

Armed Services Technical Information Agency

Because of our limited supply, you are requested to return this copy WHEN IT HAS SERVED YOUR PURPOSE so that it may be made available to other requesters. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

AD 32799

NOTICE: WHEN GOVERNMENT OR OTHER DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS OR OTHER DATA ARE USED FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN IN CONNECTION WITH A DEFINITELY RELATED GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OPERATION, THE U. S. GOVERNMENT THEREBY INCURS NO LIABILITY, NOR ANY OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER; AND THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE FORMULATED, FURNISHED, OR IN ANY WAY SUPPLIED THE DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS, OR OTHER DATA IS NOT TO BE REGARDED BY ANY PERSON OR CORPORATION, OR CONVEYING ANY RIGHTS OR PERMISSION TO MANUFACTURE, REPRODUCE, OR SELL ANY PATENTED INVENTION THAT MAY IN ANY WAY BE RELATED THERETO.

Reproduced by
DOCUMENT SERVICE CENTER
KNOTT BUILDING, DAYTON, 2, OHIO

UNCLASSIFIED

AD No. 52799
ASTIA FILE COPY

TECHNICAL
MEMORANDUM
ORO-T-215

**Basic Patterns of Political and
Propaganda Operations in
the Soviet Armed Forces**

Volume I

by

Dr. Louis Nemzer

Received: 26 January 1953

Copy 103 of 300

THIS IS A WORKING PAPER

Presenting the considered results of study by the ORO staff members responsible for its preparation. The findings and analysis are subject to revision as may be required by new facts or by modification of basic assumptions. Comments and criticism of the contents are invited. Remarks should be addressed to:

The Director
Operations Research Office
The Johns Hopkins University
6410 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Project POWOW
Technical Memorandum ORO-T-215

Received: 26 January 1953

Basic Patterns of Political and Propaganda Operations in the Soviet Armed Forces

Volume I

by
Dr. Louis Nemzer



OPERATIONS RESEARCH OFFICE
The Johns Hopkins University Chevy Chase, Maryland

FOREWORD

This paper does not purport to be a typical product of operations research. Its basic purpose is not to meet any particular immediate problem. It is intended rather to meet the need for a basic exposition of the political and propaganda system in the Soviet armies.

No such study of the political and propaganda system in the Soviet armies has been available hitherto. For any future operations research concerned with the effectiveness of our weapons and methods of psychological warfare against the Soviet Army, it is obvious that intensive knowledge of the nature of the target, particularly of the characteristics of the target which relate to its vulnerability to psychological warfare, would sooner or later be indispensable. It is believed, therefore, that this memorandum should have immediate value for both psychological warfare planning and for training purposes, as well as serving as a general reference and information source. It is hoped that it will have solid value for such purposes for some years to come, and that even when the passage of time makes further work necessary, it will still fulfill the purpose of a sound and basic monograph in its field.

George S. Pettee
Deputy Director, Division H
Operations Research Office

PREFACE

This memorandum is intended to help meet one of the requirements for a possible psychological campaign directed at the military personnel of the USSR. Among other things, the directors of that campaign would need extensive intelligence concerning the factors affecting the attitudes of its target audience. Some of these factors would be the result of the work done by the network of political organizations operating within the Soviet armed forces, and the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense which directs that network. This memorandum analyzes the basic pattern which the Kremlin seeks to use in its system of psychological control and political influence within the Soviet armed forces.

Any anti-Soviet agency seeking to reach and influence the Soviet military audience would find that its direct opponent is the Main Political Administration (MPA), which not only seeks to counter any anti-Soviet propaganda efforts, but is continuously trying to decrease the receptivity of the Soviet personnel to such campaigns. It is the basic mission of the MPA and its subordinate agencies to strengthen the servicemen's loyalty to the Soviet regime, to help increase their military efficiency, and to prepare them psychologically for the tensions and strains of the battlefield.

The foci of this study are the psychological climate which the Soviet leaders are trying to establish in their armed forces, and the structure, operational methods, and psychological techniques of the political agencies used in this effort. It must be stressed that, interesting and important as the subject may be, the data for an intensive study of the Soviet soldiers' reactions to this climate and these agencies do not exist in the Western world, although the available materials have been used in this study whenever possible. The main purpose of the present study, however, has been to determine the patterns of the system which the Soviet leaders are striving to establish, noting the shortcomings in the system as it has evolved thus far.

Something should be said concerning the sources used in this project. Among the materials examined have been: several hundred interrogations of former Soviet servicemen, reported chiefly by five American teams; hundreds of articles, and scores of books and pamphlets, written in the Soviet Union, primarily for the edification of the Soviet political workers and concerned with specific aspects of the propaganda system in the armed forces; thousands of pages of propaganda issued for the Soviet military personnel; and various books, articles, and reports by Western observers dealing with appropriate elements of the Soviet system.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	v
PREFACE	vii
PART I—PLACE OF THE MAIN POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE REGIME	
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER	
1 ASPECTS OF THE MPA RECORD	5
Political Reliability—Political Effectiveness of MPA Propaganda	
2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH MILITARY COMMANDERS	11
Historical Background (1917-39)—Military Commissars—Timoshenko Interlude (1940-41)—World War II—Present Relationships	
3 RELATIONSHIPS WITH SECURITY AGENCIES	25
Security Organs in the Armed Forces—Bases of Cooperation and Antagonism	
4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY	33
Army Communists—Civilian Regional Organizations—National Party Headquarters	
PART II—MPA STRUCTURE, PERSONNEL, AND OPERATIONAL PATTERNS	
5 FUNCTIONS, STRUCTURE, AND PERSONNEL TYPES OF THE PARTY- POLITICAL APPARATUS	45
Major Groups and Functions—MPA of the Ministry of Defense—Political Organs and <i>Zampolits</i> —Auxiliary Forces	
6 TRAINING THE IDEAL POLITICAL WORKER	73
Soviet Image of the Ideal Worker—Some Deviations from the Ideal—Overview of the System of Training Institutions—The Lenin Military-Political Academy—In-Service Training and Instruction	
7 MAJOR PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS IN THE POLITICAL APPARATUS	93
Control and Assignment of Political Personnel—Fact-Finding and Reporting— Command Methods—Planning and Plans—Verification and Other Organizational Controls	
PART III—PATTERNS OF PROPAGANDA CONTENT AND TECHNIQUES	
8 POLITICAL PROPAGANDA	115
Nationalism and Patriotism—The Government and State—Communism and the Party	

CONTENTS (Cont.)

CHAPTER	PAGE
9 MILITARY PROPAGANDA "Standards" Propaganda—"Rationale" Propaganda—Military Pride and Group Loyalties—"Strength" Propaganda	127
10 EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA Fundamental Concepts—"Hate" Propaganda—"Fear" Propaganda—The Stalin Mythology	143
PART IV—FACILITIES, MEDIA, AND BASIC PROPAGANDA FORMS	
11 ORAL AND GRAPHIC PROPAGANDA Agitation and the Agitator—Types and Forms of Agitation—Graphic Agitation—Lectures and Other Propaganda Forms	163
12 THE PRESS AND OTHER PROPAGANDA FORMS AND INSTITUTIONS Military Press System—Films—Radio—Art Media—Institutions for Cultural Enlightenment	179
PART V—SPECIAL PROPAGANDA FORMS APPLIED TO FOUR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES	
13 THE SOLDIERS Propaganda Context in the Light of Objectives and Service Conditions—New Soldiers—System of Political-Training Classes—Non-Russian Soldiers	203
14 THE OFFICERS Position of Military Officers—Political Training and Propaganda in Officers' Schooling—System of Required Marxist-Leninist Study—Supplementary Lectures, University Courses, and "Independent" Study—Political Training for Noncommissioned Officers—Social Work and Political Training for Officers' Wives	232
15 THE COMMUNISTS Party Organization in the Armed Forces—Formal Education System—Primary Party Organization at Work—Individual Communists	255
16 THE KOMSOMOL MEMBERS Place of the Komsomol in the Armed Forces—Komsomol Operational Methods and Controls—Individual Members	290
PART VI—PATTERNS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DURING BATTLE CAMPAIGNS	
INTRODUCTION: PROPAGANDA OBJECTIVES DURING BATTLE CAMPAIGNS	305
17 OPERATIONS DURING A MILITARY CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE PREPARATIONS Political Organs and Political Workers—Communist and Komsomol Organizations—Propaganda among Rank-and-File Soldiers	308
18 OPERATIONS DURING THE BATTLE PERIOD On the Eve of Battle—During the Battle—After the Battle	326
19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DIRECTED AGAINST ENEMY TROOPS Concepts and Aims—Basic Operational Factors—Operational Patterns—Major Themes and Techniques—The Free Germany Committee	350
CLASSIFIED REFERENCES AND NOTES TO VOLUME I	Vol II

CONTENTS (Cont.)

	PAGE
FIGURES	
1. Major Departments of the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense	46
2. MPA Sections for Organization and Administration	46
3. MPA Administration for Propaganda and Agitation	48
4. The <i>Zampolit</i> Instructing His Aides	61
5. The Military Commander in the Role of Agitator	64
6. The <i>Zampolit</i> Explaining Party Directives	125
7. Komsomols Mounting Political Information Photos	166
8. A General Recalling Days of the Nineteenth Party Congress	170
9. Agitator Reading to His Unit	172
10. The Hierarchy for Political-Training Classes	210
11. Political-Training Class Studying Party Statutes	217
12. Organization for Political Activities in the Soviet Armed Forces	219
13. Political Schooling of the Soviet Soldier	233
14. Communist Party Official Directing Non-Party Activists	270

Part I

PLACE OF THE MAIN POLITICAL
ADMINISTRATION IN THE REGIME

INTRODUCTION

Two basic characteristics of the Soviet state, inherent aspects of its totalitarian nature, are the systematic and widespread use of terror and the monopolization of propaganda. They are utilized by the Kremlin through two organizations, the infamous police system and the extensive network of Communist Party organizations, which are found in virtually every area of Soviet society. Within the Soviet armed forces, the propaganda monopoly is exercised by a special arm of the Communist Party, known today as the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense (the MPA), directed by a group of professional political workers, and utilizing the services of the numerous Communist Party and Komsomol branches in the armed forces, and a large percentage of the junior unit commanders. The MPA and its Party-political apparatus are the foci of this study.

Before beginning the analysis of the structure, operational patterns, and propaganda techniques of the MPA and its apparatus, it is necessary to understand their place within the Soviet regime. Although they are basic features of the Soviet system, and would exist within it under virtually any circumstances, the scope of their responsibilities and the extent of their powers have varied considerably through the past three and a half decades, depending upon variations in three major factors.

The first is the degree of trust placed in the MPA by the Kremlin, influenced by the past record of the MPA and its apparatus, and the reputation of its leaders for efficiency and loyalty. Although it has been placed within the Soviet armed forces to insure the efficiency and loyalty of the military personnel, the MPA's own efficiency and loyalty have been sharply questioned by the Kremlin at times and its leadership purged.

A second factor influencing MPA responsibilities and powers is the MPA's place in what might be called the "power triangle" in its area of operations. In every field of Soviet life—education, industry, health, military affairs, and others—the Kremlin has established its own variation of the "divide-and-rule" pattern. At least three major groups maneuver for power, each checking and reporting to the Kremlin on the activities of the other two, each seeking to expand its own authority and trying to prove that it is cooperating fully with the others. These groups might be called the technicians, the police, and the political workers.

In the industrial field, for example, the technicians—the factory and shop managers, the economists and statisticians, the bank managers, and the like—are given special training and ultimate responsibility for meeting the demands upon their economic units; within the same units, however, are small Special

Sections which represent the extensive Soviet police system, and several Party and Komsomol organizations run by the professional Party workers. In the armed forces, the same power triangle exists, with the professional military officers representing the technicians, the Special Sections acting for the police system, and the MPA representing the Party machine. As we shall see, the responsibilities and powers of the political apparatus are strongly influenced by its relationship to the police and to the military officers.

Finally, the position of the MPA, and of the political apparatus which it directs, is affected by its relations to the rest of the Communist Party structure. Even within that structure, there are tensions and struggles. The MPA of the Ministry of Defense exists primarily as an agency of the National Secretariat of the Communist Party, but its position is influenced by pressure from the Army Communist branches and the civilian Party officials.

Chapter 1

ASPECTS OF THE MPA RECORD

POLITICAL RELIABILITY

The Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense is a major instrumentality of the Kremlin, used in its efforts to ensure the loyalty of the military personnel. Strangely enough, the past history of the MPA and its predecessors* indicates that many of its own leaders have shown an inability to guess the direction of events in the Kremlin, and several have even demonstrated some proclivities toward anti-Stalinism. One indication of Stalin's reaction to this situation can be found in the fate of at least ten men who headed the Political Administration since its establishment. The first four were liquidated in Stalinist purges; two others were discarded by Stalin and disappeared into obscurity; and the remaining three were either personal agents of Stalin, or officials of his security police agencies, or both.

On 6 April 1918, after a period in which political and security responsibilities within the various Russian armed forces were performed by several poorly coordinated and often competing groups, these functions were concentrated in an agency named the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic.¹ The first two chiefs of the Political Administration, S. I. Gusev and V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, had careers that were strikingly similar in many ways—and were equally distasteful to Stalin. Both had famous combat records in the Bolshevik Revolution; both had fought under Trotsky in the Civil War of 1918-21; and both were in the anti-Stalinist camp during the struggle for the succession to Lenin's position.² While Antonov-Ovseenko was head of the Political Administration, for example, he joined 45 other Bolshevik leaders in issuing an Open Letter supporting Trotsky's point of view, whereupon he was immediately ousted from office.³

In 1923, when the efforts to silence opposition to Stalin had begun, Trotsky's supporters in the Army secured valuable assistance from some political workers who still retained illusions about the possibility of establishing democratic practices within the Communist Party. The common platform of these groups included a demand for free discussion of all important proposals within Army

*Predecessors of the MPA had many different names, but in virtually every case the name contained the words "Political Administration." For that reason, "Political Administration" has been used as a generic term for all predecessors of the MPA in cases where the exact name is not particularly important.

†Superior numbers refer to reference and bibliographical materials, which have been bound separately as Vol II, SECRET.

Communist units (to which the political workers belonged, and which were supervised by the Political Administration). Among the proposals were several calling for the election of political workers and officers, and for the transference of all responsibility for the guidance of Party units in the Army to elected Party commissions. It was at this time that the head of the Political Administration suddenly issued general instructions, in the form of Circular 200, permitting all proposals to be discussed at meetings of the Party branches.

There were two immediate results. First, the proposals of the Opposition were widely discussed, and they received considerable support among the Army Communists and political workers, especially within the Moscow Military District where they were approved by at least one-third of all Party calls. Secondly, it was disclosed that the Political Administration had failed to secure approval for its Circular instructions from the Party's Central Committee, approval which was required in the case of all important directives and had to be obtained through the Central Committee's Secretary-General, Joseph Stalin. Severe censure was pronounced by the Party's highest disciplinary body, the Central Control Commission, which declared that the Circular was creating "a hostile mood among the military Communists against the guiding organs of the Party," and charged that this and related actions were "dangerous."⁴ The eventual outcome was an intensive purge of the political staff.

With the passage of time, it became obvious that the Kremlin was coming to accept the view that the Army commanders should have almost complete freedom of action in military matters, and this attitude was sharply criticized by many Communists who feared the danger of military Bonapartism. They declared that proletarian influences in the Army were being diminished, and that commanders who were lukewarm in their loyalties to Communist and non-Party commanders were being given too much leeway. It is significant that such views were freely expressed at the school which trained political workers for the armed forces, the Tolmachev Military-Political Academy. The Party organization at the Academy actually issued a public resolution attacking the non-Communist officers and the principle of unity of command in the Army, although Defense Commissar Voroshilov and others close to Stalin had defended both.⁵ Judging by public sources of information, including resolutions and statements reported in the military press, these anti-Stalinist views were supported during 1928-29 by many other Party organizations in the Army and among political personnel, especially in the Belorussian Military District.⁶ Voroshilov later frankly admitted that these opposition groups had been active, but insisted they had been removed with speed and efficiency.⁷

A. S. Bubnov, who once had been a member of the Politburo, served as head of the Political Administration from 1923 to 1929, and was then transferred to the Russian Commissariat of Education before being purged.⁸ He was succeeded by Jan Gamarnik, a powerful political figure in that period, who ran the Political Administration for almost a decade.⁹ Under Gamarnik's skillful leadership, the personnel of the political apparatus seemed to be making a notable adaptation to life in the Stalinist state when calamity struck again. On 12 June 1937, *Pravda* announced that a great conspiracy had been discovered in the Red Army, with eight high military leaders guilty of "espionage and treason to the Fatherland" and shot. A far-reaching purge was now under way among the military commanders, and it soon engulfed the political workers, beginning with the star-

ting announcement that Jan Gamarnik had himself been part of the conspiracy, although he had committed suicide before he could be arrested and punished. For this, Commissar of Defense Voroshilov, who had been one of Gamarnik's immediate superiors, called him a "traitor and coward," part and parcel of the "treacherous, counterrevolutionary military fascist organization" which had long been carrying out "dastardly crippling, wrecking, and espionage work in the Red Army."¹⁰

The entire Political Administration now became suspect, and serious charges were levied against it, providing justification for an extensive purge. The Party's special magazine for the Army Communists declared, for example, that those connected with the Political Administration in particular, and the Army Communists in general, had, through their dangerous "political carelessness" and disregard of Marxist doctrine, failed in their obligation to detect and report the conspiracy and its operations.¹¹ The Army organ *Red Star* insisted that Trotskiites had been permitted to occupy high posts from which they were able to "weaken army cadres, to demoralize them, and to make them a political instrument of their counterrevolutionary work," which could only have been accomplished with the active cooperation of the Political Administration itself.¹² For these and related crimes, Gamarnik's two chief assistants and most of his staff were turned over to the secret police, and the entire military-political apparatus put through an intensive inspection, purge, and reorganization.¹³ The task of reorganization was assigned to Gamarnik's successor, Lev Mekhlis, a veteran Party worker often used by Stalin in this period for purges and other special assignments.

In 1939, Voroshilov was still talking about the process of "removal" which apparently was taking place in the military-political organs, and he spoke proudly of the purge which had, "with an iron broom," swept the Army of its traitors. All Party members and political personnel were ordered to carry out intensive "self-criticism" and criticism of others at meetings, and to inculcate the soldiers and commanders with "a revolutionary vigilance" that would enable them to ferret out all enemies regardless of "protective coloring."¹⁴

Drastic steps were also taken to bring thousands of new political workers into the Party-political organizational apparatus. This paralleled the determined efforts made throughout the military services to close the gaps left in the wake of the purges, by promoting officers who had survived investigation or who had proved their loyalty to the Stalinist machine, or by bringing into active service new personnel from military academies or civilian life. There were numerous instances of rapid advancement among military commanders,¹⁵ and a directive from Stalin called for the promotion of political workers and administrative personnel.¹⁶ Among the measures adopted were the lowering of age limits for active service of commanding personnel, and the immediate promotion and assignment to duty of ten thousand cadets in service and political academies of the military forces, several months before the end of the normal school year.¹⁷ It was not long before Voroshilov and the military-political organs could report that important posts in the political organizations were being filled by thousands of "remarkable young men" and "talented commanders and political workers."¹⁸

In general, the purges of 1937-38 inflicted considerable damage on the Army's political services. Almost the entire leadership was eliminated and its

policies disgraced, while many of the middle and lower political workers were shot, fired, or placed on probation. The morale and confidence of the entire organization was considerably shaken, and the *esprit de corps* was further weakened by the great influx of new and inexperienced political workers who were distrustful of, and even antagonistic to, the survivors of the purges.¹⁹ The prestige of the political services among the military personnel was low, considerable tension continued to exist,²⁰ and hostility on the part of the military officers was heightened by the new security duties of the military commissars and political workers. Finally, the relationship of the political services to the Kremlin was affected. There were various indications that the Kremlin still distrusted the loyalty of its military-political staff and held a low opinion of its efficiency. Despite the lowered prestige of the political personnel, however, greatly increased duties were assigned them, primarily because the reputations of the military commanders had been more thoroughly discredited. In particular, this was shown in the revival of the institution of the military commissar, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

For a time Mekhlis was replaced as head of the Political Administration by A. I. Zaporozhets,* but he resumed the post in the first months of World War II. The war brought new troubles for the Political Administration, not only because of its failure to halt the tremendous numbers of surrenders in the early part of the struggle, but because many of its own staff members surrendered themselves. Some of these political workers and Communist officers not only allowed themselves to be taken prisoners, they even made themselves available for use by the Germans and by the Vlassov and other Russian movements sponsored by the Nazis.

Among the most famous "traitor" political workers was Battalion Commissar Milenti Zykov, who was one of the chief advisors for General Vlassov during the middle years of the war. During the thirties, Zykov had edited a provincial paper, been an assistant editor of *Izvestiya*, and had been sent to Siberia in temporary disgrace. He was apparently released shortly before the German attack in 1941, reinstated in the Communist Party, and assigned to the Red Army as an important political officer. He was in charge of political work in a Soviet division when captured in the summer of 1942, but he had no difficulty in switching allegiance. He was soon doing propaganda work for the Germans.²¹

Another anti-Soviet official was Georgi N. Zhilenkov, who had been Party secretary in one of the largest districts of Moscow before the war. He too was sent into the political apparatus of the Red Army, and became one of the political members of the Military Council of the Twenty-fourth Soviet Army. After his capture, he became a propagandist for the Nazis, and then was made chief of the Propaganda Department for the Vlassov Movement. Similar cases can be cited from the histories of the less-publicized, German-sponsored, Russian movements such as the Kaminski Brigade, in which the Secretary-General of the Russian National-Socialist Party was a former regional secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.²²

The importance of the Political Administration's assignments, and the Kremlin's lack of trust in its leadership, seem to be implied in the appointment of a new chief during 1942. The new head of the Political Administration was Alexander Shcherbakov, a candidate to the Politburo, head of the Moscow organ-

*For a discussion of Zaporozhets' role, see Chapter 2.

ization of the Party, and a close associate of Stalin himself. Shcherbakov supervised the MPA, but turned over day-to-day control of its work to a small staff of trusted men who had come up within the Army's political apparatus during the great purges of 1937-38. His chief assistant was Joseph Shikin, who had first been mentioned in the *Army Press* in 1940, when he was a regimental commissar about thirty-six years old. In December of that year he was transferred to Leningrad, which was under the control of Andrei Zhdanov, and apparently became one of the latter's protégés. He was soon made deputy chief of the Political Administration of the Leningrad Military District, and moved up in the Soviet hierarchy along with Zhdanov, who then was regarded by many as a likely successor to Stalin himself. During the war, Shikin was given a place in the MPA and became one of Shcherbakov's deputies. When the latter died in May 1945, Shikin was chosen to write one of his most important obituaries and was formally named as his successor by the end of that year.²³

Shikin guided the destinies of the MPA during the crucial period of transition after World War II, a time of bitter struggle for power within the Kremlin.²⁴ Zhdanov, who had been temporarily eclipsed during the war, was able to return to his former position only after his rivals, led principally by Georgi Malenkov, had lost some of their authority. Even after Zhdanov's star had risen again, Shikin's administration of the MPA was criticized in the public press, indicative of political weakness in the Soviet Union. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Zhdanov died in 1948, Shikin's position was seriously weakened. *Red Star* mentioned casually in the spring of 1949 that a new man was head of the MPA; it indicated a few months later that Shikin had been demoted to the directorship of the Lenin Military-Political Academy; and finally, during 1950, it referred to a former subordinate of Shikin's as having taken over the Academy post. Shikin has not been mentioned in the public press since that time.²⁵

In reviewing the Political Administration's record for loyalty and its influence upon the Kremlin, it is necessary to keep in mind that each new appointment to a post was made with the expectation that the appointee would be a loyal Stalinist. Presumably he was given an opportunity to prove himself fit for the Kremlin's trust. Nevertheless, the past record of the Political Administration probably has had some effect upon the position of its new leaders, and upon the Kremlin's attitude toward them. It is significant that Shikin's successor, and the present chief of the MPA, was Col. Gen. F. F. Kuznetsov, whose previous career had been closely connected with the security agencies of the Soviet.*

POLITICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF MPA PROPAGANDA

In addition to the unhappy reputation of the Political Administration's leadership and staff for periodic political unreliability, its record for efficiency has not been consistently satisfactory. In the past, this record has included such spectacular failures as the famous revolt of the Kronstadt garrison supported by civilians and sailors. This was led by formerly loyal Bolsheviks and other leftists who took over this former Communist stronghold in 1921 and demanded an end to the Bolshevik dictatorship. The participants were animated by ideological motives which the political workers had been expected to channelize and

*Kuznetsov's background is reviewed in Chapter 3, in the discussion of the Political Administration's relationships with the Soviet security agencies.

control, yet some political workers and rank-and-file Communists apparently took part in the revolt.²⁶ To the credit of the Political Administration, however, the Red Army and Navy were successfully kept under control, with few important exceptions, during the dangerous period of forced agricultural collectivization and of intensive industrialization in 1928-32, although there were many indications of the fierce resentment and anti-Stalinist attitudes which existed among the officers and men.²⁷

A major crisis for the political apparatus occurred during the first year of World War II. One of the most important tasks assigned to the political workers was to convince the Soviet soldiers that they must fight to the end, never surrendering and never giving aid to the enemy under any circumstances. In this task, the political apparatus failed signally, and the record of this failure will probably plague the MPA for a long time. During 1941-42, regardless of the actual causes, the Red Army suffered tremendous defeats and was forced to retreat far behind the borders established by the Soviet-Nazi pacts. According to official Nazi figures of that period, some 3,600,000 Red Army personnel were registered in prison camps before 1 March 1942; hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers died before they reached any real prisoner-of-war camps, and some Western observers have therefore placed the actual figures at nearly one million per month for the first half-year.²⁸

The political workers apparently were able to do little in this period. Stalin gave some hint of the criticism which must have been directed against them when he publicly declared that "complacency and lack of intensive feeling were observed among Red Army men during the first months of the war."²⁹ Probably a closer approximation of the censure within the regime may be found in a secret report, captured by the Germans, in which the head of the Political Administration wrote: ". . . the necessary purposefulness, alertness, initiative, and intelligence have been lacking in our Party-political and agitational-propaganda work. Many workers of the political organs and many deputy commanders for political affairs . . . are ineffective in combating improper organization, confusion, panic, undisciplinatory action, and criminal lack of vigilance."³⁰

As the war developed, of course, the position of the political workers improved. The Red Army, aided by Hitler's mistakes and the East European weather, won some notable victories. Thousands of Communists and many Party leaders came into the political apparatus which was able to deal more adequately with its tasks, especially as the temper of the men improved after the victory of Stalingrad and the hard-won successes in Germany.³¹

Little reliable information is available for judging the MPA's postwar performance and its present reputation for efficiency. It must be noted, however, that increasingly harsh police controls have been established over the Soviet Occupation Armies in Eastern Germany and Austria, although the military units in these forces are reputedly composed of select personnel. This would suggest that the propaganda of the political apparatus has been found to be inadequate to its tasks.³² Nevertheless, for the foreseeable future, the MPA will continue to play an important role within the Soviet armed forces so long as the Bolshevik principle of Party monopolization of propaganda continues in force.

Chapter 2

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MILITARY COMMANDERS*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1917-39)

Mutual antagonism has been a fundamental aspect of the relationship between the military commanders and the political workers since the early days of the Red Army, an inevitable consequence of the political workers' functions in the fields of security and propaganda and an obvious result of their interference with the processes of command. When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, they decided to continue the system of commissars established by the Korenski government, by which special representatives and plenipotentiaries with important powers were located in key positions within the Russian armed forces.¹ Even after the old Tsarist Army was destroyed and the new Red Army created to take its place, the continuation of the commissar system† was justified as a mechanism of the Soviet government for political self-defense against the thirty thousand ex-Tsarist officers whom the government was forced to use in the Russian Civil War of 1918-21.² Moreover, the Communist Party claimed for itself a monopoly in political propaganda throughout the Soviet state, and utilized the same commissars and their assistants in its propaganda operations within the Red Army.

Even during the Civil War, these forms of interference with the military commander's control of his men were constant sources of irritation and complaint to the professional military leaders. At first, there was hope that the need for such interference would disappear after the Civil War, and that eventually all ex-Tsarist and most non-Communist officers would be replaced by Communists.³ By 1921, Communist officers already constituted 20 percent of the commanding personnel, but even these men—Tukhachevski, for example—strongly resented the work of the commissars.⁴ Trotsky himself, the Party's chief agent assigned to the Red Army, declared that, in principle, he believed there should be unified control of each military unit under a commander who should have authority, not only in operational matters, but also in the fields of politics and ethics.⁵

From this period onward, a struggle began for unified command within the Soviet armed forces, a struggle which has continued in various forms until the present day.⁶ Some success was achieved in the period after 1924, when those

*It should be noted that this chapter is concerned with the antagonisms and political relationships existing between the officer corps and the political apparatus, particularly at the top of each structure. The methods used by the political workers to propagandize the officers is the subject of Chapter 14.

†The major elements of the commissar system are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

SUMMARY OF THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN POLITICAL WORKERS AND MILITARY COMMANDERS

- Nov 1917 Bolsheviks take power; retain Russian Army's commissar system.
- 1918-21 New Red Army retains many untrusted military commanders, but Soviet employs propaganda monopoly, Communist Party military branches, and commissars to control them. Thus begin divided-control tradition and military commander-political worker antagonism.
- 1921-24 With end of military threat to regime, position of military commanders worsens; decreased attention and poor facilities given to armed forces. Political works profit from relations with Party workers under Stalin's growing power.
- 1924-37 External military threat, especially from Germany and Japan, places premium on military efficiency and morale. Soviet makes slow improvement in position of Army officers. Simultaneously, political workers' control powers diminish somewhat, and operational control of units turned over to Communist commanders.
- 1937-38 Widespread purge of military establishment hits particularly at commanders; one-half of senior officers disappear, and survivors' powers are reduced. Political apparatus also purged, but eventually strengthened with new leaders, additional personnel, and restored control functions, including those of commissars.
- 1939-40 Initial fiasco and temporary defeats in Finnish War point up need for drastic changes in armed forces.
- May 1940-
June 1941 "Timoshenko Interlude" in which commanders' influence rises to new heights. Sharp insistence on military discipline and efficiency; restriction of Party branches' powers and privileges; elimination of "socialist competition" and other signs of "false democracy" in military affairs. Curtailment of political workers' authority symbolized by abolition of commissars; political workers pressured to learn military science and fit into military life.
- 1941-42 Military disasters lead Kremlin to concentrate power in hands of political agents, and to revive institution of commissars. Many political workers and military reserve officers sent into armed forces; prestige of veteran military leaders falls.
- 1942-46 Desperate situation leads Stalin to gamble with concessions to officers, including abolition of commissars; reliance on young military professionals, rather than military-political veterans like Voroshilov and Budyennyi. Zhukov and other officers given public honors. Political workers removed from company and other lower levels, but reinforced at higher levels with appointees from civilian Party posts.
- 1947-50 Some decrease in officers' prestige; tendency to remove war leaders from public view and minimize their contribution to victory.
- 1950-53 Gradual increase in military professionals' influence. Political workers restored on company level, but many recruits taken from junior military officers. Vigorous propaganda campaign emphasizing military commanders' powers and responsibilities. Political officers remain strong, however, with propaganda monopoly, responsibility for evaluating military professionals' political records, other duties in military units, and civilian Party leaders' support.

commanders who were Communist Party members and considered politically trustworthy were permitted operational control of their units, in accordance with the widely proclaimed Soviet principle of *edinonachalie* or unified management.⁷ Many officers who were later to become famous, such as Rokossovski, Konev, Sokolovski, and Timoshenko, served as commander-commissars, and special courses were established in the military-political schools to give political training to military commanders.⁸ However, the political organs continued their propaganda and related work even within units headed by the trusted men, and all efforts to secure the complete subordination of the political workers to the military headquarters proved fruitless. These efforts were officially termed "most noxious and most dangerous," and the autonomy of the political workers continued without any interference from the military commanders.⁹

Within these limits, the position of the military commanders continued to improve until 1937. In 1935, for example, personal ranks for the commanders were re-established, with new Western titles for the levels from lieutenant to brigadier, and a continuation of Soviet names for officers from divisional commander to army commanders of first rank.¹⁰ In addition, the work of military commanders and technicians was officially decreed to be a lifelong profession (thus abandoning any illusions about citizen, nonprofessional armies), and the General Staff Academy was established.¹¹ In fact, during this period, Defense Commissar Voroshilov found there was a dangerous tendency among some military commanders to ignore or misuse the political worker and to undertake too much political work themselves.¹²

This trend toward a satisfactory position for the professional Soviet soldier, which depended on the continued and increasing confidence of the Kremlin, was brought to an abrupt halt in 1937. The Kremlin suddenly decided, for reasons which have been guessed at but never completely understood by Western observers, to undertake a widespread purge of the military leaders. Among those who disappeared at the top levels were: three Deputy Commissars of Defense; virtually all 80 members of the Council of War, established in 1934 to advise the Commissar of Defense; the heads of Military Aviation, of the Navy, and of the Far Eastern Front; and the commanders of most military districts and their deputy commanders. Many persons holding special posts were included, such as the head of the War College, the former military attaché to Great Britain, and the head of the civilian society for aid to the armed forces. Competent observers have estimated that of the sixty thousand officers in the Soviet Army at this time, at least one-third disappeared, and this estimate includes one-half of the senior officers and two-thirds of the High Command and General Staffs.¹³

MILITARY COMMISSARS

In 1937, the Kremlin decided to restore the system of military commissars in its entirety. Before examining the salient features of this system, two points should be noted. The original commissar system had been utilized in the Russian Civil War to protect the new Soviet regime against those hostile elements which it had been forced to use within its own armed forces. When the commissar system was restored in 1937, and again in 1941, however, it was used to protect the regime, which had been in power for two decades, against its own supporters,

many of whom had been educated under Soviet direction. Clearly, this is an indication of a major element of instability, of fear and hostility by the populace, which the Soviet leaders must continue to take into account. Furthermore, it should be realized that, while the system of military commissars has been abolished three times, at least partially, it will continue for an indeterminate time to be a potential instrument of the government. It will be restored whenever the confidence of the Soviet leaders in their military commanders is at a low level—a real possibility if there should be the threat of political opposition within the Soviet Union or the fear of military defeat by an outside force.

By a decree on 10 May 1937, the institution of the military commissar was completely restored throughout the armed forces, and no exceptions were permitted, regardless of the trustworthiness of the commanders' Party affiliations. Some three months later, the position of the military commissar was described in detail in a special governmental enactment.¹⁴ Although this particular statute was actually in force for less than three years, many of the powers and responsibilities thus outlined were transferred to the political officers after the post of commissar was abolished. Four aspects of the commissar system are noteworthy.

First, two lines of authority were created which crossed at many points, but which still retained individual identities within the Soviet armed forces. The commissar was appointed by the People's Commissar for Defense, but only upon the recommendation of the Political Administration. His activities thereafter were regulated by orders and instructions issued through two lines of command: the military line, beginning with the People's Commissar for Defense and ending with the military commander in his own army or division; and the political apparatus, including the Political Administration and the political organs. These competing lines of authority continue to exist to the present day.

Second, the military commissar was given important security functions. He had the task of protecting the unit from infiltration by "enemies of the people," meaning spies and saboteurs, and of putting an immediate and "decisive" end to any actions that were injurious to the Red Army. In addition, the commissar was expected to teach the soldiers and officers why they must participate in the struggle against "enemies of the people," and why they must take special care to preserve military secrets. In this area of activity today, the political officers share responsibility with the military organs of the Ministry of State Security.

Third, the commissar was given special military responsibilities, most of which were peculiar to his position, and which were not transferred to the political officers when the post of commissar was abolished. The most important of these pertained to orders issued to the unit, all of which were to be signed jointly by the commander and the commissar, even those dealing with military operations. Along with the commander, the commissar bore joint responsibility for the execution of military duties by all personnel, for the maintenance of military discipline, for operational readiness, and for the condition of all military property charged to the unit. Although these specific regulations were outmoded after the abolition of the post of military commissar in 1940 and 1942, it should be noted that the political officer still may receive military duties in some situations. For example, political workers at the middle levels, who serve as deputies for political affairs of company, battalion, or regimental

commanders, may take over the duties of their chiefs in their absence or disability.¹⁵

Finally, there were the essential political duties assigned to the commissars, virtually all of which later devolved upon the political workers. The decree restoring the commissar system began with the statement that the commissars were appointed for the direction and execution of Party-political operations with the armed forces. Both the commanders and commissars were held responsible for the political and moral condition of their units and for imbuing personnel with a spirit of unlimited loyalty to the Fatherland and to the Soviet government. In testing the effects of these propaganda duties, the commissars were expected to make a continuous and "all-sided" study of each man in the unit, to know his moods, needs, and requirements. They were expected to take appropriate measures to combat "undesirable phenomena," and regularly report all these measures to the military commander and to higher-level commissars and political organs.

Along the same lines, but far more important, was a task which continues today to be the responsibility of the political workers. The commissar was to have an equal hand in the preparation of the service record or attestation of officers, while bearing exclusive responsibility for drawing up a "detailed political characterization" (part of the attestation) of each member of the commanding personnel. These papers are vital factors in determining promotions and assignments, and give the political personnel important powers. The commissar, according to a decree issued 15 August 1937, made recommendations and executed orders concerning promotions and transfers of all officers in his unit.

The political apparatus itself was the object of much suspicion and some purging by the Kremlin at this time. The military lost a great deal of prestige and power, and the political workers lost less only because the Kremlin assigned trusted civilian agents to work in the Political Administration, and very rapidly advanced the most trustworthy of the young political workers in the academies. In actual fact, the real victor in this period was the military branch of the secret police, as the next chapter of this memorandum shows.

TIMOSHENKO INTERLUDE (1940-41)

Although the military purges, and the political changes which accompanied them, may have brought the Soviet leaders a greater sense of security against actual or potential domestic foes, they weakened military power for use against foreign enemies. This was proved in the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-40, when the Red Army took four months and committed costly errors before it was able to defeat the tiny Finnish forces. Observers in Moscow reported the widely held belief that "part of the Red Army's failure in Finland was due to the divided authority" between the Soviet High Command and the Political Administration.¹⁶

In the face of a real danger that war would come with stronger foes than Finland, Stalin saw the need for drastic measures to strengthen his military forces. On 8 May 1940, he took the unprecedented step of removing his long-time comrade and lieutenant in military matters, Voroshilov, from the Commissariat for Defense and replacing him with a military specialist, General

Semen Konstantinovich Timoshenko. For over 14 months, until Stalin himself became People's Commissar for Defense a month after the Nazi attack on Russia, Timoshenko held the broadest powers ever permitted a Soviet military leader before or since.

Timoshenko himself was typical in many ways of the new Soviet officer. Born in 1895 in the family of a poor peasant, he had been drafted as a young man into the Tsarist Army. He participated in the revolutionary movement, then joined the Red Army and rose to the rank of divisional commander by the end of the Civil War in 1921. He was sent to military school immediately thereafter, and then given a series of diversified assignments including study and work in Germany and Britain. In the next decade, he rose to the rank of commander of a military district, commanded the troops which marched into Poland in September 1939, and smashed the military resistance of Finland in March 1940. Politically, his record was spotless in the eyes of the Kremlin. He had served as a commander-commissar for many years, had graduated from a special course for commanders in political work at a military-political academy, and was untouched in the purges of 1937-38. A Communist for many years, he was made a member of the Party's All-Union Central Committee in 1939, and had served on the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Ukraine and Belorussia.¹⁷

Timoshenko and his comrades had protested that the special position given to the political workers gravely weakened the authority of the officers, that the attitudes fostered by the political apparatus made impossible the type of morale and discipline required in a modern army, and that political meetings and other frills were being substituted for the requisite hard military training under battle conditions. With his new authority as Defense Commissar, Timoshenko soon secured the abolition of the institution of the military commissar.¹⁸ He continued the efforts begun earlier to restore military ranks among the military commanders, and in other ways, to raise their morale and authority.¹⁹

Most important, Timoshenko undertook to increase military efficiency through the most rigid troop discipline. He established training methods under conditions which approximated those of actual war as closely as possible, and conducted a campaign against those political influences which lowered the combat efficiency of Army units.²⁰ Typical of Timoshenko's reforms were the heavy responsibilities placed upon officers in the new Disciplinary Code promulgated on 12 October 1940. Previously, the Soviet officer had the right to use force to secure compliance with instructions, only with respect to battle directives and then only in the battle area; the new Code made it plain that the officer would not be punished if he found it necessary to use arms, or any other form of violence, to secure obedience and discipline. The Code stated further: "A commander failing to exhibit firmness and decisiveness and stopping short of taking all possible measures to bring about compliance with his instructions is himself subject to court-martial."²¹

As part of these efforts to strengthen the authority of the officers, Timoshenko took steps to subordinate the political workers to the military commanders. Leadership of the Political Administration was changed drastically. Its chief had been Lev Mekhlis, an important political figure who had been Stalin's secretary, editor of *Pravda*, and a member of the *Orgburo*. Mekhlis was now transferred to head the new Commissariat for State Control. In his place

was chosen A. I. Zaporozhets, of whom little had been known and whose position depended in large part on his ability to work with Timoshenko and the other military commanders. He apparently did quite well, and was soon promoted to Army Commissar 1st rank, was made a candidate member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and in the spring of 1941, an Assistant Chief of the Commissariat of Defense.²² The functions of the political service were clearly indicated in the new name of the service's top level, which came to be known as the Chief Administration for Political Propaganda of the Red Army.²³

Some indication of the new relationship between the military commanders and political workers can be found in two speeches made in 1940. The first, by Timoshenko during tactical maneuvers in late summer, bluntly told political workers in a rifle division stationed near Moscow that they must put an end to "paper-pushing" and other time-wasting practices, and concentrate on vital work with the rank-and-file soldiers. This speech was widely disseminated, and the political workers were warned that they must take this advice to heart.²⁴ The second speech was delivered several months later by Zaporozhets, before a conference of Army Communists and political leaders in the Baltic Military District.²⁵

Zaporozhets' speech was republished in a 20-page pamphlet. Stalin's name occurred five times in it, usually in a ceremonial context at the beginning and end; Timoshenko's name appeared ten times, referred to as the source for leadership and guidance. The lessons stressed were those connected with Timoshenko's name—the need to work with small units, to create a training atmosphere close to that found on the battlefield, and to demand a high level of military discipline. The political workers, in addition, were warned they must direct all their efforts to raising the military power and to intensifying the authority of the military commander.

Zaporozhets' criticism is highly revealing. He scolded those who interpreted Timoshenko's reforms as meaning both that there had been a decrease in the importance of political work and that the political workers' role had been reduced to that of political drill. On the contrary, he insisted that the political apparatus would continue to be an important part of the Army structure. While stressing the need for improvement of political propaganda, Zaporozhets warned his assistants to remember that they were part of an army, that they must help the men to become better soldiers and must themselves study the military arts. The Main Administration for Political Propaganda, he declared, was undertaking a whole series of measures for "the militarization of the political corps." The entire program of the military-political academies, for example, was being reconstructed in order to put great emphasis on military discipline. In addition, a special directive had been issued to the political workers on the regimental and brigade levels to organize military classes for their subordinates.

Zaporozhets also called attention to Timoshenko's statements concerning the better utilization of the various mass media for military purposes. A number of steps had already been taken, including the calling of a conference of writers on military themes and the establishment of a planned program for the creation of needed military books. Real improvement was demanded for the newspapers and magazines issued by military units, and some harsh and detailed criticism given of a number of Army newspapers which were devoting little attention to the questions of military discipline, the strengthening of officers' authority, and

other vital military problems. Finally, he accused these same journals of copying from civilian newspapers items which did not belong in the military press.²⁶

During the Timoshenko period, a determined effort was made to deal with other grievances of the military commanders. One source of frequent complaint had been the application to military affairs of the system of "socialist competition." In civilian life, this system was used to boost production by establishing records and norms which individuals were encouraged to surpass, and by arranging contests between small shops, large factories, and even entire industries. In the effort to transplant this system to the military realm, there were contests arranged between platoons, for example, in which points were given units for desirable individual behavior on the march, for having the fewest stragglers due to foot trouble, the highest scores during target practice, and the best political work during military training.²⁷ A determined effort was made to secure a better adaptation of "socialist competition" to military life, but eventually the competitive system was abolished.²⁸

The military commanders also demanded an end to practices which, they declared, were rooted in "false democracy" and led to failure of some soldiers to salute superior officers. There was also a tendency to use familiar phraseology in speaking to officers and some efforts to establish overfriendly relationships.²⁹

An area of special difficulty involved the position of the rank and file who belonged to the Communist Party or to the Communist Union of Youth (Komsomol). The political workers were sternly commanded to abandon their "liberal attitude" toward Communists who violated rules of military discipline, and to take drastic steps to reduce the large number of disciplinary misdeeds by the men who ought to be model soldiers.³⁰ Another grievance of equal importance was the continuing custom of subjecting military commanders to criticism at Communist and Komsomol meetings; Zaporozhets' office issued a special directive to end this practice.³¹

As a result of these changes, it was normally not possible for the Communist Party branch in any military unit to discuss even the Party conduct of the commander of that military unit. Thus, the Party organization in a particular battalion was not only forbidden to discuss the military and social activities of the battalion commander, but it might discuss his activities as a Party member only with special permission from the Political Administration in Moscow. If the battalion commander committed any Party misdeeds, it might be discussed only by the Party agency at the next highest level, in this case by the divisional Party commission.³²

The powers of the political workers and the Communist branches had been sharply curtailed, but the military commanders were obviously not yet satisfied.³³ They continued to exert strong pressure for the complete subordination, or possibly the eventual elimination, of the political workers. It is interesting to note that their speeches setting forth this viewpoint were given considerable publicity in the Army press. One of the most active proponents of this view was General Andrei A. Vlassov, later to become the most publicized anti-Bolshevik leader among the German prisoners of war, who, at this time, was head of a crack division in the Kiev Military District.³⁴

A strenuous effort was exerted to answer one of the criticisms made by the military officers who often ridiculed the political workers for their ignorance in

other vital military problems. Finally, he accused these same journals of copying from civilian newspapers items which did not belong in the military press.²⁶

During the Timoshenko period, a determined effort was made to deal with other grievances of the military commanders. One source of frequent complaint had been the application to military affairs of the system of "socialist competition." In civilian life, this system was used to boost production by establishing records and norms which individuals were encouraged to surpass, and by arranging contests between small shops, large factories, and even entire industries. In the effort to transplant this system to the military realm, there were contests arranged between platoons, for example, in which points were given units for desirable individual behavior on the march, for having the fewest stragglers due to foot trouble, the highest scores during target practice, and the best political work during military training.²⁷ A determined effort was made to secure a better adaptation of "socialist competition" to military life, but eventually the competitive system was abolished.²⁸

The military commanders also demanded an end to practices which, they declared, were rooted in "false democracy" and led to failure of some soldiers to salute superior officers. There was also a tendency to use familiar phraseology in speaking to officers and some efforts to establish overfriendly relationships.²⁹

An area of special difficulty involved the position of the rank and file who belonged to the Communist Party or to the Communist Union of Youth (Komsomol). The political workers were sternly commanded to abandon their "liberal attitude" toward Communists who violated rules of military discipline, and to take drastic steps to reduce the large number of disciplinary misdeeds by the men who ought to be model soldiers.³⁰ Another grievance of equal importance was the continuing custom of subjecting military commanders to criticism at Communist and Komsomol meetings; Zaporozhets' office issued a special directive to end this practice.³¹

As a result of these changes, it was normally not possible for the Communist Party branch in any military unit to discuss even the Party conduct of the commander of that military unit. Thus, the Party organization in a particular battalion was not only forbidden to discuss the military and social activities of the battalion commander, but it might discuss his activities as a Party member only with special permission from the Political Administration in Moscow. If the battalion commander committed any Party misdeeds, it might be discussed only by the Party agency at the next highest level, in this case by the divisional Party commission.³²

The powers of the political workers and the Communist branches had been sharply curtailed, but the military commanders were obviously not yet satisfied.³³ They continued to exert strong pressure for the complete subordination, or possibly the eventual elimination, of the political workers. It is interesting to note that their speeches setting forth this viewpoint were given considerable publicity in the Army press. One of the most active proponents of this view was General Andrei A. Vlassov, later to become the most publicized anti-Bolshevik leader among the German prisoners of war, who, at this time, was head of a crack division in the Kiev Military District.³⁴

A strenuous effort was exerted to answer one of the criticisms made by the military officers who often ridiculed the political workers for their ignorance in

was chosen A. I. Zaporozhets, of whom little had been known and whose position depended in large part on his ability to work with Timoshenko and the other military commanders. He apparently did quite well, and was soon promoted to Army Commissar 1st rank, was made a candidate member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and in the spring of 1941, an Assistant Chief of the Commissariat of Defense.²² The functions of the political service were clearly indicated in the new name of the service's top level, which came to be known as the Chief Administration for Political Propaganda of the Red Army.²³

Some indication of the new relationship between the military commanders and political workers can be found in two speeches made in 1940. The first, by Timoshenko during tactical maneuvers in late summer, bluntly told political workers in a rifle division stationed near Moscow that they must put an end to "paper-pushing" and other time-wasting practices, and concentrate on vital work with the rank-and-file soldiers. This speech was widely disseminated, and the political workers were warned that they must take this advice to heart.²⁴ The second speech was delivered several months later by Zaporozhets, before a conference of Army Communists and political leaders in the Baltic Military District.²⁵

Zaporozhets' speech was republished in a 20-page pamphlet. Stalin's name occurred five times in it, usually in a ceremonial context at the beginning and end; Timoshenko's name appeared ten times, referred to as the source for leadership and guidance. The lessons stressed were those connected with Timoshenko's name—the need to work with small units, to create a training atmosphere close to that found on the battlefield, and to demand a high level of military discipline. The political workers, in addition, were warned they must direct all their efforts to raising the military power and to intensifying the authority of the military commander.

Zaporozhets' criticism is highly revealing. He scolded those who interpreted Timoshenko's reforms as meaning both that there had been a decrease in the importance of political work and that the political workers' role had been reduced to that of political drill. On the contrary, he insisted that the political apparatus would continue to be an important part of the Army structure. While stressing the need for improvement of political propaganda, Zaporozhets warned his assistants to remember that they were part of an army, that they must help the men to become better soldiers and must themselves study the military arts. The Main Administration for Political Propaganda, he declared, was undertaking a whole series of measures for "the militarization of the political corps." The entire program of the military-political academies, for example, was being reconstructed in order to put great emphasis on military discipline. In addition, a special directive had been issued to the political workers on the regimental and brigade levels to organize military classes for their subordinates.

Zaporozhets also called attention to Timoshenko's statements concerning the better utilization of the various mass media for military purposes. A number of steps had already been taken, including the calling of a conference of writers on military themes and the establishment of a planned program for the creation of needed military books. Real improvement was demanded for the newspapers and magazines issued by military units, and some harsh and detailed criticism given of a number of Army newspapers which were devoting little attention to the questions of military discipline, the strengthening of officers' authority, and

military affairs. Few political workers had any real military training though they were often called upon to help in this field, and even to take command of a unit under some circumstances. The changes resulted in placing greater emphasis on military subjects in schools and in the academy for political workers, in requiring special training courses for those already in political service, and even in shifting some military commanders to political work.³⁵

WORLD WAR II

The relatively strong position of the military commanders disappeared again after the first effects of the Nazi attack were felt in the summer of 1941. The disastrous military defeats, the obvious weakness of the Soviet structure as the entire USSR reeled under powerful Nazi blows, the regime's lack of trust in the thousands of new junior officers who came into the armed forces with the process of full mobilization, the Kremlin's fear of high commanders who, like Rokossovski, had to be trusted with considerable authority although they had been in disgrace during the previous period—all these factors led to drastic changes within the political structure of the armed forces. Stalin himself became Commissar for Defense in place of Timoshenko, and the latter's protégé at the head of the Political Administration was demoted and replaced by Mekhlis.³⁶ On 16 July 1941, less than a month after the beginning of hostilities, the system of commissars was reintroduced into the Army.

Reports indicate that during this period the commissars had reduced powers, and were advised to use their right to countersign, and presumably to challenge, the military orders of the commanders only on rare occasions.³⁷ They had all they could do in the field of propaganda, striving to rally defeated armies to stand against the most feared military force in the world, and vainly opposing the wave of surrendering that was sweeping over the Soviet forces. The situation continued to be crucial, and the great defeats continued with only temporary victories through the first 18 months of the war.

Measures taken at the beginning of the war by the Kremlin, including those which increased the powers of the political organs and commissars at the expense of the military commanders, were clearly insufficient to stem the tide of defeat. If one were to judge by the results in terms of desertions and surrenders, the performance of the political workers was particularly poor. In fact, there were many cases where the commissars and political workers were shot by military officers when they failed in their duties and showed cowardice.³⁸

In the summer of 1942, in one of the gambles that led to the victory of Stalingrad, the Soviet leaders apparently decided to increase the powers of military commanders and to rely more heavily upon them. The latter's demand for the abolition of the commissar system was again complied with, but at the same time certain safeguards were established for the Kremlin. The most politically powerful person available was placed in charge of the political services, presumably to act as spokesman for the political workers as well as to insist on the proper execution of the new directives. This man was Alexander Shcherbakov, Party boss for Moscow City Province, one of the secretaries of the CPSU, a candidate member of the Politburo, and a member of Stalin's inner circle.

A second, and very important, safeguard was to be found in the political members of the Military Councils of the various fronts. In the early days of the Soviet regime, an important administrative device in many areas of the government and the economy had been the utilization of collegia, in which several men were given final powers of decision and execution. Thus, for military purposes, the Soviet Union was divided into a dozen or more military districts, and Military Councils were established in each of these with complete executive and administrative powers. From the mid-twenties, as the principle of one-man responsibility was established in the Army, these councils gradually were transformed into advisory and subordinate bodies, until the collegiate system was abolished in 1934 and the military district placed under the control of the military commander.³⁹ During the purges of 1937, the Kremlin took a number of steps to insure its own security, including the elimination of all persons suspected of tendencies toward anti-Stalinism, the strengthening of the secret police within the armed forces, and the reintroduction of the collegiate principle in the control and administration of the military districts.

By the decree of 10 May 1937, control of the affairs of each military district largely was returned to a three-man Military Council under the chairmanship of the military commander.⁴⁰ The other two members were not necessarily military officers, and at least one of them was usually a political official who was in direct contact, not only with the Political Administration, but with the Kremlin staff itself.

The Military Councils, which continued to exist through all the changes in the position of the military commissars, were responsible for all matters affecting the military and political training, utilization, and security of the troops in their military districts. The decree establishing their areas of activity gave them control over the following: the direction of the combat and political training of troops; preparation of plans for mobilization of reserves; selection and promotion of commanding and administrative personnel; control of supplies, medical services, and antiaircraft defenses; and guidance of civil defense institutions. All orders issued by the Military Councils were to be signed by the commander of the troops and at least one other member of the Council,⁴¹ with many also to be signed by the chief of staff of the military district. When the military commissars were abolished in 1940 and 1942, the Military Councils continued in force as a major check upon actions of the generals.

During World War II, Stalin placed a number of his most trusted civilian Party leaders on these Military Councils, and gave them military ranks to add to their authority. Thus, Andrei Zhdanov, Party boss of Leningrad, and Nikita Khrushchev, Party boss of the Ukraine, both members of the Politburo, were given the rank of lieutenant general and assigned to the Military Councils of the Leningrad Front and the Southern Front.⁴²

Some important clues concerning the duties and positions of political members of the Military Councils were given in the very significant play, *The Front*, published during the middle of the war. Written by Alexander Korneichuk, who became politically important during this period,⁴³ the play was published in serial installments in *Pravda*,⁴⁴ official organ of the Central Committee of the Party. This newspaper was watched closely by Stalin himself, and was widely publicized within the Army as well as throughout the Soviet Union. For these reasons, and because of the wide publicity given *The Front*, it may safely be

assumed that the relationships depicted in that play were those approved or desired by the Kremlin.

Several important features of *The Front* should be noted. The villain of the play, or at least the character who was made the political scapegoat for weaknesses of the Red Army, was Gorlov, commander of the Front. A veteran of the Soviet Civil War who had proved his loyalty to the Kremlin, he had made the proper connections. Although Gorlov had learned to use the proper political phrases, however, he had not mastered the military methods needed for victory in contemporary warfare on the grand scale of World War II. Among other types of persons attacked in the play were those lower political workers, particularly men connected with newspapers, who misused their positions, and those military commanders who failed to use their authority fully to secure high military discipline, and those who used incorrect military strategy and tactics. The play's hero was General Ognev, a young and progressive commander, who insisted upon the adoption of new military tactics which alone could defeat the Germans, and who kept his subordinates, military and political, in their place.

Of great significance was the character of Gaidar, member of the Military Council of Gorlov's Front. He was close to Gorlov, understood his personal problems and views, aided him in many of his military and all his political tasks, and countersigned his orders. Although he did not usually have the right to countermand Gorlov's instructions, Gaidar could appeal over his head directly to the Supreme Commander or to the Kremlin. In a crucial part of the play, Gaidar secured the approval of "the proper authorities in Moscow" to permit a subordinate commander, Ognev, to carry out an offensive when Front Commander Gorlov had ordered a retreat. In this matter, Gaidar sent two messages simultaneously—one to General Ognev telling him to execute the plan for the offensive, and the second to the front commander "informing" him of what was being done—against Gorlov's wishes, but with the Kremlin's approval.

The denouement came in the last act of the play when Gorlov summoned Ognev to ask why the Gorlov plan for retreat had not been carried out. Ognev declared he had had "Moscow's permission" to carry out his own plan for attack, which had proved successful against the Germans. He then made the amazing demand that Gorlov give up his command of the Front. At this point, member of the Military Council Gaidar returned from Moscow where he had been called by the State Defense Committee (the small inner cabinet headed by Stalin which ran the Soviet state during the war). Gorlov wrote an order punishing his bold subordinates which, he promised, "they will remember for the rest of their lives." But Gaidar took the order, tore it into small pieces, and handed Gorlov a decree "from Moscow" removing him from his post. Gaidar then told how he himself was blamed in Moscow because he was not "enough of a Party guide" to Gorlov, saying that he "got it in the neck" and would "remember it for the rest of my life."

One of the final touches was supplied by the new front commander, Gaidar, in a statement to a young political worker. The latter had been favored by Gorlov and had written a critical newspaper article considered unfair by the communications officers. Said the new commander to the political worker: "Get the hell out of here, at once! If you are found anywhere along our front, you will have cause to screech as you never have had before in your life."⁴⁵

Four months after Shcherbakov had taken over personal control of the MPA, the Soviet government again announced the abolition of the commissar system. As usual, a stereotyped and uninformative explanation was given to the public, but it was stated that continuation of the system might inhibit improvement of the quality and efficiency of the military command of the troops. The new decree, signed by Stalin as Commissar for Defense, indicated that political work, formerly only a part of the military commissars' duties, would now be performed by the newly established "deputy commanders for political affairs." The commissars would either be transferred to the new posts, or would become military officers; apparently many took advantage of the latter opportunity.⁴⁶ The deputy commanders for political affairs were also given officer ranks, generally just below those of the military officers under whom they served.

The Kremlin continued to make concessions to the officers throughout the war, as the Battle of Stalingrad was fought and won, and as other victories followed. These concessions were symbolized by the restoration of the officers' gold-braided epaulettes. The establishment of "Guard" divisions and regiments was begun at an earlier date, but now was carried out vigorously. With reference to the political apparatus and the Communist Party, the military commanders secured abolition of the use of deputies for political work on the company level, and the right to issue military instructions required on the battlefield in the execution of important tasks without need of countersignature from the political members of the appropriate Military Council, as well as freedom from compulsory attendance at Party meetings or demonstrations.⁴⁷

Some valuable insights concerning the relationships existing between the military commanders and their political officers in this period can be secured from articles in Army journals which dealt with significant problems. A good example was an article by Colonel Amossov, which discussed the difficulties being experienced by many deputy commanders for political affairs on the battalion and regimental levels. He began with the assertion that "if relations between troop commander and political guide are not always happy, it is sometimes necessary to put the blame for this condition upon the political worker."⁴⁸ The article attacked political workers who "can not refrain from acting like 'commissars,' and from interfering with functions of the military commander." On the other hand, it indicated that there were many who failed to show the necessary initiative and energy in their political duties.

Amossov found one of the basic causes of distrust to be the failure of many political workers "to find ways to share in the combat experiences of the men," and their consequent inability to understand "what is in the men's hearts." He dealt with another cause of disharmony, the failure of some military commanders to keep their political deputies informed at all times on transpiring events. One of the consequences of this failure, which "so frequently happens," was that the men were given incorrect pictures of the situations. Most important, the military commanders were warned that they must support their political deputies and help them achieve necessary authority among the men, for "it is time to realize that the deputy commander for political affairs who has been degraded to the status of a mechanical tool cannot expect to cope with the great and important functions which today require his special attention."

PRESENT RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between the political workers and the military commanders have undergone far-reaching changes after 35 years of Soviet rule. In the early days of the Bolshevik regime, the military specialists had been a necessary evil connected in the Communist mythology with the worst evils of the Tsarist system, to be abolished as soon as possible, and many Bolsheviks felt that the abolition would come quickly. The political workers had been the trusted plenipotentiaries of the Politburo itself, and their power over military commanders was great indeed. Today the Soviet government has come to accept the military specialists as permanent instruments of power, whose support is imperative so long as actual or prospective enemies exist—and these will apparently continue to exist.

At the present time neither the military officers nor the political workers can attain positions completely satisfactory to themselves without creating situations which the other group would find almost impossible to accept. The directors of the political apparatus desire an increase in their authority which will give them a prominent place in the Army command, on a scale similar to that enjoyed in the days of the military commissars. This can be obtained only if the Kremlin becomes convinced of danger to itself from the military officers, or if the political workers prove that only with increased authority can they secure the loyalty of soldiers, and stimulate the men to conscientious execution of military duties. The great opportunity of the political apparatus will come with the next crisis—the inevitable purge or the period of external military danger.

For its part, the military leadership will be working for an extension of its own authority and responsibility, in accordance with the principle of unified military command and the other requirements of military efficiency. Presumably, this would mean at least a return to the conditions of the Timoshenko period of 1940-41, when some of the basic demands of the military commanders were accepted. Evidence of these desires for change is to be found in various forms of criticism of the political workers, which the latter have tried to meet in different ways.

The major points of tension between the military commanders and political workers relate to the desire for unified military command, for the unchallengeable authority of officers in their own units, and for a high degree of military discipline. The autonomous organization permitted to the political workers creates conflicts of authority and numerous difficulties in the execution of authorized plans.⁴⁹ It is obvious, too, that the duties of the political and military organizations cross at various points, leading not only to some confusion but also to situations in which political workers have authority over military officers. For example, the commander of a Soviet regiment has deputies of at least three types, for political, general military, and supply matters.

Questions arising about the relative position of these deputies have often been raised in the past and apparently continue to crop up. Moreover, under some circumstances, the political deputy may outrank other deputies and temporarily assume the military authority of an absent commander.⁵⁰ The political

apparatus has tried to meet this situation by providing intensive military training for its workers.⁵¹ In addition, the political workers are frequently reminded that they must make no effort to control the nonpolitical activities of their military colleagues and superiors.⁵²

Political operations apparently still interfere with the establishment of respect for the authority of the officer and observance of the disciplinary code. Military commanders are still plagued by vestiges of the position formerly held by Communists and members of the All-Union Leninist Communist Union of Youth (known by a combination of the initial syllables of its Russian name as *Komsomol*); their membership offered special advantages, including a measure of protection against punishment for irregularities in service and some privilege to criticize the platoon and other junior officers.⁵³ Occasionally, depending partly on the personalities of the political workers, even non-Party soldiers have been protected from officers.⁵⁴ Soldiers have discovered that, under some circumstances, they can balance the military leaders and political workers against each other. In an effort to put an end to criticism, the political workers are urged to give careful attention to problems of discipline, and to be exacting in their requirements.⁵⁵ In spite of these recommendations, there have continued to be some complaints that the political workers do not feel that disciplinary matters are their concern.⁵⁶

There are other sources of antagonism, some of which are publicly mentioned. Complaints have been published, for example, that too much of the soldiers' time and energy is expended in abstract political work,⁵⁷ or sacrificed to what one Army organ calls the "meeting-holding mania."⁵⁸ Although the political workers have been ordered to tie their propaganda operations to military tasks, the heads of the Political Administration have publicly admitted that results are below expectation.⁵⁹ Another source of tension may well be opposition on the part of some military commanders to some of the state political policies supported by the political workers, such as the forced collectivization of the early thirties or anti-American propaganda in the postwar period,⁶⁰ but any attempt to express such opposition would of course be regarded as treason. Finally, the Communist Party continues to put pressure upon the non-Marxist officers, forcing some to become formal members of the Party, making others aware that they are regarded with suspicion, and requiring all to work with the Communist branches in their military units.⁶¹

In spite of these sources of tension, it is important to remember that the Kremlin has created a balance between these groups. There is no reason to believe that open conflict will breakout or destroy the effectiveness of the armed forces, at least within the foreseeable future. The situation is irritating, but not intolerable, to the cadre officers, and cooperation does continue between the two groups. In fact, some Soviet defectors have reported that in the middle and lower levels of the military structure, an efficient and even warm relationship is sometimes created, depending on the personalities of the military commanders and political workers in the division or regiment.⁶²

Chapter 3

RELATIONSHIPS WITH SECURITY AGENCIES

SECURITY ORGANS IN THE ARMED FORCES

One of the striking trends in the history of the Soviet state, as the regime has turned increasingly to the use of violence and fear to maintain itself in power, has been the developing role of the security organs. Their personnel has grown, their authority has steadily increased in virtually every area of Soviet life, and the armed forces have not escaped their influence.

Historical Development

In the early years after the Bolshevik Revolution, there were police units within the Red Army under the control of the military commissars and responsible to the Revolutionary Military Councils on which the commissars were well represented.¹ The commissars themselves, of course, had important security responsibilities, the best known of which concerned the loyalty of the military commanders. Indicative of the importance of these duties was Trotsky's warning: "A Commissar who fails to prevent the desertion of a commanding officer will have to answer for his negligence with his own life."²

Through the next 15 years, the number, powers, and responsibilities of the military-security officers grew slowly but steadily. The failure of the political workers to prevent the Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, in which military personnel played a prominent role, and the exposure of some anti-Stalinist groups within the political staff probably made it difficult for the latter to halt this growth. In the mid-twenties, the OGPU (as the secret police were then known) contained Military Sections for counterespionage and related operations within the Red Army, and these were connected with the political apparatus and coordinated with it through military-political conferences.³ One of the principal segments of the new People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in 1934 was the Main Administration for State Security which included a Special Section for certain police operations and responsibilities within the armed forces. The Army units subordinate to the latter were also called Special Sections.

The great opportunity of these Special Sections came in 1938. Political workers had been trying for some time to halt the growing power of the police units within the armed forces and to decrease or destroy their autonomy, but without success.⁴ Early in 1937, the entire NKVD was subjected to an internal

purge, and its survivors were permitted to show loyalty to Stalin by their enthusiasm in investigating and exposing potentially dangerous elements among the military commanders and political workers in the armed forces.⁵ They cut a wide swath not only in the ranks of the officers, but also within the Party-political apparatus as well.

When the purge was over, it was clear that the Army's security organs would henceforth be a major force in the armed forces. Purges would not be continuing phenomena, but they would always be possible, and it would be dangerous for any political worker to earn the hostility of the Special Section. Moreover, even Army Communists who had escaped the purge of 1937-38 were warned that "traitors" had been able to do their work only because of the "political carelessness" of loyal political workers. In the future they were cautioned that they must possess "revolutionary vigilance" of the highest type which could help them find the enemy "regardless of protective coloring."⁶ Henceforth, such activity was to be performed in cooperation with, or rather in subordination to, the secret police. Even in periods when the institution of the commissar was temporarily restored—and the commissar always had important security responsibilities—this cooperation was required.⁷

For a time, the Special Sections enjoyed complete autonomy and responsibility for operations within their own field. In 1940, however, the Kremlin apparently decided to add to the authority of its special Army representatives serving on the Military Councils of military districts. The Special Sections, therefore, theoretically subordinated to the Military Councils of the armies and of the military districts on which at least one political representative served. In actuality, it appeared that the main line of command and direction proceeded from the Special Sections of the armed forces to the Special Section of the Main Administration of State Security in the NKVD.

On 10 May 1943, in conformity with the effort to establish at least outward forms of unified military control, the NKVD Special Sections were transferred to a new administration in the Ministry of Defense, and given the special title of "Death to Spies—Chief Administration for Counterespionage" (known by the Russian combination of the first syllables in the words "Death to Spies"—*Smersh*).⁸ However, the new organization was established merely by transferring officials of the old Special Sections,⁹ and was headed by the former Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs, V. S. Abakumov. After the war, the counterespionage organization was returned to the direct control of the Ministry for State Security (which was one of the successors to the NKVD, and which, in 1953, was merged into the Ministry for Internal Affairs) under the same officials who had been in the Army security organization since 1940.¹⁰ Thus, from a group of minor units responsible to divisional commissars, the Army security organs have grown in authority and power until they form today an autonomous system within the armed forces, competing for power with the military officers corps and the political apparatus.

Present Structure

The armed forces' security agencies operate under the legal cloak of the Soviet system of military justice, which includes several investigating organizations, the staffs of the Military Procurator, and a hierarchy of military tribunals. Misdeeds and actions of a purely military nature are reported to the

office of "military investigators" (*voennye sledovately*), which gathers all appropriate data, studies them, and then submits each case to the military commander of the unit involved, to an Officers' Court of Honor, or to a representative of the Military Procurator.¹¹ If the case has any political aspects, within the very broad meaning given those words in the Soviet Union, it is then submitted to a second series of officials.

When the case pertains directly or indirectly to espionage, treason, diversionary action, disclosure of state secrets, or other counterrevolutionary activity, it is first investigated by the Special Sections in the Administration for Counterintelligence, in the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MVD). Prosecution is handled by the staff of the Chief Military Procurator of the Armed Forces, associated with the Procurator-General of the USSR.¹² Adjudication is the province of a hierarchy of military tribunals, located at every level from the military districts and naval fleets down to divisions and parallel units, with the personnel of each tribunal named by the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court with the approval of the MPA.¹³ Tribunal decisions are executed by the MVD which may take action without this judicial procedure in certain situations.¹⁴

To fulfill its investigative duties, to participate in functions of watching personnel (intensifying the senses of terror and pressure which are vital to the Soviet system), and to prepare the "characterizations" of individuals which are so important in their promotion or demotion, the MVD has built an extensive and clearly delineated organization in the armed forces which reaches from the top military levels in Moscow down to the smallest Army and Navy units in the field.

A major segment of the MVD is its Main Administration for Counterintelligence (KRU), responsible for security in vital sectors of Soviet life, including the armed forces. During World War II, KRU's organization included large offices to promote foreign espionage and liaison with the military intelligence in Soviet forces, and special subdivisions for service arms and civilian defense organizations. The third sector of KRU dealt specifically with the security and counterintelligence operations in the armed forces pertinent here.¹⁵

Under the direction of a large staff in Moscow, today KRU has an extensive system of Special Sections on the staff of each service arm, military district and army, and division. At the division level, the counterintelligence unit has a staff headed by a major, with about eight subordinate officers handling operations, investigations, and analysis of incoming data, and a platoon guard of thirty or forty soldiers. At the regimental level, there are individual plenipotentiary operatives (*Operupolnomochennyyi*), who cooperate with the political organs and direct the network of secret informers.¹⁶

This network of informers extends into every squad and group within the Soviet Army, and most sources agree it consists of 7 to 10 percent of the total personnel at the lower levels. The network is reported to be even denser in special units such as military schools and among the higher staff levels. The informer, who is often recruited under threat of punishment for a real or invented misdeed or by promise of special reward, is called upon to report suspicious acts, careless statements, anti-Bolshevik jokes, and potentially dangerous attitudes of mind.¹⁷

The security structure thus has assumed tremendous proportions. During the war, the most dangerous, as well as the most degrading, positions on the front lines were held by the penal battalions and companies, composed of men

found guilty of disciplinary infractions.¹⁸ Among the regular troops were the secret informers of the counterespionage network. Just behind the front lines were the famous "block-the-way detachments" (*zagraditel'nyi otryadi*), composed of political workers and soldiers, but controlled by the Main Administration for Counterintelligence which watched for deserters and enemy infiltration units.¹⁹ Extending further back, from the rear battle lines to the homefront itself, were the many divisions of the NKVD; its personnel in infantry, cavalry, and tank units, artillery regiments, and air force sections established firm control of the rear and interior. They were occasionally used in combat, but were chiefly on hand to prevent large-scale desertions and to deal with threats of revolt.²⁰

BASES OF COOPERATION AND ANTAGONISM

One of the primary functions of the counterespionage organization is to help in the maintenance of that atmosphere of tension, fear, and totalitarian controls which are characteristic of Soviet society.²¹ The officers and soldiers who live in this atmosphere can hardly fail to be cognizant of it.

They are aware of informers in their midst, of the line of security officers reaching from the regimental levels to Moscow itself. During a war period, particularly, they know about the penal units to which their comrades are condemned for violations of disciplinary regulations, the MVD divisions which make their presence known in any battle area, the secret police to be found in all rail and transportation centers checking the papers of every traveling soldier, the police controls in cities and rural districts which watch the mail to and from the front, and report the conduct of relatives and friends of the soldiers—in short, the whole Soviet system of totalitarian controls. The soldier and officer must realize that there are few unapproved ideas or acts that they may think or perform without expectation of punishment.²²

Any analysis of the system of political controls and propaganda must note the individual's sense of hopelessness confronted with the overwhelming power of the state, the sense of isolation and even guilt that must be felt by those men who have thoughts and attitudes that are disapproved, and the moods of tension and fear that pervade all Soviet society.²³ Soviet methods of political propaganda are utilized against this background, and the success or failure of these methods cannot be separated from this background. From the point of view of the political apparatus and its functions, therefore, the first and most important contribution of the security organs is to establish this tense and fear-filled atmosphere with its resulting effect on the mental attitudes of soldiers.²⁴

Personnel of the political apparatus are called upon to take a prominent role in the creation of this atmosphere, and to cooperate energetically with the security agencies in all matters. Illustrative of this cooperation is the fight against desertion and deserters, a major project in the Soviet armed forces. Legislation setting forth the duties of political workers stresses their obligation "to conduct a merciless struggle with cowards, panicmongers, and deserters," and they are told that they must, in cooperation with other Soviet organs, "put an end to such treason."²⁵ In pursuance of this obligation, the political workers have given innumerable talks and have written pamphlets and articles warning against these evils and portraying their undesirable nature.²⁶ Presumably, they

also have transmitted to the security officers the names of persons deemed likely to commit these acts, and in crises, even have taken drastic action themselves against deserters and "panicmongers." On their side, police agents have proved that stern punishment would be imposed on all persons guilty, or seemingly guilty, of such acts, by shooting many upon discovery, and securing "legal" sentencing of many thousands to execution or the penal battalions.²⁷

Another indication of their cooperative action relates to the circulation of unapproved propaganda. The Special Sections have often made full use of their authority to punish soldiers accused of "counterrevolutionary propaganda and agitation," and have been particularly vigorous against those who dared to pick up enemy leaflets and pamphlets. A former member of the Soviet military tribunal reported a case which illustrated the drastic action taken during the early part of World War II.²⁸ Near the end of September 1941, German planes dropped leaflets in an area occupied by the 303rd Soviet Rifle Division. Many were dropped in a nearby forest and in meadows behind the Division's position, and virtually all the Red Army soldiers picked up some of the leaflets to use as substitutes for cigarette paper, which was hard to get. The content of the leaflets was described by the Soviet refugee as having been "so rough, cynical, and vulgar that this kind of propaganda acted, in any case, not in the Germans' favor, but to their detriment." In spite of this, the Special Section of the Division, acting on reports given by its secret informers, arrested 60 men of the Division's artillery regiment, searched them, and revealed the leaflets allegedly being used for cigarette paper. Within a very short time, 60 individual cases were submitted through the Military Procurator for the military tribunal of the Division, solemnly accusing each man of "preparing for treasonous activities in preparation for counterrevolutionary agitation." There was a difference of opinion about the appropriate action to be taken, with the head of the Division's Special Section actually threatening the chairman of the military tribunal with arrest and even violence, if he did not agree to execution of the men, when a German breakthrough on the entire front settled the matter.

The political workers, and their Communist and Komsomol aides, are expected to assist the security agencies in a variety of matters. Among the most important is that of intelligence, in which the political workers may have much to offer, for they are vitally interested in securing information on troublemakers, dissatisfied soldiers, and improper behavior.²⁹ A recent story by a Soviet defector illustrates one course of action when such information is received.

A political-training class was being held in a unit stationed near Berlin, and the political officer was explaining why the Red Army had suffered defeats—in order to draw the Germans deep into the Soviet Union and thus exhaust them, in line with "the strategy conceived by our greatest military genius, Comrade Stalin." Thereupon Private Anastas Zhuk rose to ask: "But why weren't we in a position to repel the German attack as soon as it started? Was it really necessary to allow the enemy to occupy such a huge area?" A prepared answer was immediately given, stressing the peaceful aims of the Soviet Union and the repairs then going on in tank and plane units, but Zhuk was apparently marked as a troublemaker. A report was made to the Special Section whose chief called Zhuk to his office about two days later. Zhuk reported to comrades that it was a friendly chat, in which his motives at asking the question were discussed. Then, after a talk with his divisional commander and several more interrogations with

the staff of the Secret Section, Zhuk was told that he was being "transferred" to another unit. He said his farewells to his friends, left the post, disappeared, and was never heard from again.³⁰

A major function of both the security and the political agencies involves the compilation and analysis of a wide variety of special information concerning military personnel. The police units, of course, are seeking intelligence about crimes, misdeeds, and actual and potential sources of anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet feeling; and they presumably make full use of the numerous reports concerning the moods and attitudes of the men, which are written by political officers for their own purposes. An example of such documents, usually called "Political Reports" or "Summaries of Political-Moral Moods,"³¹ was captured by the Germans early in World War II. Written on 10 June 1941, and signed by the chief of the Section for Political Propaganda of the X Rifle Corps, it began as follows:

In the past period, several anti-Soviet manifestations have occurred among the units of the X Rifle Corps, and further cases of dissatisfaction with service conditions in the Red Army have been encountered. The latter were concerned with work on fortifications, and with the poor organization of maintenances. Anti-Soviet expressions were made, but only by single and unimportant persons, and did not have any noteworthy influence upon the mass of troops.³²

The document included some remarkably frank quotations from statements by officers and men, which showed definite distrust of the Party and lack of faith in the strength of the Red Army. Materials of this type, of course, would be grist for the mill of the security agencies, representing the gossip and clues picked up by the large network of Party and Komsomol members in each unit.³³

There are many other areas of cooperation between the political and security agencies, besides this exchange of information. For example, both participate in the process of periodic evaluation of officer personnel, drawing up each man's "characterization." Both agencies must cooperate in compiling lists of men approved for service on important missions. They are jointly involved in the interrogation of prisoners during military campaigns, and often take coordinated action against unapproved propaganda and its disseminators. In periods of crisis, such as the great defeats of 1941-42, they jointly administer the punishment demanded for all guilty of desertion, and the use of terror to deter those contemplating desertion or sudden flight.³⁴

These functions in which the relationships between the two agencies are characterized by cooperation and mutual aid are important, but they do not make up the complete picture. There are also areas in which mutual suspicion and conflict of interest lead to antagonism and struggle. However, relatively little information concerning such matters is available to the non-Soviet world. The existence of antagonism is indicated by the fact that during World War II, the State Defense Committee (composed of the Politburo leaders who controlled the Soviet state during the war) found it necessary to issue an edict requiring cooperation between the security and political agencies in the armed forces.³⁵

Among the major tasks carried out by the counterespionage units are maintaining constant surveillance over members of the military-political organization, reporting on the trustworthiness of individual political workers, and presumably taking preventive measures against those on whom suspicion falls. The

political workers' awareness of these tasks and their memory of the great purges of 1937-38 cannot fail to influence their relations with the security agencies.

Moreover, the very fact that they are required to work closely with Army security officers may considerably weaken efforts of the political workers. The secret police are hated and feared by virtually all elements of the population, including the soldiers and officers among whom the political workers operate and whose confidence they seek.³⁶ Signs of mutual assistance lead to an expansion of the antagonism against police to include also Party-political workers. Indeed, there are many indications that military personnel have difficulty distinguishing between the two, and identify both as part of a single police-political agency.³⁷

This difficulty in distinguishing between the agencies is not entirely the result of the soldiers' confusion. Since the time when the leadership of the Political Administration was accused of participation in a major anti-Stalinist conspiracy, the security agencies have placed some of their own personnel within the political apparatus, presumably as a means of safeguarding Stalin's interests. This mixture of personnel is illustrated in the careers of three men, Lev Mekhlis, F. F. Kuznetsov, and V. E. Makarov.

Mekhlis had been a member of Stalin's personal secretariat in the late twenties, and was used for special tasks requiring toughness and absolute loyalty to "The Boss," such as the purging of the staff of *Pravda*. In 1937, he was made head of the Political Administration of the Red Army, in order to complete the purge of the political workers and to reorganize the entire political apparatus. After three years, he was ready for another security assignment and was transferred to a new agency policing the administrative offices of the Soviet government, known as the People's Commissariat for State Control. During World War II, he was sent back into the Red Army, serving in several posts, and was eventually made a political member of the Military Council of the Fourth Ukrainian Front, representing the Kremlin on the staff of Marshal Chernikovski. After the war, he returned to civilian security agencies as head of the Ministry for State Control, receiving the Order of Lenin for his services to Stalin at that post.³⁸

A young man whose career apparently was linked closely to that of Mekhlis is Fedor Fedotovitch Kuznetsov, present chief of the MPA. Kuznetsov first appeared as an important personage when Mekhlis took control of the Political Administration in 1937 and was removing all suspect persons and placing his own men in key positions. Kuznetsov was made editor of the important magazine entitled *Party-Political Work in the Red Army*, a special organ for professional political workers in which the Party line was explained, disapproved operational methods censured, and new techniques analyzed.³⁹ In his new post, Kuznetsov was apparently important enough to warrant recognition as a Party leader, for he was selected as a member of the Central Auditing Commission at the 1939 National Congress of the CPSU.⁴⁰

When Mekhlis was transferred from his Army political post to head the People's Commissariat of State Control, he brought Kuznetsov with him as one of his chief deputies.⁴¹ The outbreak of World War II created new duties for both men, and Kuznetsov was transferred to the General Staff of the Army. General John R. Deane, wartime head of the American Military Mission to the USSR, had

many contacts with Kuznetsov in that post and described him as a shrewd and self-confident individual who apparently was close to Marshal Vasilievski, head of the Soviet General Staff.⁴² Some of these contacts were in connection with the execution of a plan agreed on by Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt at Teheran to cover preparations for the Anglo-American attack on northern France with a campaign ("Plan Bodyguard") to confuse the Germans as to the time and place scheduled for the landings.

It is revealing that Kuznetsov was considered trustworthy enough to represent the Soviet in such important negotiations. However, some further inkling of his relations with the Soviet leadership may be gathered from the fact that, despite his three meetings with the Anglo-American representatives, in which he demanded many, and secured some, changes in the original proposals, Soviet authorities sent him to the final meeting with a formal "protocol" which accepted completely the American plan without any of the changes he had worked so hard to get.

Kuznetsov's major duties within the armed forces were related to intelligence and counterespionage. By the end of the war and for several years afterward, he was chief of the Administration for Intelligence in the Ministry of Armed Forces and then in the Ministry for State Security. In 1949, he was transferred from these security responsibilities to his present post in the Army's political apparatus, in charge of the MPA itself.⁴³ One of Kuznetsov's deputies, V. E. Makarov, had entered the Commissariat for State Control along with Kuznetsov as an assistant to Mekhlis, had followed Kuznetsov into the Army, and was brought with him into the MPA.⁴⁴

The patterns evident in the careers of Mekhlis, Kuznetsov, and Makarov probably can be found in the background of lesser officials of the political apparatus. This pattern is an important aspect of the MPA's relations with the security agencies in the armed forces. The security police not only examine and approve MPA personnel, they apparently are able to place their own personnel in key positions within the organization.

Chapter 4

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In analyzing the relationships existing between the Political Administration and the other parts of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), it should be remembered that the position of the Party has altered radically within the past three decades. Originally, the Party, through its Congress, Central Committee, and major branches, dominated the Russian state system, but today a small group of men in the Kremlin has become the unchallenged policy-making body in the Soviet state. The Party machinery and membership are today only instruments of the Politburo, competing for authority and responsibilities with the police agencies, the officer corps, and other powerful groupings.

The Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense and its subordinate units originated as a Party organization, and still retains most of the functions assigned to it in that capacity. Today, however, it has a dual personality. On the one hand, it is a part of the CPSU, directly responsible to the top levels of the Party structure, and cooperating with other parts of the Party organization in many functions. On the other hand, it is also a state agency, equipped and financed out of state funds, and performing state functions within the military forces.

In a real sense, the Political Administration has been torn between the demands made upon it in these two roles. The military leadership has regarded it as a civilian agency improperly stationed within the armed forces, creating confusion and decreasing military efficiency. The Party leadership has treated it as though it were unduly preoccupied with its military duties to the detriment of satisfactory execution of Party tasks, and has viewed with disfavor its requests for rights and privileges denied other Party units.

Because of the military pressures upon it, the Political Administration has not fitted easily or smoothly into the changing Party structure. Special relationships have had to be established with three important parts of the Party organization, namely, with the rank and file Army Communists, the regional civilian leadership, and the national Party headquarters in Moscow. In its efforts to work out a *modus vivendi* with these three, the Political Administration has been hampered by its own unstable position within the armed forces and by the attitude of the Kremlin toward it.

