedures preventing the enemy from conducting propaganda work among Soviet troops by issuing in the middle of July a special directive banning servicemen in divisions and departments working with enemy troops from listening to foreign radio broadcasts. Again it was reasoned that "listening to foreign radio broadcasts, in part, leads to the dissemination of the lies of enemy propaganda and thus contributes to misinformation among certain groups of individuals."[97] This decree marks the high point in Soviet fears of German propaganda since it expresses a distrust of the best prepared sections of the Red Army's political staff—the servicemen designing and distributing propaganda to German troops. Moreover, it limited the number of individuals studying the enemy's propaganda more than was reasonable.

A new wave of German propaganda in the summer of 1942 forced the Central Political Directorate of the Red Army to issue a special directive entitled "Concerning the Struggle with Enemy Propaganda at the Front" on August 12, 1942.[98] This directive noted that the Germans had begun to use new forms of propaganda. Aside from leaflets, "passes," instructions for deserting, photographs with texts, Russian language magazines, and so forth, they were now frequently using loudspeakers, imitations of Soviet brochures and newspapers, and also leaflets printed in the Azerbaijani language. The new head of the Main Political Directorate

of the Red Army, A. Shcherbakov, emphasized that, while the enemy was making every effort to intensify and broaden the propaganda campaign aimed at Soviet troops in this period, Soviet military commissars and political organs did not work as hard to neutralize this propaganda. Shcherbakov ordered subordinates to block all enemy attempts to conduct propaganda and to drown out the sound of German loudspeakers with automatic weapon fire. Political organs once again had to explain to the troops that possessing or reading German leaflets was equal to distributing counterrevolutionary propaganda. The head of the Main Political Directorate demanded that all Communists and Komsomol members actively struggle to counteract enemy agitation. The directive called upon the political organs of the army to "decisively expose the lies of enemy propaganda without engaging in a polemic with it." Political organs were supposed to be governed by the reports of the Soviet Bureau of Information in their work and constantly inform the troops of the large numbers of enemy casualties, showing them that the enemy was not as strong as panic-mongers made him out to be, that the Red Army had everything necessary to stop Hitler's army, to push it back, and finally defeat it. Soviet counterpropaganda was also supposed to keep the troops well-informed about the brutality of the Fascists in the occupied territories, about their plans to exterminate the Soviet people, about the unbearable torments inflicted upon POWs, and also about the penalties facing traitors and their families.[99] The struggle with German propaganda, it was suggested, should be conducted on a systematic, daily basis, not in the form of brief campaigns.

Political organs focused a great deal of attention on inspiring hatred of the Nazis in the troops defending Leningrad. At a meeting of political workers at Smolny on August 13, the leader of the Leningrad party organization, A. Zhdanov, stated that political workers should view instilling "long-term" hatred of the enemy as the key to resolving every issue. Just like the ancient Roman orator Cato, Zhdanov believed that each meeting with soldiers should end on the same note—by calling for the destruction of the enemy. He demanded that propaganda draw upon the situation in Leningrad for inspiration: "Thousands of women and children in the city had died

of starvation and in German shelling. This is a clear example of the brutality and inhumanity of Hitler's Fascism."[100]

Na strazhe Rodiny responded to Zhdanov's suggestions by devoting a whole column to documents recounting Fascist crimes against the residents of Leningrad. The column printed documents from the city hospital to which shelling victims were taken; official notifications of the deaths of women and the elderly, relatives of those serving on the front; reports of doctors working on "ambulances"; and photographs of crippled children. Moreover, the newspaper ran a series of articles about the brutality of the Germans in Novgorod, Gdov, and other Russian cities. It also published articles clarifying issues involving the military oath to counter Fascist attempts to inspire Russian soldiers to surrender. Lieutenant-Generals Stepanov and Simonyak wrote articles for the newspaper on this topic. A special column entitled "The Oath—the Law of Life for a Soldier" was also created.[101]

The heads of the political organs continued to forbid their subordinates to engage in polemics with the enemy's propaganda or to use German leaflets in counterpropaganda work. In directive No. 55, the head of the Central Political Directorate of the Baltic Fleet placed special emphasis on the idea that "some political workers have expressed extremely dangerous views, believing that it is essential to read the text . . . and explain the true meaning of these leaflets."[102]

The Search for New Defenses Against German Propaganda

On October 8, 1942, a day before the above-mentioned directive appeared, however, a number of speeches at a meeting of the Military Propaganda Council—the main institution dealing with issues of propaganda during the war—mentioned the fact that prohibitive measures alone were not adequate to combat the enemy's propaganda. For example, A. Shcherbakov supported the comments of L. Mekhlis, his predecessor as head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, who had pointed

out several flaws in Soviet counterpropaganda. Shcherbakov emphasized that simply collecting and destroying German leaflets was not producing the results hoped for, that soldiers were still reading them. "The Germans direct their appeals to a specific unit, a specific formation, a political worker, and we do not respond to these leaflets in any way," he noted.[103]

The critical remarks made at this meeting about the struggle with German propaganda never resulted in the creation of a new directive for the political organs of the army and the fleet and did not lead to any changes in the way counterpropaganda was conducted. On September 6, 1943, the writer Vsevolod Vishnevsky noted in his *Voennye Dnevniki* (Wartime Diaries) that German propaganda, unfortunately, was far from silent and that it should be written about in the newspapers, explained in discussions, and that counterpropaganda should be conducted with persistence and courage.[104]

Despite the Wehrmacht's military successes in the summer and fall of 1942, German propaganda was not particularly effective. The morale of the troops defending Leningrad was improving, and the number of people convicted by the military tribunals began to decline consistently. For instance, while 1,289 and 1,048 servicemen were convicted by the military tribunals of the Baltic Fleet in the first two quarters of 1942, in the third and fourth quarters the figure dropped to 558 and 281 respectively. The number of people convicted of anti-Soviet agitation declined by a third in the fourth quarter of 1942: in July-September, 111 men were convicted, but in October-December, 74. In January 1943, not a single incidence of treason was reported on the Baltic Fleet.[105]

One of the main objectives of German propaganda was to appeal to non-Russian minorities in the USSR; 21-25 percent of the servicemen defending Leningrad were not Russian.[106] Soviet political organs viewed the struggle with German propaganda directed at minority groups to be just one aspect of the larger problem of preparing servicemen politically and militarily, of fostering a spirit of internationalism among the troops. They did not see this struggle as a problem that needed to be resolved independently. Agitational work with minority groups focused

on explaining the worthy and exalted aims of the peoples of the USSR in the war against Germany, on the policy on nationalities, and on current events. In keeping with the general line developed by the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, discussions were held in frontline units on the following topics: "The Red Army—the Army of Brotherhood Uniting the Peoples of our Country," "What the Soviet Regime Has Given the Peoples of the USSR," "The Defense of Leningrad Is the Defense of Kazakhstan," "The Role of the Great Russian People in the Battle for the Freedom and Independence of the Peoples of the USSR and in the Construction of Socialism in the Brotherly Republics of the Soviet Union," and "The Role of the Great Russian People in the Patriotic War, in the Battle with Hitler's Germany for the Freedom and Independence of the Peoples of the Soviet Union." The Political Directorate of the front tried to counteract those developments which concerned non-Russian minorities by preventing individuals intentionally released from captivity by the enemy from conducting Nazi and nationalistic propaganda. An incident involving a released POW took place, for instance, in the 270th infantry regiment of the 136th infantry division. The Political Directorate also tried to avoid conducting propaganda work with minority groups in brief, irregular campaigns and using clichés that did not take into account the specific features of each national culture, the everyday life of individual nationalities. It tried to popularize stories about minority soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle, struggled against instances of chauvinism, and worked to create a network of minority agitators.[107]

Just as in the Baltic Fleet, an improvement in morale was noted among the servicemen on the Leningrad Front. The number of anti-Soviet incidents reported decreased significantly. On November 15, 1942, the Political Directorate of the front put together a report on the morale of the servicemen noting that no anti-Soviet statements were made concerning this order.[108]