ARMY COMMUNISTS

Communist Party units had been operating within the armed forces of the Tsarist government and of the Provisional government before the Bolshevik Revolution, and were reestablished in 1918 when the Red Army itself took form. At the end of the first year, they had more than thirty-five thousand Party members. In order to stabilize the position of the Army Communists, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party issued its "Instructions to Party Cells in Army Units and the Rear," and established a basic structure for the Party organizations.²

During the Civil War (1918-21), the Party organizations in the Red Army grew swiftly as it became obvious that the fate of the new state would depend in large measure upon its ability to defeat opponents on the field of battle. Civilian Communists were mobilized, sent into the Army,³ and admonished by their leaders that their slogan must be "death or victory." Said Lenin: "Each of you must be able to go to the most backward and the most undeveloped of the Red Army men, and in language most intelligible to these toilers explain the situation, aid them to avoid any oscillation, teach them to struggle against the numerous examples of sabotage, faintheartedness, delusion, or treason."⁴ Within the Red Army, there simultaneously began an intensive campaign to recruit new members for the Party.⁵ By August 1920, the Party rolls in the Army reached the figure of 278,043 members,⁶ or some 60 percent of the entire membership of the Russian Communist Party.⁷

The Army Communists were organized into 7000 cells, each of which was allowed a considerable amount of autonomy. Army commanders and the Bolshevik leaders increased the Communists' sense of self-confidence and importance by public acknowledgement that their energy, initiative, and sacrifices were of vital importance in winning the Civil War and saving the Soviet regime.⁸ Lenin, for example, said at a Petrograd meeting, that "our victories on the Don became possible only as a result of the intensive Party and propaganda work in the ranks of the Red Army."⁹ Only when Party units and the political workers failed in their task were supervisors sent out from Moscow. Thus, after the defeat in the Perm campaign, the Party Central Committee sent out a special Party investigating commission headed by Stalin and Dzerzhinski, first head of the Soviet secret police, to study the cause of the defeat, especially in the realm of propaganda or governmental work, and to take appropriate measures to reorganize and direct the Party and Soviet organizations.¹⁰

When the Civil War and the Russo-Polish War were concluded, it was clear that radical changes in the position of the Army Communists would have to be made. Their contributions, which had been of great value, were products, not only of the desire for the eventual achievement of an all-Soviet world, but also of the Communists' sense of personal responsibility and desire for personal advantage stemming from the immediate victory of Soviet arms. Among other things, the Army Communists expected to have special powers and authority in military and Party affairs; while this might have been useful in some situations even in a totalitarian dictatorship, it could not be tolerated for long in the dictatorship's armed forces. It was therefore necessary to "tame" the Communist rank and file without destroying the emotional attitudes that made possible their special contributions. The Political Administration sought to do this by demand-

ing complete discipline and faith in the Party leadership while continuing the illusion of granting special powers and responsibilities to the Communist members, so long as they did not interfere with military business.

This program, which the Political Administration has tried to carry out, has not evoked joy from the Army Communists. For years they were able to exert influence, unduly strong in some cases, over their military commanders, especially those who did not have Party cards; the Communists were also able to secure special treatment of various kinds. The efforts to restrict or deny these privileges resulted in many charges of serious violations of military and Party discipline, accusations of grafting, and admonitions against the use of Party membership for personal gain. As late as 1940, the Party press was still castigating those who held concepts of "false democracy," evidenced in failure to salute superiors and in criticism of officers at Party and Komsomol meetings.¹¹

The campaign to "tame" the Communist elements in the Army and to force them to adapt themselves to necessary Army conditions has grown increasingly important as the Communist contingent has increased in size. The Party membership dropped drastically in the early years with the demobilization that came after the end of the Civil War, falling to 51,816 in January 1924; but in subsequent years it increased steadily, and reached 78,000 by 1927.¹² A significant contribution to Party strength was made by the military contingents of the Komsomol into which the younger recruits were drawn. By 1927, there were some 117,181 Komsomol members in the armed forces, outnumbering the Party members and candidates by more than 50 percent. The combined forces of the Communist Party and of the Komsomol soon comprised a significant part of the total Soviet military personnel. By 1928, they made up some 37 percent of the latter, and by 1934 this figure had increased to 49.5 percent (25.6 percent Communists and 23.9 percent members of the Komsomol).¹³

During the mid-thirties, the character of the Army Communist membership seemed to be changing, with most branches becoming something like officers' clubs. In 1936, for example, it was announced that more than two-thirds of the officer corps belonged to the Party, and this group included virtually all corps and divisional commanders, 80 percent of regimental commanders, and over 90 percent of commanders of the tank brigades and airplane squadrons.¹⁴ This figure must be noted in conjunction with the statement that in 1937, only a few thousand of the Army Communists were not officers, and the Party branches at the company levels had virtually disappeared. After the Gamarnik group was eliminated from the Political Administration in 1937, however, drastic changes were instituted. The former tendencies to restrict the Party membership to officers was declared to be part of the conspiracy "created by the Gamarnik-Bulin bandits at the orders of foreign agents, in order to weaken the Army Bolshevik organizations, and to separate them from the broad Red Army masses."¹⁵ In 1938 and 1939, several hundred thousand new Party members and candidates were accepted from the Army personnel, many of them soldiers and noncommissioned officers, and the number of Komsomol members was doubled. By the end of 1940, privates and NCOs comprised some 40.8 percent of the total Communist membership in the Red Army.¹⁶

War Commissar Voroshilov reported in 1939 that more than half the total personnel of the armed forces were members of or candidates for the Communist Party or the Komsomol.¹⁷ Although a tremendous number of men entered

the armed forces during World War II, it is noteworthy that millions of the soldiers were drawn into the Party or Komsomol. In 1942 alone, for example, more than one million soldiers joined the Communist Party, and this growth continued during and after the war.¹⁸ An indication of the situation in the postwar period was found in the report that 80 percent of all sergeants in a major military district were Party members.¹⁹

In view of the quantitative significance of the Communist-Komsomol contingent and the services demanded of it, the Political Administration has expended considerable energy in its effort to make this group accept its position in the armed forces. This effort has included continuous propaganda which stresses discipline as the highest of all virtues and explains the special obligations incumbent upon the Communists and Komsomols, but denies them any significant privileges or authority. It has also included harsh punishment for those who overstep the limits set for them. The real power, even in the Party organizations, has been placed in the hands of the professional Party officials and political workers who have not been elected by the Party membership.*

It should be noted, nevertheless, that some bases for tension and conflict continue to exist in the relationship between the Political Administration and the Army Communists. Propaganda directed at the latter must of necessity emphasize their special obligations and often onerous duties—which include holding the most dangerous posts during battles and emergencies—and these must be explained by the fact of membership in the “ruling party.”† The propaganda to the civilian Communists, which cannot be kept secret from their military colleagues, calls for criticism of their superiors in their economic or state posts; this must appear strange to the Army Bolsheviks who are told to restrict their criticism to statements concerning comrades’ performance of their Party duties. Their only real safety valve is the right to criticize the professional political workers, and apparently this right is fully utilized.

CIVILIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Although the civilian regional Party leaders usually are given some responsibility for the activities of Communist agencies working in their geographic areas, it has been necessary to work out a different type of relationship with the Communists and political units within the armed forces. In the early days of the Red Army, the local Party committees sometimes appointed the military commissars, usually received reports from all political workers and Communist groups stationed nearby, and often gave orders and special assignments to all three. In fact, the practice of local Party committees in sending Army Communists on assignments away from their military units (often without informing the military officials) created so serious a problem that Party national headquarters declared it would dissolve the local Party organizations involved if the practice continued and arrest for desertion those Communists who accepted such assignments. On another level, it was disclosed that, at times, control by strong civilian Party organizations even had encompassed

*For a more detailed analysis of the Communist organizations within the Soviet armed forces, see Chapter 15.

†For a discussion of this type of propaganda, see Chapters 15, 17, and 18.

the entire range of political activity within nearby Army camps, particularly near Moscow; this extended control called forth strong protests.²⁰

The solution approved by the Central Committee of the CPSU was to assign the general guidance of all Army Party and political work to the Political Administration of the armed forces, which in turn would be responsible directly to the CPSU national headquarters. However, Party branches in the Army units were encouraged to establish cooperative relations with the regional and local Party committees.²¹

A pattern of cooperation now appears to have been established, particularly in the fields of Party training, propaganda, and morale. Many soldiers are recruited into the Party during their period of military service, and some are trained as leaders on the branch level; both types are expected to take their place in civilian Communist units when demobilized. Under some circumstances, apparently, special attention is given in the Army to the preparation of men for such civilian service. After World War II, for example, special seminars were arranged for Communists scheduled to be demobilized and reassigned to rural areas, and these dealt with the tasks, forms, and methods of Party work in the village.²² Of course, many Communist members and leaders are recruited and trained in the Party before entering the military services. In more direct fashion, some Party leaders are selected from civilian life and sent to military-political schools for special training, and then made full-time Army and Navy political workers.²³ Beyond this, of course, the civilian units dispatch hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file Communists and thousands of trained leaders during crucial emergencies, such as that which followed the German attack in 1941.

A vigorous exchange of talent and a variety of cooperative efforts have been established in the propaganda field. At the request of the local Party committees, Army Communists are sent to speak to audiences in factories, clubs, and collective farms, where they are usually well received, for soldiers are among the most popular groups in the country.²⁴ In return, Army groups hear governmental policies and Bolshevik achievements described by civilian propagandists who claim firsthand experiences with their subjects.²⁵ Frequently there is cooperation during special events and campaigns, particularly at Soviet election time. Propaganda materials and personnel are exchanged, Army Communists are often nominated by civilian Party units, and military branches take an active part in the effort to secure the expected enthusiasm and percentage of voters in support of the "Stalinist bloc" of candidates.²⁶ Army Communists and political workers often attend local schools and lectures sponsored by civilian organizations, and the latter provide teachers and various forms of assistance to political classes in the Army.²⁷

There are other forms of mutual aid used to enhance the popularity of the Communist officials and to portray them as being able to relieve anxieties and satisfy complaints of the Army personnel. A typical news story will tell of a soldier, concerned about his sick mother and her failure to secure even minimal housing, who goes to the appropriate Communist official in his regiment. The latter writes to a Communist leader in the mother's district who speaks to the member of her collective farm and secures a promise that they will build a hut for the mother.²⁸

Some remnants of the early relationships between military and civilian units continue to exist. Party regulations require that the Army Communists and po-

litical organs maintain close connections with neighboring local and regional civilian committees in various ways. Army leaders are called upon to participate in the work of the Party committees, attending meetings and joining discussions, accepting positions in their organization, and presenting reports on political work being done within the military units.²⁹ Occasionally, a critical note in an Army newspaper indicates that this relationship has become a formal one to which the military representatives actually devote little time, but this deficiency is, allegedly, soon corrected.³⁰

Soviet defectors have reported that the regional Party organizations play some part in the direction of Party and political work in Army formations stationed within their area. They may also take a hand when accusations of inefficiency or graft are directed at leaders in such formations, and may have powers to deal with problems of public order which require the use of political personnel. The pattern of Party operations in other areas of Soviet life would seem to confirm the possibility of such accounts, but it should be noted that little direct evidence exists to support indisputably such reports. Nevertheless, it is clear that some regional Party leaders of great prestige, such as Zhdanov in Leningrad before 1946, have had real authority with the armed forces.³¹

Occasionally, there are indications in the public press of personal differences between the lower military and civilian Communist officials. In one case, for example, the head of the propaganda department of a county Party organization claimed the apartment of an Army officer, and was supported by the local government officials. An appeal was sent through the staff of the *Red Star*, the leading Army organ, to the provincial leadership of the Party, and the latter reversed the original decision, returned the apartment to its previous occupant, and fired the civilian Party official who had started the dispute.³² In several instances, civilian Party committees have reviewed cases where soldiers were expelled from Army Communist units, and restored the men to their former Party status.³³

NATIONAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS

It was probably inevitable that the long struggle for control of the Party-political organization in the Soviet Army, in which so many conflicting groups have had a part, should end with the victory of the national headquarters of the Party. The Central Committee's Secretariat, then led by Stalin and Andrei Andreev, decided in the mid-twenties to make the Party-political apparatus an autonomous unit cooperating with the military commanders, the police agencies, and the regional civilian Party committees, but bearing responsibility primarily to the Kremlin's own staff.³⁴ This decision was formalized by placing the Political Administration* within the staff or apparatus of the CPSU Central Committee. This apparatus was for many years supervised directly by Joseph Stalin himself, in his position of Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In recent years, the responsible secretary controlling the apparatus apparently was Georgi Malenkov, one of Stalin's chief lieutenants.³⁵

*The name of the directing office of the Party-political apparatus in the armed forces has been changed several times, but it usually contains the words "Political Administration," and this usually has been used as its historical name in order to avoid unnecessary confusion.

The apparatus in Moscow has a total staff of several thousand professional workers. Its other departments are responsible for a series of functions, the most important of which are the selection and control of key personnel in many parts of the Soviet state, the verification of proper fulfillment of certain Politburo and all Party directives, the planning and supervision of propaganda and morale activities in most spheres of Soviet life, and control of the internal machinery of the CPSU itself.³⁶ The position of the Political Administration within this structure is not completely clear, but the pattern of its relationships and activities can be ascertained from the available data. According to the Statute of the CPSU,³⁷ the Political Administration works "with the rights," and presumably the obligations, of the Military Department of the apparatus of the Party's Central Committee.³⁸

The basic policies for the Political Administration, particularly as they concern political matters and propaganda content, are provided in the directives of the Politburo itself. Decisions concerning general organizational matters and specific operations are decided by the Political Administration, "on the basis of special instructions," which, judging by the pattern found in other areas of Party operations, would mean that they would be written within the apparatus by the Secretaries of the CPSU; and these special instructions are "confirmed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."³⁹ Thus, for example, several times in the postwar period, instructions confirmed by the Central Committee have been issued to all civilian and military Party organizations concerning the procedure to be followed in intra-Party elections. The Political Administration then issued its own directive transmitting these instructions and enlarging on them, and both instructions and directive were made the bases for the electoral activity in the armed forces.⁴⁰ Another example is related to instructions issued in the name of the Central Committee concerning the holding of a membership-recruiting campaign; this specified the slogans and other propaganda to be used, the type of men to be chosen, and the training to give the new members. These instructions were transmitted to the Army Communist units by the Political Administration, with orders for "strict conformance" with them.⁴¹

The national Party headquarters apparently exercises strict control over the structure of the Communist organizations in the armed forces. On 24 May 1943, a decree was issued in the name of the Central Committee which reorganized the lower levels of this structure and suspended temporarily the electoral rights of the Party membership. The primary Party organizations, formerly known as the "cells," were abolished on the company level, and the lowest level was established as the battalion level. The office of deputy company commander was abolished, and some of his duties transferred to the military commander; a full-time "Party organizer" (an executive Party officer who has many duties beyond those of organizing) was to be appointed to direct the Communist organizations in the battalions and regiments. The executive committee or "bureau" of the battalion primary Party organization was to be appointed for the front-line troops since it was now forbidden to hold meetings of the entire membership. On 4 June 1943, the chief of the MPA issued his own instructions to his subordinates, interpreting and expanding on this decree, and requiring reports on its execution to be submitted within three weeks. A survey of the results was printed in the Army press after several months.⁴² On 26 July 1946, the Central

Committee issued a new edict which restored the office of elected secretaries of Army primary Party organizations.⁴³ Obviously, the national headquarters of the Party had been the moving force in these structural changes.

The national Party headquarters also exercises a direct and guiding influence over the actions and policies of the Political Administration. Those directives which are issued by the Political Administration are usually submitted for previous approval to the national Party headquarters. In some cases, they are publicly approved or confirmed, usually in the name of the Central Committee. It will be recalled that this was violated in the 1923 case of Circular 200, and severe repercussions followed. A public example of the normal procedure occurred in 1940, when the Political Administration (then known, for a short time, as the Main Administration for Political Propaganda) was under strong hostile pressure on the part of the military officer corps, and War Commissar Timoshenko himself. It decided to issue directives to halt practices harmful to discipline such as the criticizing of junior commanders at meetings of the Komsomol. One such directive was publicly approved by the Party Central Committee.⁴⁴

In another case, the Political Administration submitted a plan for holding annual meetings of the primary, divisional, and district Party organizations, and it was announced that the CPSU Central Committee had agreed to this plan. In addition, the Political Administration submitted its proposals for the agenda of each of these meetings, and these, too, were approved by the Central Committee. Finally, the latter agreed to a similar plan for the Army Komsomol organizations. In consequence of these actions by the Central Committee, the Political Administration issued appropriate directives to be executed by the subordinate levels of the Army's Party-political apparatus.⁴⁵

In addition to these relationships with the Secretariat and Central Committee of the CPSU, the Political Administration has contacts with the other apparatus departments of the Central Committee. There is apparently some interchange in personnel, as illustrated by the career of Dmi'tri Shepilov, who was sent into political work in the Soviet Army during World War II, where he became a major general in the MPA, and was later transferred to the Propaganda Department of the apparatus, of which he eventually became chief.⁴⁶ The Department for Party, Trade Union, and Komsomol Organs, which has responsibilities for the improvement of the Party machinery, has provided some assistance in this field to the Political Administration.⁴⁷

The Propaganda Department of the Kremlin's apparatus exercises considerable supervision over the Political Administration in the field of propaganda and morale. This has been publicly indicated by news reports on the participation of its deputy chief and other representatives of the Propaganda Department in Army conferences on such subjects as "Marxist-Leninist Training of the Officers and Political Classes of Soldiers."⁴⁸ Another aspect of this relationship was illustrated by an attack appearing in *Culture and Life*, the organ of the Propaganda Administration, which accused a deputy chief of the Political Administration of making a crude copy of a *Pravda* article and publishing it in the Army newspaper *Red Star*.⁴⁹ The relationship was further revealed in the charge made by *Culture and Life*, against the editors of *Propagandist and Agitator*, an organ of the present Political Administration, that they were displaying "an irresponsible attitude toward their tasks."⁵⁰

The Political Administration has important relations with another major office in the Party headquarters, the Control Commission. The Control Commission, now attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU, acts as an authoritative body in matters of Party discipline and admission and expulsion of members. A line of Party Commissions have been created within the Soviet Army in each division, army, and military district, the highest of which is the Party Commission attached to the Political Administration itself. The latter apparently represents the Control Commission of the CPSU. Each of these Party Commissions has similar functions pertaining to the discipline, admission, and expulsion of Army Communists for its particular military unit.⁵¹

Finally, mention should be made of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, which is under the direct control of the Party headquarters and actually functions as a part of it. Since there are several hundred thousand members of the Komsomol within the ranks of the Army personnel, the Central Committee has important tasks here too. Most of these tasks are performed through a Komsomol Section in the Political Administration and by full-time Komsomol workers at each level down to the battalion. These professional youth leaders receive the general directives issued by the Komsomol Central Committee and adapt them to Army conditions, hold frequent conferences on youth problems in which the civilian Komsomol leaders participate, and utilize the many types of propaganda issued by the Komsomol.⁵² Like the Party organizations, the civilian Komsomol units send many of their members into the armed forces; more than two and a half million members enlisted during the first eighteen months of World War II.⁵³

Part II

MPA STRUCTURE, PERSONNEL, AND
OPERATIONAL PATTERNS

Chapter 5

FUNCTIONS, STRUCTURE, AND PERSONNEL TYPES OF THE PARTY-POLITICAL APPARATUS

MAJOR GROUPS AND FUNCTIONS

The Party-political apparatus of the Soviet armed forces is a complex and extensive organization which utilizes the services of a million or more men, working through four major groups. The driving force within the apparatus is the corps of professional political workers, with probably more than sixty thousand members who have been given special training for their responsibilities and who devote their entire working days to the fulfillment of their political duties. At the head of the professional political corps, and responsible for the efficient operation of the entire apparatus, is the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense.

Supporting the work of the political workers in execution of the Army's political programs are three auxiliary groups. The first of these is the military officer corps, particularly commanders who are given some responsibility for political operations within their units. All officers are expected to participate directly in lectures, Marxist study, and other activities of a political nature. Most military officers are not enthusiastic about these duties but respond in some way to the pressures upon them and take some part in the political programs.

The second auxiliary arm of the Party-political apparatus is the network of Communist branches in the armed forces with its several hundred thousand members. At the higher echelons of this network, which extends upward through every military level to the MPA, are professional political workers who act as Party officials, supervising, aiding, and reporting on the Communist operations within the armed forces. At the lower parts of the network, the Party branches are led by "elected" officers who devote some of their nonservice time to assisting the political workers and military officers in propaganda matters, and to mobilizing the energies of the rank-and-file Communists for the execution of their political tasks.

The third auxiliary force is composed of the military branches of the Komsomol, whose membership often comprises a third or more of the total personnel in the infantry companies, artillery batteries, and analogous units in other service arms. Here, too, the professional political workers control the higher Komsomol levels, transmitting policies laid down by the Kremlin and the MPA, working out the plans for execution of these policies, and supervising

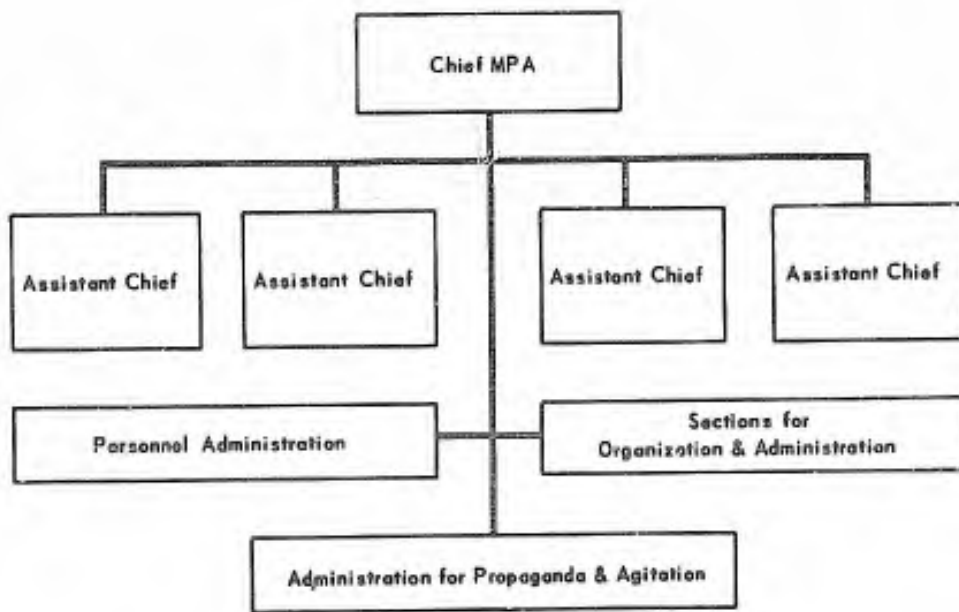


Fig. 1—Major Departments of the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense

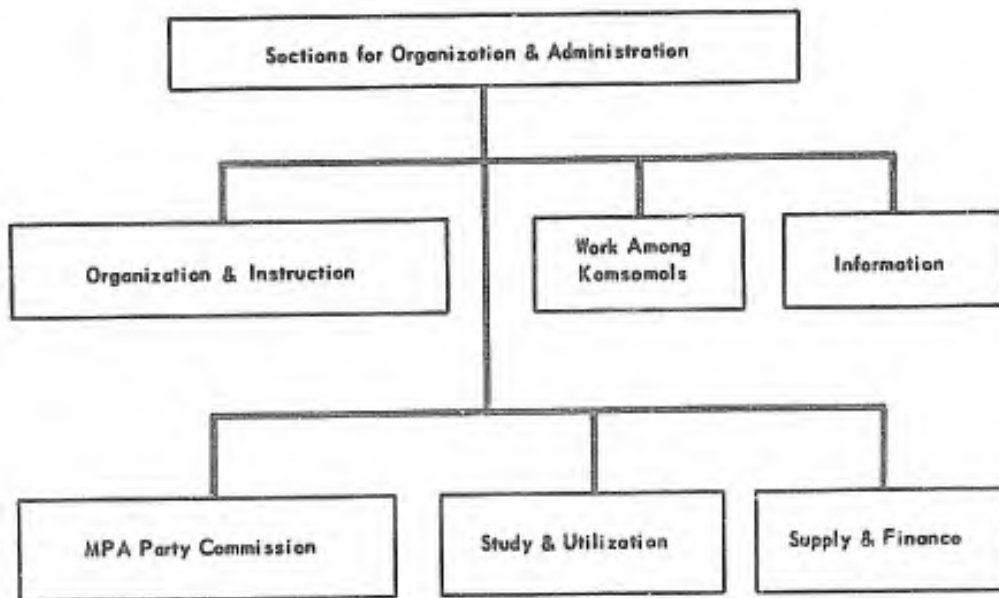


Fig. 2—MPA Sections for Organization and Administration

Komsomol activities. The hundreds of thousands of members at the base of the Komsomol organization are important instruments through which the MPA strives to influence the political attitudes, actions, and military efficiency of every man in the armed forces.

The obligations and responsibilities of the total Party-political apparatus are numerous and varied, but its major tasks may be summarized as follows: (a) To strengthen the servicemen's loyalty to the Bolshevik leaders, and to the Communist Party and Soviet government which they control; (b) To secure enthusiastic and efficient fulfillment of military duties by each member of the armed forces; (c) To control and utilize the Communist and Komsomol organizations and other appropriate groups within the armed forces; (d) To report on the moods, needs, and reactions of the officers and soldiers, and on their efficiency and speed in fulfilling directives related to political matters; (e) To diminish wherever possible the causes for dissatisfaction on the part of military personnel, especially in matters of food, shelter, clothing, and other material needs; (f) To cooperate with the political police and military tribunals in establishing the desired psychological climate, and to eliminate actual and potential supporters of anti-Soviet attitudes or actions.¹

MPA OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Officers and Functions

Responsibility for supervising the Party-political apparatus and assuring the timely and successful execution of its tasks has been assigned to the agency known, since 1953, as the Main Political Administration of the Ministry of Defense (*Glavnoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie Ministerstva Oborony SSSR*).^{*} This is an organization of a dozen sections, employing the talents of several hundred professional administrators and political workers. The present chief of the MPA is simultaneously a Party official, the director of a far-flung political-propaganda organization, a high officer of the Soviet armed forces, and probably a member of one of the political groupings within the Kremlin.

The latter point is, of course, most difficult for an outsider to establish with certainty, although some clues do exist in the available information concerning the man's career. The background of Col. Gen. Fedor Fedotovitch Kuznetsov appears to have been connected with the Soviet security organs, and particularly with that of Lev Mekhlis.[†]

Kuznetsov has gradually acquired the various signs of success in Soviet society. He was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, the Order of Suvorov, and the Order of Lenin for his wartime services. In 1944, he was assigned the military rank of colonel general at the same time that this rank was given to Mekhlis and to Nikolai Bulganin, a Politburo member who later assumed responsibility

^{*}It should be noted that the descriptions and analyses in this report deal primarily with operations of the MPA within the Soviet Army. Not only are the operational patterns of the MPA in the Navy likely to be similar, but the Army MPA is probably a superior administrative body. Moreover, during those periods when the Soviet armed forces have been unified under a single command, the leaders of the Army MPA have been in direct control of the Navy political apparatus.

[†]For a discussion of Kuznetsov's career, see Chapter 3.

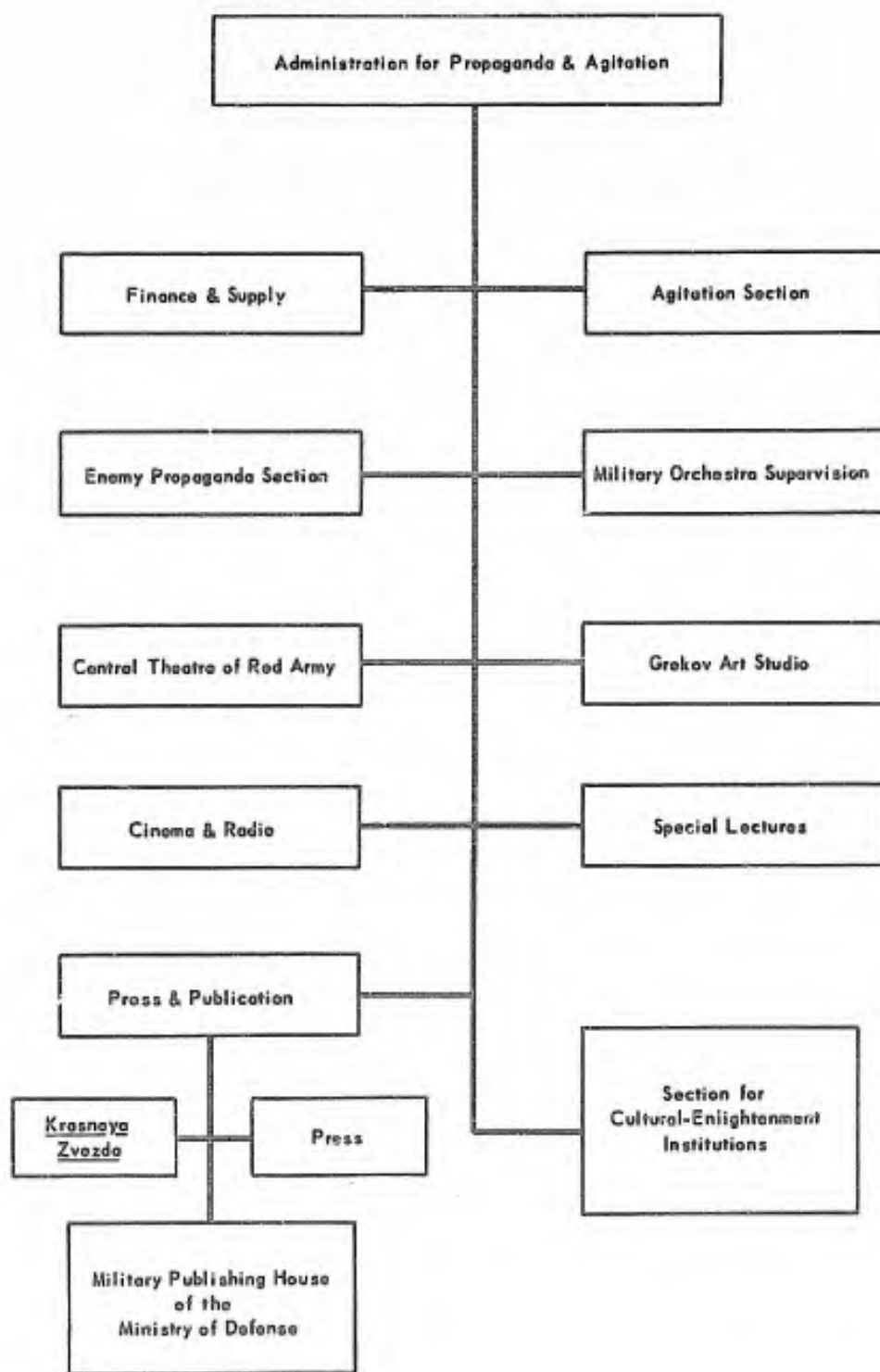


Fig. 3—MPA Administration for Propaganda and Agitation

for military affairs.² In the civilian sphere, he was elected to the Supreme Soviet in 1947, joined the governing board of an agency established to provide military training for civilian groups, and was chosen a member of the Central Electoral Board for the Soviet elections of 1950.³ He has apparently been one of the small group of Soviet officials who meet important personages from foreign countries, for he attended receptions at the Kremlin for Czech and Finnish diplomats, greeted a delegation from satellite Mongolia at the Moscow airport, and joined a luncheon party honoring Marshal Montgomery of Great Britain.⁴

In keeping with his position as the chief of the MPA, he has presided or delivered the official speeches at meetings celebrating such events as Red Army Day, Air Fleet Day, Day of the Tank Warrior, and Soviet Press Day.⁵ Finally, Kuznetsov was one of the 111 Party officials announced as Candidate Members of the Party's Central Committee at the recent Congress of the CPSU, along with Marshals Budyonny, Zhukov, Govorov, and Malinovski.⁶

In performing his important tasks as head of the MPA, Kuznetsov has a large staff, headed by four or five deputies. The careers of these men, insofar as data are available, tend to support the hypothesis that the staff combines two basic personnel types. One career pattern is that of the reliable trouble shooter who is often connected with the secret police, but who receives a variety of assignments in widely different fields. The second pattern characterizes the professional military-political worker who specializes in this field throughout his adult life and moves up from the ranks to his staff post.

Lt. Gen. V. E. Makarov is apparently an example of the first type. In 1940, he had been one of Mekhlis' deputies, when the latter first established the People's Commissariat for State Control.⁷ His wartime services were apparently within the Army, for which he received several military awards, and he was assigned to an office within the Soviet Military Administration in Germany in the postwar period.⁸ His gradually improving status was revealed in a series of nominal governmental and some important Party posts, including membership on the executive committee of the Moscow Provincial Party organization, and receipt of the Order of Lenin.⁹ When Kuznetsov moved back into the leadership of the MPA in 1949, he brought Makarov with him.¹⁰

Another example of versatility among Kuznetsov's deputies is Lt. Gen. S. S. Shatilov. During World War II, he was a political member of the Military Council which directed the Northern Group of Armies.¹¹ When the war ended, he was given a variety of political assignments. He worked for a time with the leading political workers in the Occupation Forces in the Soviet zone of Germany, consulted with the heads of the All-Union Komsomol organization inside the Soviet Union, and participated in several military missions sent abroad, including one to Poland. He was a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federalist Socialist Republic (RSFSR), acting as a member of its Foreign Affairs Commission.¹² By the early part of 1948, he had been made a deputy chief of the MPA.¹³

The specialist in military propaganda is typified by Maj. Gen. Vladimir S. Veselov, who was a deputy chief of the MPA several years before his death in 1948. Born a decade before the Bolshevik Revolution, Veselov was educated under the Soviet regime, worked in the Komsomol for several years, and joined the Communist Party in 1927. After five years in the civilian Communist ranks, he was sent to a military school for junior political workers, and then began a

career in the Red Army which lasted the rest of his life. When military purges began in the mid-thirties, Veselov was one of the men selected to attend a concentrated training course in the Lenin Military-Political Academy. He was graduated in 1938, and was then assigned to responsible work in the Army's political apparatus. At the age of thirty-two, after one year in the field, he was given a post within the MPA itself. He moved steadily upward for the next decade, serving as a section chief, director of the MPA's Propaganda Administration, and finally deputy chief of the MPA.¹⁴ Lt. Gen. M. M. Pronin, another of Kuznetsov's deputies today, has had a career similar in many ways to that of Veselov.¹⁵

Under the direction of Kuznetsov and his deputies, the MPA performs numerous and varied functions which appear to fall into four major areas of activity. First, the MPA acts as a major transmittal point, receiving the directives of the Kremlin itself, interpreting and adapting them to military conditions wherever necessary, and disseminating them to the appropriate levels of the Party-political apparatus in the armed forces. An example of the many special directives issued by the Kremlin can be found in the 1946 orders, issued in the name of the Central Committee of the CPSU, for more militant content in Soviet propaganda throughout the USSR, and for stricter control over all Soviet propagandists.¹⁶ Like many other agencies responsible to the Politburo, the MPA called a series of conferences at various levels and in various parts of the military-political apparatus, clarifying the new Party line and launching a re-examination of the propaganda content and the conditions under which propaganda was being issued in the armed forces.¹⁷

A second group of MPA activities is related to the smooth and efficient functioning of the extensive network of political organs. Through its headquarters staff and its field representatives, the MPA tries to deal with matters of personnel selection and training, structural efficiency, intra-organizational communication, and efficient fulfillment of the various duties of the political workers in the subordinate political organs.¹⁸ For these purposes, numerous directives are issued by departments of the MPA, agents and commissions are sent into the field to give on-the-spot directives and report on the execution of MPA programs, and frequent conferences are called to transmit new orders and provide training. Many of the directives and conferences are publicly announced, and these deal with such varied subjects as propaganda for the Soviet elections,¹⁹ psychological preparation for demobilization,²⁰ operations of the political-training courses which all servicemen are required to attend,²¹ "social sciences" and other political propaganda at the military schools,²² and the work of the "cultural-enlightenment institutions" of the armed forces.²³

A third area in which the MPA has important responsibilities concerns the control and supervision of Communist and Komsomol organizations within the armed forces. For example, the MPA has worked out the basic structure governing activities of the Army Komsomols,²⁴ and issued instructions concerning such matters as the procedures for electing Komsomol officers, agendas for meetings, admission and expulsion practices, activities of branches and members, and the forms of member supervision and direction exercised by the MPA's own subordinate political organs.²⁵ Similar functions are performed with reference to the Army Communist branches.

Finally, if one judges from the pattern found elsewhere in Soviet life, the MPA provides important services for agencies superior to itself. It is probable, for example, that staff members of the MPA collect, analyze, and report to the headquarters of the CPSU and elsewhere on moods and attitudes in the armed forces, on soldiers' sources of dissatisfaction, and on their reactions to political policies and general conditions. In addition, the MPA probably nominates important officials for the Party-political apparatus for consideration and selection by the Secretariat of the Communist Party, and drafts legislation for action by the appropriate bodies.²⁶

To supervise the execution of these functions, the MPA is apparently organized into three major departments or administrations, with more than a dozen subsidiary sections. There have been frequent changes, reorganizations, and adjustments within this structure which make it difficult for foreign observers to work out its precise description. It is possible, however, to distinguish the general pattern of the MPA's organization.

Propaganda Administration

The MPA has important responsibilities in the field of propaganda and morale, and one of its largest units is its Administration for Propaganda and Agitation. The key position of the latter was recognized in 1943, when a decree of the Party Central Committee made the director of the Administration a deputy chief of the MPA.

Major General Veselov headed the Propaganda Administration for almost a decade, during which time his deputies included Maj. Gen. I. M. Grishaev, Col. V. V. Rudnitski, and Konstantin Vasilievich Krainyukov. The latter, who succeeded Veselov and was given the rank of lieutenant general, is one of the few "old Bolsheviks" left in the political services. His official biography states that he was born in 1902 in a poverty-stricken Volga peasant family, and that he worked as a boy in various parts of the Caucasus. After the Bolshevik Revolution, he was employed for a time in an agricultural commune, then joined the Komsomol, and finally volunteered for the new Red Army in 1919. He fought through the Civil War, eventually taking charge of political work in an armored train unit which operated in the Ukraine. He was a propagandist in the Soviet Army throughout the twenties, and was then sent to the Lenin Military-Political Academy, graduating in 1934. He served in various administrative posts until World War II, when he was assigned to supervise political and propaganda work in the First Ukrainian Army Group as a member of its Military Council, and he went with the troops through campaigns in the Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. He held a series of high political posts in the postwar period which culminated in his appointment to the Moscow Headquarters of the MPA. Among the public signs of recognition of his work were three Orders of Lenin, four Orders of the Red Banner, many other orders and medals, and election to the Supreme Soviet in 1951.²⁷

The Administration for Propaganda and Agitation operates in a number of fields, not all of which are publicized. Its operational methods and contributions may be illustrated, however, by reference to the system of political training, attendance at which is required for most soldiers and junior officers. On the basis of propaganda concepts approved by the Kremlin and in keeping with con-

ditions of military life, a special statute was prepared for the signature of the MPA chief outlining the conditions under which political training classes are to be held.²⁸ Each year, in accordance with directives issued by the Party Central Committee for all propagandists, the Propaganda Administration issues a plan specifying themes for each meeting of all political classes.²⁹ Through the year, the Administration issues, often in the name of the MPA, various methodological aids for class leaders, such as bibliographies, guides on how to conduct classes, and graphic materials. In addition, articles written for journals and newspapers, and speeches given at various conferences, provide explanatory and illustrative materials to be used in the political classes.³⁰ In the middle and then again at the end of the school year, the Propaganda Administration supervises an inspection of the classes, from which reports and recommendations for improvements are made.³¹

The Propaganda Administration has three sections which deal with general propaganda matters on a broad basis. The Propaganda Section, headed by Rear Adm. F. Chernyshev, is concerned with the methods and materials used in training Communists and officers, particularly in the field of Marxism. Among other duties, it controls the special system of Party education, comprising thousands of circles and hundreds of schools in which Communists study the history of the CPSU and the biographies of the Bolshevik leaders.³² It also supervises the systems of training advanced groups, such as the leaders of political-training classes,³³ the heads of political schools and study circles for Communists,³⁴ and the military officers studying Marxism-Leninism.³⁵

The Agitation Section, led by Col. N.I. Tolkachev, is responsible for the training and utilization of the many thousands of agitators who are active at the lower levels of the military services. It establishes the methods of recruiting and training agitators, determines the themes and content of their half-dozen or more talks each month, and makes sure that they are provided with placards, slogans, and other aids.³⁶

The Agitation Section itself issues basic materials for the guidance of the agitators, including key articles and brochures which give factual data and methodological instructions,³⁷ and a monthly directive on the themes to be followed in their group talks.³⁸ It also sends out from Moscow its own groups of agitators to train others and gather information in the field.³⁹

Finally, the Section for Enemy Propaganda plans the strategy of psychological warfare, utilizing foreign Communists and the other Bolshevik resources.⁴⁰

In the sphere of general communications media, the Propaganda Administration has several supervising sections, and the use of considerable facilities. Its Press Section, under Colonel Baev and Lieutenant Colonel Dedyukhin, oversees the extensive Army network of journals, newspapers, and the thousands of one-page wall-newspapers.⁴¹ The radio and cinema are exhaustively exploited by the MPA through its most extensive radio networks in the Soviet Union and its facilities for producing some (and exhibiting all) Soviet films.⁴² There are also two other major units which are controlled in part by the MPA—the Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defense, and the official organ of the Ministry (and unofficial spokesman for the MPA), *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star).⁴³

Nor do these exhaust the list. The Propaganda Administration's lecture bureau sends out special speakers and issues directives for guidance of lec-

turers on lower military levels. Its director until recently was Col. Prof. Nikolai Alexandrovich Fedorov, who had been Professor of Party History in the Lenin Military-Political Academy.⁴⁴ In addition, the Administration maintains the Grekov Art Studio which employs some of Russia's best-known artists in the production of graphic propaganda,⁴⁵ the Central Theatre of the Red Army which has one of the best dramatic troupes in the country,⁴⁶ and a Section which supervises the work of the many military orchestras.⁴⁷

Through these Sections and facilities, the MPA not only controls the output of the lower-level political organs, but also disseminates propaganda prepared by its own staff or taken from civilian Soviet sources. Thus, the MPA issues a series of magazines, including a literary journal, *Sovetski Voin* (*The Soviet Warrior*), and *Ilyustrirovannaya gazeta* (*The Illustrated Gazette*), as well as books and pamphlets which include methodological aid for political workers, reprints of civilian authors, and collections of soldiers' writings.⁴⁸

Two more units complete the structure of the Propaganda Administration. The Section for Cultural-Enlightenment Institutions supervises the far-flung system of libraries, officers clubs, Army houses, and "rooms for cultural-enlightenment work." Headed by Colonel Tsaristyn and Colonel Kovtun, it works like the other MPA Sections through special directives, field agents, instructions given in public articles and speeches, and conferences of responsible officials.⁴⁹ The final Section is one which deals with problems of finance and supply in the propaganda field.⁵⁰

Personnel Administration

In Soviet administrative practice, the selection, training, and promotion of promising officials, and the elimination of inefficient and untrustworthy personnel, are of great importance;⁵¹ one of the MPA's most essential units concentrates on such matters. The MPA Administration for Personnel is directed by Lt. Gen. M. V. Rudakov, with the assistance of Major Generals Romanov and Konstantinov. Although its precise organization is not clear from available data, it has a number of Sections headed by Colonels Yakovlev, Chugunov, and Kozlov. Kozlov, for example, is in charge of the Section for schools and academies.⁵²

The Personnel Administration deals with the MPA's problems of recruiting and training key personnel, establishing standards for filling political posts, and utilizing these standards in specifying the conditions for admission to the Lenin Military-Political Academy and other schools under MPA control. It also provides some supervision over the various institutions used to train professional political workers, including correspondence-school courses for the political staff.⁵³ In addition, the Personnel Administration has important responsibilities in developing and training Communist and Komsomol leaders—preparing the basic MPA plans for these tasks, consulting with appropriate groups concerning the plans and making necessary changes, and then supervising execution of the approved programs.⁵⁴ Apparently the Administration has some authority also with respect to other training institutions such as schools for nonpolitical personnel.⁵⁵

Another important area for the Personnel Administration is the control and assignment of leading figures in the political apparatus. Judging largely from

the operational patterns found in other parts of the Soviet structure,⁵⁶ the MPA Administration for Personnel nominates the more important political officers at the higher political levels for consideration and action by the Secretariat of the CPSU. In connection with such duties, the Administration must pay close attention to the performance of key persons, checking frequently on their work, making a constant effort to root out inefficient misfits in the apparatus, training promising personnel, and securing the full utilization of the successful and efficient officers. Finally, the Personnel Administration supervises personnel assignments of the political apparatus at lower levels, overseeing personnel assignments and training facilities.⁵⁷

Administrative Network of the MPA

The MPA supervises the work of three interrelated systems—the various units which form its own system of political organs, the network of Communist Party branches and committees, and the network of Komsomol bodies. One of the MPA's major responsibilities in this connection is to control the functioning of these systems, and to take actions necessary to increase their operational efficiency.⁵⁸ Available information does not make clear whether a tightly knit Administration, analogous to the Propaganda and Personnel Administrations, performs these functions. However, a number of MPA sections and offices have been reported which would be part of such an Administration.

The most important of the MPA units in this field is the Organizational-Instructorial Section, formerly headed by Maj. V. V. Zolotukhin,⁵⁹ with the assistance of Lt. Col. M. Zotov, Colonel Evokimov, and others.⁶⁰ Through its headquarters staff, instructors, and other field agents, and by the use of special directives and conferences, this Section studies, reports on, and takes steps to improve operations of the lower cogs of the political machine in the Army, particularly the political sections of military districts and armies.⁶¹ It also has vital responsibilities concerning the Communist and Komsomol organizations. Among other duties, it controls the issuance of Party cards and other important documents, supervises the execution of Kremlin directives concerning the training and utilization of members in propaganda and military activities, and regulates the conduct of meetings and related activities.⁶²

Two units share the interest of the Organizational-Instructorial Section in the membership of Communist and Komsomol branches in the Army. The Party Commission attached to the MPA is the highest of a line of Party Commissions connected with the political staff in the administration of each military district, army, and division. These Commissions oversee the enforcement of Party regulations concerning admission of new recruits, enforce rules of conduct for Communists, impose disciplinary penalties upon those who violate the rules, and expel those who are found to be lacking the qualities demanded of Communists. The Party Commission attached to the MPA is a body of 12 men who must be approved for their posts by the Central Committee of the CPSU.⁶³

A third unit in this field is the Section for Work Among the Komsomol Membership. It is led today by Lt. Col. A. A. Marinov who has specialized in Komsomol work in the past decade. He attained his present military rank during World War II and was promoted to the MPA in the postwar years. He has a large staff (of which Lt. Col. G. Shatunov is a member) which has the dubious honor of

being that part of the MPA which is most frequently and most strongly criticized in public. Among its assignments are the supervision of the professional Komsomol workers who are found at every level of military organization down to the battalion, the providing of facilities and instructional materials for the training of Komsomol leaders, and the transmittal and enforcement of Kremlin instructions for the conduct of individual members of the Komsomol.⁶⁴

There are three other sections whose functions are related to the organizational tasks of the MPA. The Supply and Finance Section, headed by Major General Losikov, controls the MPA's bookkeeping and equipment materials.⁶⁵ The Informational Section appears to have responsibility for analyzing and reporting on data coming in from the political organs in the field.⁶⁶ The Section for the Study and Utilization of Party-Political Experience is apparently dedicated to the improvement of political operations. The last-mentioned Section was established in the postwar period in response to Stalin's order that all Sections of the Soviet armed forces study and profit from the experiences of World War II. An MPA directive in 1947 dealing with this subject, signed by the head of this Section, Colonel Brittin, and approved by the chief of MPA, called on the lower political organs to undertake a series of investigatory programs. These were to include conferences on aspects of political work in the past, lectures by experts in varied fields, and the writing up by individuals and groups of their own experiences. It is instructive to note the controls established over each author. His subject must be taken from a list compiled by the MPA; his plan of work must be approved by the MPA before he begins his study; and his paper must be sent in draft form to the Section for the Study and Utilization of Party-Political Experience. That Section, together with the Propaganda Administration, decides which of the studies submitted should be published.⁶⁷

POLITICAL ORGANS AND ZAMPOLITS

The political organs of the armed services are the chief instruments through which the Kremlin secures its major political propaganda in this area of Soviet life. As an official book on the subject puts it, "the political organs carry the will and ideas of the Bolshevik Party to the army and navy masses. They are responsible for the development in the warrior of his Soviet spirit, his sense of military duty, his vigilance, and his love for military matters. . . . They guide the Party and Komsomol organizations in the armed forces, train the Communists and Komsomols in the spirit of Bolshevik ideology and political consciousness, striving to make them active supporters and assistants of the commander in his tasks, models in the fulfillment of their own military duty."⁶⁸

The MPA is the top segment of the political organs, and the subordinate units have the same twofold relationship to Government and Party. Below the MPA, political organs or individual political workers are found at each level of the military services. For purposes of description, those within the Soviet Army (and analogous units exist within the Soviet Navy) are of three types: the political administrations of the service arms and of the military districts, the political sections of the armies and divisions, and the deputy commanders for political affairs in the regiments, battalions, and companies.

These are part of the Soviet apparatus placed administratively under the Ministry of Defense (or the Ministry of the Navy) and thus responsible, in part, to the military commanders of their units or formations, and financed through governmental funds.⁶⁹ On the other hand, their direct subordination to the Communist Party is equally clear, as this typical statement by the Army organ shows:

The political organs are not a type of service such as the communications service, the supplies service, or the fighting units on board a ship. They are military Bolshevik Party organs. . . .

The political worker is a militant Bolshevik. He has been placed by the Bolshevik Party in a most important area of work, training Soviet warriors in order to strengthen the military might of our Armed Forces. He is responsible to the Party for all aspects of the life and activity of the troops.⁷⁰

Political Administrations

The first type of the Political Administrations is found in the staffs controlling the various service arms. The military organizations have oscillated between a unified system which brings all service arms within the Ministry of Armed Forces, and a semidecentralized system which divides the military services between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Navy. Since 1953, the former method has been in vogue. It is apparent that the MPA provides leadership for all political organs in both ministries, regardless of the formal organization.⁷¹

Under the MPA, therefore, are found today the Political Administrations for the (Army) Ground Forces, directed by Lt. Gen. S. F. Galadzhev, for the Navy, directed by Maj. Gen. A. Muraviev (of the Coast Guard), and for Army Air Forces, under the supervision of General Lukashin. According to the fundamental statute concerning the political organs, the basic responsibilities of these Administrations include:

1. Guidance of the political organs and Party and Komsomol organizations to secure military discipline and the political morale of personnel;
2. Supervision of the facilities used for political training of soldiers and sailors, Marxist study by officers, and social science training in subordinate military schools and academies;
3. Control of the Party and Komsomol organizations, especially with respect to the admission, training, and study of members, and activities of the various branches, and in regard to Party affairs, control of dues and documents;
4. Analysis of all reports from lower organs and presentation of reports on all matters to military and political superiors;
5. Training of political workers, assignment of lower-level political workers, and nomination of higher officials for approval by MPA;
6. Study of political moods and needs of personnel, especially food, recreation, and related matters, and the taking of appropriate action;
7. Participation in preparation of attestations for generals, admirals, and other high officers;
8. Control of supply, dissemination, and correct utilization of newspapers, magazines, other literature, and other facilities for cultural and recreational activities;
9. Provision of necessary finances for "political-enlightenment" expenditures, and control of all economic activity in this field.⁷²

For the fulfillment of these important duties, each Political Administration has an organization on the MPA's pattern, including a Party Commission and departments for personnel, propaganda, organization-instruction, and supplies, each with a full complement of sections.⁷³ In general, it may be said that such a Political Administration does not make policy in any way, but transmits instructions from the MPA, inspects and reports on their execution, and provides the facilities and assistance needed for increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the lower political organs.

Examples of the types of leaders found on this level of the political apparatus are Colonel General Rogov and Lieutenant General Galadzhev. Rogov was born in 1899, served as a young man on the steamboats of the Volga River, and entered the Bolshevik Party in 1918. During the Civil War, he was sent by the Party into the Red Army where he moved steadily upward, serving as company political leader, then as commissar of a regiment and later a division, and was ultimately assigned to the General Staff. During World War II, he was chief of the Political Administration for the Soviet Navy.⁷⁴

Galadzhev was born in 1902 in a worker's family, and as a youngster of sixteen fought in the Civil War as a Bolshevik volunteer. He served most of his adult life in the Red Army, and in World War II headed the Political Administration of the Central Army Group which fought from Stalingrad to Berlin. In the postwar period, he became chief of the Political Administration of the Soviet Ground Forces and was selected as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet in 1947. He has written many articles and edited a number of books, all dealing with techniques and organization of political work.⁷⁵

Another type of political administration is found on the second military level. In the Soviet Ground Forces of the Army, this level is represented by the military districts in peacetime, and the fronts, or a combination of military districts and fronts, during war operations. During peacetime, the command of the average military district will include 100,000 to 200,000 soldiers, who can be organized in rifle armies in case of emergency. During wartime, the military district in which conflict is taking place or threatened becomes a front, which thus roughly corresponds to a theatre of operations. The Front Command will have control of several armies and air divisions with as many as a million or more men.⁷⁶ During wartime, the commanding general of a front is a topflight Soviet soldier, usually holding the rank of colonel general or marshal.

In periods when the principle of one-man control (*edinonachalie*) does not prevail on this level the military commander of a front belongs to a three-member Military Council, which issues the major directives and approves all important plans. Of the other two members, at least one, usually designated only as "Member of the Military Council," is a high Party official who is directly responsible to the Kremlin and reports to the MPA.⁷⁷ In peacetime, those Members of the Military Council who remain in the Army become Deputies for Political Affairs to the commanders of the military district, and are regarded as political workers subordinate to the MPA.⁷⁸ The third seat on the Military Council is often held either by the executive secretary of the Communist Party organization in which the military district is located, or by the military commander's chief of staff.⁷⁹

The military district or front is the highest field organization of the Soviet Army, and is theoretically capable, with its own resources and equipment, of

executing plans for a major military campaign.⁸⁰ In fact, the Soviet war against Finland in 1939-40 was largely conducted through the forces of the Leningrad Military District. In its field, the political administration of a military district works out its own propaganda campaign, determining the special slogans and appeals to be used in all units, and issuing numerous brochures, pamphlets, posters, and speech outlines, which are used to bring the slogans and appeals directly to the rank and file.⁸¹ In peacetime, it determines the schedule of political-training courses, basing its decisions on the directives of the MPA, and maintains tight control over political organs at lower levels.⁸²

To perform these duties, the political administration of the military district has a large staff, with facilities which usually include its own publishing house or easy access to one, a daily newspaper,⁸³ a theatre and troupe,⁸⁴ group of lecturers,⁸⁵ and sometimes its own art studio.⁸⁶ Its organization usually is composed of departments (*otdeleniya*) or sections for personnel, propaganda, information (or reports to superior bodies), "cultural-enlightenment" work, organization and instruction, finance, and supplies. Attached to its staff will be a Section for Work among the Komsomol Membership and a Communist Party Commission.⁸⁷ Administrative problems at this level are often discussed in newspaper and magazine articles written for the political workers.⁸⁸

There appear to be three major types of men in controlling posts of the political apparatus at the military district level. Most famous are the men of national importance who are assigned these tasks during periods of military danger. Typical of these in World War II were two Politburo members, Andrei Zhdanov, then secretary of the Communist Party committee for Leningrad Province, who became a Member of the Military Council of the Leningrad Northern Front, and Nikita Khrushchev, then secretary of the Party organization in the Ukraine, who joined the Military Council on the Southern Ukrainian Front. A second type of leader, the trusted agent and trouble shooter, is represented by Lev Mekhlis. Finally, there is the leader who devotes his professional life to the military-political field and moves up the ladder to this important post at the military district level. To this latter group belong Lt. Gen. Konstantin Nikolevich Zimin, who had joined the Party as an eighteen-year-old youth, participated in the Civil War as a soldier, and then worked as a deputy military commissar of a battalion. He was assigned for two years to civilian Party organizations in Nizhnegorod Province, and then was transferred in 1923 back to political work in the Red Army. For two decades he remained in this realm of Party operations, moving up steadily until he was a member of the Military Council of the Transbaikal Front.⁸⁹

The posts within the political administrations are usually held by professional military-political workers. One of these was Col. Gregori Nikitich Zakharychev, who was born in 1906 of a peasant family and, at the age of nineteen enlisted in the Red Army. He joined the Communist Party two years later, was sent to military-political schools, and served for several decades as a political worker in the Ground Forces. He also rose to prominence in the Party, becoming a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and was given the Order of Lenin and other rewards for his services during World War II.⁹⁰ Another kind of supervisor in the political administration posts is the former Party academician assigned to propaganda tasks. Col. S. S. Belyaski had held the chair for Party-political work in the Higher Military-Political School of the Soviet Navy

before he was transferred to the post of deputy chief in the Section for Propaganda and Agitation of a Political Administration.⁹¹

Political Sections

At the middle level of the Soviet military structure, propaganda and political tasks are handled by political sections (*politotdely*), attached to the military commands of the armies, corps, and divisions.

A description of the organization of an army political section, which available data indicates was probably authentic, was given by a Russian soldier captured by the Germans in the autumn of 1942. He gave some details about the Fifty-second Army's Political Section, which was headed by Corps Commissar Sokolov and had a staff of about one hundred men. Sokolov, who was also a member of the Military Council of the Army, had an important section for Agitation and Propaganda, an "operating section" which supervised the propaganda directed at enemy troops, a large Personnel section in charge of appointment of political workers, a Party-organizational section which was concerned with Party internal operations, a Party Commission which usually concerned itself with matters of admission and Party discipline, a Komsomol section, a Party-documents section, and a section in charge of the army newspaper and printing office. In addition, there was a supply section, administrative unit, and two "cultural-enlightenment" institutions—a clubhouse and a library.⁹² Other sources provide information of the army political section which substantially fits this picture.⁹³

During World War II, each army, like each military district, was controlled by a three-man Military Council which often included a veteran Party leader. One such official was Maj. Gen. N. G. Chernyshev, who had been employed as an electrician when he was a young man, had served in the Red Army for a three-year period in the late twenties, and had then worked as a civilian Party official until 1941. He was assigned to political work in the Soviet armed forces during World War II, and became the political member of the Military Council in a field army.⁹⁴

The political sections at the corps,⁹⁵ division, and brigade levels are smaller editions of the army *politotdel*. In the Soviet division (which had a strength of 9000 during the war and 11,000 in the postwar reorganization), for example, the military command is usually headed by a major general. His deputies include a chief of staff who coordinates operational and logistical planning, a deputy chief of staff in charge of operations, and a political deputy. The latter who usually has the rank of colonel, also heads the small political section, assisted by a deputy chief and an assistant chief for Komsomol work. His staff usually includes two senior instructors for propaganda and agitation, an instructor for enemy propaganda, a senior instructor for matters of Party organization, cultural work, personnel work, and information, and the secretary of the divisional Party Commission.⁹⁶ The *politotdel's* special facilities usually include a radio network and a weekly newspaper.⁹⁷ Running a divisional political section requires lengthy training, organizational skill, and considerable experience, judging by the men found as chiefs. One of these was Col. Pavel Sergeevich Lushakov who was born in 1900 in a peasant family, entered the Red Army in 1919 and fought in the Civil

War, joined the Communist Party in 1920, and spent the next quarter-century in military-political work.⁹⁸

At these middle levels, considerable attention is given to political work among the officers, and the divisional *politotdel* usually has a "collective" of 15 or 20 propagandists, who give lectures on current events, Marxist theory, military strategy and tactics, and popular science. The propagandists are recruited from those political workers, staff officers, and unit commanders who have had some college training. They are assigned specific subjects by the political section, which approves the drafts of their talks, provides some training, and receives periodic reports on their work.⁹⁹ In addition, agitators are recruited and trained by the divisional political section for intimate talks among small groups of soldiers in the platoons and companies.¹⁰⁰

Deputy Commanders for Political Affairs

In the lower levels of the military forces, the unit commander is, in theory, responsible for all operations conducted within or by his unit. Among his assistants is his *zampolit*, the deputy commander for political affairs who reports to him and works with his approval and support. The responsibility of this deputy, however, does not end there, for he is also a representative of the Party and an agent of the MPA. As the *Red Star* put it, the deputy commander for political affairs (the *zampolit*) is "the right hand of the military commander and the direct organizer of all political work among the troops, but has his own obligations and rights, bearing a direct responsibility in the operations which he was commissioned to carry out."¹⁰¹

The *zampolit* thus works within the framework of the military structure, cooperating with other officers, taking his share of duty, and accepting subordination to the military commander in many matters. If he finds, however, that his political work is being hindered by military superiors, he is expected to appeal to higher political organs for the necessary support. This point was emphasized in a *Red Star* story about a regimental commander who refused to attend a conference of Party members and would not permit his subordinates to participate. In this case, the political section of the army intervened, transferred the date and place of the Party meeting, ordered that ample publicity be given to the new arrangements, and had the commander given a place on the program which left no question about his attendance and active participation.¹⁰² In many other cases, military commanders have received sharp public censure for lowering the efficiency of their political deputies by excessive assignments to economic or other tasks.¹⁰³ The deputy also works within the political structure, receiving his instructions from high political organs on operating methods, material to be emphasized in propaganda operations, and the approaches to be taken in explaining the current political and military situations.

The *zampolit* at the regimental level supervises the propaganda affecting some two thousand men,¹⁰⁴ and he has facilities which usually include a weekly newspaper, a radio network, a regimental club and library, and several dozen men working at battalion, company, and platoon levels to provide oral and other propaganda. The chief deputy of the *zampolit* is the regimental propagandist who is not only responsible for the political study of officers, but also supervises the political-training classes for soldiers, and directs the agitators delivering short

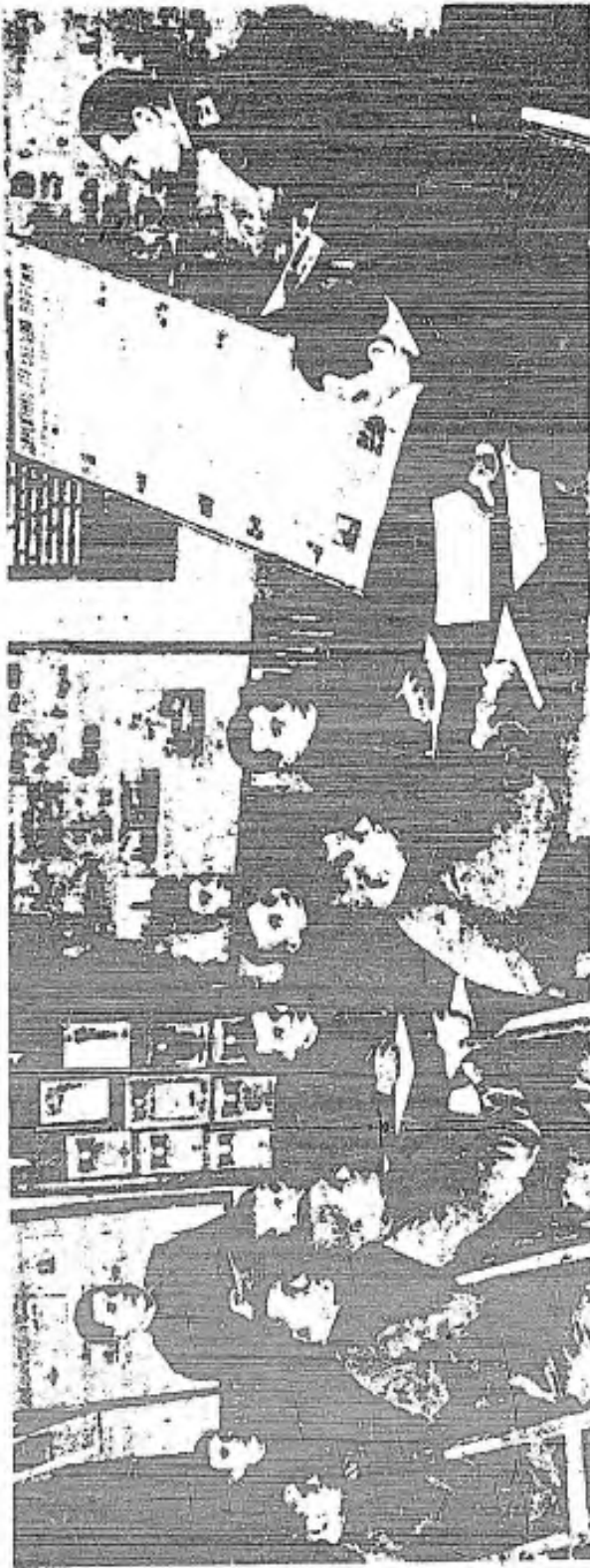


Fig. 4—The Zampolit Instructing His Aides

Russian Caption: "In the detachment of Officer G. Tamurk, much attention is given to the political education of soldiers and sergeants. In the photograph: P. D'yachenko, deputy commander for political affairs, conducts a talk with Komsomol group-organizers, agitators, and readers, who aid the warriors to study the materials of the Nineteenth Party Congress." K.Z., Oct 26, 1952.

Note: A Komsomol group-organizer is the appointed head of a Komsomol unit on the company or platoon level. A reader is a soldier or noncommissioned officer who reads aloud and explains materials from *Pravda*, or other approved sources, to a small group of soldiers.

Background: Zampolit D'yachenko is standing near a display entitled "Directives of the Nineteenth Party Congress."

Note: Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 14 are reproductions of photographs in Soviet newspapers. In some instances, headlines on reverse sides of the photographed pages bled through to the pictures and could not be deleted from the reproductions.

talks among the squads and other closely knit groups.¹⁰⁵ The *zampolit* also has two assistants for "cultural activities"—a chief for the regimental club and a professional librarian. Finally, it should be remembered, the *zampolit* uses the leadership of the Communist and Komsomol units in his regiment.

The success of the regimental deputy commander depends in large measure upon the contributions made at the lower levels by the political workers. Each Soviet regiment has three rifle battalions and a series of special units, and each rifle battalion contains 555 men when at full strength. The battalion deputy commander who deals with the political problems of this level has only one professional assistant, the battalion agitator, but he has the assistance of the Communist and Komsomol primary organizations which exist on the battalion level. Much of his work is concerned with the supervision of these Party branches, direction of the deputy company commanders,¹⁰⁶ and special propaganda for the officers of the battalion.

The political worker closest to the military rank and file is the assistant commander for political affairs (*pompolit*) for the company. The Soviet rifle company has a personnel of 110 men at full strength, and the *pompolit* is concerned with their propaganda and recreation. While he does not have professional assistants, he is aided by a circle of "activists," most of whom belong to the Communist Party or Komsomol.* With their help, he runs the company's Room of Cultural-Enlightenment Work, which is a combination clubroom, entertainment center, library, and assembly hall. Other activists edit the wall-newspaper or bulletin board for the company, are leaders in the sports, music, and other recreation groups, and give approved talks to small groups in their own platoons and squads. In addition, the *pompolit* himself delivers many talks, striving to motivate the men to cultivate the military virtues, and transmitting the current propaganda lines.¹⁰⁷

Since the office of the deputy company commander has been only recently restored,¹⁰⁸ little data exist as yet concerning the type of men selected for this post and the training provided for them, although they are usually given the rank of lieutenant. However, it appears that most of the men chosen in 1950 had a minimum of formal schooling for their work, although some had been graduated from a military-political school for junior officers. Many had had no experience of any kind in political training of the masses, although some had been responsible for the operations of the Komsomol branches.¹⁰⁹

AUXILIARY FORCES

Although the political organs and their professional staffs provide the drive and direction for the Party-political apparatus of the armed forces, the effectiveness of the apparatus among the millions of rank-and-file soldiers depends in large measure upon the utilization of the contributions made by three other interrelated groups: the military commanders, the Army Communists, and the military members of the Komsomol. In order to secure these contributions, the political organs themselves expend considerable time and energy in propaganda for, and political operations among, these special groups.† It is necessary to

*The next section of this chapter discusses the duties of the activists.

†See Part V, especially Chapters 14, 15, and 16, for the activities of the political organs among military commanders, Army Communists, and military members of the Komsomol.

note how these groups are utilized as instruments for general propaganda purposes of the Party-political apparatus. They serve a variety of purposes, but three major political tasks may be distinguished.

First, these groups provide the manpower and energy necessary for bringing the desired lessons and doctrines to each man in the military ranks. It is a basic premise of Soviet propaganda that significant results cannot be expected from a presentation of ideas in general terms to a mass audience. Therefore, greater reliance is placed upon direct communication through intimate talks to which the individual listener must show at least external signs of attention, as he listens to what is hoped to be a clear and intelligible presentation of Party doctrines. This method, it hardly need be said, requires many thousands of propagandists and agitators.

Secondly, these groups, particularly the Communist and the Komsomol groups, are necessary instrumentalities in the Bolsheviks' determined effort to capture control of the small informal aggregations to which each soldier belongs. A soldier spends his free time with his friends, and they play a vital part in the formation of his attitudes, standards, and goals. Through the Communist and Komsomol groups, the Bolshevik leaders attempt to capture the leadership of these informal groupings, to encourage pro-Soviet attitudes and a desirable climate of opinion within the groups, and to inhibit non-Soviet or unapproved attitudes and actions.

Finally, these auxiliary groups provide much of the intelligence needed by the political organs for their plans and programs. From them are received data concerning moods of the men, their reactions to policies and conditions, and the names of actual and potential troublemakers and of unenthusiastic or inefficient soldiers.

Military Commanders

During the past three decades, the Soviet military officers have sought in various ways to minimize the activity and influence of the political staff within their military units. Curiously enough, one result of this campaign has been the gradual broadening of the propaganda and political responsibilities of the officers themselves. Each time they have won a temporary victory and the authority of the political workers has been narrowed, the officers' responsibilities have been expanded.

Thus, for example, the professional political worker was removed from the company level in 1942, and the military commander was ordered to carry on the political work himself with the aid of his own soldiers. In 1950, when the professional political worker was restored at that level as the deputy company commander for political affairs, the company commander continued to bear some political responsibility, certainly more than he had possessed before 1942. The result of this process over the years has been to make the military officer, in theory at least, a constituent part of the very political systems he has sought to restrict and eliminate; and he has been forced to assume some part in their work.

On 9 October 1942, when the office of the military commissar was abolished, governmental decree instructed the military commander that "political work had become a part of his service obligations."¹¹⁰ The present Statute for Internal

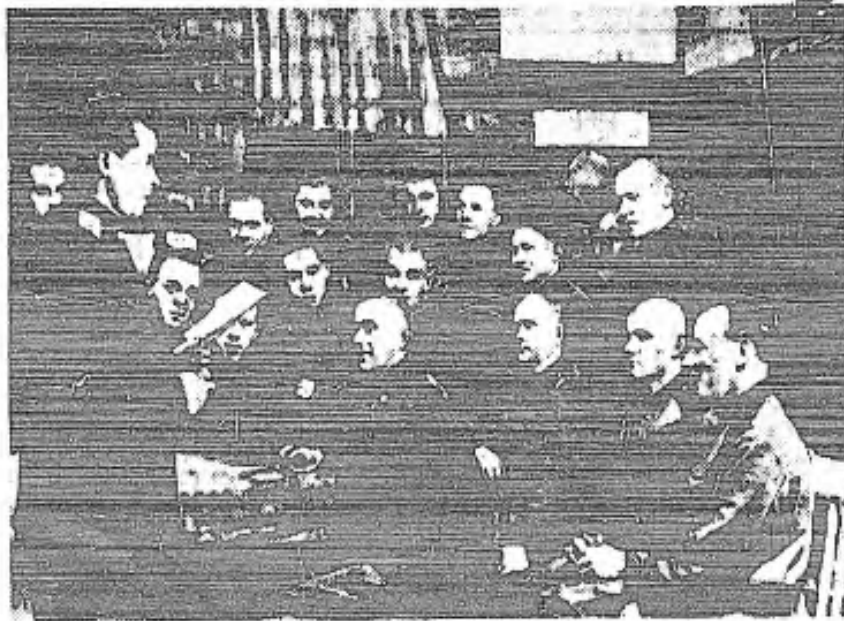


Fig. 5—The Military Commander in the Role of Agitator

Russian Caption: "The warriors of the N-th unit greeted with tremendous enthusiasm the decree of the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union concerning the lowering of state retail prices for consumption and industrial goods. In the photograph: First Lt. V. Zuikov conducts a talk with military servicemen of his detachment after the radio broadcast on the lowering of prices." Kz, Apr 1, 1953.

Service of the Soviet armed forces specifies, among other things, the duties of the various military officials. It states that the regimental, battalion, company, and platoon commanders are all responsible for the military and political training of their subordinates, and are obligated to guide that training.¹¹¹ These and other statements of official policy show the Kremlin's insistence that the military commander must not hold himself aloof from propaganda activities, that he must refrain from showing opposition to or contempt for such work, and must make a positive contribution to the morale effort.

Various types of assistance are demanded. The officer must help to establish high morale within the military unit by trying to make the soldiers feel their true interests are being served and adequate provisions are being made for their requirements. The ideal is to have the soldiers refer in "loving fashion" to their commander as "our father."¹¹² He is called upon to concern himself with the daily needs of the men, the quality of their food and clothes, the diversity of their recreation, and the satisfaction of their just demands.¹¹³ He must strive to build a dynamic *esprit de corps*, and to provide personal inspiration for his men.¹¹⁴

In the field of propaganda proper, the military commander is called upon to be an active participant in political operations conducted within his unit. He is given some basic training in military school for this role,¹¹⁵ and is provided with propaganda facilities and skilled assistance while on duty. He is aided through seminars and special classes to understand the latest Party line and to learn the best methods for persuading his men to support it.¹¹⁶

One propaganda task in which many military commanders take a direct part is called "political information," which may be described as a review of current events in the light of the Kremlin's interpretation. It is conducted daily "in order to keep the Army rank and file and sergeants up to date in all important events in the land of Soviets and beyond its borders, and to help the warriors to orient themselves in the world situation, . . . connecting these events with the tasks of the Red Army warriors."¹¹⁷

In many regiments, the deputy commander for political affairs selects the most appropriate themes, and sends them to the company and platoon commanders with his suggestions for materials to read and techniques to use in the talks. He may also send one of his assistants to provide on-the-spot instruction.¹¹⁸ At higher levels, some army and divisional commanders share with their political deputies the task of conducting political information sessions among the staff officers and lower unit commanders.¹¹⁹

In addition, the more literate and articulate officers are frequently asked to lecture, report, and give special talks on a wide variety of subjects, including military matters, political events, and Marxist doctrines.¹²⁰ Those who are particularly skilled and who evince willingness to accept such assignments will be enrolled in an agitational-propaganda collective, in which each member may be called upon to speak several times a month.¹²¹ Many of the military commanders assist the political apparatus by presiding or participating in various types of meetings, and a few officers conduct political classes for both officers and soldiers.¹²² Finally, some military commanders find it politically advantageous to take seriously their obligation to supervise political training in their units, and are publicized as reviewing the plans for political activities, visiting the political classes, and hearing reports from the group leaders and propagandists.¹²³

The commander is also expected to secure assistance from Communist Party and Komsomol members in his unit. He is required to accept a special relationship with the Party branch, a relationship which, although he has full authority over his company, nevertheless prevents him from interfering in the internal affairs of the Party branch, and forces him to accept its suggestions and even criticisms on Party matters in his company. He frequently attends Party branch meetings, speaks at its functions, and reports to the branch officials concerning his plans. In return, the commander finds the Communist Party members at his beck and call, attending to the multitude of minor details which must never be forgotten in political work, reporting on various aspects of unit morale, and keeping the Party's ideas constantly before the men.¹²⁴ In criticizing the situation in one unit, an Army magazine explained the relationship in these words:

It is clear that the commanders do not guide Party and Komsomol organizations. This guidance is carried out by the political organs of the division, and by political workers of the regiments and battalions. The obligation of the commander is to place, in timely fashion, concrete tasks before the Party and Komsomol organizations of his unit, directed to the improvement of training of the personnel.¹²⁵

An ideal program of weekly political activity in an artillery company was published during 1946 in *Red Star*. It was attributed to the military commander and included the following notations:

November 10th: group talks within each platoon, to be conducted by platoon commanders, and to be based upon Comrade Stalin's speech on the coming collapse of the fascist bloc; special group discussions for the agitators of the battery in which experiences in directing the detailed study of Comrade Stalin's speech are to be exchanged, under the direction of a Communist Party official.

November 11: a company meeting, conducted by me, to discuss "Events of the Week on the Fronts of the War."

November 12: a conference of editors of special bulletins and leaflets, conducted by a senior sergeant, and dealing with the theme "How to Aid in the Study of Comrade Stalin's Speech."

November 13: conference of all Party members in the company, to be conducted by the Party officials.

November 14: meeting in each platoon, to be conducted by the platoon commanders, to discuss results of recent tests in military techniques.

November 15: meeting of all personnel in the entire battery, to discuss the question of the soldier's appearance and bearing.¹²⁶

Army Communists

An important objective of the Soviet propagandist is to capture, and utilize for his purposes, every significant group in Soviet society, and "to encompass with Bolshevik influence" every Soviet individual. In the campaign directed to these ends within the military forces, the several hundred thousand Army Communists and Komsomol members play a vital role.¹²⁷

One aspect of this campaign is directed at capturing the leadership of the small, informal group. A vigorous and continuing effort is made to recruit the most energetic, efficient, and courageous individuals for membership in the Party, but the special attribute which is desired of the Communist is that of

authority among his fellow soldiers. Under optimum conditions, there will be at least one Communist, aided by a member of the Communist youth or Komsomol, within each small group.¹²⁸ He is expected to give leadership to the group, and to influence the others to accept his attitudes and ideas, which are, of course, supposed to be those approved by the Party officials and the political apparatus.

The specific activities of these Communists are numerous and adapted to the variety of situations existing in the many parts of the Soviet Army, but a basic pattern can be discerned. A major share of this pattern relates to the countering of all potential or actual anti-Soviet influences. The Communists provide a high percentage of the agents who report to the political police on all statements or actions that reflect undesirable attitudes.¹²⁹ They also assist the political workers in determining and describing the moods of the men, help to find the sources of dissatisfaction and areas of doubt, and suggest problems or questions that should be solved.¹³⁰ More specifically, the Communist himself is expected to react immediately to questions that are asked within the informal group, to resolve doubts, and to contend with dissenters and malcontents.¹³¹

Considerable emphasis is placed on the Communists' obligations in military matters. Each Communist is expected to assist the military commander in his efforts to secure firm discipline, efficient military service, and vigilance. To do so, the Communist is called upon to be a model of enthusiastic and efficient fulfillment of all his military tasks, to aid in the popularization of available exemplary soldiers, and to mobilize group opinion against those who do not meet the Army's standards. In this way he is supposed to inspire the comrades to show the desired discipline, military efficiency, physical courage, and all other attributes of a good soldier.¹³² As the *Red Star* put it: "The Communist must not only always observe the military regulations himself. He must also be a thoughtful, skillful educator, who knows how to look into the mind and character of his comrades, and knows the way toward the best form of military discipline, based on a conscious desire to fulfill one's duties."¹³³

In addition to these military duties, the Communists are given numerous propaganda assignments. In the field of political propaganda, the Communist is one of the last links in the long chain reaching back to the MPA and to the Kremlin itself. It is his task to bring the Party line personally to the men in his squad or platoon. His typical propaganda form is the *beseda*, the short intimate talk by which the Communist agitator acquaints the men about him with the Party line, repeating it again and again until all give at least external signs of acceptance, answering all questions, and trying to resolve any doubts the men might have.

From the ranks of the Communists and Komsomols come the thousands of agitators who work in the platoons, squads, and companies. The results that political workers hope to achieve by their efforts can be illustrated by the story of Communist Trifonov. He was appointed Party organizer in his company, and found that the Party could give him little help, for his company had no other Communists and only one candidate for Party membership. His first step was to create an *aktiv*, a group of activists willing to devote part of their free time to political tasks, and he began to build it by recruiting the Communist candidate, the officials of the Komsomol branch in the company, and the elected members of the Council in charge of the Room for Political Enlightenment Work. Then Trifonov conferred with the company commander, and learned that the use and care

of small arms would be the center of the company's training program for the immediate future. His next step was to draw up a program of political activities which would be helpful during this period, and to transmit this program, with his instructions and objectives, in special meetings with his activists.

The execution of the propaganda program was begun, along with preparations for rifle training, with a series of talks by Trifonov and the Communist candidate on these subjects: "Attain Excellent Results in the Shooting," and "Our Arms Are the Best in the World." Next the Communist candidate and an agitator from the Komsomol explained to groups in the company the rules under which rifle practice would take place. A special meeting was held for Komsomol members, and they were told why they must maintain positions of leadership in the training of marksmen.

During the shooting practice, reports on scores attained were issued in the form of "militant leaflets" or pamphlets. The men in charge of the Room for Political-Enlightenment Work dramatized these results by exhibiting a large shield on which were shown the increasing accuracy and decreasing number of misses of the riflemen. When the training period was concluded, the best marksmen were ordered to give short talks on their superior methods, and an issue of the wall-newspaper was devoted to the same subject. On instructions from Communist Trifonov, a Komsomol wrote a story about the best sharpshooters, and this was read in a large meeting at the battalion clubhouse.¹³⁴

The Army press contains many examples of the ideals placed before the Communist agitators. When one Soviet detachment moved into Czechoslovakia, some of the soldiers in conversations with each other expressed curiosity about the country into which they were moving. A Communist agitator casually indicated that he could answer some of their questions, and, according to the story in *Red Star*, he was soon prevailed upon to give a talk about the geography, government, economy, and living standards. This lecture was halted in order that the men might rest, but it was resumed "at suitable moments" during the days that followed until the entire approved story had been given to the men.¹³⁵

Military Komsomol Membership

The military branches of the Komsomol form the third auxiliary agency supporting the program of the political organs. A major instrument of the Kremlin for influencing and controlling young civilians,¹³⁶ the Komsomol offers attractive possibilities for its use within the armed forces where the lower ranks are mainly filled with young men of Komsomol age. Another important target for Komsomol influence is the junior officer of the armed forces, especially in the case of Navy personnel,¹³⁷ and the Komsomol organization is expected to provide some assistance in the training of new officer cadres.¹³⁸

Like the Army Communist organization, the Komsomol is called upon to attract into its membership the men who are outstanding in a physical, military, or intellectual sense, and who have the potentials for leadership within their age and military group. The Komsomol members are subjected to influences which are designed to intensify their loyalty to the Kremlin and to increase their usefulness to their military-political superiors. In the process, their energies are presumably channelized, some of their questions answered, and their own ambitions at least partially realized.¹³⁹

The Komsomol membership is expected to help in the general propaganda program of the military-political apparatus, especially with respect to "the Communist training of Soviet youth."¹⁴⁰ As the chief of the Komsomol section in the MPA put it: "The basic elements of Komsomol work in the Armed Forces are the Bolshevik education of the young warriors and the struggle for high grades in study and discipline among them."¹⁴¹ Those Komsomol operations dealing with the general training of the Army youth appear to fall into three major categories—political education, military training, and care of recreational and related leisure-time facilities.

The tasks of political propaganda are given special attention in the programs of the Army Komsomol organizations, and they are told that they must consider "the ideological training of the youth as their own special field."¹⁴² Properly exploited, the Komsomols can provide useful manpower in operations directly supervised by the political workers. Thus, in the system of biweekly classes for political training which all soldiers and noncommissioned officers must attend, about one-quarter of the class leaders and the vast majority of assistant leaders are Komsomols.¹⁴³ Moreover, the Komsomol organizations provide a variety of other forms of assistance, assigning men to produce maps and other needed graphic aids, to aid the backward students, and to teach the Russian language to soldiers of non-Russian origin.¹⁴⁴ The Komsomol branch leader is told to make a special point of watching the progress of the political class, by hearing reports on its work and its problems, by finding additional literature for the leader, and by awarding prizes to the most promising students.¹⁴⁵ The branch leader is also expected to provide the personnel for operating the company Rooms for Political-Enlightenment Work.¹⁴⁶

Another type of contribution, oral propagandizing, is carried out under the sponsorship of the Komsomol organizations themselves. There are many opportunities for oral propaganda, and the Komsomol branches are encouraged to arrange special meetings for the young soldiers of their battalion or company, to conduct special "youth lecture series," and to assign members to give informal talks to small groups of their comrades. One Komsomol battalion organization was praised for holding open meetings in which the programs were based on such themes as "Love and Defend the Homeland as It Was Loved and Defended by the Heroes of Krasnodon," and "The Soviet Youth in the Struggle for Fulfillment of the Stalinist Five-Year Plan."¹⁴⁷

Other examples of the goals set for the Komsomol branches can be found in *Red Star*. The Komsomol organization of a garrison in the Soviet zone of Germany sponsored one series of lectures on Marxist theory, another series on the lives of Lenin and Stalin, and a third on the history of the Communist Party.¹⁴⁸ Frequently, Komsomol branches are publicly ordered to include "youth" themes in the lectures planned for their units.¹⁴⁹ Another propaganda form is the short talk, and many Komsomol members are given a "commission" to deliver such a talk on the meaning of a recent political event, a new Party line, or "exposing the thoroughly rotten bourgeois ideology and 'culture.'"¹⁵⁰

Many of the other propaganda forms and methods used at the lower levels of the armed forces also require considerable manpower, and here again the Komsomol organizations are called upon to be of service. They can aid the Communists and professional political workers in the issuance of wall-newspapers and special leaflets, and often Komsomol members will turn out posters and

other forms of graphic agitation.¹⁵¹ They are also called upon to check on and secure the timely delivery of the various newspapers sent to the unit, and to appoint their more articulate members to read aloud the editorials and important articles in each issue.¹⁵² With regard to books, the Komsomol organizations are encouraged to study the types of literature being read, to help the men select the best books, to insure that these are easily secured, and to organize discussion of the approved books in order that the desired lessons may be learned.¹⁵³ They are also expected to furnish some of the volunteer help needed by the libraries of the Army units.¹⁵⁴

The Komsomol branches are also ordered to exploit the servicemen's home ties, particularly those exercised through the mails. The young soldier is told to send letters regularly to his friends and relatives, and the Komsomol secures cooperation from homefront organizations in getting these letters answered. Some use is made of those letters, particularly during wartime, which "prove to have real propaganda value"; part of a useful letter is reproduced or read aloud to a propaganda group.¹⁵⁵ The Komsomol units are often used in the utilization of other media, organizing groups to see recommended films and to discuss the lessons to be learned from them, and arranging for "collective" listening to important radio programs.¹⁵⁶

The Komsomols are constantly warned that they must not content themselves with propaganda efforts of a general nature reaching those servicemen who are readily accessible to being propagandized in groups. They must be particularly vigilant in assuring that the Party line is brought to every man. A specific illustration of this pressure is to be seen in the lecture given to a company Komsomol branch which had been satisfied to report that almost all its own members were receiving excellent grades in military and political training. It was reprimanded for failing "to encompass with its influence all the non-Komsomol youth of the company." *Red Star* emphasized the lesson to be learned by reporting that subsequently the branch gave special attention to the men who worked in small groups or who rarely attended meetings for some reason, to the young soldiers who were sick, and to those who had shown little interest in the political propaganda in the past.¹⁵⁷

If properly exploited, the Komsomol units can be used for many types of propaganda. A recommended program "to nourish among young warriors the attitudes of Soviet patriotism and Soviet national pride," may include: meetings based on the theme, "In Our Socialist Homeland"; talks concerning Soviet scientists and artists given in the company Room for Political-Enlightenment Work around the large map of the USSR; joint meetings with Soviet workmen or farmers, or with famous military or labor heroes; correspondence with former soldiers of the unit or with Stakhanovites; reading aloud of newspaper articles about new Soviet advances in agriculture and industry; and exhibition of an album of materials showing "the might of the Soviet Union and the superiority of the socialist structure over the capitalist."¹⁵⁸ Sometimes the Komsomol members will arrange for excursions to historic Bolshevik monuments or to nearby industrial works.¹⁵⁹ It need hardly be said that even the most energetic Komsomol organizations cannot cover more than a very small percentage of these numerous and varied activities.