The Germans' New Tactics

In Autumn 1942, the Germans began to use innovative tactics in their propaganda, which proved relatively successful when they captured a significant number of surrounded soldiers from the 2nd Army. Instead of calling upon them to murder their commissars and political workers, the leaflets appealed to the political staff itself to surrender to the Germans. In a number of such leaflets, directed at political workers, an attempt was made to discuss important theoretical and moral issues, raising issues like the essence of the patriotic war, the attitude of political workers to common human values, and so forth. Leaflets of this type proclaimed an amnesty for all Communists and political workers of the Red Army who voluntarily surrendered to the Germans. An anonymous leaflet dropped near the troops at the front on October 31 was entitled "To Our Comrades—the Soldiers, Commanders, and Political Workers of the Red Army" and contained a detailed and outwardly attractive program for building "postwar Russia" and for ending the war. The leaflet included the following provisions: (1) an end to all military action; (2) conversion of military factories to the production of consumer goods and agricultural machinery; (3) personal freedom; (4) amnesty for all Communists and members of the political apparatus; (5) release of political prisoners; (6) return of those who had been exiled; (7) abolition of collective farms; (8) creation of privately owned farms and private ownership of property; (9) revival of handicrafts and trade; (10) freedom of religion; (11) introduction of social justice, "peaceful labor without the Bolsheviks and capitalists;" (12) cooperation between different nations.[109]

This platform was obviously demagogic in that it did not even touch the most important issues of all—questions about power, borders, the principles upon which the state would be founded, and so-called cooperation between nations.

The Struggle with Nazism and Domestic "Cosmopolitans"

In the first few months of 1943, the Germans began to put less energy into propaganda. The military archives have virtually no material on German propaganda in the Leningrad area during this period, although reports on the morale of servicemen still contain examples of defeatist attitudes.[110] Soviet political organs, however, continued to view the struggle with Nazi ideology as one of their main tasks, although the struggle did take on a somewhat different form. At a meeting of agitators at the front on March 3, 1943, Major General Fomichev called upon them to struggle against "Westernizing." According to Fomichev "this new danger" involved the tendency of many Soviet public figures to attribute the work of great Russian writers, poets, artists, and composers to the influence of Western culture. Fomichev referred to this kind of idea about the interdependence of different cultures as "disguised propaganda for the Nazi thesis that Russia owes its cultural development to the West and primarily to Germany."[111] Radical Russian nationalism replaced traditional slogans of internationalism in Soviet internal propaganda. A new relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church, the revival of the military ranks of the old regime, and the creation of new decorations to commemorate famous Russian heroes such as Alexander Nevsky and Alexander Suvorov served this end. At the same time, the secret police apparently stopped recording incidents of anti-Semitism in the military and in the city of Leningrad. This kind of crime almost disappeared from NKVD reports. The last anti-Semitic statements were recorded in several units of the Baltic Fleet in April 1943.[112] The Allies' delay in opening the long-awaited Second Front against Germany also stimulated an increase of anti-Western sentiments at all levels of Soviet society, including the military at the Leningrad front. All these developments prepared the way for the campaigns against cosmopolitanism in the postwar period.

In April 1943, the Germans again began to actively produce propaganda, and the next month the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front issued a special order about the struggle with German propaganda. This order noted that one of the

achievements of Fascist propaganda was its use of audio equipment in all sectors of the front. Anti-Soviet agitation touched upon the following topics: It popularized General Vlasov and the programs and goals of the Russian Liberation Army; it called upon Soviet troops to surrender to the Germans and promised privileges to traitors (Order of the OKW, No. 13); it spread false rumors about NKVD brutality in the territory liberated from the Germans against Soviet citizens who had remained there during the occupation; it propagandized a German "paradise" in the occupied territory of the USSR; it tried to compromise the Communist administration and personnel to the greatest possible extent. German leaflets depicted Soviet commanders as debauchers, thieves, drunks, illiterates, and so on. It reported serious problems in the Soviet rear, criticized the Soviet government and the high command, and called for the existing authorities to be overthrown.[113]

The Germans began to drop an enormous quantity of leaflets all along the front, including Leningrad, on May 1. These leaflets were collected and destroyed but, in a number of cases, the need to take measures against German propaganda was ignored, and some of the anti-Soviet literature ended up in populated centers and near military installations. The Political Directorate of the front attempted to combat the negative effects of this by explaining the deceit of German propaganda, its aims, and methods to a broad spectrum of servicemen. In order to silence the enemy's loudspeakers, soldiers were told to immediately open fire with all possible weaponry in order to destroy any broadcasting equipment that appeared and, if Soviet equipment arrived at the same time, to ask it to drown out the Germans by broadcasting music and textual readings to the Soviet troops. The Political Directorate of the front ordered political organs to get the Red Army ready for action as soon as German loudspeakers began to broadcast, and the Soviets tried to drown them out just in case of a sudden attack.[114]