Another broad sphere of Komsomol activity in the armed forces is that of recreation, which in the Soviet Army, is closely tied to political and military

aims. The Komsomol members are specifically instructed that "the organization of leisure-time activities is one of their most important obligations."¹⁶⁰ Not only are they called upon to help establish clubs and libraries in units whenever such institutions are lacking, but they can provide the personnel to operate them, to supply and repair the capital equipment, and to assist in formulating and executing an approved program of activities for such centers.¹⁶¹ They can also provide leadership for recreational groups interested in dramatics, music, and sports.¹⁶² *Red Star* declared in 1950 that there were many thousands of amateur drama and music collectives, and warned that "the Komsomol members must be the souls of these collectives."¹⁶³ Komsomols can assist these groups by securing outside talent for concerts and similar events,¹⁶⁴ and by providing them with such items as songbooks.¹⁶⁵

The supervision and encouragement of sports groups in the armed forces also come within the scope of Komsomol duties. Physical culture is regarded as an integral part of Communist education of youths, making them "ready for labor and defense,"¹⁶⁶ and the Komsomol members are specifically instructed to develop group sports as a beneficial means of organizing the leisure time of the soldiers.¹⁶⁷ A directive of the MPA ordered Komsomol branches to give special attention to such athletics as bayonet fighting, skiing, gymnastics, track and field, and swimming.¹⁶⁸ In support of this work, the political administrations issue to the Komsomol organizations reference works on various types of sports and items of athletic equipment.¹⁶⁹

The exploitation of the Komsomol organizations is most energetically pressed in the fields connected with military training. In fact, all these Komsomol activities, both political and recreational, must in the Bolshevik view be connected with the effort to increase military efficiency. In official pronouncements and publications, the political and military obligations of the Komsomols in the armed forces are usually mentioned side by side, with the first often supplementing the second. The MPA itself emphasizes that the duty of the Komsomol is "more closely to rally . . . all young soldiers around the Communist Party and the Great Stalin, in order to render assistance to the commanders, political organs and party organizations in the strengthening of fighting capacity and the political-morale composition of the troops, their unshaken steadfastness and resistance in battle, and firm military discipline and order."¹⁷⁰ The contributions sought from the Komsomol groups in the military field fall into four major groups—military propaganda, the strengthening of discipline, exemplary performance of all duties, and the perfecting of military skills.*

It is important to note that this picture of Komsomol contributions represents the ideal sought by the Komsomol leaders and their supervisors, and is not a description of the system in actual operation. The daily activity of the Komsomol units is less fruitful, and examples given of their contributions represent the exception rather than the rule. Available information indicates that the Soviet leaders are exerting considerable pressure in their effort to secure a closer approximation of actual performance to the established ideals through frequently repeated directives and orders, rewards to those approaching the ideals, and punishment for those who lag far behind. In this process, some indications of the weaknesses in the Bolshevik system, and the types of action taken to correct

*These are discussed in some detail in Chapter 9, entitled "Military Propaganda."

these weaknesses, can be found in the public press, particularly in the critical articles and editorials which frequently appear.

One major area of criticism concerns the utilization of available Komsomol manpower and facilities. The Komsomol organizations have thousands of members (and can draw upon thousands more of the non-Komsomol people if they wish), but most members are not given adequate training for these political and related services, and they are therefore not usable.¹⁷¹ Moreover, even in those companies and battalions where experienced or trained Komsomols are found, many are not used because of poor program planning or incompetent management on the part of the Komsomol officials.¹⁷² Frequently, the Komsomol organizations fail to use their opportunities for influencing the Army youth, being content that their members attain good grades in their own political and military studies. They fail to maintain their contacts among the non-Komsomol soldiers, and allow a gap to grow between themselves and the men they are supposed to inspire. This ignores, of course, the Bolshevik admonition that the strength of the Komsomol activist "must consist not only of the fact that he works himself, but that he makes others work and follow him."¹⁷³

Another type of criticism is connected with the quality of organization and the content of the propaganda. In many branches, too much time is spent in writing out grandiose plans, leaving little time to prepare for and carry out these plans.¹⁷⁴ Often reports are submitted which are based on the plans, but the plans actually are not carried out and the reports are false.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, because of insufficient preparation, poor organization, or lack of skill, the level of Komsomol propaganda is often very low. The Komsomol leadership may leave all the work to one person, or talks and lectures are ill-prepared, or the propagandist does a poor job of explaining the Party line.¹⁷⁶ The illustrations used to put across the lesson may mean little to the audiences and have no connection with the world familiar to them.¹⁷⁷

Other critics refer to sterility and lack of inspiration in the Komsomol organizations' propaganda. Although they hold frequent meetings and engage in numerous activities, their efforts are largely fruitless. A criticism of this type appeared in *Krasnaya Zvezda*:

Take for example the unit in which the Komsomol organizer is Junior Lieutenant Slobodin. If one were to judge by the quantity of the measures undertaken, it would appear that the work of training the youth in this unit is being undertaken in a model fashion. But when one examines the matter carefully, it is obvious that the Komsomol organization is not achieving desired results. The agendas of its meetings are narrow and repetitious, the level of its activity and discussion quite low. Criticism and self-criticism at meetings are absent, and the measures which are decided upon are not concrete and no one is obligated actually to do anything. Talks and lectures in the unit are often not distinguished by their deep content or by their intelligibility. The speakers concern themselves with general comments and questions, and very few use examples taken from the life of the unit.¹⁷⁸

Chapter 6

TRAINING THE IDEAL POLITICAL WORKER

SOVIET IMAGE OF THE IDEAL WORKER

One means of grasping Soviet concepts of political operations is to examine the various descriptions of the desirable qualities, traits, skills, and methods which are found in the literature for Army political personnel. The image of the ideal political worker which emerges from these descriptions is not, of course, a true description of the actual political worker, but it epitomizes the qualities which the Bolsheviks are trying to instill in him and points up the objectives of personnel selection and training.

The political worker in the armed forces is expected to make his major contribution to the execution of the Kremlin's plan by influencing and exploiting the attitudes and emotions of the military personnel. Within this context, the ideal political worker is seen primarily as the manipulator of men's minds, the stimulator of desired tendencies, and the inhibitor of vices and dangerous thoughts, who uses the men's fears, loyalties, ambitions, and desires for social approval in order to achieve the ends desired by the Kremlin.

The central core of this image may be seen in two statements, one describing standards established for the ideal political worker, and the other telling of the alleged qualities of a specific person working within the political apparatus. A special journal issued for the Army's political workers declared in 1948:

It is the obligation of the Party-political leader to perfect his mastery of the method of the individual approach to people. He must be able to conquer the souls of men, in order to direct the power and the activity of people on the correct road. He must daily develop in himself the ability to persuade people, to recognize the merits and deficiencies of each of them.¹

The other statement is found in the description of the man who directed the political apparatus during the defense of Sevastopol in 1941-42:

His personal example inspired people with valor and coolness. He has a sobering effect on even the most flustered person. He did not tolerate disorder or even fussing around. He knows how to speak and how to change their moods. He knows that laughter sometimes soothes and sometimes wounds—an excellent medicine which he uses lavishly.²

To perform his duties as manipulator, the political worker is expected to be a student of human nature who uses the available time and facilities to examine

the men entrusted to him, to learn their moods, their complaints, their problems, and the arguments that move them.³ He should be a teacher who uses this information to build in his students the habits of obedience and the impulses which lead to proper fulfillment of the tasks assigned to them.⁴ Above all, he must so control his men that he can "change their moods" when need be—calm the excited and give courage to the cowards. In the words of Ilya Ehrenburg, the political worker "prepares bravery and steadfastness just as the quartermaster prepares stores of provisions."⁵

In theory, the ideal political worker is able to perform these functions because he has achieved a high status symbolized by his "authoritativeness" among his colleagues and subordinates. This status depends on several qualities, which include "battle-worthiness," solicitude for the legitimate needs of his men, and unyielding insistence that they meet the standards of conduct set for them.

The literature written for the political personnel contains numerous admonitions that each political worker become a model soldier, especially in the display of courage on the battlefield. A typical statement of the role he is expected to assume is the following: "This explains the great number of casualties among commissars; commissars not only talk of bravery in battle, they themselves set an example. Usually in every group the commissar's name symbolizes courage. . . . Commissars go to battle ahead of the soldiers, not behind them."⁶

The ideal political worker shows constant solicitude for the basic needs of his men, although never indulging them with unnecessary luxuries, and he constantly adjusts conditions to meet the justified complaints of individuals or groups. This legend is not only circulated within each battalion or regiment (such as in tales about the political worker who secures aid for the soldier's mother in need of a home, or who demands justice for the soldier who is wrongfully treated),⁷ but, in addition, frequent references to this quality are printed in novels and in Army newspaper articles.⁸ The ideal is illustrated by the description, in a postwar analysis of the battle for Moscow, of a cavalry regiment's military commissar who was called "our own father" by his men:

He merited such love and respect because of his strong connections with the Red Army soldiers, and because he was constantly solicitous of their needs. He was always to be found where the most difficult situation existed, and he knew how, in the most trying moments, to support a cheerful spirit among his men and to inspire them to great deeds.⁹

A quality of far greater importance, and one rated very highly throughout Soviet society, is that of being exacting concerning the requirements imposed on each man. The political workers in the armed forces are frequently told, in the words of the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1919, that they are "the bearers of the spirit of our Party, representing its discipline, firmness, and manliness in the struggle for the accomplishment of the assigned task."¹⁰ In keeping with this, the model political worker devotes himself, "with all his soul" to the training of the men, explaining to them "their honorable and responsible tasks as Soviet soldiers, and nourishing in them a feeling of responsibility for the precise fulfillment of their service obligations."¹¹

In this capacity, the political worker must insist that each man obey all rules and regulations to the letter, and that he give the full measure of his potential contribution. In the matter of military discipline, for example, he is warned that

"not a single case of the slightest violation of the military oath or military regulations, or of orders and instructions of senior commanders, must go by without attention." "The person committing any act destructive of discipline must be given the punishment that he deserves."¹² In battle, the political worker is expected to be ruthless when he finds cowards or "panic-mongers," and to shoot these on the spot if necessary.¹³

Beyond these basic requirements concerning minimum rules of conduct, the political worker must act as a gadfly and spur, even for those who do their jobs, pressing the good men to work harder and perform their tasks better. A revealing although semi-fictional, characterization of a wartime commissar was given by one writer:

The commissar liked people to be angry when they left him. He believed that there was nothing that a man couldn't do, and when he scolded someone, it was never for something he could have done and didn't. When a man did something big, the commissar reproached him for not having done more. He was firmly convinced that a man thinks better when a little angry. He liked to break off his sentences halfway, so that only his main intention was understood, and the rest left to be worked out by the other. By such tactics, he made his presence constantly felt in the division. He could not be with everyone all the time. But when he spoke with a man, he tried to give him enough to think about until the next time.¹⁴

In his efforts to wield effective influences among his men, the political worker is expected to observe the Soviet basic rules for good communication with the masses. He is praised for speaking directly and personally to people, rather than using "formal" statements delivered in written form or through unenthusiastic subordinates, and he is constantly reminded that he must speak frequently to large groups, small groups, and individuals. He must not be satisfied with going through the motions of communicating, but must make certain that the desired points are being grasped, that the important questions are being answered, and that the correct approach for each type of audience is being used.¹⁵

In addition to these required traits for good group management, the ideal political worker has individual characteristics that are highly valued. He is eminently practical, acutely aware that his success is measured primarily in the fulfillment of the military tasks of his unit, rather than in the quantity of talks he gives or the number of satisfied men he commands. In the reprimand given to the political workers in a front-line regiment, this statement was emphasized:

Although it is completely clear that the task of political work is to support the combined operations in battle, there are obviously political workers who are completely unable to orient themselves in this situation. They convert political work into an end in itself and forget that it is rather a powerful means for attaining the military objectives assigned to the soldiers.¹⁶

The political worker drives himself and his men, working long hours and attending to many things.¹⁷ Throughout it all, he is enthusiastic about the Party line, and does not permit himself or his men to be lackadaisical about political affairs or related matters.

The system for schooling, in-service training, and control of the political worker is apparently directed at the production of the most pliable and efficient instrument for this role. The characteristics of unquestioning obedience and complete faith are stressed, for the ideal political worker is indifferent to

the moral implications of the methods and content of his propaganda, and he is willing to accept any instructions, without any qualms concerning the correctness of the basic policy or the desirability of the ends sought.

The ideal political worker has no qualms in those respects because he has studied and memorized the accepted Party doctrines and the approved versions of Party history until they have become indelible parts of his own consciousness, and he can give the Party line at any given time without inner question or outward doubt. Indeed, the fundamental element characterizing high moral stature in a Soviet officer is his "Bolshevist ideanness" (*ideinost*) or complete faith in the principles of Marxism-Leninism.¹⁸ He has learned that the Party is always completely right, and any hesitation in accepting the line or supporting its policies only reveals the potential traitor who is doomed to destruction if he does not conquer his weakness.¹⁹

SOME DEVIATIONS FROM THE IDEAL

These aspects of the ideal image placed before the political workers are useful for our understanding of the objectives and intentions of the Bolshevik leaders, even though they are not, of course, reliable descriptions of actual political workers. There is a wide discrepancy between the ideal and reality here, as in most matters in the Soviet world, and it is useful to note how the Bolsheviks try to deal with this discrepancy. In a sense, this entire memorandum is a study of this discrepancy, and several elements of the Soviet ideal should be noted.

An examination of the qualities sought in the political worker reveals that some of these qualities are contradictory in nature and mutually exclusive. The political worker, for example, can hardly be an instrument of terror and pressure for the state and still be recognized as a friendly counselor whose ideas can be accepted without much question. Yet he is expected to assume both roles. Not only must he work closely with the secret police, using violence himself in periods of crisis,²⁰ but he must exert constant pressure on the people about him, and show "exactingness" (*trebovatel'nost'*) in demanding that every person work to his full capacity for the glory of the state. Moreover, he is the keeper of his men's consciences, the moralizer who should be a constant reminder of the standards they must maintain and the weaknesses they must avoid. It was in these terms that a former captain in the Soviet Army explained, when he spoke with American interrogators after his own defection, why he particularly had disliked the *zampolit* of his division. The *zampolit*, declared the captain, was a pompous, didactic individual, who went about dissuading the officers from actions such as drinking or associating with German girls, and the like, and sanctimoniously urging them to devote their spare time to political duties.²¹

The Soviet leaders apparently recognize disadvantages which result from such duties of the political worker, but it is obvious that they will not permit him to forget them even if they lower his effectiveness as a propagandist. However, they apparently seek to overcome this difficulty in some measure by insisting that the political worker show his concern about some of the personal anxieties of the soldiers—their food, clothing, recreation, housing conditions, family welfare, and so forth. One Soviet defector calls this system a kind of blackmail, whereby the civilian agencies help the relatives of the soldier only if the latter behaves properly toward his own *zampolit*.²²

Another group of difficulties for the political worker stems from the fact that he is essentially a talker in a section of society where efficient and straightforward action is the highest virtue. He must tell the men to be good soldiers, to be content with the modest conditions of their lives, and to believe the official propaganda; the consequences of this role are obvious.

Most political workers are regarded as "babblers" because they constantly deliver political orations which, they seem to feel, is a way of "constructing Communism."²³ Virtually all non-Soviet sources stress the soldiers' dislike of these incessant speeches, particularly those connected with politics, and their boredom at the required political-training classes. Moreover, the political workers are themselves handicapped by the fact that they are given little autonomy in their own propaganda operations. Each *politrabotnik* must deliver talks at the times his orders call for them, regardless of the men's disposition at those times; he must speak on the specified subjects, regardless of the men's interest in them; he must tell obvious untruths, when the official line calls for them; and he must present the approved interpretations of those subjects rather than his own ideas.²⁴ He is regarded as a hypocrite who merely reads what is given to him, without belief or interest.

The Soviet leaders, of course, continue to demand that the political workers get a favorable response to their talks, while refusing to change the conditions under which they must work. They meet the problems raised here by issuing edicts on propaganda methods. Thus, in order to secure the interest of the audience, the propagandist is ordered to intersperse all talks with examples from local affairs and to talk in terms familiar to the men in his audience. In order to counteract the accusation of hypocrisy and cant, the propagandists are told: "If you want to win the masses, you have to be aflame with enthusiasm; . . . if you rise to address a meeting without feeling excited yourself, if you would rather be sleeping, then the mood of your audience will undoubtedly correspond to your own."²⁵ Of greater importance, perhaps, is the fact that the Soviet state strives to give its own propagandists a virtual monopoly of the means of communication and the latest information to be made public. Even though it is presented in a highly biased and perverted fashion, official news is often the only available news on world and national affairs, and some interest is shown in it by those men who have some curiosity about the world about them.²⁶

Other serious disadvantages to the work of political workers stem from the fact that the workers are aliens in the military world. They are not soldiers, although they must exhort their charges to become good ones, and they are often subjected to ridicule about their own ignorance of military matters and their own lack of enthusiasm for the hardships and dangers of military life. Here the Soviet leaders have no hesitation concerning the proper course of action. The political workers are subjected to pressure to learn the military sciences, although they are hardly given sufficient time to make themselves expert.²⁷ Often political workers are recruited from the military officers or the rank and file in a particular military service, and in fact most men at the Lenin Military-Political Academy (which trains the middle level of political officials for the Army) are war veterans.

Even more energetic steps are taken to meet accusations of political workers' cowardice or avoidance of the hardships and dangers of their military charges. There is an intensive propaganda campaign to create a legend about the

bravery of the typical political worker. Newspaper articles, official histories, and all types of belles-lettres often contain stories about political workers who distinguish themselves by their personal courage in battle, their coolness under fire, and their ability to rally their men for the fulfillment of difficult military assignments.²⁸ More important, apparently strict orders have been issued that the political workers, particularly those on the battalion and company levels, be placed directly in the front lines, with an unavoidable obligation to lead the charges and be models of bravery and courage; and available evidence indicates, in fact, that this was done during World War II.²⁹

It is true that some *zampolits* and commissars were able to gain acceptance of a sort among the soldiers and officers, judging from the reports of defectors. Yet it is worth noting that such men were liked in spite of their official duties, and usually because they failed to live up to some of their obligations. In their day-to-day relations with their unit's personnel, they overlooked faults in the men about them, failed to exert continuous pressure and to inflict swift and sharp punishment for misdeeds, privately admitted some faults in the Soviet regime, and made it plain that they were trying to do an unpleasant job which they themselves disliked.³⁰ Such men were able to secure some receptivity for their propaganda, precisely because they did not live up to the major aspects of the Bolshevik ideal.

OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Junior political officers receive their basic academic training in one of the several military-political schools (*uchilishche*) located in various parts of the Soviet Union. The most prominent are to be found in the two Russian metropolitan centers, one in Leningrad named for Friedrich Engels, and the other in Moscow named for Vladimir Ilich Lenin. Both of these schools were founded some thirty years ago, and have turned out many thousands of graduates.³¹ Both have been given many governmental and military awards for their accomplishments. Similar schools are located in Kharkov, Zaratov, Smolensk, and Gorki.³² During the war, special courses or schools to train new political workers were set up and supervised by the political administration of each front.³³

Candidates for admission to these schools are usually under thirty years of age, and the age range in the naval-political schools is set at eighteen to twenty-six years. Candidates are expected to have a secondary school education, and some training in Communist Party or Komsomol organization work. Although most of the students are noncommissioned officers or veteran soldiers, civilians experienced in political work or propaganda are encouraged to apply for admission. During the war, for example, many Communist Party leaders and Soviet governmental officials went into the political organs of the Army and Navy. In the postwar period, most students are reported to have been battle veterans who have won many awards for heroism.³⁴

Conditions at one of these schools were epitomized by a student in an interview with an American reporter, when he said that the work was hard and the food good. The men are up at five o'clock in the morning; they have ten hours of classes each day; and they live under rigid discipline. In peacetime, each student is given a good-sized stipend, which ranged, in 1940, from 200 to 450 rubles

each month (triple that given to the students in a Soviet teachers' institute), increasing gradually through the two-year course.³⁵

The daily curriculum at the political school for junior officers apparently included four hours of military training, four hours of training in theory, and two hours of political education.³⁶ A postwar press story indicated that political training concentrated on the bases of Marxist-Leninist theory, the approved methods of Party-political work in the Army, and the Communist Party's current line on ideological questions.³⁷ As part of their training, the students were given assignments in political work outside the school, including lectures and talks at nearby factories and schools.³⁸

Each major branch or service of the armed forces has its own academy for the training of middle-level officers. The political service has, for this purpose, the Lenin Military-Political Academy, which is described in some detail in the following section.

At the apex of the military-political school system is an institute attached to the Lenin Military-Political Academy giving the "Courses for Perfection of Senior Political Personnel." The men chosen for promotion to the highest posts in the political apparatus of the armed services are brought here for a year's training. Little information has been published currently concerning their study, except that it includes intensive work in theory and history of the Bolshevik Party, and military science.³⁹

There is, finally, an extensive network of institutions to provide training for the political worker who is already assigned to a military unit and performing his professional functions within the political apparatus. This network is also discussed in some detail later in this chapter.

THE LENIN MILITARY-POLITICAL ACADEMY

History

In 1919, on direct instructions from the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, a special institute to train political officers was established for the new Red Army. Students were selected from the soldiers on the front lines, brought in to Petrograd for a short and intensive course, and then sent back to fight in the Civil War. According to official propaganda reports, the first 150 graduates of the new institute were sent to work with the troops of the famous Seventh Army, with which Stalin's name has become connected. During the anti-Leninist Kronstadt revolt in 1921, some 235 institute students, who had been attending the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, acted as spearheads of the columns which crushed the rebellion.⁴⁰

The location and name of the school have changed several times through the years. After four changes, in 1925 the school was given the name of the Tolmachev Military-Political Academy. Located in Leningrad, then the center of anti-Stalinist activity within the Communist Party, it became inevitably involved in the controversies that arose between that city's leadership and the Stalinist-controlled headquarters of the Party in Moscow. Official historians declare today that the students of the Academy were "militant Bolsheviks who were irreconcilable in their struggle against the 'enemies of the people.'"⁴¹ Yet it is

obvious that there were anti-Stalinist groups in the school through the late twenties and after, and indeed, one of the major purges within the Red Army was directed against the Tolmachev Academy.

Various forms of public honors were given to the Academy in the next few years, probably as part of the effort to secure the loyalty of the student body to Stalinism. For example, on its fifteenth anniversary, in 1934, the Academy was given the Order of Lenin, presumably in acknowledgement of its meritorious services. It is clear, however, that the Kremlin was not happy about the Academy's work. In 1938, while the great purge of the Army was being conducted, and many people who had been connected with or graduated from the Academy were being removed from public life, some changes were ordered. The outward and public signs of these changes included the disappearance, and complete obliteration so far as public mention was concerned, of its former name, and the substitution of nothing less than the name of Lenin himself. In addition, the entire Academy was now moved to new quarters in Moscow "in order that it might work in immediate proximity to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and with its Military Section—the Main Political Administration."⁴² To fill the ranks of the Army's political workers, so deeply depleted in the purges, faculty members of the reorganized Academy were told that they were being given new and greater tasks. The student body was almost tripled, branches for extension work were opened in six other cities, and the research assignments of the Academy were greatly extended.⁴³

During World War II, the Academy's study program was extensively altered, and eventually a series of short-term courses was established to turn out many more graduates in a shorter period. Illustrative of the new tempo of the school's work is the fact that the number of new students admitted in the fall term of 1941 equalled the total number graduated in the first 15 years of its existence; thousands of new graduates were turned out during the war under this system.⁴⁴ The Academy returned to its normal operating methods early in the postwar period, and received the Order of the Red Banner and personal congratulations from Stalin on its twenty-fifth anniversary.⁴⁵

Faculty Tasks and Facilities

The Lenin Military-Political Academy has been assigned the task of training the leadership of the Army's professional political workers, and of providing special services in research and propaganda. Its graduates begin as deputy commanders for political affairs (*zampolits*) on the regimental level, or as staff members of the political sections on the army and military district levels.⁴⁶ During World War II, senior alumni of the Academy were assigned to act as members of the Military Councils of several fronts, while other graduates included the chiefs of most political organs in virtually all fronts and armies.⁴⁷ To carry out the Academy's missions, a group of trusted and skilled propagandists has been assigned to its teaching staff and administration, and it has been given comparatively extensive facilities.

The quarters of the Academy are located today at 14 Sadovaya Boulevard, within the capital city of Moscow. Its major building is described as being several stories high, and containing broad corridors and well-lit rooms. Its library, declared to be one of the best in the Soviet armed forces, has some eight hun-

dred thousand books and extensive files of newspapers and magazines. The building also contains two major reading rooms, one containing separate tables, lamps, and writing equipment for 60 students, and the other having places for 140 students. The classrooms are found on the lower floors, and the top floor has clubrooms in which meetings, concerts, and various forms of entertainment are held. A prominent place is given to a permanent exhibit of the published works of Lenin and Stalin.⁴⁸

The head of the Academy for several years during and after the war was Maj. Gen. A. I. Kovalevski, who has written many of the basic political brochures for the armed forces.⁴⁹ He left this post in 1948 in order to take the important post of Rector of the Kremlin's Academy of Social Sciences, attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU.⁵⁰ He was first succeeded by Lt. Gen. K. V. Krainyukov;⁵¹ then, during 1949, Col. Gen. I. Shikin, who until then had been the head of the MPA itself, became director of the Academy for a few months.⁵²

Shikin's successor, and the present director of the Academy, was one of the leading veterans in the Army's Political Administration. Lt. Gen. M. A. Kozlov received an award in 1947 for his long services (presumably 25 years), achieving the rank of major general by 1942. During World War II, he was deputy commander of the Thirteenth Army, and was given the Order of Lenin and other awards for his work in the Caucasian and Ukrainian Fronts; he was placed in charge of all political work in the Army's Ground Forces in the postwar period. The author of many articles and brochures on political operations and Bolshevik propaganda, he was placed in charge of the Academy in 1950.⁵³

Although less information is available concerning the heads of the academic departments, they appear to fit the pattern of the typical Soviet "intellectual," trained in the approved doctrines and experienced in the Party's operations. One such man, who may be typical, was Col. Nikoli A. Fedorov. Born in 1901 in a peasant family in central Russia, he volunteered for Civil War service in the Red Army during 1919, entered the Communist Party in 1921, and became a teacher in military institutions after 1924. Apparently regarded as a promising young man, he was sent to the Institute Academy in the thirties as a member of the teaching staff. During World War II, he was chief of the Department for Propaganda and Agitation in the Political Administration for the Southwestern Front. While at the Lenin Academy, Professor Fedorov was in charge of the chair or department of Communist Party History.⁵⁴

The faculty is presumably one picked for its members' trustworthiness, propaganda skill, and knowledge of political operations in the armed forces. Many of those teaching the political and military subjects are permanent employees, who have earned higher degrees in Soviet universities and who saw active service during the war.⁵⁵ Like all members of the intelligentsia, however, they have been charged with failure to carry out the Party's directives in the ideological field, and of permitting some elements of scholasticism to exist among the students.⁵⁶

The Student Body and the Curriculum

While information providing real insight into the standards used to select students for the Academy are not available, some clues can be found in the special announcements made for potential applicants and in other public sources.⁵⁷

The prospective student at the Lenin Academy must be under thirty-two years of age, and is expected to meet the educational and cultural requirements for admission to any Soviet university. Thus, he should have completed a secondary school, must pass preliminary tests in general cultural subjects, and rank high in competitive examinations on the Russian language, literature, and geography.

An effort is made to secure students who have good military records, and can secure the respect of their future military subordinates and colleagues. The present student body is almost entirely composed of veterans of World War II, and the publicity given to the Academy often boasts of the large number of students who have won medals and other awards for bravery and efficiency in military service. Thirty-five of them were allegedly "Heroes of the Soviet Union," including Major Samsonov, who had been mentioned in the dispatches concerning the Soviet battle for Berlin and who had been made a deputy to the Soviet parliament.⁵⁸

Candidates for admission are also expected to have secured some previous training and status in the military or political fields. Minimum requirements call for each to have had at least three years experience as a military commander or political worker, and to have attained at least the rank of company commander or its equivalent, and many are apparently majors and lieutenant colonels. Newspaper stories, for example, have referred to Major Yurasov, who had been commander of an artillery battery. Other students have held important political posts in the armed forces, such as one lieutenant colonel who had been a regimental agitator, a captain who had been on the staff of a divisional newspaper, and an instructor in the political administration of a military district.⁵⁹

Political reliability is obviously important. Each candidate must not only have a Communist Party card, but his application is accepted only after he has passed a preliminary test of his knowledge of the widely used textbook, *A Short Course in the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. If his application is accepted and forwarded to the Academy, it must be accompanied by several types of documents including a secret evaluation of his Party record drawn up by a Party official. In addition, the candidate's papers must include an evaluation of his service record, a copy of his personnel record, two photographs of him, and a biographical sketch written by himself. It may safely be presumed that all other available records about him are studied, and that his personal characteristics are evaluated. If all these documents prove to be satisfactory, the candidate takes a competitive examination on the history of the Bolshevik movement, and is interviewed by a member of the Academy staff.

The successful candidates are enrolled for the four-year program. They arrive at the Academy in late August, and their classes begin on the first of September. The courses fall into four areas, of which three are compulsory for all students: political training, military training, and general cultural study. In addition, each student enrolls in one of the six colleges or faculties: the general military faculty, the faculty for newspaper editors, and the artillery, tank, air force, or naval faculties.⁶⁰ At the end of this period of training and development, he is expected to become "a militant Bolshevik, a flaming Soviet patriot and an efficient teacher of Soviet warriors," to have mastered "Marxist-Leninist theory, the bases of Soviet military science, and the skills necessary for Party-

political work among the troops," and to have the attributes of "a cultured Soviet officer, with a well-rounded general education."⁶¹

In the field of politics, which the Soviets call the social sciences, the aim is to provide a level of training that compares with that of the Kremlin's school for its most promising Party leaders, the Higher Party School attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU.⁶² The basic courses in this field deal with the history of the CPSU, dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, history of the USSR, general history, international relations and the foreign policy of the USSR, political geography, and logic.⁶³ In addition, the Party organization at the Academy has a program for intensive study of the works of Stalin and Lenin. For example, in the period after the Party began to issue the collected works of Stalin, each student was expected to read the articles found in these volumes, to participate actively in "comradely discussions" conducted by Party agitators, and to attend the reports and lectures on the same subject which are given by the professors and Party leaders at the Academy.⁶⁴

An important place in the Academy's program is given to the study of Party-political work in the armed forces. The students examine in detail the special features of the Party's organization within the armed forces, are given intensive training in the methods and forms used by the Party in its propaganda and political operations within the armed forces during peacetime, and participate in extensive analysis of the methods and forms used during the recent war.⁶⁵ As might be expected, one of the most important departments in the Academy is the chair of Party-political work, held in the postwar period by Colonel Spirin.⁶⁶ There is also a department to train political workers to direct officers' Marxist studies.⁶⁷ As has been indicated, most students come to the Academy with at least three years experience as field commanders or political workers, and so are acquainted with the basic forms of political operations. When the students conclude their formal class work, they are required to write a satisfactory thesis on some problem of Party-political work.⁶⁸

The study of military affairs occupies a prominent place in the program of the Academy, and a "significant" portion of each student's time must be devoted to this area, according to a former director of the Academy.⁶⁹ Graduates are expected to have mastered the skills necessary for leading a regiment under peacetime and battle conditions, and to understand the special features which distinguish the work and organization of the various forms of troops.

In addition to these basic features of military science, the Academy requires that each student take courses in military history and principles of military strategy. He is also given some acquaintance with the operations and distinguishing features of foreign armies. In order to guarantee the acquisition of the necessary skills in the military field, students are assigned to military duties in the field. In 1947, it was planned to have each cadet gain experience as a troop commander or ship's officer.⁷⁰

Finally, an opportunity is given the student to improve his cultural background, particularly in the arts. Students are offered an opportunity to take courses in music, painting, and literature of the Russians and of the other Soviet nationalities. Each is expected to have some knowledge in the history of literature, presumably encompassing non-Soviet contributions in this field, and in

the history of art. Every graduate is required to have a knowledge of at least one foreign language.⁷¹

The methods of training at the Lenin Military-Political Academy are similar to those used throughout the world in institutions of higher learning. The basic methods are declared to be the lecture system and independent study. In most of the social science courses and in the arts, large classes are apparently normal. In certain upper-division courses, such as those on the history of the Communist Party, on dialectical and historical materialism, on political economy, and on the principles and methods of political operations among the troops, the seminar form using very small groups is required. In the courses on military subjects, the forms are diverse and include class meetings, group conferences in the field, special consultation, and "practical work" in the laboratories.⁷²

Special Services and Programs

The Lenin Academy has a series of special assignments, in addition to its basic mission of preparing political workers for service with the armed forces. Considerable importance is given to its research and publication program, or as the head of the Academy described the tasks: "The drawing up of theoretical generalizations and scientific working-out of the experience of Party-political work among the troops."⁷³ This program is apparently guided by a Scientific Research Section attached to the Academy's head office, with the assistance of the Scientific Council of the faculty.⁷⁴

One important aspect of this program calls for the issuance of special brochures and books which set forth the approved methods of Party-political work. These become guides not only for the students in the academy and military schools, but also for the political workers operating in the field. In 1948, for example, brochures were written by members of the Academy staff on such subjects as "Inner-Party Work of the Party Organizations of the Soviet Armed Forces," "The Political Apparatus of the Regiment and Battalion and Company," and "Party-Political Work in Support of Rifle Training."⁷⁵ In 1950, the Academy issued a book for wide dissemination entitled *Techniques of Independent Study by the Officer in Marxist-Leninist Training*.⁷⁶

In addition to these vocational aids, the faculty of the Academy has published works in a variety of fields. Typical of those in the military area is one book by assistant professor Colonel Stokov entitled *Unique Features of Russian Military Art*, and another by assistant professor Colonel Kadishev on *The History of Soviet Military Art*.⁷⁷ There have also been studies of Marxist theory, Communist history, and Soviet economics.⁷⁸

A considerable contribution to the research program is apparently expected from the advanced students and faculty members who are working for higher degrees. The requirements, similar in theory at least to those of Western universities, include the writing of an approved dissertation, and defense of the thesis at public meetings in the auditorium of the Academy. Several dozen theses have apparently been submitted since the end of 1945, nine presented in one 6-month period in 1949.⁷⁹ Some indication of the Academy's scope of interest may be found in the fields being studied.

In the field of non-Party history, there have been several theses concerned with Russian military campaigns, such as "Kutuzov's Counter-Offensive in

1812" and "The Balkan Campaigns of Svyatoslav," while others have concentrated on the "imperialist" policies of foreign countries. Typical of the latter were: "The First Balkan War of 1912-1913 and German Policy," "Russo-German Relations on the Eve of the First Imperialist World War," "Right-Wing German Social-Democrats in the Service of Anglo-American Imperialism," "On the History of the Military Ideology of British Imperialism," and "The Military activity of D. A. Milyutin." In addition, there were several which appeared to show interest in Pan-Slavism, such as "The Ties of Russia with the Southern Slavs," and "The Slavic Colonies in Russia during the Eighteenth Century."⁶⁰

A number of these have been submitted in the fields of philosophy and economics. Several of the former explored the contributions of such Russians as Chernyshevski, Radischev, Herten, and Umov in the development of "progressive" thought.⁶¹ Several other dissertations have been concerned with various aspects of Stalinist philosophy, including "Marxism-Leninism about the Historic Tasks and Character of the Armed Forces of the Socialist State," and "Marxism-Leninist Philosophy on the Essence of Law and Its Characteristic Features."⁶² With reference to economics, there have been studies of collective farm labor during World War II, the Soviet state's role in the New Economic Period of 1921-25, wages and organization of labor in the coal industry during the recent war, profit in socialist industry, Stalin's role in organizing the USSR's wartime economy, Stalin's views on economic support for the national defense establishment, history of the Soviet currency system, and "special features of military economy in the Soviet state."⁶³

The greatest emphasis has, of course, been placed on the Party and its political operations. Many aspects of early Party history have been studied, such as "Lenin's Struggle for a 'Party of a New Type' between the Second and Third Congresses of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party," "The Batum Demonstration of 1902," and "The Peasant Revolutionary Movement in Tula Province and Its Guidance by the Bolsheviki in the Russian Revolution of 1905-07."⁶⁴ There has been some interest in evaluation of the early Party experience in the Russian and Soviet Armies, as indicated by theses on "The Bolsheviki's Revolutionary Work among the Troops of the Northern Front in the First World War (August 1914-November 1917)," and "The Bolshevik Party in the Struggle for Creation of Officer Cadres in the Red Army (1918-1920)."⁶⁵

In response to MPA directives, much attention is being given to the propaganda used in World War II, in such studies as "The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against Fascist Germany (1941-1945), a Just War of Liberation," and "The Party's Efforts to Secure Greater Friendship between Peoples during the Great Patriotic War."⁶⁶ Finally, there are several dissertation titles which indicate the work being done on problems of current propaganda content and techniques, such as "The Use of the Military Traditions of the Soviet Army in the Training of Soviet Warriors in Peacetime," "The Policies of the Bolshevik Party—the Vital Bases of Soviet Society," and "Duty, Honor and Merit of Soviet Warriors."⁶⁷

Among the assignments given to the Lenin Military-Political Academy, one of the most important is the training of instructors in the social sciences for the other institutions of advanced learning under the control of the armed forces. For this purpose, assistantships have been established in conjunction with each chair in the Academy's departments of social sciences and opportunities for

advancement and training are given to officers who have shown an aptitude for teaching and a grasp of the Party's teachings in the social sciences. The following areas of specialization have been established: history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; dialectical and historical materialism; political economy; Party-political work in the armed forces; history of international relations and of USSR foreign policy; world history; history of war and of the military art; and political and military geography.

Assistants with specialties in one of these fields work for three years, at the end of which time each must present and defend a dissertation (which is roughly the equivalent of the Master's thesis in American universities) and must pass appropriate written examinations.⁸⁸ Illustrative of the variety of dissertations are the following examples: Lieutenant Colonel Petrov is writing on "The Construction of the Party Organization during the Civil War"; Major Gavrilin is concerned with "Questions of Soviet Army Structure in the Decisions of the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party"; and Lieutenant Colonel Shuktomov is working on "The Training of Soviet Warriors in the Spirit of Fraternity and Friendship of Soviet Peoples."⁸⁹

Extension and Correspondence Study Programs

During World War II, the ranks of the political apparatus were greatly supplemented by recruits from two groups: civilian Party workers without previous training in military-political operations, and young soldiers selected in the field for political duties in spite of minimum experience and little formal training in Party work. As the war ended, and it became evident to MPA leadership that many of these newcomers would be needed at their military-political posts for years to come, plans were made to give them an opportunity to acquire the institutional training which most lacked.

Since the Lenin Military-Political Academy could only admit a few hundred students each year, an extension program was devised, based largely on direction by correspondence and private study during each student's free evenings, interspersed with short intensive periods of lectures, consultations, and examination. The basic legislation was later changed in a number of ways,⁹⁰ but the major aims of the program continue to be those of providing Army officials with the opportunity of securing the equivalent of a military-political higher education while continuing to perform their daily service functions.

The present program requires four years of study and is administered by a special faculty for extension study in the Lenin Academy, working with the active assistance of the political administrations of the military districts.⁹¹ The Academy faculty provides the central direction and planning for the program, issues the basic literature and study guides, helps with consultations through its branch offices, and gives the examinations. The political administrations of the military districts select the nominees for admission to the program, supervise the assistance given to the students in their areas, and provide facilities for periodic meetings and lectures. It is difficult to estimate the total number of students who participate in the program during any one year, but it probably includes several thousand political officers.⁹²

Applicants must be officers of the armed forces, members of the Communist Party, have a general education background equivalent to that received in a

civilian secondary school or a military-political *uchilishche* (the lowest grade of military school, the graduates of which become lieutenants), and have experience as an officer for at least three years. Those having such qualifications may send their applications through regular channels to the chief of the Political Administration of the military district. There, an office receives from each applicant a copy of his autobiography, school record, health statement, and two photographs. Other sources send a series of vital secret documents, including a copy of the applicant's personnel file, his latest service attestation, and his Party characterization. The applicant must also take a series of preliminary examinations on Russian language and literature, geography, history of the CPSU, and military regulations.⁹³ The final decision concerning acceptance of applications is apparently made by Academy officials on the basis of the recommendations of the Political Administration of the military district,⁹⁴ their own evaluation of the applicant's papers, and his results on the preliminary examinations.⁹⁵

Once admitted to the program, the conscientious student can find it requires a hard and exacting schedule. The major subjects apparently fall into three areas: ideological, in which he is expected to increase his general knowledge of: the history of the CPSU, dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, logic, history of the USSR, world history, history of international relations, and the Soviet foreign policy; the bases of military science and allied subjects; and the methods and techniques of Party-political work used in the armed forces.⁹⁶ To fulfill his assignments in the program, the student must use virtually all his free nonservice time, including three free evenings each week. For three days each month, he is excused from his service obligations in order to study.⁹⁷

Many branch offices of the Lenin Academy faculty for correspondence and extension work have been established to assist the students and to maintain "daily" control over the study of the students.⁹⁸

A vital part of the study year comes during the periodic conferences (or *sbor*), for which the students are relieved entirely of their service obligations and are brought together for lectures, consultation, and examination.⁹⁹

At the end of the four years of study, if a student has fulfilled all previous requirements, he is called upon to write and defend an independent piece of research. Examples of the latter have included such titles as: "The Work of Political Organs and Party Organizations in Ensuring that Communists Maintain their Vanguard Role," "Party Guidance of Komsomol Organizations in the Armed Forces," "Cultural-Enlightenment Work in the Regiment," and "Military Traditions of the Soviet Army and Their Significance in the Training of Soldiers." In the last stage, the student must pass a series of final examinations declared to be on the level of those given at the Lenin Academy, and he is then eligible for graduation. He is sent to Moscow, where he attends a typical graduation ceremony, and receives an official diploma certifying that he has pursued a program parallel with that of the general-military faculty of the Academy and has completed the work of the Lenin Military-Political Academy.¹⁰⁰

The results of this process are not easy to evaluate. Some of the most energetic and ambitious of the political workers are directed into the program, and during the four years, they spend at least six months at conferences (where they study intensively, attend numerous lectures, and take many examinations)

and many hundreds of hours of what would otherwise have been their own free time. They read and reread, memorize, and hear repeatedly the Party line on Stalinist political theory, military matters, history, and current politics. Perhaps the student increases the sense of identification between his own mental processes and the Party line through the constant repetition, the monopolization of his own reading and thinking, and even by the very fact of his sacrifice of time and energy to this program. Certainly when he is through, at least a surface knowledge of these doctrines, and unquestioning belief in them, must be almost instinctive with him.

Even from the official point of view, however, the program apparently is still unsatisfactory. Some unfit and unprepared political workers are admitted to student status through errors on the part of those evaluating their application forms and papers, and failure on the part of the local political officials to interview personally all applicants.¹⁰¹ Some of the students are so poorly prepared that they do not know how to use books or charts, and their language skills are quite low even by Soviet standards. After they have been accepted, some students fail to apply the necessary concentration although they had realized that this would be necessary.¹⁰² Many of those who do study restrict themselves to the official textbooks and newspaper articles, and learn only to parrot what is desired without understanding it.¹⁰³ Moreover, even this process of memorization is applied largely to political matters, and it is reported that "a significant number of students" continue to show their ignorance on such matters as Army regulations and military tactics.

Considerable public criticism is directed at the leaders in the political organs, and it appears clear that there is little support in the organs for the program. Many leaders have denied their subordinates even the "free evenings" necessary for their study, and others have found the study guides and other literature so useful that they did not pass them along to the students. A typical story in this respect is that of Major Kuznetsov, who returned to his division to report that he had been accepted as a student in the correspondence program, for which he was publicly congratulated by all his superiors and Party colleagues. He soon found, however, that no one would help him. His own chief warned him that he needed workers, not students, and refused to get him any literature or to give him his promised "free evenings."¹⁰⁴

Some chiefs of political offices refused to let their men go to the required month-long conferences while others would give them assignments which required long inspections and other trips, making regular study difficult if not impossible. One important political official refused to accept a man as his deputy on the grounds that he was a correspondence-course student and did not have sufficient time for his new duties. Most important, most officials are accused of failing to maintain the type of control over their men which the Soviets feel is necessary to ensure continued, intensive, and efficient study. Finally, there apparently have been so many complaints concerning the poor arrangements made for student conferences, especially with respect to housing, food, and the qualities of teachers provided, that *Red Star* has warned that the chief of the Political Administration arranging the conference would be held to "a personal responsibility before the Main Political Administration" for this task.¹⁰⁵

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Soviet ideals for the political worker require that he make a continuing effort throughout his career to broaden his understanding of Marxism and to increase his knowledge of propaganda and military affairs. For the individual political worker who is busy with his multitude of regular duties involving his subordinates and military audiences, and often swamped by special tasks such as requests for lengthy reports and demands that new directives be executed immediately, the requirement that he give up precious hours each week for study of obscure Marxist texts or stereotyped discussions of familiar propaganda methods probably seems unreasonable. He finds, however, that there are numerous and heavy pressures upon him which cannot be denied.

Those political workers interested in personal advancement are reminded of the statement by an MPA chief that "the political worker who is untrained or illiterate in theory can, at the very least, not count on promotions of a significant type."¹⁰³ They know, too, that the study processes are under the supervision of the cadre branches that control job assignments.¹⁰⁷ They also note the public criticism meted out to those "know-it-alls" who believe that they need not spend time in such study since they have recently been graduated from the Lenin Military-Political Academy.¹⁰⁸

There is a fundamental Bolshevik concept which has special relevance here. Attitudes of loyalty and interest in one's work are supposed to be revealed by a person's eagerness to study (particularly Marxism-Leninism), and conversely, those who do not apply themselves to such methods of self-improvement are regarded as sinking into attitudes that may lead to deviationism or carelessness. Illustrative of this concept is an article criticizing an army political section, which emphasized that "it is not by accident that the work here is below standard, since many of its officers were neglecting Marxist-Leninist study," and mentioned by name five of those guilty of this crime.¹⁰⁹ Political workers have a similar type of warning in that which came recently from the Kiev Military District, pointing to the "sad lesson" of two political officers. The men had served in the armed forces for more than 12 years, but in recent years had not been "enriching their practical experience by theoretical knowledge" and had relied on the fact that they were "old" workers, a mistaken attitude which was declared to be one of the reasons for their "release from their duties."¹¹⁰

With such warnings before him, the wise political worker usually gives at least token obedience to the admonition that he must establish a program of study for himself each year. The execution of this program is not left to chance or individual motivation, for his superior in the political apparatus will check on it from time to time, the Party branch to which he belongs will require reports on his progress, visiting instructors in organizational Party work will question him concerning it, and the cadre branches will keep records on it with his personnel file. His in-service training is provided through a variety of instructions and mechanisms of five major types.

First, every Soviet officer is required by military regulations to participate in a compulsory system of "commanders' study," which includes military as well as political study. For the middle-level political officer, such as the chief of a divisional political section, these regulations require a minimum of 96 hours of study per year, usually carried out in a circle for "Marxist-

Leninist training." Here the officer studies Party history and philosophy, based primarily on the Party textbook, under the direction of another political officer.¹¹¹

In addition to the formal program of "commanders' study," the political apparatus provides a number of special lectures, conferences, and special meetings. After periods when many new and relatively untrained political workers have come into the service, such as during the great purges of 1937-38 or World War II, a process of training and retraining is used. In each of the military districts after the war, the political leaders were convened for four- or five-day sessions, in which they heard lectures on Marxist theory, discussed principles of Party-political work, and were given instruction on the current policies of the government.¹¹²

To supplement the training received in these forms of compulsory study, the individual political officer is urged to use his initiative in planning an additional school program. He may elect to go to the classes in the universities of Marxism-Leninism which are to be found in every large city and near the headquarters of most large Army units, take courses in nearby civilian colleges, or enroll in one of the extension programs of the Lenin Military-Political Academy. Thousands of political workers are believed to have chosen one of these alternatives.¹¹³ For men who want less formality in their study, there are hundreds of circles in which small groups study the Party textbook on Communist history, various questions in dialectic materialism, or elements of Soviet foreign policy. These, too, are kept under strict supervision by appropriate Party officials.¹¹⁴

In addition, all political workers are expected to maintain a continuous program of independent study and reading by working. They are given such models as Captain Tveretinov, who in one year reportedly studied one major work by Marx, another by Engels, five by Lenin, and three by Stalin, besides utilizing appropriate articles in his field to be found in newspapers and journals, and reading important works of contemporary fiction.¹¹⁵ A good deal of energy is expended in the effort to aid political workers in their independent study, including: the publication of special articles in the press, and of brochures on content and methodology; the presentation of appropriate lectures; and the provision of consultants for help in dealing with individual questions and problems.¹¹⁶

The most important method of in-service training is provided within the framework of the political apparatus itself, largely through the staff workers on the middle (regimental and divisional) levels, called instructors. These work out from their unit's headquarters, and concern themselves with the work of the *zampolits* of the companies and battalions. Instructors' duties consist of gathering information through analyses of the *zampolits*' written reports, discussions with them in conferences and headquarters meetings, and above all, on-the-spot investigations of their work. With the information gathered, the instructors are expected to provide direct assistance in correcting errors and developing the basic skills of the *zampolits*, through written reports, "instructional conferences" in headquarters, and, most important, personal discussions in the *zampolits*' own units.¹¹⁷

The usual discrepancy between the ideals of propaganda and reality is to be found even in the public reports concerning in-service study. In spite of the repeated claims of thousands of scholarly political workers, Soviet materials

indicate that many political workers actually do not study at all, or at best go through the motions with "an unserious attitude."¹¹⁸ Large numbers of them start the study-year in the fall or winter with ambitious programs which are duly recorded in apparatus records, and then abandon them completely or fall far behind any adequate schedule.¹¹⁹ This attitude is not restricted to formal Marxist studies, for some political workers (presumably submerged in the multitude of duties assigned to them) fail to read the important military journals, the press materials explaining Soviet policy, and even the special magazine issued for propagandists and Party workers.¹²⁰ There is sharp criticism, too, of many political workers who register in the evening universities of Marxism-Leninism and other schools. Attendance is often quite poor, while many regular students who do come to class show that they are inadequately prepared and they are able to learn little. Many Communists work aimlessly, know little about note-taking and other techniques of study, and they, too, "poorly assimilate" the necessary materials.¹²¹

Much of the blame for this situation is assigned to the teachers and the political organs. Many teachers have been accused of being poorly prepared for their lectures and therefore unable to answer questions or otherwise to help their students. Courses in the political and economic subjects have been called particularly disorganized, while those concerned with techniques of propaganda work in the armed forces are often led by men with no military experience, who lack practical and political knowledge. The best men with the longest experience and best understanding of these subjects, who now hold important offices within the political apparatus, should presumably be the most effective teachers, but they rarely accept these roles. Consequently, not only are the courses poorly taught, but the subject matter of each lesson is often unconnected with immediate political and military problems—a most serious charge in Soviet educational and propaganda circles.¹²²

Vehement criticism is directed at the political organs and the Party leaders, since they are given full responsibility for proper organization of in-service training, and for guidance of the political workers in general. The political organs are charged with convening too many poorly planned study conferences often on subjects of relatively low priority according to the Bolshevik standards, with otherwise overloading their subordinates with daily work so that study becomes difficult if not impossible, and with failing to make allowances for those who have a serious study program.¹²³ Frequently, political officials will be accused of being exclusively interested in quantitative success, wasting their time and energy on "compiling statistics" although they lack control over the quality of the teaching and their programs are inadequate for the needs of whole groups of political workers (such as the librarians and club directors in cultural-enlightenment activities).¹²⁴

Even more important are the serious warnings against permitting the students to work without close and continuous guidance from the Party branch or the political organ. Each man's needs should be studied carefully, his plans approved, and their execution supervised; the political organs are expected to know at all times what, and how well, each political worker is studying. The Party branch is expected to provide assistance in the overcoming of all difficulties, and to exert the type of continuous pressure that will ensure steady and intensive study.¹²⁵

Contempt is heaped upon those officials who are "embarrassed," or find it "inconvenient," to "interfere" in the personal affairs and independent study of each political worker regardless of the worker's official position or previous training. Here is a typical statement:

One need not wonder that the political section of a particular division has not coped with its tasks. The astonishment is of quite another kind—why do the chiefs of the political sections not understand that these work failures are caused by the backwardness in knowledge of theory among the people that each is leading? Independent study by the political workers in some units has been lowered to the level of individual impulse, the chiefs of the political sections do not control that study and are not watching it. Indeed, in some places, they consider that if a man occupies a responsible post, then it is "inappropriate" for us to interfere in his personal studying, that it is "inappropriate" to criticize him for his backwardness in knowledge of theory. Thus, in protecting the vanity of their cadres, the various chiefs of the political organs actually injure them in this way. How, for example, could the political section of the Nth Formation permit a situation in which one deputy battalion commander for political affairs, Major Vasil'ev, has not for some three months touched *A Short Course in the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*? Moreover, Comrade Vasil'ev has not even been reading the most important documents which have been recently published in the magazines and newspapers. This worker can be shown very quickly to be completely unfit for the work to which he has at present been assigned, but you see the political section is "embarrassed" to deal with him! ¹²⁶

There is a clear contradiction between the expressed aims and methods used in the training of the political worker. On one hand, there is the ideal of the political worker, with his ability to find the means to manipulate the masses, his self-reliance, and sense of initiative. As one of the top leaders in the political apparatus put it: "The study of our cadres in the political apparatus must give them not simply a certain amount of knowledge. We need not merely literate men who possess a general educational preparation, although this is important too. We insist that we must instill in our cadres Bolshevik qualities—Communist ideology, political acuteness in orientation in problems of our Party's domestic and foreign policies, and the correct bringing of these policies into life."¹²⁷ Yet, on the other hand, there are the demands for inflexible and detailed control of the political worker's study, disrespect for his mind and attitudes, and constant drill and repetition of stereotypes in his training and education. This latter aspect of control, which may well lead to a stifling of self-reliance and initiative, is accentuated by the very conditions under which he must carry out his daily functions within the political apparatus, and by his entire relationship to the organization of the apparatus.*

*The political worker's functions within, and relationship to, the political apparatus are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

MAJOR PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS IN THE POLITICAL APPARATUS

Lenin's concept of his Communist movement had little in common with Western concepts of a political party. He conceived of "a small, compact core, consisting of reliable, experienced workers, with responsible agents in the principal districts."¹ In the contemporary Soviet system, the relationships of these agents to the central Bolshevik leaders are important. In Stalin's words, they must give "conscious and voluntary submission" to the leadership, for it is necessary to have "a Party strong in its cohesion and iron discipline."² The Stalinist concepts of organization demand that the agents be given detailed guidance and placed under continuous pressure for precise and immediate fulfillment of instructions. This chapter analyzes the major operational patterns of the political apparatus, noting particularly how its higher levels control the individual propagandists and political workers.

CONTROL AND ASSIGNMENT OF POLITICAL PERSONNEL

When the political worker is ready for his first professional assignment within the Soviet armed forces, he is placed under a system of personnel control which continues throughout his career. The offices controlling this system determine his job assignments, maintain records on his performance and attitudes, and help to administer the rewards and punishments which he receives. These controls over each political worker are wielded primarily through the cadre or personnel branches of the political departments and sections.

The cadre branches form an interconnected system, in which the higher levels of the political apparatus supervise the cadre branches in the divisional and other middle-level political organs, while the latter control personnel work on the regimental and lower levels. The best public sources of information in this field are the published reports which stem from these supervisory functions. *Red Star* published, for example, noteworthy articles based on analyses of the cadre branches in the Political Administrations of the wartime First Ukrainian Front and the Air Forces.³

To perform their functions, the cadre branches need a steady flow of information concerning the political workers. Much of it comes up to the top levels from the subordinate cadre branches, and a large part of it comes originally from the reports of the cadre branch instructors who are assigned to study the

character, work, and potentials of specific political officers.⁴ Since the latter are virtually all members of the Party, information is also gathered in the files of Communist offices, particularly those of the Party Commissions, which are entrusted with the analysis of personal behavior and related matters affecting Communists.⁵ Major sources of information are the reports and evaluations which are regularly prepared on each political worker by his own superiors and colleagues.

The most important of these evaluations are the "political characterization" which analyzes the officer's political attitudes and tendencies and the "service attestation" which discusses the quality of his performance. It is not difficult to imagine the effect of one political characterization which was reported by a Soviet defector who had been an Army officer and which stated that the subject was politically illiterate, ignorant of Marxist-Leninist theory and unwilling to learn, morally unstable, and ideologically mistrained.⁶

One attestation, described in the Army press, concerned the deputy chief for political affairs of a military auto-repair works. He was characterized as a well-trained political worker, who knew his duties and was systematically striving to raise his level of theoretical knowledge and culture. The attestation was sent to a superior officer, who was suspicious of the eulogizing and ordered an investigation. Eventually, it was disclosed that Party-political operations in the repair shops were in a chaotic state, that the work program was not being fulfilled on time, that the Party and Komsomol organizations were idle, and that the deputy chief had stopped his personal study and had read no books for several months.⁷

The dangers that accompany the responsibility of issuing characterizations and attestations are illustrated by two other cases. In the first, a sharp reprimand was directed against a political section which had submitted an unfavorable attestation for a political worker. It was later pointed out that he had worked in the unit for a short time, hardly time enough to justify the sharp criticism of his work, his ideological training, his study habits, and related matters.⁸ In the second case, a wartime director of political activity in a regiment was turned over to Party organs for punishment because he had given a favorable characterization to an officer who later committed an unspecified, improper action.⁹

Utilizing the information which comes to them from these varied sources, the cadre branches participate in the execution of three major functions of the political organs. First, they have the task of filling political posts placed under their authority or "nomenclature." The scope of such responsibilities may be illustrated by the work of the cadre section of a fleet Political Administration, which was responsible during one period for filling such posts as the deputy director for political affairs of a school for cabin boys, the instructors employed in its own Political Administration, the director of a ship's clubroom, the librarian of an Officers' House in the land headquarters of the fleet, and the staff of the fleet's newspaper.¹⁰

Obviously, this task entails numerous difficulties and raises many problems, especially when there is a lack of trained or trusted personnel for posts that must be filled. Frequent difficulties have been reported, for example, in securing adequate staff for the numerous clubs and libraries which exist throughout the armed forces. Among the hundreds of officials holding such posts in the Odessa Military District, about half of them were replaced by the appropriate

cadre branches during six months of 1947. Sixty percent of the club directors in the Turkestan Military District were transferred to other posts during the same period, and five different men were tried and found wanting as chief of one regimental library in that military district during 1947.¹¹ The cadre branches which permit this type of turnover in the posts under their control are themselves regarded as inefficient, for they are held responsible to some extent for the appropriateness of each appointment or nomination.¹²

The second major function of the cadre branches, closely related to the task of filling the posts under their control, is the creation of an adequate pool of acceptable personnel for the posts. The cadre branches are expected to make a continuous study of their long-term personnel needs, and to determine what posts will probably have to be filled in the foreseeable future. On the basis of these estimates, each cadre branch maintains a reserve list of potential candidates for these posts, a list on which specific persons are supposed to be designated for future assignment to definite posts.¹³ In order to make these estimates and to draw up the reserve list, the cadre section must carry on "a daily study of people, of their training and growth," and must help to guide their study and growth.¹⁴

The cadre section is thus expected to maintain a survey of the work being done by the political personnel under its control, to study the progress being made by each man in his studies and efforts at self-improvement, and to note the character of his participation in conferences and the quality of his reports at meetings. The cadre branch of one Political Administration, for example, was publicly criticized because it had not given adequate attention to the personal study undertaken by the political officers acting as social science teachers in military educational institutions, and had ignored the research programs being undertaken by them.¹⁵

A third series of functions assigned to the cadre branches is related to the objective of improving the quality of political operations by punishing the blundering personnel, weeding out the incapable and disloyal, rewarding the energetic people, and promoting the most promising. Among the sanctions most frequently used against inefficient and distrusted personnel¹⁶ is the censure, which is imposed on a political worker and placed on his record for improper, but not dangerous, action. This was the punishment imposed on a representative of a divisional political section, who interfered too openly in the "spontaneous" electoral process within a Party organization, and postponed the election of new officers against the wishes of the Party members.¹⁷ Somewhat more serious is the "official censure with warning" which may be publicly given to a political worker, especially when his work or conduct is below standard.¹⁸ This was imposed on two political workers who ignored reports of irregularities and tried to stifle criticism of this type.¹⁹

Another type of sanction is the severe reprimand, a punishment which is also placed on the political worker's record. This may be imposed in the case of an infraction of disciplinary regulations, or some other serious offense.²⁰ Political worker Suslov was given a Party reprimand when he was found guilty of committing some improper act (unspecified in the story about him). Unfortunately, his conduct grew worse instead of improving after this punishment, and the cadre section was criticized for failing to place him under sufficient control to ensure his correction, and for being too "liberal" in its treatment of him.²¹

A more drastic punishment is the transfer of the political worker from his post, illustrated by the case of worker Shapovalov. There had been a series of "signals" about serious deficiencies in his work and conduct. The appropriate cadre section took note of these signals, warned him, and then gave him provisional approval in a new post; but when he continued to show serious weaknesses, Shapovalov was "removed from work."²² This type of action may be taken on a large scale, as indicated in the case of one cadre branch which replaced 33 percent of its political staff within a period of less than a year. A check made of these actions by a higher body indicated that some of these transfers were made without adequate cause, and that the replacements usually were less qualified than their predecessors.²³

The cadre sections are under continuous pressure to improve their work, and the criticism published about their weaknesses is a useful source of information. A frequent type of criticism, one leveled in any society against those responsible for job assignments, is that the cadre sections frequently assign the political workers to posts for which they are not trained and the sections waste skills that are available. Captain Baturov, for example, was a propagandist who aided officers and Party officials in their independent study of Marxism-Leninism, and who gave lectures on Marxist ideology. In order to hasten his promotion to higher propaganda positions, Captain Baturov enrolled in two correspondence courses—one with the important Higher Party School in Moscow. But when his next assignment was announced, Baturov was disappointed to learn that he was made an instructor for informational matters. He apparently appealed to some higher authority, secured some investigation of his case, and at least had the satisfaction of seeing an article in *Red Star* which censured the cadre section for failing to take into account the captain's own preferences, his talents, or his training.²⁴

From the Bolshevik point of view, the most important weaknesses are those which are revealed in the functioning of the cadre branches during periods of crisis or emergency. During the build-up for a wartime military offensive, the cadre branches are expected to concentrate the great weight of the agitators, propagandists, and *zampolits* in the front-line units, and to prepare and train reserves and replacements for these men for immediate use. A study by the MPA in 1945 revealed, however, that on one major front, the political workers were twice as numerous in the rear echelons and supply contingents as on the battle line. Moreover, even among those on the battle line, the distribution of available political workers was poor, with a large number in some divisions and a severe shortage in neighboring formations. The MPA report insisted that more than half of the available political officers were in headquarters units of the front's Political Administration or stationed at communication points such as railway lines. Orders were issued, therefore, to assign most of the political reserves, during military offensives and other rapidly moving situations, to the front-line units where they work directly with the fighting soldiers, and to establish potential replacements for them within each unit.²⁵

A related criticism concerned the inefficiency shown by the cadre branches in matters involving transfers. In some cases, men had been called from their former tasks and sent to the cadre branches where they were given new assignments. These men took ten days or more to reach their new posts, even though an offensive campaign was in progress and they were badly needed. In other

cases, the cadre sections themselves apparently ceased operations while their own headquarters were being moved to points closer to the front lines.²⁸

FACT-FINDING AND REPORTING

Subject Matter

According to the Soviet concepts of organization, a requisite for the maintenance of personnel efficiency and trustworthiness is the free flow of information to the command and policy-making levels about the execution of major tasks and policies at the lower organizational levels, and the reaction of the masses to these policies. Within the political apparatus, a considerable amount of attention is given to securing this information, which provides a major means for control of the political workers and an indispensable means of checking on the attitudes and conduct of Army personnel.

A tangible result of these Soviet concepts and methods is a continuous flood of reports which go upward through the chain of command in the Army's political apparatus to the MPA in Moscow. The materials gathered become valuable tools not only for those responsible for the administration of the political apparatus, but also for the policy-makers in the Kremlin. In peacetime, as a former official of Soviet military intelligence points out, the Army's political service is "a delicate nervous organism which picks up every tremor that passes through the quivering ranks" of the armed forces and even beyond, reflecting the attitudes of the soldiers' friends and civilians in the cities and villages.²⁷ In wartime, the reports move upward through the regiment, division, army to the front headquarters, which telegraphs in a daily report on the political, psychological, and military situation to the MPA.²⁸

To control the various streams that contribute to this flow of information, extensive mechanisms and regulations have been established which are supervised by information specialists at the middle and higher levels. The information specialists regulate the steady flow of reports, ensure that efforts are made to answer questions regarded as important, provide some collation and analysis at their particular levels, and call the most urgent materials to the attention of appropriate authorities. These tasks are carried on by large information branches within the Political Administration at the top levels of the apparatus, by smaller subsections within the political sections of the armies and divisions, by special "instructors on informational matters" who go into the smaller units, and by the political workers on a part-time basis in the lower levels.²⁹

The area of political information covered by this organization is wide, precisely because the Bolsheviks believe that such data is vital for the proper functioning of the political apparatus. Specialists in this field are told that political information must be like a "mirror, reflecting all the positive elements and all the gaps and defects" in political work, aiding the Party-political leadership "to understand actual reality, to define the road of development of Party-political life and to set forth clearly the definite tasks" of political work.³⁰ Within the wide perspectives of Party-political information, the main focus is on the conditions within the unit from which the report is coming. In addition, information is also sought concerning enemy troops in wartime, concerning the neigh-

boring Soviet units, and concerning the friends and relatives of the soldiers in the reporting unit.³¹

The most important type of political information is related to the "morale-political condition of the personnel," a term which is frequently used.³² Above all, this involves a continuing demand for meaningful data about the ideas and attitudes of the men, and the reasons for their past actions and for their probable actions. In an analysis of political reports coming from a military unit from which older soldiers were being demobilized, the lack of such attitude data was grounds for a major criticism. The analysis pointed out that in three months of reporting, an adequate basis for judgment about "the moods, thoughts, and expectations of those being demobilized" was not given.³³

Attention is also given to the actions of the men, particularly those involving actual or potential violation of regulations.³⁴ The political worker is expected to report on violations committed, to indicate their probable causes, and to set forth the steps being taken to prevent their recurrence. When one political worker noted in a report that the men in a particular company had not ceased violations of discipline, he was publicly reprimanded because "he had not disclosed the causes in general, had not analyzed what had stimulated particular military servicemen to commit misdeeds, and had not shown whether these violations were evidence of poor enlightenment work in certain specific areas."³⁵ The reports are also expected to indicate the names and deeds of men who are distinguishing themselves for bravery, vigilance, or skill, so that these items may be used in propaganda and appropriate awards be given.³⁶

Careful attention is given, of course, to the work being done by the political staff, and by its auxiliaries, the Communists, Komsomols, and other groups. The political worker enumerates measures planned and executed, such as meetings held, talks given, leaflets issued, and new candidates recruited for Communist and Komsomol branches and the actions taken by these groups; the worker makes some analysis of the successes, failures, and problems encountered in the political operations.³⁷ The information specialists apparently scrutinize such reports with special care, and use the materials presented for their own suggestions, criticisms, and rewards.³⁸

Attention is also given in these political reports to the material conditions under which the men live, and information is sought concerning the quality of food, living quarters, and other primary factors, and the men's reactions to them. In the existing situation within the armed forces, the political workers are expected to be perceptive on such matters, and often the task of improving matters devolves on them.³⁹

Finally, the political workers are encouraged to report on significant factors in the military situation, especially during wartime. They watch not only the psychological conditions of the unit and the factors immediately affecting them, but also note failures or weakness in communications and gaps in supply methods, "generalize on experience in military action of men and commanders," and make suggestions for better utilization of military weapons and techniques.⁴⁰

Sources of Information

In order to provide the considerable amount of raw material and data required, the political workers must tap every available source inside and outside the normal channels of the political apparatus. Many items, for example, come

through the Army press, and the political workers are frequently warned to study carefully the materials printed in the far-flung network extending from the wall-newspapers of the companies to the multi-paged newspapers of the regiments, divisions, and armies.⁴¹

More important, the political workers are expected to keep in touch with the editors and staff members of the newspapers to secure tips and suggestions that are not published.⁴² It must be remembered that the newspapers secure a great deal of data through their numerous "military correspondents" who are encouraged to spend their spare time looking for useful information. An appeal to the servicemen of one regiment, after invoking the name of Stalin, called on the men in these words:

Comrade! Write to your newspaper:

About the heroes of the Great Patriotic War. . . About the masters in your professions. . . About the workers securing the uninterrupted flow of supplies. . . About the work of the Party and Komsomol organizations. . . Write about the work of the agitators. . .

Along with the widespread popularization of the best experience of those in service and military service, it is necessary to write about deficiencies, subjecting them to sharp Bolshevik criticism. Comrade. . . , actively participate in the work of your newspaper.

The Editorial Staff of the Red Army Newspaper, *For the Fatherland*.⁴³

No reference to the utilization of the newspaper medium can be complete without mentioning the large number of letters sent to the Army press. These contain various suggestions, complaints, and praises, and are particularly useful on matters touching the soldier-writer personally. Many of these letters are printed in the newspapers, and all of them are presumably investigated. A typical letter, published in 1950 under the broad generic heading of "On the Trail of Unpublished Letters," was written by an officer and reported on the mishandling of funds and the inefficiency in the House of Officers of his unit. His letter was investigated, found to be based on fact, and allegedly led to numerous changes.⁴⁴

Such letters are illustrative of the comparatively small percentage that appear in the public press, and which are selected for their value in emphasizing the current line; the total inflow includes thousands of communications about conditions in the armed forces which are brought in person to, or sent by mail to, newspapers, radio stations, public officials, and to various parts of the political apparatus. The political staff is expected to use these as "signals" which must be investigated and used to full advantage. A formal system has been established in most political offices, in which specialists note the arrival time and content of each message, keep an account of its movement after transmitting it to appropriate authorities for investigation and action, and maintain a final record of each case.⁴⁵

Another major source of information is the large amount of material that is gathered by, or with the help of, members of other organizations in the armed forces, and the political workers are frequently reminded to refer to those organizations. The military sections of the secret police (the Special Sections of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) are prominent among them, as well as the agents of the Military Procurator and other legal officials, the employees of military supply units, the staff of the mail field stations (which seems to be connected with the censorship officials).⁴⁶ The political workers are also ex-

pected to maintain a continuing contact with the military commanders and staff officers on the regimental level and below.⁴⁷

Important, too, are the branches of the Communist and Komsomol systems. The individual members are called upon to provide valuable items about the reactions of their fellow servicemen to conditions in general, and to political questions in particular, and frequently provide a basis for judging the efficiency of the political workers themselves.⁴⁸ Many of these suggestions are sent directly to Party officials or to political workers, while the others are expressed in meetings of the branch. One article on Party operations emphasizes the importance of these reports, declaring that here are found "the richest materials representing the opinions of the broad Party masses," and calls on Party officials and political workers to use this material.⁴⁹ All Communist and Komsomol branches not only make periodic reports to their own higher levels, but also to the political apparatus,⁵⁰ and the records or "protocols," of meetings and discussions, and of plans made and actions taken, also are made available for use by the political apparatus.⁵¹

An instructive story is told by *Red Star* concerning the treatment of information turned in by a Communist about his military unit. Private Kharchenko sent a letter to a Party organ, reporting on irregularities and deficiencies in the political work being carried on in his company, and this letter was turned over for investigation and action to the political section of the division. The chief of the political section himself conducted the investigation, indicating the seriousness of the charges; he went to the company and spoke with the Communist membership there. In his report, he confirmed Kharchenko's criticism that the company political worker created a gap between himself and the Communists and Komsomols in the unit, and that the Communist branch leader was rude to his fellows and restricted criticism (a very serious charge indeed in the Bolshevik book, for this shut off a valuable source of information to the top levels).

However, the investigating chief of the political section did not accept Kharchenko's charge that discipline and military study were at a low ebb in the unit, and that Party-political work was not helping as it should. He reported that a more "balanced" description would reveal that "all Party-political work was directed to fulfillment of the plan of military training" and that the Communists were leaders in military training and maintenance of discipline, and the company's grades in all areas of military training were high.

As a result of the "balanced report," and presumably the general support given to the Party leader and the political worker in the unit, nothing was done. When the annual meeting for reports and elections was planned, a report was written for presentation by the secretary of the Party organization, who referred to the presence in the branch of "Communists who fear criticism and self-criticism." The chief of the divisional political section read this report before it was given, made some note on it, but apparently overlooked this particular sentence. The report was therefore given at the annual meeting with the critical sentence still in it, and provoked a debate. Some Communists, including the company political worker, wanted it removed from the record, but the report was approved by the membership with the sentence left in, and the protocol of the meeting noted that the Communists gave special attention to development of criticism and self-criticism. Both the secretary's report, with the sentence marked in red pencil, and the protocol of the meeting were apparently seen by

political workers on a high level, for they made this situation the subject of a sharply critical article in the Army organ, *Red Star*.⁵²

Available copies of Party proceedings, such as the protocol of one full Communist Party meeting, show how informative such documents can be concerning the behavior of specific individuals and groups. The protocol revealed that the Party meeting was held on 24 August 1944 and was attended by 28 members of a battalion branch in the 239th Guard Rifle Regiment. When the meeting was opened, the battalion commander posed some important tasks for the Party organization to undertake in the near future. Then a review of recent events was held with six men reporting in some detail on the actions of specific groups and men in the regiment. Among other things, these Communists criticized the slowness of the stretcher-bearers in removing wounded from the battlefield, the propaganda content of the pamphlets being distributed, the failure to halt plundering by the soldiers, the poor execution by two Communists of their military duties, the continued tendency of soldiers to leave the battlefield during fighting (which was connected with the failure to stress the penalty for desertion), and the poor work of the signal communication unit. They also spoke of the need for convincing the soldiers not to throw away their guns, for dealing with cases of fear in the face of attacking German tanks, and for preparing the men for difficult battles yet to be fought. There was much praise for certain individual Communists (each mentioned by name), and their deeds were described. In concluding, the Communist membership set forth its plans for removal of the deficiencies noted during the meeting, and for carrying out the tasks posed by the battalion commander.⁵³

Such materials from organizations and sources outside its own ranks are only supplementary to a large amount of data gathered by agencies of the political apparatus itself. These findings are reported in various forms, through statements at political conferences, through letters or other communications to appropriate media, through oral summaries presented to individual superior officers in the political organization, and most important of all, through one of the many written reports that must be made by each political worker.⁵⁴ Through them the political worker is expected "to report in truthful and timely fashion to his [military] commander and to the superior political organ about the condition of the unit, about the condition of study and propaganda, about the [political] work being conducted, and about all deficiencies."⁵⁵

The scope of the written reports may be surmised from an official directive concerning reports to be made by political workers assigned to military units at the battle front. The daily report, it declared, must contain information on the following matters:

1. The execution of the unit's battle assignments and the political work conducted in connection with these assignments;
2. The attitudes of the men during the conduct of battle assignments; attached to this are to be examples of heroism and courage;
3. The unit's losses in men, technical materials and armament;
4. The enemy's losses in men and equipment; booty and prisoners brought in;
5. Care of material needs; transport of wounded, collection of weapons; postbattle work in securing position on battlefield;
6. Attitudes and actions of men in relation to the local populace; cooperation and conduct of the local population in relation to the Red Army;
7. Delivery of newspapers and letters, and materials for the "readers" [who read propa-

- ganda materials aloud to the men and agitators;
8. Work of the Communist and Komsomol members; actions taken with reference to admission of new members; and
 9. Detailed descriptions of atrocities committed by the German invaders, with evidential materials.⁵⁶

In addition to these daily reports, the political workers were ordered to make a detailed statement every five days concerning the Party-political work conducted, and one every ten days on the political attitudes and reactions of the men. This order ended with the warning that the reports are expected to be "truthful and complete, to contain abundant facts and examples, and should be submitted at the time specified, so that they may be used by the appropriate Party organs."

In addition to these reports made by the political workers stationed within the units in the lower echelons of the armed forces, the political organs on the middle and higher levels utilize two other major sources. First, they use their own staff "instructors," who go into the field for extensive observation, assistance to the political workers, or intensive study of special questions; their data usually are presented in long memoranda.⁵⁷

Second, the political organs utilize the numerous investigatory and inspectorial groups which are characteristic of the Soviet bureaucracy. Within the political apparatus of the armed forces, these apparently include: staff inspectors who investigate units about which unfavorable information has been received; groups that make a continuous study of the structure and operations of the political apparatus at various levels; special commissions which investigate failures or scandals; inspection units which make an annual tour of all units and grade them on achievements in the political field; and survey groups which study the work of particular institutions such as the wall-newspapers and the Rooms for Political Enlightenment, or analyze the work done under special conditions, as in summer camps.⁵⁸

*Standards and Criticism*⁵⁹

The Soviet leaders expect the totality of political information to provide them not only with a "mirror of reality," but with one that is crystal clear about significant items of reality. The political information must therefore be truthful, concrete, and "actual." The first requirement of truthfulness and correctness is, of course, obvious, and the emphasis given to this point in public criticism might well mean that reports lacking in these virtues are not unusual.⁶⁰

The second requirement, that of concreteness, is a special virtue in the opinions of the Bolshevik leaders who despise the tendency to string words together into meaningless generalizations. One political worker was reprimanded for characterizing the men of his regiment in these words: "The personnel of the unit are burning with desire to fulfill the tasks set before them, they never cease working, and they declare with one voice their readiness to give all their strength. . ."⁶¹ In the third of these requirements in the field of information, the political worker is warned that in every situation there are elements of special significance about which the reports should be concerned and that he should not concern himself with questions of secondary importance. He must not permit himself to "depart from vital matters," but must turn in information which

is "operational" and concerned with "actual" (*aktual'nye*) questions of the day.⁶²

In order to be completely useful, the political information must be reported in good time, placed within an analytic framework, and if possible, accompanied by suggestions on how it can be used. The matter of timeliness is stressed so frequently that it appears clear that needed data have been held repeatedly until their usefulness has passed.⁶³ Finally, the political workers are warned that "political reports from political organs not infrequently consist of mechanically enumerated and accidentally chosen facts" which lack analysis and are "not directed at appropriate conclusions and measures."⁶⁴ Model reports point out bases for specific action, after describing such faulty conditions as the incorrect methods used in the Communist branches, the poor clothing or food which become focal points of dissatisfaction, and the weaknesses in the communications system which might create dangerous military situations.⁶⁵

For tasks as important and difficult as these, it is obvious that skilled and intelligent men are required, and that they must be given favorable conditions in which to perform their duties. Yet many political officials, who are accused of "regarding political information as a heavy burden and who underestimate its importance," apparently select their information specialists from their weakest and least qualified men. They use men described as being able "to fix facts," but who are not capable of "critically analyzing them or of actively influencing events."⁶⁶

Moreover, the men who gather the information receive so many demands for reports that a situation is created which usually makes careful and analytic work impossible. At the lower levels, particularly, these men have several tasks to perform besides those related to information. One description of the written reports done by a political worker over a period of three months mentioned the fact, without indicating that this was unusual in any way, that each of them was at least 17 pages long.⁶⁷ Other press statements have mentioned political workers who wrote 17, 25, or 26 special reports in one month.⁶⁸

The attitude of the political workers on the matter of reports was expressed at the 1948 Party Conference in the West Siberian Military District:

Yet the paper streams in, containing all kinds of requests, orders and demands, and they literally deluge us during this time. Instead of being able to give practical assistance to Party organizations during their period of reports, in 15 days, I had to draw up six extensive reports. Such writing was also necessary for our unit's propagandist, informational specialist, and assistant chief of the political section for Komsomol affairs. It must be recognized that all of us were drowned in papers, and therefore could not perform authentically political work among soldiers, sergeants, and officers.⁶⁹

In addition to the formal demands for written reports, the political workers are apparently called upon to make frequent oral reports, dropping everything else if necessary to secure the required information.⁷⁰ Typical of many is the statement of a deputy battalion commander for political affairs, who declared that hardly a day goes by without his receiving a summons to a conference in the political section of the division or to the regimental headquarters, or at least a commission to prepare some type of report.⁷¹

A major complaint, voiced also in connection with bureaucracies in non-Soviet societies, is that much of the information gathered by the political workers is ignored, misused, or underestimated. Extensive memoranda are drawn up,

but the recipients are frequently charged with being "completely indifferent to them and finding nothing better to do than deposit them in the archives."⁷² Those who submit "signals" in the forms of letters or criticism find themselves regarded as cranks or opportunists, especially when their charges may have serious consequences involving political officials.⁷³

Apparently there is a reluctance on the part of some political officials to use this "information" against their colleagues, especially if the latter have friends and supporters in high places, in spite of the pressure and even regulations requiring that such materials be used. In some cases, the reports and letters are ignored or lost, in others the complainants are reprimanded by their superiors. Often, only formal action is taken. *Red Star* tells of a political official who was assigned to supervise the use of letters and similar information sent to the political section, but who usually found some excuse for sending the important items to other people and then forgetting about them.⁷⁴

Some reports tell how the charges made through such channels were often dismissed as "nonsensical complaining," and only later (when an office at a higher level demanded investigation) were some of them found to be justified and bases for important action.⁷⁵ In one case (referred to as having been typical of many), information was received concerning a large number of alleged violations of disciplinary regulations in a military unit where the Party leaders had failed to take appropriate action. The political worker who received this information merely sent to the military commander and Party organization of the criticized unit a so-called "comradely Party letter." Apparently a standard form for these letters has been worked out, beginning with "a gentle chiding," followed by a recommendation that a number "of tried means" be employed to cope with problems, and ending with an expression of hope that all would be well in the future.⁷⁶

COMMAND METHODS

As an official Soviet textbook on military-political work points out, the political apparatus is directed primarily through the enactments (*postanovleniye*) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, directives of the MPA, and orders (*prikazy*) from other agencies in the Ministry of Defense.⁷⁷ Political workers are taught, as a fundamental element of organizational doctrine, that "the edict of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B) . . . serves as a program for our work . . . [and political workers] must be guided by these policies of the Party."⁷⁸ The Party directors determine the nation's political policies and the propaganda line to be used in obtaining support for them. They also control the organizational structure of the armed forces' political services, and reserve for themselves the right to make all major changes and personnel assignments in those services.

The orders of the Ministry of Defense are usually of a general nature affecting the entire Army, and there appear to be no instances where the Ministry has issued special measures affecting only the political apparatus. However, the members of the political staff are constantly reminded that one of their major functions is to assist in the achievement of objectives in the military field. In a speech to the 1948 Party Conference of the Leningrad Military District, the head of the MPA warned:

The political organs and Party organizations have still not completely reconstructed their activity in accordance with the requirements and tasks flowing from the orders of the Ministry of Armed Forces. The Party-political work often bears a superficial character, and is not connected organically with the concrete tasks of military training of the troops, with the strengthening of discipline, and with the daily care for the material and personal needs of the Soviet warriors.⁷⁹

The MPA transmits all major directives affecting the organization and personnel of the political apparatus as well as the propaganda line to be used by it. Its functions in adapting Kremlin propaganda directives can be seen in the official program for political studies to be used in the Army, which is issued each year by the MPA. This program is set forth in detail, specifying not only the major sections of the year's study, but the titles and basic content of each lecture to be given and the bibliography and teaching methods to be used.⁸⁰

Illustrative of MPA operational and organizational directives are two documents captured by German forces during World War II. The first of these was issued on 15 July 1941 by the head of the MPA, and it summarized the results of the first three months of the war and laid down the major propaganda lines to be followed in the immediate future. The language was frank and clear; the criticism, sharp and pointed (leaving no doubts about the near-panic of Soviet leaders at the time); and the directives were concrete and definite, spelling out the main propaganda themes to be employed by the political apparatus.⁸¹ The second captured directive, signed by Shcherbakov, head of the MPA in 1943, spelled out the details of the reorganization of the Communist and Komsomol structure in the armed forces, as determined by the Party Central Committee some two weeks earlier.⁸²

The majority of written directives are issued by the middle levels of the political apparatus, from the Political Administrations of the different service arms and the military districts down to the political sections of divisions.⁸³ Many of these directives transmit the various decrees, orders, and directives which come down from higher levels.⁸⁴ Other instructions are issued to improve organizational efficiency, solve special problems, or merely conduct the normal business of the political apparatus at that level.⁸⁵

In theory, at least, the directives from higher levels set forth "the general measures which define the road to be taken in the fulfillment of various tasks," and the political organs are expected "not to copy these directives, but to organize in a concrete and practical fashion the fulfillment of these tasks."⁸⁶ According to Bolshevik standards, the written directives should be short, infrequent, and clear, and the higher political organs should assist in the fulfillment of these general directives through personal contacts (either by sending their instructors into the field, or by bringing the political workers of subordinate levels into headquarters for explanatory conferences). In actual fact, a reading of the political apparatus' press makes it obvious that prevailing practices are far below the standards of these ideals.

Many of the complaints voiced by the political workers concern the large number of directives issued for their benefit. Many of them are poorly composed and are written on every conceivable subject; all demand immediate action. When added to the demands for information and reports of all types, they swamp the political workers, confusing them concerning the proper direction of their major efforts, and stimulating attitudes of complete reliance on specific orders

from above.⁸⁷ Moreover, there are many orders issued besides the formal, written, and officially stamped directives. Many orders are given over the telephone from the political section;⁸⁸ others are told to individual officers summoned to appear at army or divisional headquarters,⁸⁹ and still others are written in short notes or letters.⁹⁰ In some cases, circular instructions are issued in which special problems are interpreted and orders given for coping with them.⁹¹

An important method of guidance, used particularly for the press officials, is known as the "closed survey." A political organ will assign a group of analysts (its own personnel or Party officials from other areas) to study one or all of the newspapers issued within the units for which the political organ is responsible. The group reads the newspapers, interviews the editors, reviews all types of criticism, determines the causes of shortcomings, and then issues concrete directives for their solution.⁹² Similar surveys are conducted for various phases of political work; they too result in the issuance of directives indicating the approved operating methods.⁹³

The Soviet leadership believes that, where possible, guidance should be given in person rather than in writing or over a telephone.⁹⁴ For this reason, staff members are frequently sent into the field to instruct and assist, often using "instructional lectures."⁹⁵ Of great importance, too, are the numerous instructional conferences called by the political sections to explain plans for special campaigns, new emphases in propaganda, and various solutions for common problems. Many of these conferences are held periodically, while others are called as the occasions require.⁹⁶ In fact, so many time-consuming conferences are called that complaints have been received from the political workers, and the political sections have been told to minimize their number.⁹⁷

These types of command methods have obvious weaknesses. The orders prescribe for so much of the political worker's time and so many of his duties,⁹⁸ insisting on immediate and precise fulfillment, that there is little encouragement for him to use his own ideas or initiative. There are many indications of the resulting dependence upon instructions. In 1940, when Marshal Timoshenko became People's Commissar for Defense, he made a series of speeches of major significance for the political workers, restricting their activity to political propaganda and related matters, and warning them against interference in military matters. Although these speeches were brought to the attention of the political workers and the lessons pointed out through articles, speeches, and conferences, it became apparent months later that many had failed to make the necessary changes. A study of the situation showed that these political officials were waiting for formal directives of an official and written nature before making the changes.⁹⁹

Another illustration of the lack of initiative concerns the Siberian Military District, where the political administration made copies of an important political document received over the radio, and distributed them immediately to the political sections of its divisions and regiments. Each of the latter were instructed to transmit the contents of this document to the military personnel on the next morning, using any propaganda medium deemed appropriate. On the next morning, however, a series of telephone calls from the chiefs of the political sections made it obvious that most of them felt lost without specific directives indicating whether meetings should be held, whether they should be

mass meetings or all-regiment types, and precisely what time the meetings should be held and what should be said.¹⁰⁰

A common story is that told about the divisional political section which was arranging a seminar for the Party organizers in its lower units. Although this organizational form was frequently used, especially by this political section, the seminar had to be delayed for days. The delay was caused by the need to secure approval for the seminar plan from the Political Administration of the military district. The chief of the organizational-instructional department of the Political Administration to whom the plan had been sent, could not point out deficiencies in the plan until he in turn had talked with the chief of the entire Political Administration—but the latter was too busy with other matters.¹⁰¹

PLANNING AND PLANS

"A plan," declared the editors of the Army organ, *Red Star*, in a discussion of Party-political operations, "is an indispensable sign of culture and good organizational quality in our work."¹⁰² In Soviet society, there are few elements of public administration so strongly emphasized as the demand for thorough planning for each unit, carefully synchronized with other plans, approved by the appropriate authorities, strictly adhered to in operations, and available for checking by superior levels at future dates.

The Communist branches in the armed forces are told "the plan is the organizing, disciplining, and directing document in the activity of the Party bureau and entire Party organization." This same principle, as applied to the entire field of military-political work, is indicated in the compliment chosen for a model political officer: "Strict adherence to planning from the first stage is a characteristic feature in his activity; consequently, he has purposefulness and concreteness in his work."¹⁰³

There appear to be three major types of plans: the general plan, covering all important measures of a political nature to be taken in a regimental or other military unit; the special plan, including all steps to be taken by the political officers in execution of a particular directive or an important task; and the plans for the auxiliary organizations, especially those of the Communists or Komsomol branches. It is possible to delineate some of the basic principles followed in compiling each type.

The political officers on each level place in their own plans only the actions to be taken by their own staffs or by persons working with their own staffs (such as the military commanders of the military units or the Party organizations on those levels), but do not include the work to be done by lower levels of political workers.¹⁰⁴ Thus, a divisional political section would include the measures to be taken by its own staff members, but not all the measures to be taken by the political workers of the regiments or battalions on the levels below. The plan usually deals concretely with the specific measures to be taken during a relatively short space of time, and indicates the person responsible for each measure and the time designated for it.¹⁰⁵ Finally, with the Bolshevik emphasis on purposefulness and concentration on major tasks, it is obvious that the plan worked out at any level must be tied to the military tasks of the unit and the political directives sent down from the MPA.¹⁰⁶

Typical of the general plans are those established to guide the political operations in a regiment or brigade, which are among the most important operating levels within the entire apparatus. The general political line for a specific period is, of course, laid down by the political office on the next highest level.¹⁰⁷ An example of an actual plan is available in a verbatim translation into German of a plan for Party-political work in the 20th Red Banner Mechanized Brigade, drawn up for use in the five-day period of a Soviet offensive during the summer of 1944.

The plan is divided into four major parts: measures to be taken in the preparatory period before the battle, during the attack, in the postbattle period, and items to be given special attention. For each of the 20 measures noted, there usually is given the expected time of execution and the person in charge of its direction. The measures include conferences in which instructions are to be given to various responsible groups, talks to be given to the soldiers, and propaganda to be disseminated among the local populace.¹⁰⁸ This plan meets the approved pattern for it sets forth "concrete measures" to be carried out, and "foresees where, when, how, and with what personnel the work is to be done."¹⁰⁹ Another plan, one of the peacetime monthly political plans, contains some 22 measures to be taken, half pertaining to inner-organizational tasks (reports, special conferences, lectures to professional personnel) and the remainder dealing with mass propaganda operations.¹¹⁰

Important, too, are the special plans of the political officers for dealing with a single task or problem. Among those mentioned in the press are plans for the following: training staff personnel in Marxist theory and techniques of political work (28 different measures are listed);¹¹¹ teaching the basic military regulations to the rank and file in a regiment;¹¹² and conducting a propaganda program designed to strengthen discipline in a division.¹¹³

Frequently, the special plan is established on the basis of an urgent directive from a high political echelon. In 1944, for example, the political section of a rifle corps on the Ukrainian Front received "a very important document" from the MPA, and it was decided that a program for fulfilling this order must be established at once. The chief of the political section assembled his entire staff, read the document to them, and ordered them to drop everything and to spend the next 24 hours thinking of suggestions to use in the special program. During the following day, a three-hour conference was held to study the suggestions, and a program was worked out for the next two weeks, calling for ten different conferences and various types of instructional talks. At the end of that period, all the political workers on the lower echelons of the corps, presumably trained to do what was needed, were ordered to carry out the directive on their levels.¹¹⁴

These special plans of the professional political officers and their staffs are distinct from those drawn up by the Army organizations of the Communist Party and the Komsomol which perform valuable propaganda functions and act as auxiliaries of the political apparatus. The latter plans are usually established monthly for execution in the following month, and include a concise statement of the main tasks before the branch, the actions to be taken within the organization itself, the "mass-enlightenment" measures to be undertaken with respect to personnel of the military unit, and the specific assignments to each active member of the branch. In keeping with the subordination of the Communist Party and

Komsomol organizations to the political apparatus, the plans are not official until approved by the professional political worker of the military unit; they are executed with his assistance and direction.¹¹⁵

VERIFICATION AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROLS

The Bolshevik emphasis on the need for organizational efficiency, a tradition with which Stalin himself is connected, is reflected in the operation of the political apparatus. Major responsibility for securing efficiency is given to the chain of organizational-instructional branches, which are found at every level of the apparatus from the MPA down to the political sections of divisions and brigades. In addition to their informational functions and other functions mentioned previously, these branches are expected to study and improve the operational methods used within the apparatus, and to check on the execution of directives and orders sent down from the leadership of the apparatus.

For the execution of their tasks, the organizational-instructional branches depend primarily upon members of their own staffs, especially the inspectors and instructors in Party organizational work.¹¹⁶ These instructors investigate complaints concerning the quality of political work in the military units; they conduct continuing studies of the organizational machinery of the political apparatus, and of the techniques used by the political workers; they provide personal guidance to the Party organizations, assisting them to perform their functions skillfully and efficiently; and they provide much of the information used as the basis for reports, personnel shifts, and organizational reforms.¹¹⁷ With their help, the political organs are expected "to penetrate deeply into all details of life, to study and train the troops, to generalize and propagandize the best experience, and to remove in time all types of deficiencies and faults."¹¹⁸

The operational patterns of the organizational-instructional branches can be illustrated by two specific cases. The Political Administration of a military district had received information, in reports of its own instructors and complaints from lower levels of the political apparatus, about serious shortcomings in the work of the Party organizations and the political section of the X Division. The chief of the divisional political section was called to the military district headquarters, and was ordered to present a full report on the situation and answer these complaints of inefficiency; he then was given "appropriate suggestions" on how to remove these shortcomings. When a subsequent report indicated that the necessary corrections were not being made, the deputy chief of the organizational-instructional section was sent out of the X Division. He made an on-the-spot investigation, speaking with many political workers, visiting Party meetings, and studying the files and reports of the divisional political section. His analysis was submitted to the chief of the Political Administration in the military district headquarters, who wrote a set of definite instructions for the X Division and ordered the political section to carry them out immediately.¹¹⁹

Another type of operational pattern is illustrated in the report on Golovanov, secretary of the Party bureau of an Air Force regiment, a responsible political post for which he had no experience. For several months after his election to the post, he was visited regularly and given training and assistance by Major

Loburets, instructor in Party-organizational work of the divisional political section. Loburets had had 12 years of Party-political work in the Army, and had been assigned frequently to the training of new Party officials. He helped Golovanov plan his program for each month, showed him how to conduct conferences with subordinate Party officials and to assign specific tasks to each of them, instructed him in the vital job of writing and disseminating propaganda concerning the leading aviators and their methods, and assisted him in many other ways. After the initial training period, Loburets' visits decreased in frequency, but he continued to read the reports about Golovanov's work, and to make periodic inspections.¹²⁰

Most instructors apparently believe that the evaluation of their own efficiency is made largely upon the quality of their reports, and success depends on their ability to find alarming situations which need urgent attention. In any case, the instructors are frequently accused of concentrating their energies in efforts to find and report such situations. Thus, a divisional political section which had been charged with inefficiency was informed that it would be visited by instructors from the Organizational-Instructional Department of the Moscow District Political Administration. Presumably, the purpose of the visit was to analyze defects, to give specific suggestions for improvement, and to help apply these suggestions in actual practice. An entire "brigade" of instructors did arrive, but they concentrated on a feverish search for information, convened the divisional political workers, administered a series of scoldings for the poor work being done, and soon returned to their own headquarters to write a sharply critical report.¹²¹

This function of improving the efficiency of the organizational machinery is closely identified with another major task of the organizational-instructional branches—the verification of the proper execution of major directives about policies or methods. Stalin, who gave a good deal of attention in the first decade after the Bolshevik Revolution to the creation of an effective Party organization, frequently warned that "nine-tenths of our defects and faults are due to the lack of a properly organized system of checking up on fulfillment of decisions."¹²²

A *proverka* (check or verification) is made on various occasions. It frequently follows the receipt of complaints or charges, which may originate from, or be sent to, a Party office, an Army newspaper, or the political apparatus. If the complaint is made about a political worker or section, a higher political officer will appoint a commission to examine the charges and investigate the situation.¹²³ Similarly, important directives from superior levels require that special checks be made, and an instructor (or several of them) may study the methods used in executing the directives.¹²⁴

A political administration or section may decide to study how its subordinate units deal with a special question (such as direction of Party schools, or operation of Rooms for Political Enlightenment), and extensive examination may be made by staff members assigned to this task.¹²⁵ Finally, at all political levels, periodic checks are made on the regular operations of the political apparatus, testing such matters as the results being attained by the political classes for all personnel, the techniques being used by the individual political workers, and the effects of recently issued directives and instructions.¹²⁶

Verification is usually made by a higher political unit which relies largely upon its own staff. It sends its agents into the field to make on-the-spot investi-

gations, to study all available records (such as the protocols of meetings, reports to the units being investigated, and records of complaint and criticism), to attend meetings and conferences, and to talk with individual political workers, Communists, and military commanders. Upon completion of this type of *proverka*, the investigators return to their own office and prepare a detailed statement which is supposed to give a balanced picture of the situation, with suggestions for the correction of weaknesses. In addition to the information gathered in this type of investigation, the political organ may use other sources for verification operations, such as detailed reports in written or oral form from subordinate units.¹²⁷

The importance of the *proverka* is reflected in the continuous attention given to publicizing the approved methods to be used, while the published criticism reveals that there is a wide variance in the application of these methods.¹²⁸ The sharpest criticism is meted out to those who forget that "every check must go beyond the mere gathering of factual materials, for it must always be accompanied by concrete aid to the Party-political apparatus in the removal of discovered deficiencies."¹²⁹ Illustrative here is the comment on the work of the political section in one division. Its staff had made several checks of the work of platoon agitators of one of its regiments and each time had written extensive and specific reportorial memoranda (*dokladnye zapiski*). Among other things, the memoranda had indicated that several agitators had inadequate political training and poor educational background, and that many talks given by them were of a low ideological level. However, instead of teaching these agitators how to prepare themselves and how to speak before their fellow soldiers, the instructors from the political section merely convened the agitators for a conference and exhorted them to intensify their agitational work. In another case, there came into this same regiment an instructor from the Political Administration of the military district, sent to study the organization and techniques used in the political-training classes, and in the Party and Komsomol branches. He looked over all the plans for political work, the protocols of meetings and conferences, and the reports on work done, and talked with appropriate people, but refused to give any direct instruction. He gave no lectures, and would not take the trouble to point out how shortcomings could be overcome.¹³⁰

Rules for the report on a *proverka* are rarely discussed in the public press, and it is therefore instructive to note the comment made about one short report which was reprinted with only minor omissions. A political worker had been assigned to verify the operations of study circles in a certain regiment, and he submitted the following memorandum:

I am reporting on the work of study circles, as verified by me on February 2, 1949. In the circle studying the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there are 17 persons enrolled, but only seven attended the meetings. It was led by Lieutenant Kazhdan and dealt with the theme of "Historical Materialism." The method used in this meeting was a talk (by the leader).

In the circle studying the short biography of Comrade Stalin, 18 persons are enrolled and six attended the meeting. Lieutenant Tarasov conducted the meeting, which dealt with the sixth chapter of the *Short Biography of Comrade Stalin*. The method used in this meeting was discussion.

If one were to judge the attendance and success by the account books of the circles, one might come to the conclusion that the meetings were conducted regularly and that there was good attendance and success in learning. However, if one were to judge by the

meetings of February 9, 1949, then one might conclude that the meetings were poorly organized.¹³¹

The reporter was sharply criticized for his memorandum, because he had failed to make a serious evaluation of the meetings and had refused to indicate his judgment on their success or failure. He had spent four hours at these meetings, but had not tested the ideological level of the students and the methodological training of the leaders, and he had failed to discover the causes for the numerous absences.

Part III

PATTERNS OF
PROPAGANDA CONTENT AND TECHNIQUES

Chapter 8

POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

One of the few verbatim reports of a lecture given to the students and teachers of the Lenin Military-Political Academy contains some noteworthy statements about the "role and tasks of the political workers in the Red Army and Navy." The lecture was given in the fall of 1940 by Mikhail Kalinin, who was then a high Soviet official devoting much of his time to the work of Bolshevik propagandists. Although the speech contains many of the usual banal Soviet stereotyped phrases, it also includes the following advice:

Comrades, the first task which stands before you, as future political workers, is to develop in the Red Army men and Red Navy men the ideas of Communism. But to develop in them the ideas of Communism does not mean to make them all Party members. No, I do not have this in mind. It means to make comprehensible, close, and dear to them everything that is being done in the Soviet state. . . . The political worker has a tremendous quantity of facts from our really colorful life, in order to strengthen in the young hearts patriotic pride for their entire subsequent life.

Comrades, to inculcate the ideas of Communism—this means to educate the youth so that it loves the Soviet land with all its youthful fervor, loves it not only with consciousness but with all the five senses of man. . . . Quite often one can hear from our warriors and commanders declarations like the following: "We are ready to die for the Soviet state, for our great homeland!" I regard this slogan as deeply patriotic. But I would make it more precise, more truthful, deeper. Of course, to die—this is a great act, a heroic act. But the question is—how to die? One must not die passively, without the most desperate struggle. . . .

In educating the Red Army and Navy in the spirit of Communism, you must not rush about seeking to make all Red Army men and Red Navy men formally Marxists and Communists. Try to develop in each Red Army man and Red Navy man the consciousness that cowardice at his post, flight, treason are shameful things, and death is a thousand times better in any case.¹

Statements of this type, of course, do not indicate any changes in the basic aims of the Soviet leaders; indeed, basic aims of a dictatorship would hardly be discussed before student propagandists, and certainly would not be published for the edification of the Soviet readers. These statements do point up a significant change in the types of appeals believed desirable and effective, and reveal a vast contrast with the content of Army propaganda in the twenties, when Communist symbolisms and ideals were widely used.² This shift was probably due to Stalin's realization that purely Communist propaganda was not contributing markedly to the strength of his regime.

Although the Kremlin's hold on the people has oscillated sharply at times, the period of 1930-34 was one of real danger for the Bolsheviks. Hostility toward the regime was at a high point, as a result of the policies of intensified industrialization and of forced agricultural collectivization with its accompanying horrors of mass purges of kulaks and other resisting groups and the use of violence in connection with recruitment of collective farmers. Obviously the symbols of Communism and the Party, in whose names these deeds were taking place, had little positive appeal and actually evoked widespread reactions of repulsion and hatred.³ New symbolisms and new appeals, or at least several supplemental ones, had to be found.

It was at this time, while the functions and powers of the secret police were being vastly expanded, that the Soviet propagandists began a significant campaign designed to reach and influence the non-Communist masses with nationalist appeals. This was similar in many ways to experiments that Lenin had carried on in 1918 and 1920, when he had declared that the "socialist homeland" was in danger and he was fighting in defense of the country, and when he accepted the aid of Tsarist generals against foreign foes.⁴ Since the early thirties, nationalist themes have become part of the propaganda materials disseminated to the populace. Their role in Army propaganda is shown in this 1948 statement by the chief of the MPA: "A basic task of our ideological work in the Army and Navy is the training of the personnel in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and Soviet national pride, in the spirit of love and unlimited loyalty to the Motherland."⁵

Although there are many variations in nationalist propaganda, two are significant in the output for the military forces. The first of these is called the "cultivation of national pride," and is mentioned here chiefly because of its quantitative importance within the totality of Soviet propaganda. The second may be termed the propaganda of responsibility for national interests, and is much more closely tied to the emotional appeals made to the soldier.

National Pride

A clear statement of the national pride theme was given in a book on *The Nourishment of Soviet Patriotism in School Children*. This called for the inculcation "of boundless devotion to the Soviet state, Communist Party, and the Bolshevik leaders" based "above all on the recognition of the superiority of the Soviet system, on the conviction of its superiority in relation to any other non-Soviet system, on a highly developed feeling of Soviet national pride for our Socialist Fatherland."⁶ Mikhail Kalinin explained another characteristic of this theme in these words: "The propagation of Soviet patriotism cannot be divorced or separated from the roots of our people's past history, for we must be filled with patriotic pride for the accomplishments of our people."⁷

Propaganda disseminated through Army media contains much material on each of these subjects, and on the special qualities of the Russian people.⁸ There is also much pointing with pride to the attainments of Russian and Soviet artists and writers, particularly Tolstoi, Chekhov and Gorki,⁹ and to other famous intellectual leaders.¹⁰ There is a never-ending series of claims about past intellectual attainments (which the Soviets sometimes call the "priority campaign") in which most of the discoveries and inventions in most fields of human endeavor are claimed for the ancestors of the Soviet people.¹¹ There is an extensive re-

writing of history, with much vehement denial of unfavorable interpretations of past events, and enthusiastic efforts to add new glamour to the great names of Russian and Soviet history. Examples of these are to be found in brochures issued for the leaders of Army classes in political training,¹² in handbooks published for the thousands of military agitators and propagandists,¹³ and in many newspaper and magazine articles.¹⁴

There are other aspects of this nationalist propaganda, some of which (like the pride in current Soviet accomplishments or the need to hate foreign enemies of the homeland and traitors to the nation) are discussed in Chapter 10. In their totality, they are expected to stimulate the soldier's sense of identification with the accomplishments, interests, and problems of the nation, and to create a desire to contribute to its future accomplishments and to solutions of national problems.

Group and Individual Responsibility

It is typical of Bolshevik methods that these general appeals to love the Motherland, to be true to the people, and to be proud of national achievements are closely connected with demands for group and individual service. Audiences are frequently told that love of country and national pride impose responsibilities upon each societal grouping and class; this might be called the "responsibilities" aspect of nationalist propaganda. There are a number of themes which carry this viewpoint to the military audiences, two of which may be mentioned here as typical.

The first of these themes asserts the general responsibility of the military forces for the protection of the people and their interests. The head of the Lenin Military-Political Academy expressed it in this fashion: "Our Army must assure the protection of the peaceful labor of the Soviet people, and secure the state interests of the Soviet people. 'The perpetual military readiness of the Soviet Army and Navy is the guarantee of the safety of our Motherland and of stable peace in the entire world,' says Order No. 55 of the USSR Ministry of Armed Forces."¹⁵ The symbols used to convey this concept are shown in a statement issued to the troops by the commander of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany: ". . . We soldiers are called upon to stand guard over the peaceful constructive work and over the peace and security of our country. . . Vital Soviet patriotism, the perfect fulfillment by every man of his duties to the mother country and the feeling of constant responsibility for its security must lie at the basis of all our life and training."¹⁶

Far more significant is the second theme of this "responsibility" propaganda which stresses the personal and direct responsibility of each soldier for the protection of these great national or ideological interests. A formal expression of this appears at the beginning of the Disciplinary Regulations: "Military discipline is based on the consciousness of each serviceman of his military duty and his personal responsibility for the defense of his own Motherland—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

A major part of the "personal responsibility" propaganda centers about the various military oaths which each serviceman must take. He swears to one on entering military service and usually takes several others later in his career. Their references to the individual's honor or his soldierly pride are considered

to have some effect, even by defectors who have fled the Soviet Union or the Soviet Army.¹⁷

When the Soviet citizen enters the Army, he takes the following oath:

I, a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, going into the ranks of the Armed Forces, accept the oath and solemnly swear to be an honorable, brave, disciplined, vigilant warrior, strictly preserving military and state secrets, unswervingly fulfilling all military regulations and orders of commanders and superiors.

I swear that I shall conscientiously study military matters, shall in every way guard military and national property, and shall be to my last breath loyal to my People, to my Soviet Motherland, and to the Soviet Government.

I shall always be prepared at the order of the Soviet Government to come to the defense of my Motherland—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and as a warrior of the Armed Forces, I swear to defend it courageously and ably, with merit and honor, not sparing my blood and my very life for the attainment of full victory over the enemy.

If I should violate my solemn oath, let me receive the stern punishment of Soviet law, the universal hatred and contempt of the toilers.¹⁸

The occasion at which the oath is taken is made as solemn as possible. Often it is taken before the entire regiment, with music by the band, ceremonial unfurling of the unit's flag, and speeches by political workers and commanders.¹⁹

The soldier is frequently called upon to take other oaths, especially during periods when high emotion is desired. One soldier reports that when he and other young people were taken into a crack Siberian regiment, they were issued rifles formerly belonging to men who had fallen in battle, and each novice was required to swear that he would fight as bravely as had the former possessor of his rifle.²⁰ Other soldiers reported that they repeated the service oath when they were transferred to new units, and when their regiment was upgraded into a Guard unit.²¹ Before major battles, many unit commanders call upon their men to swear to fulfill their military duties and fight with honor.²²

Supplementing the military oaths are many appeals of a personal nature. During World War II, for example, *Pravda* published the following in an article entitled "They Know at Home How You Are Fighting":

Whether your home is near or far doesn't matter. At home they will always learn how you are fighting. If you don't write yourself, your comrades or your political instructor will write. If the letter does not reach them, they will learn about you from the newspaper. Your mother will read the communiqué, will shake her head and say: "My dear boy, you should do better than this." You are quite wrong if you imagine that the one thing they want at home is to see you come home alive. What they want you to do is to drive out the German. They do not want any more shame and terror. If you die while stopping the German from advancing any farther, they will honor your memory forever. Your heroic death will brighten and warm the lives of your children and grandchildren. If you let the German pass, your own mother will curse you.²³

The aim is to make the concept of the Motherland—and therefore the duty toward it—as personal as possible. Thus, in a speech from Radio Moscow to Soviet soldiers stationed abroad, the audience was told that "no matter what distances separate the Soviet soldiers from the Motherland, they must always feel their blood relationship with her." Moreover, the soldier must be grateful for what has been given to him and justify the trust placed in him:

The Soviet soldiers serving abroad are expected to make a real contribution toward the consolidation of our victory and toward the successful execution of our national

policy. Having a real understanding of his own role, every conscientious Soviet soldier is eager to confirm the trust of his people and the best hopes of our friends throughout the world. "My country is in my heart," as Senior Sergeant Manturov said, who is hundreds of kilometers away from his beloved country. "The Motherland to me is not just Motherland, but a real mother. She has brought me up, educated me, taught me. The honor and dignity of the Soviet Motherland is therefore a matter of personal honor to every soldier."²⁴

In this effort to utilize their sense of group and personal responsibility and obligation, an immense quantity of propaganda is disseminated to the military personnel. The political workers and military commanders are constantly reminded of the importance of these themes,²⁵ and instructions are frequently given to the Communist and Komsomol organizations on how they are to help to make this propaganda effective.²⁶ Thousands of articles and editorials are written in the Army press and read aloud,²⁷ hundreds of thousands of talks are given to individuals and small groups,²⁸ innumerable posters and other forms of graphic propaganda are displayed,²⁹ and many special events and techniques are used to dramatize these propaganda themes and to drive them home.³⁰

Use in War and Peace

The Kremlin's evaluation of the effectiveness of these nationalist and patriotic appeals, and their superiority to the Communist and socialist symbols, were amply demonstrated during the Nazi war. The military newspapers dropped the motto of "Workers of the World, Unite!" and substituted "Death to the German invaders."³¹ The struggle was called "the Great Fatherland War" (*Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina*), similar in popular usage and historical title to the great defense of Russia against Napoleon in the second decade of the nineteenth century. In his announcement of the Nazi attack on 22 June 1941, Molotov presented this slogan for the country: "For country, honor, and freedom," and Stalin in his 1941 speech on the Bolshevik anniversary praised "the idea of defending their Fatherland, for the sake of which our people are fighting."³²

Most important, these symbols were effectively used in the crucial battles of that war. When a Soviet defector, described by his interrogators as a "very intelligent, mature officer," was asked why Russian soldiers had fought so well, he replied, "It is the Russian spirit, their love of their country and their own soil." Another told how the soldiers would rush forward, crying: "Get up for your Fatherland! For our Mother! For the liberation of Russia."³³

Although somewhat less urgently, and probably less effectively, similar appeals are made during peacetime. An illustration of this is found in the talk given by a platoon agitator on "Why We Must Love and Defend Our Fatherland." A newspaper article reports that the agitator "tells the warriors of his platoon that to love the Motherland means to strive to extend its glory, to be ready under any conditions and at any cost to defend its honor and its cause. The best testimony on how one should love the Motherland is to be found in the heroic deeds recorded by the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War and the labor exploits accomplished by Soviet patriots during peacetime. In conclusion, the agitator calls on the warriors to study diligently and to fulfill their military duties zealously."³⁴

THE GOVERNMENT AND STATE

Propaganda concerning the government is apparently designed to give it an image related to both the people and the Party, and combining some of the qualities of both. On one hand, it is identified with the Party and Stalin (as the administrative arm used in the execution of Party plans), and propaganda concerning the government therefore emphasizes the need to be loyal to it and to be grateful for its promises and accomplishments. On the other hand, the government is presented as being representative of the people and expressive of their will, and propaganda concerning the government tends to reflect some of the nationalist-patriotic themes.

Two aspects of the propaganda output concerned with the government should be noted. There is, first, an effort to give a continuing report on the government's policies and actions, and upon those events which illustrate the correctness of its policies. This effort goes on continuously, and special propaganda methods are used to present this material to the military personnel.³⁵ Beyond this are the special events which are constantly being contrived for propaganda purposes—Soviet elections, the "peace" and other campaigns tied to Soviet policy, and special days celebrating the anniversaries of or honoring special Soviet groups or institutions, such as Armed Forces Day, Day of the Soviet Miner, and Press Day.

Much of the propaganda concerning the government is disseminated during the campaigns that precede and accompany an election. In 1946, for example, a series of political apparatus conferences were held on every level of the political service from the MPA down to most regiments. Some of the objectives of the propaganda campaign were frankly stated in these conferences, and plans were made for special operations in accordance with these plans. At one conference, held by the MPA with the heads of the Political Administrations in military districts and naval fleets, the chief of the MPA declared:

It is necessary for all of us to understand that the coming elections constitute an important political campaign. Its success in the Army and Navy to a great extent shall depend upon our work, on how well we are able to carry out its aims in an organized fashion, and how skillfully agitation and propaganda are conducted.

It is the duty of the Party-political workers during the pre-electoral agitation and propaganda to explain great principles of the Basic Law of the USSR, the Constitutions of the Union and autonomous republics; to set forth the rights and obligations of the Soviet citizen; and to demonstrate the superiority of our socialist structure and our Soviet democracy. It is necessary to tell in detail about our successes in the spheres of economic and cultural construction, and in the execution of the Five-Year Plan. Moreover, while explaining the temporary nature of the difficulties created by the war and by the failure of crops in a number of provinces and districts of our country, it is particularly necessary to tell about the great concern shown by the Party, the Soviet government, and Comrade Stalin personally about the everyday material needs of the Soviet people and its armed forces.³⁶

This statement indicates some of the many propaganda themes utilized to popularize the Soviet government and system. There are, of course, many such themes, and we shall here refer only to four which are typical of the entire group, and which are also quantitatively important in the total propaganda output. The first of the themes may be called the explanation of the need for the Soviet state in the present state of historical development. It was the basic lesson of

a full-page article, which appeared in *Red Star* under the title of "The Soviet State—The Chief Weapon in the Construction of Communism in the USSR."³⁷ It was also found in an editorial on "Red Army Bolsheviks," in which *Pravda* once declared that "the Red Army propaganda workers must daily make the Red Army men realize the greatness of the victories we have won and their inspiring sources: The Soviet regime, the Socialist economic system. . . and the untiring activities of the Leninist-Stalinist Party. . ."³⁸

A second major theme involves the explanation and justification of the policies of the Soviet government and its satellites. Their foreign and domestic plans and actions are explained in simple, stereotyped terms, and repeated day after day until they are familiar to, and generally accepted by, the military personnel.³⁹ Related to this is a never-ending stream of criticism and comment on the policies of non-Soviet governments and politicians. Quantitatively, these themes are the most important elements in the entire output of political propaganda.

The last two major themes are more personal and more closely related to the interests and attitudes of the soldiers. They are apparently designed to secure not merely understanding and general approval, but a sense of personal gratitude and identification. Thus, the third theme is concerned with illustrating the favorable effect of governmental policy upon the people and the resulting gratitude of the latter. *Red Star* commended a divisional newspaper which devoted two full pages to comparisons between a Soviet city in Armenia and a neighboring city in capitalist Turkey, and then told of the use made of this material by Army propagandists. One officer gave a talk to his men on the topic of "Two Cities—Two Worlds," describing the alleged poverty, hunger, unemployment, and despair of the inhabitants of the capitalist city, who had no real power to change their situation under the existing government. In contrast, he said, the Soviet city "had flowered under the sun of the Stalinist Constitution and the socialist government"; the people were busily and happily employed and were grateful to their beneficent rulers.⁴⁰

In similar fashion, descriptions of the Five-Year Plans,⁴¹ of the State Loan campaigns, of monetary reforms, and related subjects are always accompanied with fulsome descriptions of the happy lives being enjoyed by the Soviet people, and of their deep-felt gratitude.⁴² In 1951, for example, the Kremlin announced a new decree which lowered certain prices; the next day, the entire first page of *Red Star* was devoted to the story. The Army organ's coverage included a verbatim copy of the decree, an editorial on what it called the newest proof of "Stalinist concern about the welfare of the people," and a series of reports from various localities throughout the Soviet Union under this general headline: "The Soviet People Praise the Wise Policy of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government."⁴³

The most personal materials are to be found in relation to the fourth theme, which is concerned with the reactions of the soldiers themselves to governmental policies. Here are recounted the claims, among other things, about the rights and privileges of personnel in the armed forces. Much is made of the soldiers' participation in the electoral process, and of the military men who are members of the Supreme Soviet and other parliamentary bodies.⁴⁴ Beyond such items as these, the soldier is continuously reminded that the government gives him and his comrades the material elements of an acceptable standard of living, trains

them for their roles in the important task of defending their country, and provides the arms and supplies so that the task may be fulfilled properly.⁴⁵

COMMUNISM AND THE PARTY

The political propaganda disseminated within the armed forces contains innumerable references to Communism and the Party; analysis of propaganda content, however, must place this fact in its proper context. Kalinin's statement, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, indicates that the Kremlin's aims are not merely to persuade the soldier that the truth is to be found only in Marxism or to stimulate his desire to join the Communist Party. The basic objectives also include increasing the efficiency of military personnel; apparently the Kremlin has been convinced that appeals to Communism are not sufficient for that. The Communist appeals are supplemented by nationalist, patriotic, and military propaganda materials which are quantitatively more important than the materials on Communism.

It is important, too, to note that much of the material expounding the Communist ideology is actually directed to the relatively small group of politically-minded officers, rather than the entire personnel of the military forces. So far as most of the latter are concerned, the objective during the past two decades seems primarily to have been the creation of certain emotional attitudes, such as faith in the Party and respect for its ideology, rather than understanding of or support for Communism as a philosophy.*

It is important also to note that the Kremlin and the MPA show little faith in the power of Marxism-Leninism to evoke the type of positive emotional response desired during periods of great danger to the regime or at other times when high emotional intensity is needed on the part of the military masses. For this reason, there was a sharp decline in the use of Communist materials or ideological appeals during the first years of World War II.⁴⁶ It was only after the victory at Stalingrad, which assured the Soviet leaders that they would not only survive but would have a great military force at their command, that widespread propaganda of Marxism-Leninism was renewed and intensified.⁴⁷

It should also be pointed out that, even among the professional Communists of the political apparatus, there seems to be little inclination to use these themes and little enthusiasm when they are used. The propaganda concerning Communism and the Party is often casually referred to in connection with other themes, but the dissemination of intensive propaganda concerning them seems to be limited largely to special ceremonial periods, such as the anniversaries of the Bolshevik Revolution or the death of Lenin.

Moreover, except for the propaganda materials concerning Stalin himself (who can be considered a type of propaganda theme related to, but not identical with, the propaganda themes of Communism and the Party), the Communist themes are more diffused and are presented with less emotional pressure than are other major themes. It may be that this treatment is the result of a belief by the political workers that the propaganda themes concerning Communism find less response among the soldiers than do other appeals. In this connection, it

*It is noteworthy, for example, that the soldiers are not given a real basis for understanding or assimilating Marxism-Leninism either in their pre-military schooling or in their formal political training in the armed forces. See Chapter 13.

is important to note the report made by an American team which interviewed and studied the attitudes of a large number of defectors from the Soviet Army. This team stated:

The attitudes of our sources also indicate that identification with Communism plays but a small direct role in combat motivation. At the same time, hostility toward Communism as such, or in principle, also plays a very small role as a motive militating against active participation in battle. Indirectly, however, certain particular repercussions of Communism may injure the soldier's will to fight, e.g., the injury which the system does to his family or to himself, or the impersonal harsh manners of *Zampolits* who are identified with Communist principles. Thus, of all the factors we have discussed which affect the will to fight, the presence or absence of loyalty to Communism is probably the most neutral in its effect on combat performance.⁴⁸

With these comments as a background, it is appropriate to examine the propaganda concerning Communism. It may be noted, first, that there are many stereotyped instructions concerning the training of the men in Communism as part of their political training. For example, an editorial in a publication largely intended for the military commanders contained the following:

. . . In teaching and training their subordinates, commanders and political workers should remember the instructions of V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin that Communist consciousness and political maturity of our people does not come of itself. These qualities are nourished in the course of strengthening the might of our country, in persistent battle with hostile ideologies and with survivals of capitalism in the consciousness of people. . . .

It is a primary responsibility of the commander unceasingly to build in Soviet warriors a Communist world-outlook, to train them in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, in Soviet and national pride, in the spirit of hatred toward the foes of Socialism, to nourish in his subordinates faithfulness to their military oath.⁴⁹

The materials concerning Communism, or Marxism-Leninism as the Bolsheviks call their ideology today, contain at least three major elements worthy of note.

First, and perhaps most important, are the descriptions of the special qualities attributed to the ideology—qualities which allegedly give strength and wisdom to the Bolsheviks and assure success to their cause. The keynote of this theme, repeated continuously, is taken from a speech by Stalin in which he discusses the victories already won by the Party: "It owes them [the past victories] to the fact that it is guided in its work by the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. There can be no doubt that while we remain true to this teaching, while we possess this compass, we shall have success in our work."⁵⁰

The same theme is to be found in the demand for faith in the correctness of the Marxist doctrines, Lenin's teachings, and Stalin's interpretations of these doctrines and teachings. Many events, large and small—military victories over Germany, alleged rises in living standards, increases in Soviet power—are presented as new proof of the correctness of Marxism, of the invincibility of its ideas and methods, and the inevitableness of world victory.⁵¹ These are frequently presented, especially in ceremonial periods such as those honoring Lenin or the Party, in speeches and articles with such titles as "The Invincible Force of the Great October [Bolshevik] Revolution,"⁵² and "Forward, under the Banner of Lenin and the Leadership of Stalin, to the Victory of Communism."⁵³

Related to this theme is the actual presentation, through numerous books, lectures, talks, and articles, of various aspects of the Marxist ideology itself. The dissemination of these materials is apparently part of the campaign to force

most politically-minded officers, Party leaders, and all others who have the necessary schooling and intellectual capacity to understand, to read and learn the stereotypes of Marxism-Leninism. They are told, with emphasis supported by the authority of Stalin himself, that all leaders, whether they be technicians, academicians, or military officers, must learn the Marxist laws of society in order to solve their own special problems and understand what is happening about them.⁵⁴ Some rudimentary explanations of selected Communist principles are also given the soldiers and sailors.

There are several other explanations of a non-Soviet nature, which might be suggested as reasons for the dissemination of this material and for use of this pressure. Those who are drawn into actual study of Marxism-Leninism are given little time to concern themselves with oppositional ideas, or to question the policies or methods of the rulers, and they may actually come, through repetition, to accept these ideas as their own.⁵⁵ For those who do not study, either through disinclination or inability, these materials tend to project the illusion that there is an explanation and justification for policies and methods, and the pretense that there are some who understand the ideology and others who must take it on faith, as many take scientific explanations concerning atomic energy.

It may also be suggested that these articles and lectures provide the official answers to questions that the officer and soldier may well ask. The constant references to the great "advances" being made by the Soviet Union, to the new type of "Soviet man" that is now claimed to exist, and to the coming complete victory of Communism—all these may well leave one wondering why there are secret police agencies and concentration camps with so prominent a place in Soviet life, and why there must be totalitarian governments ruling with force and violence. The official answers are provided in lectures and articles such as "The Struggle with Survivals of Capitalism in the Consciousness of People,"⁵⁶ and "The Nature of the Gradual Transition from Socialism to Communism."⁵⁷

Two major aspects of the propaganda concerning Communism require mention. The first of these is related to much of the nationalist propaganda which asserts that the USSR is superior to the Western states. Frequently, the assertion is made that the USSR is superior precisely because it is a socialist state, founded on the basic premises of Marxism and led by students of Marxism-Leninism.⁵⁸ In similar fashion, propagandists assert that the Soviet armed forces are invincible because the policies and strategy of its leadership is based on a knowledge of Communist "science."

The propagandists try to exploit the world-wide fear of war by a series of assertions for which they demand acceptance through repetition and the silencing of opposition. According to this line, war takes place only in pre-Communist world society and arises now because capitalist states still exist. The propagandists insist that only the Soviet state is honestly trying to avoid war and only it will have clean hands when war begins. Finally, and most important, they assert that only the Soviet leaders understand how to distinguish between a just and an unjust war, and only they know how to utilize a just war in the interest of humanity. According to them, only people with a real grasp of Marxism-Leninism understand and can utilize properly the social-economic-political-military forces which determine the outcome of a war; with this knowledge, the Soviet has worked out superior types of military strategy and mili-



Fig. 6— The Zampolit Explaining Party Directives

Russian Caption: "Soldiers of the N-th unit study the historic decisions of the Nineteenth Party Congress. Agitators of the detachments receive advice and aid from commanders and political workers before conducting talks and reading newspapers. In the photograph: Capt. A. Shkurko, deputy detachment commander for political affairs, tells platoon agitators about the directives of the Nineteenth Congress concerning the Fifth Five-Year Plan of development of the USSR for 1951 - 55." KZ, Oct 22, 1952.

tary science which make its armed forces invincible.⁵⁹ As Bulganin declared on the thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet armed forces:

The might of our Army is the might of the Socialist state. There lies the principal source of the invincibility of our Soviet Army and Navy. The historical victories of our armed forces are indisputable proof of the advantages of the Soviet Socialist regime which make it superior to that [the regime] of the capitalists, a proof of the superiority of Soviet military science and military organization over the military organization of capitalist countries.⁶⁰

Propaganda concerning the Communist Party itself is based on, but goes much farther than, the materials dealing with the Communist ideology. The Party is depicted as not only the carrier of the doctrine, but also as an organization of men who inspire the people to great deeds, who organize them for the successful effort to translate Communist theory into accomplished fact.⁶¹ A typical example of these themes is given in this paragraph from a talk to the soldiers of a battalion:

The Bolshevik Party is the soul of our Army. From the first day of the creation of our armed forces, it has been cementing our ranks, inculcating in the soldier a spirit of unwavering devotion to the Fatherland and to the Soviet government and inspiring them to immortal exploits. The Communists have set for the soldiers examples of power and heroism, and now in peacetime they are showing how it is necessary to study and to become excellent soldiers. We are proud of the fact that the great Party of the Bolsheviks is leading us, that we are defending the Party of Lenin and Stalin with our weapons in our hands.⁶²

The materials concerning Stalin are, of course, closely connected with the other themes of political propaganda. However, because of their special content and usage, they are discussed in Chapter 10 with other examples of "emotional" propaganda.⁶³

Chapter 9

MILITARY PROPAGANDA

Political workers are frequently and insistently reminded that among their most important duties is the providing of propaganda assistance to the campaign to secure efficient and enthusiastic execution of military duties.¹ Those who erroneously concentrate on political propaganda are reminded: "Political propaganda and agitation is not an end in itself, but a means of increasing the military preparedness of the Red Army, of strengthening Soviet military discipline and raising the high political and morale level of our personnel."²

Within the tremendous quantity of propaganda materials disseminated in support of these military tasks, four basic approaches may be distinguished: (a) "Standards" propaganda, which tells personnel about regulations and other specifications of conduct expected of the military personnel; (b) "Rationale" propaganda, which explains the existence of these standards and the approved reasons for striving to live up to them; (c) "Pride and loyalty" propaganda which appeals to the soldier's emotional attitudes stemming from his membership in large and small military groups; and (d) "Power" propaganda, which attempts to give the soldier confidence in the armed forces, a sense of its power, and faith in its invincibility.

"STANDARDS" PROPAGANDA

One of the major tasks of the propagandists, of course, is to convince personnel that they must become good soldiers, either because of personal advantages, duty to the nation, group loyalties, external pressures, or a combination of these causes. In this connection, the propagandist must help to tell the military personnel how they can be good soldiers, informing them of the established standards and regulations as a preliminary to impressing the need of living up to them.

Military Regulations

The core of the "standards" propaganda is the explanation and study of military regulations and laws. An official journal for Army propagandists specified that "the training and study of the personnel is not properly organized and its aims cannot be achieved unless its focus is on the military statutes. Only if the entire life of the formations and units are built upon these

regulations can truly military order and discipline be inculcated in them.”³ Therefore, each unit is expected to have a “well-conceived and purposeful plan” for teaching the contents of these regulations, and the program must be carried on continuously.⁴

Every method and medium is used for this major task, including newspaper articles, pamphlets, sessions of the classes for political training, talks to small groups or individuals, lectures, and special meetings.⁵ The commanding officer is told that he must arrange meetings in which he is not merely to read appropriate parts of the regulations, but must have also an interesting and effective program based on past military experiences and local examples.⁶ Detailed instructions are issued for all those who are supposed to aid in the teaching of the regulations: the political organs and political workers,⁷ Communist organizations and branches of the Komsomol,⁸ teachers of the political classes,⁹ editors of the military press,¹⁰ and the military commanders.¹¹

Each member of the military forces is warned that he is personally responsible for learning these regulations.¹² In fact, the study of the statutes must become “the primary obligation and concern of each military serviceman throughout his service in the Army.”¹³ The heaviest pressure is placed on the individual soldier and officer not only to memorize these regulations, but to show that he understands and accepts them by obeying them at all times. He is told again and again that these statutes are “the indestructible law of life of our Army life,” and warned that “formalistic” memorization is not enough.^{14*}

Officer-Soldier Relationships

Another major area in which “standards” propaganda is widely used is concerned with the relationships between the officers and their subordinates. Among the traits desired in Soviet soldiers is that of unquestioning and complete obedience, for the Disciplinary Regulations insist that “the order of the commander is a law for his subordinates and must be fulfilled without discussion, precisely, and in time.”¹⁵ A typical statement of this theme is the following from an Army newspaper:

It is the sacred duty of every Soviet warrior to concentrate all his efforts and abilities on the strict and unquestioning fulfillment of the regulations, orders, and assignments issued by his commander, regardless of conditions. No trials, privations, or dangers, even to one's life, must be allowed to stop the Soviet warrior from carrying out the commander's will.¹⁶

In addition, the soldiers must have respect for, and foster the “authority” of their officers.¹⁷ It is hoped that this respect will be accompanied by warm affection, for the soldiers are told that “one of the glorious traditions of the Soviet warriors is their love for their commander.”¹⁸ In any case, they are complimented for any evidences of this attitude, especially those connected with an effort to protect the officers (and political workers) from physical injury.¹⁹

The standards established for the officer in his part of this relationship are also given much attention. He is urged to try to earn his men's affection and

*The reasons given for obedience are, of course, related to these propaganda themes and are discussed later in this chapter, in the section on “Rationale Propaganda.”

respect, by showing fatherly concern for their needs. Above all, he must secure the prompt and complete fulfillment of all regulations and orders by using this authority and respect and by his own display of model behavior. A frequently quoted statement is that of Marshal Vasilevski, USSR Minister of War, who declared in his Order No. 100 of 7 November 1949: "All commanders and chiefs are required to strive for strict fulfillment of regulations, and must skillfully combine high exactingness [*trebovate'nost'*] toward their subordinates with true fatherly care about their needs."²⁰

The commander is frequently reminded of this hope that he will show fatherly concern about the needs, requirements, and interests of subordinates, and will demonstrate continuing care for their development as men and as soldiers.²¹ Praise is given to those commanders who "in fatherly fashion" care for their men and establish good relations with their subordinates.²² They are warned that studies of violations of discipline show that in an overwhelming majority of cases, "one of the chief causes was poor political-enlightenment work and the absence of requisite care for the material conditions of the men."²³ Considerable stress is also given to the commander's role in improving the military skills and behavior of his men, both as teacher and through his personal example.²⁴

The greatest emphasis in this propaganda concerning the officer-soldier relationship, however, is that given to the demand that the commander be demanding and exacting, particularly with respect to the precise execution by each soldier of his duties. A typical article on this subject starts by quoting from the official regulations of the Army Disciplinary Code: "The interests of the defense of the Fatherland demand from each commander that he take action with respect to every delinquency of his subordinates, always penalizing those who have been negligent, and encouraging those who have displayed zeal and are making progress in the service."²⁵

The commander himself may be punished if he does not show the required exactingness in his relations with his men. The Disciplinary Code in force during the war stated that "a commander who fails to show firmness and decisiveness, and who stops short of taking all possible measures in his orders, is subject to courtmartial himself."²⁶

In the Soviet propaganda materials, at least, this insistence on strict discipline and precise fulfillment of orders is tempered somewhat by cautions that extremes must be avoided and that the men must not be given cause for resentment and antagonism.²⁷ The political workers are called upon to take the necessary steps to protect the authority of the officers, secure good discipline, but also to see that "inexperienced officers avoid important errors in their disciplinary practice."²⁸ A typical story used to illustrate this point concerns a mortar unit where every misdeed, no matter how slight, was followed by the strictest possible punishment, administered in "a rude form which degraded the personal dignity of the subordinates." The regimental political worker was commended when he had a "heart-to-heart talk" with the commander of this unit, showed the damage being done to the morale and effectiveness of the men, and secured a change in disciplinary practice.²⁹

Qualities of the Ideal Soldier

Finally, "standards" propaganda is concerned with those personal and military qualities which are lauded in every good soldier. He is, of course, called

upon to demonstrate basic qualities of bravery, boldness, and decisiveness.³⁰ He is also expected to show traits of shrewdness, initiative, and resourcefulness.³¹ The political workers call upon him to help develop his persistence, endurance, and drive.³²

Most frequently, the soldier is urged by the political propagandists to be vigilant, aiding in the conflict with all enemies—actual and potential, foreign and domestic, large and small. He must report any infractions of the rules by his fellow soldiers, even if they are petty in nature; he must aid the Army units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Soviet police agency; and he must guard all military information against any unauthorized persons.³³

In addition to the usual admonitions for vigilance, the propaganda often is supplemented by threats, as in the following article:

An official of a certain military institution, A. L. Rudakova, once sent off a package containing secret information, using established methods. But she addressed the package incorrectly and this showed a negligent attitude toward important documents. Naturally, the package was returned. Rudakova again displayed negligence—she did not record the receipt of the documents. And then she lost them completely. It is understandable that such negligence can only serve the purpose of the enemies of our Motherland. A military tribunal condemned her to four years in the corrective labor camps. This example shows how inadmissible is the slightest negligence concerning secret documents.

Casual conversations between servicemen, and with their acquaintances or relatives, are important sources from which foreign intelligence agents attempt to derive secret information. . . . Not so long ago, Sgt. I. N. Sankov appeared before a military tribunal of the N garrison. In criminal chatter with his acquaintances he made known the names of his unit, partially divulged its strength, its security system, the state of discipline among the personnel, etc. The court sentenced him to ten years in a corrective labor camp.³⁴

“RATIONALE” PROPAGANDA

The rationalizations and arguments for performing duties efficiently and enthusiastically are, of course, extremely numerous. Their various forms are of three major types: those appealing to a soldier's loyalties, political attitudes, and sense of personal honor; those depending upon his fear and desire to avoid punishment; and those utilizing his desire for social approval.

The main bases for the first type are the approved political attitudes and personal interests, discussed in the preceding chapter. A widely used stereotype is the assertion that each soldier strives to meet the standards set for him because of his realization that he can thus contribute to the attainment of major political objectives—defense of his homeland, protection of his family and of the entire Soviet people, building of Communism in the USSR, acceleration of the movement toward world Communism, and so forth. The Disciplinary Code states, for example: “Military discipline is based upon each soldier's consciousness of his military duty and of his personal responsibility for the defense of his Motherland—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”³⁵

A sharper and more realistic note is struck in the propaganda materials which place the rationale for fulfillment of military duties in the fear of punishment. While these themes are not widely disseminated in published form, the soldier is made well aware of the argument. When he joins the armed forces and promises to be an honorable, disciplined, and earnest soldier, his oath ends with

the words: "If I should violate my solemn oath, then let me receive the stern punishment of Soviet law, the universal hatred and contempt of the toilers."³⁶

Soviet military law provides firm and even harsh punishment for those guilty of such serious crimes as treason, disobedience, or cowardice during battle, or carelessness in security matters. This fact, which provides the background for the entire disciplinary propaganda of the armed forces, is so frequently and vigorously brought to the attention of the military personnel that it forms a special "fear" theme of the crisis or highly emotional propaganda groupings discussed in Chapter 10.³⁷

Personnel are given a detailed code of disciplinary regulations which, they are told, must govern their activities in their everyday life. These regulations, in theory at least, hang over every man throughout his service, and they symbolize the state's determination to alter his fundamental habits and secure approved conduct from him, reacting to his misdeeds and to his praiseworthy actions. The regulations stress, and the men are often reminded, that "the interests of the Motherland's defense demand that the commander does not let pass without reaction even one offense of his subordinates; he must prosecute the improper and encourage the worthy..."³⁸

The political workers are expected to participate in the effort to convince the men that they must "live by the regulations." In addition, the political workers are called upon to impress the Communists, Komsomol members, and officers with the need to obey the disciplinary regulations themselves (apparently there is much distress about their own continued undisciplined actions), and to use them to bring the appropriate appeals to the remaining military personnel.³⁹ The political workers are often charged in the public press with failure to perform these tasks, and with carrying on "their political work on a low ideological level, which has a very superficial and narrowly practical character, and therefore does not take hold in the life of the personnel."⁴⁰

The third major form of the rationale for proper execution of the soldier's duties are the rewards for excellent or unusually good performance, and the publicity and social approval accompanying the rewards. The military regulations require that commanding officers not only punish those who are negligent in their tasks, but that they also "encourage the deserving ones who show zeal, make progress and excel in the service."⁴¹ In each soldier's "card of reprimands and encouragements" are recorded such rewards as personal commendations, commendations before the military unit, mention in Orders, monetary and other gifts, and cancellations of disciplinary penalties.⁴² During wartime, a commander will often send a personal gift to distinguished heroes and will distribute congratulatory postcards to those who did their duty well.⁴³ The agitators and other political workers are called upon to publicize such rewards through special talks, meetings, articles, posters, and in various other ways.⁴⁴

Properly used, the Soviet officers are told, "encouragement plays a very important role in the training of the soldiers, increasing their self-respect and pride in proper behavior, creating the desire for public glory in the collective, and inspiring all to new heights in study and in battle."⁴⁵ Although sometimes an officer may be told that he is giving too many rewards, most public pressure appears to be in the direction of giving more signs of approval and recognition.⁴⁶

The most publicized forms of public recognition are the various medals, awards, and Orders. The most famous are the awards to "Heroes of the Soviet

Union" who get monetary compensation, special privileges, and the Order of Lenin. Created in 1934, the Order of Lenin was used only sparingly to honor famous fliers and adventurers. It is interesting to note the increasing use of this award:

By 9 Jun 1942:	242 awards
1 Jan 1945:	6,414
Apr 1945:	8,204
16 Apr 1949:	More than 11,000

It is noteworthy that about two-thirds of the recipients were Russians, that some 65 percent were Party members, that during the war 26 were twice awarded the title, and that three men (Marshal Zhukov and two famous fliers) were awarded it three times.⁴⁷

Indications of the increasing use of this award technique are found in the facts concerning other awards. There were relatively few Orders used to honor military men before World War II, but during the crucial years of 1942-44, the following were announced in the class of Orders alone: Order of Victory, Order of Suvorov (1st, 2nd, and 3rd classes), Order of Ushakov (1st and 2nd classes), Order of Kutuzov (1st, 2nd, and 3rd classes), Order of Nakimov (1st and 2nd classes), Order of Bogdan Khmelvitski, Order of Alexander Nevski, Order of the Patriotic War (1st and 2nd classes), and Order of Glory (1st, 2nd, and 3rd classes). The awards and medals totaled:

By 9 Jun 1942:	117,982
Oct 1942:	185,000
1 Jan 1943:	434,000
1 Jan 1945:	6,050,269
Apr 1945:	7,170,910
1949:	11,000,000.

Of the total number issued by the beginning of 1945, about 40 percent had been awarded to Russians, with 174 other nationalities sharing the remainder. Over one-third went to Party members, and another large number to members of the Komsomol.⁴⁸ It is obvious that propaganda aims governed the work of the Awards Section of the Chief Personnel Administration of the Soviet Armed Forces, which issued these medals, awards, and honors.⁴⁹

MILITARY PRIDE AND GROUP LOYALTIES

In pre-Revolutionary times (and, to some extent, long afterwards), the Bolsheviks had attacked the professional soldiers of the Tsarist and other non-Soviet armies, and the institutions of militarism in general. Indeed, in the early

years after they took power, there was much discussion on whether a Soviet state should have professional soldiers. As the years went by, and the need for effective armed forces grew, rather than diminished, the Soviet leaders realized that efficiency and enthusiasm could not be expected from men who did not have pride in their military profession and loyalty to their military units. Even when the Bolsheviks thought of the military men's needs in the grossest and most elemental terms, they were forced to include not merely food and drink, but other less tangible needs into account. Stalin is reported to have said to the head of his secret police (who repeated the words):

What's all this drivel about discontent with Hitler in the German Army? What does it take to content an Army? Ample rations? Hitler furnishes them. Good arms and equipment? Hitler supplies them. Prestige and honor? Hitler provides it. A sense of power and victory? Hitler gives that, too. The talk about Army unrest in Germany is all nonsense.⁵⁰

The Soviet effort to build the necessary emotional bases for a loyal and efficient armed force has attempted to stimulate pride in four major points: militarism, the traditions of the Russian Army of past centuries, contemporary Soviet military forces, and the ties within the smaller military units to which each man belongs.

Militarism

The campaign to stimulate pride in the military profession is in sharp contrast to the antimilitaristic elements of early Soviet propaganda. Among the most vivid impressions of a former American attaché in Moscow are the efforts of the Kremlin to create an atmosphere of "martial glory" in the Soviet Union; the attaché reports that there is no country today in which parades, displays of armed might, martial music, and the militarization of cultural life and even of language are so highly developed. In this atmosphere, there is no place for the dissemination of information or opinions which might "arouse fear of the horrors of war or suggest the possibility of defeat."⁵¹

A recent defector from the Soviet Army, writing for a British journal, tells how all the Soviet propaganda media are being used to portray the soldier as "a physical and spiritual superman, as a very paragon of cleverness, ability, uprightness, strength, and of unboasting greatness." With "the glamour of uniform, the clink of medals, and the roll of drums," the "military profession has become the most honorable in the Soviet Union."⁵² It may be noted that the Soviet authors were told: "We must write of war so that the generation that comes after us will love arms and be ready for struggle and victory."⁵³

Within the armed forces, of course, this campaign has been carried on with more consistency and intensity. In contrast to the antimilitarism of early Bolshevik days, an article in 1940 ascribed to Trotskyists and other "traitors" the attempt to educate the Red Army in the civil, rather than the military, spirit.⁵⁴ Indicative of the propaganda materials disseminated today are articles with such titles as "On Love for Military Matters," "The Nourishment of Love for Military Service," and "Love for Military Work."⁵⁵

Among the appeals used are those of group loyalty as illustrated in a talk on "The Pride of the Soviet Soldier." In this instance, the battalion commander told

his men: "The man who loves the Soviet Army, his regiment, and his company will make every effort to make himself into an excellent soldier, and to increase their military glory."⁵⁶ Another propaganda approach is to call for the imitation of heroes, in the fashion used by a Far Eastern army newspaper: "Every soldier, sergeant, and officer must always bear in mind the unforgettable example of love for the military profession, as shown by the great commanders of the past, Suvorov and Kutuzov, by the outstanding leaders of the Civil War, and by the numberless heroes of the Great Patriotic War. A classic example of love for the military profession . . . is shown us by the greatest commander of all times, and of all peoples, Generalissimo of the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin."⁵⁷

It is worth noting the impressions recorded by an American team interrogating a number of Soviet military defectors on various questions. They reported "a general disposition toward indifference" about soldiering in general, and "not one of the enlisted men . . . referred to the importance of the work they did, to its value to the prosecution of the war or in the defense of the Soviet Union, or to any more general professional justifications for their task and the status which it enjoyed."⁵⁸

Pre-Revolutionary Military Traditions

In a fashion that is characteristic of Soviet propaganda methods, the campaign to glamorize military duties is conducted primarily not in broad and generalized discussions of militarism, but in relation to several specific elements. One of these has been the Russian Army—its history, traditions, heroes, even its symbolisms and outer trappings. In the early years of the Soviet regime, the Bolshevik leaders apparently made a conscious and thoroughgoing effort to discredit the Tsarist Army's traditions and symbolisms.⁵⁹ However, it soon began to dawn upon the men in the Kremlin, and the impression grew with the years, that these traditions and symbolisms had some relationship to the level of discipline, the soldiers' pride in their profession, and their *esprit de corps*. Gradually, many of the Tsarist institutions were re-established: the professionalization of the officers; the ranks and titles, elaborate uniforms, medals, and Orders harkening back to pre-Soviet days; strict discipline and subordination of the lower officers and men to their superiors; the salute; the Guards units; and many others.⁶⁰

Typical examples of propaganda on these matters can be found in the materials disseminated early in 1943, when the Soviets restored the use of epaulettes for officers and men, along with new and more elaborate uniforms. Several dozen pictures of these new accouterments were published in *Red Star*, accompanied by articles and editorials which explained their significance. One editorial stressed the importance of the reintroduction of the epaulettes, and indicated that this act was "calculated to increase still further the Army's discipline and its martial spirit," and to "emphasize the distinction between privates and officers." "The wearing of epaulettes," it declared, "must inspire every soldier and officer with a feeling of pride that he belongs to the valiant Red Army—a sense of pride both for himself and his Army."⁶¹

A significant article in the same newspaper was written by a former Tsarist officer, who was permitted to say that the introduction of these epaulettes, "now, at the height of the Great Patriotic War," was particularly important because "it emphasizes and symbolizes the continuity of the glory of Russian arms

throughout the history of Russia right down to our times."⁶² He referred to "these tokens of military dignity which adorned the men of 1812, 1854, and 1914" as being "sacred for every officer," representing his past, present, and future. Finally, he declared, while there is still supposed to be "social equality between officers and men . . . the officer's epaulettes are calculated to stress, even more than before, the role of every rank of officer, and to increase in this way the authority of each officer and his responsibility for the outcome of the battle."⁶³

It is important to note in this connection that the steps taken by the Soviet authorities during this period were favorably reported even by the officers who were later to become defectors and flee from the Soviet Union. When interviewed after their defection, many of these men testified to the improvement in morale which came about when epaulettes were reintroduced, and to the feeling throughout the entire Army that it had been honored by this return to the "good old days."⁶⁴

This report is supported in the information given by German prisoners of war. One of these was a former Russian scientist who had worked for a Soviet Army institute before the war. He had been drafted and sent to the front lines as a lieutenant in a rifle regiment before being captured by the Germans. His entire statement reveals him to have been a discerning and intelligent person, and on the epaulettes and related matters, he said:

It was clear to all Red Army men that the government was carrying through these measures not from conviction but only for political motives, hoping in this way to galvanize the patriotism of the Russian people. In personal discussions, even the Communists often spoke about Russian officers rather than Soviet officers. Nevertheless, the officers' authority and the general discipline has been strengthened by this lifting of the officers out of the masses. Although the civil population holds that the restoration of these outer forms is unnecessary, it is universally supported in the Red Army. The men are always satisfied with such things, for they see it as a turning away from the Communist system and the beginning of a return to the old times. I am aware that this apparent return is only a political maneuver. Nevertheless, I believe that this is good, and support these measures, since they can be used to bring order and training to the army.⁶⁵

Curiously enough, testimony from these sources is supported by the Soviets themselves in articles of self-criticism. One such article, which dealt with the talks given by the leaders of the political-training classes, contained the following:

In a number of cases, the political classes are conducted on a low ideological level. Several leaders of political study groups simplify and sometimes mistakenly discuss the content of most important sections of the program. Most important, this is reflected when, during the meetings, they touch on historical questions. Some propagandists approach the past of our country in an entirely uncritical fashion. They see only positive elements in the history of Russia, and they either pass silently over or touch lightly upon the negative sides [of that history] which flowed from the landlord-bourgeois structure of pre-Revolutionary Russia. . . .

One of the leaders of the political-training classes, 2nd Lieutenant Pertsov, recently gave a talk on the theme of "The Unit Banner—Symbol of Warriors' Honor, Valor, and Glory." He spent almost his entire time in discussing the banners of the old Russian Army, telling how the Russian troops fought at Poltava and during the Patriotic War of 1812, etc.⁶⁶

The same article complained about lecturers who failed to say anything about the Red Army, others who talked about regimental banners but did not tell how their

own regimental banner was received, about talks in which the military regulations were discussed entirely in terms of pre-Soviet days, and about the many propagandists who compared the Soviet regulations with those of Peter the Great's Army—and failed to find much difference between them.

In their effort to emphasize and symbolize "the continuity of the glory of Russian arms," the Bolsheviks have found many occasions to utilize materials of pre-Revolutionary days. Their official title for the Soviet part of World War II, particularly for the war against the invading Germans, is a Russian title translatable as the Fatherland War or the Great Patriotic War.

A major part of this propaganda based on pre-Revolutionary traditions has been about the great military heroes of the past and present, and much has been said about the lessons to be learned from the deeds, personal lives, and military campaigns of such men as Alexander Nevski, Dmitri Donskoi, Kutuzov, and Suvorov.⁶⁷ Another major theme is the Soviet "priority" propaganda as applied to the military field. Soviet military leaders and propagandists have claimed practically all principal inventions in aeronautical, tank, naval, and infantry warfare, and have not been modest in proclaiming the military superiority of their predecessors over all foreign contemporaries.⁶⁸

Soviet Army Traditions

Within the total context of propaganda of military traditions and pride—including the military pride and the Tsarist traditions which have been discussed, and the traditions of individual military units within the Soviet Army—some attention has been given to the task of building a propaganda structure which could be labeled the traditions of the Soviet Army. It has not been simple, and the results apparently have not been wholly satisfactory to the Bolsheviks.

In the early days of the Soviet regime, a determined effort was made to create a new set of traditions which could completely replace those held within the Tsarist Army, and would be appropriate to Bolshevism and the hoped-for Soviet state. But these early attempts, based as they were on such concepts as equalitarianism, revolution, and internationalism, did not lend themselves to the creation of what was soon found to be necessary—well-disciplined, professionally military, nationalist forces, loyal to those in power and completely obedient to their military and civilian superiors. Gradually, these early Bolshevik traditions were discarded,⁶⁹ and a new set were advanced to take their place.⁷⁰ Current propaganda purporting to explain the traditions of the Soviet Army usually presents some combination of three major elements: themes reflecting propaganda concerning Soviet society in general and the Army's place in it; assertions of the characteristic traits of the Army and its personnel; and tales of its "brave deeds and remarkable exploits."

The first of these elements, related to Soviet society, involves the utilization of such a familiar political theme as "the fraternity of peoples within the Soviet Union," the claim that good relations and warm friendships between ethnic groups always exist within the Army, a claim which has become one of its major traditions.⁷¹ Another theme maintains that the Soviet only fights "just wars," and the Army therefore either proudly defends the "Socialist Motherland" or issues forth on "liberating missions," and in either case enjoys the love of the people it is defending or liberating and is inspired by its own mission.⁷² A third

theme is concerned with the Army's relationship to the state and the Communist Party, which give it guidance, care, and power.⁷³

The second major group of propaganda themes is concerned with inherent traits of the Army, its leaders, and its men. Much is made of the alleged qualities of the Army, its invincibility, the claim that anyone with ability can become a high officer, the high degree of the care given to its men, the great genius of its leadership.⁷⁴ Its commanders are called the finest in the world, and much is made of their alleged proletarian backgrounds and the fact that they have been led and trained by Stalin himself.⁷⁵

A prominent theme is concerned with the special qualities of the Soviet soldier. He is inspired by "noble aims," cared for and supported by the Soviet state, and beloved by the Soviet people. "The very words 'Soviet soldier' mean an honest, magnanimous, brave, noble man who does not spare his life for the welfare of the toilers. . . and his qualities include love of the Fatherland, fearlessness in battle, and loyalty to his oath of allegiance."⁷⁶ Much is said and written, in addition, concerning the alleged "comradely relations" between soldiers, and warm and amicable relationship of men and officers.⁷⁷

Finally, considerable propaganda is concerned with boasting about the record of the Army and its personnel. Here again there are many thematic combinations, including praise of its objectives, especially those of defense of the Fatherland and liberation of oppressed in other lands; and much pride in its feats in the battles with the counterrevolutionary forces in the Civil War, the Japanese, the Poles (!) and the Finns in the thirties, the Axis satellites, the Japanese, and above all, the German Wehrmacht in World War II.⁷⁸ With reference to the soldiers themselves, the following is a typical propaganda statement: "The Soviet Army is rightfully called an Army of heroes. Since time immemorial, people have cherished the memory of heroic deeds by their soldiers, but in all the many centuries of history, there have not been such exploits as those carried out by the soldiers of the Soviet Army. . . [Several paragraphs follow, in which reference is made to the deeds of about ten Soviet soldiers] and there are many others whose names the people repeat with pride and love. Heroism has become a mass phenomenon with us."⁷⁹

Unit Symbols and Traditions

The propagandists give considerable attention to stimulating pride of membership in the various military units. Materials concerning the service arms, particularly the Air Force, Navy, artillery, and infantry, appear to be particularly full of stereotypes and composed of generalizations.⁸⁰ A typical speech to the men in an infantry unit contained the following:

We belong to the most glorious arm of the Soviet Army—the infantry. Our infantry is not called heroic without cause. It has a rich battle history, and is the best infantry in the world. The infantry plays a tremendous role in battle, and it is therefore a great honor to be a Soviet infantryman.

I see among you Soldier Panchenko. When he came to us, it seemed to him that there was no service arm better than the artillery. Particularly did it appear to him that we infantrymen have a dull time, duller in fact than any other service arm. But now Panchenko is of another opinion about his military speciality. He has become an excellent machine-gunner and has demonstrated his love for his weapons and service.⁸¹

A great amount of material is disseminated about the service arms, especially on the special days devoted to each of them. However, it is at the middle levels of the division and regiment that the most intensive efforts are made to stimulate and exploit group loyalties, to create a sense of pride in past achievements of the collective or unit, and to stimulate a sense of personal obligation to meet existing standards. The most common methods appear to be those which have been well publicized such as the unit awards and honors, establishment of Guards units, propagation of special ceremonials and other activities around such symbols as the unit colors, and the glorification of the unit's past history and present traditions.

During the war (and, indeed, before and after it), much attention was given to recording and rewarding commendable deeds and patterns of behavior among individuals and military units. Every commander, and especially his political assistants, took part in this effort, and Stalin himself issued numerous communiqués, commendations, and special messages of congratulation. Millions of individual medals and thousands of group awards were issued, and all these became the raw materials for the propagandists.

In the early months of the war, the Soviet leadership took another page from the Tsarist book of operations and began to designate special units as Guards armies, divisions, and regiments, as rewards for special services, high heroism, or unusual assignments. The men in such units received such tangible advantages as higher pay and better food and weapons, and were also honored in other ways. New recruits were placed on three months probation before being allowed to call themselves Guardsmen, and frequent reference was made to the honor and responsibilities of Guards units. Special ceremonies were established for such occasions as the awarding of the title and the presentation of new Guards colors, and each unit was encouraged to build up its own special symbolisms and ceremonies.⁶² There seems to be a little evidence that these steps had fairly favorable reactions among some of the military personnel, especially when combined with other propaganda tactics concerned with fostering group loyalties.⁶³

In all permanent units, whether or not given the Guards title, a considerable amount of time and energy apparently goes into the effort to exploit the unit's history, traditions, and objects of pride. Every available group and individual, especially among the political workers, is under pressure to give attention to this theme. Frequent reference is made to Kalinin's instructions that the propaganda of military traditions "must be properly dealt with, not in a hit-or-miss fashion but in an organized way, so that each newcomer arriving in the regiment shall know not only its number but its entire military history, all its heroes and military deeds, all its victories in training and maneuvers, so that he may be proud of his regiment and always defend its honor."⁶⁴

In publicizing the unit symbols, special events are held, such as frequent meetings of the entire unit or parts of it,⁶⁵ and various men are pressed into service, including the unit commander, officers, Communists, Komsomols, officials of the Rooms for Political-Cultural Enlightenment, and the unit's agitators.⁶⁶ Special exhibits are prepared, sometimes in permanent museum-rooms, or on tables, stands, posters, and shields. Through these are shown photographs of unit heroes and famous men, souvenirs of past events, commendations and communications from high officials, and other tangible evidences of the unit's history.⁶⁷

During peacetime, traditions such as these are recounted in most units time after time, and the lessons of these stories are spelled out for the men. Officer Kotsar gave a talk in a political class on the traditions of the Soviet Army and of his own unit, and he emphasized that these traditions were created by "flaming love for the Socialist Homeland, constant readiness, and self-denying determination to defend the country's honor, freedom, and independence." After telling of great exploits from the history of the unit, Kotsar declared that "the personnel of our unit have been rightfully proud of the glorious deeds of their comrades in the Great Patriotic War. This pride is a moving emotion, stimulating the soldiers, sergeants, and officers to maintain in sacred fashion, and add to, the military traditions of the unit. They are fulfilling their military duties in model fashion, and they declare: 'The glory of my regiment is my glory, the honor of the regiment is my honor.'" He went on to read the names of the ser- vicemen who had received excellent grades in their military and political- training classes and had been commended by their commanders for their fine discipline and conduct, and called upon all men to preserve and add to the tra- ditions of the regiment.⁸⁸

Of all the military objects around which the Soviet propagandists have con- structed symbolisms, none is more important than the unit banner. A former professor of the Imperial General Staff College (and Chief of Staff of Tsarist Armies in the Rumanian Fronts), who studied Russian morale in World War I, has stressed the "ritual" aspects of Russian patriotism and the grip of mysti- cism in a people like the Russians.⁸⁹ The deliberate effort of the Bolsheviks to utilize such qualities in their soldiers is well illustrated in the case of the sym- bolisms built around the unit banners. Indeed, Major General Fomichenko, then editor of the Army organ, actually declared that "veneration of the colors is a deep-rooted tradition in the Russian Army," in explaining why the regimental standards play a significant role in the training of the soldiers.⁹⁰

The effectiveness of these unit symbols and traditions is difficult to evaluate. It is obvious that the Soviets regard their efforts as at least partially rewarded or they would not continue to use them so intensively in their political opera- tions.⁹¹ It also seems probable, as one defector who had some interest in mili- tary matters put it, that these symbols had some effect upon those soldiers who were well fed and healthy, and who were able to identify themselves and their veteran comrades with the traditions and memories of a crack regiment. In such cases, according to the informant, its banner and the numerical designation of the regiment moved them and gave them both pride and a sense of obligation.⁹² However, an American interrogation team found that generally "the common sol- diers did not appear to respond to these measures, . . . the harsh conditions of life in the infantry, and the low prestige even in units so distinguished, tended to weaken the motives for identification with regimental symbols."⁹³

Informal Groups and Personal Relationships

A major attempt of the Soviet propaganda and political organizations is to secure control of the small informal groups in which most men spend their free time, and to utilize the pressures inherent in them and in personal relationships for Bolshevik purposes. It is significant that an intensive study of the American soldier revealed the importance of the small group, which "in its informal char-

acter, with its close interpersonalities, served two principal functions in combat motivations: it set and enforced group standards of behavior, and it supported and sustained the individual in stresses he would otherwise not have been able to withstand."⁹⁴ The American authors of a recent study of the Soviet armed forces come to the conclusion that "the two main objects with which the Russian soldier identifies himself are the quite small, informal groups and the Motherland as a whole."⁹⁵

The Bolsheviks are interested in the stabilizing influence of these ties to the informal group, and encourage what they call the "feeling of comradeship among soldiers."⁹⁶ They seek to draw the natural leader of each of these groups into the Communist Party branches, or at least into one of the auxiliary bodies controlled by the Party, and in this way to direct his thinking and attitudes and thus to influence his followers.

An effort is also made to develop within each group and among the influential members of each group, a sense of responsibility for those who are backward in their military training, political attitudes, or sense of discipline. This item in the newspaper of a military district illustrates the process as the Soviets would like it to happen:

The Training of Discipline

In this company there occurred a vexing case, in which Private First Class Gutsol committed a violation of regulations, and received a formal reprimand. This is what happened on that evening. The soldiers spoke for a long time with the private, reproving him severely. At first, Gutsol tried to justify himself, saying that there was nothing unusual in the act committed by him. But he soon found that no one supported him and he was forced to be silent. He then confessed that he had not acted properly.⁹⁷

Pressure is also placed on individual leaders to assume this type of responsibility. The organ of the MPA, for example, told about a military unit in which Privates Ababkov and Marchenko served.⁹⁸ The two men had been close friends for a long time, but were quite different in several ways. Ababkov was considered a good soldier, who always did well in his military and political training, who worked enthusiastically in fulfillment of his duties, and who always observed the disciplinary regulations—a Bolshevik model. His friend Marchenko, however, was backward in his studies and careless about his appearance. Ababkov knew that his friend had these shortcomings, but felt that it was not his place to correct them for they were Marchenko's "personal affair." It was Ababkov who was finally taken aside by an officer and given a lecture about the "essence of real friendship," and about Marchenko's "obligations to himself and to his comrades." It was only then, according to the political organ, that the correct solution was found; Ababkov "understood his error" and began "with word and personal example" to aid Marchenko.

In using these techniques, the political worker or military officer in the unit is expected to secure the help of the Communist or Komsomol branch in the unit. Often, one of these organizations will appoint an "activist" who will establish a special relationship with the delinquent soldier. He may give the latter several talks on discipline, perhaps obtaining the aid of several older soldiers respected in the unit, may help him in his studies and training, and above all will watch him carefully to prevent backsliding into sin.⁹⁹

In order to perform these special functions, the Communist is warned that he is expected to be a personal example in his performance of duty, a model in military conduct and political attitudes. Most important, he must help to control his fellow soldiers. An organ of the political apparatus worded that obligation in this way: "The Army and Navy Communist . . . is obligated to be a leader, to bring with him the non-Party Communists, and to render constant Party influence upon them. The most important duty of our entire Party-political apparatus and all Communists is to encircle each Soviet warrior with Party influence."¹⁰⁰

Another significant element in this propaganda grouping is the appeal to the individual's loyalty to his group, especially when important group interests are at stake. A frequent story in the Army newspapers follows this model: Soldiers Khramtsov, Kuleshov, and other members of the platoon were in the company Room of Political-Enlightenment Work, looking at newly posted individual and group scores achieved in target practice. A bitter argument soon arose, with Khramtsov and Kuleshov trying to defend themselves against the complaints of their comrades that they had lowered the standing of the entire platoon. Finally, the secretary of the Komsomol bureau intervened, insisted the two men recognize their weaknesses and correct them instead of trying to justify themselves against their comrades' appropriate reprimands. He gave them specific advice on how to improve their shooting technique, and then assigned the three leading marksmen in the group to work intensively with them.¹⁰¹

"STRENGTH" PROPAGANDA

One of the most astute analyses of the Russian Army in World War I stresses the consequences of the soldiers' feeling that "the Russian Army was not strong enough to meet the Germans. . ."¹⁰² This was sharply pointed up in a report by a careful foreign observer, who wrote:

It was impossible to avoid being struck by the respect with which the more intelligent commanders regarded the determination of the Germans and their skill in maneuver as well as their superiority in technique. There was a belief that the Germans "could do anything." This was natural but unhealthy. Among the rank and file there had been many desertions to the enemy as well as to the rear. . . . Any excuse was good enough to get away from the front. They said that there was no good in their fighting, as they were always beaten.¹⁰³

The Bolsheviks must have realized that popular conviction of their own weakness would not only mean military defeat imposed by a foreign victor, but also the end of their control at home. For while the appearance of weakness will have serious consequences for most governments, it is obviously disastrous for the totalitarian regime which uses fear, based on violence and the threat of violence, as the chief weapon for taking power and holding it. It is clear, too, that soldiers must have a sense of confidence in the Army's power if victory is to be attained. As an article on military morale put it, "a sense of the strength of our mighty artillery, aviation, and tank support is of overwhelming importance for our morale and spirit."¹⁰⁴

How do the military propagandists attempt to secure such confidence in Soviet strength and military power? At least four major groupings of significant

themes are utilized in this campaign. First, there are assertions of power arising from nonmilitary sources, particularly from Stalin's personal wisdom, Soviet military science based on Marxist-Leninist principles, and the inspiration of the Communist Party. These themes, of course, are used in several areas of Army propaganda, and have been discussed in previous sections of this chapter. With reference to the leader, for example, Stalin has been credited with a "science of victory" which he has taught the military leaders,¹⁰⁶ which includes that military strategy which "alone yields the correct scientific solution to questions involving those main factors which decide the outcome of war."¹⁰⁶ As a result of these, Marshal Konev wrote: "Soviet people and their Army now have profound faith in the might and strategic genius of their beloved leader, and in the victorious victory-bringing powers of his sage guidance."¹⁰⁷

Related to this grouping of "strength" themes is a considerable amount of material about two groups of people. One of these is the Soviet people; and propaganda emphasis is placed on the guarantee of victory that assertedly stems from the group's strength, and its love of the Army, the men, and material which it supplies.¹⁰⁸ The other group is composed of the people who happen at the moment to be allies of the Soviet Union, such as the Western allies during the war¹⁰⁹ and the satellite states in the postwar period, and there is some boasting of the power they add to the Soviet cause.¹¹⁰

A third grouping of propaganda themes concerns the strength flowing from military sources, and emphasizes the effectiveness of the equipment of the Soviet armed forces, their efficient tactics and techniques, and their fighting ability and passions.¹¹¹ Quantitatively most important are the paeans of praise offered for each of the service arms, with the propagandists being particularly effusive on the special days set aside for honoring each — Air Forces Day, Day of the Tankist, Navy Day, and many others. A fourth major group of themes is related to a description of the current enemy, and here the materials of the "hate" propaganda are used.¹¹² Particularly pertinent are the themes claiming the internal weakness of the enemy homeland, the immorality of the adversary's state policies, the stupidity of its leadership, and the brutality and cowardice of enemy soldiers.

The objectives sought with the use of these strength themes are clear. The Soviet leaders want not merely to convince the general public about, as one propagandist put it in a *Pravda* article, "The Certainty of Victory";¹¹³ they want the soldiers to experience the attitudes reported by a foreign military observer during the Soviet occupation of Poland in 1940: "Their [the Soviet soldiers'] consciousness is dominated by the idea of the overwhelming power of the U.S.S.R. . . . 'Our Red Army is invincible,' they kept repeating."¹¹⁴ The objective is succinctly put in the excerpt from a World War II description of training for new arrivals in a front-line division:

An important part in creating courageous and steadfast warriors, during instruction and on active service, is played by political training. . . . For their benefit, there was a detailed explanation of the aims and problems of the Patriotic War, elucidation of the strength and might of the Soviet ranks—why they have become stronger during the War and how they have more aircraft, tanks, guns, and so forth than the Germans. Facts, figures, and various battle stories were used to prove conclusively the power and the invincibility of Soviet arms.¹¹⁵

Chapter 10

EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Lenin thought of the human animal as being bound under normal conditions by a network of innumerable habits and instincts to the way of life and thought prevailing in the society in which he was bred and trained. Under the Tsarist regime, he believed, the conduct of the Russian peasants and workers would usually be determined by their habits of obedience and their attitudes of servility and fear. Lenin saw, however, that these crude concepts, based on a rudimentary knowledge of late nineteenth century psychology, did not fit the crisis situation. An important place in his theory of revolution, therefore, was based on his belief that a significant number of people (mostly workers, in accordance with Marxist dogmas) could be torn loose from their "normal" instincts and their ties to the existing social order during the strange period of the revolution, and these could be used by an astutely led political party as a means for acquiring power.

These concepts have an important bearing on the task of the Soviet propagandist in wartime and other crisis periods. The Army political worker must not limit himself to inculcating attitudes of obedience, or to encouraging the soldiers to show pride and efficiency in military affairs. In crisis periods, he must find the means to persuade the soldiers to forget their normal caution and inhibitions, and to ignore the very instincts for self-preservation.

One explanation of this concept, worded in typical Soviet terminology, can be found in the official Army handbook for political workers in 1941. Amusingly enough, the handbook quotes with approval the view of the man who was to become the most famous Soviet "traitor" of World War II, the professional soldier who was to help organize some fifty thousand Soviet prisoners of war to fight against the Soviet Union and its allies—Major General Vlassov, here called "the commander of the leading division in the Red Army." Vlassov wrote in *Pravda*:

Systematic training in the spirit of strict discipline is one of the elemental things that make for success in battle-front situations. During battle, there are two opposite forces which struggle in the soldier: the force of self-consciousness and the force of self-preservation. The force of self-consciousness says: "Comrade, for the Fatherland and for its happy future, you will now rise upon the orders of the commander and throw yourself against the enemy." The feeling of self-preservation says: "Look, if you just raise your head, a bullet will strike it—and of course, you have only one life."

In a grave moment, the force of self-preservation may gain the upper hand in weak people not accustomed to serious situations. At this moment, a third force, namely, discipline which has been implanted in peacetime training, should come to the aid of self-consciousness. This force puts an end to hesitation and leads the soldier into battle.²

The content of the crisis propaganda will be illustrated in this chapter with the famous "hate" and "fear" themes, and in the propagandists' utilization of the Stalin myths.³ It might be useful, before beginning an analysis of these propaganda themes, to note another example of this approach to the problem of stimulating men to the fulfillment of dangerous tasks in a crisis situation, by blurring their natural fears and weakening their normal inhibitions against such exposure to the dangers of violence and death. The use of vodka and other liquor, once regarded as a great weakness of the Russian Army,⁴ was greatly restricted in peacetime and even legally forbidden to soldiers at times,⁵ but this situation was altered soon after the beginning of the German-Soviet war.⁶ Its extensive use was reported in the Stalingrad campaign, according to Alexander Werth, a pro-Soviet Western correspondent of Russian descent who made an intensive study of Soviet sources. He found that the priorities on the difficult and dangerous Stalingrad supply lines across the Volga were: first, arms and ammunition; second, vodka; and third, food.⁸ According to him, the regular Russian Army ration during the war was 100 grams a day, and this was doubled before an infantry attack.⁷ An American investigating team summarized the views of Soviet defectors and their own conclusions in this way:

Some of the quartermasters rated vodka as a more important commodity than food at the front. Several soldiers spoke deferentially of Stalin, asserting that he was clever enough to see to it that front-line troops always had plenty of vodka. Stalin knew it might result in losses but that it would also induce heroism, as well as a vague, diffused sentiment of brotherliness within the unit. It enabled men to open their hearts to their comrades and to feel that others in their unit were doing so too. At the same time, it released aggressive impulses, which, in the combat situation, were naturally directed against outsiders—the enemy.⁹

"HATE" PROPAGANDA

There are few emotions more destructive of normal inhibitions and better designed as a prelude to wild action than that of blind, raging hatred. The effort to induce and exploit this emotion became a major task of the military-political apparatus during World War II. Stalin justified this campaign for the general Soviet public when he declared that "one cannot defeat an enemy without having learned to hate him with all one's soul."¹⁰

A sharper statement of the propagandists' objective was given during the war by Major General Fomichenko, the editor of *Red Star*. He stressed the view that the fighting power depended not merely upon material and technical equipment, but also upon such personal qualities of the soldier as inflexible high morale, fortitude, self-sacrifice, contempt of death, and overriding desire to smash the enemy. However, he declared:

All these military qualities do not come of themselves. The most important essential in developing them is the inculcation of hatred of the enemy. Stalin has pointed out that it is impossible to defeat the enemy unless one learns to hate him with all one's soul. In

peacetime we did not seriously, in a thorough and systematic way, inculcate this hatred.