Soviet counterpropaganda focused on the following themes: explaining the noble aims of the Great Patriotic War; systematically informing all servicemen about German brutality to POWs and the civilian population of occupied Soviet territories; propagandizing the successes of the Red Army, the growing might of the USSR, and

the coalition against Hitler; studying the law about the penalties for treason, the text of the military oath, and the contents of the famous order No. 227, known as "No step backwards!" from the People's Commissariat of Defense.[115]

Political organs devoted a great deal of attention to instructing servicemen in subjects related to this last point, particularly those whose families were in German-occupied territory. Work with this contingent of soldiers, it was emphasized, was to be carried out as convincingly as possible.

Political workers were expected to produce agitational material in a timely fashion so that the troops could be acquainted with the contents of each piece. If worst came to worst, collective readings from newspapers were organized.

The part of the order that concerned the need to raise the living standards of the soldiers, increase their contact with their commanders, and prohibit the latter from making insulting remarks, was very important to the morale of the troops. Political organs were also expected to take decisive measures to combat any negative developments among Communist personnel. The order also made changes in the honors that could be paid to fallen soldiers. Heroes who particularly distinguished themselves in battle could be left permanently on the rolls of their regiments and, moreover, military ceremonies could be observed.

The military councils of the armies took responsibility for leading counterpropaganda efforts personally. The principal members of the war council exercised authority through the heads of the political department. The study of German propaganda became one of the most important duties of political organs, commanders, and political workers. For this reason, enemy broadcasts were monitored, recorded, and, if possible, transcribed. The importance of carefully studying and analyzing the contents of Fascist propaganda, determining the main aims and forms that it took, was emphasized. The head of the Political Directorate of the front demanded that documentation of this issue be detailed and clear. Reports on the implementation of the order were supposed to be made once every ten days.[116]

Thus, as the second year of the war was coming to an end, real changes in the organization of counterpropaganda were made. It ceased to be the concern of

simply a small circle of political workers, primarily in the center. The need to neutralize enemy propaganda began to be considered alongside the need to improve the lives of the soldiers in various ways—their everyday routines, food, relationships with their commanders, their connection with their homes, and, also, their esteem for their service. The transformation came about because previous methods of counterpropaganda had not proved satisfactory. Some of "the liberalization" can also be explained by the fact that conditions on the Soviet-German front had improved, including in Leningrad.

In the middle of 1943, political organs also took measures designed to study the analysis of German propaganda by foreign, particularly American, specialists. Information gleaned from American military and political journals helped political organs better understand the general topics, aims, forms, and methods of enemy propaganda in the various stages of the war, and the Fascist strategy for conducting psychological warfare.[117]

The period from the second half of 1943 to January 1944, when the blockade was entirely lifted, was characterized by the failure of Fascist propaganda to produce any noticeable effect on the troops defending Leningrad. The Political Directorate of the front and the political departments of the army did not pass a single resolution on this issue in this period.

Conclusion

The struggle with German propaganda during the battle for Leningrad played an important role in the activities of political organs, the NKVD, party organizations of the military units and subunits, and also the organs of justice. Throughout this period, the repressive measures introduced to neutralize the effects of Nazi propaganda were justified. During the siege of Leningrad the morale of the military was supervised by the security service and political organs. The propaganda work

carried out by the political organs rarely reached the level of ideologically discrediting Nazism, due to the generally low theoretical level of the political workers who replaced the old cadres repressed on the eve of the war.

In various periods during the battle for Leningrad, German propaganda undoubtedly had an effect on the troops defending the city. The spread of defeatist, pro-German, and anti-Semitic attitudes took place when the Wehrmacht was militarily successful and conditions both in the city and at the front were worsening because of the blockade. Wild rumors helped to keep servicemen and the population of the country as a whole ill-informed about events at the front. The political apparatus, which generally was so perceptive, turned out to be unprepared for its work in the difficult first months of the war. Stereotypes of social consciousness that took shape in the 1930s also helped to create these early problems. The belief that there were "enemies of the people" at all levels, including the very highest, and that their wrecking was the cause of all ills, helped German propaganda discredit Soviet political and military leaders.