But it was not easy to acquire the ability to hate, even with the mass murder of our people and the violation and humiliation of our women. Now educational activities are directed at inculcating the Soviet Warriors with a fanatical hatred. To hate with all one's soul means to devote one's self to the cause of hatred. Hatred of the enemy must not be like a fireworks rocket, its outburst sufficing but for one blast, for a day or half a day. It must imbue everything. It must become the basis of the soldier's character. . . .¹⁰

The "hate" propaganda campaign was a basic element of Soviet propaganda strategy for World War II. It was planned long before the stories of Nazi barbarism began to come in, and many months before the first Russian counter-attack revealed the bestialities committed by the Germans. The "hate" materials were tested during the Finnish war of 1940,¹¹ and materials on Nazi atrocities appeared immediately after the German attack began. Within one week after the Nazi invasion, for example, a Soviet pamphlet had gone to press containing what was to become typical "hate" propaganda and ending with the statement that "great and sacred hatred fills our hearts."¹² A few months later, *Pravda* published an editorial instructing Party agitators on specific methods to use "in arousing the workers' hatred of the German invaders."¹³

One of the tasks for the political apparatus was to secure adequate materials for the campaign. The MPA itself made full utilization of the materials collected and written by the many civilian agencies, and ordered the political workers on every level to add to these materials. The MPA headquarters in Moscow, for example, issued a special series of documents for use in the "hate" campaign in at least thirteen volumes,¹⁴ and its actions were followed by its subordinate political organs.¹⁵ Detailed instructions for the campaign itself were given in the Army press, through such articles as "The Cultivation of Hatred," written for *Red Star* by one of the top leaders in the political apparatus.¹⁶ Wide publicity was given to efficient execution of these instructions, and much credit was given to actions initiated on lower levels.¹⁷

While there are insufficient data for a precise analysis of the effectiveness of this theme, several points may well be noted. As Virski (who was forced to join the Red Army during World War II) points out, with their own deeds, the Nazis provided substantiation for this propaganda, and their actions did much to make all Soviet citizens detest everything German and Nazi.¹⁸ Regardless of the cause, a variety of observers, including Marshal Bulganin (the Politburo member responsible for the Soviet armed forces),¹⁹ a member of the American military mission in the Soviet Union,²⁰ a Soviet officer who later fled the USSR,²¹ and an American reporter who studied the Russian Army during this period,²² agreed that the "hate" propaganda had an important effect on the soldier.

The "hate" propaganda materials had many variations and aspects, but four themes seemed outstanding. In the first, and perhaps the least important of the four, the German was presented in contemptuous, ludicrous, and despicable terms. One propagandist reminded his readers of the criticism by Marx and Engels concerning the servile and reactionary nature of the German people, who "let themselves be used as the blind tools of the reactionary ruling circles," and declared that because of this slavish spirit, the Germans were "so hated, so accursed, so despised abroad."²³

The contemporary Marxists also found much to despise in the German. *Red Star* told of the German soldiers' deceitfulness, and warned:

The Germans are a perfidious enemy who care nothing for any of the rules and traditions of warfare that existed in the past. In innumerable cases they have dressed up in Red Army uniform and used Russian markings on their planes and tanks. Sometimes they pretend to surrender by raising their arms, and when our trusting soldiers approached they shot them down. Any means is good for destroying such an enemy. As Ognev says in Korneichuk's play, *The Front*: "It is very stupid of us to fight honorably against this most dishonorable of foes."²⁴

For these and other reasons, the Soviet writers referred to "this cursed generation of moral monsters, stinking of decay, rottenness and death,"²⁵ and declared that "the Germans of today are the vile offspring of vile fathers."²⁶

The Germans were often depicted as being devoid of human feelings, and many references were made to their inhuman or despicable actions. A typical cartoon in a newspaper showed a German officer cynically looking at a dead child whom his men had shot.²⁷ Public posters depicted the German Army as a giant crab with a Hitler mustache, as a giant Hitler-faced rat, and as a reptile.²⁸ In the early period of the war, there were not only attacks on Hitler and his followers, but angry charges that "eighty million Germans have willingly associated themselves and have shared in the crimes and responsibilities of his gang of murderers."²⁹ Bitter comments were often made, too, about the German women who exploited, and badly mistreated, Russian "servants," and about the German men who were constantly looking for "presents" to send home from Russia. Some of the material is presented in true melodramatic form (early Hollywood style), such as the film on German atrocities in Yugoslavia and Poland which shows a German officer snatching a cup of milk from a sick child and pouring it into his coffee.³⁰

There were also continuous efforts to portray the enemy in barbaric or ludicrous terms. Thus the Germans were referred to as "these fish-eyed oafs who are contemptuously snorting at everything Russian,"³¹ while they try to destroy the famous Peterhof Palace and the cultural treasures of Tolstoi's farm.³² There were also hundreds of comic doggerel verses about the winter troubles of the German soldier, many posters ridiculing the Germans in their retreat during the winters of 1941 and 1942, and many articles, pamphlets, and even circus and vaudeville acts on all these themes.³³

Another major aspect of the "hate" propaganda was connected with the effort to prove the growing weakness of the enemy. There were frequent enumerations of indications that the enemy was being hurt, that his strength was steadily decreasing, and that his defeat was inevitable. The Soviet Information Bureau, an official governmental agency, published frequent résumés which emphasized this aspect. Its review of the first year of the war was typical; it alleged that about ten million Germans had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner; that the Nazis had lost over thirty thousand guns, twenty-four thousand tanks, and twenty thousand planes; and that the basic German military cadres had been destroyed and the remainder demoralized. While new German offensives were predicated, the Information Bureau communiqué predicted that these would not be successful, and claimed that the basis now existed for smashing the German Army in 1942.³⁴

In similar fashion, reports of the short talks given to the soldiers in the field show that they emphasized the destruction of German tanks and equipment,³⁵ while much was made of the growing weakness of the German home front and decreasing Nazi strength in the conquered territories of Europe.³⁶ The Soviet

generals were constantly quoted to prove that the German war effort was collapsing, the German leadership panic-ridden, and the execution of their battle plans chaotic.³⁷

More important than the allegations of Nazi weakness, however, were the reasons given to the Soviet soldier for his hatred of the enemy. Several were general, and probably not expected to be very effective. He was told that fervent patriotism meant "boundless love for his native land . . . love that knows no mercy to the enemy."³⁸ He was encouraged to be proud of his "sacred hatred" of the "fascist fiends," because the great Russian writers proclaim that "hatred of evil is one of the noblest of emotions and one of the most active instruments for combating the enemies of mankind."³⁹ He was told that it was his "sacred duty to his country and to European civilization to kill a Nazi."⁴⁰ An Army newspaper even published an appeal written by a priest who had escaped from German-held territory, under the title of "Kill the Followers of Anti-Christ."⁴¹

More intensively presented were the numerous reminders of the Nazi persecution of Soviet citizens, and the great danger to those not yet caught in the Nazi toils. In an article entitled "Hatred of the Enemy," the editors of *Pravda* wrote in 1942:

Dear comrades at the front! . . . Listen! Listen to your own people groaning in the areas overrun by the enemy! Behind you are the flourishing fields and villages, still unsoiled by the enemy—a country where your mothers, sisters, and children live. Let us not allow the enemy to go any farther.⁴²

Descriptions of persecution and warnings of danger were repeated in thousands of talks and articles given to the Red Army soldiers, and they were never permitted to forget them.⁴³ In the latter part of the war, as the Soviet armies moved westward in pursuit of the enemy, the soldiers were reminded of the millions yet under Nazi rule and the need to rescue them. This theme was stressed in a large conference held in an Air Force unit before the campaign to retake the Crimea when one speaker reminded his audience of "the thousands of tortured Soviet people and partisan-heroes awaiting us."⁴⁴ A leading editorial in *Red Star*, printed when the Army prepared to go over the German frontier, was entitled "The Voice of Our Brothers and Sisters."⁴⁵

The central aspect of the entire "hate" propaganda theme was the description of the physical violence already done by the Nazis, usually coupled with the demand for revenge. The descriptions were given in vivid detail, often with photographs, and repeated innumerable times. Some of the materials, like the photographs of tortured soldiers and corpses, were described by Western reporters as being "too sickening to be good propaganda" in their opinion.⁴⁶ The Bolshevik propagandists evidently believed that the materials were more effective with the Soviet audience.

A strenuous effort was made to bring the lesson of these stories home to the men, and to make their impact a deep and personal one. Letters from home were often taken by the political officers who reproduced the best ones and distributed them to all members of the unit. A typical letter, described in the literature for political workers, was written to a sailor by his sister who had been taken into Germany and not only treated as an *untermensch* but raped, dishonored, and crippled. Her letter was read to the crew in the presence of the brother, and the men saw and felt his reaction.⁴⁷

To make the impact as deep as possible, the men were often shown photographs such as that taken from a captured German, which showed a Russian girl lying on the ground after being raped.⁴⁹ Another tactic (which was commended as an example of initiative in an article on the duties of a regimental agitator) was that of a political worker who discovered the corpses of two Red Army soldiers "brutally tortured by the Germans." Before the next battle, he gathered the soldiers about him and "conducted a meeting over the bodies of the fallen comrades," which was closed by having each soldier take an oath "to strike the enemy without mercy."⁴⁹ The desired impact of these materials, designed to shock, horrify, and enrage the Soviet soldier may be seen in these lines of a widely disseminated poem:

In the fields of the great battles for my country,
I have witnessed all the baseness of the enemy and the filth of his foul robber deeds.
Mine eyes have beheld thousands of dead bodies of women and children, lying along the
railways and the highways.
Their flesh was lacerated with lead and iron.

They were killed by the German vultures.⁵⁰

Many of the documents issued by the agencies of the Soviet government contained detailed statements about these misdeeds in equally graphic language, and these were read to the troops at every possible opportunity.⁵¹

One aspect of this material was presented in the form of legends about several individual martyrs, selected by the Soviet propagandists to give human and personal significance to the mass of data about German misdeeds. One of these legends, perhaps the most famous of all, was told about Zoya Kosmodel'yanskaya, an eighteen-year-old girl member of the Communist Youth organization. She joined a Partisan band harassing the German Army as it attacked Moscow in November of 1941, and was captured in early December. According to the Soviet propaganda, she was tortured and beaten by her captors but never gave any information on her comrades. She was finally hanged, and her body left on the gallows for several weeks as a warning to the populace. The body was cut down on January 1 and buried. When the Soviet troops swept through the area shortly afterward, *Pravda* published a series of articles on Zoya which were made the basis of the Zoya legend.⁵² The Soviet officials announced that they had definitely affixed the identity of the dead Partisan girl, and had posthumously granted her the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union." Many talks were given about Zoya, many articles and brochures were issued,⁵³ and countless photographs were distributed, one of which allegedly showed her with the rope about her head.⁵⁴

The high point of the "hate" propaganda, the theme which summarized all the other materials and provided a climax for them, was pounded across to the soldier in a never-ending stream of appeals centering about one demand: "Kill the Germans!" The government organ declared in a typical editorial: "We love life and therefore we must kill the Germans. We stand for the right cause, and therefore our arms must not know pity. The call of your land, the voice of your people, everything commands you: 'Kill the snake.' Your duty to the motherland, soldier, obliges you to kill the German. There is no other way of defending our motherland. Kill the Hitlerites mercilessly, one, ten, one hundred. Every Hitlerite killed by a soldier is a step toward saving the children and old men, our mothers and daughters."⁵⁵

Examples of this demand can be found throughout the propaganda of the war. A collection of atrocity documents ended with this appeal; "Warriors of the Red Army: Take revenge on the fascist aggressors, who have brought such sorrow and tears to our people. Smash the enemy without mercy! Kill the fascist mad dogs! Cleanse the Soviet land from the German robbers. Death for death! Blood for blood."⁵⁶ A poem in a widely read newspaper, after detailing the Germans' crimes, ended with these lines: "This scum must not go any further! Ram your bayonet down the German's throat."⁵⁷ An article in a political workers' journal, which was designated for reading aloud to the men, was entitled "Kill the Germans," and written by Ilya Ehrenburg.⁵⁸ Posters and signs on the walls, written along roads used by the Soviet soldiers all used the slogans: "Death to the German occupiers," and "Kill every German and then the War will end."⁵⁹

Konstantin Simonov, whose writings were widely popularized by the government, wrote a poem with the simple title of "Kill Him" which contained the following:

If your home is dear to you, where your Russian mother nursed you . . .
If your mother is dear to you, and you cannot bear the thought of the German slapping her wrinkled face;
If your father's memory is dear to you; if you do not want him to turn in his grave;
If you do not want the German to tear down his picture, with the Crosses he earned in the last war, and stamp on it;
If you do not want your old teacher to be hanged outside the old schoolhouse;
If you do not want the one who for so long you did not even dare kiss, to be stretched out naked on the floor so that—amid hatred, cries, and tears—three German curs should take what belongs to your manly love;
If you do not want to give away all that you call your Country, then kill a German, kill a German every time you see one.
And if your brother has killed a German, then he, and not you, is the soldier;
Kill a German, so that he, and not you, should lie in the ground,
Kill him, so that the tears should flow in his home, not in yours;
Let his house burn, not yours; let his wife, and not yours, be a widow;
Let his mother weep, and not yours; let his family and not yours wait in vain.
Kill him, kill him every time you see him.⁶⁰

"FEAR" PROPAGANDA

Hatred and fear are, of course, closely allied in the human spirit. For the Soviets, the emotional pull of "Hate Your Enemy" must be reinforced by the driving force of "Fear Your Rulers," especially in situations where great danger is obviously present and the men may entertain thoughts of retreat, desertion, or some other escape from duty. The soldier is encouraged to find his justification for doing his duty in his sense of patriotism or in his group loyalties, but he is told clearly and frequently that he must do it in any case or face stern punishment. He learns the spirit of this attitude from such sources as the talks about Lenin, who said, in a circular letter to Red Army commissars, officers, and soldiers: "The Red Terror is obligatory now always and everywhere, not only against direct traitors and saboteurs, but also against all cowards and deserters, who try to save their skin or hide during battle. Not one crime against discipline and revolutionary warriors' spirit must be left unpunished."⁶¹

The soldier knows that Lenin's attitude is reflected today in the entire structure of Soviet society, and he is aware of its threat throughout military life. He feels the anxiety and tension about him, of which the presence of the secret police are symbolic, and he knows that his superiors will not hesitate to use every means of propaganda and terror to secure the fullest contribution from him, particularly in periods of crisis. These attitudes and this knowledge form the background and basis for the "fear" propaganda which is an important element of Soviet techniques for crisis periods.

Graphic illustrations of this "fear" propaganda may be found in the materials dealing with the consequences of improper conduct on the battlefield—desertion, retreating without orders in the face of the enemy fire, or surrender—which are prohibited by explicit military regulations under all circumstances except extreme physical disability.⁶² It is worth noting that each of these phenomena, particularly desertion, has been a major problem for the Russian armies throughout this century.⁶³ On these matters, the political apparatus has a directive from the MPA "to nourish in the warriors the consciousness that treason to the motherland is the worst of all crimes, and is punished mercilessly by Soviet law. The entire training of commanders and soldiers must be based on the development of attitudes of revulsion to cowardice and pusillanimity. Flight from the field of battle, surrender alive—these are shameful acts for the warrior of the Red Army and they are worse than death."⁶⁴

In the place of such "shameful" action, the soldier is told that he must fight on, even when the odds seem hopeless. A former Soviet officer asserts that the Bolsheyiks extolled the virtues of the soldier who committed suicide rather than surrender,⁶⁵ and this assertion is supported by the available data. A typical vignette in a widely read book tells of a desperate battle in which the company commander had been wounded and lay in the arms of the commissar: "Then he died. The men died. Private Ryabokon fought to the last cartridge. Political officer Yeretik, after destroying scores of the enemy, blew himself up with a fast cooling hand. . . ."⁶⁶ An official handbook for political workers instructed them to teach their men that "in wartime it is better to perish in an honorable death than to fall into the hands of the enemy,"⁶⁷ and a pamphlet issued by the Political Administration of the Leningrad Military District specified:

"The duty of every soldier," states the Infantry Combat Regulations, "is to hold on stubbornly, without considering the losses, to defend his position before the onslaught of the enemy, or valiantly to give up his life for the Fatherland." No one ever has the right to leave his position, or to retreat without an order.⁶⁸

The core of the "fear" propaganda, however, is not related to legality, honor, or duty. It is primarily the threat and actuality of punishment, the warning of retribution, and the promise that escape from duty brings results worse than the soldier's lot on the battlefield. In his first speech after the Nazi attack in 1941, Stalin declared: "We must organize a merciless struggle with all disorganizers of the rear, with all deserters . . . It is necessary to turn over immediately to the Military Tribunals all those persons regardless of position, who by their hysteria and cowardice are interfering with the work of defense."⁶⁹

Within the Army the potential traitor is threatened in virtually every possible fashion. His family may be punished, especially if he flees from Soviet authority or goes over to the enemy, and Soviet legal authority explains that "the

political significance of this regulation is to be found in the intensification of the preventive influence of criminal law, just as in a significant crime like flight abroad, when the guilty person himself cannot be punished.⁷⁰ He is told that if he surrenders to the enemy, his captors will give him a fate worse than death, torturing him and treating him like an animal if indeed they permit him to live.⁷¹ A *Pravda* article which discussed with great detail the treatment of Russian prisoners in German hands, ended with these lines:

In their death agony, these men are crying out to every Red Army man: "Fight to your last breath, but do not surrender. And, if there is no other choice, then die, and while doing so try to kill as many of the Nazi scoundrels as you are able."⁷²

Most important, the Soviet soldier is told that the traitor will find that all parts of Soviet society will be turned against him. He is reminded of his own military oath which stressed that such action would earn him "the bitter punishment of Soviet law and the universal hatred and contempt of toiling people." He reads in a pamphlet issued to each man that "the traitor to the homeland does not have a right to live."⁷³

The soldier hears widely disseminated rumors that Soviet planes deliberately bombed Soviet civilians retreating with the Germans or in German prison camps, dropping pamphlets which read: "So will it be with all those who betray the cause of Lenin and Stalin."⁷⁴ Stalin himself signed a special decree, supplementing those issued before the war, stressing the official attitude that all citizens who permit themselves to be taken prisoner are to be considered traitors;⁷⁵ and this was probably made the center of a special propaganda campaign. Men who were captured by the Germans, regardless of the circumstances, were placed under surveillance and treated with suspicion after they returned to Soviet lines.⁷⁶

The threat of punishment is not completely relegated to the unforeseeable future or to unfamiliar conditions or scenes. The soldier is told, with much emphasis during periods of crisis, that men are watching him who are authorized and ready to punish him for cowardice, for proposals to surrender, or for un-instructed retreat. He knows of the "block-the-way detachments" behind the lines, and of the MVD military detachments placed in strategic places throughout the war zone. He knows, moreover, that action may be taken within his unit, whenever it appears to be necessary. Defectors who served in the Army during World War II tell how regiments and companies which retreated under fire were broken up, their constituent parts reassigned to other units, and several men shot as examples.⁷⁷

The most important document connected with "fear" propaganda during World War II was a famous order signed by Stalin and the Army High Command. Order No. 270 was issued on 16 August 1941, after two months of Soviet defeats and retreats, and it was made the basis for a concentrated campaign designed to dissuade servicemen from deserting or surrendering to the seemingly invincible enemy. The Order began with the usual assertion that the men of many Red Army units were conducting themselves in "an irreproachable manner," even when they were surrounded by the enemy, and usually used every means to break out of encirclement. However, after citing some examples of approved conduct, the Order stated:

All of these and other numerous facts of this kind testify to the steadfastness of our troops and to the high moral spirit of our warriors, commanders, and commissars. But we must not hide also the fact that in the recent period there have taken place some shameful cases of surrender to the enemy. Some generals have given a bad example to our troops.

Lt. Gen. Kachalov, commanding the Twenty-eighth Army, finding himself, together with the staff of the Army Group, in an encirclement, showed his cowardice and surrendered to the German fascists. The staff of the Kochalov Army Group escaped from the encirclement, and units of the Kochalov Group broke out of the encirclement, but Lt. Gen. Kochalov preferred to surrender, preferred to desert to the enemy.

Lt. Gen. Ponedelin, commanding the Twelfth Army, fell into an enemy encirclement. He had a full possibility to breakthrough to his own lines, as did the overwhelming majority of the units of his army, but Ponedelin did not show the necessary steadfastness and will toward victory and gave himself up to panic and cowardice and surrendered to the enemy. He deserted to the enemy, committing in this way a crime toward the Motherland as a violator of the Military Oath.

Maj. Gen. Kirillov, Commander of the XIII Rifle Corps, found himself in an encirclement of German-fascist troops. Instead of fulfilling his duty to the Motherland and organizing the troops entrusted to him for a steadfast repulse of the enemy and escaping from encirclement, he deserted from the field of battle and surrendered to the enemy. As a result of this, units of the XIII Rifle Corps were smashed and several of them surrendered without serious opposition.

It is necessary to note that in all the facts of surrender to the enemy indicated above, members of Military Councils of Armies, Commanders, Political Workers, and members of Special Sections, finding themselves in encirclement, revealed unpermissible lack of strength and shameful cowardice, and did not even attempt to prevent the very cowardly Kachalov, Ponedelin, Kirillov, and others from surrendering to the enemy.

These shameful facts of surrender to our accursed enemy testify to the fact that in the ranks of the Red Army, steadfastly and self-sacrificingly defending our Soviet Homeland from the low aggressors, there are unstable, faint-hearted, cowardly elements, and these cowardly elements exist not only among the Red Army men, but also among the commanding personnel. As is known, some commanders and political workers, by their conduct at the front, have not only not shown to the Red Army men models of daring, steadfastness, and love for the Motherland, but on the contrary—they hide in holes, busy themselves in offices, do not see and do not observe the field of battle, but with the first serious difficulties in battle pass over to the enemy, tearing from themselves the signs of rank and deserting in the field of battle.

Is it to be tolerated that in the ranks of the Red Army, there are cowards who desert to the enemy and surrender themselves, faint-hearted commanders, who, with the first difficulties at the front tear from themselves insignia of rank and desert to the rear? No, it is not! If we give a free hand to these cowards and deserters, they will in a short time decompose the Army and destroy their Motherland. It is necessary to annihilate cowards and deserters.

Can we consider as commanders of battalions and regiments those Commanders who hide in holes during battle, who do not see the field of battle, do not observe the course of the battle in the field and still imagine themselves to be Commanders of regiments and battalions? No, we cannot! These are not Commanders of regiments or battalions, but impostors. If we give a free hand to these impostors, they will in a short time transform our Army into a complete bureaucracy, such impostors must immediately be removed from office, demoted, transferred to the ranks, and if necessary, shot on the spot, moving into their place bold and courageous people from the ranks of the young commanding personnel, or from the Red Army men.

I ORDER:

1. Commanders and Political Workers, who during battle tear from themselves signs of rank and desert to the rear, or who surrender to the enemy—are to be considered malicious deserters, the families of whom are subject to arrest as families of men violating their Oath, and deserters betraying their Motherland.

To obligate all superior Commanders and Commissars to shoot on the spot such deserters from the commanding personnel.

2. Units and Subunits falling into enemy encirclement are self-sacrificingly to fight to the last possibility, to guard their material as the apple of their eye, breaking through to their own troops in the rear of the enemy, inflicting damage on the Fascist dogs.

To obligate each military serviceman, regardless of his service position, that he demand from his superior chief, if his unit finds itself in an encirclement, to fight to the last possibility in order to break through to their own troops, and if this chief or unit of Red Army men, instead of organizing repulsion of the enemy prefers to surrender and be taken prisoner—to destroy them with all means, land as well as air, and the family of Red Army men surrendering are to be deprived of State subsidies and aid.

3. To obligate commanders and commissars of divisions immediately to remove from their positions, commanders of battalions and regiments who hide in holes during battle and fear to guide the course of battle on the field of struggle—to demote them as impostors, to transfer them to the ranks, and if necessary to shoot them on the spot, moving to their place bold and courageous people from the junior commanding personnel or from the ranks of Red Army men distinguishing themselves.

This Order is to be read in all Companies, Squadrons, Batteries, Escadrilles, Command Positions and Staffs.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE SUPREME HIGH COMMAND OF THE RED ARMY

Chairman of the State Defense Committee
I. Stalin

Deputy Chairman of the State Defense Committee
V. Molotov

Marshal of the Soviet Union	S. Budennyi
Marshal of the Soviet Union	K. Voroshilov
Marshal of the Soviet Union	S. Timoshenko
Marshal of the Soviet Union	B. Shaposhnikov
General of the Army	G. Zhukov ⁷⁹

This famous Order was only one instance of "fear" propaganda of World War II. The Soviet serviceman is conscious of many other materials emphasizing the same lessons. He remembers the many talks and articles to which he was exposed during his political-training classes, explaining the authority and duty of his own commanding officer in this matter. He knows about Article 7 of the Disciplinary Regulations which states: "In the case of open disobedience or opposition of his subordinates, the commander is obligated to take all measures of pressure, and in extreme cases which do not permit delay, to use his weapons."⁷⁹ *Red Star* has stated this clearly and plainly: "Every officer and political worker

has the power given to him by the State to see to it that the very idea of retreating without orders becomes impossible. With the powers given him by the State, he can see to it that so long as one single soldier is left alive no German can pass. He who retreats without orders cannot expect mercy."⁶⁰

There were apparently many instances during the war's early years of defeat and retreat when the military commanders and the political officers used this power in the effort to persuade their men to hold their positions and to halt defeatist talk.⁶¹ In fact, *Red Star* openly told the commissars in its editorials: "If you see that you have before you an obvious enemy and defeatist, a coward or panic-monger . . . there is no use wasting persuasion or propaganda on him. You must deal with the traitor with an iron hand."⁶² This was repeated through all the channels available to the Bolshevik leaders.⁶³

Even these threats of violence from duly accredited authorities do not complete the "fear" picture for the soldier. He knows of the efforts to encourage each group and military unit to create its own group pressures and to take common responsibility for the proper conduct of its members.⁶⁴ He is told that his own mates are obligated to take action against him if he shows signs of cowardice or fails to fight to the last moment, regardless of circumstances. In the summer of 1942 and other periods of crisis, this was plainly stated in the Army press. Much had been made of the heroic actions of 28 soldiers of a division led by General Panfilov in the battle before Moscow. For the benefit of, and as an obvious warning to, the men in the armed forces, *Red Star* stressed the story:

It is high time that the retreat was halted. . . Let us remember the 28 legendary heroes in the Battle for Moscow, who fought to the death against the 50 enemy tanks. They also dealt with a contemptible coward. Without any preliminary discussions, all the Panfilov men fired at the same time at this traitor, by that sacred volley symbolizing their determination not to retreat another step, and to fight to the bitter end.⁶⁵

THE STALIN MYTHOLOGY

No study of propaganda in crisis situations can reflect the basic elements of Soviet practice if it fails to mention the use that has been made of the symbolism and mythology built about the figure and name of Joseph Stalin.⁶⁶ Although the Western observer may find this Stalin mythology puzzling (as well as amusing and somewhat repulsive at times), it has been utilized in a very considerable amount of propaganda, in peacetime as well as war, and a vigorous effort obviously has been made to give it emotional overtones.

One of the important elements in this mythology has tied Stalin's name closely to both the non-Marxist concepts of nationalism and patriotism on the one hand, and to the Communist ideology and the Communist organization, on the other. An illustration of this effort may be found in the official publication entitled *Joseph Stalin: A Short Biography*,⁶⁷ which millions of Soviet citizens,

*The writing of this report was substantially concluded when the demise of Joseph Stalin was announced on 5 March 1953. This section has been largely retained in its original form, however, because it illustrates a fundamental pattern of Bolshevik crisis propaganda. If the Bolsheviks continue to rule the Soviet Union, it is highly likely that they will build their crisis propaganda around a central figure whose influence they will exploit as they did the symbols associated with Stalin. The men who will direct propaganda campaigns in the foreseeable future were trained under the Stalinist regime, and their propaganda patterns and techniques probably will be in keeping with these Stalinist concepts and methods.

including those in the armed forces, are required to read, hear about, and study.⁶⁰ The concluding section of that book contains a number of much quoted sentences including the following:

Millions of workers in all countries look upon Stalin as their teacher, from whose classic writings they learn how to cope with the class enemy and how to pave the way for the ultimate victory of the proletariat. Stalin's influence is the influence of the great and glorious Bolshevik Party. . . . The workers of all countries know that every pronounced word by Stalin is the word of the Soviet people . . . J. V. Stalin is the genius, the leader and teacher of the Party, the great strategist of Socialist revolution, helmsman of the Soviet State and captain of armies . . . He has a unique faculty for generalizing the creative revolutionary experience of the masses, for seizing upon and developing their initiative, for learning from the masses as well as teaching them, and for leading them forward to victory. . . . Stalin guides the destinies of a multinational Socialist State . . . His advice is a guide to action in all fields of Socialist construction. His work is extraordinary for its variety; his energy truly amazing . . . In the eyes of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., Stalin is the incarnation of their heroism, their love of country, their patriotism.⁶⁰

A major role given to Stalin has been that of the Great Teacher. An immense amount of manpower, time (in preparing and giving lectures), and paper (for writing of newspaper articles, pamphlets, and books) has been expended in the portrayal of Stalin in this role to the soldiers and officers. Much of this material has been devoted to a repetitious list of generalizations and stereotypes about his abilities and contributions, but attention also has been given to specific ideas identified with him and articles written by him.⁶⁰

The officers are not only required to listen and read much of this, but many of them must devote their own energy to studying this material.⁶¹ A significant directive on propaganda given by the *Red Star* editor to political workers made this point explicit: "At the basis of all our propaganda must be placed Stalin's teaching. His speeches and books, particularly about the war, are in truth inexhaustible sources of ideas and thoughts for each propagandist. Beside that, it is necessary that we utilize extensively in our propaganda such primary sources of Marxist-Leninist science as Stalin's *Questions of Leninism* and his *Short Course in the History of the CPSU*. In studying these classic works, each officer shall find the key to understanding of contemporary events and shall enrich his knowledge in the sphere of military art."⁶²

In addition to the propaganda themes in the materials destined for the general public, most of which also have been presented to the military personnel, there has been a series of special themes found in the propaganda written particularly for soldiers and sailors. Seen in their totality, these themes create a series of images of Stalin which the Soviet servicemen have been urged to accept.

The first of these images has presented Stalin as the great military genius and leader.⁶³ Stalin appeared as the great military strategist, flexible in his thinking, able to judge the weaknesses of the enemy and his own strength, and never failing to find the strategy that inevitably wins;⁶⁴ moreover, his leadership of the civilian and other aspects of the state have enabled him to create the economic, political, and psychological bases necessary for victory.⁶⁵ With these claims as background, the Soviet Army press (and motion pictures, as

well)⁹⁵ have depicted Stalin as having given personal leadership in directing military operations at every front.⁹⁷

This image of Stalin has been summed up in a famous statement by Colonel Professor Razin, who declared: "The leader of the people of the USSR, J.V. Stalin, cannot as a military leader be compared with any other military leader of world history, for he not only possesses the exceptional qualities of a great leader and teacher, but also commands the only true scientific theory—the theory of Marxism-Leninism—and all his practical activity as military leader as well as his activity as a political leader is integrally related to this theory, arises from it, and supports it." Moreover, along with his other evidences of genius, and in line with his role as a master of Marxism, Stalin has been credited with the power to predict future events and trends of events.⁹⁸

Closely connected with these images of the Military Strategist and the Director—symbolic of wisdom and strength, and guaranteeing victory—has been the more personal image of the soldiers' friend, comrade, and commander. He has been presented as being close to, and to some extent a member of, the military personnel, and thus to be viewed by the latter as one of themselves. These elements have been reinforced by such actions as Stalin's assumption of a military title and his wearing of military uniforms,⁹⁹ his choice of audiences for several prominent speeches (including one before the graduates of the Army academies and another before the Red Army generals),¹⁰⁰ and his publicized vacation on board a ship in which he was photographed and described as being on a friendly basis with the sailors.¹⁰¹ The image may have been seen in the numerous personal greetings to him from many groups in the armed forces¹⁰² and his salutations in turn to the military forces on Red Army [now Armed Forces] Day and on other occasions. During the victorious march of the Soviet troops from 5 August 1943 to 26 February 1944, there were issued in his name some seventy orders, commending the men of a division, army, or front for deeds accomplished or work well done, and each of these was made the basis for intensive propaganda work with the military personnel.¹⁰³

There have been other, well publicized elements of the military image of Stalin. As in many other parts of Soviet life, history has been rewritten so that Stalin could be presented with Lenin as the two founders of the Red Army;¹⁰⁴ his military role in the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War of 1918-21 was built up to extraordinary lengths especially as pertained to the battle around Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad),¹⁰⁵ and the creation of the economic base necessary for a great military force was attributed to his efforts and genius.¹⁰⁶ He has been given the dominant role in the creation of auxiliary forces such as the Navy and the Air Force,¹⁰⁷ and credit for preparing the military forces for their victories in the period before the Nazi attack.¹⁰⁸

Important, too, have been the images of Stalin which portrayed him as the symbol of the nation's support of the men in the armed forces, assuring a constant flow of munitions and supplies to the front lines, and providing loving care for soldiers' families. There also have been constant references to Stalin's concern for the soldiers' own personal welfare and their material well-being.¹⁰⁹ Here Stalin was the "beloved friend and father, who gives all his strength, all his tremendous experience. . . for the strengthening of the Armed Forces."¹¹⁰ A much quoted expression of the faith and assurance that Stalin's care should have given the soldier was spoken by Andrei Zhdanov during the siege of Leningrad:

"We have felt and now feel the continuous and loving care given to Leningrad by our leader and teacher, Comrade Stalin. We know and feel that Stalin is with us. Each Leningradite and every warrior on our front sees in this the guarantee of victory, and finds in this new forces for the struggle with the hated Hitlerite aggressors."¹¹¹ Mikhail Kalinin, in a description of the situation in the early months of the war, pictured the Soviet people "like a person nervously shifting from one foot to the other, undecided what specific practical steps should be taken. . . Comrade Stalin's appeal showed the way, opened the floodgates of popular passion, indicated how the people's energies must be used."¹¹²

Thus, in addition to his roles as strategist, teacher, military comrade and father, Stalin has been portrayed as the inspiration of the Soviet military personnel. The Army propagandists have carried on an intensive campaign to convince the soldiers that Stalin was actually the focal point of their nationalist, patriotic, ideological, and personal emotions. They have been called upon to sing and hear many songs expressing faith in and love of Stalin,¹¹³ and have heard and read articles and poems about his inspiration.

In one of these poems, entitled "The Soldier's Oath," the soldier has read: "I am a Russian man, a soldier of the Red Army. My country has put a rifle in my hand and has sent me to fight against the black hordes of Hitler that have broken into my country. Stalin has told me that the battle will be hard and bloody, but that victory will be mine. I heard Stalin and I know that it will be so."¹¹⁴ Another example is a poem written by a famous writer, Konstantin Simonov, in the early part of the war:

Comrade Stalin, can you hear our voice?
We know it—you must hear us.
At this dear hour of our lives,
Our first thought goes, not to our sons or to our mothers, but to you.

No one, in all his life, has ever known such a grim anniversary,
But a true man's heart grows only stronger in battle.

And as we marched past you in festive ranks,
Not thinking of the sorrows of war,
Who could tell that, on this day,
We should be separated from you?

[In next few verses, here omitted, the poet declares that victory must come, and the poem ends with a vision of a victory parade through the Red Square]:
Like the vision of our happiness, we shall see you again.
Standing above the jubilant throng,
You will stand there in your plain soldier's greatcoat,
And looking a little older after this bitter struggle.

This poem by Simonov, in which he depicted the emotional attachment of a soldier for the figure of Stalin, has been part of the important campaign in which the Army political workers participated. Other indications of the campaign to build this legend may be seen in connection with Stalin's speech of 6 November 1941 at a great meeting celebrating the twenty-first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. A film of the event was shown at the front, and it was described as having been "followed with great emotion," and the military personnel and political instructors reportedly stated that "this unforgettable film inspires us to fresh feats of heroism."¹¹⁵

A few months later, a book was published which contained stories of the exploits allegedly performed by the front-line soldiers who had been brought to Moscow in order to hear Stalin in person, and by the partisans in the Bryansk Forest who had heard the speech over their radio.¹¹⁶ Many soldiers were reported to have expressed their great desire to make a detailed study of this speech, and the Political Administrations of several armies issued a pamphlet of 127 pages to aid them in this project.¹¹⁷ An oft repeated story, typical of those told in illustration of the soldiers' alleged love of Stalin and found in literally thousands of official propaganda stories, has been that of the hero who led his tank crew into a perilous position, performed a valiant deed, and then collapsed after he radioed to other tanks: "I die like a Bolshevik. For the Fatherland! For Stalin! Forward!"¹¹⁸

Statements of this type of course, have been made by propagandists to tell the soldiers what their comrades are supposed to be feeling and what they themselves should feel. Most materials available to Western students stem either from propaganda descriptions of this type, or from the evidence reported by defectors from the Soviet Army. The latter reports are worthy of note. A recent study by Americans, based on intensive interviews with a number of defectors,¹¹⁹ reported that even among these men whose antagonism against the regime was sufficient to cause them to risk considerable danger in order to escape to the West, there were some who still had a favorable identification to Stalin.

Among the defectors studied by this American team, in addition to those who hated Stalin and the regime, there was a group whose responses seem to have had four features. They reported that many people respected Stalin for certain personal qualities such as personal strength, courage, and power. Secondly, many referred to his mental qualities of cleverness, slyness, flexibility, and his ability to handle large masses of people. In addition, there were defectors who have felt that Stalin really was concerned about conditions in the Soviet Union and was honestly doing his best to improve them, although hindered by inefficient and evil subordinates. Finally, there were some who felt that Stalin actually did provide some inspiration to the Soviet people, and that many persons actually felt some emotional identification with him. This attitude, it was reported, stemmed from their confidence in his strength and cleverness, their own encouragement as a result of his courage and calmness, their approval of what they felt was his selflessness and willingness to share their trials and deprivations. One of these defectors, who indicated his own hatred of Stalin, told of a story current in the Soviet Army that the soldiers at the battle of Stalingrad were cheered on by such slogans as "Stalin is in the trenches with you."¹²⁰

Whether or not this emotional attachment for Stalin has existed and actually has been widespread, the political workers in the armed forces have used his name in calling upon the soldiers to do their duty. The announcement of the new disciplinary regulations in 1946, for example, began with the statement that they were being put into effect on orders from Generalissimo Stalin.¹²¹ Party members have been ordered to give talks on such subjects as "Lenin and Stalin on the Significance of Fighting Fitness of the Soviet Army."¹²² In earlier appeals to the men to obey their orders, a sentence like the following was frequently used: "Fulfill your instructions like the great Stalin and

Comrade Voroshilov have done, for they—without sparing their blood or life—have for decades fulfilled the will of the Bolshevik Party and the will of the mighty Soviet people. . .¹²³

Even more familiar to those who have read the literature of Soviet political work, have been the many references to Stalin in the effort to inspire the men to great deeds in battle. Before the war, a pamphlet placed in the hands of each soldier ended with this statement: "With the name of the Great Stalin, we have gone into battle and have conquered; we shall in the future conquer any foe, regardless of whence he comes, for we have the name of Stalin."¹²⁴ The political workers announced, after the men had seen a film in which Stalin spoke, that "this unforgettable film inspires us to new feats of heroism."¹²⁵

An article for political workers describing the battle techniques to be used by regimental agitators, presented the oft repeated story of the Party worker who saw a company faltering just as it was supposed to lead the regiment's attack against the enemy. The agitator "quickly appraised the situation, moved in front of the battle ranks of the company, and led the troops forward with the cry: 'For Lenin's city! For Stalin!'"¹²⁶ The same stereotype has appeared in many stories of Soviet victories, as in the storming of Budapest where the final attack was described as beginning when a rank-and-file Communist soldier charged forward with the shout of "For the Motherland! For Stalin!"¹²⁷

Another frequently used method has been the soldiers' oath to Stalin. During the battle of Stalingrad, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, political workers went from trench to trench and from unit to unit securing signatures to a mass letter sent to Stalin, solemnly declaring:

Before our military banners, before the entire Soviet country, we swear that we shall not soil the glory of the Russian arms. We shall fight as long as we can. Under Your guidance, our fathers were victorious in the Tsaritsyn battle. Under Your guidance, we too shall be victorious in the great battle before Stalingrad.¹²⁸

Part IV

FACILITIES, MEDIA, AND BASIC PROPAGANDA FORMS

Chapter 11

ORAL AND GRAPHIC PROPAGANDA

AGITATION AND THE AGITATOR

Of all the propaganda media available for use by the Bolsheviks, none has the appeal or importance of face-to-face personal communication. This appeal stems from many causes, not the least of which is the traditional use made of oral propaganda in past Communist history. Above all, however, "agitation" is highly favored because it is peculiarly well adapted to Soviet conditions and meets the major Bolshevik requirements for effective propaganda.

The Soviets divide oral persuasion into two major categories. "Agitation" is the term used by them in referring to talks and graphics presented intimately and informally, and dealing in a simplified fashion with subjects comprehensible to the average Soviet citizen. "Propaganda," on the other hand, refers to lectures and other formal presentations of more difficult subjects, on a semi-intellectual basis. The Soviet definition presents agitation as the fundamental and lowest level of explanatory work, to be used primarily in dealing with the masses. The agitator is expected to observe an observable phenomenon and explain its significance to the people, whereas the propagandist should establish the connection and dependence between the various facts and phenomena of society and indicate the Marxist conclusions to be drawn from these. Agitation is considered better suited for work with the masses of the rank and file in military-political operations.

In the Soviet armed forces, the agitator is officially given a dual purpose: to assist in the inculcation of unshakable political loyalty and support of the Soviet regime, and to promote the soldiers' efficient performance of their military duties in the defense of the Soviet state. A recent editorial of *Red Star* illustrated the agitator's function in these terms:

By examples and facts which are close and comprehensible to the broad masses, Army agitators explain to privates, sergeants and officers the policy of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet government and show the all-victorious power of the ideas of Lenin and Stalin and the just and invincible nature of the great cause of Communism. By their words and their personal example, agitators mobilize the fighting men for the successful fulfillment of the tasks which face the Soviet Army. . . .²

The ideal agitator's major strengths are expected to lie in his knowledge of his audience, his close and intimate relationship with most men in it, and the

"authority" and acceptability which his words should have among them. A high official of the MPA Department of Propaganda and Agitation wrote:

The agitators, as no other group, are close to the soldiers and junior commanders. As a rule, they live the same life with them, share with them the hardships and joys of the soldiers' lot. Above all, they, as no others, know the interests and concerns of their comrades-in-arms, and are able to transmit to each soldier the words of Bolshevik truth in language intelligible to him.³

In view of the vital significance of his work, and in line with the usual Bolshevik methods of direction, the agitator is given day-to-day guidance, vast amounts of agitational materials, and numerous forms of advice and instruction on how to utilize them.⁴ From this instructional literature, and particularly from the ideals and standards presented to the agitators, some concept of the desired qualities in Army agitation can be formed.

The agitator himself is expected to meet his audience with full confidence in himself and in the importance of his work, for he is the "envoy of the Party, its trusted representative, its faithful transmitter of Bolshevik ideas to the masses. . . ." As a trusting Party member, he will not have any doubts about the materials given to him for use in agitation, for he must believe that the Party line is the truth.⁵ The agitator is therefore admonished always to be "truthful."⁶ Being convinced of the truthfulness of what he tells the men, the agitator speaks more convincingly and with sincerity—two desirable traits. "If an orator comes forward. . . without firm conviction in the justice of the slogans for which he is agitating, the audience will have no faith in him and will not follow him. Without internal conviction there is no agitation."⁸

To acquire the necessary authority with the men, it is necessary to have their confidence and affection. Kalinin has warned that:

. . . the agitator should guard against making it appear that he knows more and is cleverer than the people around him. My experience as propagandist and agitator extends over many years, and I know that if people notice, in however slight a degree, that the agitator puts on airs, considers himself cleverer than they are, such an agitator is done for, he will not inspire confidence. You must talk to the Red Army men as to people with a good grasp of things. And if any one of them says he does not understand something, you can always come back at him: "Why pretend you don't know, what have you got on your shoulders, a head of cabbage? I can see you understand it all no worse than I do. You're just trying to be clever." You must not take a supercilious attitude to people.⁹

The agitator must make certain that the important points have been brought home to each soldier, and that they have been accepted and assimilated. Thus, the agitator cannot restrict himself to group talks or to other forms of mass work, but must reach each man on an individual basis.¹⁰ He must pay particular attention to the men who usually are unable to be present when the group talks are given, such as the cooks and medical aids,¹¹ and above all, he must work intensively with those who are doing poorly in their military and political classes or are lagging behind in the performance of military duties.¹²

In order to ensure effective results, the agitator must use constant repetition. It is, of course, important to repeat the basic points in the explanation of a particular question in order that a lasting impression is made on the listeners, and so that newcomers are made fully aware of the lessons to be learned.¹³

But, more than that, agitation must be a never-ending process explaining the perpetual changes in public life.¹⁴ In Stalin's own words:

. . . It is necessary to explain the instructions of the Party and of the Soviet authority, to explain patiently and attentively in order that the people understand what the Party wishes and where it is leading the country. If they do not understand today, it will be difficult to explain the day after tomorrow. Without this there will not be and cannot be any guidance now.¹⁵

Some of the characteristics desired in the agitators are presented in idealized portraits of specific individuals, whose examples presumably should be followed. One of these models was Komsomol member Vasili Verevkin, "deservedly reckoned one of the best agitators in his regiment."¹⁶ A young man who finished the tenth grade in 1943, and entered the Army immediately afterward, he was a senior sergeant by 1947 and a squad commander. He was a model soldier, with high grades in military and political training, no reprimands for disciplinary violations on his record, and many military awards. He was an assistant leader in his political-training class, and served as platoon agitator in his unit; these activities took up virtually all of his spare time.

The propaganda skills and methods attributed to Verevkin followed the basic Bolshevik patterns. "He is always among the soldiers, and knows whom to aid and how to do it, and is aware of shortcomings in study, conduct, and daily habits. The soldiers respect Verevkin as a model warrior, and an attentive, wise advisor. In spite of his youth, one can always have an interesting conversation with him and learn much." He was particularly active during tactical maneuvers, when his company was ordered to take a small town. On the evening before the attack, Verevkin spoke with each soldier in his platoon, explaining the general and specific tasks to be accomplished on the next day, and "strengthening each of them with clear examples from his own military experience."¹⁷

TYPES AND FORMS OF AGITATION¹⁸

Political Information

The simplest of all forms of oral agitation is performed through the semi-official type known as political information. The company commanders, their political assistants, and the platoon agitators use this form as a principal means for informing the soldiers about selected events in the USSR and abroad, and for guiding their thinking about these events.¹⁹ The individual talks are based upon the most appropriate materials which the agitator can cull from recent communiques, newspaper articles, or radio broadcasts.²⁰ Under the cloak of the dissemination of factual information, the political apparatus tries in this way to orient the soldier's thinking about each of the major events and to help him fit them into a total image of the world approved by the Kremlin.

Even the Soviet agitators apparently have a tendency to confuse the political information sessions with other forms of agitation, for which they are often scolded in the Army press, but the basic characteristics of this form are clearly drawn in the instructions of the political apparatus from the MPA down. First of all, political information is distinguished by its brief time span for it is never supposed to exceed thirty minutes, and may even be somewhat shorter.



Fig. 7—Komsomols Mounting Political Information Photos

Russian Caption: "For study of materials of the Nineteenth Party Congress, graphic agitation is widely utilized in the detachment of Officer G. Knyazhitski. In the photograph (left to right): Deputy company commander for political affairs, Lt. L. Vasil'ev, Sgt. G. Peredvigin, buro member of the company Komsomol organization, and S'Sgt. Yu. Nazarov, as they prepare a photo-showcase on the report of Comrade G.M. Malenkov at the Nineteenth Party Congress." KZ, Oct 19, 1952.

Secondly, unlike other agitational forms, political information does not call for general discussion, but merely a talk followed by a few questions from the men, and these must be very limited in number because of the briefness in time.²¹ Thirdly, in the course of political information, the agitator does not usually employ graphic devices such as charts, maps, and placards.²²

Great stress is placed on the need for making each event meaningful to the men and relating it to their immediate military tasks. For example, Officer Bessonov was commended for the fashion in which he oriented a political information session around a recent edict by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers. The edict was entitled "On the Conduct of Harvesting and Storing of Agricultural Crops in 1949," and normally would not have been read by the men. Bessonov explained the significance of the edict, described the condition of Soviet agriculture, and pointed out what would be done in specific collective farms which many men had visited during short furloughs. He ended by calling on the men "to answer the labor exploits of the collective farmers with new successes of their own in military and political training."²³

In spite of its simplicity, the Soviet political leaders have charged the agitators with misuse of the political information form of agitation. Those responsible for its use have been criticized for incompetence, indifference, and neglect which have resulted in poor quality of the talks and dull presentation—a charge which is confirmed in part by Soviet defectors who report that the men are usually bored with the sessions. In many cases, the work is apparently delegated to untrained personnel; sometimes the entire session is devoted to the reading aloud of disjointed newspaper accounts without any explanation; even more serious from the Bolshevik point of view, the topics are selected without any connection to any plan for propaganda or to the military tasks of the unit. The professional political workers are under some attack themselves, for the required close supervision of all phases of political information is largely theoretical. But the heart of the matter is probably expressed in this statement by a regimental *zampolit*: "The political information sessions are most difficult for me. They are tedious and do not touch the men's hearts."²⁴

The Beseda

The *beseda*, or informal talk, is the most widely used form of Soviet agitation. It is used under almost all conditions in the armed forces, being adaptable to virtually every subject, any location, many occasions, and all small audiences. Although closest in form to political information, the public descriptions make a clear distinction between the latter and the group *beseda*.

The agitator is often permitted forty minutes to an hour, and he can therefore deal with somewhat involved problems and can spend some time in exhortations to his audience. Even more important, in contrast to political information, active audience participation is considered an important ingredient in a successful talk and one which every agitator strives to achieve. Indeed, the experienced agitator is expected to do little of the actual speaking himself, but instead, by skillful questioning and prompting, tries to draw all the soldiers into the discussion, leading them to express themselves and guiding and correcting opinions and facts only when necessary.²⁵

Far more definitely than in political information, an effort is made to create an informal atmosphere for the purpose of facilitating discussion and for fostering a feeling of mutual trust and confidence between agitators and the men. Indeed, the agitators are specifically instructed to conduct their discussions "under comradely circumstances," and to act in a simple and sincere manner. While they are constantly admonished to prepare and to plan the contents of their talks with the utmost care beforehand, they are warned not to glance at their planned outline while they are speaking lest they destroy the illusion of spontaneous, from-the-heart delivery and thus make their talk assume an "official character."²⁶

The size of the audience for talks generally is smaller than that for political information, sometimes consisting of small groups of three to five men, or even only one individual, depending upon the occasion.²⁷ Naturally this accentuates the desired informal atmosphere and general effectiveness of the talk. In cases where the agitator's talk precedes or follows a radio broadcast, a large formal meeting or assembly, or the viewing of a film, et cetera, the size of the audience is likely to be considerably increased.

One major function of the informal talk is to supplement propaganda efforts over the mass media. Generally speaking, talks are in order whenever the soldiers view films or listen to major political broadcasts from the central broadcasting centers (especially to the speeches of important Soviet leaders),²⁸ and whenever a mass meeting or major assemblage of soldiers is held or some matter of major import arises.²⁹

In addition to his function of emphasizing and driving home the points made through films and other mass media, the agitator has, in theory at least, the task of dealing with the emotional and attitudinal problems of the soldiers. Through the informal talk, the agitator is expected to find the cause of emotional depressions and other disturbances, the reasons for poor grades in military and political training, and above all, the explanations for improper actions on the battlefield or elsewhere within the military structure. When he finds the causes, the agitator is called upon to take the appropriate propagandistic measures, primarily through the individual or small group talk, or through the mobilization of "public opinion" in the unit.³⁰

A third major use for the *beseda* is in the transmittal of the Party line on any subject--political, military, or personal--deemed important by the political worker or the agitator. In many cases, he will find obvious titles in the literature published for agitators, in orders from the professional political workers, or in the Army newspapers. Agitator Shevchenko, for example, was commended because he "untiringly explains to the soldier the policies of the Bolshevik Party, keeps them up-to-date on events of current affairs, and connects all his explanations and answers to questions related to the tasks of the military company."³¹ Questions raised by the men over some matter they do not understand are likewise supposed to guide the agitator in the selection of suitable topics for talks.³²

In general, however, the agitator is expected to exercise his own initiative in utilizing every favorable opportunity which presents itself at a moment propitious for the delivery of a talk. During the tense period before a new military offensive,³³ or a brief lull in the midst of a battle, the sight of enemy-devastated villages,³⁴ the report of a spectacular feat of heroism, the announcement of a new Five-Year Plan, or some other significant domestic or international event--

these and similar occasions provide agitators with the opportunity to drive home the significance such events have for the servicemen and their fatherland. Obviously, the variety of subjects upon which agitators talk is as broad as the variety of occasions, for the agitator is expected to respond to every important event with a suitable talk.³⁵

Graphics of all types, including slogans, maps, charts, posters, and photographs, are additional means utilized by the agitators in their talks. They are expected to be useful in conveying news and statistics more vividly, transmitting complex ideas, or arousing strong emotional responses in their audiences.³⁶

Meetings and Assemblies

General meetings or assemblies (*sobraniya*) are often held for large groups, sometimes on the regimental or company levels.³⁷ These mass gatherings can best be characterized as military pep rallies, for the aim is primarily inspirational rather than explanatory or instructional. Generally speaking, they are supposed to be held at regular intervals, approximately one every three months or so.³⁸

The responsibility for convening and conducting these meetings lies with the commanders and their deputies for the political affairs.³⁹ They receive extensive assistance from the agitators at all levels whose job it is to conduct a series of talks beforehand as part of the preparatory groundwork for the assembly. Typical of the agitator's work may be talks on Lenin and Stalin, the deeds of Soviet patriots, or the military oath. The political-enlightenment rooms are decked with appropriate slogans and pictures.⁴⁰

Finally the day of general meeting arrives. Usually some sort of makeshift tribune has been erected, flanked by immense pictures of Stalin and other leaders. Sometimes there is even a military band or orchestra present to add to the dignity of the affair.⁴¹ The themes of the proceedings at most mass meetings are set by general slogans such as "Kill the Fascist beast in his lair and unfurl over Berlin the banner of victory," which was a favorite one during the war years.⁴² At the largest gatherings a praesidium is "elected" to preside over the assembly, on which are always chosen the commanders and political workers, and the soldiers who have distinguished themselves in military and political studies.⁴³

After the meeting is opened, the deputy commander for political affairs usually delivers a report; and he is followed with a series of speeches by agitators or propagandists on such themes as the need for all soldiers to live up to the honorable traditions of their regiment. The meeting is then thrown open for "spontaneous" statements from previously alerted Party members. Finally it concludes with the passing of a resolution, prepared in advance, in which the assembled soldiers dedicate themselves to the fulfillment of their assigned duties.⁴⁴

Special events or anniversaries, such as November 7 or May 1 will usually be used as the occasion for such gatherings. The effort is made to lend as much dignity and solemnity to the occasion as possible, but it rarely proves to be an inspiring affair.⁴⁵ Most evidence seems to point to the fact that the audience attending these assemblies is a "captured" one which would not put in an appearance unless required to do so. One Soviet defector tells how, during the

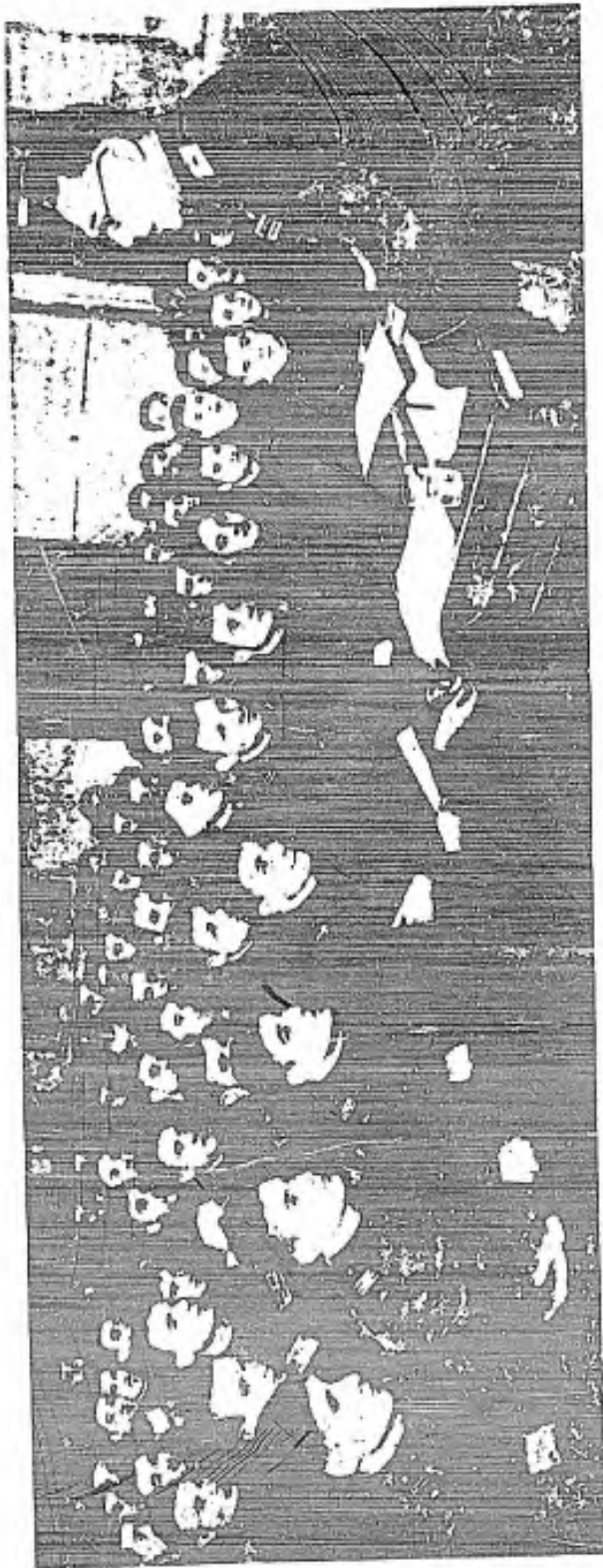


Fig. 8—A General Recalling Days of the Nineteenth Party Congress

Russian Caption: "Maj. Gen. N. M. Filippenko, delegate to the Nineteenth Party Congress and Hero of the Soviet Union, shares his impressions with warriors of the N-th unit about the unforgettable days when the historic Nineteenth Party Congress was at work." KZ, Nov 4, 1953.

course of such a meeting, the audience was commanded to jump to attention several times, the purpose being to wake the men who had fallen asleep in their seats.⁴⁶

Other Agitation Forms

Closely allied with the agitator's talks is the practice of collective reading. Whenever the soldiers have a free period—during a rest on the march, a lull in battle, or in the evening after a strenuous day of training—the agitator is expected to utilize the occasion for reading aloud official news summaries, editorials and articles from the major newspapers and Party journals, or books of special literary or political merit (chapter by chapter over a period of time).⁴⁷ Personal letters received by individual soldiers from home, or letters sent to the unit by civilian factory workers or members of collective farms, may also provide material for the agitator's collective reading sessions. Conversely, the letters which the soldiers send home in reply may be similarly used for agitational purposes at the other end. In addition, some collective reading of political articles from *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, or from literary masterpieces, is broadcast over the radio, and agitators assemble the soldiers to listen to these special programs.⁴⁸

Whenever time permits, the agitator follows the reading aloud of material with a talk stressing the significant points, and he encourages the men to discuss and ask questions.⁴⁹ Frequently the book used for collective reading is of a political and ideological nature; it may be a biography of Stalin or a story of his childhood, an item from the satirical journal *Krokodil*, and last, but by no means least, *A Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*.⁵⁰

During the recent war, the use of the letter for the ends of oral and printed agitation was highly developed.⁵¹ Whenever a letter containing promising agitational material was received by a member of a platoon, the platoon agitator was charged by the deputy commander to read it to the assembled soldiers and then to spread its contents to neighboring platoons either by word of mouth or by having it mimeographed for distribution.⁵²

In addition to the person-to-person type of letter, the Red Army energetically promoted the exchange of public letters between Army and civilian groups. These group letters often were in the forms of resolutions or special greetings formulated at meetings of the men probably under the supervision of the agitators, propagandists, or Party organizations.⁵³

GRAPHIC AGITATION⁵⁴

Slogans

A slogan consists of a brief phrase conveying a simple idea which is expected to evoke in a reader the desire for positive action towards a specific goal: it is perhaps the most widely used of all forms of graphic agitation in the armed forces. Much slogan material comes ready-made to the agitators and does not require highly specialized personnel either to create or distribute

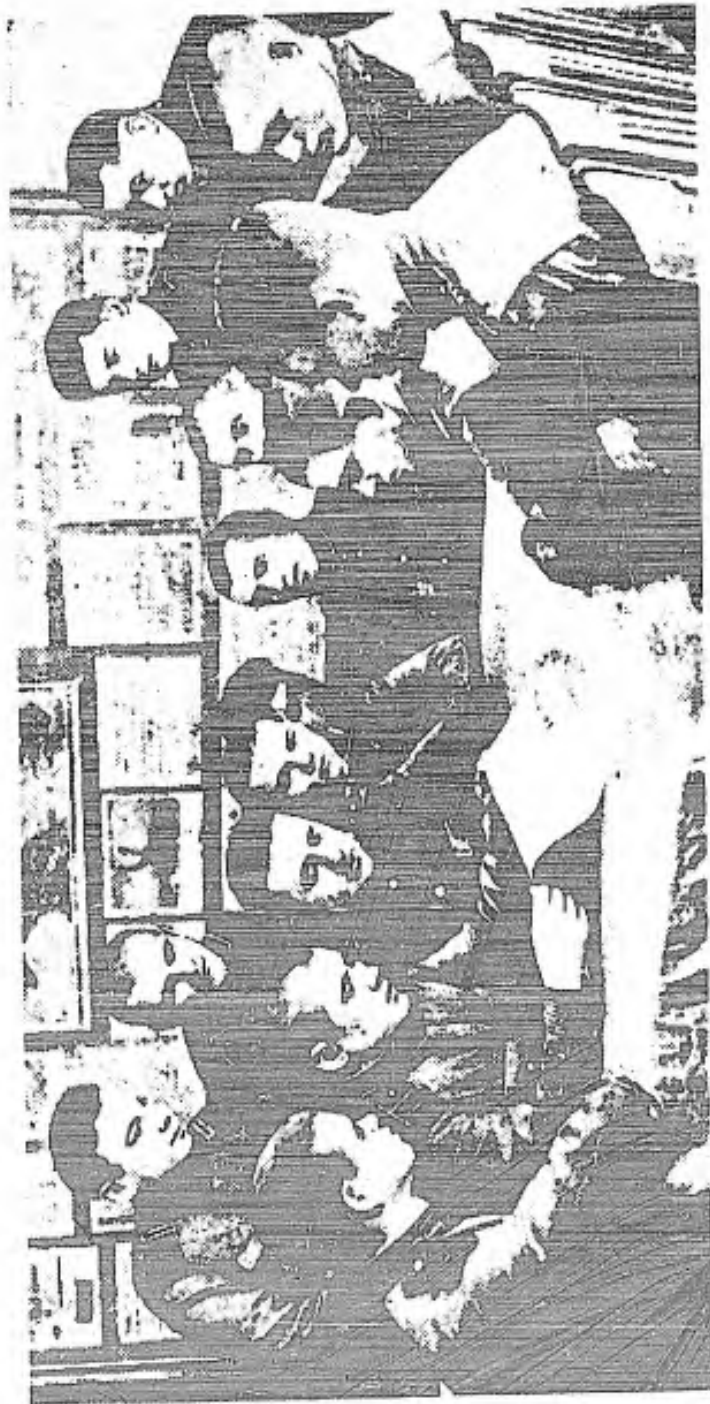


Fig. 9.—Agitator Reading to His Unit.

Russian Caption: "Yesterday in all detachments of the N-th unit, there was reading of materials of the Fourth session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. In the photograph: In Lt. Nosov's detachment. Corp. V. Ivanov, secretary of the Komsomol organization in the detachment, reads materials of the session." KZ, Mar 17, 1953.

it. In many instances Army newspapers supply the slogans needed. In other cases, quotations from the speeches and decrees of Soviet leaders, especially those of Stalin, and excerpts from the Military Code or other official documents are widely utilized for slogan purposes.⁵⁵ In theory, slogans should be brief but forceful in expression, should be closely connected with the everyday experiences of each serviceman, and should have definite appeal for many soldiers. Above all, they should be timely in expressing key ideas of the Party line.⁵⁶

The oldest and most famous of Communist slogans, which still makes its appearance on much military and civilian printed material, is Marx's and Engels' appeal to the working class: "Proletarians of all countries, Unite!" During World War II, innumerable slogans were used to rally the armed forces to the winning of the war. For example, Stalin's appeal upon the outbreak of war: "Our cause is just—victory will be ours!" and "Death to the German occupiers!" remained leading slogans throughout the war years. The two slogans for the armed forces which are currently dominant in the postwar period and which express the new tasks of the soldiers are: "For our Soviet Fatherland!"; and "We must vigilantly guard the peace which has been won and the constructive labor of the Soviet people, and be the reliable support of the interest of the Soviet Union."⁵⁷

All of the above slogans are of a general type which has relatively long-term validity. Another kind of slogan is used for short periods, to deal with a specific battle situation or peacetime task. Once the particular goal is achieved, such slogans are discarded and new ones created in conformity with the new undertakings. For example, when fighting on the Karelian Peninsula, the troops had to force their way across the Vuoksi River. Along all the roads leading to the crossing point were hung such slogans as: "A river is not a barrier to heroes. Forward, heroes of Leningrad!" As the Soviet troops advanced through the ruined areas recently liberated from German occupation, they encountered such signs as: "Here was a flowering Soviet village. Fascist bandits burned it and Soviet people were driven into exile! Warrior, take merciless vengeance on the foe!"⁵⁸

Even in the promotion of military and political training at camp installations during peacetime, slogans are much in evidence, such as: "Fulfill the tasks of summer military and political study with an excellent grade," or "Warriors of the Soviet Army! Cherish each hour of summer camp study, ably assimilate the experience of the past war." At the shooting range, the soldier's eye may encounter the signs: "There are no poor rifles, there are only poor shots," or "Without knowledge of the rules of shooting, without training in the principles of shooting, one cannot learn to shoot swiftly and accurately."⁵⁹

Thus, in almost every area of military life the soldiers are constantly exposed to slogans, as one of the major forms of graphic agitation. They may be found in every conceivable place—on the sides of buildings, in the political-enlightenment rooms, in Lenin corners, at the shooting ranges, on the sides of automobiles, and at crossroads where the troops pass.⁶⁰ They may be crudely lettered by hand, or printed in special workshops.⁶¹ Since they are basically rather simple devices, they require no extensive professional staff to create them. Usually they are both prepared and distributed by such organizations as the Houses of the Soviet Army or by the officers' clubs in the military units, and these are apparently able to produce and put up a tremendous number of

slogans. For example, during one month of the fighting on the Karelian Peninsula, the staffs of two Houses of the Soviet Army prepared and put up along the roads of the battle region nearly three thousand such slogans, while the employees of a divisional club prepared and hung 360 slogans in a two-week period.⁶²

Posters

Closely allied to the slogan, but more complex in form of graphic agitation, is the placard or poster. The main feature of the placard is its picture, although it usually also contains a word or two, or even a few lines of verse, to emphasize the thought expressed. Basically, however, Soviet theory calls for the picture to be readily comprehensible without the use of words, and the majority of placards depict only the most typical features of a certain subject. For example, in portraying the enemy, placards show only certain of the enemy's stereotyped characteristics which stimulate attitudes of hate or antagonism. Similarly, only certain selected and favorable features must be shown in a placard about the Soviet soldier or citizen.⁶³

Placards should evoke strong emotional response. As one Soviet expert puts it: "The depiction must capture all the [viewer's] feelings and agitate deeply. It must stimulate in him either a flaming hatred and the desire to smash and be victorious over the enemy, or it must summon him to heroic labor, to an exploit in the name of the glory of the might and security of the Soviet state."⁶⁴ Most placards are starkly simple without superfluous detail so that the viewer will not be distracted from the central message which the placard conveys.

Judging from a large sample available in this country, the usual size of mass-distributed posters is 3 by 5 feet in size. Most of those sent to this country are in colors designed to attract attention and appear to be mass-produced by what is called the "Silk Process."⁶⁵ Occasionally, however, posters may be of gigantic size, especially portraits of Soviet leaders.

These posters during the war apparently used three basic themes. Some played up patriotic themes linking Russia's invasion ordeal with her historic past; others were satirical jibes at the enemy; still others were direct emotional appeals. For example, a placard of the first type was entitled "Let Us Free the Lands of Novgorod from the Enemy," and depicted Alexander Nevski, a prince of ancient Russia, towering over piles of destroyed German tanks and dead German soldiers. Nevski's famous words appeared on the poster: "He who comes to us with the sword, shall perish by the sword."⁶⁶

One of the satirical posters had a picture of Hitler boasting over a microphone, "I am forcing the English channel." The right-hand side of the poster showed Hitler in a dead faint after hearing the loud speaker announce that Anglo-American troops had crossed the channel.⁶⁷ Another poster of the same kind was entitled "To the West," and it showed a Red Army soldier knocking down, with his rifle butt, a milestone set up by the Germans, which had once had the inscription on it "To the East."⁶⁸ For the third theme, posters showing atrocities were often used. One of the most effective of these was entitled "Take Revenge!" It depicted a mother holding her dead child against a background of burning villages. The entire face and figure of the woman bespoke profound grief, and at the same time expressed terrible anger and cursed the invaders.⁶⁹

The MPA has continued to make extensive use of posters in the postwar period. They are especially common at military installations during election campaigns, or on the anniversaries of important dates such as the commemoration of the Bolshevik Revolution or the founding of the Red Army, and are frequently utilized to promote greater enthusiasm for duty and excellence in military study.⁷⁰

Unlike the slogan type of graphic agitation, poster production requires a well-trained personnel to achieve the greatest effectiveness. The MPA utilizes both amateur and professional artists for this work.⁷¹

Nevertheless, much poster work is of such excellence that it is obvious that first-rate professional artists have been pressed into service, including some of the leading painters in the Soviet Union.⁷² Most of these distinguished professionals have been members of the Grekov Studio which had been founded in 1934 as a training ground for gifted Red Army artists. At the beginning of Russian participation in the Second World War, this studio was transformed into a "collective of military artist-professionals," a unique artistic organization in the system of the Red Army. Early in 1942, this corps of artists began to make visits to the various battle fronts, sketching at firsthand the combat they observed. Eventually they accompanied the attacking Russian troops into Germany.⁷³ In many ways their work might be compared to that of the professional writers who were also attached to the troops, taking down their impressions in picture form while they were still fresh and vivid. In between visits to the scenes of the fighting, the artists returned to their Moscow workshop to transform sketches into finished paintings, pieces of sculpture, placards, medallions, and so forth. At their headquarters, the artists had a special library at their disposal, as well as a variety of military objects for use as models.⁷⁴

Various publishing houses reproduced the works of the Grekov Studio by the millions of copies.⁷⁵ They were hung in prominent places wherever soldiers were likely to congregate as regular items of equipment, in the Rooms of Political Enlightenment, regimental libraries, parks around the Houses of Officers, and on agitational machines. In wartime, they were displayed along the route of march.⁷⁶ The pictorial work was also disseminated through the pages of battle leaflets, the major organs of the Army press at the divisional army and front levels, special exhibits, graphic illustrations of the history of individual units and regiments, and small-scale reproductions in all types of propaganda pamphlets.⁷⁷

LECTURES AND OTHER PROPAGANDA FORMS

The simple agitational forms are hardly suitable for the military officers and technicians, who are regarded as the Army intelligentsia. These groups must have a more formalized method of presentation and more sophisticated content in their propaganda, provided largely through two propaganda forms — the Marxist-Leninist circles* and the numerous lectures and reports provided by the political staff.

The rationale for the lecture programs is a familiar one on the Soviet scene. The regime claims to be guided by the "scientific" doctrines of Marx-

* These are discussed in Chapter 14, which deals with special propaganda forms for the officers.

ism-Leninism, and all officials in every field of endeavor are regarded as competent only if they understand the official versions of Marxist theory and are conversant with the policies allegedly based on these versions.⁷⁸ The lectures therefore deal with many subjects in such fields as international politics, national affairs, military science, and Marxist theory. All of them, of course, are used to prove the unvarying correctness of Kremlin action and the need for enthusiastic support of all policies.

There is another major purpose for which the lectures are used. The numerous agitators who work directly with the soldiers are not only given special instructions concerning the subjects of their agitational talks and the methods to use, but they must also have fuller explanations of the Party line on many subjects. The staff propagandists take a direct part in the training and guidance of the platoon agitators under the supervision of the regimental *zampolit* and the regimental agitator.⁷⁹

The ideal propagandist is a well-educated officer, skilled in his own military or political field, and capable of assimilating the necessary training for propaganda at this level. He is expected to be thoroughly familiar with the classic sources of Marxist philosophy and the commentaries upon them, and able to show how they explain and justify all policies of the Kremlin.⁸⁰

Although these qualities are rarely available in propagandists, judging by the complaints in the Army press, the members of a typical *agitprop collective* usually include professional political workers, staff officers on the divisional or regimental levels, military specialists, and unit commanders.⁸¹ Many of them have high military rank, including colonels and generals. Others hold academic degrees, including some doctors of historical science, or are candidates for the doctorate. In fact, the possession of higher education, attained on a formal level through correspondence schools or through actual attendance at an advanced school or university, is considered almost essential.⁸²

A highly praised lecturer group is attached to the Political Administration of the Air Forces of the Soviet Army. Its membership includes more than one hundred nonstaff lecturers, including some politically trained generals and other officers of the Air Forces' General Staff, and employees of the available military educational and research institutions. Many are teachers and research workers of the military academies and colleges, and among these are 11 professors and 59 "candidates in science."

The lecture group has four major sections: the History and Theory of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Soviet Military Science and Military Training; Soviet Aviation Science and Techniques; and the International Position of the USSR. Each section meets regularly and discusses the themes of future programs, hears selected talks, and analyzes in detail the lectures being presented. Sometimes heads and members of appropriate departments in military academies are called in to hear and discuss specialized lectures. During 1949, this lecture group gave more than 850 "qualified" lectures, besides conducting numerous consultations with individual lecturers from lower levels and with students of their specialties, and participating in various conferences on scientific and technical subjects.⁸³

Lecturing is organized and conducted in a much more formal manner than the informal, intimate, face-to-face methods of the agitators. The size of the audience for a lecture may be large enough to fill a hall or auditorium, and the

lecture may extend over two hours.⁸⁴ In most cases, lectures are given in a series or cycle, each devoted to the various aspects of a single major topic.⁸⁵ The lectures must be planned in detail, announced for specific dates and places, and publicized well in advance. There is none of the seeming spontaneity and friendly informality which are supposed to characterize the agitator's work; instead the lecturer permits his audience to know that he is reading from a previously prepared text. The pretense of general discussion and the attempt at audience participation in a mutual interchange of ideas and experience are also features which are lacking at the lecture.⁸⁶

Finally, the very character of the subject matter with which lectures deal is supposed to be of an abstract, general, and theoretical nature, as contrasted with the continuing effort of the agitator to tie in specific and observable phenomena of the immediate environment with each soldier's personal experience. The following themes, deemed appropriate lecture subjects, aptly illustrate this difference: "Sources of the Strength and Might of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet Armed Forces," "Soviet Military Science and Soviet Military Ideology," "Soviet Military Pride," "Bolshevik Vigilance," "Superiority of the Socialist System over the Capitalist System," "On the road to the Completion of Construction of Socialism in the USSR," "Patriotic Struggle of the Soviet People for the Fulfillment of the Postwar Stalinist Five-Year Plan in Four Years," and "Struggle of the USSR for a Stable Democratic World in the Contemporary Period."⁸⁷ In addition to these topics, however, an even more significant place in lecture work is supposed to be devoted to the history and the theory of the CPSU, especially dealing with the post-Revolutionary period.⁸⁸

Such topics and the demand for high standards in dealing with them present special problems of delivery. In those cases where the regimental or divisional political section does not have a lecturer trained to deal with a planned subject, formal requests will be submitted to the Political Administrations on the higher levels stating the subjects on which the sections wish lectures to be given, and asking that qualified lecturer-specialists be sent to them.⁸⁹ The lecturers are expected to use different approaches to their material with different kinds of audiences, taking into account the levels of theoretical and intellectual training of their listeners. The rank-and-file soldiers, the sergeants, and the officers' staff are segregated, and each is exposed to the type of lecture deemed to be best suited to its comprehension level.⁹⁰

Almost every aspect of lecture propaganda and all the levels of lectures have been objects of sharp criticism. On the basis of the charges made, one might judge that the quality of lectures is usually poor, the content dull, and the topics frequently unapproved. The political sections are blamed for these deficiencies and are held responsible for failing to provide sufficient guidance to the propagandists and lecturers.⁹¹ Sometimes they are accused of permitting the lecture work to be unorganized, unsystematic, and sporadic in nature.⁹² In other instances the faults and deficiencies as to quality are attributed to the overloading of lecturers with themes other than their specialties, or even worse, are attributed to the misuse of lecturers for duties they were not meant to perform.⁹³

By far the most serious and most frequent charge, however, is that the very type of subject matter on which the major emphasis of lecture work should be placed, Marxist-Leninist theory and the Bolshevik Party, is precisely that area

which is most neglected. For example, out of nearly six hundred lectures delivered in 1950 by the lecture group of the Turkestan Military District, 355 dealt with the international situation and foreign policy, and only slightly more than 15 percent with the history and theory of the Bolshevik Party; Marxist-Leninist philosophy was completely neglected.⁹⁴ Often the historian lecturers at the upper levels commit the "unforgivable error" of 'academism' by devoting the major part of the expositions to the pre-Revolutionary era and the celebrations of jubilee dates, instead of concentrating upon the important contemporary achievements of the CPSU.⁹⁵ On occasion, lectures are reported to have been given on such unpolitical themes as hunting and hunting dogs, or fauna and flora.⁹⁶

Chapter 12

THE PRESS AND OTHER PROPAGANDA FORMS AND INSTITUTIONS

MILITARY PRESS SYSTEM

The organization, methods, and contents of the Soviet military press are, of course, profoundly influenced by the Bolshevik concept of the appropriate role of the newspaper in the armed forces. It is not in any way an agency for the dissemination of news or the providing of entertainment, but a major instrument for what the Soviet propagandists call "the Communist training" of the soldiers and officers. As such, it is called upon to aid the agitators in the inculcation of approved attitudes, and in the mobilization of soldiers for the execution of the Kremlin's plans.¹

To perform these functions, the Bolsheviks have, in accordance with their method of establishing a system of newspapers and magazines for each major segment of the population, built an extensive press for the personnel of the armed forces.² One indication of its scope and extensiveness, particularly impressive when one remembers that each copy of a newspaper is expected to be used for propagandizing several (sometimes many) soldiers, is the fact that the military newspapers under the control of the MPA had a single-issue total of 1,725,000 copies before World War II, and this rose to over two million during the war.³ In addition, nearly one-half million copies of magazines were circulated to the military forces in the prewar period.⁴

The organizational structure of the military press system follows the general pyramidal pattern of all such specialized press structures in the Soviet Union. Possessing a dominant position at the top of the pyramid is the central Army newspaper, *Red Star*, with a circulation of several hundred thousand copies daily. *Red Fleet* appears to hold a similar position in relation to the Navy, although it tends to be largely overshadowed in importance by its Army counterpart. Somewhat less important is *Stalinskii Sokol* (*The Stalinist Falcon*), organ of the Air Forces.

Below these central organs come the newspapers of the army groups, such as *Sovetskaya Armiya* (*The Soviet Army*)⁵ which serves the occupation troops in Germany, and of the military districts; typical of the latter are *Stalinski Voin* (*The Stalinist Warrior*) of the Primorski Military District, and *Krasnyi Voin* (*The Red Warrior*) of the Moscow Military District. Most of these newspapers at the army group and military district levels consist of four pages and

are issued daily.* Below the military district, at each descending administrative level for army, division, regiment, battalion, and down to the company, a variety of newspapers are to be found, ranging from printed multicopy divisional papers like *Krasnaya Znamya* (*The Red Banner*) down to single-copy handwritten wall-newspapers at the company level.⁶

The wall-newspapers, which stand at the bottom of the military press pyramid, are so unique in form and loom so great in number as to merit special attention.⁷ Almost all of the lower administrative groupings of the Army beneath the regiment, especially at the company level, issue their own wall-newspapers, so that their number in the armed forces must run into many thousands. Generally a wall-newspaper is issued in one to three copies which are posted in prominent places for the soldiers to view, frequently in the local club or library. They are usually written by hand, although they may be multigraphed, or even printed if printing equipment happens to be easily accessible, although the Army does not provide printing equipment for wall-newspapers. Sometimes they have even been thrown on screens by a projector.⁸ The majority appear weekly, but some are brought out daily.⁹

Each wall-newspaper is run by an editorial board selected from the Communist personnel of the unit it serves; and it usually has a staff of approximately twenty-five military correspondents who supply it with material.¹⁰ So important has the Party come to view the activities of the wall-newspaper that it issues special regulations to govern their work from time to time.¹¹ It is the duty of the local Army Party organization to provide continuous guidance to the wall-newspapers.¹²

In coverage, the emphasis is on local happenings in its company, with occasional announcements of major events of country-wide significance. Each paper is supposed to operate according to a plan drawn up by its editorial board, and this plan in turn reflects the military tasks which have been assigned to the company.¹³ A central place in the papers is given to reports of the experiences of those who have distinguished themselves in military or political studies, and to criticism of backward soldiers. Sometimes the papers contain news about local sport competitions, soldiers' poems, riddles, and, occasionally, photographs, but the material always has a close bearing upon the immediate lives of the men in the particular company.¹⁴

Guidance and Control of the Military Newspapers

In order to ensure that the multitude of military newspapers at the various levels correctly perform the tasks assigned to them, a formidable system of guidance and control has been established. *Red Star*, which is the mouthpiece of the MPA, occupies a special position of pre-eminence over all the other Army newspapers. While *Red Fleet* occupies a rather similar position in respect to all the lower organs of the Navy, it is largely overshadowed by *Red Star*. Indeed, upon occasion the latter has publicly taken *Red Fleet* to task in its columns, and it would appear that this major Navy newspaper is in some measure subordinate to *Red Star*.¹⁵

In content, format, and method of presentation, *Red Star* serves as a model for all the other upper-level military newspapers. It also serves as both in-

* Copies of all the newspapers mentioned in this chapter are to be found in the Library of Congress.

structor and critic of the press organs immediately below it. Through its editorial columns and in signed articles, there flows a continual stream of advice and instruction which redefines the tasks before the Army press and tells how best these tasks may be carried out. These instructional columns explain to the lower organs what their content should be, where their emphasis should lie concerning particular themes such as an election campaign or how best to propagandize a report by Stalin, and so forth.¹⁶

In many instances these instruction-type articles from the top of the press hierarchy spell out, in considerable detail, the current line to be taken by the whole subordinate press structure. A typical editorial of this type in *Red Fleet* was entitled "Education of the Warrior-Patriot is the Most Important Task of the Naval Press."¹⁷ Here the lower Navy newspapers were told to emphasize the theme of patriotism and to point this up by showing the USSR's priority in the realm of scientific discovery and invention. Simultaneously by "biting, Marxist-Leninist criticism of the state and social system of bourgeois democracy" and exposure of the "corrupt culture of these countries," the Navy newspapers were ordered to expose "the rotten situation in capitalist countries." Secondly, the newspapers were instructed to propagandize military pride, by showing "the world-wide historic mission of the Armed Forces of the Soviet state" and "their role in the defense of the vital interests of the socialist Fatherland." Interspersed in the article were specific examples of how best to apply these instructions.

Both *Red Star* and *Red Fleet* exercise close supervision over the subordinate newspapers to see that their coverage and contents generally are in keeping with instructions. Any paper which does not perform as instructed may find itself the butt of devastating criticism by one or the other of the two central organs.¹⁸ Much of this criticism may not merit a full article being devoted to it, but instead may be embodied in articles of a more general nature, and the guilty papers may merely be cited as horrible examples of what should be avoided. Nevertheless, even such passing criticism exercises important control and guidance functions of the top newspapers over the lower press levels which rarely allow such critical mention to go unheeded. A more thorough and far-reaching type of press control and guidance through criticism is the device of the press review (*obzor pechati*)* which makes its appearance from time to time in *Red Star*.¹⁹

The functions of supervision, control, and criticism by *Red Star* and *Red Fleet* are duplicated at every lower stage of the hierarchical military press structure. The district press supervises the press at the army level, the latter supervises the divisional level, and this in turn watches those on the regimental level, and so on down to the lowly, single-copy and handwritten wall-newspaper.

The control and guidance of the military press is, of course, closely affected by general directives from the civilian Party structure. The various decrees by the Central Committee of the CPSU, especially as they touch upon the desired treatment of ideological questions or the performance of specific journals or newspapers in any area of life, must inevitably be of prime importance as guideposts to the military press as a whole.²⁰ More frequent than a direct blast from the Kremlin itself, however, are critical articles in the leading civilian Party journals of the practices and contents of the military press. Articles from such

* Press reviews are discussed at the end of this section.

sources are, of course, as authoritative in controlling and guiding the military press as though the Central Committee itself had issued a pronouncement. The Party newspaper, *Pravda*, and the (now deceased) journals, *Party Construction* and *Culture and Life*, all mouthpieces of the Central Committee, have been the most usual channels for criticism of the military press.²¹

Sometimes the director of the propaganda sector of the Central Committee's Department of Propaganda and Agitation has personally addressed conferences of Army newspaper editors and laid down the tasks which the Party expects to be performed by the military press.²² Thus, despite the special prestige and supervisory functions which *Red Star* and *Red Fleet* exercise over the entire military press hierarchy, they are themselves subject to a very real measure of control and guidance from the Central Committee.

Another important type of control is exercised by the various political organs and the MPA and its subordinate bodies, the Political Administrations and political sections at the various army and divisional levels. The Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the MPA and its Press Sector play leading roles in supervising the Army press. Sometimes this supervision takes the form of specific instructions regarding themes the press is expected to emphasize or the manner in which newspapers and magazines are to be distributed.²³

These instructions or directives are frequently brought to the personal attention of the editors for intensive study and correct execution at editorial conferences convened by the MPA at the levels of the groups of armies, military districts, and fleets. The editors are given detailed explanations by MPA officials (especially members of the Press Sector and the Agitation and Propaganda Department), or officials from the corresponding civilian Party organizations of the Central Committee, concerning the line they should stress for the coming period. At these and similar conferences summoned by MPA, attention is also given to criticism of those newspapers which have not lived up to the obligations placed upon them, emphasizing the demand that the editors follow the MPA's instructions carefully in the future.²⁴

The Political Administrations of the military districts also transmit instructions through conferences, and deal primarily with the editors of the multicopy newspapers at the administrative levels from the army down to the regiment. In addition to conveying instructions and directives from the MPA to these editors, the district conferences also perform a training function by facilitating exchange of experience in newspaper work and by exposing deficiencies.²⁵

When deficiencies in the work of a particular newspaper seem to be too deep-rooted, the Political Administration of the district will appoint a commission, headed by one of its own officials, to deal specifically with the situation and to eliminate the paper's shortcomings.²⁶ On a continuing basis, control and guidance are provided by the "press instructors" who deal with the problems of several newspapers, and go into the field for on-the-spot operations.²⁷ Through one method or another, the Political Administration issues specific instructions to the particular political organs or political sections attached to that administrative level.²⁸ The latter organizations apparently bear the bulk of the responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of the entire Army press below the district level, and they are constantly admonished to provide "guidance" to the newspapers within their administrative jurisdictions.