I did not detect any ideological rejection of Stalinist socialism among the troops defending Leningrad. Some of the "anti-Soviet" statements made by servicemen merely differed from the official line at the time or criticized individual actions taken by central and local military and party organs. Only the so-called Westerners and older servicemen occasionally expressed a world view that was inconsistent with the existing system of government.

At first glance, the percentage of deserters was small, even at its worst (0.2-0.25% of the total number of soldiers defending Leningrad). There was one critical period in the history of the blockade, however, when the Germans had a chance to win the battle for Leningrad despite the loyalty of most of the military. This period began at the end of August 1941, when even local party and military leaders, shocked by the Germans' early success, took some steps in anticipation of a Wehrmacht victory. This anxiety within the leadership coincided with "negative" developments in the military. The morale of the defenders of Leningrad had been declining rapidly. The NKVD suspected that about half of the wounded Soviet

soldiers at the Leningrad front engaged in self-mutilation. The peak of this crisis was in the middle of September and in October. Desertion from the front line numbered on some days up to 1,500 people. Cases of group betrayal in several units and "fraternization" were registered by the political organs and the NKVD. The impact of these events cannot be underestimated. The balance of power (Soviet and German) was very fragile. Any German success on the front (for example, destruction of the encircled 8th Army) could have led to victory in the whole battle. Moreover, in September-October, there was a possibility of linking the growing disloyalty to the regime in the army with similar sentiments in the city. These two developments required new courses of action. The easiest way to achieve this was through propaganda. German propaganda could give the Soviet military not just slogans and a critique of Stalinism, **but a plan of action**. It could serve as a substitute for organization for those who were disloyal to the Soviet regime, just tired of war, or did not want to suffer any longer. Besides, in accordance with the analysis made by the German Secret Police (SD) based on interrogations of captured Soviet soldiers, one of the reasons for on-going resistance to Germany was the Red Army soldiers' fear of German captivity. To make the Soviet people believe in Germans ought to have been one of the German propaganda's priorities in fall of 1941.[118] Germans had all the means needed to increase their propaganda, but they did not use thousands of Russian emigres who wanted to take part in the war against Stalin.[119] The Germans started to seriously investigate the situation in Leningrad only in October when the Soviet military, led by G. Zykov, had already managed to control it. Repressions, strict censorship, and total control by both military and civilian authority precluded any chance for massive riots either in the army or in the city. Moreover, German propagandists faced a difficult situation: the failure of the Blitzkrieg strategy at Leningrad marked the first time since the beginning of World War II that the Germans could not boast of military success, a main component of their propaganda.

My research leads me to identify the main periods in the struggle with German propaganda during the battle for Leningrad as follows:

From the beginning of the war to August 1941, the main elements of the propaganda war were defined and measures were taken that made it more difficult for German propaganda to reach Soviet troops and the population of the city. At the front, the struggle with anti-Soviet agitation remained limited to prohibitive measures. In Leningrad, although there were active attempts to discredit the enemy's ideology and propaganda, these measures were inadequate. Among the troops and the urban population, interest in the enemy grew and all sorts of rumors circulated.

During autumn 1941 and the first winter of the blockade, morale among soldiers and sailors, as well as among city residents, declined. "Anti-Soviet elements" within the city became more active and the Germans spread rumors about turning Leningrad into an "open city." During this period, significant measures were taken to explain the most worrisome political issues and aspects of everyday life, to discredit rumors, and to strengthen the party's ties to the masses.

From spring to the end of 1942, the military situation at the front generally worsened and German propaganda intensified. Fear of enemy propaganda in the Central Political Directorate of the Red Army reached its highest point in the middle of 1942. The enemy's constant ideological barrage was combated largely by prohibitive measures.

In the second half of 1943, troop morale improved in connection with the successes of the Red Army in other parts of the Soviet-German front. Counterpropaganda work was slightly reorganized, although still based principally on prohibitive measures, thereby allowing Vlasovite propaganda to be neutralized.

Notes

1. John Keegan, *The Battle for History: Re-fighting World War II* (New York, 1996), p. 30.

2. See, for instance, H. A. Jakobsen, in "Tak byla proigrana," *Vtoraia mirovaia voina: Dva vzgliada* (Moscow, 1995), p. 68.

3. See K. Kirchner, *Krankheit rettet: Psychologische Kriegfuehrung* (Erlangen, 1976), p. 213; interview with J. Hoffmann, *Novii chasovoi* (St. Petersburg), 1 (1994), 10.

4. See R. Bidlack, *Workers at War,* The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East Eruopean Studies, 902. (Pittsburgh, 1991): L. Goure, *The Siege of Leningrad* (Stanford, 1962); W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord: Der Kampf im Nordabschnitt der Ostfront, 1941-45* (Bad Nauheim, 1966); Kirchner, *Krankheit rettet;* H. Salisbury, *The Nine Hundred Days: The Siege of Leningrad* (New York, 1969); H. Wedel, *Die Propagandatruppen der deutschen Wehrmacht* (Neckargemuend, 1962).

5. W. Averell Harriman, "Stalin at War," in *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World,* ed. G. R. Urban (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), p. 43.

6. A. Schreiner, *Vom totalen Krieg zut totalen Niederlage Hitlers* (Berlin, 1980), p. 94.

7. *Ibid.*, 94-104.

8. See J. Mader, *Hitlers Spionage Generals sagen aus: Ein Dokumentarbericht ueber Aufbau, Structur und Operationen des OKW-Geheimdienstes mit einer Chronologie seiner Einsaetze von 1933 bis 1944* (Berlin, 1983) 51; *Die deutsche Siedlungen in der Sowietunion* (Berlin, 1941).

9. Bakhmetiev Archive (Columbia University), Collection ROVS, box 30, Correspondence 1940-1944. Most military propagandists took key positions in the German mass media after the war. See K. Scheel, *Krieg ueber Aetherwellen* (Berlin, 1970), 176. In 1941-1943 German secret police reports on the situation in Leningrad included: (1) the morale of the city's population; (2) the Communist Party and its organs; (3) destruction in the city; (4) Soviet defensive measures; (5) the Red Army; (6) future activity of Einsatzgruppe A. All interrogations of both civilians and military included

questions on the situation in the Red Army: mobilization—age of conscripts and their place of origin; depots; food supply on the front; Soviet propaganda among the military; desertion, self-mutilation, and other extreme events; the morale of the military as a whole; examples of military mismanagement; data on the military leadership, etc.). See U.S. National Archives, German Captured Documents. Collection of SD (Sicherheitsdienst) T.175-233. Ereignismeldungen UdSSR. No. 116-170.

10. K. Scheel, *Krieg uber Aatherwellen* (Berlin, 1970), p. 176.

11. U.S. National Archives, Record Group - S. D. Reports (German Security Service). Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 116, Oct. 17, 1941, p. 3.

12. See A. Philippi, F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegn Sowietrussland 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 21.

13. Central Archive of the Defense Ministry (hereafter TsAMO), f. 32, op. 11306, d. 8, ll. 712–32; op. 11309, d. 89, ll. 1–53; M. Burtsev, *Prozrenie* (Moscow, 1981), 24.

14. TsAMO, f. 32, op. 11306, d. 6, ll. 232–43.

15. *Ibid.*, d. 24; D. Volkogonov, "Politisheskii portret Stalina", *Oktiabr'*, 12 (1988), p. 66–67.

16. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 312, l. 25.

17. Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 61, 1941, August 23, p. 2.

18. Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 116–18.

19. Between 1941 and 1943, the Central Political Directorate of the army and the navy several times addressed the importance of preventing troops from hearing Fascist radio programs, particularly at centers of communication. In addition to Order No. 161 from the Minister of the Navy dated March 5, 1941, and Directive No. 40 from the GlavPUVMF (Glavnoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie Voenno-Morskogo Flota) dated September 1, 1941. A third decree was issued (No. 63) which mentions instances when Fascist programs were listened to, including in the Baltic Fleet, and the measures necessary to prevent such activities in the future. See Central Naval Archive (hereafter TsAVMF), f. 102, op. 1, d. 186, ll. 85–86.

20. *Ibid.*, ll. 2–4

21. *Ideologicheskaia rabota KPSS v deistvuiushcheii armii, 1941–1945* (Moscow, 1985) p. 80.

22. TsAMO. f. 217, op. 217, d. 9, l. 15. Here and below, some individuals are identified only by surname because their initials are not given in the archives.