While "guidance" is, in theory, not supposed to signify interference with the innumerable details of daily operation of a newspaper, the term as defined by a high official in the Central Committee's Department of Agitation and Propaganda would seem to include almost everything except the actual writing of the columns. In an article dealing specifically with the Army press, he indicated that guidance includes: "the detailed selection and training of the newspaper workers . . . solicitude concerning the raising of the ideological-political, military, and cultural level [of the newspaper's contents] . . . informing the editorship workers about the military and political life of the troops . . . regularly giving instructions to the editorship concerning the order and character of the enlightenment of the most crucial and important questions from the life of the detachments and units," and seeing that these instructions are subsequently carried out.²⁹ Published data have shown how these political organs have dealt with problems of staff personnel, field correspondents, and editorial content.³⁰

One of the key methods in press "guidance" and supervision is the device of the press review. This consists of a thorough, systematic examination and analysis of the content and presentation of a particular newspaper over a particular period of time (usually a month) by a group of qualified experts.³¹ For a careful press review, the chosen critics will not only read a file of the issues of the paper under examination, but may visit the military unit which the newspaper serves, to verify whether the paper's contents really reflect the life of that particular unit. They may also examine the Political Administration's own files to see if the instructions issued to the newspaper have been followed, read letters sent to the paper by its readers, and interview the amateur military correspondents, soldiers, and officers in the unit.

An examination of any typical press review discloses the thoroughness of the scrutiny to which newspapers are subjected. For instance, a review of the newspaper *Red Army Patrol* charged that its editor had largely limited his articles on matters of military training to reprints of releases by the MPA's press *buro*; the paper's contents were declared to reveal poor selection of material and to contain too few letters and notes from its military correspondents; its lead articles were deemed to be of low quality, its coverage of foreign news defective, and the major part of its materials handled poorly from the literary point of view.³² The findings of a press review are often published in a higher newspaper, but whether made public or circulated privately, immediate steps are supposed to be initiated by the appropriate political organ to correct the alleged defects. As a rule, every press review drawn up by a Political Administration is discussed at conferences of the local Army political organs, or at sessions of the Party *buros* in the area served by the newspaper under review, to decide on the measures to be taken for improvement.³³

The final method of press control lies in the selection and training of press personnel. A surprising feature of the military press structure is the small proportion of the editors, military correspondents, and other contributors who are professionally trained journalists. Editors who have had formal training are, of course, more frequently found in posts at the top of the press hierarchy, but the careers of many of them seem to follow the pattern of A. Ya. Karpov, the late deputy editor of *Red Star*, who, as a Party member in the Army ranks, rose to the position of political worker and from there entered Army press work.³⁴ Since political content, rather than news coverage, style, or speed in

reporting, is given primary emphasis in all newspapers, ideological reliability and political training are the prerequisite qualifications for editors. *Red Star* has described the attributes of a model newspaper editor in these terms: "The newspaper editor . . . is a Party worker on a large scale. . . . The editor should not be a solitary office worker, but a Party leader."³⁵

In addition to its small editorial staff, each newspaper is expected to build up a body of part-time military correspondents among the officers and soldiers. The local political organs or political sections often participate in the selection of these correspondents, and the criterion of choice lies in political reliability. The correspondents provide volunteer and part-time services, and the number of them attached to each newspaper is probably very large. For example, the small wall-newspaper *Pobeda (Victory)* which appears weekly, has a staff of 25 soldier and sergeant military correspondents.³⁶ In the Baikal Military District, the district newspaper has correspondents in almost every garrison and unit in the district.³⁷ An extensive training program exists, in theory at least, for both editors and their staffs.³⁸

Books and Belles-Lettres

Immediately after the German attack upon the Soviet Union, large numbers of professional civilian writers were assigned as war correspondents to the prominent central civilian and military newspapers like *Pravda*, *Izvestiya*, *Red Star*, *Red Fleet*, and *Trud*. *Pravda's* roster of writers, for instance, included some of the most famous names in Soviet literature among its regular correspondents—Gorbatov, Kozhevnikov, Marshak, Leonov, Simonov, Sobolev, Tikhonov, and Sholokhov—and many others made occasional contributions.³⁹ Others were attached to the MPA of the Army or to the Government's Soviet Information Bureau (the *Sovinformburo*). According to Alexei Tolstoi, nine hundred writers, including novelists, dramatists, poets, reporters, and journalists, were in the ranks of the active Army.⁴⁰ Many of them, like Konstantin Simonov, received military decorations and orders for their literary work and bravery under fire.⁴¹

This front-line experience proved of considerable value in the writers' efforts to give color and authenticity to their stories about the armies and men. They were given some freedom to move from one front to another, and a writer like Simonov traveled from the Arctic to the Black Sea. They were permitted to question soldiers immediately after their return from a skirmish or raid, while the events were still sharp in their minds. Some had the opportunity to question German war prisoners or Russian traitors, or were supplied with German soldiers' letters and other material captured on the field of battle.⁴²

At first the literary work produced by these men took the form primarily of newspaper articles and straight reportage, but gradually, a steady stream of short stories, poems, then novels and plays, and finally war diaries began to appear. Much of the literary output of these special correspondents was quite effective both as literature and as propaganda.⁴³

Virtually the entire output of writers of this period dealt either with military life directly, or the impact of war upon Soviet society generally. This literature on military themes was of particular significance for soldier-readers, and special methods were devised to make these literary works available to the

huge soldier audience, and also to overcome the handicap of a drastic paper shortage. Above all, this meant the extensive use of reading aloud to small groups of soldiers.⁴⁴ Usually this was supposed to be accompanied by discussion. Today, the Rooms for Political Enlightenment are frequently selected for these reading sessions, although in time of war they occurred in the dugout or any other conveniently located place.⁴⁵

Another method of bringing literature to the troops was through the Military Publishing House issuance of special series designed for soldiers. One such series, entitled *Biblioteka "Ogonek,"* was being issued regularly with ten thousand copies per edition even before the war. The appearance in 1942 of Alexei Surkov's *Bo'shaya Voina (The Great War)*, a collection of poems about the war, marked the sixty-sixth volume in this series. Another series of 14 publications under the title *From Life at the Front* contained a variety of poems, short stories, and short novels, all dealing with military themes and bearing the names of some of the USSR's most distinguished writers.⁴⁶ Even more extensive was the series *Biblioteka Krasnoarmeitsa (Library of a Red Army Soldier)* which included straight propaganda tracts as well as various literary efforts such as Simonov's poem, *Son of an Artilleryman*. Among the unique features of these series were the convenient size of the booklets (usually four inches by six inches) permitting the servicemen to carry them in their pockets, and their extreme cheapness which encouraged the men to purchase them.⁴⁷

Many books not included in any series are also published for distribution to the soldiers by various publishing houses, generally written in simple language comprehensible even to the peasant.⁴⁸

The control and direction of literary writing is handled primarily by the Party authorities. An important mechanism is the special Military Commission, created during the war by the Praesidium of the Union of Soviet Writers. This Commission was set up to study the "literary manifestation of the Red Army and various military problems as they affected literature."⁴⁹ By December 1944, however, this Commission organized a discussion of "The Image of the Soviet Officer in the Literature of 1944" in which even so prominent an author as Konstantin Simonov found his leading characters in *Days and Nights* under fire.⁵⁰

FILMS

The political apparatus has Lenin's own assurance that "of all the arts, the most important for us is the film," and Stalin's belief that the film is "the greatest means of mass agitation."⁵¹ Beyond this, the Army political workers themselves have stressed several other advantages which they find in the cinema. First of all, in their "graphicness," films have even more force and effectiveness than posters and placards, because they can depict events in motion simultaneously with words.

As a propaganda device, the motion picture is preferable to the live theatre because it is more mobile and easier to display. A film and projector can be easily transferred from place to place and do not require a large cast nor a specially constructed building as does a theatrical production. Finally, a film can be issued in many copies, and is therefore cheaper and reaches a far larger audience than most other propaganda forms.⁵²

Despite the rapid expansion of the film industry, by the time war broke out in 1941, the Soviet's production of both movies and projection equipment was still entirely inadequate for the needs of its vast and widely displaced population. Since the urgency of the war situation gave the needs of the armed services paramount importance, films and projectors were nearly always in good supply in the armies, even though other segments of the population might lack them. Moreover, a new branch of cinematography was formed for the special purpose of servicing the film needs of the front lines and the military-training program.⁵³

The various studios producing scientific-popular and training films in Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Kiev, and Tashkent were converted to the production of "military-defense" moving pictures for the armed forces.⁵⁴ All the divisions and all the various military units were provided with film equipment and plenty of reels.⁵⁵ For each army on every front, there was set up a film base which distributed scores of educational movies and newsreels, as well as some artistic films.⁵⁶

The German invasion drastically depleted the amount of projection equipment and prevented the replacement of worn-out items, as well as destroying many of the film production centers and studios. According to the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the restoration of the cinema industry was supposed to have attained its prewar level by 1948, but in that year *Red Star* was still complaining that many isolated military garrisons had no movie facilities for the soldiers.⁵⁷ By 1951, however, the situation appeared to have improved with millions of rubles being spent annually to replace the Army's outmoded equipment and supply the military film fund with up-to-date movies. There was no longer criticism of a dearth of movie equipment; criticism was then concentrated upon the slow and haphazard use of films.⁵⁸

In order to arrange for the more efficient distribution and rotation of movie reels throughout the various branches of the armed services, each military district has a Film Supply Center under the direct supervision of the Political Administrations of the district.⁵⁹ The chiefs of the divisional political sections are responsible, both for the selection of films to be shown the local garrisons, and for making the actual application to the film center for the films.⁶⁰ They are also expected to sanction the plans for the showings, to see that such plans are fulfilled, and to ensure correct and full utilization of the films.⁶¹

The MPA plays a direct role in the utilization of the cinema by issuing detailed instructions to all the chiefs of the *politorgans* as to the kinds of moving pictures to be shown on specific occasions, such as the elections to the Supreme Soviet.⁶² The main burden for the planning of movie showings at the local level, involving questions in both movie content and method of display, however, lies upon the shoulders of the chiefs of the *politorgans* who are supposed to give it personal attention.⁶³ In carrying out the actual showings, of course, the chiefs are assisted by film technicians, who look after the mechanical ends of the operations and the physical equipment (projectors, screens, portable generators, and so forth), and by the local garrison staffs of agitators and propagandists.

In contrast to the numerous special movie theatres in the West, there are few movie houses in the Soviet Union, and less than 10 percent of the film projectors in use are installed in such theatres.⁶⁴ Instead, the overwhelming majority of films are shown in buildings which serve other purposes, such as

schools and clubs; in the case of the armed forces, the servicemen's clubs and the Houses of Officers are the two most frequently used locations.⁶⁵ The armed forces also have numerous portable projection units, mounted on trucks and equipped with special generators, even though the total number of such units is far from sufficient for their total needs. During the last war, portable projectors brought a vast number of films to the fighting men, and were often set up in open fields immediately behind the front lines of combat.⁶⁶

Because of the various locations where movies are most frequently shown, Army film audiences usually consist of small groups. Under battle conditions at the front, for example, it took 20 days to show the picture "She Defends the Fatherland" to an entire division.⁶⁷ The number of times that the servicemen have the opportunity to view movies seems to depend largely upon the initiative and energy of those in charge of the local film program. A minimum movie attendance by servicemen of three to four times per month is considered desirable, although actual film showings at a club or House of Officers are supposed to take place not less than eight to ten times in a single month.⁶⁸

The movies deemed suitable for Army use fall into several general categories, such as artistic, historical-revolutionary, popular-scientific, and chronicle-documentary films, and military-training shorts.⁶⁹ Obviously, most of the films in the above categories are equally appropriate for civilian audiences, although there appears to be a slight preponderance of movies on military themes in the armed services' film showings. Such films as "Stalingrad Battle," "The Defeat of the German Troops before Moscow," "The Destruction of Japan," "The Struggle for Our Soviet Ukraine," "Stalingrad," "Leningrad in Struggle," "Berlin," and "Parade of Victory," to name only a few, were considered effective means for arousing pride and confidence of victory in the hearts of soldier audiences and, at the same time, solidarity between the civilian and military elements of the population.⁷⁰

Of the films on nonmilitary themes, newsreels of Stalin's speeches before the Moscow Soviet, or at special parades on anniversary celebrations, have had especially wide distribution, and the Party press has made the usual claims that these inspired the men to "fresh feats of heroism."⁷¹ Other non-military movies shown to servicemen have themes on contemporary postwar problems, such as the rebuilding of the devastated occupied territories, the reconstruction of ruined factories and cities, the need to be on guard against foreign espionage, and "the conspiracies of the imperialist powers." All are expected to glorify "the high moral qualities" of Soviet citizens.⁷² Movies of this type are shown to Army personnel to arouse their vigilance in "guarding the creative conscious labor of the Soviet people" and the desire to defend their Fatherland.⁷³

Since films are not regarded as a means of providing idle entertainment, but rather as a channel for the inculcation of desired attitudes and responses, their purpose inevitably affects the manner in which they are shown to Army audiences. A cursory examination of film titles reveals that a goodly number of old films are being used side-by-side with more recent ones. Those who select the old films for reshowing, however, are warned to choose only those whose messages are still pertinent and whose themes correspond with contemporary tasks faced by the soldiers.⁷⁴

The selection of films for exhibition at any particular time is very seriously studied, under the strict control of the political apparatus. The entire film

supply, for example, must be re-examined every two months to make sure that any films recently criticized by the film censors have been removed.⁷⁵

From time to time, the MPA itself specifies the exact titles of films it wishes shown.⁷⁶ Special "movie evenings" on particular themes—such as the Fatherland, the Bolshevik Party, Lenin and Stalin, the Five-Year Plan, socialist construction, achievements of Soviet science, technology, culture, and art—are arranged at the clubs and Houses of Officers which the men attend, sometimes accompanied by their wives and families.⁷⁷ More elaborately organized by personnel of the Houses of Officers are the "movie festivals," which consist of whole series of films shown on consecutive days and dedicated to a specific end usually expressed in a propaganda slogan.

The themes of such movie festivals run the entire gamut of armed forces propaganda and include both military and nonmilitary subject matter. The following titles and slogans of movie festivals are a cross section of what the Red Army soldier views: "The Stalinist Plan for Remaking Nature," "The Soviet Union—a Country of Friendship and Fraternity of Peoples," "The USSR—the Country of the Greatest Scientific Discoveries,"⁷⁸ "Loyalty to the Military Oath Is the Sacred Duty of the Soviet Warrior,"⁷⁹ "Be a Patriot and Honorably Serve the Socialist Fatherland as Your Sacred Obligation,"⁸⁰ "Let Us Work Unceasingly to Perfect Our Military and Political Knowledge,"⁸¹ and "Military Friendship."⁸²

Mere showing of films is not enough, however. Every movie evening and movie festival is expected to be preceded, and followed, by talks by agitators and propagandists, and collective discussion of a film just viewed is usually demanded of the soldier audience. The agitators are expected to explain the "ideological essence" of a picture as a whole, to characterize the actors' roles, and generally to point up the political aspects of the film which might otherwise be overlooked by the audience. In the discussions after showings, the agitators answer questions raised by the men.⁸³ The more energetic agitators talk on forthcoming films a day or so before the scheduled showings, and sometimes they organize collective reading of the reviews of new films. In other instances, Party and Komsomol members may organize collective discussion of films in the subunits.⁸⁴

The Army press indicates that the Party's demands, concerning the utilization of films for propaganda purposes, are rarely achieved. Sometimes the blame is placed on the indifference of the personnel responsible for the film programs. Often the blame is put on the original film studios, directors, actors, and script writers who turn out "unsatisfactory products." In still other cases, the defects are directly attributed to the widespread devastation of the war which severely retarded the entire film industry in its production of new films, technical film supplies, and projection equipment.⁸⁵

Other complaints reveal that film distribution mechanisms often function inefficiently causing long delays before the servicemen see the most recent movies, or that scores of excellent popular-scientific films lie on the shelves unused, despite numerous applications for them to the Political Administration of the district.⁸⁶ Frequently the film showings are not advertised; often the showing of a film starts two hours later than announced, or is even postponed an entire day.⁸⁷

The selection of films for Army use also comes under frequent attack. There have been instances when the chief of a political section has delegated his responsibility for choosing films to the movie technician, with subsequent complaints from the Army men over the types of films shown or the complete lack of movie evenings and movie festivals.⁸⁸ Some film programs have failed to include standard film classics on military themes, such as "Ivan Nikulin — a Russian Sailor" or "Submarine T-9," despite requests for them; in other instances, programs have completely neglected films of the scientific-popular, technical, and documentary type.⁸⁹

An even more serious lapse betraying a "complete forgetfulness" of the "ideological and educational role" of the cinema was sharply criticized by *Red Star*, when it was discovered that officers stationed abroad were being shown foreign films "full of gangsters and stage girls, and praising adulterers."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, with all this criticism, the Soviet leaders continue to regard films as major propaganda media, and to invest large amounts of manpower and funds in it.

RADIO

The political workers regard radio as "a powerful weapon for ideological influencing of the masses," and one which has "an exceptionally great role in the political and cultural training of the Soviet soldiers."⁹¹ In fact, with the special safeguards political workers are able to impose as the result of broadcasting mechanisms, it has the special attraction of security as well as effectiveness.

Soviet radiobroadcasting facilities fall into three major categories. First, a group of Moscow stations occupies a central position in providing programs for the country as a whole over the usual transmitting mechanisms. On a secondary level, there are stations broadcasting from the republics and autonomous regions, and having a close relationship to the national central network from which they derive many of their programs for rebroadcast. Finally, there is a unique system of radio-relay exchanges which transmits programs from receiving and broadcasting stations to subscribers' speakers over wires rather than air waves. These exchanges also originate some programs of their own.⁹² Since regular radio sets in 1947 constituted only 18 percent of all radio-receiving equipment in the USSR,⁹³ it is obvious that the latter method of wired reception is of real significance, especially in the avenues of utilization open to it among certain homogeneous groups such as the armed forces.

Wired transmission restricts the listener to the one program being sent by the exchange. From the Soviet point of view, this makes wired radio a safe propaganda medium, for each program can be carefully checked and supervised. It has the added advantage of promoting the development of one specific kind of program for one specific type of audience, whereas the central and regional broadcasting networks must of necessity diversify their programming for mixed audiences. In addition, during wartime, the local wired radio exchanges have the special advantage of being able to continue to function without betraying their locations by signals audible to enemy planes, since actually these exchanges broadcast and maintain communication without being on the air waves.

Accurate information as to the exact number and type of radio equipment in use at the present time is difficult to procure, but a few general observations can nevertheless be drawn from scattered evidence in the military press. In 1939 Voroshilov announced that there were 350,000 radio-receiving points in the Army.⁹⁴ Not until 1948 did some isolated garrisons obtain any radio facilities,⁹⁵ but by 1949 *Red Star* was claiming that all military units, establishments, and study institutions had obtained receivers, and that a vast number of stationary radio-diffusion exchanges, radio receivers, and radio transmitters had recently been set up.

Each regiment theoretically has its own radio receiver which usually is carried in the vehicle of the political unit. Neither the officers nor the men have individual receivers for their personal use with the exception of the political workers. Instead the men listen collectively to programs over wired speakers.⁹⁷ These loud-speakers are located wherever the men are likely to congregate, such as in their barracks, the Rooms of Political Enlightenment, the officers' quarters, the mess halls, the clubs, and so forth, and they are turned on at every propitious moment, while the men are dining, and during their rest or recreational periods.⁹⁸ By this practice a minimum of equipment can serve a maximum audience.

The advantage of wired radio-diffusion exchanges in broadcasting to a homogeneous type of audience is particularly well illustrated in the armed forces, where special radio exchanges have been created in virtually every unit.⁹⁹ Such a specialized exchange can devote much of its programming to local problems and particular tasks assigned to its servicemen listeners. Its physical plant can also accompany the men, continuing to provide them with programs when the unit moves to camp or goes on maneuvers.¹⁰⁰ Responsibility for these Army radio relay exchanges is assigned to the chiefs of the political organs and the deputy commanders of the political units who are expected to give their personal attention to the selection of the programs to be transmitted by the exchange.¹⁰¹

The majority of the programs carried by these specialized military exchanges originate either at the central stations in Moscow or the stations at the republic or regional level, but the local exchanges are also expected to create and send out their own programs to their military audiences no less than twice a week.¹⁰² The central and regional stations provide many cultural and political programs, such as classical music, drama, discussions, and readings of literature. Talks about the general internal and external situation of the USSR, newscasts, and speeches of Party leaders, are often directed at the military forces in particular. For example, during the war, the Leningrad radio stations had a weekly program especially for the Baltic sailors, entitled "This is the Baltic Fleet," which was later copied by stations in Estonia and Latvia. Later a special series of 24 Navy broadcasts was created by the Leningrad station.¹⁰³ Sometimes there are broadcast readings from fiction on military themes for Army men.¹⁰⁴ "Radio letters" from soldiers at distant posts to their families in rural villages, and vice versa, saying they are well and happy are read over the air during wartime as a device to boost morale.¹⁰⁵

The programs originated by the local military radio exchanges in the units supplement this fare. While their work usually bears an amateurish stamp, it can have the advantage of being timely and attuned to specific local problems.

When the unit first moves to summer camp, the exchange presents talks by officers and men on experiences in camp and the problems of study in field conditions.¹⁰⁶ During wartime there are special programs on courage and patriotism just before the men go into the attack.¹⁰⁷

The local flavor of these exchanges is accentuated by having the unit's musical recreational groups perform, or by bringing the unit's top-ranking soldier in military or political studies before the microphone to tell his comrades the approved reasons for his success. The unit's officers and agitators give talks on special themes like the military oath, and pride in the socialist Fatherland and the Bolshevik Party.¹⁰⁸

In general, the political and educational programs carried by these military exchanges are clearly additional facets of oral agitation. Indeed, all of the personnel most closely concerned with oral agitation, including the deputy commanders, chiefs of clubs, the political organs, Party and Komsomol organizations in the armed forces, and the agitators and propagandists in the units, are expected to provide talks and other material for the programs.¹⁰⁹

The political workers in the unit are expected to draw up plans of proposed radio programs, subject to approval by the deputy commander. Theoretically this plan is to be displayed in a prominent place in the Room for Political Enlightenment, and speeches are supposed to be made about this plan in the sub-sections.¹¹⁰ It is the duty of the agitator to be familiar with the broadcasts from Moscow and the Soviet republic where the troops are stationed, and to select from their schedules the programs he feels the servicemen of his unit ought to hear. When talks will often be of interest only to certain elements among the troops (such as the rank and file, the officers, the sergeants, or the Party members), he must arrange for these special groups to "listen collectively" to these talks. Of course, Stalin's speeches were obligatory for all.

Organizing and assembling the men for "collective listening" is one of the agitator's most essential duties.¹¹¹ After a listening period, he is expected to help the audience to analyze what they have heard, to answer questions, to conduct talks in connection with previous radio broadcasts. As though these activities were not enough, he is supposed to check the mechanical condition of the local radio apparatus with the assistance of the radio technicians, making certain that it is always in good working order.¹¹²

It goes without saying that, in view of all their other duties outside of the sphere of broadcasting, the heavily burdened agitators and political personnel do not meet the standards in radio work, which are set for them in the Army. Almost every aspect of the performance of the military radio-relay exchanges has, at one time or another, received severe public censure in the press. Sometimes the charge is made that those responsible for conducting radio work among the servicemen are neglecting this propaganda medium or using it inadequately,¹¹³ or the charge is that radio equipment has been allowed to fall into disrepair, and yet the commanders and political workers remain indifferent to this serious situation.¹¹⁴ Often there is criticism of the actual content of the military exchanges' programs: they are lacking in ideological impact, are poorly worked out, and lack organization and planning.¹¹⁵ In most instances, these defects seem to be traceable to the fact that far too frequently the radio work in the units has been entrusted either to men who are already overloaded with other official duties or to personnel who are inadequately trained,¹¹⁶ such as the technical

radio men who have little or no knowledge of agitation techniques. To correct this last fault, the Political Administration of the Central Group of the Armies conducted a vigorous cleanup campaign among radio personnel in 1948, and issued special instructions on the organizing and planning of work at the radio-relay exchanges.¹¹⁷

ART MEDIA

The Theatre

In addition to the ordinary civilian theatres in all large population centers, a special network of Army and Navy theatres has been created. Every military district has at least one major theatre which produces dramatic presentations and spectacles especially for military audiences in its area.¹¹⁸

Standing above the local military theatres, and occupying a special position, is the Central Theatre of the Red Army in Moscow. The entire network of Army theatres in the military districts is oriented towards this Central Theatre which is supposed to be "an exemplary laboratory" creating the right kind of repertoire for all of the Army theatres.¹¹⁹ The Central Theatre also appears to have superior resources and personnel, for it can commission dramatists to write plays, and has better-known actors than the other military theatres.¹²⁰ The fact that the Central Theatre is directed by an officer with a high rank (Maj. Gen. S. I. Pasha) is another indication of its importance.

Supplementing the work of the military theatres are some of the more prominent civilian centers like the famous Bol'shoi Theatre in Moscow, and various institutes of dramatic art. Many of these civilian theatres give special programs for soldiers, and during the war their troupes went to the front lines to perform. The activities of a theatrical collective named "Moscow Literary Reading," whose members are students from the Lunacharsky State Institute of Theatrical Art are typical of civilian contributions to the Army's program. Without any scenery or stage properties, this group of young civilian actors travels about the country to read before Army audiences selected works of Russian classical literature and modern Soviet plays.¹²¹

Finally, the collectives of amateur artists in the military units also do some dramatic work, and in this they receive guidance and assistance from artists of the military and civilian theatres.¹²² In fact, in some instances these artists have actually been responsible for the original formation of the clubs and collectives of "artistic self-activity" in the armed forces.¹²³ Although most of the dramatic presentations are performed by professional actors attached either to the military or civilian theatres, the theatrical work of the collectives for "artistic self-activity" is done by amateurs.¹²⁴

Since the district military theatres are not always accessible to all the soldiers, their dramatic troupes frequently tour military installations and bring their performances to their audiences. This practice was very prevalent during wartime, especially by the "brigade artists" of the Central Theatre of the Red Army who frequently followed the troops to the front, or beyond the frontiers of the Soviet Union.¹²⁵ Since the end of the war, a dramatic theatre has been set up for occupation troops in Germany, where it is reported as showing plays of "great educational significance."¹²⁶

The MPA views the theatre, like any other medium, as a "school of ideological upbringing,"¹²⁷ and this belief is reflected in the types of plays deemed suitable for Army audiences. In general, the theatres are given a series of ideological objectives: to "generalize past glorious events . . . especially the recent war"; to demonstrate the progress of "socialist reconstruction"; "to show the modern soldier, and to expose the imperialist world as—under the guise of peace-loving diplomatic actions and agreements—it is actually preparing a new war." They are expected to show the Bolshevik version of "the best aspects of the Soviet officer and serviceman, and the special character of Soviet patriotism—the sources of the heroism and bravery of the Soviet soldier and officer, and of their ideological qualities."¹²⁸ Thus, while these theatres need not devote themselves to military themes alone, their center of attention is expected to be the problems of war and of the Army.

Typical of the kind of drama presented at the Army theatres and deemed suitable for soldier audiences, judging from the Army press and the prize awards, were L. Leonov's "Invasion," Chepurin's "Men of Stalingrad," A. Sofranov's "Moscow Character," A. Kuz'michev's "In Our Regiment," V. Vishevski's "Unforgettable 1919," N. Virta's "Conspiracy Doomed,"¹²⁹ and Korneichuk's significant play "The Front."^{*}

The theatres of the armed forces, like all other ideological media, have been accused of failing to perform their tasks of indoctrination. Since 1945, when the Central Committee of the Party issued its decree "On the Repertoire of the Dramatic Theatres and Measures for Its Improvement," there has been close critical scrutiny of the kind of plays presented, especially in the Central Theatre of the Red Army; at that time, the Central Theatre was charged with failure to present plays of a high ideological level, with grossly neglecting dramatic works on military themes, and with producing too few plays despite its excellent facilities. During the previous four years, it was declared, this theatre had produced only seven new shows; of these, only one new production was presented, and none at all appeared in 1946. The Central Theatre was also accused of neglecting Russian classics, while putting on foreign plays which the Central Committee characterized as containing "propaganda of reactionary bourgeois ideology and morality."¹³⁰

Two days after the charges appeared in *Red Star*, a special conference of the directors of Army and Navy theatres was held to discuss the Central Committee's decree and the Central Theatre's dramatic repertoire. Major General Pasha, the head of the Central Theatre, accepted as correct the criticism leveled at his organization. In addition the local political organs, declared responsible for providing leadership to their local military theatres, were reproved for a "negligent" attitude, and the Army and Navy press was accused of giving insufficient attention to these vital matters.¹³¹ The Navy Theatre, too, soon came in for its share of verbal chastisement.¹³² Since this initial eruption in 1946, even the theatrical critics for the military have come under fire. The denunciation of "antipatriotic actions" in the realm of theatrical activity have continued to be a cause for the concern of all military theatrical workers.¹³³

* The play is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Music

The utilization of music for political indoctrination and morale building parallels the extensive use of the mass communication media. The song-books issued to the servicemen illustrate how adaptable this form of music is to ideological propaganda purposes. A collection called *Songs of the Red Fleet* compiled, significantly enough, by a battalion commissar, contains such selections as a "Song about Stalin," "We Shall Be Like Lenin," "Red Fleet March," "Red Fleet Oath," and so forth.¹³⁴ Another typical and widely used songbook, issued by the State Musical Publishing House, contains a "Song about Stalin," "Song of Happiness" (describing the Soviet Union's size, power, and how happy it is), "Red Fleet Song," "Tankists' March," "Song of a Guerilla," "Song about Cossack Cavalry," "Song of Vengeance," "Moscow Song" (dealing with the defense of Moscow), "Song of the Front," and many others of a like genre.¹³⁵

Musical performances are provided for the service personnel by both civilian and military organizations, just as in the case of theatrical presentations. Of course, a great deal of classical music is broadcast over the wired radio system from the central Moscow stations. In addition, civilian and military orchestras, bands, and ensembles, as well as a large number of soloists attached to the largest civilian theatres, present concerts for Army men. This was especially true during wartime when many musical performers (thirty-two thousand of them, according to one statement) were sent to the front lines to give special musical performances to the troops.¹³⁶

Regular "Front Concert Brigades" were organized by the MPA of the Army, in cooperation with the USSR Commission on the Arts, to tour the various fighting fronts.¹³⁷ Many of the large civilian theatres, during both peace and war, have sent their opera and ballet troupes and other artists to visit military units; for its activities in this respect, the Bol'shoi Theatre was awarded the banner of the Military Ministry of the USSR.¹³⁸ In addition, civilian artists often provide valuable assistance to the musical collectives of "artistic self-activity" within the military units.¹³⁹ As in the case of other artists, the composers and musicians are under heavy pressure from the Party, and this involves all military personnel who deal with musical matters.¹⁴⁰

INSTITUTIONS FOR CULTURAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The political apparatus regards "cultural enlightenment" as a basic and significant form of political work and propaganda, and assigns a large part of its staff and funds to this area. The chief of the MPA, in signing a major directive on cultural-enlightenment work, warned those engaged in this field that their institutions must contribute "to the political, military, and cultural training of servicemen." They must be "in fact active transmitters of the ideas of the Communist Party, of the policies of the Soviet state, and of Soviet military ideology, as well as gardens of Socialist culture."¹⁴¹

Some idea of the prewar network of cultural-enlightenment institutions may be gathered from the statements of War Commissar Voroshilov, in his speech in 1939 to the Eighteenth Party Congress. He reported then that the annual

fiscal appropriations for enlightenment work had risen from 72 million rubles in 1934 to 230 million rubles in 1939. According to him (and to statistics released later), every platoon had its Red Table, offering periodicals and books for use by the soldiers, and exhibiting various posters and slogans. On the company level, there were some twenty-five thousand Lenin Corners, each equipped with publications and facilities for oral and graphic propaganda. Most battalions or regiments had their own clubs for their men, and there were almost two thousand officers' recreation quarters. In addition to these, there were nearly three hundred Red Army Centers in the large garrison cities, many agitation points at railroad stations and other places, and several thousand libraries.¹⁴²

In the postwar period, the numbers of these institutions and the scope of their facilities have probably increased, although few general statistics have been released. One index may be the contents of the libraries, which are not considered of great importance or given high priority in the expenditure of funds. The military libraries boasted of 12 million books in 1936, not counting tens of millions of pamphlets and large stocks of periodicals; their book supply was estimated at 25 million in 1939, and at 44 million at the end of 1948.¹⁴³

The extensive network of cultural-enlightenment personnel is under the general control of the professional political workers from the company level up to the MPA. At the very top is the MPA Section for Cultural-Enlightenment Institutions (headed by Colonel Tsaritsyn), which supervises the work, inspects facilities, and conducts the in-service training of cultural-enlightenment personnel through conferences and other means. In recent years, Tsaritsyn has been leading an energetic campaign to eradicate what the Party regards as major weaknesses in the work of the institutions, for which they have been under constant attack.

Although there have been many points of criticism, four stand out: (a) The activities conducted in the Army clubs and other institutions have not been sufficiently permeated with Communist propaganda. Colonel Tsaritsyn told a conference of cultural-enlightenment workers that "we are workers on the ideological front," and therefore "we must . . . direct all our forces toward the training of the Soviet warriors in the spirit of Bolshevik ideology." He complained that too many theatrical productions and concerts "often suffer from apoliticalness and a lack of ideological quality," while some clubs, theatres, and Officers' Houses "have gone along the path of naked, empty entertainment."¹⁴⁴ (b) The cultural-enlightenment institutions often fail to give continuous and meaningful aid to those studying Marxism, Soviet policies, and military science. There are frequent charges that few lectures are given on Marxist-Leninist theory, that little attention is given to students of military matters, and that the cultural institutions rarely use their exhibits and other facilities to aid in the achievement of the military tasks of the units to which they are attached.¹⁴⁵ (c) There are frequent charges that the buildings and rooms in which the cultural institutions are housed are not kept in good order, the facilities are poorly utilized, and that state funds are carelessly expended and sometimes wasted.¹⁴⁶ (d) The political organs are under constant attack because they fail to maintain the desired degree of control and supervision over the housing of these institutions, the selection of their personnel, the making of plans for the cultural-enlightenment institutions, and the proper execution of those plans.¹⁴⁷

Servicemen's Institutions

There is a three-level system of cultural-enlightenment institutions open to all servicemen: the great Houses of the Soviet Army (or Navy), the regimental clubs, and the company Rooms of Political-Enlightenment Work. The largest individual structures, of course, are the Houses of the Soviet Army, which service the personnel of an entire military district and are showplaces in the great garrison cities. The most famous of these are the Frunze Central House of the Red Army in Moscow, and the Kirov House of the Red Army in Leningrad. Both are housed in imposing buildings, in which extensive military exhibitions are held, many films shown, frequent lectures given, large schools operated, and many other forms of political work conducted.¹⁴⁸ There are several other such Houses controlled by the armed forces, but none on such an elaborate scale.¹⁴⁹

The Moscow or Leningrad Houses of the Red Army might be visited by a serviceman once in his lifetime; they cater largely to officers. Much more important to the private, as a center of his week-end recreation, is the regimental club. Here are centered the sports programs, the amateur art circles in dramatics, music, and other fields, the film showings, and the exhibits and posters on military and political affairs. The club contains the regimental library, recreation rooms for chess and other games, the headquarters of the unit's radio exchange, and the regimental hall for lectures, meetings, and shows. The regimental club and its various facilities are in the charge of a professional staff of political workers, supported by a large number of activists, who are usually Communists or Komsomols assigned by the Party organizations to do the multitude of tedious and minor tasks connected with the club's affairs.¹⁵⁰

Most familiar to the servicemen of all the cultural institutions is the company Room of Political-Enlightenment Work. It is expected to provide relaxation and edification after the men complete their service obligations, when they come to listen to the radio, play chess, talk with friends, or read the latest newspapers.¹⁵¹ Around the room are various types of slogans and other propaganda, including many pictures, presumably relating to the company's military tasks and accomplishments. These may include, for example, shields showing the grades and records of individual soldiers and platoons in military and political training, and slogans publicizing the latest aspects of the Party line in political and military matters.¹⁵²

Above all, however, the ideal Room of Political-Enlightenment Work is the scene for much propaganda and agitation. Party men read aloud selected articles and editorials from the newspapers and magazines, and emphasize the points to be remembered. Platoon leaders discuss problems of their units and give (what are supposed to be) inspirational talks, calling on the men to improve the quality of their performance in military training and scolding the men with poor records. Many meetings on military and political themes, and company flag and other ceremonies are held here. Many study and amateur art circles hold their sessions in the same place. Finally, the agitators are able to find their audiences here, and they hold the group discussions and give their talks on numerous political and military subjects.¹⁵³

The Houses of Officers

Immediately after the end of World War II, the Soviet military administration returned to its former policy of setting aside some of the Red Army Houses

in the large garrison cities and centers of military districts, and designating them for the exclusive use of the officers. *Red Star* explained this move by stating that "under present conditions of cultural-enlightenment work, it is necessary to have a sharp differentiation and separation" between groups.¹⁵⁴ The Officers' Houses appear to have three major functions.

First, the Houses are centers for recreation and leisure-time activities of the officers and their families. This point, incidentally, was stressed by representatives of the MPA in a conference called for chiefs of Officers' Houses. The latter were warned that they must not forget about such measures as "Family Nights," balls, mass games, group singing "of popular Soviet and older people's songs," and amateur art circles. Too many of the latter, it was charged, limited their activities to "boring and monotonous meetings."¹⁵⁵

Many of the Officers' Houses have restaurants, film-exhibiting facilities, and game rooms. In a "Family Night" held by one Officers' House, the members had their choice of a play put on by the drama circle, a musicale in which dancers, singers, and an orchestra took part, dancing or participating in mass games, or playing chess, checkers, or dominoes.¹⁵⁶ In addition to the family activities, there are special circles for officers' wives, dealing with child welfare and related matters.¹⁵⁷

A second major function is related to the serious study and training of the officers. In many ways, the Officers' Houses serve as centers for off-duty educational activities. Many of them have organized special classes and even general schools to give their members who have not had much formal education an opportunity to correct this deficiency, or to prepare them for entrance examinations in the military schools and academies. In addition, there are groups studying military science and discussing military developments in many Officers' Houses.¹⁵⁸

Finally, and most important for the political apparatus, the Officers' Houses are key institutions in the dissemination of political propaganda. Considerable pressure is placed on directing staffs to arrange frequent lectures on Marxist-Leninist theory and related topics, and the members are expected to turn out in full force for these. In addition, there are speeches and lectures on domestic policy, international affairs, and military matters. Indicative of the political functions of the Houses are the Evening Universities of Marxism-Leninism, many of which are held in the Officers' Houses, and the extensive work done by the Houses during electoral and other political campaigns.¹⁵⁹

The Tashkent House of Officers has been commended for its work, especially in the field of propaganda and political study. During 1949, its staff arranged nearly six hundred lectures to be given in the House or in other buildings convenient to officers of the Tashkent Military District. Many of the lectures were directly related to the required studies of the members and to their Marxist-Leninist training, while others were concerned with pointing out Soviet successes in "the construction of communism," in proving the "superiority" of the socialist structure over the capitalist system, and in explaining the Party line in international politics. The House is reported to have an active Evening University of Marxism-Leninism, special offices for aid to those doing independent study in any one of many fields, a library of nearly one hundred thousand books, and a large, active nonstaff lecture group.¹⁶⁰

A typical activity of a House of Officers was an exhibit dedicated to the slogan of "The Peoples of the World Will Not Permit the Anglo-American

Brigands to Unleash a New World War.' In connection with the exhibit, there were numerous lectures, showings of films, compilations of articles and books, and presentation of cartoons, pictures, and other graphic materials.¹⁵¹

Agitational Points and Agit-Machines

The political apparatus is not content with the dissemination of propaganda while the servicemen are in their regular quarters. For those soldiers and officers who are travelling, special "agitational points" have been established at important river and railway stations, and similar places. Rooms are set aside there, supervised by professional political workers,¹⁶² and containing posters and other graphic materials, books and newspapers, agitators who give informal talks on political subjects, and information booths.¹⁶³

When the troops are at summer camp or in field maneuvers, at the front lines during wartime, or being subjected to an electoral or some other type of political campaign, the usual propaganda facilities are not considered adequate. At such times, therefore, "agitational machines" are equipped by the Party organizations or political organs, and sent into the field. One such agit-machine, sent out during an electoral campaign, was plastered with pictures of construction projects and other scenes, portraits of Stalin, and slogans calling on all viewers to vote for the "Stalinist bloc of Communist and non-Communist candidates." In addition, the machine had books and brochures for distribution, a concert group of singers and dancers, and several Communists to give political talks.¹⁶⁴ There are several other types of machines, including one with a radio (transmitting broadcasts from Moscow stations), film projector, and library, which visits the men during summer camp, or follows them into the field during military campaigns in wartime.¹⁶⁵

Libraries and Librarians

The staff members of the cultural-enlightenment institutions are under considerable pressure to make their contributions to political work in the armed forces, even when this seems far-fetched or difficult. Typical is the position of the librarians who have been under increasing pressure as their work has grown in importance in recent years.¹⁶⁶

Military libraries exist in divisional and regimental units and their equivalents, as well as in military academies and similar institutions and in the Officers' Houses. A typical library in an Officers' House may have as many as twenty-five thousand books, while the regimental libraries usually average from 2500 to 4000 volumes.¹⁶⁷ During the years of the war, some 256,800 portable libraries, each containing 30-40 books, accompanied units to the front lines,¹⁶⁸ and a considerable number of other books and pamphlets were dispatched to the servicemen at this time. The Navy also has its share of library installations, most of them at the fleet level and at naval bases.¹⁶⁹

The military libraries appear to be heavily stocked with the standard classics of Marxism-Leninism, the works of Lenin and Stalin, the history of the Communist Party, books about the history of "the Socialist Fatherland," technical and scientific publications, especially those dealing with military matters, and the approved works of the Russian classical authors.¹⁷⁰

A major development of the postwar period has been the Party's drive to make propaganda and indoctrination the primary function of the Army library system. In a front-page editorial in 1948, *Red Star* stated that "library work is an integral part of our many-sided activity in the communist upbringing of soldiers of the Soviet Army and Fleet. It is necessary that the work of the libraries be indissolubly connected with those political and military tasks which stand before the Armed Forces of the USSR and actively assist in the successful resolution of these tasks."¹⁷¹ Since 1946, the directing librarians have been increasingly those selected from the ranks of the political officers. The MPA now takes a direct interest in library affairs, through conferences and directives.¹⁷² Continuing supervision is provided by senior instructors for library operations, who are attached to the Political Administration of each military district.¹⁷³

The decision to select political officers for library posts brought many problems in its train, some stemming from the fact that many of the new chief librarians knew nothing about how a library should be operated. Special correspondence courses had to be set up to train these men in library techniques. In the Prikarpatzki Military District, for example, all the chiefs of the libraries were undergoing this correspondence training in 1947 and 1948. Some of the first to complete the courses were then reassigned to the correspondence divisions of institutions of higher learning to teach what they had just learned to others who followed. In the Eastern-Siberian Military District 75 percent of all the chiefs of libraries were starting correspondence study, and a similar state of affairs prevailed also in the Northern Caucasian Military District.¹⁷⁴

In the political system, the military libraries' activities are hardly confined to keeping a ready supply of books on hand. The librarian is expected to direct and guide readers along desirable channels.¹⁷⁵ The librarians also organize readers' conferences at monthly intervals, set up exhibits on political subjects, provide consultations for puzzled readers, and prepare special bibliographies.¹⁷⁶ So important have these political propaganda functions become that they have come to overshadow all other activities of the military libraries and appear to be the sole criterion by which the worth of library work is judged.¹⁷⁷ Most of the articles in the military press concerning the libraries deal with the use of their facilities for propaganda purposes.¹⁷⁸

There are many complaints that the library system is not functioning on the level demanded by the political apparatus. Many of the older librarians, while familiar with efficient library techniques, appear to lack systematic ideological-political training, while the new political personnel seem unable to manage the technical end of library work. Not enough is being done to provide guidance to the readers, so that only 2.5 percent of the books withdrawn by readers deal with natural science and technology, and only 10 percent with military subjects.¹⁷⁹ This is considered a reflection of the fact that a "significant number" of the library staffs have not even finished their middle schooling, much less had any specialized library training,¹⁸⁰ and thus are quite unready to provide the required guidance to the soldiers.

Part V

SPECIAL PROPAGANDA FORMS
APPLIED TO FOUR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

Chapter 13

THE SOLDIERS¹

PROPAGANDA CONTEXT IN THE LIGHT OF OBJECTIVES AND SERVICE CONDITIONS

A well-oriented evaluation of propaganda for the Soviet soldiers must take into account the basic Bolshevik objectives, the context in which the audience lives, and the propagandists themselves. It is true, of course, that an exact and complete description of these factors cannot be found in the available data, since this would require, among other things, a precise statement of the Politburo's ideas of military strategy and of the national characteristics of the Soviet peoples. Nevertheless, some factors should be discussed to make an analysis of propaganda meaningful.

The basic elements of Soviet military strategy which bear on the position of the individual soldier call for overwhelming the enemy by massive, repetitious, and eventually irresistible blows, or a defense in depth against the maximum pressure of the enemy, followed by vast encircling movements of the Soviet troops.² This type of strategy demands a vast reservoir of human manpower, and needs men on the front lines willing and able to perform their tasks, so disciplined that they will execute their instructions under all circumstances, and fatalistic enough to risk death if they are so ordered (and the Soviet leaders are not reluctant to give such orders). This is the background for the famous statements made to General Eisenhower by Marshal Zhukov, which led the former to write: "The Russians viewed measures to protect the individual against fatigue and wounds as possibly too costly. Great victories, they seemed to think, inevitably require huge casualties."³

It is obvious that the people can provide the numbers needed, under normal war conditions at any rate, for a steady inflow of raw recruits into the armed forces. It is far more difficult, however, to train the civilian so that he will become a disciplined and skillful soldier who is obedient to authority and who never rebels against the slaughter of his fellows or against instructions which place him in great danger. It is true that outwardly, at least, the Russians have traditionally been passive and obedient. Russian soldiers used to be referred to as "the little grey animals,"⁴ and as one foreign student of the Soviet Army put it, "dull fatalistic nameless masses of them died on the battlefield, century after century."⁵ When he was asked what he considered the Russian leaders' chief asset, the German General Dittmar replied:

I would put first, what might be called the soulless indifference of the troops—it was something more than fatalism. They were not quite so insensitive when things went badly for them, but normally it was difficult to make any impression on them in the way that would happen with troops of other nations.⁶

It is important to understand however, that this seeming passivity does not mean self-imposed and permanently maintained discipline. It signifies, rather, an acceptance of legal disciplinary regulations, of public rules of conduct, and of attitudes imposed from above—so long as certain conditions pertain. Whether these rules were imposed by a Tsarist government or a Bolshevik dictatorship, there has usually been an outward show of acceptance with little surface expression of emotion, but this has characteristically been accompanied by sullenness, constant testing of authority in petty violations of regulations, and, from time to time, explosions of sharp resistance and rebellion with violent and often senseless destruction. Anyone who studies the Russian people and their history can find innumerable references to incidents when seemingly passive peasants suddenly flared up in wild and violent outbursts of arson and murder, such as the great Pugachev and other peasant rebellions.⁷

The system created by the Soviets in their effort to secure firm and un-deviating discipline within their armed forces is, of course, manifold and complex. There is a constant flow of propaganda setting forth requirements and regulations and explaining why they must be met, striving through sheer repetition to wear away doubts or resistance and make discipline and obedience habits. Every man is conscious of a never-ending pressure upon him from several agencies of the state that constantly watch him, judge his actions, and punish every failure to meet standards set for him. He is aware, or made aware, of the operations of the secret police units, the military tribunals, the Communist Party units, and even the group pressures stemming from the units to which he belongs.

This is the "normal" propaganda, the accompaniment to the pressure exerted upon the soldier to stay in the ranks, to hold his place, to do his duty without question or deviation. Applied with monotonous regularity, it relies upon the power of authority, the persuasiveness of repetition, and the futility of trying to hold independent views when the state maintains a monopoly of the media that shape public opinion. This kind of propaganda is typified by the techniques used in the system of political-training classes. There is another type, used primarily in crisis situations, which employs special emotional appeals to sweep aside normal inhibitions and instincts of self-protection, such as "hate" propaganda, the threat of violence and the use of violence.

What is the position of the soldier during "normal" times? It is important to keep in mind the tension and pressure which are intended to convince him that he has no alternative but to try to become an efficient and skillful soldier. Beyond this, the circumstances and conditions under which he must live are hard but not intolerable, and can be accepted by him as just and equitable in view of the conditions under which he knows civilians live and those under which he is told that non-Soviet citizens live.

Discipline is harsh, even in comparison to that imposed on soldiers of other armies,⁸ but the Soviet soldier shows few signs of rebelling for this reason.⁹ His standard of living is low, but he knows that his food, clothing, lodging, and other basic needs are met on a higher level than that enjoyed by most Soviet citizens and, he is told, higher than that of most people throughout the world.¹⁰ He knows that as a soldier he enjoys respect and even some popularity in his country, that his external appearance (symbolized by his uniform and his physical health) is superior to that of his fellow citizens, and that he can be con-

fidant that his living standards, minimal though they may seem to some people, will be maintained and just complaints about them considered.

It is significant that the political apparatus takes special pains to watch the complaints about the maintenance of this minimum standard. The political workers are frequently warned that this is an important subject for their attention:

The most important principle of Bolshevik guidance demands the closest, inseparable connection, with the masses. The political organs are obligated to know how the warriors live, eat, and drink, to study the concerns and political moods of the personnel. Unswervingly fulfilling the orders of Comrade Stalin, they must concern themselves constantly with the daily needs and food of the soldiers, sailors, sergeants, and master sergeants. They must give intensive attention to making sure that the military servicemen are satisfied with the way in which the basic needs are met, and must take measures for removal of deficiencies in the material and basic servicing of the Soviet warriors.¹¹

Through the public media, at least, the soldiers are encouraged to voice their complaints, particularly with respect to the condition of their food, housing, and recreational facilities. Some of these complaints, when sent to the Army newspapers, are published and followed up with assurances that the complaints have been studied and satisfied.¹²

In summary, then, the soldier lives in an atmosphere of heavy pressure from the state, which demands that he submit without resistance to the requirements of the Army, and threatens punishment if he fails to perform those requirements fully and efficiently. Through the perpetual propaganda deluge, he is told of the unshakeable power of the state and the uselessness of considering any challenge to it; he is warned that all the agencies and auxiliaries of the state are watching his actions and will help to punish him for any misdeeds; and he is appealed to, in the names of the country, nation, family, hatred, and fear, to do his duty with enthusiasm.

The basic training techniques appear to require intensity, strict control by the authorities, and repetition. In military training, for example, the soldier works intensively and continuously (six days a week throughout the year, with longer hours per day than his counterpart in the West), under conditions that closely simulate combat conditions and employ live ammunition and hard marches.¹³ The same characteristics of intensity, repetition, and strict control are found in the soldier's political training.

NEW SOLDIERS

The young man who enters the military service is usually no stranger to military training and militarism, especially if he has had an urban background. For a decade or more before his induction, he was exposed to militarist ideas and had participated in semimilitary activities. His teachers in elementary school were told that: "Properly understood, militarization must be applied from the first classes in school, and should show itself in strict and consistent attention to outward appearance . . . conduct of children at lessons and out of school, the form of addressing teachers, and the prompt and exact carrying out of the orders of teachers, and other leaders."¹⁴

The Soviet leaders had made an intensive effort to insert military concepts and ideals in the cultural influences to which the new soldier had been exposed.

The Propaganda Administration of the Party's Central Committee, for example, told writers that: "It is the highly noble task of Soviet literature to educate the people, and especially our youth... in the spirit of the great military traditions of the Soviet people, in the spirit of willingness of every Soviet individual to fulfill his military duty."¹⁵ In return, the Party-controlled Union of Writers promised to continue the war theme in literature, declaring that: "We must write of war, so that the generation of young people that comes after us can love arms and be ready for struggle and victories."¹⁶ The schoolboy's fictional heroes and the national leaders, ranging from Alexander Nevski to Lenin and Stalin,¹⁷ were painted in military colors.

When the young man reached his adolescent years, the semimilitary training was sharply increased. In his school's middle grades, beginning with the eighth class (when he was fifteen), at least one week of military training per year was required, and when he completed the ninth class, he attended a 20-day summer camp. He was given a total of two years of military training "to instill in the youth an unlimited devotion to the Socialist Fatherland and the Party of Lenin and Stalin, and to give them the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary to the private soldier."¹⁸ Throughout this period, the young man was also given physical training and was encouraged to take an active part in athletics and sports.

Most important were his activities in the semimilitary defense organization *DOSAARF* (All-Union Society for Assistance to the Armed Forces), or its predecessors, the All-Union Societies for Assistance to the Army (*DOSARM*), for Assistance to the Navy (*DOSFLOT*), and for Assistance to the Air Force (*DOSAV*). Originally established after the Russian Civil War, in the early twenties, these societies were combined into the *Osoaviakhim* (Society for Aid to Defense, the Air Fleet, and Chemical Defense) in 1927, re-established as separate agencies in 1948, and reunited in 1952.

The major tasks of *DOSAARF* are the dissemination of military knowledge, development of special skills needed for military operations, and the development of defense preparation. Millions of men and women are taught to use the rifle and other firing arms, and thousands are trained in radio skills, gliding and other phases of aeronautical sciences, the handling of small water craft, and many other military matters. During World War II, millions of *Osoaviakhim's* members (there were 11 million in 1931 and 30 million in 1939) served in the armies or in the Partisan units; tens of thousands were among winners of awards and medals, and two hundred were given the highest award as Heroes of the Soviet Union. Today the defense society works closely with the armed forces under the direction of the Party, and is supported by most mass organizations, especially the trade unions and the Komsomol.¹⁹

In addition to the military skills developed in the period before a young man's induction into the armed forces, he was exposed in the defense society to a good deal of military and political propaganda. He was expected to learn military traditions, the names and deeds of Russian and Soviet heroes, and even the records of some units. He was given some explanation for the great expenditure in material wealth and manpower for military reasons, especially in terms of the "capitalist encirclement" and the dangers of war. Moreover, it should be remembered that the defense society is known as a "voluntary" people's organization; with the prohibition of political parties other than

the CPSU, the society is used to disseminate political propaganda. For example, it undertakes extensive propaganda work during the electoral campaigns and on days honoring the military services, such as Navy Day, Tank Day, and Artillery Day.²⁰ It is interesting to note that one of the members of the All-Union Electoral Commission is Col. Gen. F. F. Kuznetsov, head of the MPA, who was nominated for this post by DOSARM, the Society for Assistance to the Army.²¹ The voluntary organization also does much of the political work on other subjects among its special audiences.

For these and related purposes, the members of the society attend regular meetings of the branches, hear many informal group talks and several more formal lectures, see films and posters, and are expected to read brochures, pamphlets, and the organs of the societies. The magazines include a biweekly *Patriot of the Homeland*, a monthly *Military Knowledge*, and others. Some concept of the scope of these programs can be gathered from the first semi-annual report of the DOSAV, which claimed that some forty-eight thousand lectures and talks were given under its auspices in the latter half of 1948, and over 1 million copies of posters and other graphic material disseminated.²²

Even before he was inducted into the armed forces, the young man came into active relations with the military authorities. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, depending on whether he was going to school at the time and on his birthday, he registered with the appropriate military commissariat. Here his record, and those of his family and his region, were carefully studied by security and political agencies, to determine whether he would be accepted for any military service, or whether his service would be limited in some way for security reasons. For several years after World War II, for example, those who had lived under German occupation were regarded as questionable; in addition, many minority groups apparently feel discriminated against because of their ethnic origin.²³ The soldier-candidate is also given a physical examination, which is apparently very superficial.²⁴

If he passes these tests, the young man reports for duty at the military commissariat in the fall of his nineteenth year. During the period that he is being processed, the recruit is the object of attention from the Political Section and the Party branch in the commissariat and the local Party branch; they assign propagandists to talk to him, answer any questions he may have, and prepare him for the events to come. Usually they give short informal talks on why the recruits have been called to service, on the "honor" of the serviceman, and the need for discipline and observance of military regulations.²⁵ Once processed through induction, the new soldier is usually sent to a basic training unit, where he is placed in a small detachment under the charge of a company commander and a political officer. Here he is subjected to an extremely rigorous program of physical exercise, military training, and political education. The emphasis in the latter phase is apparently placed on security matters and political behavior, and the soldier's political training is begun.²⁶

When the soldier arrives at his first military assignment, upon completion of basic training, he is supposed to be the object of special attention by the political workers, and the Communist and Komsomol organizations. An effort is made to help him get adjusted, learn the most important regulations, and understand particularly the significance of the military oath which he has taken. The initial phase of political work is often a series of *besedy*, or informal talks,

on "The Military Oath—Law of Life of the Red Army Soldier," in which, with many examples, the warrior is told how he must fulfill the oath, even if it means the loss of his life. In the adjustment period in a model battalion, members of the Komsomol will be assigned "to surround the new soldier with attention, advice, and help," especially in such matters as helping him with his uniform, learning the use of the rifle, and so forth.²⁷

The newcomer is also briefed on the traditions of his new outfit, and an effort is made to stimulate interest in his military unit. One Komsomol branch was complimented for its work in this field:

In the battalion where Comrade Sveshnikov is the Komsomol organizer, a group of new warriors had arrived. On the instructions of the Komsomol branch, Agitators Mokrousov, Kochurin, and others began to conduct talks with them on the first day. In lively and attractive fashion, they told about the heroes of the unit, about its military history, and its victories. In the young Red Army men there was developed a sense of pride for the regiment to which they had come to do their military service.

This is of no little importance and significance. A man who has respect for his military family will never let it down. The agitators at the same time acquaint the newcomers with the order established within the Army and with the obligations of the warrior.²⁸

During wartime, attention to the newcomer is supposed to be intensified before his first battle. Agitators, often selected from the young men in the Komsomol units, are assigned to each newcomer, to help him to prepare for the battle, to emphasize the tasks that must be accomplished during the battle, and to give advice on anything that troubles the newcomer. One major objective is to "give him the feeling that he is not alone, that his comrades are supporting him, and that the 'collective' is watching out for him."²⁹ The Komsomol agitator assigned to help him will promise to be with him when the fighting begins, and to help him whenever he needs it.³⁰

Wartime instructions to the agitator stress the need for imparting the sense of security and strength that comes with the feeling of participation in a large group:

The feeling of the collective is an exalted feeling. When the soldier hears the voice of the Communist-agitator calling him forward, when he is given a pamphlet which tells him about a hero, when he receives advice at a difficult moment from a more experienced comrade or hears the encouraging words in an order by Comrade Stalin, when he is told about the successes from the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau—all this arouses in his consciousness the sense that he is a member of a powerful collective, the Red Army, which is destroying the German usurpers. And such an awareness does much to help a man become a hero.³¹

When the battle is over, the agitators are expected to survey the situation and take any necessary steps. When novices show fright during the fighting, an effort is made to get the men to talk freely and confess their fears. Frequently this will be followed by a friendly talk in which the veterans point out that they too are tense in battle, but they still do their duty, and the newcomers are encouraged to do better. For those men who do well in their first battle, there is encouragement and praise, and sometimes the Communist and Komsomol members report the bravery to the commander and often send letters to friends of the man, telling of his fine deeds.³²

SYSTEM OF POLITICAL-TRAINING CLASSES

Over-all Characteristics

Like many other aspects of the armed forces, the Bolshevik political institutions have gone through a long period of development from the un-planned and often disorganized methods of the early post-Revolutionary period to the present highly organized, and strongly centralized, techniques. In the early days, the political apparatus on the lower levels consisted largely of the commissars, who were quite autonomous in the execution of their duties, and who relied almost entirely upon the Communists in their military units. They gave short, vigorous, and highly emotional talks whenever they seemed appropriate, taking basic themes from the local press, but developing them in their own ways and in their own language. Today, there are many types of propaganda, utilizing all the major media and employing many trained propagandists; these combine into a far-reaching and most intensive organization.

The core of this organization's operations among the soldiers is the system of political-training classes (*politicheskie zanyatiya*). A highly institutionalized and rigidly controlled system, its forms, methods, and themes are worked out by the MPA and are closely supervised by the middle and lower levels of the political apparatus. The present system slowly developed from the early years of individual and small-group talks, but most of its characteristics were in existence by the period preceding the second World War. There was much dissatisfaction with its effectiveness in those years, as the official directive on "Political Study by Red Army Men and Junior Commanders" for the 1938-39 year plainly stated:

Because of some political organs' and unit commissars' failure to give concrete and daily leadership and attention to political training, scholasticism and petty tutoring are to be found in many units. Political training has been transformed from a powerful means for Bolshevik education of the Red Army men into tedious wordiness.³³

During the prewar period, the major themes in political-training classes were "Our Fatherland" and "The USSR and the Countries of Capitalism" for first-year soldiers, and "The History of the Peoples of the USSR" for second-year soldiers. A total of 230 hours per year was used for these classes, an average of three sessions of two hours each per six-day week in the winter months, and two sessions per week in the summer months.³⁴ These class sessions were supplemented by official explanations of the government's and Party's political policies.³⁵ In the early and middle years of the war, the classes were replaced by "political talks," presented, whenever conditions permitted, on the basis of specific instructions from the higher levels of the political apparatus.³⁶

By 1944, however, the MPA ordered the restoration of political classes in most supply, training, and reserve units, and later throughout the entire Army, full time and began the training of class leaders through a network of seminars.³⁷ For more than three years after this decree was issued, the MPA leaders showed, by their sharp criticism in the public press, that they were very dissatisfied with the disorganized conditions existing in, and the ineffective methods used by, the entire system of political-training classes.³⁸

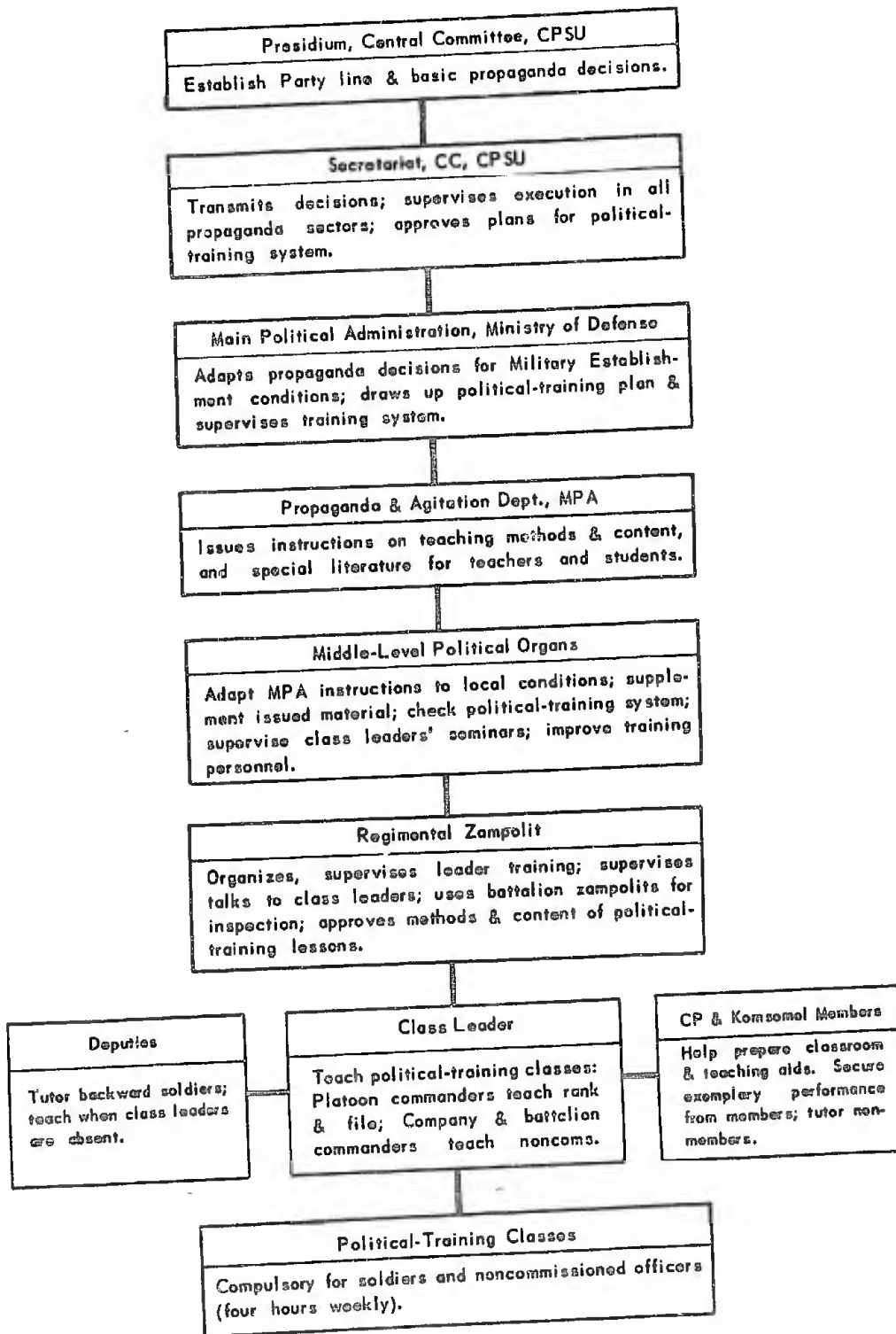


Fig. 10—The Hierarchy for Political-Training Classes

The MPA addressed itself seriously to the solution of these problems. In 1946-47, it issued a unified plan for the entire system of political-training classes, insisting that all class leaders use the same list of themes, the same timetables, and the same approved methods, and strengthening its system of supervision and control.³⁹ During the same year, the institution of the assistant leader of the political-training classes was restored, to provide more direct and immediate support to the class leaders.⁴⁰

The framework of the present system was now complete, and its main features have remained fairly clear. Each class has a small group of twenty-five or thirty men, all usually coming from the same platoon,⁴¹ who usually meet twice weekly for two hours per session. In 1946 and 1947, the plan called for a total of 170 hours of class work per year. Attendance at the political-training classes is compulsory for all soldiers.⁴² An ideal pattern of operations was established, indicating themes for the classes and providing for an introductory talk, "independent" study, class discussion, and a summary by the class leader.

In the first part of its work on each theme, the class hears a talk in which the class leader introduces the theme and shows its connection with other important aspects of political training, indicates the essential points to be studied and understood, and states the vital questions which each must be able to answer eventually. He is expected to combine an emphasis on the major aspects of each lesson with repeated stress on the importance of such fundamental virtues as loyalty, enthusiasm, and efficiency.⁴³

Very heavy stress is placed upon the ability of the political leader to hold his audience, even if it means departure from the approved text of his talk. One leader was commended for noting, in the middle of a talk which had seemed to be going very well, that "the attention of the audience had begun to weaken and it was showing signs of fatigue." He immediately interrupted his talk with a story about heroism in the recent war, and when he saw that a soldier in his audience had guessed the name of the hero, turned to the class member for some remarks. The audience "revived," and he was able to finish the talk with full attention, illustrating how "one episode," introduced in time into the talk, had stimulated the audience to proper behavior and had helped to explain one of the basic problems of the theme.⁴⁴

In the second stage of work on a major theme, the class will often, although not always, devote a special session to "independent" reading and study. In such sessions, the class guide is expected to emphasize the fundamental points which the students should keep in mind. He must also prepare them for their reading by explaining difficult words that they are likely to encounter, and aid the backward students in every way possible.⁴⁵ Each man is expected to make notes on his own reading and study, and to know them.

Graphic aids and other media are sometimes used to explain important points in the themes.⁴⁶ In addition to the formal classwork, soldiers are given further assistance in their regimental library and in the company Room for Political-Enlightenment Work. Sometimes Party and other agitators discuss the theme with them, read to them fiction and other literature related to each theme, and find out how each soldier is doing and what questions need to be answered for him.⁴⁷

To complete its work with a theme, the class may have a discussion period in which everyone is expected to participate, with much "lively" talk, answering of questions posed by the teacher, and "deepening" of the knowledge already attained. The class leader closes the study of the theme with a short lecture, emphasizing the major points to be remembered.⁴⁸ At the end of the study year, the class undergoes a process called "the testing of progress," which is theoretically a stock-taking discussion. A list of questions, drawn up by the class leaders, is examined and approved by the deputy regimental commander for political affairs. When the class session begins, an examining commission gives these questions to the students, and hopes to begin a "lively discussion." Each soldier is then given a grade reflecting his understanding of the basic premises of each theme and his ability to express them in his own language.⁴⁹

Personnel and Mechanics

The men who guide the political-training classes are regarded, in the words of *Red Star*, "as not simply teachers of political grammar, but primarily as political agents."⁵⁰ They are picked, in theory at least, from among those officers who have adequate general educations, who are deemed to be "cultured" in their personal behavior, and who have shown themselves to be politically "literate."⁵¹ The men who select class leaders are told that, whenever possible, platoon commanders are to conduct the political-training classes for the rank-and-file servicemen, while the best-qualified company commanders and battalion political workers are used to direct the studies of the noncommissioned officers.⁵²

A great deal of attention is given to the training of these teachers. They are placed under considerable pressure from their military superiors and from the political workers, to give much of their free time to "independent study," to attend Party schools and "Evening Universities of Marxism-Leninism,"⁵³ and to prepare intensively for each class session. The most important institutions for their training are the special seminars for the class leaders. These operate constantly throughout the study year, and are under the direct supervision, although not the chairmanship, of the regimental deputy commander for political affairs.⁵⁴ They are expected to follow the detailed pattern of operation decided upon by the MPA.⁵⁵ In these seminars, some training is given in the techniques of teaching, professional propagandists lecture on the subjects to be discussed in the political-training classes, and detailed control is maintained over the talks prepared for those classes by each class leader. Some of the class leader's burden is shared by a deputy who is usually appointed by the Komsomol group in his platoon or company. The deputy leader is expected to look after those soldiers who have been absent from class, to coach those who are backward in their political studies, and to hold special classes for those who need it. In addition, he helps the teacher make graphic aids, finds supplementary reading for those doing advanced work, arranges trips to museums and places of interest, and is available to substitute for the class leader when the latter is forced to be absent.⁵⁶

Some measure of the importance allocated to the system of political-training classes can be found in the intensive and continuing attention given to it by the professional workers in the political apparatus. Under the system, which was reorganized in 1946, the MPA issues each September a unified plan for all

military—political-training classes to follow during the next year. Here are specified the major aims, precise themes, and important points to be made, the methods to be used in explaining these points, and aids to be applied such as supplementary literature and films.⁵⁷

Throughout the year, the MPA keeps careful watch over the operations of the system, receives a steady flow of reports from its agents and subordinate organs in the field, and sends out special teams of inspectors to study the situation on the spot and convene conferences in key areas to deal with weaknesses of the system. Its Propaganda and Agitation Department issues many brochures and other literature on themes and methodological aids.⁵⁸ Other forms of assistance and direction from this top level are issued frequently in the Army press and through the command channels.⁵⁹

The political organs in the middle levels, controlling the political work from the service arms to the divisions, have important transmitting and supervising functions. They adapt the MPA instructions to conditions within their organizations, issuing supplementary orders, and providing additional methodological aids.⁶⁰ Of equal importance are their information-gathering functions, in furtherance of which they conduct periodic "checks" of the political-training system with their own staff members and personnel of the subordinate units. They are also charged with supervising the work of the seminars of political leaders, inspecting the political-training classes, and improving the skills of all personnel connected with the system.⁶¹

The key administrative offices are found on the regimental levels.⁶² In supervising the political training of several thousand soldiers and non-commissioned officers, the regimental deputy commander utilizes the services of the regimental agitator, the battalion deputy commanders for political affairs, and the Party and Komsomol leaders of his unit. To conduct the political-training classes, moreover, the regimental *zampolits* have at their disposal part of the service-time of many company and platoon commanders.

The regimental *zampolit* has grave responsibilities in the system of political-training classes. He must organize and supervise the training of the class leaders, especially their seminars which he usually controls through his regimental agitator. He is expected to watch the work of the class leaders, visiting their classes himself and receiving reports on their work from Communist and other sources. Above all, he must give serious attention to the ideological level of the talks given in the classrooms, checking the notes and plans made by the class leaders, subjecting drafts of their talks to detailed examination, prohibiting any talks which have not been officially approved by him or his authorized representative, and having the classes visited to make sure that the talks given are actually the approved versions.⁶³ In the functions of the regimental *zampolit*, and particularly in his anxiety about the actions of the leader of the political-training class, one can see the characteristically tight controls that the political apparatus maintains upon its instrumentalities and channels, and its sharp insistence upon its own version of the "truth" being presented to the soldiers.

Another characteristic feature of the political-training system, reflecting a trait of the Soviet system in general, is the detailed instruction and considerable assistance given to the class leader as he performs his tasks. This comes not only from the political apparatus,⁶⁴ but also from the Army branches of the

Communist Party and the Komsomol. The latter are expected to secure exemplary performances from their own members in the political-training classes, to provide special tutoring for the nonmembers who are backward students, and to give every needed assistance to the class leaders in equipping the classrooms and preparing graphic and other class aids.⁶⁵

The military commanders, from the platoon level up to the regiment, also provide auxiliary service in the political-training system. The younger men are used as class leaders, and the senior officers are supposed to supervise their work. Although the latter rely heavily upon their *zampolits*, they are themselves expected "to maintain constant control over the work of the leaders of the political-training classes."⁶⁶ Among other things, the military commanders sign the orders assigning the class leaders, and they are warned that they must watch the work of political classes, visiting them frequently, punishing leaders who are not properly prepared, and ensuring full attendance at these meetings where unexcused absences are forbidden by military regulations.⁶⁷

Pressure is also placed on the men responsible for the mass media and the political-cultural institutions to make their contribution to the effectiveness of the political-training system. The Army press publishes a considerable amount of supplementary reading material for the men, instructional articles for the leaders, expositions of the accepted views on the major themes, and criticism of those failing to meet the standards of accomplishment expected of them. The men in charge of the libraries, Rooms for Political Enlightenment, officers' clubs, and the film exhibitions are all given appropriate tasks to perform.⁶⁸

Themes, Contents, and Methods

The general content of the themes chosen for the political-training system follows the major patterns of the total propaganda issued for the Army. The themes appear to be a somewhat rudimentary presentation of the basic political and military elements of that propaganda, with heavy emphasis upon what the soldier may think is "factual" data.

The study plan issued by the MPA for the political-training classes of 1946-47 was divided into five major parts, with the following division of time allotted to each:

(a) "The Defense of the Fatherland is the Sacred Duty of Each Citizen of the USSR"—containing 16 themes, with a total of 48 study hours. Of these, 24 hours were to be spent in class leader talks, 2 hours in study during class hours, and 22 hours in classroom discussion;

(b) "Our Homeland—the USSR"—containing 8 major themes, with a total of 44 hours. Of these, 18 hours were to be spent in class leader talks, 6 hours in individual study during class time, and 20 hours in classroom discussion. The titles of these 8 themes were:

Theme 17: "The Vastness and Wealth of Our Motherland"

Theme 18: "How the Workers and Peasants of Tsarist Russia Lived, and How They Fought Against the Landlords and Capitalists"

- Theme 19: "How the Workers and Peasants of Russia, under the Guidance of the Bolshevik Party, Established and Defended the Soviet Power"
- Theme 20: "How the Workers and Peasants Have Built Socialism in Our Country under the Guidance of the Party of Lenin-Stalin"
- Theme 21: "The USSR—the Socialist State of Workers and Peasants"
- Theme 22: "The USSR—Land of the Great Fraternity of Peoples"
- Theme 23: "Superiority of the Socialist Structure over the Capitalist" (An outline of this theme is given below.)
- Theme 24: "The All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)—Guiding and Directing Force of the Soviet State"
- Concluding Discussion: Two class sessions, of 2 hours each, summarizing the important lessons of this part;
- (c) "The Great Patriotic War"—to which 36 hours were to be devoted, 15 in leader talks, 6 in individual study, and 15 in class discussion;
- (d) "Tasks of the Soviet People and Its Armed Forces in the Postwar Period"—to which 30 hours were to be devoted, 12 in leader talks, 4 in individual study, and 14 in class discussion;
- (e) "Lenin and Stalin—The Great Leaders of the Communist Party and of the Soviet People"—to which 12 hours were to be devoted, 4 in leader talks, 4 in individual study, and four in class discussion.⁶⁹

Each class leader is given clear directions for his talks, even before he takes his preliminary draft for approval to his regimental deputy commander for political affairs. Here, for example, are directions given to him for one of the more political of these themes, an outline for his talk on "The Superiority of the Socialist Structure Over the Capitalist":

Superiority of the socialist structure over the capitalist. Capitalist society is a society founded on private property and exploitation, where all wealth and political power belong to the exploiting classes. Impossibility of planning the economy in a capitalist society. Anarchy in production and crises in capitalist society. Unemployment. Growth of unemployment in bourgeois countries after the second World War. Impoverishment of the masses.

The socialist structure—the most advanced societal structure in the USSR, the political power belongs to the toiling masses. Soviet democracy, the highest form of democracy for the toilers. Role of socialist property in the people's economy. Liquidation of the exploiting classes. The end of exploitation of man by man. Growth of welfare and cultural level of the toilers. Labor under socialism—a matter of honor, of glory, courage, and heroism.

Planning of the national economy in the USSR. Basic aims of socialist planning—growth of societal wealth of the USSR, raising of material and cultural standard of living of the popular masses, strengthening of the independence and defensive ability of the USSR. Further growth of the people's economy of the USSR. Basic tasks of the new Stalinist Five-Year Plan.

The Socialist structure—the best form of organization for the economic and cultural upsurge of the country in peacetime, and the best form of mobilization of all forces of the people for destruction of the enemy in wartime. An all-sided test of the power and

ability to survive of the socialist structure in the Great Patriotic War. The military, economic and moral-political victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War—the victory of the Soviet social and state structure.⁷⁰

As a basis for supplementing this outline, the class leader is referred to four works, two by Stalin, and one each by Mikhail Kalinin and Andrei Zhdanov.

The same stereotyped content can be found in the outline for a two-hour propaganda talk on the theme entitled "The All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Guiding and Directing Force of the Soviet State":

The CPSU is the leading detachment of the toilers of our country, the guiding force of Soviet society. The CPSU was the organizer and guide of the Great Socialist Revolution, the organizer of the Soviet state and its Armed Forces. The CPSU is the inspirer and organizer of victories of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. The CPSU—the organizer of the fulfillment of the postwar Five-Year Plan of rehabilitation and further development of the people's economy of the USSR. The CPSU is the teacher of the Soviet people in the spirit of Communist consciousness. The guiding role of the CPSU in the further strengthening of the Soviet societal and state structure, in the struggle for further intensification of the might of the Soviet Union, in the struggle for full victory of Communism in our country. The ties of the CPSU with the masses as the source of its strength and invincibility.

Lenin and Stalin--the organizers and leaders of the CPSU.⁷¹

The bibliography for this theme is somewhat longer, although it contains materials that the class leader must have read, including: (a) The Constitution of the USSR; (b) *Short Course in the History of the Communist Party* (concluding chapter); (c) Section on "The Party," in lectures by J. Stalin entitled *On the Bases of Leninism*; (d) J. Stalin, "On the Great Patriotic War of the USSR"; (e) J. Stalin, "Speech at pre-electoral meeting of electors, February 9, 1946"; (f) *Joseph Vissarionich Stalin — Short Biography*.

An examination of the official outlines and other instructional materials for the leaders in the political-training system reveals, as might have been expected, that political themes dominate much of the work done in the classes. The Party leaders have always regarded the Soviet armed forces as ideal institutions for political indoctrination of a major segment of the population.⁷² It should also be noted that the generalized and stereotyped phrases of the political propaganda form a background for many military propaganda themes. Some hint of this method may be read in a statement made by the present head of the MPA when he referred to the objectives of the political-training system:

The most intensive attention must be given to the political-training classes, which have become the principal institutions for the political education of our servicemen. The Ministers of the USSR Armed Forces demand that our commanders and political organs raise the quality of these political-training classes, strengthen the educational role played by them, and intensify their influence on the successful solution of the problems of military training and consolidating military discipline.⁷³

Many commentaries stress the importance of using the classes to drive home lessons desirable for military life. Praise is given to commanders "who control the work of the leaders of political-training classes and teach them the art of connecting the materials to be studied with the military tasks of the company."⁷⁴ So far as the actual content of the classwork is concerned, an official of the MPA (who apparently has considerable responsibility for supervising the political-training system) has stressed that an important place in the



Fig. 11—Political-Training Class Studying Party Statutes

Russian Caption: "The political-training group which is led by Komsomol member Lt. L. Bulavko is one of the best on the N-th ship. The meeting of the group is well organized and active, and proceeds on a high ideological-political level. In the photograph: A regular meeting of the group, devoted to study of the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. On the left is Lt. L. Bulavko." KZ, Apr 4, 1953.

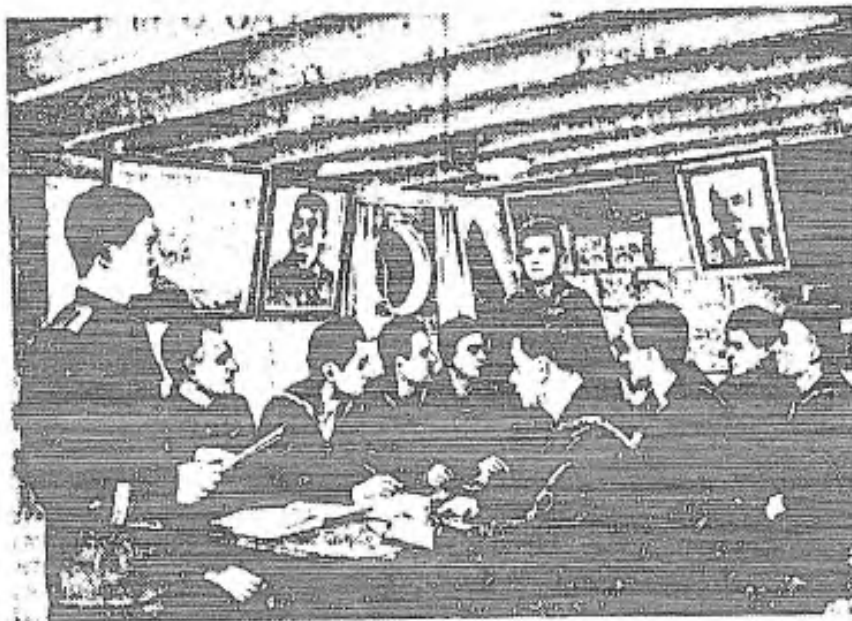


Fig. 11—Political-Training Class Studying Party Statutes

Russian Caption: "The political-training group which is led by Komsomol member Lt. L. Bulavko is one of the best on the N-th ship. The meeting of the group is well organized and active, and proceeds on a high ideological-political level. In the photograph: A regular meeting of the group, devoted to study of the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. On the left is Lt. L. Bulavko." KZ, Apr 4, 1953.

plans for the system is given to military subjects; and these comprise at least one-third of all themes.⁷⁵

This may explain why the men selected to act as class leaders are not those who have distinguished themselves for their knowledge of Communist theory or for their services to the local Communist branch. They are largely the young military officers who have chosen to make their professional careers within the Army, and who probably join the Communist Party because a membership card is necessary for their promotion.