23. *Ibid.*, op. 1217, d.3, ll. 76, 138. As a result, on November 12, 1941, L. Mekhlis, head of the Central Political Directorate of the Red Army, issued a directive demanding that political organs send materiel discrediting Fascism to the center. He emphasized that underestimating the importance of such work would limit the ability to conduct counterpropaganda and instill a mortal hated of the enemy in the Red Army and the population of the USSR; shortage of materiel would make it difficult to issue illustrated magazines and leaflets or a special collection of documents concerning the brutality of occupational forces. *Ibid.*, l. 138.

24. *Ibid.*, op. 217, d. 101, l. 51.

25. *Ibid.*, d. 11, l. 50.

26. The decree issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on September 8, 1941, extending the right to impose the death penalty to division commanders and commissars, continued this trend which, on the whole, led to serious failings in ideological work. As noted in order No. 0391 of the People's Commissariat of Defense on October 4, 1941, "Facts about the Replacement of Propaganda Work with Repressive Measures," repressive measures came to replace ideological work. *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 9 (1988), 29–30.

27. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 19/1, l. 44.

28. *Ibid.*, d. 3, l. 107.

29. *Ibid.*, d. 8, l. 68.

30. *Ibid.*, d. 32, l. 150. Soviet troops defending Leningrad in 1941–1944 numbered almost half a million.

31. *Ibid.*, d. 33, ll. 355–56.

32. *Ibid.*, d. 32, l. 37.

33. Archive of the St. Petersburg Department of the Security Ministry of Russia (hereafter Archive of UMBR LO), f. 21/12, op 2, p.n. 38, t. 1, d. 10, ll. 1–6.

34. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 32, l. 150.

35. Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History, (hereafter, RTsKhIDNI) f. 77, op. 1, d. 922, l. 48 ob.

36. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, ll. 135–36.

37. *Ibid.*, d. 16, ll. 26–27, 128.

38. *V gody surovykh ispytanii Leningradskaia partiinaia organizatsiia v Velikoi otetshestvennoi voine* (Leningrad, 1985), p. 3

39. *Ibid.*, 32.

40. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 32, ll. 163–64, 171, 173, 174. Later, the head of staff of the forces guarding the rear lines of the Leningrad front (subordinated to the NKVD), Colonel Dreev, noted that cases of desertion in the army took place mainly during its retreat, namely in August, September, and the beginning of October 1941. Archive of the UMBR LO, f. 21/12, op. 2, p.n. 19, d. 12, l. 31.

41. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 32, l. 184.

42. Central Naval Archive (hereafter TsAVMF), f. 102, op. 1, d. 186, l. 107.

43. In January 1942, the Military Council of the Leningrad front rescinded the directive issued by the head of the Political Directorate of the Baltic Fleet, branding it illegal. This directive had tightened an already cruel system to new extremes. *Ibid.*, d. 229, l. 66.

44. Archive of UMBR LO, f. 21/12, op. 2, p.n. 38, t. 1, d. 10, l. 17–19.

45. Ereignismeldung UdSSR. No. 123. 1941, October 24, S 1-6.

46. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 32, ll. 255, 276.

47. *Ibid.*, ll. 279–80.

48. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1, d. 232, l. 93.

49. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 32, l. 316.

50. *Ibid.*, l. 170.

51. *Ibid.*, l. 529.

52. *Ibid.*, d. 8, l. 122.

53. *Ibid.*, d. 32, ll. 328–29.

54. *Ibid.*, d. 46, ll. 122–23.

55. *Ibid.*, f. 32, op. 11302, d. 61, ll. 141–141 ob.

56. *Ibid.*, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 5, ll. 28.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*, d. 32, l. 529.

59. U.S. National Archives. Ereignismeldung UdSSR. No. 137, Nov. 21, 1941, S. 19; No 144, S. 8

60. On March 14, 1942, the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front informed the Personnel Directorate of the Red Army that all Estonian workers in political organs were to be replaced. TsAMO f. 217, op. 1217, d. 303, l. 120. Directive No. 029 of the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Front on July 11, 1943, addresses overzealousness on this issue and warns against indiscriminate mistrust of servicemen who resided in the Baltic region, Belorussia, and the Ukraine prior to the war; it specifically bans using the term "Westerner." *Ibid.*, d. 327, l. 104.

61. *Ibid.*, d. 13, ll. 374–78.