The instructions on methodology given them are not indicative of any unusual propaganda theory or special tricks but they do show the Bolshevik traits desired in the methods of class instruction.⁷⁶

Criticism and Weaknesses

In spite of the frequently repeated importance of the political-training system, and the considerable amount of manpower assigned to plan, supervise, and operate that system (as indicated in Fig. 12), Soviet sources make it obvious that there is a wide discrepancy between plans and reality.⁷⁷

One symptom of the weakness of the system is found in the numerous indications that the men are disinterested in the class sessions, and even resent the time they require. Most reports agree with the defector who declared that the classwork was very "boring," and that "perhaps one man out of a hundred cares for it."⁷⁸ Perhaps the least unfavorable report was that of another defector, who said that the soldiers were "so worn out by their regular work that they regarded the political classes as time off and used them as rest periods."⁷⁹ Soviet leaders reveal that their own intelligence supports such views, by their constant admonitions to the class leaders to be more stimulating, and to give more attention to capturing the men's interest.⁸⁰

Although the class leaders are given detailed instructions about interest-getting techniques, many of them use techniques which seem to be intended to kill interest. Some merely read the statements of important Russians about the theme for the day, and have their men copy the statements for their notes, keeping the men after class when they are slow in taking dictation.⁸¹ Others read to the class entire pages from their study aids, and then have assistants dictate the notes that the students should have made.⁸² Many teachers are accused of giving confused talks, resulting from their own misunderstanding of the theme.⁸³ Not a few apparently use part of the class time for other matters, and then have the class memorize "learned book answers" to the most important questions.⁸⁴

More important to the Soviet leaders are the various reports that the men are not learning the desired lessons. Even in those units where the soldiers received good grades in political training, there are often indications that these grades are either unmerited, or are due to a month-long period of drill in which the main points are repeated again and again, and the men memorize stock answers to expected questions.⁸⁵ It need hardly be said the men resent the futility of such procedures and the pressure under which they are carried out.⁸⁶

In spite of such tactics, there are many public reports of poor results attained in the classes, of situations where "none of the soldiers could give any sort of intelligent answer to the questions of the leaders."⁸⁷ Many units

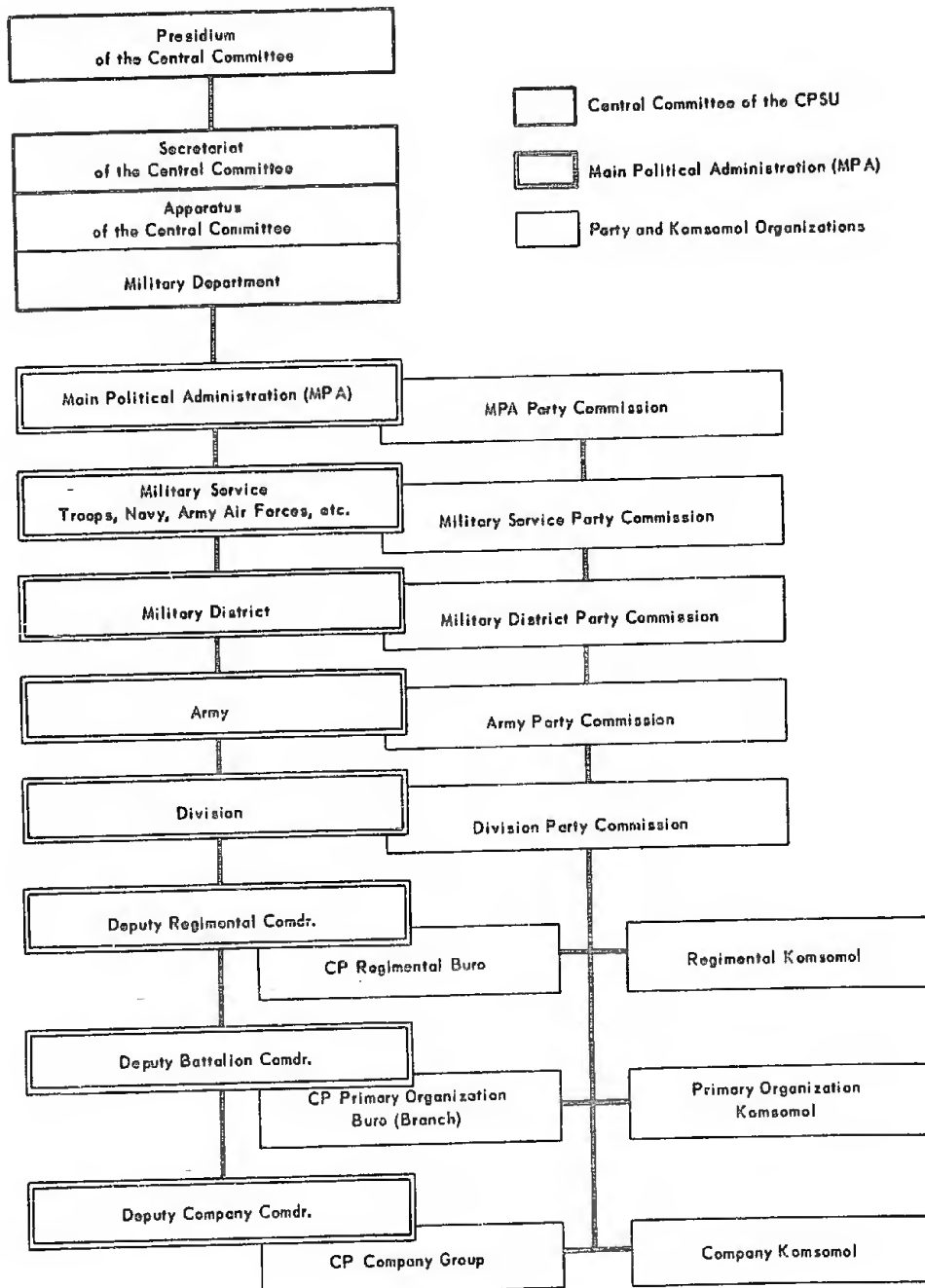


Fig. 12—Organization for Political Activities in the Soviet Armed Forces

report large numbers of "backward" students who need special attention and supplemental aid, and who still do poorly in the simple examinations at the end of the year.⁸⁸ In those units where the intensive period of preparation for the examinations helps the men to make a good initial showing, probing questions often show that learning without understanding has taken place. Soldiers are able to refer to the "glorious military traditions" of the Army or of their own divisions, but are frequently unable to describe them. Others know that they are expected to say that the Soviet system is superior to the capitalist system, but can not explain how it is superior.⁸⁹

Another proof of poor effect, judging by the Soviet view which insists that successful propaganda will result in higher production figures or improved military behavior and enthusiasm, are the many indications that the men do not connect the lessons of their political studies with their military life. There are many complaints that some men have learned to give the correct answers about the approved motivations for discipline and efficiency and about military regulations and standards of behavior, but continue to violate these same regulations and standards. The knowledge gained in the classroom does not affect the men's conduct, demonstrating that the class leader has been guilty of the heinous crime of "formalism" and that the soldier has not really learned his lessons.⁹⁰

In noting the criticisms of methods and complaints about results, it is important to keep in mind the nature of the manpower pool from which are recruited the class leaders. Most of them are platoon and company commanders who are not greatly interested in the objectives of the training system, and who demonstrate it in various ways. Not only do some show a lack of enthusiasm for the political content of the themes,⁹¹ but others find what they believe to be better use for the time to be spent in the classes. Many excuse their men from the classes on slight pretext, or give them special jobs to perform which will take them out of the class.⁹² Some officers use the time of the class "to scold various soldiers for their failures in their military duties," and for similar purposes. At least one used the time for drill.⁹³

The system requires a large number of class leaders, and they must be taken from the relatively limited and untrained group of junior officers. Consequently, there are often low standards for selecting the class leaders, even to the extent of using some officers who were refused admission into the Communist Party because they were considered "politically untrained."⁹⁴

Even those young officers who try honestly to do the job expected by the political officers soon find that the demands of their immediate superiors in the political apparatus may well force them to give up a large part of their week's time. It need hardly be said that more than their total free time is needed to fulfill the demands for study and careful preparation made by the seminar leaders and other political workers, for going to the various special schools and study groups which class leaders are pressed to attend, and for participating in the many meetings and conferences which are frequently held.⁹⁵ As a consequence, the quality of class leaders working in the system is apparently far below the level desired by the MPA.⁹⁶

It is curious that many of the reports show that the officers and men appear to be interested only in those themes which touch on international topics or show a nationalist orientation.⁹⁷ The following is taken from a report made by

a high political officer who had investigated the classes in the Trans-Carpathian Military District:

In many cases, the political-training classes are conducted on a low ideological level. Several class leaders oversimplify and sometimes mistakenly present the content of most sections in the program. Most frequently, this is reflected when they deal with historical matters in their classes. Some of the propagandists deal in an entirely uncritical fashion with our country's past. They see only positive elements in the history of Russia, and the negative aspects connected with the landlord-bourgeois structure of pre-Revolutionary Russia are either silently passed over or are touched upon lightly. . . . The superiority of the Soviet structure over the capitalist structure must be explained to our students.⁹⁹

There are many other complaints about the actual presentation of major themes, particularly those relating to the Soviet system and to Bolshevik policies.⁹⁹

As always, the political workers are given a major share for the sad condition of the political-training courses. It is their responsibility to find skillful teachers, but they have been accused of performing this function carelessly and without regard for its importance.¹⁰⁰

The most important training institution for the teachers is the seminar for the class leaders (which is under constant attack and criticism).¹⁰¹ In addition, the political organs and their professional personnel are under pressure to control other aspects of the political-training system, including the types of classrooms provided, the views expressed in the classes, classroom attendance, and the assistance given to the teachers.^{101a}

NON-RUSSIAN SOLDIERS

Background of the Utilization Problem

Although the Soviet Union is often called Russia, it is a land of many nationalities in which the Great Russians only form the largest nation. There are over 80 significant non-Russian ethnic groups, probably totaling over 80 million souls; and these include the Slavic peoples of the Ukraine and Belorussia, the Moslem peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the Baltic, Armenian, Mongolian, and other important peoples. Virtually all of these larger groups have long histories of conflict with the Great Russians, and traditions of struggles for independence against foreign oppressors. Relying as they do on the Russian people, the Bolshevik rulers may well fear a military foe who could make skillful use of "psychological fission," as it was described by one American student of psychological warfare.¹⁰²

The Bolsheviks are aware, of course, of the dangers in this situation. Not only did they try to bring about such "fission" in the Tsarist empire as part of their revolutionary methods, but Stalin himself was closely associated with the Communist work among the non-Russian ethnic groups. Within the Tsarist armies, even before the Bolsheviks had made any real headway with their own propaganda, the size of the country, and the provincialism and ethnic diversity of the people, were major weakening factors. A Russian general who made one of the most perceptive studies of these factors in World War I, concluded:

The Russian people proved that they were unprepared for the War, psychologically. . . . Nor could the mass of the people have developed a sense of national unity under the existing conditions. Because of the many races, the vast size of the country, the sparsity of the population and the poor communications, the implanting of such a sense was an extremely difficult task. Even the portion of the population that was pure Russian had no sense of unity. "We are of Vyatka, or of Tula, or of Perm. The Germans won't come so far as our province!" Such were the words in which the attitude of the peasants towards a general threat to the state often, and with a good enough reason, expressed itself.¹⁰³

In the early years of the Soviet regime, the place of the national minorities within the Red Army was largely determined by political considerations. This was the consequence of the Bolshevik's own propaganda about "national rights" of the minority ethnic groups, of their fears of repeating the Tsarist mistakes of "Russification," and of their dreams of fostering revolutions in lands inhabited by peoples related to the Soviet minorities. The discussions of how to handle the national minorities within the Red Army began in 1917, and Stalin himself, at a military conference of Bolshevik representatives, insisted that the formation of "national" regiments was not in the interest of the "toiling masses."¹⁰⁴ However, he did not deny the "right" of the non-Russian ethnic groups to have their national regiments or formations, and many of their leaders continued to insist upon them.

Only by 1924 was a plan for national formations worked out by the Red Army leaders, and through the last part of the twenties, national divisions, regiments, and other military sections were set up, most of them with their own leadership and their obligations restricted to their own territories.¹⁰⁵ There were many difficulties with these formations, especially in the methods of finding and training leaders and cadres for them,¹⁰⁶ but, temporarily, the political considerations were considered more important than the military. Mikhail Frunze, the builder of the new Red Army during this period, frankly admitted that, while from the purely military viewpoint it might be better to have ten divisions recruited from Russians than mixed divisions recruited on a national basis, the importance of the revolutionary movement of the colonial peoples would not be overlooked.¹⁰⁷

The program went slowly at first, but by 1932 there were 17 national divisions (ten Ukrainian, three Belorussian, two Georgian, one Armenian, and one Azerbaijan) and other formations recruited from ethnic groups in the Volga, North Caucasus, Central Asia, and Far Eastern areas.¹⁰⁸ It is significant that in these divisions and formations, unlike most of the Red Army during this period, the military commissars were not gradually eliminated; the introduction of the system of unity of command under military officers was postponed.¹⁰⁹ In 1939, after the great purges in the Army and its political apparatus, the national formations were disbanded and their personnel merged with the other units. War Commissar Voroshilov stated that the Red Army was the sole Army of the Soviet, and therefore the existence of separate national military formations, permanently attached to their own territories and ethnic groupings, was in contradiction to the fundamental principles of the Stalinist constitution and the recruitment principles of the Red Army.¹¹⁰

Since 1939, the eligible males among the non-Russian ethnic groups (as among the Russians, of course) have been examined for possible induction into the USSR forces, and, although many have been screened out,¹¹¹ millions have

been inducted. They have been scattered through all parts of the Army, and press reports indicate that in some battalions there are ten or more different nationalities represented.¹¹² * These millions of men add much, of course, to the total power and resources of the Soviet armed forces. However, they may also be regarded as potential sources of weakness if one remembers the past history of their peoples with the rulers of Russia and their own relationships with the Kremlin in the past 35 years.

Signs of Potential Trouble

Although this is not the place for a detailed survey of the Kremlin's relations with the national minorities, it is clear that relations have never been as untroubled as Soviet propaganda claimed them to be. The Bolsheviks took power after making many promises about each nation's right of self-determination, but now they rule all nations in the USSR with the same methods of force and violence. There had been rebellions, active and passive, among the minority peoples, together with sullen acceptance of the Bolsheviks' superior power, until the Nazis created a new situation by attacking the Soviet.

The full story of the national minorities in World War II has not been told in the West, but there are reports that in the opening months of the war, large groups, sometimes of company or battalion size, went over to the enemy, and reports of desertions continued to circulate after the first chaotic months of the war.¹¹³ There have been many rumors of open revolts among the Kalmuck and some Caucasian peoples, and well-authenticated stories about anti-Soviet partisans, especially among the Ukrainians and Tatars.¹¹⁴ The Soviet authorities showed the truth of these stories by their actions in eliminating the Volga German, Chencheno-Ingush and other so-called autonomous republics, and by transplanting millions of these peoples to new homes in Central Asia. It is revealing to read the Soviet's own explanation of what took place:

During the Great Fatherland War . . . many Chechens and Crimean Tartars entered into voluntary detachments organized by the Germans and fought with German troops against . . . the Red Army. They likewise organized bands of diversionists to fight against Soviet authorities in the rear. . . .

In connection with . . . [the dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush Republic and the downgrading of the Crimean Republic], the Chechens and the Crimean Tartars were resettled in other parts of the USSR. . . ."¹¹⁵

This evidence of anti-Soviet feeling and these actions point to a most serious problem for the Soviet leaders, which must affect the position of the non-Russian men within the armed forces. In addition, there are other factors which must concern the political apparatus and might be expected to lead to programs of action. The first group of factors is symbolized by the leaders' apparent belief that many men from these minority groups make poor soldiers, for too many are backward in their military studies and training, and show little interest in military matters. Some have even been accused of lacking in courage and in the other qualities of manhood needed by all soldiers.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶It is worth noting that, although the national formations have not been restored since 1939, in many cases men with similar ethnic backgrounds are found in the same military units because they were inducted from the same area by the same military commissariat.

Another major group of problems is connected with the interrelationships between the non-Russian soldiers and the Russian soldiers and officers. There seems to be clear evidence that many of the non-Russians have reason to feel that they are aliens in a military force which others think of as being, and often call, "Russian." During the critical days in the summer of 1942, for example, the important propagandist, Ilya Ehrenburg, wrote an article entitled "Russia," in which he discussed the attitudes of the many nationalities in the Red Army, and their alleged consciousness of fighting for "Russia," which he called a great tree now embodying all the nations of the Soviet land.¹¹⁷

Even the Russian defectors who disclaim any animosity toward the minority groups tell of the condescending and even contemptuous attitude usually expressed toward the non-Russians.¹¹⁸ So openly was this attitude shown during the war that Constantine Umanski (who had spent many years in the Soviet propaganda system and in the diplomatic service) frankly disparaged the morals, patriotism, and general behavior of the Caucasian Moslems, the Georgians, and others, in talks with Western correspondents.¹¹⁹ Some defectors indicated that, within the Red Army, the soldiers from Central Asia were quite unpopular, and tried to explain the Russians' attitude in terms of the Asiatics' alleged unclean habits, hypocrisy, stupidity, and even cowardice under some circumstances.¹²⁰ Virtually all sources agree that anti-Semitic attitudes were widespread within the Army.¹²¹

The reaction of the non-Russians to these relationships can easily be guessed. An illustration of the views of many Ukrainians and Belorussians, especially those from areas which had been under German control, is given by one defector who said: "We were despised as if we were guilty for having been occupied. It was as if they were blaming us and regarding us as second-grade people, and yet we all felt, despite the hunger and despite everything, that we wanted to beat the Germans and wanted to get on with the war."¹²²

Many of these soldiers felt that their people were being discriminated against, even in the Army, and that this was revealed in the Soviet reluctance to promote their fellow countrymen to officer rank or to enroll them in crack units to which some aspired. Others felt that the authorities were far too prone to induct all Ukrainians and other members of minority groups in cases where Russians might be exempted.¹²³ Even articles in the press indicate that the non-Russian soldiers were often harshly treated,¹²⁴ and American investigators who interviewed many defectors reported that "as far as we can tell, the ethnic minorities reacted resentfully to the mixture of playful derogation and to the occasional cruelty to which they were subjected."¹²⁵

In addition to this sense of internalized resentment, which presents a problem in itself to the political apparatus, there is a tendency on the part of many non-Russians to isolate themselves from the Russian soldiers and to reject any invitation to participate in platoon or company affairs.¹²⁶ Another aspect of the same reaction is the tendency of some non-Russians to group together and present a united front to their fellows, and even to "gang up" on officers who are harsh toward any one of them.¹²⁷ The effect of these attitudes, as American investigators put it, is that "ethnic heterogeneity often interfered with military performance. The poorer military achievement of some of the ethnic groups, i.e., the Central Asians, was in some part a product of their alienation from Soviet symbols and their animosity toward Russians. There was

a tendency for the persons from a given ethnic group to stick together, even at the cost of the performance of their military duty."¹²⁸

These difficulties are connected with another factor of major importance, one which the political apparatus tries to deal with in a kind of backhanded fashion. Most non-Russians have an imperfect knowledge of the Russian language, and are ignorant of Russian symbolisms, attitudes, history, and intellectual heritage. These factors are not only important because they widen the gap between the two groups, and make the non-Russians intellectual aliens in a Russian environment; they are vital within the framework of military requirements, since all orders, instructions, regulations, and explanations are worded in Russian, and all official statements which the soldier affirms, from the initial oath which he takes on entering the military forces to the demobilization papers which he signs on leaving them, are in the Russian language.¹²⁹ Ignorance of the language is a major obstacle to proper training of the non-Russian soldiers, to satisfactory assimilation of them, and to adequate communication especially in crisis periods.

Political Work with Non-Russians

The Kremlin's major techniques for dealing with these problems, especially those resulting in anti-Soviet actions or attitudes, fall into the field of security measures and are therefore not analyzed in this study of propaganda and political operations. Within the armed forces, these measures include careful screening before induction, the same type of attention given by security organs to all citizens in order to spot potential troublemakers or rebels. There is also, apparently, a policy of scattering the non-Russians as much as possible among the Russian troops and of avoiding the assignment of non-Russians to command units including many other non-Russians.¹³⁰ It is significant, however, that the Soviet leaders place heavy reliance upon their police system and the threats of violence, especially when one considers the Bolshevik's traditional use of propaganda as a major supplement to terror. In contrast to this emphasis on security methods, there seems to be no extraordinary use of propaganda in dealing with the problems of the non-Russian soldier in the Army.

Some measure of the relatively low importance given to the problems of the non-Russian soldier is provided in the scant attention apparently given to them by the higher levels of the political apparatus. There are few indications of planning or coordination of far-reaching programs by the MPA, or of important personnel assigned to deal with these matters. However, many scattered references are made to these problems in the press, and some steps are taken. During the prewar reorganization of the political operations, for example, the MPA indicated in a general evaluation that it was particularly dissatisfied with Party, Komsomol, and political apparatus work with non-Russian soldiers and non-commissioned officers. A study made during the following year indicated that little had been done of any significance.¹³¹ During the war, there were several conferences of agitators working in platoons having non-Russians (of which one conference was addressed by Mikhail Kalinin), various proclamations and appeals to non-Russians, and a number of newspaper and magazine articles dealing with these problems.¹³²

Political work among the non-Russians is largely of two types. The first type revolves about the Russian language, and includes only incidentally propa-

ganda in Russian for the minority groups. The second type is related to the propaganda disseminated to the non-Russian soldier in his own native tongue. Basically, the non-Russian soldier is treated precisely like his Russian fellows, and merely regarded as backward in his knowledge of the official language of the Soviet people. The general propaganda materials issued for all soldiers are apparently presumed to meet most of the non-Russian's needs. It is instructive to read one official's advice to military agitators working among non-Russians:

The agitator must without fail take the national customs, manners, and modes of life of the different peoples into account in his work. However, I think that there is also a common approach to all our peoples. You know that the agitator need not spend much time with the soldier who fights well and keeps abreast of events. But [as] to the soldier—whether he be Georgian Kazakh or Uzbek—who fights badly or is faint-hearted. . . .¹³³

From the very first day of his military service, the non-Russian soldier is placed under pressure to learn Russian. The military oath is administered to him in it, commands are given to him in it, and he soon discovers that all his military and political training will be conducted in it. In spite of the alleged existence of universal and compulsory education for over two decades in the Soviet Union, articles in the political journals and newspapers indicate that there are a great many soldiers who come into the armed forces with a poor understanding of the Russian language.¹³⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that many of these men are rated as poor soldiers and that they do poorly in the military and political classes.¹³⁵ The reaction of some military commanders is to accept the situation, and to show that they expect less from the non-Russians by lowering the standards for them.¹³⁶

The Soviet leadership has, at least in the public press, sharply rejected this solution and has demanded that these men be taught the language. Strangely enough, however, few Political Administrations have established official Russian classes for them, have tried to use trained teachers, or have given service time for this clearly important task. In a few places, the men who have a poor knowledge of Russian are excused for a time from political-training classes (which are conducted in Russian, of course), in order that they may learn to read and write the language. In one area, the Ural Military District, some general classes have been opened for this purpose, but it appears to be an unusual procedure even here.¹³⁷ Occasionally, there appears to be some use of the recreation and rest periods for language instruction.¹³⁸

In the vast majority of cases, the initiative has apparently been left primarily to the Komsomol branches and to other auxiliary organizations of the political apparatus. Each organization, in a strikingly haphazard fashion, approaches the task in its own way. Many ignore the non-Russians until scolded, while others assign individual Russian soldiers, usually Komsomol members, to each of the men to be helped. Some Komsomols organize language-study circles, which meet in the evenings and during free hours.¹³⁹

Another curious feature of this situation is the fact that, in spite of the Bolsheviks' passion for centralized control and precise instructions on what seem to be minor activities, apparently no effort is made to give direction or aid to these "teachers" of Russian. Apparently, the only times that the political apparatus concerns itself with these matters are when it receives complaints that no help is being given the non-Russians, or, more rarely, when there are reports that too much pressure is being placed on them and harsh methods are being used.¹⁴⁰

Although much of the attention given to the non-Russians is related directly to this language study, certain other aspects should be mentioned. Because these men are often backward in their military training and political studies, an effort is sometimes made to give them special help. Sometimes tutoring is given in the work of the political-training classes, in basic military skills (such as the infantrymen's use of a rifle), and in Marxist training.¹⁴¹ Some propaganda is also directed at the non-Russians through the general media of the press and through talks by Russian-language agitators, although these follow the stereotyped themes of the "fraternity of peoples" and generalized praise for the services of the minority groups, themes which are described later in this chapter.

The primary problem of the agitator who deals with non-Russians is to find how to reach his audience; he is warned that this cannot always be done by speaking in Russian, desirable as it may be at other times to use the language. Kalinin told a conference of agitators:

They naturally think in their native language. Hence, if you want to say something to the men in a way that will move them, say it in their native language, and your audience will respond better to what you tell them. Their mother tongue will reach their hearts, convey all the nuances of your thought to them. That is why study of the Russian language does not release the agitator from the obligation to use their native language.¹⁴²

A Soviet report of the Bolshevik agitator at his best in dealing with these minority peoples (and a revealing story on their position) was given during the war by First Lieutenant Khadzhishvili who knew Russian and four Caucasian languages. One day there was transferred into his unit a young man from Azerbaijan who was regarded as hopelessly backward and unlikely to make a good soldier. He was known as one who refused to talk to his fellows, who would day-dream during the training sessions, and who was extremely poor in fulfilling his military duties. The Lieutenant, who was obviously a political officer, bided his time and then invited the Azerbaijani to visit his quarters. The latter came, looking worried, as though he expected a reprimand for his poor grades. The propagandist asked if he could sing, and they sang a Caucasian song together. It was soon clear that the young soldier had a good voice, but could not read the words of a song given to him. The propagandist then asked if he could write, and was told that he had written to his wife and children nearly a year ago, but had received no answer.

The propagandist eventually learned that the man had, in his own letter to his family, given an extremely full return address, with details on the position of his military unit. It became clear that for security reasons the letter had never been delivered. Apparently, no one had ever bothered to tell him what had happened with his letter, or to ask what was wrong with him. At the propagandist's suggestion, he wrote another letter to his wife, and was soon delighted to receive an answer. Among other things, his wife asked him how he was doing as a soldier, but he decided to postpone answering this question. With the help of the Lieutenant, he now set to work on his military studies, and gave them all his free time and energy. There is the usual Bolshevik stereotyped ending to the story. Encouraged by stories of Caucasian heroes and spurred on by the changed position in which he found himself, the Azerbaijani became a model soldier, received commendation for his work, and was eventually made a propagandist, working with and encouraging other non-Russian soldiers.¹⁴³

Lieutenant Khadzhishvili represents the most specialized level of the propaganda staff used by the political apparatus in its work with the ethnic minorities.

Although there is no indication that such specialists exist in large numbers, some references are made in the press and elsewhere to permanent assignments of this type given to men with the necessary language and propaganda skills.¹⁴⁴ Much more numerous are the agitators working on the platoon level with groups containing non-Russian soldiers. Many of these agitators are themselves selected from the minority groups, being presumably those men who have adapted to the Russian scene, but who still have a good command of the minority's language and know how to deal with the men.¹⁴⁵ A few are Russians, or members of the other ethnic minorities, who have learned enough of the minority's language to be able to talk with the men.¹⁴⁶ Although these agitators represent the core of the staff used by the political apparatus to reach the non-Russian soldiers, their number is normally small in proportion to the millions of men in their potential audience—except during special political events, such as the electoral campaigns, when their ranks are augmented by many temporary agitators.¹⁴⁷

The efforts of the few officer-propagandists and the many agitators are supplemented with occasional lectures or talks by military or technical officers, who know one of the minority languages. Speeches are made, and special messages are also sent from time to time, by civilians who are usually Party or governmental officials representing areas containing one or more of the ethnic groups. Thus, a military unit containing many non-Russians and stationed in Soviet Armenia, was visited by many Armenian writers, artists, prize-winning Stakhanovites, and workers, who were reported to have told the soldiers how their people were "flourishing" in the great "fraternity of nations."¹⁴⁸

To complete the picture of media used, it should be noted that the political apparatus arranges to have the influence of these propagandists supplemented by newspaper materials sent by civilian groups at home or printed in the newspapers of the Army itself, and disseminates pamphlets, letters, posters and other graphic materials, and films.¹⁴⁹ Finally, during the war at least, the MPA provided the cadres and supplies necessary for issuing some newspapers in non-Russian languages, although the quality of these newspapers has been harshly criticized.¹⁵⁰

Propaganda Content

The content of these propaganda materials is somewhat less diversified than the types of media. The overwhelming majority of the materials features any one, or a combination, of four major themes. These themes may be called: the mutuality of general interests; the place of the non-Russian ethnic groups in Soviet society; the Bolshevik policy of "the friendship of peoples"; and the special appeals to specific minorities. As in the case of Soviet propaganda in all other fields, these themes are presented with numerous variations, but are emphasized continually.

The first of these four themes consists largely of materials issued for the general Soviet audience, emphasizing the basic interests which Soviet citizens are expected to have in common. In World War II, there were many examples of general appeals to the spirit of self-defense against an invading enemy, references to humanism and cultural values, and attacks on Nazism as a degenerate system. These were the themes for the numerous "anti-Fascist" meetings

held in Caucasia and other non-Russian areas.¹⁵¹ The same theme is exploited in the general propaganda disseminated during electoral and other propaganda campaigns, when the electoral laws, the expositions about the "wisdom" of Stalin's policies, and the appeals to support the Soviet fatherland are simply translated from the Russian.¹⁵² A similar situation exists in the case of the military propaganda, which merely translates the general materials about "military honor," Army regulations, and the traditions of the military unit into the tongues of the individual non-Russians.¹⁵³

Somewhat more distinctive is the second of the major themes which relates to the place of the non-Russian population within Soviet society. Here the central core is the theme of the "Leninist-Stalinist nationalist policy," which is described in the usual stereotyped phrases, but asserts that the leaders in the Kremlin secure the interests and protect the rights of each national group as they move forward together in a great "family of nations" toward prosperity, happiness, and Communism. An example of this theme is given in a report on a regiment, which had in its ranks representatives of at least eight Soviet nationalities:

Serious attention is paid here to a profound explanation of the Leninist-Stalinist National Policy of the Bolshevik Party, giving the soldiers an extensive familiarity with the tremendous achievements in the economic and cultural construction of our united Soviet republics. . . .

Not long ago one of the best propagandists of the unit, Officer Navasardian, gave an interesting report with the poetic title of "My Fatherland Is a Wide Country." This was a lively, sharp account of the Stalinist friendship and successes of the peoples of the Soviet Union, as the audience took an imaginary excursion of the sixteen united republics. . . . Another speech of Comrade Navasardian was on the theme of "The Young Heroes of the Soviet Union," in which he told about the many soldier-heroes of various nationalities, whose names are known to all the Soviet people. . . . The sons of all the peoples of the Soviet Union fought together in one formation, winning honor and independence for their Socialist native land. The speaker's examples showed how, in this violent struggle with the common enemy, the great friendship of the people of the Soviet Union was made still more firm. First Lieutenant Sivachenko gave a sharp and specific report on the patriotic collaboration of the peoples of the USSR, in the struggle for the fulfillment of the postwar Stalinist Five-Year Plan. . . .

Along with the lectures and reports which are, as a rule, conducted on the scale of the entire regiment, the theme of the friendship of the USSR peoples also occupies a prominent place in the daily work of the agitators in the platoons. Their talks are especially valuable because they are always filled with facts and examples taken directly from our own activity, from the life of our unit and of its subsections. The talks of agitator Zaitsev are characteristic of these. For each of his talks, he finds sharp persuasive facts, meaningful to the soldiers. Recently, for example, he spoke in his subsection about the friendship of the Soviet peoples during the years of the Great Patriotic War. He told how this friendship had found concrete expression within the Armed Forces, and brought into his talk examples from the fighting past of his own unit, showing how firm was the fighting cooperation on the front lines among the soldiers of the various nationalities.¹⁵⁴

Closely related to this propaganda about the Leninist-Stalinist nationalist policy is the third frequently repeated theme, one which heralds the "elder brother" of all Soviet nationalities, the Russian people. Since Stalin himself offered a toast to the qualities of the Russians during his reception for the Red Army commanders, references to this theme are virtually compulsory. Even

before Stalin spoke, Kalinin told the conference of agitators among non-Russian soldiers: "The peoples of the USSR consider—and correctly consider—the Russian people to be their elder brother. The heroic past of the Russian people, its national heroes and great men, should be well known to you, too, and you should tell fighting men of the non-Russian nationalities about them. This will bind all the peoples of our country still more closely together and strengthen friendship among them."¹⁵⁵

The final major element in the propaganda for the non-Russian ethnic minorities may well be the only one likely to have a strong appeal to its audience, but it also may be regarded as subversive to the authority of the Soviet centralized state. Here are found the direct appeals to specific national groups, and this type of propaganda may strengthen separatist attitudes and reinforce the sense of resistance to the Bolshevik leadership in Moscow. In general, the Soviets use this material carefully and try to place it in a context favorable to them.

An example of the direct appeal to nationalism was delivered in a speech by a Georgian soldier at the front. After a few statements about the love of the Georgians for the other Soviet peoples, he said:

When I left for the front, my father said to me, "Shaliko, I am 62 years old. I am an old man and can not bear arms with my own hands. Our ancient custom demands revenge on the enemy. Go and avenge your brothers; do not permit the plundering of your own Georgia. Let your bullets and your sword bring us true revenge."

Comrades, I shall not forget the words of my old father! In Georgia, each knows that the most sacred thing to a man is his love for his homeland, and revenge for his friend. For each death in the Caucasus, not one but ten enemies shall pay. We know that Hitler wishes to destroy our entire people, to despoil our maidens and women, to make slaves of free Georgians. Georgians shall not be slaves to the Germans! It will be my shame and disgrace if I do not fulfill my duty as a son, or if I violate our ancient law of vengeance against the enemy!¹⁵⁶

A propaganda vehicle often used with these themes is the exchange of letters and appeals between the home folks and their soldiers in the Army. In the early part of World War II, when a desperate situation removed most propaganda inhibitions, one of the most nationalistic of all appeals to a non-Russian people was sent "From the Uzbek People to the Uzbek Soldiers." It was signed by Uzbek civilian leaders, in the name of 2 million Uzbeks, and began as follows:

Beloved sons of the people, children of our heart! May your eyes go blind if they look with indifference upon your tortured earth! May your ears go deaf if, without heeding them, you go past your brothers and sisters calling for help. . . . Sons of the Uzbek people! Remember, your ancestors preferred to gnaw through the chains with their teeth, rather than live as slaves. Remember, Hitler is not only the sworn enemy of all the peoples of the East. Behold the fate of the Moslem peoples of the Crimea and the Northern Caucasus: their peaceful villages are being burned and looted by the Germans. Quickly destroy the enemy, or these beasts will slay your gray-haired grandfathers and your fathers and mothers, and violate your wives and brides, and crush your innocent babes under foot, destroy your canals, and wipe off the face of the earth your flourishing fields and gardens and vineyards, and turn Uzbekistan into a sun-scorched desert. . . . Remember, ye warriors of Uzbekistan! Remember the past! The Uzbek people gave birth to many valiant men, to many great heroes. But they suffered defeat because our people fought their enemies alone; and yet our people longed for freedom as Farhad the Mountain lan-

guished for Siring the River But when our people, with the help of their older Russian brothers, raised the banner of revolt, we achieved victory, freedom and happiness. . . . An enemy bullet will not pierce the heart that is armoured with brotherly love for the other Soviet peoples. . . . If there are any traitors or deserters among you, we shall curse them; and there will be no room for them in our sunny Uzbekistan. Their Mother and their country will never forgive them. Such an unworthy son will not have the right to return and knock on the gate of his parent's home. . . .¹⁵⁷

The appeal continued for four more such columns, calling upon each Uzbek soldier to remember the ancient heroes and writers of his people, and warning that the Nazis were trying to destroy "Samarkand, where Navoi our great Uzbek writer and Ulug-Bek our great man of science lived; and Ferghana, where Mughumi wrote his inspired poems; and Bokhara, in whose walls Tarabi, the national hero of the Uzbek people, fought for freedom against the Mongol conquerors."

A similar message pledging themselves to fight for their homeland and to raise high "the glory of the Soviet patriot," was signed by 2031 Georgian soldiers and political workers and sent to the Georgian people.¹⁵⁸

Even more direct utilization of the nationalist sentiments were advised by Kalinin in his speech to non-Russian agitators. "Everybody," he told them, "is proud of his nationality, . . . and this point is of very great importance, and should always be borne in mind in agitational work." For example, the agitator should tell a soldier who fights badly or shows cowardice, regardless of whether the man is Georgian, Kazakh, or Uzbek:

Do you mean to say you don't want us to take part in the war when all the other nationalities are fighting like lions? How can we stand aloof from the war? Do you really want people to think just because of you that all our people are cowards? Do you think that it will be a good thing if our republic gets to be looked upon as a country whose people cannot fight and are unable to wage war and defend themselves? How, after this, can we look other people in the face, how shall we be able to go forward, to develop our culture?

Kalinin told the agitators to try to speak in the soldier's native tongue so that he would understand everything. If the soldier asks why the speaker uses such strong language, the speaker should tell him: "I'm an Uzbek (or a Kazakh) too, and I love my people no less than you do; that is why I talk this way."¹⁵⁹

The opposite technique of appealing to the sense of pride rather than shame is also frequently recommended for the agitator. He is told to "remind each soldier of the heroic traditions of his people, of its splendid epics and literature, of its great men," and to urge him to add to the list of national heroes.¹⁶¹ To help the agitator, information about heroes coming from the minority peoples is widely disseminated, especially in magazine articles and brochures.¹⁶² The agitator is also encouraged to learn about the customs and traditions of the homeland of his soldiers, and to use in his talks with them information about their native region's progress and "successes in Socialist construction."¹⁶³

Chapter 14

THE OFFICERS

POSITION OF MILITARY OFFICERS

The men of the officer corps in the Soviet armed forces represent a potential, but very significant, threat to the Bolshevik rulers in the Kremlin. They are, of course, a necessary element which can not be ignored or destroyed without replacement. The services demanded of them require that they have mental attitudes that do not decrease their courage, drive, initiative, or other qualities necessary in military conflict. For this reason, they can not be ideal citizens of a totalitarian state, for they lose these qualities if they are slaves driven to perform the tasks imposed upon them.

In the early days of the regime, the Bolsheviks worked out a crude system for utilizing the services of competent military specialists from the old Tsarist Army, while safeguarding the Kremlin's own security against possible damage by them. Among the basic elements of this system were: the use of hostages in the form of the officers' families; the assignment of commissars to watch the officers in the field, and to countersign all orders given by them; and the early beginnings of non-Communist propaganda appeals to military pride and nationalist patriotism, resorted to especially when the Communist rulers of Russia were proclaiming a war with Poland or some other foreign state.

Beginning in 1918, and continuing for almost two decades, the Soviet leaders hoped to eliminate gradually the need to control non-Communist specialists by creating their own corps of trustworthy military specialists.¹ That effort was a long and complicated one, doomed to failure because of the nature of Communism and because its representatives in Russia did not have magical powers to create a new type of servile but efficient man. The ex-Tsarist officers were replaced by young Soviet citizens, but they did not prove to be the ideal instrumentalities that the Kremlin had hoped to produce. By 1937, when the great Army purges began, the commissar system was reinstated to protect the regime against these same men who had been raised and educated under its aegis. It had become plain that the Bolsheviks would have to create a permanent system for the control and exploitation of their military officers.

The system that has now been established for these purposes is complex, far-reaching, and often illogical, but available data reveal what are apparently five elements of that system: (a) Providing material needs; (b) Promoting professional pride; (c) Controlling via security agencies; (d) Controlling via political apparatus, and Communist and Komsomol branches in the armed forces and (e) Political schooling.

Senior Officers:

"Refresher" courses in Marxism-Leninism at military academies & special training courses. Compulsory attendance at lectures, political gatherings, & officers' groups for Marxist-Leninist training. Active CP members, resulting in speech-making, study, and attendance at meetings.

Junior Officers:

Required courses in Marxism-Leninism & "social sciences" at military academies. Training in Party-political work. CP & Komsomol activities. Compulsory officers' groups for Marxist-Leninist study. Private study of Party propaganda, bullet-letters, and Marxist classics. "Evening Universities of Marxism-Leninism" & other Party schools. Films, press, lectures. Are leaders of noncoms' political-training classes, studying & making own lesson preparation.

Noncommissioned Servicemen:

Induction at 19. Basic training indoctrination. Agitators' informal talks. Propaganda meetings sponsored by political officers, or CP or Komsomol branches in unit. Compulsory political-training classes; extra private study. Lectures, films, public readings of newspapers, "collective listening" to broadcasts. "Information" talks by superiors giving Party line on current events or aspects of Soviet life.

Preinduction Years:

Formal schooling, 4-5 years. Komsomol & other memberships, 10-12 years. Films, press, talks, meetings, 12 years. Summer and school training in military traditions & propaganda, 3 years. Military reserve organization, 2-4 years.

Fig. 13—Political Schooling of the Soviet Soldier.

The first element is an effort to satisfy the material needs of the officer and his family. This effort seems to be quite successful, at least in contrast with the abysmally low standard of living provided for the average Soviet citizen working in a factory or on a farm. A foreign observer who had the ability and opportunity to make an analysis of the men in the Army has written:

In Russia the officers are a privileged class in the literal sense of the word. Their privilege is not, as in many other countries, an irrational, immaterial sham, a glossed-over poverty, a mere social glamour. All Soviet citizens are employees of the state. Among them the officer is the best paid. But his pay is not the important thing; for even the well-paid Soviet citizen has a pretty difficult life. It is hard to find a place to live, to be properly clothed—in short, life is full of worries. The important point about the professional army officer is that he is relieved of all these cares. He has everything in his barracks . . . he is relatively well clothed and fed; he has all kinds of sports, educational facilities, and amusements. The convalescent homes and sanatoriums belonging to the army are the best in the Soviet Union. The Voroshilov Sanatorium in Sochi is fitted out with extraordinary luxury.²

This analysis, written during World War II, still holds true. The officer's salary compares favorably with that given to the military commanders of any other army in the world, is far above that of men in comparable groups in the Soviet Union, and is disproportionately above that of the Army private.³ Moreover, unlike the civilian, the officer can be reasonably sure of being able to use this money, for he is a member of a vast military consumers' co-operative, called *Voentorg*.⁴ In 1951, when most Soviet citizens were having difficulty getting any durable clothing, *Red Star* ran a three-column story criticizing *Voentorg* for (what seems to a Western civilian to have been minor) deficiencies in the uniforms being sold to officers.⁵ The Army press shows constant anxiety that the officers obtain proper housing, clubhouses and other recreational facilities, and other conditions suitable for them.⁶

A second major aspect of the Bolshevik program for the officer is to provide a basis for those psychic satisfactions concerning his profession which are necessary to his own self-respect and self-confidence. Since the Civil War of 1918-21, the Kremlin has been under pressure from the officers who demand a more prominent role in the military community, and especially the abolition of the commissars and secret police.⁷ Although the security controls have been maintained in spite of this pressure, partial compensation has been provided in other steps taken by Moscow. These steps are symbolized in the restoration of personal military ranks for commanding personnel, the professionalization of the military specialist's career, and the restoral of shoulder epaulettes. By the end of World War II, the nonideological military themes, with their emphasis upon pride in the military profession and in the traditions of the entire Army and particular military units, had become quantitatively perhaps the most important part of the entire propaganda output for the armed forces personnel.⁸

It is worth noting that the RAND team, which studied information provided by defectors concerning service conditions and morale in the armed forces (while regarding as unimportant the military specialists' sense of membership in an officers' corps), was impressed by:

. . . the fact that Soviet officers are conscious of their status and aware of its advantages. They enjoy the deference which they receive as officers. Ambitious men who have risen from the lower classes often have a certain kind of cockiness and pride in being officers. We do not know whether this pride affects the performance of the officer's

duties, but in some cases, at least, it certainly underlies the demand for acknowledgement of his status and dignity as an officer in the Soviet Army. . . . Officers, when confronted by insubordination on the part of their enlisted men, have sometimes forcibly reminded them that as enlisted men they had not been regarded as good enough to become officers. The officers' assertion of their superior quality, as well as the requirement that they be obeyed, is justified by the government's having appointed them [CR 26]. It is significant that our sources did not justify this professional position in terms of its important and necessary function in the working of the Army, or in terms of the officers' personal qualifications for fulfilling that function.⁹

The effort to build up the self-esteem and professional pride of the officer is revealed also in the Kremlin's pressure upon its own literary and other propaganda agencies. It is evident not only in the numerous articles in the military press on "the honor and merit of the Soviet officer," but in such highly praised plays as *The Front*, where the young, but professionally competent, Major General Ognev clashes with and wins over the "Old Bolshevik" and Civil War hero, who is not able to cope with the complicated problems of modern warfare and is surrounded by fawning and flattering incompetents.¹⁰ Outside the military forces, the military commander also appears to enjoy a position of respect and prestige, resulting from his membership in the officer corps. Civilians, particularly in the rural areas, apparently rate him just below the Party employee, without any of the stigma attached to the latter.¹¹ Stalin's banquet for the Red Army commanders in 1945 was another public announcement of the honor due to the military officers.¹²

A third major element of the control system is symbolized by the secret police and the other security agencies. The network of the police (representing the Army units of the MGB, or the Ministry for State Security) extends, of course, through all echelons of the armed forces; this means that all military officers are under constant surveillance and pressure. The officers have been made aware of this surveillance, and are aware of former colleagues who disappeared when they incurred the suspicion or displeasure of the MGB.¹³

The MGB uses numerous informants and auxiliary agencies, including the Communist Party branches in the armed forces, to maintain its control over the officers.¹⁴ One aspect of this system may be illustrated by a quotation (which is probably authentic) from an order issued by the Commander-in-Chief of Soviet forces in Austria during 1947. He wrote that although Soviet "troops abroad have the mission of showing to the people of other countries the superiority of the Soviet way of life, . . . it has been noted recently that a number of Soviet officers are falling under the influence of the bourgeois ideology through social intercourse with the local population, and are becoming either anti-Soviet-minded or outright traitors to their country." For this reason, he specified a series of security measures, including the following: "All the commanding officers will be responsible for the conduct of their subordinate officers and will be continually informed of the location of any of their subordinate officers at any time during day or night. The commanding officers will be informed of the personal association and personal activities of their subordinate officers."¹⁵

A fourth element in the control system is the structure of political propaganda and organization symbolized by the political apparatus and the Communist and Komsomol branches in the armed forces. The political workers have yielded many of the commissars' important security functions to the police, but they still make a significant contribution to the control system. Like the police

agents, the political workers are alien forces within the military services, responsible primarily to civilian bodies in Moscow, and expected to work closely with the police and act as informants for them.¹⁶ Moreover, the political workers make various reports to their own supervisors within the political apparatus, which reveal, among other things, potential sources of trouble as well as present gaps and incompetence in military and other nonpolitical matters. One of the most important functions of the political worker is to make out the "political characterization" for each officer, which forms part of his permanent record and seriously affects his career.¹⁷

In the day-to-day activities of the military officers, the political workers play a considerable role. It should be remembered that not only are political workers to be found at every level from the Ministries in Moscow to the companies and batteries in each regiment, but that every military commander in these levels has his own official deputy or assistant for political affairs (his *zampolit* or *pompolit*). The latter are expected to work closely with the military commanders, to know his military and other plans and the reasons for his actions, and to be able to help and even substitute for the commander.¹⁸ In addition, the *zampolit* is responsible for the recreation, non-military study, and propaganda of the officers, and he puts considerable pressure on them in connection with these duties.¹⁹ The best summary of relations between the military officers and the political officers is that given by defectors:

Easy relationships between political and other officers seem to be difficult. There is a feeling of constraint when the *zampolit* is around. There is little freedom of conversation—an officer can not discuss women or news from home since the *zampolit* always has a disapproving look which implies: "Why aren't you people attending to your business? All this has nothing to do with your duty." . . . [By Defector CR11]

In general, military officers appear to think of *zampolits* in one or more of three ways: as nuisances, brutes, or cowards. . . . Some of the dislike for political officers comes from the fact that their specialty is words, while the officers are oriented toward action. Combat officers in all armies, and no less in the Soviet Army, tend to be impatient with those who are constantly preaching to them.

The postwar attitude toward the *zampolit* is one of irritation rather than hostility. He tends to be regarded as a moralistic snoper and hypocrite who imposes boring and trivial inconveniences, but whose impositions are, on the whole, bearable. If it were not for his priggishness and for his dangerous relationship with the MGB, and consequently with the officers' security and promotion, Soviet officers would probably not take too badly to the political propaganda and supervision to which they are subjected by the *zampolit*.

. . . But the *zampolit* does irritate the officers by his pretensions to superiority, by his frowns when they drink, by his censorious attitude toward their lack of political seriousness and toward the ways in which they spend their leisure time. He is regarded as a sort of bluenose: as one colonel put it, in speaking about a newly arrived *zampolit*, "Oh, they have sent us one of those clergymen." (Having been overheard by the *zampolit*, the colonel was accordingly reduced in rank.) [CR 2]

Officers are aware that the *zampolit* can damage their careers. One source said that he often caused officers to be replaced or demoted. The *zampolit* exercised his power indirectly by the use of his channels of communication to the MGB and to the higher echelons of the MPA, which could determine the professional fate of politically or personally obstreperous officers.²⁰

Another aspect of the officer's control by the political apparatus is his relationship to the Communist Party or to the Komsomol if he is a junior officer in his early twenties. Through the years of Soviet rule, it has become in-

creasingly important for the average military officer to join the Party, regardless of his own ideological bent, if he wants to stay out of trouble and have a fair chance of steady advancement. The only exceptions are apparently highly skilled technicians in such fields as medicine and engineering who would join for personal reasons, or those general officers who have not been acceptable to the Party because of their anti-Soviet relatives or other disqualifications.²¹ By the outbreak of World War II, the overwhelming majority of the professional military officers were Party members, and most of the men who entered the Army's ranks during the war are now assimilated into the Party.²² The Kremlin's attitude is epitomized by two incidents—its insistence that the ex-Tsarist general (later the Soviet marshal), Shaposhnikov, appear at a Party Congress with a group of other non-Communist officers to announce that they were joining the Party, and the announcement that General Govorov (who had been perhaps the leading non-Party general in the Red Army) had joined the Party shortly before he was put in charge of the defense of Leningrad in World War II.²³

The advantages of Party membership for the military officer are not insignificant. He avoids pressure to join, and the suspicion that is levied against non-Party people; in fact, defectors report that many join precisely because they have a cloud on their record and want to avoid notice.²⁴ He has a clearer road ahead, for he will find it quite difficult to get admitted into a military academy for advance training if he is not a Party member, and his promotions depend on good "political characterizations."²⁵ Moreover, if he finds favor with the Party officials, they may help him to get good publicity and even become an Army hero. The two best examples of the latter were Generals Panfilov and Dovator, both of whom had even been political workers at one time, and who were made the subjects of intensive propaganda campaigns in the early part of World War II and in the postwar period.²⁶

The Party is an important part of the regime's mechanism for the control of the military officer. The officer who is accepted within its fold soon finds that he is in a co-operative for group surveillance, in which all members are required to watch and report on each other and where each individual's ideas, attitudes, and actions are made the business of the Party branch. While the branch can not call upon the commander to report on and defend his military policies, it can discuss his statements to his friends, his lack of enthusiasm or success in his work, and his relationships to his men, for these are part of his record as a Communist.²⁷ As a Party member, he is under constant pressure to improve his service work, and to be a model officer.²⁸ Not only are the standards higher for him, but he is subjected to a double system of punishment, military and Party, if he fails in any of his duties.

Finally, as part of his Party duties, the officer-Communist is required to spend much of his spare time and mental energy in the "study" of Marxist and other literature prescribed for him, and to memorize much of what he reads. This requirement is quite important in the armed forces and should not be underestimated because of the general attitudes of boredom and resentment which defectors report. Although the precise purpose of this requirement is not entirely clear to Western observers, the Soviet leaders probably feel that "study" of this kind has desirable results in the creation of basic political attitudes in the mind of the officer, in decreasing the amount of time and interest

that he may have to explore other and less desirable concepts, and in expanding his respect for those who seem to be able to understand and use this Marxist "philosophy" and the "laws of societal development" which it is alleged to reveal.

POLITICAL TRAINING AND PROPAGANDA IN OFFICERS' SCHOOLING

Schools and Their Staffs for Political Work

Through the 35 years of Soviet rule, the armed forces have established an elaborate officer-training system, in which the educational institutions play an important part. The emphasis placed on the latter is revealed in the claim that most officers pass half their peace-time careers in schools of one kind or another.²⁹ The general aims established for these institutions follow the usual Bolshevik stereotypes. Bulganin, who generally speaks for the top leadership on military matters, said in his speech on the thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet Army: "The military schools must train officers who are well educated in military and political matters, able skillfully to teach their units in peacetime and to resolve successfully complicated military tasks in war time. The military schools must serve as models for military units with high discipline, proper organization, precise inner order, and soldierly bearing."³⁰ Beyond this, those responsible for the training of officers are frequently reminded that they "are called upon to give their students not only the necessary military knowledge, but also serious political and ideological training,"³¹ for "the Soviet officer conducts important political work in the companies, and all his activity is intimately connected with the life of the Party and Komsomol organization."³²

In order to secure the results desired in the political sphere, each military school and academy has a staff of full-time professional workers with numerous part-time auxiliaries. In charge of the political program is the school's deputy director for political affairs, an important and responsible official of the school administration whose staff forms the school's political section. He plans and supervises the execution of an extensive political program, maintains some inspection over most classwork with particular emphasis on the courses dealing with political subjects, controls the work of the Party and Komsomol organizations in the school, and maintains records on the political reliability and potential of each future officer. His staff and auxiliary forces give formal lectures and informal talks, lead discussion groups, arrange meetings of various types, direct the school's newspaper and control its radio facilities, arrange for the showing of films and other graphic propaganda, and approve the plans for recreation.³³

Major functions are also assigned to other groups within the school. The faculty members, particularly in the social science departments, are not only responsible for introducing Marxist ideology and attitudes in their class programs, but are often given lecture and other propaganda assignments.³⁴ Another of their most important functions is the exerting of conscious and continuing influence over the personal attitudes, actions and independent study of their students.³⁵

The Party and Komsomol organizations in the school are, of course, expected to make their own contributions to the political program. Their first task is to exert pressure on their own members. This is described in Bolshevik terminology as "securing the leading role of Communists in study and discipline." This pressure must not be generalized or reduced to exhortations to the membership for improvement, but is expected to be revealed in "real and constant concern that each Party member and candidate without exception shows himself to be a model in study and discipline." It requires reprimands and punishment for backward members, and public praise and rewards for the leaders.³⁶ A similar function is performed with respect to the faculty, most of whom belong to the Party. Steps are taken to ensure that their lectures and public utterances fit the current Party line, with appropriate emphasis on themes regarded as important at the moment.³⁷

Concurrently with their duties toward their own members, the Party and Komsomol branches are expected to put pressure upon, and to bring the official propaganda to, the nonmembers in the student body, faculty, and service personnel. For this purpose, they aid the school authorities and the political workers, acting as informants and agitators, trying to mobilize "public opinion" against troublemakers and seeking to aid the backward and misguided.³⁸ A revealing picture of what is expected from a Party organization at work is given by an account of the annual meeting for reports and elections, held by the First Company in the Novosibirsk Infantry School. During the meeting, Student Konovalev took the floor and said, "Our company has every possibility of becoming the leading unit in our school. However, this possibility has not been fulfilled, and the fault for this lies upon us Communists. We have not been able to mobilize all students to the struggle for the raising in quality of our military and political training. More than that, even among the Party members and candidates, there are backward people. Thus, Communists Serov, Osipov and Burev are not examples for the non-Party people, for they themselves violate military discipline."

Other speakers then arose to condemn the executive committee (or Party *buro*) for its failure to deal with these and other important matters, accusing it of taking "a liberal attitude toward Communists who had violated disciplinary regulations, because they feared to 'wash our dirty linen in public.'" In fact, even the officers of the branch were declared to be poor Communists, for the deputy secretary of the Party *buro* had neglected his studies, earning poor grades in several important courses. The meeting then adopted a program for work with the new Party members and candidates, and for improvement of conditions in the unit.³⁹

The Teaching Faculty

A major aspect of the political training planned for the officer-in-training is given in the classroom, especially in the courses dealing with what the Soviets call the "social sciences."* Before viewing the content of some courses in this field, it is important to gain some impression of the men used on the

*There are special courses in Party-political work, which are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

faculties of these schools, and of the controls maintained over their attitudes and actions.

Several types of faculty members can be distinguished from the data in hand. The first is the political worker on his way up the ladder, who serves a period in the training of officers. Col. G. N. Zakharychev was one of these. He had been drafted into the Red Army in 1925 at the age of nineteen, joined the Party in 1928, was sent to officers' training school, and then entered the political apparatus of the Army. He worked his way up within the Party and the Army apparatus to the point where he was a delegate to the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939, a deputy in the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR, and the chief of the Political Administration of one of the twenty or more military districts into which the Army is divided. After the war, in which he received numerous awards and orders, he was assigned to the post of chief of the political section in one of the top military academies in the Army, but died there at the age of forty-five.⁴⁰

A political worker who was assigned to teaching after he had reached the apex of his career in the political apparatus was Col. G. V. Barandov, who had joined the Communist Party at the age of seventeen, in 1919. He had worked in the ranks of various civilian Party apparatus units for 15 years, and was then sent into the MPA of the Red Army in 1932. He went rapidly up the ladder within the Army political structure until he became the editor of *Red Star*, the Army organ run largely by the MPA, and served in this post from 1937 to 1940. But here his progress was apparently impeded, for he was removed from that important post before World War II; his wartime duties are obscure. In the postwar period he was assigned to the Department of Marxism-Leninism in the Voroshilov Military Academy for Chemical Defense, and also taught in various Party institutions.⁴¹

Representative of the specialists in the same academy was Col. F. P. Kambalov, who joined the Red Army at seventeen, became a political worker and a divisional commissar before he was thirty, and then received a study assignment to the Lenin Military-Political Academy, where he became interested in teaching and in the research in the field of geography. Although he was assigned to Party-political work as a minor activity, his major tasks were in the field of military geography, and he was a senior teacher in that department of the Voroshilov Academy for Chemical Defense when he died.⁴²

The careers of Zakharychev, Barandov, and Kambalov illustrate some of the qualities apparently desired by the Soviet leadership—long membership in the Party, professional assignments within the Party apparatus which develop an acute sense of what is desired by the Party of its agents, and knowledge of how to operate within that milieu. The agents should be men who have become aware of the intellectual bases of their academic subjects, and who have been able to secure the academic degree which is the union card of the advanced teacher. However, the vast majority of men teaching social science subjects in the military schools do not meet even these standards for academicians, judging by comments in the specialized journals. Many of them are young men, relatively untrained even in Party methods, who learned a minimum of subject matter in the Lenin Military-Political Academy or the Kalinin Military-Pedagogical Institute. The latter institute was established precisely to train teaching per-

sonnel in the political and economic disciplines for assignments in the military schools.⁴³

An analysis of the situation in 1941 reported:

The teachers of the social-economic subjects in our military academies must be highly educated and cultured people. In this respect, we have much that remains to be done.

For each 100 teachers among us, we have one professor and eight assistant professors. The number of advanced degrees is even lower. An overwhelming majority of the teachers have gone through a higher school for military-political education but not all can boast of a high educational level. There are also those who have not attained the average educational level.

Only a few know foreign languages well. As a matter of fact, not all our teachers have really mastered the Russian language. You sit in the room of one of our teachers and listen to his lectures, and you are surprised at the poverty of his language. The words with which he operates in the course of two hours are so often repeated that the lecture becomes tedious and unattractive.⁴⁴

There are also frequent charges that these teachers fail to study the Stalinist version of Marxism, that they often show carelessness and even neglect in preparing their lectures, even when dealing with Stalin's writings, and sometimes are guilty of violating the Party line by praising the wrong foreign countries or overdoing such praise. In discussing the theme of Lenin's book, *The State and Revolution*, one teacher was quoted as saying that the most democratic country is America.⁴⁵ There are many indications of statements and formulations that violate the Party line, although none so obviously serious as this one.

In view of the frequent expressions of distrust of, and disrespect for, most teachers in the political and social sciences,⁴⁶ and, more important, because of the Bolshevik insistence on tight control of the Party's ideological and propaganda agencies, it was inevitable that a rigid system would be established for control of the teachers in the military schools. The outlines of this control system are evident in the available materials. Although each man has been carefully studied and checked before appointment, he is kept under the careful watch of the political section and of the Party organization of the school, within his classes and outside them.⁴⁷ He is permitted to use only textbooks approved, and usually specially written, for each particular course, and he must work in accordance with a carefully prepared set of "organizational-methodological instructions," which are established after intensive study by the MPA itself.⁴⁸

The teacher must attend conferences and seminars on content and methodology inside his own department and for his school; here his own efforts are carefully checked, and he is given instructions and told in detail of the errors of other teachers, in order that he may understand what is expected of him. The same materials are published for a wider audience in the newspapers and organs of the Army's political apparatus and of the teaching profession.⁴⁹ The teacher must be an active member of some Party organization, performing propaganda and other functions for it, and continuing his never-ending study of Marxism-Leninism under its direction.⁵⁰ Finally, he is always conscious of supervision by the representatives of the political section of the school, who have frequent conferences with him, call him to meetings and lectures, look over his notes, attend his classes, and approve and supervise his research and other activities.⁵¹

Utilization of School Courses

The major political courses given by the teachers in the military schools are based, of course, on the Stalinist conceptions of past history and present policy. In 1945, the MPA approved for compulsory use in all schools and academies of the armed forces, a revised course on the history of the CPSU.⁵² Some inkling of the content of this course may be secured from descriptions of several themes, each of which probably occupied a class for a week or more.

After World War II, a new theme was added to the course syllabus, entitled "The Party of Bolsheviks during the Great Patriotic War." The teacher was called upon to demonstrate the role of the Party as the organizer and inspirer of the national war effort, against the background of the conflict with the Nazi forces. He was told that he must find the basic content of his lectures in Stalin's collection of war speeches, entitled *On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*. With this material, he must "tell in detail about the ideas put forth by Comrade Stalin, show the further development of Marxist-Leninist teachings about war and the Army, and give the students a clear presentation about the sources of power and might of the Soviet Union which secured victory for it."⁵³

During 1950, in the Tamborski Infantry School, several lectures in the same course on the history of the CPSU were devoted to the theme on "The Party of Bolsheviks in the Completion of the Construction of Socialism and the Gradual Transition to Communism in the Prewar Years (1938-1941)." Its teacher was Captain Pyanykh who had graduated from the Kalinin Military-Pedagogical Institute a little more than a year before. The captain apparently had some difficulties, and a report on his preparation for this theme was given by *Red Star*.

As in the preparation of all other political lectures, he was required to present his theme plans for discussion by the methodological conference of teachers in his department. A week before this discussion (about a month before he presented the lectures to his class), Captain Pyanykh circulated a copy of his lectures to the members of the conference, and they were thus prepared to give him detailed suggestions. The major criticism was that his lectures suffered a lack of "contemporariness," which apparently meant that he had failed to stress the current Party line in his description of Stalinist policy in the late thirties. On the basis of these suggestions and the "instructions" of the chief of his department, Captain Pyanykh "was able to show more fully and in detail the dirty role of the American-English imperialists in the creation of the bloc of aggressive states, and instigating its attack on the Soviet Union."^{54*}

Other themes in this course on the history of the CPSU are entitled "The Mensheviks and Bolsheviks in the Period of the Russo-Japanese War and the First Russian Revolution," and "The Party of Bolsheviks in the Period of the Imperialist War" (which means in Bolshevik parlance, World War I). Through these two themes, the students are expected to learn Marxist-Leninist teaching about the nature of war and the Army, the military ideology of the Bolshevik Party, and the military work done by the Party. They are called upon to study the military questions resolved in the past by the Party, including those solved during an armed uprising.⁵⁵

*Presumably, this means that the Captain was to tell his class that the Americans and British had created the Axis coalition which was at this time fighting the British, and was soon to attack the United States!

Along with this course on the history and ideas of the Bolshevik Party, all officers are required to pass a course on the history of the USSR. They are expected to learn what the Bolsheviks present as the basic patterns in the development of the Soviet people, and especially "the great role of the glorious Russian people in the struggle for the honor and independence of the Homeland, with the models created by our great ancestors."⁵⁶ The students will then presumably have faith in "the world-historic significance of the Bolshevik Revolution, the guiding and inspiring role of the Russian working class and its Party, in the struggle for the liberation of all peoples of our country from the oppression of capitalists and landlords in the struggle for Socialism."⁵⁷

In addition to these basic courses, most students are required to take courses in Marxist philosophy, world history, and political economy. Some 120 class hours are devoted to political economy in naval academies, for example, where attention is given to such topics as "Wages and the Working Day under Capitalism," and "The Socialist System of the National Economy and the Nature of its Economic Laws."⁵⁸ A student of the Military Institute for Foreign Languages reported that some four to six hours per week were devoted to the study of Marxism-Leninism.⁵⁹ In these courses, and indeed in all others offered in the military schools, the teachers are expected to demonstrate the "truth" of Marxism and the desirability of the Party line—whatever it might be at any given moment. In this way, through repetition, censorship of opposing ideas, and persuasion of the correctness of these concepts, the school is expected to "form a Marxist-Leninist outlook in the Soviet officer."⁶⁰

Training and Practice in Political Work

The military commanders of all units from the platoon level up to the individual army are held responsible for the morale and the political attitudes of their troops, and they are told not to shift this responsibility entirely to their political deputies. In order to prepare the officers for any political duties that may accrue to them during their service, they are given formal course training and practical experience in the military schools and academies.

According to Colonel Kozlov, the head of the MPA section on military schools, the curricula of all military-educational institutions must give a prominent place to the course entitled "Party-Political Work in the Soviet Army."⁶¹ This course, which the students are expected to take in the senior year, is intended to acquaint the students with the form, content, and methods of Party-political work, and to help them develop the habits necessary for operations in this field.⁶² Among other things, each student is called upon to plan and conduct one session in which he presents "political information," and another in which he leads an informal group discussion or *beseda*. After each individual's effort, the class is called upon to analyze the content and methodology used, and their analysis is capped by a statement from the teacher.⁶³

A more detailed description is available concerning requirements for this course at the Frunze Infantry School in Cmak. Here a part of the course is called "Political-Enlightenment Work with Soldiers, Sergeants, and Master-Sergeants," and deals specifically with the platoon commander's functions in conducting political-training classes for the men. Each student is given a theme for his class; he studies the assigned materials, draws up an outline

of his opening talk, plans a group discussion and a bibliography on the theme, and selects appropriate graphic materials. When his work in the class is done, he is assigned to act as a leader in a political-training class within the school.⁶⁴ Another assignment in the same course deals with the use of "Party-Political Work in Securing of Military Training," and here he learns how to use propaganda methods and the Party and Komsomol organizations to improve the men's performance in firing practice, guard duty, and study of military tactics.⁶⁵ Similar assignments are given at the Saratovsk Infantry School.⁶⁶

Virtually all students are members of either the Party or the Komsomol, and are expected to take active parts in the affairs of their branches. Since each branch has a vigorous program with considerable propaganda functions, each student becomes familiar with branch business, elections, reports, arranging of meetings, and giving of talks. In most platoons of officer cadets, there are official agitators and deputy agitators; they give informal talks to their fellow students, read aloud articles from newspapers and magazines with appropriate comments, and participate in monthly seminars for agitators and propagandists.⁶⁷ After the student completes his course work in "Party-Political Work in the Soviet Army," he may be assigned to organize collective reading of books and newspapers, to assist the council running the Room of Political-Enlightenment Work, to issue propaganda leaflets, or to give a public lecture. In many military schools before graduation, the officer-candidate is expected to make a speech before and after a movie film, to speak before a civilian audience in a nearby factory or collective farm, and to conduct a political-training class with the service personnel at the school.⁶⁸

In addition to securing practical training in performing propaganda and political functions, each student is the target for intensive and numerous political activities outside the classroom. The effort to make him a loyal, unquestioning, and devoted Soviet citizen with only Party-approved ideas and attitudes goes on constantly. He is expected to spend much of his spare time in "independent study" (which, in spite of its title, is closely supervised by the political officers and Party leaders) of Marxist classics, Leninist and Stalinist writings, and Party literature.⁶⁹ In addition, he must attend numerous meetings, lectures, political-information sessions and group talks—all intended to give him the latest version of the Party line, as interpreted by the school's deputy director for political affairs or his subordinate political officers, by civilian Party leaders or specialists, by members of the faculty, or by authorized students.⁷⁰ If the officer has not acquired the ideas and attitudes approved by the Kremlin when he graduates, the fault can hardly lie in insufficient exposure to Communist propaganda and the Party line.

SYSTEM OF REQUIRED MARXIST-LENINIST STUDY

The System and Its Rationalization

After the officer leaves the military school or academy, he is required to spend part of his service time and his own free time in self-improvement. The core of his program is expected to be the service time which he must devote to the two phases of "commanders' study." On the military side, each

commander works within a group under the leadership of a senior officer which discusses tactical problems, reviews recent books on military questions, and analyzes military operations of previous wars in Russia and elsewhere.⁷¹ Commanders' study also has a political phase, in which each man is expected to make a continuing study of Marxist-Leninist theory and Soviet policy. Thus an officer who became a defector in July 1949 reported that in his regiment there had been 24 hours each month of commanders' study, and that six of these hours (usually classes of two hours each for three days) were devoted to political lessons.⁷²

In this political phase of his commanders' study, each officer is required by military regulations to follow a program based upon that established and maintained by the MPA. He must do this by participating in certain of the groups to which he is assigned, and this is supposed to point up and stimulate his independent study. The required minimum time to be spent with his group in political study ranges from 24 hours per year for Army divisional commanders and Navy fleet unit commanders, to 40 hours per year for Army platoon commanders, and 96 hours for escadrille commanders in the Air Forces.⁷³ Around this core of group meetings, each officer is expected to plan and carry out a personal program of individual reading, periodic consultations with political specialists (particularly on difficult problems or isolated points which seem confusing), attendance at lectures arranged by the unit's political officers—all possibly supplemented by the officer's attendance at some Party school or nearby university, or enrollment in correspondence courses for which he is eligible.⁷⁴

The rationale for this hectic activity is based on the demand that every Bolshevik learn all he can about two fields, his own specialty and "the Marxist-Leninist science of society. . . ."⁷⁵ The military officers are assured that they form the basic structure (*kostyak*) of the Army, through which the government and Communist Party "conduct their policy in the military sphere," and they are called upon "to train and lead their subordinates" and to "solve other complicated and responsible" problems. Moreover, they are told, this is a period of intensive struggle with "the survivals of capitalism in the consciousness of people."⁷⁶ For all these reasons, it is a "most important and pressing task of each officer to work continuously to perfect his political training and to master Marxist-Leninist theory."⁷⁷

In order to perform this "gigantic" task, the officer is encouraged to use the facilities available to him, beginning with the system of commanders' study and using available study circles, nearby schools or universities, or the many correspondence schools in order to achieve the ends envisaged in the study plan set for him during every year. He is also pressed to set up a personal plan for independent study, and achieve the desired results by persistent and intensive work.⁷⁸

A Bolshevik study aid for the officer, issued by the Lenin Military-Political Academy, illustrates these demands upon the military commander by pointing to the accomplishments of a model officer named V. Kononov. He acquired "the habits of systematic work in Marxism-Leninism" when he was in the military academy, and he has worked on the Marxist classics ever since, using his acquired knowledge in his "practical public and service activities."⁷⁹ Life is complicated, he says, with many events occurring which must be understood, and so he studies constantly, trying each day to "enrich" himself with new knowledge from Marxist-Leninist theory:

At the present time, Comrade Kononov is pursuing his Marxist-Leninist training in the system of commanders' study. He has a study plan, and is always aware when any particular subject is to be taken up at the seminar meetings. . . . [Moreover] although Officer Kononov has already done basic work on [the book entitled] *A Short Course in the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, he is at the present time studying it once more with profound interest. In addition to this, for each chapter of *A Short Course*, the officer is studying thoroughly the corresponding sections of the biographies of V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin. He also regularly reads supplementary literature from original sources, and at the present time is reading memoirs and fictional literature dealing with the basic theme.

. . . Each officer must have a personal plan of work for the study of Marxist-Leninist theory. In the plan must be specified the extent of the material which is to be studied, the time to be set aside, and the methods of work to be used (study of books, consultations, lectures, class-group and seminar meetings, preparations for political study classes or reports or lecture). It is essential in drawing up the personal plan of Marxist-Leninist training, to take into consideration the program to which the officer has been assigned, including the general service work plan, and the time and study opportunities which are at hand for the unit in which the officer is assigned.⁶⁰

The lesson in this and similar stories was stressed in a typical comment made at the 1948 Party conference in the Primorski Military District. The main speaker, in discussing the condition of officers' Marxist-Leninist study, declared: "Experience has shown that the tasks of military and political training are most successfully resolved in those units where the officer personnel systematically and persistently occupy themselves with their self-education in this theory."⁶¹ As a warning to those who neglect or underestimate the need for study of Marxism, stories are told and published about such men as Officer Nichinurenko. Several times this man had ceased his independent study and neglected his Party work, and each time he was brought to his senses (presumably by a political worker) and put on the right track. But the situation grew worse, and eventually it was discovered that Nichinurenko could not answer even "the most elementary political questions of his subordinates." Not only had he fallen behind in his Marxist study, but (the presumption is that this follows inevitably) he made one serious error after another in his service duties. "In the end, it was necessary to remove him from his post."⁶²

The System in Operation

In each study year (usually running from the fall of one year to the early summer of the next) the MPA issues an annual plan, with detailed objectives for each officer group and specific assignments for all officers.⁶³ The plan is used as a basis for the directives of the political section of each army or equivalent military formation which establishes a program of study for the officers subordinate to it, depending primarily on the *Short Course in the History of the CPSU(B)*.⁶⁴ Then a network of groups for Marxist-Leninist training is established, and the groups are opened for most officers. Pressure is used by every part of the political apparatus to get each eligible officer enrolled in one of these groups, and to have him stay with that group through the year.⁶⁵ The political section at the army level, using the political workers of its own staff and of lower levels, is commissioned to recruit competent leaders for these study groups, to train and assist them in their work, and to control their work and that of their groups through the study year.⁶⁶

The men chosen as leaders for the study groups are usually high military officers who have shown a special propensity for Marxist theory and explanation of it, or professional political workers who must, of course, have a detailed knowledge of the Stalinist version of Marxism. Among those who are used here are the chiefs of divisional political sections and their staff political workers, deputy regimental commanders for political affairs, and the best-qualified Party officials.⁶⁷ Each leader must be checked and approved by the Army political section, and formally assigned by official order.⁶⁸

A report from a division located in the Soviet Zone of Germany indicated that a majority of the officer personnel was enrolled in these study groups. In assigning each man to a group, consideration was given to his service position and rank. There were two study groups at the divisional headquarters, one composed of the commanders of nearby regiments and equivalent units, and the other comprised of the officers of the military staff and of the divisional political section. In each regiment, there were groups composed of battalion commanders and other groups composed of company commanders.⁶⁹ Platoon leaders who were considered to be too immature politically to lead political-training classes for their soldiers were given Marxist training in special groups. These met twice a week, for two hours each time, to learn how to conduct political training with their men and to study Marxism-Leninism.⁷⁰

The methods used in the study groups follow the basic pattern found in many other political activities of the Communist Party. At the beginning of the study year, the group is given a basic plan which enumerates the "themes" to be studied, with one or two weeks for each theme. The study of each theme begins with a lecture from the group leader, then there is a period of independent study by each member of the group, and this is climaxed by a period of "lively discussion" in which all members participate, closing with a summary of the salient points by the group leader.⁷¹

In characteristic Bolshevik fashion, the men leading the study groups are placed under the control, training, and guidance of the professional political workers. The political organs at the divisional or army levels usually establish seminars for these group leaders, each composed of 15 to 20 people. A high-ranking political official is placed in charge of the seminar, with responsibility for conducting its meeting and for providing continuous aid to, and control over, the members.⁷²

To complete the cycle of control, the seminar director himself must draw up a clear and detailed plan for his seminar, and this is submitted to an appropriate authority for approval.⁷³ All the persons involved in this system, including the officers who are members of the primary study groups, the leaders of the officers' study groups, and the directors of the seminars for the group leaders, are given additional guidance in magazine and newspaper articles, in special group conferences, and in discussions with supervising political workers.⁷⁴

Content and Methods

The content of the Marxist study program for the individual officer varies somewhat with the level of the group in which he finds himself. Virtually all officers are required to make at least one intensive analysis of the Party bible, *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): A Short*

Course, although some men go through it carefully four or five times. Most groups spend at least one year on a chapter-by-chapter detailed study of it.⁶⁶ A large number of the officers and the officers' study group have reportedly already completed this, and most of the others are now doing so.⁶⁷

Soviet defectors who had been assigned during their military service to such groups, have described the primitive methods used in many of them. In many study groups, one chapter in the *Short Course* is assigned for each class meeting, and each member is expected to read that material plus supplementary discussions on the same basic questions. When the class is assembled, the group leader explains the basic doctrine or reads an explanation to the officers, and then asks for questions or comments. He might then open a question period by stating: "Comrades, we are working on the third chapter today. Captain Ivanov, will you tell me about the political situation in the Tsarist regime at the end of the nineteenth century?" Captain Ivanov would then recite, receiving a grade for his effort, and then other officers would be called upon to comment or to correct his statement.⁶⁷

For those officers' groups which have completed *A Short Course in the History of the CPSU(B)*, permission may be requested to undertake one of several advanced programs. One of the more advanced is a course in historical materialism, in which the students are expected to work directly with primary sources and must give detailed reports on their study. An officers' group in Marxist-Leninist training, led by Officer Shparkovski and including about a dozen men who had all finished work at an institution of higher learning, was permitted by the divisional political section to undertake this course. One of the early themes in the course was entitled "Marxism-Leninism and the Class Struggle," and after the group leader had introduced the subject in a formal lecture, he announced that five separate and extended reports would be given by selected students in the next four-hour meeting of the seminar.⁶⁸

Another advanced group studying historical materialism had four two-hour seminars on the theme of "The Marxist-Leninist Theory of Classes, the Class Struggle, and the State." Several lectures on important parts of the theme were given by a civilian specialist who was a candidate for a higher degree in philosophical sciences. Then reports were made by members of the class. Thus, one officer spoke on "The Class Struggle—Moving Force in the Development of Antagonistic Societies," and emphasized the significance of the class struggle in capitalist countries "of the present period," showed "on living examples" that "the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie was now organically intertwined with the struggle for peace and with the effort to bridle the imperialist instigators of war." In the concluding part of his report, the officer described the struggle of the Soviet-led "camp of peace, democracy, and socialism."⁶⁸

Another alternative program is to have the officers' group study a series of miscellaneous subjects connected with the Army. One such group, led by Officer Anisomov, devoted a session to the theme of "The Fighting Traditions of the Soviet Armed Forces." The opening lecture was given by Anisomov who thought that he had given a stimulating talk, but it was criticized by the unit commander who visited the session. Anisomov was roundly scolded because he had failed to emphasize the military traditions and past heroes of his own unit, because he had not referred to the present-day leading soldiers and officers,

and because he had failed to use graphic aids. Other themes in the work of this group included: "The Leninist Theory of Imperialism and of Socialist Revolution," "The Superiority of Soviet Military Science over Bourgeois Military Science," and "How to Work Over a Political Book."¹⁰⁰ Another group in the Arkhangel Military District studied and heard formal reports on such themes as "Soviet Military Ideology and Its Superiority over Bourgeois Military Ideology" and "The Role of Constantly Active Factors in Contemporary War."¹⁰¹

While most officers do not meet time-consuming demands of these political study standards, the commanders and political workers in each division and army are expected to demand that a real effort be made.¹⁰² In one unit, where it was discovered that most officers did not study or prepare until shortly before their study groups met, it was announced that at least two "free" evenings had to be given to work on military or political questions, and a room was especially equipped for study on such evenings, providing the necessary literature and consultants.

Some control is apparently maintained on the proper use of these "free evenings," which seems to include noting the names of those using the study rooms.¹⁰³ In one unit, the commander established a specific time for independent work by officers, amounting to four hours a week, and he checked to see that the reading rooms were being used; other commanders have been criticized for attempting to wield too much control, even to the extent of going through officers' quarters at night to see if they are studying.¹⁰⁴

The political apparatus strives to provide adequate assistance to the officers in the form of numerous lectures, consultations, graphic aids, magazine articles, and brochures, all dealing with the subjects being studied.¹⁰⁵ It also tries to put pressure on the officers through the Party branch meetings and Party officials, through grades given to the officers in the final evaluations of their progress, and through the "political characterizations" which they must add to the permanent record of each man.¹⁰⁶

In spite of all these efforts for full and profitable use of this major propaganda form, the system of officers' study is still the subject of much public criticism. The charges are familiar ones: the officers show little initiative or real interest, and apparently begrudge the time spent; the class meetings are often tedious and boring when they are held; they are conducted on a low ideological level by poor teachers; insufficient control is maintained by the unit commanders and political officers to ensure proper conditions; and no real effort is made to connect the political lessons with the military tasks of the unit.¹⁰⁷ A *Red Star* article frankly admits that some Communist officers even think of themselves as "military specialists," and "simply disregard their political studies."¹⁰⁸

SUPPLEMENTARY LECTURES, UNIVERSITY COURSES, AND "INDEPENDENT" STUDY

The time spent in the required groups for Marxist-Leninist training is supposed to be only the core of each officer's program of "independent study" of Marxism and Soviet policy. He is under continuous pressure to study in the many informal and unsystematic occasions which are presented to him (as

attending the special lectures or reading a variety of books), or to use the more formal methods of attending a school or enrolling in a correspondence course of some kind.

He can hardly avoid the lectures and reports which are given to the officers of his military unit, for his attendance is usually required at these. Many are given at the officers' club, or in special lecture halls in the large cities. An example of the importance given to them is the lecture series given in the Kirov House of Officers in Leningrad for "senior officers, generals, and admirals."¹⁰⁹

The political lectures are, of course, considered most important although apparently not enough of them are given, in the view of the MPA. A highly approved type of program is the "cycle" of lectures on the Marxist-Leninist classics, in which a single work by Marx or Stalin may be discussed in detail during a series of talks, and its significance plainly set forth. A similar method is to schedule a series of lectures on the history of the CPSU, which must be something less than a novelty since most officers have studied the subject and the official textbook in civilian school, in the Komsomol, in military academy, and in the officers' system of required Marxist-Leninist training. In addition, many lectures are given on various phases of Marxism and on many problems of philosophy.¹¹⁰

In a more popular vein, although hardly likely to make its audience eager listeners, many lectures deal with political affairs, and particularly with nationalist and patriotic themes.¹¹¹ Apparently, many talks deal with the claims in agriculture and industry, plans for economic expansion, and the construction of new dams and other structures. Other lectures are concerned with various phases of military science, although all of them are expected to prove the superiority of Soviet concepts and methods in this field, as in all others.¹¹²

As in virtually all phases of political work, complaints are frequently published about the lectures given for the officers—their low levels, tediousness, failure to give attention to the approved themes, and the poor control wielded by the political organs over the selection, training, and work of the lecturers themselves.¹¹³ Even more revealing, perhaps, of the pressures exerted by the audiences are the types of subjects that would be selected if the political organs did not exercise their authority over the choice of themes. A review of lecture work done in the armed forces makes this comment: "It can not be considered normal if in some cases all lecture propaganda amounts largely to explanations of current events on the international scene, while lectures and reports on the history and theory of Bolshevism are given very rarely." Thus, for example, of 115 lectures given recently by a lecture group (probably attached to a Political Administration) headed by Comrade Yaroshenko, only 14 were dedicated to questions of CPSU history, 5 to Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and 3 to political economy.¹¹⁴ Similarly, the lecture group of the Political Administration in the Turkestan Military District gave nearly 600 lectures in 1950. Of these 355 were on the international situation, and only 15 percent dealt with any aspect of the history or theory of the Bolshevik Party.¹¹⁵

In the postwar period, in addition to the required participation in the groups for Marxist-Leninist study, attendance at lectures and other special events, and Communist study as required by the Party, something new was added for the officer. This was an institution called the "Evening University of Marxism-Leninism," operating within the armed forces in accordance with the plans of

the Propaganda Department of the MPA. Although applications to these schools are made "voluntarily" by the officer, and although he must attend and do the specified work in his "free time," there is apparently much pressure upon the young officer who wants the Party's support in securing promotions.¹¹⁶

The students of the evening universities are apparently a good cross section of the politically ambitious men in the armed forces. In the universities of the Northern Fleet, for example, 60 percent of the students were declared to be ship commanders, chiefs of units or subdivisions on board ship, or staff officials, while the school attached to the Frunze Central House of the Red Army boasted a number of high officers including Lt. Gen. N. A. Istomin, who reportedly went through the two-year course.¹¹⁷

Regardless of the actual level of academic work done here, a heavy load is placed on the average military officer, who must combine study and attendance with his full range of service and Party duties. It is hardly surprising that there are complaints of low attendance in many classes, that the teachers complain many students are inadequately prepared for classes, and that the political organs complain about the teachers.¹¹⁸ It is hardly surprising to read that there are "comrades who do not have a real desire to learn and, lacking the will and persistence to overcome difficulties, cease to attend the lectures when they discover that the university presents serious demands upon its students."¹¹⁹

It is obvious that the demands upon the officer for participation in the Communist system of political study and ideological training cannot be met by the average man. Only an officer consumed with political ambition and spending every moment of available time on these matters could hope to satisfy these pressures. He must spend several hours a month in commanders' study, which includes some attention to Marxism and Party history. If he is a platoon, company, or battalion commander, he may well be asked to lead a political-training class for privates or noncommissioned officers, and this will require hours of attendance at preparatory meetings, conferences, and lectures, in addition to the time spent with his class. If he is an active Party member, he will be asked to attend a Party school or an Evening University of Marxism-Leninism, or he will be encouraged to enroll in a correspondence school course.

Finally, since he is declared to be a member of the intelligentsia, he must attend the lectures and other serious events at his Officers' House, and he should work out his own program of independent study. The core of this program must obviously be the reading and re-reading of the Marxist classics, and the Leninist and Stalinist commentaries upon them. The officer is also told, however, that he is expected to read widely in his own field of military specialty, as well as the latest works in science, art, and fiction. And, of course, he must know the latest turns in the Party line, read *Red Star* and other Army newspapers, and keep up with the journals in the field of his interest.¹²⁰

POLITICAL TRAINING FOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS

The noncommissioned officers were regarded as weak elements in the pre-war Army, and have been given careful and rigid training in the postwar period.¹²¹ A Soviet general told an American military attache that political education has particular importance on this level,¹²² and the political apparatus

gives special attention to this educative task, treating the noncommissioned officers as a separate group. On the whole, however, the political training given to the sergeants and other noncoms is fairly close in type to that given to the mass of soldiers.

The type of men now available for assignment as noncommissioned officers is somewhat higher than the Soviets were able to secure in the prewar period. Most of them have had a general education on the secondary school level, and have been given a short but intensive preliminary military training. They have been described by American sources as hard, well-indoctrinated politically, and able to follow orders promptly and well.¹²³ Their morale has been described as good, and this is partially supported by reports that even among defectors, the sergeants take seriously the propaganda about unit loyalty and soldierly pride.¹²⁴

The core of the political program for the sergeants and other noncommissioned officers is the system of political-training classes. Although similar in type and operations to the system used for the soldiers, the sergeants' classes are kept separate from the latter, and the sergeants are expected to supplement their class training with lectures and independent reading.¹²⁵ A typical three-month study plan for the sergeants, as approved by the Political Administration of a military district in 1946, contained the following themes: (a) "Punishment and Commendations," in which the class leader is expected to give a two-hour talk, followed by a two-hour discussion period; (b) "Off-duty Conduct of Military Servicemen," with the class leader's talk and the class discussion each allotted two hours; (c) "Training with the Traditions of the Military Unit and Formation," studied for four hours; (d) A control and testing meeting, reviewing the work of the past two months, to be given four hours; (e) "The Superiority of the Socialist Structure over the Capitalist System," in which the class leader is expected to give a lecture for two 2-hour sessions, followed by two hours of independent reading by each man, and a two-hour class discussion; (f) A two-hour talk by the leader on "How Party-Political Work in the Soviet Army is Organized"; (g) A two-hour talk by the class-leader on "One-man Leadership in the Soviet Army"; (h) A two-hour talk on the programs and duties of the company organizations of the Communist Party and the Komsomol; (i) A two-hour talk on the methods and objectives of agitational and propaganda work on the company level; (j) Five class sessions on "The Geography of Our Country"; and (k) Four class sessions on "Our Country in the Past."¹²⁶

It is apparent that the sergeants are expected to cover the same ground as the privates do in their political study, although the former will presumably do so in more intensive fashion. In addition, however, they are given some training in methods of political work among their men, and are provided with some conception of the political apparatus in which they have a minor role. It is typical of Bolshevik stereotypes that a journal issued for the military commanders asserts that where discipline is poor in platoons and squads, a major cause is often found to be the failure to teach the sergeants approved techniques of "enlightenment work."¹²⁷

Like the political classes for the privates, the sergeants' groups meet for four hours each week. However, although there have been indications that this creates some difficulties, the political workers have been ordered to set up the classes for the sergeants on the company or battalion level, and to prohibit the holding of mixed classes in which privates and noncommissioned officers

work together.¹²⁸ In addition, the sergeants' classes must be led by commanders on the company or battalion level, or by professional political workers, and not by the platoon commanders. About half the class leaders are company commanders.¹²⁹

Those sergeants who are considered quite advanced in political study are permitted to concentrate directly on the Party textbook *A Short Course in the History of the CPSU(B)*. This results in some pressure on the students to do outside reading and to learn the basic materials concerning Party history and ideology. They are expected to be ready for such study, however, since most of them are Komsomol or Party members, and since many of them hope eventually to become officers some day.¹³⁰ Moreover, various forms of special assistance are made available to all sergeants in their political study.¹³¹

In spite of all this attention, there is evidently much dissatisfaction with various phases of the sergeants' training. A major subject of criticism is the types of men selected to guide the political classes, and the poor guidance given to these class leaders. The Political Administrations of several military districts have been accused of permitting classes to be entrusted to the youngest officers and to military specialists who often have poor backgrounds in general education or in Party history.¹³² There is also some scolding about the poor arrangements made for these classes, often resulting in classes with a small number of enrollees and many absentees.¹³³ Whatever the real reasons may be, there are public reports that many sergeants do poorly in their studies and receive poor grades for their lack of political knowledge and criticism for their poor discipline.¹³⁴

SOCIAL WORK AND POLITICAL TRAINING FOR OFFICERS' WIVES

The wives of the military officers have long been regarded as potential sources of energy for Party affairs and of influence upon their husbands. During the thirties, considerable pressure was exerted on the political workers to make use of the wives' energy and influence,¹³⁵ and this pressure has been renewed in the postwar period. The MPA has issued directives on the subject, and has assigned members of its own staff to work in this field.¹³⁶ In many military districts, the Political Administration has assigned political workers, who are given the title of "Senior Instructor for Work among Families," to organize and supervise the women's activities and to arrange conferences of the women's leaders.¹³⁷

These women's groups have been called upon to undertake a number of important tasks, the most important of which assist the Communist Party in its "ideological-enlightenment work among women," and in its efforts to encourage women to take an active part in community life.¹³⁸ * The major activities of these

*In one organization, created by political workers and considered a model for directing such a program among the officers' wives of a large military unit, the members elected a leadership of seven women, who formed the "women's Soviet." The organization had four major sections, one each for political enlightenment, cultural mass activities, material and household affairs, and work among children. Each of these sections had its own planned program, arranged its own meetings and other activities, and sought the participation of eligible women.¹³⁹

groups fall into three classes, two of which might be expected of women in any country.