62. U.S. National Archives.

63. U.S. National Archives, Record Group - S.D. Ereignismeldung UdSSR, No. 137, Nov. 24, 1941, pp. 16–19; Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 140 - Vollzugsbericht der vordereren Teile der Einsatzgruppe A fur die Zeit vom 6.11. bis 20 11.41, Dec. 1, 1941, p. 3; Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 144, Dec. 10, 1941, p. 8.

64. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 303, l. 529.

65. Ereignismeldung No. 130, 1941. November 7, S.2.

66. U.S. National Archives, Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 123, Oct. 17, 1941, p. 2.

67. *Ibid.*, Ereignismeldung UdSSR. No.137, Nov. 24, 1941, p. 17.

68. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 26, l. 523.

69. *Ibid.*, d. 13, l. 486.

70. *Ibid.*, Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 140, Dec. 1, 1941, p. 3.

71. *Ibid.*, p.n. 38, t. 1, ll. 75–78.

72. Leningrad Party Archive, f. 25, op. 2, d. 4655, ll. 21–23, 26.

73. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1, d. 229, ll. 258, 345, 346–47.

74. *Ibid.*, l. 346.

75. *Ibid.*, ll. 346–47.

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*, l. 348.

78. *Ibid.*, d. 232, l. 93.

79. *Ibid.*, l. 97.

80. *Ibid.*

81. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 146, l. 4.

82. *Ibid.*, f. 32, op. 11302, d. 6, l. 18.

83. *Ibid.*, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 131, l. 18.

84. *Ibid.*, l. 19.

85. *Ibid.*, f. 32. op. 11302, d. 6, l. 308.

86. *Ibid.*, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 306, ll. 2 ob.

87. *Ibid.*, d. 165, ll. 211–12.

88. *Ibid.*, l. 213.

89. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 165, l. 214. The remarks of Korobov, the political leader of the 10th battalion of wounded; Nikaanchuck, a military technician of the first rank from aviation repair base no. 3; Fedorov, a senior lieutenant of a brigade of wounded; Kotov, the head of the engineering service of the 351st antiaircraft artillery regiment and a military technician of the first rank; and others were basically the same, with very insignificant differences.

90. *Ibid.*

91. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1, d. 232, ll. 132, 134.

92. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 165, l. 406.

93. *Ibid.*, d. 131, l. 21.

94. *Ibid.*, l. 22.

95. *Ibid.*

96. *Ibid.*, d. 306, l. 6 ob.

97. *Ibid.*, f. 32, op. 795436, d. 6, l. 76.

98. The contents of this directive are described in a somewhat abridged form in N. I. Sobolev, *Ideologicheskaia rabota KPSS v deistvuiushchei armii, 1941–1945,* 82–83. (Moscow, 1985)

99. TsAMO, f. 32, op. 795436, d. 6, ll. 88–89 ob.

100. TsAVMF, f. 32, op. 795436, d. 6, ll. 88–89 ob.

101. TsAMO, f. 32, op. 11302, d. 208, l. 365.

102. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1. d. 5, l. 39 ob.

103. TsAMO, f. 32, op. 11309, d. 165, l. 139.

104. V. V. Vishnevsky, *Dnevniki voennykh let: 1943, 1945* (Moscow, 1979), 306.

105. TsAVMF, f. 11, op. 2, d. 655, l. 311; f. 102, op. 1, d. 311, l. 44.

106. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 165, l. 516.

107. *Ibid.,* ll. 518 ob–519 ob.

108. *Ibid.,* l. 478.

109. *Ibid.,* d. 131, l. 22.

110. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1, d. 311, l. 95.

111. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 350, ll. 32–33.

112. TsAVMF, f. 102, op. 1, d. 311, l. 97.

113. TsAMO, f. 217, op. 1217, d. 131, l. 91.

114. *Ibid.,* l. 93.

115. *Ibid.*

116. *Ibid.,* ll. 95–96.

117. TsAVMF, f. 11, op. 2, d. 750, ll. 1–46.

118. See Tsentr Khraneniia Istoriko-dokumentalnykh Kollektsii, Moscow (TsKIDK), f. 500, op. 5, d. 23, ll. 125–127. TsKIDK is the former "Special Archive which still has German captured documents, including the German secret service's documents.

119. See Bakhmetiev Archive. Collection ROVS. Correspondence 1940–1944; TsKIDK. f. 1358. op. 1, d. 29, 35, 62.