In the first class are activities of a social and cultural type, including literary, dramatic, and other amateur arts programs, excursions, theater parties, and various social events. The activities of the second class are connected with family matters, and the women are encouraged to take an active and informed interest in the problems connected with their children, marriage, and their family. For these purposes, study groups are formed and lectures heard on such subjects as "Marriage and the Family," and "Training of Children in the Family and the School." They take a strong interest in the schools of the area, visiting the classes and trying to help the teachers to deal with their problems.¹⁴⁰

The third class of activities includes those which the Bolsheviks call political enlightenment. Whenever possible, groups are formed to undertake a detailed study of the basic Party books: *A Short Course in the History of the CPSU(B)*, and the biographies of Lenin and Stalin.¹⁴¹ Lectures are arranged on such topics as the Communist views on morals, the family, and the education of children.¹⁴² Finally, "political information" talks are given on current events inside the USSR and on the international scene.¹⁴³

The Army press frequently praises the work of the women's Soviets, but complains that much needs to be done with them. Too many women, for example, have been educated by the state, but refuse to take public employment when they marry military officers, even though teachers and other public workers are needed.¹⁴⁴ Many complaints, of course, are directed against the political workers, who have failed to organize enough women's groups and to give sufficient guidance to those groups already organized.¹⁴⁵ The political workers are warned that they must not forget "the serious influence of his family upon the service achievement of the serviceman, and in the strengthening of his moral qualities. . . . Understand the simple truth that the stronger the family ties of the officer and the higher its [the family's] political and cultural level, the more successfully will the officer fulfill his official duties, and consequently the higher will be raised the military and political training of his unit."¹⁴⁶

Chapter 15

THE COMMUNISTS

PARTY ORGANIZATION IN THE ARMED FORCES

The Party membership within the armed forces has oscillated considerably in size and composition through the years. It has grown tremendously during wars and other crisis periods, going from 35,000 at the end of 1918 up to 278,043 in August 1920 during the Civil War, and down again to 51,861 by January 1924,¹ and showing a similar trend during World War II. In normal periods, the Communist proportion probably drops to about 22 percent of the total military personnel, combining with the Komsomol membership to make up some one-half of the men in the armed forces.² An army of 3 million men, for example, would probably have somewhere between 600,000 and 700,000 Communists.

Party Structure

In its composition, this body of some 650,000 Communists includes virtually all senior officers and most officers of the middle ranks (from battalion commanders to army staff members). Among those not in the Party are some men with special technical skills, such as engineers and physicians, who do not feel that they must have the Party card to ensure a stable position and future promotion, and those who have been declared ineligible for personal or family reasons. In the lower officers' ranks, the company and platoon commanders are largely divided between the Communist and the Komsomol organizations, depending upon their ages. Among the noncommissioned officers, most of the more energetic and promising young men belong to the Komsomols, with a sprinkling of those with "authority" (a most significant trait) being taken into the Party when they are old enough.

During the thirties, there was a significant trend toward exclusion of the rank-and-file soldiers and transformation of the military Communist branches into virtual officers' clubs. By 1938, official sources later claimed, there were very few Party members among the privates and the noncommissioned officers.³ After the purges of 1938, a determined effort was made to alter this situation and to recruit a good proportion of enlisted men.* It was complicated, of course, by the fact that most new servicemen came into the armed forces

*See Chapter 2.

before they were old enough to have joined the Party in civilian life. However, this effort seems to have had some effect.⁴

This effort to recruit Party members among the noncommissioned officers and privates or seamen continued, and it was intensified during the war. The Soviet press contained many references to the active recruiting campaign, and the resulting influx into the Party organizations. One battalion branch, for example, took in 64 (or more than 10 percent of the total personnel of the unit) new members in two months.⁵ There were and still are, however, wide differences between various military units. Some divisions boasted that their entire personnel was divided between the Party (40 percent Communists in one Siberian division)⁶ and the Komsomol,⁷ while in others only a small percentage had Party cards. One defector, for example, was in a postwar brigade which had less than 600 officers and men. According to him, some 60 of the 100 officers (and noncommissioned officers, presumably) were Party members, while five or six of the 500 privates were Communists and another 25 privates were members of the Komsomol.⁸

In their references to the Party, the propagandists pretend that it is an autonomous and "democratic" structure composed of the "best" Soviet citizens who share in the governing of the state through their rights and privileges as members of the Party.⁹ In actual fact, few fail to realize that the Party branches function only as additional instruments available for the use of the men in the Kremlin. This fact is even more evident to the Army Communists than to their civilian colleagues, for the civilian Communists have the right to criticize the managers of the local industrial, agricultural, or trading institutions. The military Communists, on the other hand, are denied even this right for they are not permitted to criticize the service conduct of the military commanders, or to require reports from them on this subject. Moreover, the higher officials of the military Communist structure are simultaneously employees of the government, earning salaries paid from the government's treasury, and Party officers, although few have ever gone through the pretense of being "elected." This paradox is clearly evident in the public structure of the Party, and no effort is made to hide or to resolve it.¹⁰

The actual organization of the military Party units is relatively simple, and may be compared to the civilian Party structure. The basic Party unit, called the "primary Party organization,"¹¹ is usually found at the battalion level and comprises some fifteen to perhaps one hundred men in this military formation of about five hundred soldiers.* It might be compared with the Party civilian basic unit in the middle-sized factory that employs several hundred men. The civilian primary organization in the factory reports to the *raion* committee, controlling the Party organizations in a city ward or rural county, while the military branch reports to the regimental bureau, controlling Party members scattered among some two thousand men. The regimental bureau will usually be "elected" by the Communists in the regiment, either at a mass meeting or through delegates to a conference.

*There are three other types of primary Party organizations: (a) the special staff Party branches established at the regimental and higher command posts (and their equivalent in other service arms) to which most of the middle and senior military and political officers belong; (b) in certain service arms, such as certain aviation units, the primary Party organization at the regimental level; and (c) primary Party units established for special companies attached to regimental and divisional headquarters posts.¹²

At the military levels above the regiment, from the division up to the Ministries for Defense and Navy, the Party personnel is a combination of two major elements. First, there are the great majority of Party officials at these levels who are professional political workers, and who supervise the lower Party organizations as part of their service duties to be performed on service time. These are appointed, assigned, and promoted by the personnel departments of the political structure. A second type are the members of the Party Commissions attached to, and working under the supervision of, the political organs of every level from the division up to the MPA. The latter are nominally "elected" by conferences of Communist delegates from lower levels, and report on their activities to the next conference in the following year.

Party Commissions

The Party Commissions have a series of related functions, the most important of which concerns the admission, training, disciplining, and expulsion of Party members. There is much talk about the standards which should be maintained by the lower Party organizations in admitting men to candidacy and membership, and the Party Commissions are called upon "to fight for purity of the Party's ranks," as they review the actions taken. The Commissions are empowered, and frequently use their powers, to reject men accepted by the Party branches (or primary Party organizations), although they cannot do the opposite and require the acceptance of men rejected by the latter. The branches must take the first affirmative step in accepting new members.¹³

The Party Commissions also have major functions in the training of individual Communists, especially through disciplinary action. The primary Party organizations have the initial burden of training, and they may punish those members who fail to obey the rules or fulfill their duties. The Party Commissions review these punishments and may cancel them, increase or decrease their severity, or even impose punishment when the primary group has failed to do so. In effect, they act as a Party court, and their sanctions range from warnings to actual expulsions from the Party and the transfer of matters to a State legal body.

In their participation in the training process for Communist members, the Party Commissions are expected to go beyond the consideration and imposition of punishment for misdeeds. Even more important, in theory at least, are the three functions of: analyzing the body of data about all Communist infractions of Party and service regulations and injunctions; working out some generalizations concerning the basic conditions and specific causes leading to them; and recommending an action program designed to secure a general improvement of conditions.¹⁴ The minimum expected of the Party Commissions here is to maintain a policy of publicity concerning its most important actions, so that the Communist rank and file may be warned against the errors of those who have been punished. As one article puts it: "The work of the Party Commission must have tremendous educational value. It is obligated not simply to evaluate this or that other violation of our Party's regulations, but also to influence the Party masses, to teach people on the basis of living concrete examples."¹⁵

The Party press contains some incomplete information on the operating methods and actual functions of the Party Commissions, but much fuller data than one might expect on the basis of Soviet informational practices in other fields. One article which was published in *Red Star*, for example, gives some insights not only on the Party Commissions, but also on the relationship between the Party apparatus and the military commanders.¹⁰ It concerns a certain Colonel V., who was the head of a Guards regiment, and whose crime was apparently to have misplaced his Party card and to have it turned in to the Party headquarters.

Once the colonel's case was opened all factors in his Party record and even some aspects of his service conduct were carefully examined. It should be noted that not only was Colonel V. an important military commander, but he had distinguished himself in battle, receiving eight medals and other governmental awards, and he had been seriously wounded four times during World War II.

The case was first turned over to an important official, known as the Party Investigator, who had the military rank of lieutenant colonel. This man studied the matter, not only questioning "dozens of people," but studying Colonel V.'s "entire life history." When the initial investigation was completed, Colonel V. was called to the door of the Party Investigator's office, which he "opened timidly" and then he immediately announced that he had come to tell "the whole truth." "That is the first obligation of a Communist," said the Party Investigator, approvingly. The Colonel began by giving "a long and vague account of his case," and the Investigator had to explain the real case against him. He pointed out the seriousness of the loss of the Party card, stressing that "for a true Communist, the loss of this document is equivalent to death." The next questions of the Party Investigator are worth quoting:

"Do you consider proper the disciplinary practice in the regiment which you command?"

"I never exceeded the rights granted to me," replied the Colonel.

"That is not enough," Lieutenant Colonel Kapralov pointed out. "Can it be proper when, during the past five months, many officers of your regiment have been subjected to house arrests and, when during the same period no commendations were issued?"

"It was necessary to strengthen discipline," replied the Colonel uncertainly.

"But you should have known that punishment is not the only measure of training. The disciplinary regulations provide not only for arrests but for other measures."

The investigator explained to the Colonel that he had not relied on the Party organization in attempting to improve the discipline of his regiment. He had given an incorrect tone to the Party meetings, and had insulted his subordinate officers. People had feared him, but did not respect him since he had been unjust in his treatment of them.

"Do you understand your guilt?" the Investigator asked for the second time. The Colonel replied that he was beginning to understand.

When the interview was completed, the Party Investigator submitted a detailed report on the entire matter to the Party Commission, and the latter directed Colonel V. to appear for a formal hearing. On the appointed day, Colonel V. entered the meeting "with a heavy heart, and he saw no trace of sympathy in the faces of the members. He felt that he would be expelled from the Party." The description of the proceedings is short:

The Secretary of the Party Commission asked Colonel V. how it happened that he, an old Communist and distinguished officer, had committed such a mistake. Colonel V.

admitted that he had become puffed up with success. It was a long time since he had read the *Short Course*¹⁷ and he had somehow forgotten it.

After Colonel V. had been asked to leave the session, the Investigator gave supplementary information, pointing out that the regimental deputy commander for political affairs had failed to exert the Bolshevik influence on Comrade V.

The Commission finally ordered the return of the Party card to Colonel V., but the secretary of the Commission decided to give him a new one since the old one had been covered with blood at the time of the Colonel's last wound. The newspaper article complimented the Commission for its "comradely concern about a fellow Communist," and hoped that the Colonel would "expiate his guilt by loyal service to his Motherland." Most important, it stressed, was the lesson to be learned by everyone that the Party values the services of its members, but will not permit any of them to become complacent or conceited.

FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Basic Theory

How, according to Party doctrine, are Communists produced? The Party's efforts to transform each new member into a "Communist" in mind, spirit, action, and attitude takes many forms, but officially the campaign depends upon four major processes. It should be stressed, before noting them, that in Party theory all these processes will fail if the candidates lack the proper qualifications, thus presumably justifying the rigorous examination which the admitting agencies are supposed to make before passing each candidate to membership. Nor can this training succeed if the Party fails to protect the candidate from evil elements seeking to subvert him, thus presumably justifying the numerous security measures used by the Party leadership to prevent the Communist membership from being "contaminated" by wrong ideas or bad people. Along with these negative precautions, the Party sets into motion four positive processes when the recruit is finally admitted to candidacy.

Each man undergoes an intensive and continuing indoctrination in the Party's ideology and mythology through participation in the Party's study programs, attendance at its formal study institutions, and by personal study throughout his entire career as a Communist. Secondly, he must, at the same time, take an active role in the inner Party activity, particularly that of his branch or primary Party organization; he is expected to learn the habits and attitudes of the ideal Communist in meetings, discussions, and other aspects of Party life.* Thirdly, he will be called upon to execute specific Party assignments, especially among non-Party people, in such matters as the dissemination of the Party line, the exertion of Party influence on specific persons, or the securing of information for Party use.¹⁸ Finally, the new member will be told in innumerable ways and on countless occasions about the traits which the ideal Bolshevik possesses, as manifested by certain Party heroes of past and present, and he will be called upon to make a serious and continuing effort to inculcate these traits into his own character and behavior. While all these

*Party activities, particularly in the primary organization, are discussed in this chapter in the section entitled "Primary Party Organization at Work."

†This pressure on the individual Communist, and the specific Bolshevik traits which he is called upon to inculcate in himself, are discussed later in this chapter.

processes are in operation, the individual Communist is called upon to exert all his energy toward improving his service qualifications so that he may become an excellent soldier in every way, and a model to his friends and comrades.

The first of these processes, that of indoctrination in the Party ideology and mythology, is justified to the individual member in various ways. He is told that he can not be a true Communist unless he learns the Marxist-revealed laws of societal development, the trends of history in our age, and the part played in that history by the Communist Party. Along with this rationalization, he is also told that he will be more efficient in his service speciality or technical field after he learns to apply the doctrines of the Party. He is often reminded of the words of Stalin that "it is necessary to recognize as an axiom, that the higher the political level and Marxist-Leninist consciousness of workers in any branch of state and Party work, the higher and more fruitful is the work itself and the more effective the results of that work."¹⁹ Moreover, the member is told that he must learn these doctrines and dogmas if he desires to stay in the Party and he must learn them well if he wants to move up the Party ladder. Whatever the justification which moves them, "tens of thousands" of the Communists in the Soviet armed forces²⁰ are enrolled in the study institutions, and the rest are presumably engaged in "independent study."

The basic elements of the Party educational system are characteristic of Bolshevik methods in virtually all fields. The individual Communist is told repeatedly that his registration in any Party school or circle must be voluntary, and that his study also must be voluntary, but he is kept under constant and powerful pressure from his Party branch colleagues and superiors. He knows that his conduct is being watched and recorded in Party reports.²¹ Every study institution is kept under strict supervision by the appropriate political organ. The latter appoints study directors, who operate in conformity with Party regulations as spelled out in special directives,²² and they train the teachers, provide the necessary facilities, and test the methods used and results achieved.²³ Capt. F. Chernyshev, who, as head of the Propaganda Section of the MPA, is apparently in personal charge of the system of Party education within the armed forces, publicizes the latest Party instructions through frequent speeches and signed articles in the Party press.²⁴

Most study institutions operate with facilities provided by the military services. They are available to the soldiers and officers during the hours in which they are free from military duties. The study year is planned to fit in with the military training program, usually running from late fall, when the soldiers reach their regular quarters, until early summer, when the service units are sent out on large-scale maneuvers or to summer camps.²⁵

The Political School

All new members and candidates for membership are required to learn the Party regulations and bylaws, especially those referring to the duties and obligations of the individual Communist, and to be familiar with the Party's organizational structure. To assist them, copies of the Party's bylaws are published, along with numerous explanations, in pamphlet form and in newspaper and magazine articles.²⁶ In some military units, special study circles are organized for candidates and new members, but on the whole recruits are expected to learn the regulations and bylaws on their own.

The basic institution in the Party's formal educational system is the "political school attached to the primary Party organization." Re-established after World War II, the mission of the political school is to train the young Communists in the habits they will need for their lifelong study of Party doctrine and Marxist ideology (as interpreted, of course, by Stalin), and to make comprehensible to them the basic features of that doctrine and ideology. The school leaders are exhorted to teach their charges how to use books (particularly on Party history), to help improve their reading skills, and to train them how to take notes on the materials being studied. The teachers are expected to explain the need for participation in Party branch activity and encourage all students to learn the techniques of Party propaganda and agitation.²⁷ Finally, the new Communists are given a rather primitive introduction to Party doctrines.

In spite of its title, the political school is usually only a single class, attended by ten to twenty-five students. It is organized by and responsible to the Party branch to which the students belong, and thus draws its students from the battalion or the unit in which the branch operates. The school meets for two-hour sessions, usually once or twice a week, and continues for an eight-month term. Its study program is determined by the MPA, which works out a detailed plan for the school, issues the necessary literature including a special textbook of "political grammar," and provides explanatory and methodological literature for the teacher. Of course, the MPA requires close supervision of the school's work by the professional political workers of the regiment and division.²⁸

The basic class method, similar to that usually found in other Party propaganda groups, consists of an opening talk by the teacher for each theme, a period of reading and study by the students, often followed by class discussion and review, a closing statement by the teacher on each theme, all capped by one or two meetings at the close of the school year for summary, review, and examination.²⁹

So far as political content is concerned, the school is conducted on a level which contrasts strongly with the pretense that the individual Communist is a person with superior intellect and special training.³⁰ Judging by the official program for the school, the first ten themes present a rudimentary view of the recent history of the Soviet people, and a simple statement of the organization of the state, almost as basic as that which one might expect to be given to the average Soviet schoolchild, and presenting no additional information that the child's textbooks would have. The last five themes are presented on a slightly higher intellectual level, but even this is hardly commensurate with the level of a Party which claims to be an organization of the most advanced people in the state. Note, for example, the outline of the lesson for Theme 12, presumably one of the most important lessons of the school year for the new Communist:

Theme 12: The organizational Bases of the Bolshevik Party
(2 hours of class work)

Lenin and Stalin--the organizers and leaders of the Bolshevik Party. The Party of Bolsheviks as the Party of a new type. The basic differences between the Bolshevik Party and the Party of the Second International. The Party of Bolsheviks as the leading, conscious detachment of the working class. The Party as the organized detachment of the working class. The Party as the highest form of the class organization of the proletariat. The connection of the Party with the masses as the source of power and invincibility of the Communist Party. Democratic Centralism--the basis of the Party organization. The Party as a unity of wills, incompatible with the existence of factions.³¹

Several sources are available for additional information on what the student is told in the political school, including newspaper articles and an official book of supplementary readings. The latter book, a publication of nearly two hundred pages issued by the MPA and entitled *In Aid to the Student of the Political School*, devotes about twenty-six pages to the subject of "How the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Is Constructed." The following is the opening section of that chapter:

Significance of a Militant Party Organization

The All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) successfully fulfills its tasks not only because it has a clear aim and conducts a true policy, but also because it correctly constructs its ranks and organizes its inner life. It could have a good program and a correct political line, but if this program and line are not strengthened by a definite system or organization, it can not attain the execution of its aims.

The Party of Bolsheviks is not an accidental accumulation of individuals, but a united and well-unified organization, acting according to a single plan and under single guidance. Precisely for this reason it was able to head the struggle of the toilers to overthrow capitalism and to construct socialism. Precisely for this reason it is successfully fulfilling its role as the guiding and directing force of the Soviet socialist society.

The Bolsheviks have always given great significance to organization, and have resolutely struggled against the attempts of the Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and other traitors to weaken this organization, to shatter Party discipline, to undermine the unity of the Party, to transform it into a malformed and distorted grouping of different groups, factions, etcetera. The Bolsheviks begin with the view that any kind of weakening of the Party and its organization aids the enemies of the working class.

Lenin and Stalin worked out and defended in battle with their enemies their teaching about the revolutionary Party of the proletariat. Our Party, in all its practical activity, is always guided by this teaching. The Party is the advanced and organized detachment of the working class, the highest form of the class organization of the proletariat. It must always be a united, unified, and disciplined organization, closely connected with the broad masses, acting according to a single plan and under a single guidance.

Comrade Stalin has indicated that the Party is not only the sum of the Party organizations, "the Party is also a unified system of these organizations, capable of carrying out the planned and organized guidance of the struggle of the working class."

Lenin and Stalin taught that the entire Party must act as one man, as a single whole, in which the minority must subjugate itself to the majority, the lower organs to the higher ones. The decisions of the Party congress, the decisions of its Central Committee, and [those of] the local Party organs are a law for the Party organizations, for each Communist. After the next task is thoroughly discussed, and a decision is adopted, it is the duty of each Party organization and of each Communist to fulfill this decision. Without these conditions, the Party could not be a unified, organized detachment of the working class, guiding all workers.

[The next paragraphs explain why the Party bylaws are the "unalterable law of Party life," and set forth the obligations and rights of members, and the formal structure of the Party organization.] ³²

The lessons appear to stress particularly the need for Party unity, the wisdom of the top leaders, and the absolute necessity for giving these leaders unquestioning obedience and for maintaining Party discipline at all costs.

Circles Studying Biographies of Lenin and Stalin

The choice of the next educational experience, after completion of the political school, depends upon the Party member's general education and intel-

lectual level. Most young Communists are enrolled in one of the circles studying the officially approved biographies of Lenin and Stalin. These are also established by the primary Party organizations, and operate under their supervision. Although participation is allegedly "voluntary," there is much pressure to get most young Communists enrolled in them. Those who do enroll soon find that there is formal registration at the beginning of the school year, recording of the attendance rolls, and reports on absences to the Party organization. Regular study assignments are given which demand time and energy, and tests of progress are held at the end of the year.³³

The textbooks for the study circles* are issued by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU, and are thus official documents of the Party.³⁴ Judging by the content of the two books, and utilizing the available data about the teaching methods used by the Party, there appear to be four major aims for the circles.

First, the circles' endeavor to build a sense of faith in Lenin, Stalin, and their Party, and a conviction that their policies and decisions are correct under all circumstances, as a basis for demanding full acceptance of Party doctrines and practices, and unquestioning obedience toward directives issued by the Party leadership. Lenin, for example, is called nothing less than "the greatest genius of all times and all nations, master of all the treasures of human knowledge and human culture,"³⁵ while Stalin, "the Lenin of today," is "wise and deliberate in solving complex political questions. . . a supreme master of bold revolutionary decisions and sharp turns of policy."³⁶

The circles' second aim is to set forth the specific qualities of the model Bolshevik, as illustrated in the alleged characters of these two men, which should be copied by each Communist member. Thus, Stalin is described as devoting much time to the study of Marxism and Lenin's writings,³⁷ as acquiring and using the techniques necessary to successfully propagandize the masses,³⁸ as showing a genius for organizing and leading the workers,³⁹ as being ever-faithful and obedient to his chief, Lenin, and to the Party line,⁴⁰ and as showing tremendous diligence, iron determination, and untiring energy in the service of the Party.⁴¹

The circles also attempt to give the young Communists a reverence for the movement, its aims and its leaders, and a sense of identification with them. The lives and struggles of the leaders are presented in a highly romantic light; their aims are described in humanitarian terms, and total victory is made to appear completely inevitable. Moreover, through both biographies run the major themes of the relationship of these men to the Party and its members, of the importance of the Party in achieving the ultimate aims, and of the part which may be played by loyal and industrious members.⁴²

Finally, the circles attempt to introduce the young Communist to some of the basic doctrines concerning the Party organization, and the fundamental aspects of Marxist-Leninist ideology as interpreted by Stalin. Thus, a very simple, two-page discussion is presented of Lenin's classic work on Party organization, *What Is To Be Done*; his basic exposition of Soviet foreign policy, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, is reviewed in three pages; and Stalin's chapter on "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" in the Party textbook is outlined in three paragraphs.⁴³

*Like most important Soviet books of this type, these are available in this country.

Study of the Party Textbook

Some mention has already been made of the Party textbook, the English translation of which is entitled *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): A Short Course*.⁴⁴ So familiar is this book to the Party membership that reference to it is frequently made in the Party press by some allusion to the *Kratkii Kurs (The Short Course)* without any further explanatory note. This important work was written and edited by a special commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and its title page announces it to be "authorized by the Central Committee of the CPSU (B)." What is much more important, the name of Stalin himself is connected with the book, for he is credited not only with directing and supervising the work on the book, but with writing the sections in it on Marxist-Leninist ideology.⁴⁵ It has become required reading and the basis for continuing study by all Communists, Soviet as well as foreign, veterans as well as new members.⁴⁶

There are various types of symbolisms connected with the *Short Course*,⁴⁷ among them references which sound strangely like the holy books of the religions attacked by the Communists. In the case of Colonel V., he had to admit to the Party Commission that he had grown vain and "puffed up with success" because he had ceased to read *The Short Course*, and had forgotten the lessons which it taught. An example of the same attitude is illustrated by a defector who told of being brought before a military court, where he was confronted with his copy of the Bible and history of the Russian church, and accused of never having a copy of *The Short Course* on his table.⁴⁸

The Communist begins his study of *The Short Course* immediately after completion of the introductory stages in the Party's educational system. Every member, regardless of previous education or ideological training, is expected to give serious and continuing attention to an intensive study of the book. Most young members, especially those not regarded as ready for "independent" study, begin this study by enrolling for two years in a circle studying *The Short Course*.

The study circle usually meets once each week, for two hours, in accordance with a two-year program. It is organized, and its members are assigned, by the Party branch, with facilities and leadership usually provided by the professional political workers, and continuing control theoretically exercised by both groups. The textbook is, of course, *The Short Course*, and the study circle goes through it section by section and chapter by chapter. In accordance with the usual Party teaching methods, the circle leader opens the study of each new theme with an explanatory talk, which becomes the basis for assigned individual reading and is followed by group discussion and recitation. Frequent reports are supposed to be made to the supervising Party branch on attendance, intensity of study, and progress being made, and special meetings are held in the circle at the end of the year for summarizing and testing.⁴⁹

In its content, *The Short Course in the History of the CPSU(B)* is a relatively simple and straightforward presentation of the Stalinist version of Party history and ideology. The Communist member is expected to learn the "historical facts" and doctrinal explanations, in fact virtually to commit them to memory, for they are to become the "truth" for him. In their structure, the chapters follow a historical-chronological approach, taking the story of the Party from its early

origins to World War II. Interspersed through the chapters are various explanations of doctrine, but the core of the discussion of ideology is to be found in Stalin's 26-page section on "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." It is a rudimentary presentation of Marxist philosophy, although written in an obscure style with many quotations inserted from the writings of Marx and Lenin.

In addition to acquainting the Communist member with the official versions of Party history and doctrine, the circles for study of *The Short Course* appear to have at least four more aims: (a) to convince the member of the high aims and idealistic nature of the Party, and thus to secure his emotional loyalty; (b) to persuade him that all anti-Stalinist groups are evil and must be fought with great intensity and eternal vigilance; (c) to explain that the Party has overwhelming strength and will inevitably conquer all opposition: "The study of the history of the CPSU (B) strengthens our certainty of the ultimate victory of the great cause of the Party of Lenin-Stalin, the victory of Communism throughout the world";⁵⁰ (d) to prove the "genius-like" attributes of the Party leaders, the wisdom of their policies and directives, and consequently, the imperative demand for absolute obedience and discipline imposed upon each member.

Schools for Activists and Other Advanced Schools

For the main body of Communists who remain rank-and-file members throughout their lives, the political schools and study circles represent the sum total of formal Party education. However, for those members who aspire to, or have already been selected for, office within their branch or a higher Party organization, several additional institutions are available. The most important of these is the Divisional School for Party Activists, or the Party School. It is established at the divisional (occasionally at the brigade) level, and is attached directly to the Political Section at the Divisional Headquarters. The professional political workers are completely responsible for its operations, securing housing for it, appointing and instructing teachers, screening applicants, and controlling the classwork.

The Party School is often located in a special building set aside for it. Each class consists of twenty-five or thirty students, meets for about four hours a week, and is led by a trained teacher (one often graduated from the Lenin Military-Political School or the Kalinin Military-Pedagogical Institute) or an advanced Party worker. The usual teaching methods are used, with lectures by the class leader, assigned reading and study by each student, and classroom discussion for each theme. On the day before each class session, the teacher goes into the barracks and consults with each student, checking his notes and answering his questions. At the end of each school year, the class has five continuous days of conferences and examinations, following which grades are given by an examining commission.⁵¹

The curriculum of the Party school is fairly limited. It includes courses on the history of the Party (using the *Short Course* as a textbook, of course), history of the USSR, structure of the Party, Party-political work in the Armed Forces, and political geography (which apparently includes lectures on international affairs and Party policy).⁵² There are two sections in each Party school: the day section, which is attended by Party officials and political officers, and in

which courses last two years; and the evening section, which is attended by the ambitious, younger Party members and new officials, and in which courses last one year.⁵³

As always, the teachers and students in the Party schools are supposed to be kept under strict control by the Party branches and political organs. The teachers are given lectures on course content and methodology, and the students in each class get brochures specially written for the course in order to make doubly sure that the precise formulations given are those approved in Moscow. Moreover, each student should expect to be watched and supervised by his teachers, the officers of his primary Party organization, and the professional political workers.⁵⁴ As compensation for the time spent and energy expended, the students are encouraged by promises of promotion in the future. They are told, for example, about a lieutenant who had been secretary of his Komsomol branch and was made regimental propagandist when he graduated, and of another junior officer who was promoted to the post of assistant chief of the divisional political section for Komsomol affairs.⁵⁵ For each student, the evidence of his ambition, energy, and loyalty is recorded, and the road upward in the Party hierarchy (and sometimes within the military service) is made easier. Several thousand Army and Navy Communists respond each year to these attractions and enroll in the Party schools, with more than eight hundred being enrolled in the Leningrad Military District alone.⁵⁶

For those Communists who have military officers' rank, there is encouragement and pressure to use their "free" time (as well as the time permitted for the official commander's study) in formal work at an institution for advanced Party training. They may select a course in the local Evening University for Marxism-Leninism, or one of the correspondence courses of the Lenin Military-Political Academy, or even attend a branch of the Higher Party School which has its central headquarters in the Kremlin and gives the most advanced Party training. In every case, however, the officer-Communist will find that he has assumed a burden which will drain his off-service time and energy, and his only real compensation will come from the additional favors he will incur from Party leaders.

"Independent" Study

Finally, it should be stressed again that all Communists, especially those not enrolled in a formal institution of Party training, are under constant pressure to plan and carry out a program of study which will continue through their Party careers. The Communist may, if he wishes, carry out part of that program in company with other Party members, in a circle studying current aspects of Party policy in foreign or domestic affairs or in a group analyzing special problems of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. On the other hand, he may, and apparently most do, limit himself to reading current Party literature and restudying *The Short Course*.⁵⁷

Whatever the Communist's choice, it is incumbent upon the Party branch to which he belongs to watch him carefully, to aid and guide him, and to receive reports on his study from time to time. Those branches which fail to establish this relationship with their members make themselves liable to criticism in the public press, and are accused of following the "rotten" practice of failing to control the independent study of their Communist members.⁵⁸

In addition to pressure and guidance from the primary organizations, the Party apparatus tries to provide various forms of assistance to the individual Communist in his study. One major method is through the use of Party consultants. In some Party organizations, there will be a central office, or *kabinet*, where those doing independent study may come with their problems and questions and receive aid.

Other branches, who are commended for this practice, assign their most advanced members to work as consultants in their spare time, and each is given five or six "independent" students to supervise. The consultant is not only available for questions, but he will also meet regularly with each of the men under his supervision. He will help each of them draw up his study plans, make his notes and outlines of materials read, and prepare for testing periods. From time to time, the consultant will convene the entire group for group discussions.⁵⁹

On a more general level, the "independent" students are given assistance in various other ways. Special lists of literature, either published directly for them or believed to be of special interest to them, are issued by the MPA and divisional libraries try to supply the items to students.⁶⁰ The Army and Navy newspapers frequently print articles with the special designation of "In Aid to Those Studying Marxism-Leninism." *Red Star* ran more than a dozen of these in the last month of 1948, for example.⁶¹ Finally, each Party branch and political section arranges for lectures, reports, and talks on Marxism and related topics for the edification of Party members.⁶²

PRIMARY PARTY ORGANIZATION AT WORK

Basic Elements

Although the Party structure in the armed forces extends from the MPA in Moscow down through the political sections in every military district, army, and division (and their naval equivalents), its base rests upon thousands of primary Party organizations, the branches which execute the plans and programs worked out by the professional political staff. Each regiment has a primary Party organization in each of its battalions and other branches in the special units and the staff headquarters.⁶³ In order to facilitate their own operations, many primary Party organizations have subunits in company and other lower military units, but these are not full-powered branches and may operate only under the control of the primary Party organizations' officers.

The sizes of the primary Party organizations vary greatly, depending upon the types of military units, the calibre of leadership, and the existence of crisis situations. Branches are likely to be relatively large in the Air Forces, tank units, or in other favored services, and in Guard units where most of the officers and many privates will belong either to the Party or the Komsomol.⁶⁴ Also, an energetic *zampolit*, or some other type of political worker, may force many of the men with influence among their fellows to join the Party. Most important, there is apparently a policy of building up the Party organizations during a crisis period or war.⁶⁵ After the crisis, of course, the proportion of Communists and the size of the branches are permitted to drop again. After World War II, for example, a *Red Star* article pointed out that many Communists had been

demobilized and numerous primary Party organizations "were now small in membership."⁶⁶

The general functions of the primary Party organizations are, of course, numerous and diversified. Four areas, however, stand out as having special significance:

(a) Education: Primary organizations assist in the propaganda and educational functions of the political apparatus and the military commanders; help backward soldiers in military training, political study, and study of the Russian language; support the operations of the political-studies classes;

(b) Control over non-Party members: Primary organizations perform significant functions of an unofficial nature among the servicemen, by striving to guide the men with influence over their fellows, and by trying, in other ways, to control the informal primary groups in which the men spend their free time; watch for sources of complaint among the men which may not be articulated on an official level; carry the Party line to the men, explaining the policies of the Party and Government and answering the questions of the servicemen;

(c) Control over Party members: Primary organizations control the Party conduct of each member of the branch, initiate most Party business concerning him, and supervise his training;

(d) Intelligence: Primary organizations fulfill a series of miscellaneous duties in the field of intelligence, by providing agents for the secret police and filing reports through Party channels on morale, complaints, and inefficiency.

In addition to these major functions, which are discussed in some detail in the following pages, each primary Party organization must pay careful attention to inner-Party business. An amazing amount of time and energy is devoted to the issuance and delivery of Party cards, to the writing and reviewing of Party reports, to the payment and recording of Party dues and other financial matters, and to the proper handling of all Party documents.⁶⁷ Most work in this sphere is supervised by the political workers who have the title of "instructor on registration of Party documents."⁶⁸

General Duties Concerning Non-Communist Soldiers

The major mission assigned to the primary Party organization is that of influencing the Soviet troops in general, including both the Party members and the non-Party servicemen. The approved methods for dealing with the Communists are discussed in succeeding sections of this chapter, but some note should be made here of the cell's relations with non-Party people. The latter, it should be emphasized, constitute the overwhelming majority of the privates and able-bodied seamen in the services, often amounting to 80 or 90 percent of this group.

In dealing with the non-Communist servicemen, the Party branch has certain myths and potential strength which it is expected to exploit frankly and energetically. It pretends both to be above the masses, in the sense of being part of the elite organization which rules the Soviet state, and yet to include rank-and-file servicemen in its membership who "represent" the masses and are part of them. Stressing the ties of the rank and file with the masses, the Communists are called upon to work seriously among the servicemen, to understand their attitudes and ideas, to exert continuous influence upon them, and to

gain "authority" among them as true leaders—and then to exploit this knowledge and authority to fulfill the tasks imposed upon the Party branch by the political organs and the military commanders.⁶⁹

The total scope of the branch's activities is quite wide, and several activities are worthy of special note. The branch is expected to concern itself with the formal training of the soldiers in political and military matters, conducted during service time and usually under official auspices.⁷⁰ It must also strive to assist the military commanders and political workers in the less formal, but vital, tasks of political propaganda and military operations. The Communists are reminded of Stalin's words: "The point is not that instructions and directives of the Party are correct. This is, of course, good, but it is insufficient. The point now is to persuade the broad masses of the toilers of the correctness of these directives and instructions. The point is that the masses must themselves on their own experience be persuaded of the correctness of the Party's directives and instructions. This requires great and complicated, flexible and patient work on the part of the Party."⁷¹ The leaders of the primary Party organization are expected to confer regularly with the unit commander and his deputy for political work, to learn from them which aspects of the political line and which military tasks should be emphasized in the propaganda work of the branch, and then to organize a vigorous effort to prepare each man in the unit for understanding of the line and fulfillments of the tasks.⁷²

In carrying out its tasks, the primary Party organization is constantly reminded that it has a general responsibility for the performance of the entire military unit and all the men in it, including the dissatisfied, backward, undisciplined, and maladjusted individuals.⁷³ It is a basic requirement for all Party branches that they strive to have contacts, in the form of their own members, with all parts of the military units and extending into every group, formal and informal, in which men spend their time and express their views or which influences the men. Through this network of contacts and influence, the primary Party organization tries to build continuous and significant ties with all non-Communists, and from these ties secures reports on the ideas, attitudes, and especially complaints of each man.

The Communist organizations are, in fact, called upon to minimize the number and length of their own closed meetings, and to do more work with the "soldier masses," striving to know all better, and to understand "their needs, requirements, and moods."⁷⁴ They are expected, for example, to learn the justified complaints of the men and to do something about correcting intolerable situations, wherever possible.⁷⁵ Most important of all, the individual Communists are warned to remember their "Party obligations" when one of them witnesses "incorrect conduct of his service comrade, or hears a conversation in which mistaken views are expressed on any question."⁷⁶

In the latter case, the Party member may report the incident to the proper authorities, but first he is expected to take definite and appropriate action. A defector reported: "A Party man will always come over if he hears somebody is griping about food and quarters and will explain why there is such shortage or why such a thing occurs. He always goes around, circulates among the men especially during rest periods, trying to see who it is that is griping and then will come over and explain to the person why such things occur."⁷⁷



Fig. 14—Communist Party Official Directing Non-Party Activists

Russian Caption: "In the N-th unit, reporting-electoral meetings have been taking place in the company Party organizations. In one of the companies, Lt. A. Lebedinski was elected secretary at the reporting-electoral meeting. In the Photograph: Secretary of the company Party organization, A. Lebedinski, talks with the Komsomol activists." KZ, Feb 3, 1952.

Note: At the reporting-electoral meeting, held at periods determined by the Party leadership, outgoing Party officers present reports on their work, and officers are elected for the new terms.

Background: Behind the speaker is a photo of an officer kneeling and kissing his unit's banner. Above the photo is a statement, probably from a newspaper editorial, entitled "Banner of the Unit." Between the five-pointed star and the hammer and sickle on the left is the inscription: "Military service in the Soviet Army is the cherished obligation of the citizen of the USSR." To the right is the inscription: "Defense of the Fatherland is the sacred duty of every citizen of the USSR."

Of equal importance is action to be taken in response to improper conduct on the part of a serviceman. The press emphasizes that "each Communist must answer not only for his own discipline and study, but also for the conduct and success of the non-Party soldiers surrounding him."⁷⁸ Thus, a man who has violated the disciplinary regulations may be reported to the primary Party organization in his battalion, either by a Communist or by the company commander, who may ask the branch to "create the proper public opinion on the matter."⁷⁹ The Party organization may assign several Communists to speak to the offender and to watch him in the future, or it may call a platoon or company meeting of soldiers and publicly shame the offender; it may attack him in the wall newspaper or in special leaflets, or it may send a group of agitators into his platoon to give a series of talks based on the reaction to his acts.⁸⁰ In the effort to correct soldiers who are backward, unenthusiastic, or undisciplined, the Party branches are expected to deal separately with each man, "to find the correct approach to each warrior."⁸¹

A final aspect of the primary Party organization's relationship with non-Party people is concerned with a special type of non-Party man, the man with his own type of "authority" or influence among his fellow servicemen, who has unusual energy and ability, but who has not yet been brought into the Party. The Party organization is called upon to build up groups of "non-Party activists" from this class of energetic and influential men.⁸² This seems to have two obvious purposes: to channelize the energies and loyalties of the activists along lines approved by the Party, and to use these energies and influences for the benefit of the Party. In some units, the non-Party activists are treated almost like Party members, being brought into special inspirational meetings, pressured into undertaking study programs based on Party and Marxist themes, and given various honors.⁸³ All these men are given Party assignments, usually in the field of agitation and propaganda, and they give talks to their fellow servicemen, read newspaper articles aloud, lead group discussions, and work on the wall-newspaper staff and in similar groups.⁸⁴

Processing and Practical Training

The primary Party organization's treatment of its own membership is, of course, more detailed, prolonged, and complex than its treatment of the non-Communist. To start with, as befits an organization calling itself an elite society of leaders and superior people, the admission process is a serious and time-consuming affair. A precise set of regulations, and an amazingly large and detailed literature of instructions and explanations of the regulations have been issued by every Party agency from the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the MPA of the Ministry of Defense, down to the political organs on the army, divisional, and regimental levels.⁸⁵

Soviet citizens who wish to be considered for membership must comply with all these regulations, including the presentation of detailed information concerning themselves and their families, the securing of recommendations from three Communists who have known them for at least one year, and submission to cross-examination at a meeting of the primary Party organization to which they are applying. Everyone connected with the admission process is sternly and frequently warned that admission must be a process of "individual selection."

Numerous criticisms are published in the public and Party press of those branches and individuals who permit wholesale or group admission and who fail to make a serious analysis of the applications submitted, especially when it is decided that some men never should have been admitted and must be expelled after a short period of membership.⁶⁶

When a primary Party organization provisionally approves an application, it must be sent up through Party channels for quadruple confirmation. First, it must be confirmed by the *buro* of the regimental Party organization. Then it is re-examined for possible confirmation by the divisional Party Commission, which spends much of its time on problems of admission of new members (and expulsion of old ones), and is expected to make a careful analysis of available documents.⁶⁷ Next, the application must be confirmed by the head of the divisional political section, who is a high-ranking political official and has little time indeed for such matters, but who may be publicly reprimanded if he "stamps" with approval the application of a man later found to be unfit for membership.⁶⁸ Finally, the application is reviewed by the staff of the Party higher levels in the military district, and even sometimes in Party headquarters in Moscow.⁶⁹ At each of these four stages, the Party members and officials are urged to use the principle of individual selection and to maintain high standards; and those reviewing agencies which pass too many of the already-approved applications are sharply criticized.⁶⁹

All these special measures are expected to impress the Communists with the importance of membership and the seriousness of their responsibilities, and to ensure the exclusion of potential troublemakers and other unacceptable people. Even when an applicant has been accepted as a candidate, he must go through a year's probationary period before he may be considered for full membership. In the meanwhile, even though he is merely a candidate for membership, the process of training the new man is begun and should be well under way by the end of the probationary period.

In this training of the member, the primary Party organization is expected to play a key role. Not only must it process his papers and maintain contact with him, but it must plan his Party work, facilitate his execution of Party duties, check on his performance, and, above all, keep him under constant supervision. As *Red Star* put it, the Party organization must pay careful attention to the training of young Communists, "caring for their cultural and material needs in fatherly fashion."⁶¹ The actual training measures used to transform the young candidate into a true Communist fall into three major areas: ideological study, participation in intra-Party activities and Party assignments, and disciplinary measures.

First, of course, the Communist is started on his lifelong study of the Party ideology, and in this, presumably, he is always under the control of the primary Party organization.* The latter is frequently and emphatically told that supervision of the ideological training of its members is among the most important aspects of its activities, and apparently the organization spends considerable time dealing with this matter.⁶² Another stage of this training process is supposed to take place within the primary Party organization's day-to-day work

*This is discussed in detail in the preceding section, under the subheading of "Independent Study."

and activities, thus justifying the demand that the individual Communist devote much time and energy to Party affairs.

An important type of this practical training should come through the fulfillment of Party "assignments" which each member is supposed to get frequently from his primary Party organization. In Bolshevik theory, this is important for, "by fulfilling the assignments of the organization, the members and candidates develop politically, and acquire the habits of organizers and leaders of the non-Party soldiers. This drawing of Communists into public activity is not only an irreplaceable means of their Bolshevik training, but also a most important factor in the great intensification of our Party organization's own activities."⁶³

The Party assignments are given by the branch *buro* or secretary, and they are expected to aid the young and inexperienced members in the execution of these assignments and to check on their performances when completed. A typical statement of what is expected can be illustrated in the *Red Star* story about Seaman Ivan Shimko. He entered the Party during World War II, and was soon given his first assignment, to deliver a talk to his fellow sailors, shortly before a battle, about the significance of the military oath. The Party secretary helped him prepare the talk and worked with him afterwards to remove some defects in his methods. Later he was assigned to writing a battle leaflet in his unit, and when he had done this with some aid, he was given increasingly difficult tasks and needed less help with each one. Eventually, the story goes, Shimko so increased his own powers and abilities with this training that he became a military officer and head of the Party organization on his ship.⁶⁴

The Bolshevik conception of how the Party assignment should be used may be further illustrated by another often-told and stereotyped story, this one of a model company Party organization led by Sergeant Zverkov. The company was sent out on tactical maneuvers during the winter, and Zverkov drew up a plan whereby the Party organization would give "political support" to the company commander. Every member and candidate for membership in the company organization was given a definite assignment, and presumably helped to prepare for its proper execution. Two men conducted group discussions within the platoons and with platoon commanders concerning the obligations of each soldier on this field trip. Four other Communists, who were veteran soldiers, gave detailed talks on how to prepare for and act on the trip, including the best way to dress, how to avoid exhaustion and cold, what kind of food to eat, and so on. During the maneuvers, several other Communists issued the "militant leaflets" which praised the best soldiers and described what they had done, and criticized specific defects in the preparation and behavior of others. Two other men circulated among the squads during rest periods, giving talks on the same subjects. All Communists were constantly warned that they must be "models" of discipline and performance, and leaders of the non-Party people. As a result, the newspaper story reports in stressing the usual lesson to be learned, the entire company did very well, and the company commander expressed his gratitude to the company Party organization and its secretary.⁶⁵

While the normal performances of the Party organizations and officials are hardly up to the level of these ideals, the usefulness of the Party assignment is obvious in the practical training of the individual Communist and in the process of squeezing from him every possible contribution. Party leaders

are under continuing pressure to make full use of this method, by giving each member an endless, varied succession of assignments, and ensuring their proper and timely fulfillment.⁹⁵

Another area in which practical training is provided for the Communist member is within the Party organization itself, in its meetings, discussions, and inner-Party activities. It is a Bolshevik slogan, that "a well-prepared Party meeting conducted at a high ideological level can be a school of Bolshevik training, helping to expand the political horizon of the Party member."⁹⁷ There are, of course, many types of meetings and a variety of possible agenda items, but time is usually set aside for analysis of the Communists' behavior and performance in such matters as Party assignments, service duties, and relationships with non-Party people.

It is in the meeting of the primary Party organization that the group pressures, which are so frequently and widely used by the Bolsheviks, are exerted against the Party member. The Party demands upon him, both general and specific, are frankly and directly stated, and his actions are evaluated before his fellow Communists and with their assistance. The Party's ideals and standards are discussed at great length and at frequent intervals; the members themselves are made conscious of these standards, taking turns in proclaiming them to the branch.

The Party's disciplinary system is another, and in some ways the most important, method for teaching the membership the desired types of actions and attitudes. The basic theory underlying this system is a curious one to a Western observer, and is revealing of the Bolshevik distrust of human nature. According to this viewpoint, a man must be trained in appropriate modes of conduct, not merely by recounting to him an ideal standard, but must also be taught that any violation of regulations will be immediately punished. Supporters of this system point proudly to the fact that most disciplinary cases concern young Communists, proving presumably that the older men either learn to obey the regulations or are expelled.⁹⁹

In order to give this training, the primary Party organization is called upon to react to every improper act, regardless of the minor nature of the misdeed or the rank of the Communist.⁹⁹ The core of this plan is the belief that if the miscreant is caught promptly in the early stages of his Party career and given appropriate punishment, illustrating the vigilance and standards of the Party, it might teach the young Communist a lesson that would last throughout his career.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, goes the theory, if the early and less-serious misdeeds go unnoticed and unpunished, the Communist will go on to commit increasingly serious crimes until the only possible Party reaction is expulsion of the man.¹⁰¹

The types of actions or attitudes which are punishable in a Party member are numerous, of course, but the press reports some of the more frequently repeated offenses. Many are related to the personal morals of the Communist, including such matters as habitual drunkenness, "debauchery," and a surplus of wives.¹⁰² Others are concerned with formal aspects of Party membership, such as failure to pay dues, or the personal loss of the Party card (which is a very frequent offense).¹⁰³ Another type of offense is somewhat more important, involving poor performance of a service obligation, or what is still more important and much more serious, involving a violation of military regulations.¹⁰⁴ A

last group of offenses is related to the personal attitudes of the Communist, including his lack of enthusiasm in the performance of Party or service duties, his failure to take an active or continuing part in the branch's activities, his attempt to repress criticism of himself or his friends, or his failure to carry out required punishment of his own subordinates.¹⁰⁸

While the most serious misdeeds are mentioned above, they are only a few of the subjects mentioned in primary Party organization's discussions of its members' conduct. Discussion of the members' personal affairs, in every way that can be related to the interests of the military unit or to the Party organization, is a frequent item on the agenda of each branch's meeting. When Party Candidate Bovin was accused of showing negligence in the handling of Party documents, it was decided to discuss his personal case at a meeting of the branch *buro*. An effort was made to study all the circumstances surrounding his crime, and also to find "all negative sides of his conduct and character." Then Bovin was called in and told all his shortcomings, and given detailed instructions on how to correct them.¹⁰⁹ In other cases, the Party organizations mentioned such matters as the assumption by the accused of the "wrong tone" in Party meetings, failure to maintain discipline in his platoon, and unwillingness to do sufficient enlightenment work with subordinates.¹⁰⁷

The major sanctions available to the primary Party organization are six in number, and they appear to be effective for their purposes. The most obvious, to be used only in minor matters and with new Communists, is the exertion of group pressure through criticism at open Party meetings or in private talks between Party officials and the offender.¹⁰³ It is noteworthy, however, that there are frequent complaints that this sanction is not used often enough; frequently, either no attention is paid to the misdeed,¹⁰⁹ or overly strict punishment is used.¹¹⁰ Beyond the punishment of criticism, the punishments that may be applied include formal warning, reprimand (*vzyshanie*), censure (*vygovor*), severe censure, and expulsion from the Party. Each is used frequently and extensively.¹¹¹

What happens after a punishment, short of expulsion, has been decided upon? The primary Party organization is expected to make a special effort to reach the consciousness of the offender, through group meetings, individual talks with him, Party assignments, and invitations to confess and to promise significant improvement in the future. If indeed there is significant improvement, then the situation is re-examined after some time has elapsed, and the reprimand or censure may be taken off the man's Party record.¹¹² In the meantime, however, as soon as the original punishment is imposed on the miscreant, the case is sent up for review to the divisional Party Commission, which may approve the action, void it as uncalled for, or change it if the circumstances call for it.¹¹³

The Party Commission is expected to institute an investigation of its own, which will be especially vigorous if a serious charge is involved, and may involve the services of professional Party investigators.¹¹⁴ On the basis of the old and new evidence, a formal hearing is held, and a new decision is handed down.¹¹⁵ The Party Commission, too, is expected to carry on a vigorous enlightenment program, intended to warn all Party members against violations of Party regulations and to secure the rehabilitation of those offenders who are not beyond rehabilitation.¹¹⁶ Perhaps the most educational feature of the entire program is the wide publicity given to the general reasons for punishment and the number of such punishments in the previous period.

Operational Machinery and Patterns of Action

As the basic unit of the Bolshevick organization, the primary Party organization is a closely supervised body, operating on the basis of detailed regulations and numerous instructions, and performing important responsibilities within the battalion, ship, or escadrille. Several basic myths from the Party ideology are employed with much emphasis and repetition to ensure fulfillment of the organization's responsibilities. Prominent among these is the Soviet version of "inner-Party democracy," according to which, each member has a right to participate in branch discussions and elections,¹¹⁷ and each must engage in criticism of the branch's methods and his colleague's methods of self-criticism. The member must feel a sense of responsibility for the execution of the numerous tasks assigned to his branch.¹¹⁸

Another concept is the heavy and urgent responsibility of each Communist to make himself a model to his non-Communist fellow soldiers through his exemplary performance of service duties, the expression of proper ideas and attitudes, and the maintenance of high standards of conduct at all times. The last concept which should be mentioned is less frequently expressed, but is nevertheless significant, for it concerns the relationship between Party officials and members. The officials are required to put heavy and continuing pressure on the members in the execution of their duties. For their part, the members must accept this pressure and constant criticism as proper and appropriate, and strive to fulfill the demands made upon them by the Party officials.¹¹⁹

The primary Party organization consists of three elements: the members who often participate in branch discussions but whose major organizational actions are performed at the reporting-and-electoral meeting held every year or two; the executive committee or *buro* of the branch; and the secretary of the *buro* or branch. The political apparatus actually controls the Party branch, and gives it direction and supervision from the outside, by working largely through the political workers at the regimental and divisional levels, with some advice from the military commander of the unit.

The typical primary Party organization is created at the battalion level or its equivalent; in the Army, therefore, it would be operating within a unit having more than five hundred men. If it has fifteen or more members, they are in normal times permitted to elect a branch *buro* of three to seven men, and the *buro* in turn elects its secretary, who acts as the leader of the entire primary Party organization.¹²⁰ Two variants of this rule exist. During crisis periods, as in World War II, the executive officer of the branch is appointed by the political apparatus and called the Party Organizer. Also, in primary Party organizations which have fewer than 15 Communists, in normal periods the members "elect" the secretary and do not have a *buro*.¹²¹ The "election" staged for the benefit of the members will be discussed below.

The executive officer, whether he is called the Party Organizer or the secretary of the primary Party organization, is normally a serviceman who is not freed from his military duties. While it is obviously impossible to draw a precise description of him, there are several characteristics that may be called typical of a large number of branch secretaries. He is usually a junior or noncommissioned officer, who has had some Party training in a divisional school for Party activists, and some experience as a member of the primary

Party organization's *buro*. Usually he is relatively inexperienced in the post of secretary, and there is a heavy turnover of 25 to 60 percent among the secretaries at every Party electoral period.¹²² He is expected to work closely with the members of his *buro*, among whom there will often be Party veterans, and under the close supervision of the political workers in his battalion and regiment. Thus, in relation to his Party superiors, the branch secretary is a subordinate and closely controlled official.

His role, in relation to the Communist and non-Communist soldiers in his military unit, however, is supposed to be quite different. Here the branch secretary represents the power and responsibility of the Party apparatus, which reaches up to the Kremlin itself, and he is called upon to show such characteristics as extraordinary strength, energy, confidence, enthusiasm, and, above all, "authority." His actual functions are varied and complex; indeed, it is difficult to imagine that many of the secretaries of primary Party organizations could come up to the standards set for them by their Party superiors.

If we look only at the functions which the branch secretaries must perform in relation to the Communist members, and through them in relation to the non-Communists in the military unit, at least two major tasks may be distinguished. The first of these requires that the primary Party organization secretary try to understand the moods, ideas, and concerns of the men, and seek information on them through an extensive and personal series of contacts.¹²³ This information is not only to be reported to the Party superiors, but is to be used as a basis for the pressure to be placed on each Communist. The branch secretary must place a goal of more and better achievements before each member, using such propaganda themes as the individual Communist's obligation to be a model to his fellow soldiers, and the secretary must keep pressing the man to reach that goal. The branch secretary must know such things as the Communist's plans and current work in Marxist study, his potential execution of military duties and his actual level of performance, and all variations from, and violations of, military disciplinary regulations.¹²⁴

A second major aspect of the branch secretary's relationship with the Communist membership is related directly to the Party organization itself. Tasks of the secretary require him to: draw the members into the Party activities, and give Party assignments to each man and check on their execution; direct the conduct of organizational business, such as the payment of dues, and plan meetings and serve as chairman at them; press the individual Communist into satisfying the Party's constant demand for his self-criticism, and criticism of his fellow Communists and of the organization—all for the information and edification of the Party leadership.¹²⁵

In performing these and other tasks, the secretary of the primary Party organization has various aides, instrumentalities, and supervisors. Within the branch itself, perhaps the most important are the members of the *buro*, or the executive committee of the primary Party organization, each of whom has a variety of possible functions. They act as a check on the secretary, helping to train and watch him, warning him of deficiencies in his methods, and reporting on results to superior Party officials.¹²⁶

The *buro* members join with him in carrying out the instructions from higher Party and military levels through the planning and execution of branch programs, through the passing of *buro* decisions, and through service as a

Party court in the discussion of questionable conduct of Communist members.¹²⁷ In addition, *burol* members undertake tasks requiring Party status and prestige, such as checking on the Marxist study of branch members, aiding Party leaders in the small groups and platoons, and helping to train young Communists in their Party duties. They are particularly concerned with applicants and candidates to membership, devoting much time to analysis of their potentials and qualifications, and to providing training and guidance in their study.¹²⁸

Also important in the execution of programs are the branch's enthusiastic and energetic members, or "Party activists," who fulfill most of the Party assignments. They handle many of the propaganda functions, especially those involving non-Communist soldiers, giving agitational talks, leading group discussions, writing and distributing leaflets, and editing wall-newspapers. In many branches, especially in front-line units during wartime when there is usually a rapid turnover of Party officials, deputy Party organizers are selected from among the activists and are trained to aid the Party Organizer (*Partorg*) and to replace him when necessary.¹²⁹

The primary Party organization, usually operating with a 500-man battalion, may try to increase its effectiveness by establishing subunits to operate within the smaller military groups. Most primary Party organizations have company Party organizations and, occasionally, even Party groups within platoons, airplane squadrons, tank crews, small ships, and the like. Many company Party organizations have as many as ten to twenty members (working within military units having about one hundred soldiers) while Party groups have less than three Communists.¹³⁰ These subgroups decreased in total number and individual membership after the war, but there are still many of them in the armed forces and they would probably increase again in case of another military conflict.¹³¹

The company Party organization is largely concerned with problems of morale and military training. Operating under close supervision from the secretary and *burol* of the battalion Party organization and the company deputy commander for political affairs, its members disseminate the printed matter written at higher Party levels, give talks on subjects determined by its supervisors, direct the wall-newspaper, and lead the study circles and the company room for political enlightenment.¹³² The Party "group," established where there are only two or three Communists in the platoon or squad, relies more heavily upon Komsomols and non-Party activists, but performs functions similar to those of company Party organizations.¹³³

Some mention should be made of an aspect of the structure which is given particular significance in the Party mythology. Membership meetings in general are considered important in the training of individual Communists and the maintenance of group cohesion and morale, but a special place is given to the periodic meeting for reports of old officers, discussion of branch problems, and elections of new officers. In theory, these meetings are formal gatherings of great meaning to the branch, in which the entire membership acts in plenary session with full legislative powers (within the scope permitted to the branch, at least), reviewing the events and accomplishments of the past period, and determining policies and officers for the months to come.¹³⁴ Each member is expected to participate in the discussions, speaking frankly and sharply in the spirit of the Bolshevik concepts of criticism and self-criticism.¹³⁵

In actual fact, there are few Party activities in which the mythology is shown so clearly to be false and contrary to practice. The real decisions and controlling actions are made by the political apparatus, and the membership goes through the motions as it is instructed, providing the pretense of democratic action that deludes no one. The dates and agendas of the reporting-electoral meetings are determined by the top Party leadership in the Kremlin, and are announced in the permission to hold these meetings, given by the CPSU Central Committee to the MPA.¹³⁵ The latter bodies issue orders that the political organs at the middle and lower levels of the armed forces instruct the membership and officers of the primary Party organizations in the observance of the required ceremonies and forms at these meetings.¹³⁷

Detailed instructions, which must be obeyed to the letter, are issued for conducting the meetings, and the branch officers and members are given lessons in the meaning of these instructions.¹³⁸ Before the actual meeting is held, the professional political workers give instructions as to the types of reports to be made, and check on preparations and drafts of official talks, to make certain that these are in accordance with directives to the branch leaders.¹³⁹ Finally, the meetings are held at times when political workers can attend them, so that they may keep them "under control"; the political workers suggest the men to nominate for office, control the type of criticism that may be offered, and approve the conclusions reached by the Party branch.¹⁴⁰ (These conclusions are often determined before branch discussions are held, or after only appointed members have spoken.)

This control is expected to be discreetly maintained, but it is never hidden from the Party leadership, and is often referred to openly in the Party press.¹⁴¹ It is amusing to note the complaint that, frequently, so many professional political workers attend the electoral-reporting meeting of individual primary Party organizations that they outnumber the branch members three to two.¹⁴²

These facts, however, should not be interpreted to mean that the reporting-electoral and other meetings have no value for the Soviet leadership. The discussions, when they are utilized properly, can give much valuable information on the moods, attitudes, complaints, and ideas of the Communist members, often reflecting the views of the non-Party people with whom they are connected; this is useful in planning Party propaganda for the future. They can also intensify considerably the pressures on the leaders and the members for full satisfaction of the Party demands upon them, or as *Red Star* puts it, "the force of public opinion in the matter of disclosing and correcting deficiencies is much more effective than the power of administrative pressure."¹⁴³

Less important, but not to be overlooked, too, is the probability that these meetings do help to give the members, particularly the younger Communists, a sense of belonging to the Party branch. It helps them feel that they are personally involved in its affairs, and are responsible for the execution of the tasks set before it by the military commanders and political workers.

Relations with Military Commanders and Political Officers

No description of the operational patterns of the primary Party organization would be complete or correct if one did not emphasize its relationship with the military and political officers. In a very real sense, of course, the Party

branch is an instrumentality to be used in the execution of military and political tasks, and it would be abolished immediately if it ceased to be an effective instrumentality.

The premises of the branch's relationships with the military commander of the battalion, company, or platoon are fairly clear; in a way, they illustrate the changed power-patterns in the armed forces. Once upon a time, the members of the "cell" were permitted to regard themselves as competent to analyze the commander's military orders, and to establish their own program without being concerned about his ideas. Today, the primary Party organization is reminded frequently and emphatically that it is "a major aide" of the military commander, expected to devote a large part of its members' energies to assisting in the execution of his plans and programs, and permitted to make its own plans and programs only on the basis of the tasks assigned to it by the commander and his political deputy.¹⁴⁴

Insofar as the branch's review or supervisory powers over the commander are concerned, the Communists are reminded that "primary Party organizations in the Army and Navy cannot give instructions concerning command functions, and they can not discuss reports about the commander's service activities at their meetings."¹⁴⁵ It is noteworthy, however, that even in the present decade, the Army press reports incidents in military units, especially in industrial units under military control, where the Party organization ignores this rule.¹⁴⁶

It should not be imagined, however, that the military commander is under no pressure from the Party or the primary Party organization. He is almost always a member of the Party, and as such is assigned to some branch which places him under surveillance and control. He can be reminded that he has a Party duty to fulfill all service and other obligations in model fashion, and that he is subject to criticism by the Party organization at any time. "The latter has a full right to criticize any member of the Party, regardless of his service rank, if he is not fulfilling the obligations flowing from his membership in the Communist Party."¹⁴⁷

Many disciplinary and control measures are taken by the professional political workers, in their capacity as Party officials. For example, a company commander was accused of showing gross rudeness and tactlessness in his relations with his subordinates, a lack of concern about the material needs of his troops, and failure to conduct proper political-enlightenment work. The accusation was sent in to the editorial staff of *Red Star*, turned over to the Political Administration of the military district, investigated by the organizational-instructional section (which deals, among other things, with Party affairs) of that administration, and confirmed. As a result, the commander was "drawn to Party responsibility," given a Party reprimand, and subsequently mended his ways.¹⁴⁸ In the case of Colonel V., mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is significant that the Colonel's misconduct was partially explained by the Party Investigator, when he pointed out "that the deputy regimental commander for political affairs had not exerted the proper Bolshevik influence on Comrade V."¹⁴⁹

With direct reference to the operations of the primary Party organization, the military commander of the battalion or other military unit plays a vital role. His cooperation can facilitate the work of the branch in several ways: by acknowledging the help of the Communist membership and leaders; by ensuring

that Party members are free from service obligations in order to carry out Party assignments and attend meetings; and by attending the branch meetings himself, and lending them his prestige and status.¹⁵⁰ On its own part, an efficient branch can do much to ease the difficulties of the military commander in military and political training, by disseminating the information which the commander wants each man to remember, and by organizing for special tasks in battle or on maneuvers.¹⁵¹

The primary Party organization's relationships with the political apparatus and its workers rest on very different premises. The political staff and its workers are the professional agents of the Party hierarchy, and the supervision and utilization of the Party branches are among their most important responsibilities. In fact, an important sector of the political apparatus at the higher and middle levels concentrates on these responsibilities, and presses the political workers at the lower levels (the *sampolits*, or battalion and company deputy commanders for political affairs) in these matters. This is done specifically by the organizational-instructional sections in the divisions, armies, and military districts, working primarily through their instructors in organizational Party work.¹⁵²

The *sampolits* and the political section instructors exercise a surprisingly tight form of control and close supervision over the theoretically autonomous primary Party organizations. This has already been illustrated with reference to the periodic reporting-electoral meetings which are supposed to be so important to the branches. In addition, the political workers maintain a continuing scrutiny of the branches' operations, criticizing, helping, reporting on them, and giving numerous and detailed instructions and recommendations for changes.¹⁵³ Political workers train new leaders, remove any duly elected Party officials when the political apparatus feels inclined to do so, and recommend new candidates to take the vacated posts.¹⁵⁴ They call "instructional" conferences and issue pamphlets and articles in which the branch leaders are given detailed instructions and directives.¹⁵⁵

The professional political workers also control the branches' finances, have access to all written records and receive all reports, must approve the branches' plans before their fulfillment, and include the branches' affairs in their own reports submitted to the higher levels of the political apparatus.¹⁵⁶ In fact, they can even substitute for the branches, when none of the latter exist in a military area, for the individual Communists or small groups then report directly to the political workers.¹⁵⁷

On the other side, the political apparatus regards the primary Party organizations and their membership as major sources of information and manpower, absolutely necessary for the formulation and fulfillment of its own plans for political work among the troops. It is a frequently repeated truism that the Communist soldier knows best what is concerning and motivating his non-Party comrades, and the political workers are constantly reminded to use the reports from the individual Communists and their primary Party organizations before making plans.¹⁵⁸

The Communist and Komsomol members furnish the manpower, and particularly the secondary leadership, necessary to run the study and recreation circles, to direct the cultural-enlightenment institutions (such as the company Rooms for Political Enlightenment), and above all to bring the Party line forcibly

and frequently to the attention of each man in the armed forces.¹⁵⁹ A very high percentage of the Party and public activity of the Communists and their branches is carried out in fulfillment of tasks assigned by the professional political workers. It is characteristic of this relationship that none of the plans which the Party branches are required to make are official until they have been approved by the appropriate political workers.¹⁶⁰

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNISTS

Why Do Men Join?

It should be frankly stated at the outset that only guesses can be made at the present time concerning the complex question of the motivations which lead men to apply for membership in the Party, and about the men's reactions to the demands and rewards of that membership.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, some summary of the available data may be useful.

Some note must be taken of the appeals and attractions of the Party to the young, the romantic, and the emotional soldiers. To the young Komsomol who is impressed by the legends of the Party's world mission, subjected to a continuous stream of propaganda about the Communist Utopia and the Party's alleged efforts to assist mankind achieve it, or awed with the great power and responsibility of Party leaders, the Party appeals may well have considerable, even if temporary, effect. It should also be noted, conversely, that the young man's sense of disillusionment, when he comes to an understanding of the Party's true nature and the aims of the individual Communists, will probably be equally great.¹⁶²

There is also a type of nationalist or patriotic appeal for those who identify the Party with the Soviet people or the Russian (or Soviet) state, an identification that the propagandists strive constantly to encourage. One defector, a man whose personal anti-Soviet attitudes were intensified by the fact that his father had been a priest, said: "About twenty men in my company were Party or Komsomol members. During the war that's understandable: it [the Party membership] committed you, people were loyal in a different sort of way. After all, it's our country."¹⁶³

On the basis of our present knowledge of the Soviet system and the type of men it breeds, the advantages that Party membership has for service promotion and personal gain are more likely to be effective than the preceding idealistic appeals. Every officer and prospective officer, for example, is apparently aware of the importance of Party membership for most men desiring to make a life-time career in the armed forces. Not only do most defectors from the Army report this,¹⁶⁴ but the Army press and Party propagandists often complain about the "careerists" in the Party branches.¹⁶⁵

A related attraction, less publicized but one which must be very powerful for the citizens of any authoritarian state, is the appeal of strength and power. For some people, the Kremlin and its Party must symbolize invincibility and stability, providing for them a type of emotional security which they find comforting and even stimulating. The same persons, it might be pointed out, however, are the most untrustworthy in a serious crisis, for they will go over to a

stronger rival without qualms, as did many Communists inside Germany and within the Red Army during World War II.¹⁶⁶

Another major type of motivation for membership finds its impetus in the efforts of the Party itself. A fundamental concept in the pattern of operations emphasizes the urgent requirement of exploiting the services of most men with "authority," able to influence the attitudes and actions of their fellow servicemen because of their superior intelligence, bravery, physical prowess, or other qualities. The political workers and Party officials are expected to watch for such men, to utilize their energies, and to encourage them to apply for membership, often exerting heavy and continuous pressure upon them. A cadre non-Party officer, who defected in 1948, gave a graphic description of this pressure:

The *zampolit* calls you in, not for anything special. He just wants to have a little friendly conversation with you. And he asks how things are with your family, and he is very pleased to learn that things are not bad. And then he says: "Why aren't you a Communist? After all you are in a position of leadership and it is shameful that you should not be a Communist." Then you answer: "But I am a Communist, but I'm not a non-Party Bolshevik." The answer is: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You, an officer for so long and not yet a Communist." Then you answer: "I don't know enough people in this unit to get the proper recommendation." The *zampolit* answers: "Oh now that is only a formality. I will recommend you and that will be enough. I'll answer for you with my head. Now what else do you want? Here are the papers. Fill them out." Then the procedure is to forget about the papers, and the *zampolit* calls you in again and says: "Now look. It will be bad for you if you don't join the Party. The time has come." But then he is transferred to another unit or you are transferred to another unit, and when you reach some place else, the whole thing starts over again.¹⁶⁷

Another group of appeals is connected with the individual's sense of gregariousness and his response to informal group pressures of his fellow soldiers. The Party offers not only Utopia to the idealist, personal advantages to the ambitious, alliance with power for the weak, but it also offers companions and group strength to the lonely and isolated. It is the only organization of its kind which can operate with official sanction and approval, and it enrolls many of the most prominent and the most influential individuals. Something of this can be found in the comment of an anti-Soviet defector who told an American interrogator about some men in the Komsomol and the Party: "One of them was a wonderful fellow. He lived very poorly, he helped his old mother and worked very hard. There were some wonderful people among them. There are people who are in the Party and are still a hell of a lot better than non-Party people. It isn't as simple as that."¹⁶⁸ Individuals like this defector, while probably relatively few in the Party, will probably display a stubborn loyalty to the organization and its membership, and will be antagonized by enemy propaganda which directly attacks the Party.

Demand for Acceptance of Marxism-Leninism

From the moment that he is accepted as a candidate, the Communist is under pressure to carry on a never-ending study of Marxism-Leninism (the Stalinist version of Marxist ideology, Leninist concepts, and Bolshevik views of the place of the Party in contemporary society) in order to lay the intellectual

and emotional foundations for the correct relationship between himself and the Party. He must accept the generalizations of Marxism-Leninism about the future Utopia, its analysis of present trends and current events, and its description of the past, in order to gain complete confidence in an inevitable victory and to understand why all Communists must work desperately to hasten that victory. What is even more important, the individual Communist must assimilate the Stalinist explanation of the place of the Party organization in the struggle to hasten the inevitable victory, for this will be a rationalization for his acceptance of the burdens and obligations which the Party will place upon him personally.

The individual Communist is called upon to accept further claims. He must agree that the Party has intellectual weapons of a type never before created or discovered by mortal man, and that it has leaders to use these weapons effectively and wisely. As the Communists' official textbook puts it: "the power of the Marxist-Leninist theory lies in the fact that it enables the Party to find the right orientation in any situation, to understand the inner connections of current events, to foresee their course, and to perceive not only how, and in what direction they are developing, but how, and in what direction, they are bound to develop in the future."¹⁶⁹ This claim of the powers of prevision and prediction is coupled with serious insistence that the leaders of the Bolshevik movement, especially Stalin of course, are men of genius who know best how to apply these powers to the pressing problems of the day.¹⁷⁰ The Communist who accepts these assertions has no alternative but to assume the correctness of all Party directives and instructions, and therefore to fulfill them with unquestioning obedience.

Another basic element of the Party doctrine is concerned with the "enemy" and his evil nature. Those who oppose the Party, the Communist is constantly assured, are basically weak and will lose inevitably, but for the time being they are dangerous because they are energetic and cunning, and can find servants and allies. The "capitalist world" works with great vigor "to organize gangs of assassins, wreckers and spies within the U.S.S.R." and actually has in the past found within the Soviet Union "faithful servants who were ready to spy, sabotage, commit acts of terrorism and diversion."¹⁷¹

These evil people are depicted not only as working outside the Soviet, or as sending allies into it, but as having allies in those elements within the Party itself who refuse to give all their strength in the service of the Party, who doubt the correctness of its policies, who seek personal advantage, or who are willing to compromise in the struggle with the "enemy." The Party attitude about such weak people is clear:

Opportunism in our midst is like an ulcer in a healthy organism, and must not be tolerated. The Party is the leading detachment of the working class, its advanced fortress, its general staff. Sceptics, opportunists, capitulators and traitors can not be tolerated on the directing staff of the working class. If, while it is carrying on a life and death fight against the bourgeoisie, there are capitulators and traitors on its own staff, within its own fortress, the working class will be caught between two fires, from the front and the rear. Clearly, such a struggle can only end in defeat. The easiest way to capture a fortress is within. To attain victory, the Party of the working class, its directing staff, its advanced fortress, must first be purged of capitulators, deserters, scabs, and traitors.

It cannot be regarded as an accident that the Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and nationalist deviators who fought Lenin and the Party ended just as the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties did, namely, by becoming agents of fascist espionage services, by turning spies, wreckers, assassins, deserters and traitors to the Party.¹⁷²

The lessons for the individual Communist are clear. He must have complete confidence in the ultimate victory of the proletariat, in the correctness of the Party's long-term strategy, and in the appropriateness of the leaders' tactics for the present. He must obey the instructions given to him swiftly, completely, and without questions or qualms. Above all, he must not only fight foreign enemies and their domestic agents, but he must combat any tendencies within himself toward opportunism, scepticism, or compromise, for such attitudes are the first steps on the road to ruin.

Finally, the ideology is full of praise for the Party membership itself, claiming that its motives are high, its services great, and its ranks exclusive. The Communist member hears repeatedly these words of Stalin: "We Communists are people of a special mold, constructed from a special material. We constitute the army of the great proletarian strategist, the army of Comrade Lenin. There can be no higher honor than to belong to this army. There is nothing higher than the calling of the member of the Party which was founded and led by Comrade Lenin. It is not given to everyone to be a member of this Party. Not everyone can withstand the storms and difficulties which are connected with membership in such a Party."¹⁷³ This is typical of the fulsome self-praise and the glorification of the Party, which the member reads constantly. Presumably, it is intended to justify the role assigned to him, the tasks and attitudes he is required to assume, and the constant pressure for efficient execution of the tasks placed upon him.

Obligations to the Party

The preceding description of Marxist-Leninist ideology is used to rationalize the demands made by the Party upon its members. Among its most important uses are the appeals it makes to the Communist's sense of group loyalty and group pride. The Communists are constantly reminded of Stalin's references to "the honor of the Party member"¹⁷⁴ and to the need for each Communist to hold his Party honor inviolate. In speaking to a group of young people, Kalinin put the appeal in these terms:

In joining the Party, each person entering it not only assumes the obligation of knowing the Party program and rules and of carrying them out honestly—he makes, as it were, an unwritten vow not to do anything that might cast a slur on the Party, to fight with all his energy, unsparing of his strength or life itself, for the Party line and for its orthodoxy, never to be dishonest in his conduct toward the Party and its various bodies. . . .¹⁷⁵

The Party literature stresses the special relationships that should exist between members of the Party; it emphasizes the importance of "comradely relations," and scolds those who soil the "honor of the Communist by improper or unapproved behavior."¹⁷⁶

On the basis of these and other rationalizations, the Party makes a series of appeals to the membership which are extraordinary both in their scope and intensity. A brochure for new members, frankly entitled *What the Party De-*

mands from Communists during the Patriotic War, explains the Party's view that "to be a member of the Party means to give oneself in every way" to the Party's and the nation's cause.¹⁷⁷ The Communist is called upon to accept a relationship with the Party in which it takes full responsibility for him and his concerns, and has the right to train him in its own way, to know his thoughts and concerns, and to assign him wherever, and at whatever task, it sees fit.¹⁷⁸ This is a demand for total commitment to the Party's program, and to complete discipline in the execution of its directives.¹⁷⁹

The Party demands continuing contributions in many areas, especially in the fulfillment of Party assignments and directives. One defector, who served as Komsomol member, Party candidate, and Party member, described his reaction in this fashion:

There was a gradual change as you moved up the Party ladder. As a non-Party man, I was responsible for myself. As a Komsomol, the Komsomol secretary gave me certain tasks, for example, to talk to certain people or to edit the wall-paper. . . I would come home two or three hours later, and had to do lots of work. All this is empty, but it carries the Soviet propaganda to the masses. I became a transmitter of the Soviet policy. As a Party candidate, the kind of work was about the same, but you feel a greater responsibility. This constant worry about your future also plays a great role. When you then become a member of the Party, you become a completely soulless person. True, many people develop a center poison against this, they separate private life from the work of the Party.¹⁸⁰

The member is called upon to be "vigilant," to watch for "enemies of the Party" and for unwary comrades who fail to carry out their obligations: "Party discipline demands from every Party member not only that he himself fulfill consciously the decisions of the Party, but also that he fight with all violators of Party discipline. Those who act tolerantly toward the violators of Party discipline and who cover them, who do aid not the Party but the violators of Party discipline, they themselves become violators of Party discipline."¹⁸¹ This attitude should be part of the Communist's general conduct toward any Party enemies, for he must be "able to recognize the foe in his very embryo, and to smash him completely."¹⁸²

The member is also urged to take a full role in the activities of the Party, joining its organizations, and performing the normal duties such as payment of dues, attendance of meetings, and so on.¹⁸³ Finally, he is expected to fulfill his service obligations with vigor, efficiency, and enthusiasm.¹⁸⁴

The Communist's Responsibilities for Non-Party People

A special aspect of the Communist's obligations is related to his conduct toward non-Communists, a relationship which is obviously of great importance to the Party. Three major themes are stressed by Party propagandists in referring to this relationship. The first and most important concerns the Communist's own conduct and performance, and revolves about the frequently reiterated demand that each Communist be a model in his own behavior and in his performance of social and service obligations; he must not only show how the non-Communist should act, but must persuade him by his own example to act in the approved fashion. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this theme, the emphasis given to it, and the frequency of its appearance in the Party

lessons and appeals to the membership. The Communist is told again and again that while propaganda assignments are important and must be fulfilled, "the best propaganda and agitation is the demonstration by example, for this is propaganda and agitation in action."¹⁸⁵ This theme is repeated endlessly, particularly in justification for the continuous pressure upon each Communist for better performance of service obligations, for assumption of the dangerous and difficult assignments, and for adoption of higher standards in his personal life.¹⁸⁶

Another group of propaganda themes to the Communist is concerned with his duty to undertake positive steps for leading and influencing the non-Party people. He is called upon to accept the presumption that, since he was "selected" for membership in society's elite organization, the Party, that he must already be a leader of the masses. He must not only learn the techniques of leadership, but must apply them in active participation in "public affairs," by taking an active part in public propaganda, and by accepting the principle that he is his brother's keeper. The Communist is told that he must be "an irreproachable warrior," but in addition is obligated not only to be in front of, but also to lead, the non-Party soldiers, to subject them constantly to Party influence."¹⁸⁷

The Communist is never permitted to forget that he is responsible for the behavior of the non-Party people about him, that he must use his friendships to influence those who accept him as a comrade and to try to alter their views and attitudes. He must reprimand immediately those who make remarks critical of the Soviet system or do anything else designated as improper by the Soviet authorities, and he must report any clues, whether or not he thinks them important, that any of his fellow soldiers need correction. A guide for Party Organizers during the war, included the following in a series of specific directives: "Communicate daily with the Communists and . . . work so that each Communist of the company becomes a Bolshevik leader of the masses in battle, able to raise the moral spirit of the warriors, inculcating in them by word and deed a faith in the justice of our cause, in our victory and the inevitable defeat of the German occupiers."¹⁸⁸

A major aspect of the propaganda about the Communist's relationships with non-Communists is concerned with the attitudes which he should adopt in trying to influence his fellow servicemen. Here again is found a typical Bolshevik prescription for successful manipulation of the masses. There should be on the surface, well displayed for the public to notice, expressions of gentleness and humanitarianism, to cover (and if possible make palatable to the masses being exploited) the basic ruthlessness, utilitarianism, and toughness.

Thus, the Communists are told to be "warm in their relations toward the people about them, because—as Stalin put it—in order to be "political leaders of the Leninist type," they must "love their people as Lenin did."¹⁸⁹ They should not only tell about their affection, but should demonstrate its authenticity by speaking "heart-to-heart" with fellow soldiers,¹⁹⁰ by paying close attention to the moods and concerns of the non-Party people,¹⁹¹ and by reacting swiftly and efficiently when soldiers have justified complaints.¹⁹²

On the other hand, there must be no doubt that the primary requirement is efficiency in securing desired results and in maintaining the type of continuing pressure that obtains the fullest possible contribution from each man. Each Communist must be ruthless against actual and potential traitors, slackers, and sluggards, and uncooperative persons. Every man must be kept under con-

tinuous Bolshevik pressure so that he will strive himself to remove his own shortcomings, improve his talents, and multiply his contributions to the military unit and to the state.¹⁹³ Above all, the Communist must have "authority," and use it as the Party directs.¹⁹⁴

Qualities of the "Model Bolshevik"

In addition to all the other demands made on the Party member, most of which are not unique to the Party, there is additional requirement which is typically Bolshevik. This calls upon the individual Communist to alter his own character and personality, and reform it to reflect the qualities desired by the Party. In his brochure entitled *What the Party Demands from Communists during the Fatherland War*, Yaroslavski wrote in his concluding section:

In this brochure, the author has attempted--in language intelligible for each candidate for membership into the CPSU (b), and for each Komsomol member--to set forth what the Party demands from the Communist; to sketch the image of the Communist, what kind of person he must be, in order to fulfill, with the most success, the great tasks placed on all of us in our Party in a period so important in the life of the Soviet state. Each of us should want to nourish in himself the features and unique qualities of the Bolshevik, the ideal embodiments of which are Lenin and Stalin.¹⁹⁵

The various aspects of the image of the Bolshevik model are frequently discussed in the Party literature and during formal lectures. Stories of Party leaders of past and present, for example, will frequently be considered appropriate bases for such discussions. There are many qualities mentioned in all these discussions, of which three groupings are most prominent and perhaps worthy of mention here.

The first group of desired traits is related to the demand for efficiency, particularly in the performance of the professional duties of each Communist. Kalinin told a conference of minor Party leaders:

What is the characteristic feature of the secretaries of our primary Party organizations? It is their practicality. . . . Imagine a person nowadays who would leave his job in production undone, postponing everything for tomorrow, call a study circle together and take other people away from their work, drag them to a lesson and call this doing Party work. Of course, nobody will consider such a person a good Communist. . . . Hence, if I were a secretary, I would consider a person's chief Party and social activity to be his production [of] work. I would say that a person with an unsatisfactory showing in production is a poor Communist even if he shows up well in all other respects.¹⁹⁶

Related traits of the good Communist are businesslike intensity and directness. The model Bolshevik is depicted as a man who stays at his work despite all distractions or competing attractions, never falling to pay attention to all details, no matter how minor, and yet ensuring that the main principles laid down by the Party are always followed. He does so, moreover, in spite of praise or promotion, for the ideal Communist never becomes conceited or complacent.¹⁹⁷

The second group of traits is related to the Party's demand for maximum contribution from each man. The model member places himself under continuous and never-ending pressure, and accepts the manipulative efforts of the Party with pleasure and profit. This major point is graphically shown in the

story of Senior Lieutenant Kurguzov, a naval officer who had been highly praised and rapidly promoted in his first years of active service, but eventually got into Party difficulties and was brought before the Party Commission in its capacity of tribunal. When Kurguzov tried to show his proper attitude by confessions that he had erred in a specific case, the secretary of the Commission gave him a long lecture on the Party's attitude toward him and his kind.

According to the Commission secretary, the real subject at issue was not an individual mistake, but the "definite line of conduct" shown by Kurguzov over a period of time. He had been highly praised at an early stage of his naval career, and had apparently felt that he reached high enough in Party esteem so that he could relax his efforts. This was a serious fault in his character, for he had thus forgotten a basic Party demand. Said the Commission secretary: "We must not be complacent with achievements, but must as Bolsheviks push onward. This is a characteristic trait of Bolsheviks which you, Kurguzov, have lost."¹⁹⁹ The official pointed to Kurguzov's failure to continue his intensive study of Marxism-Leninism and naval affairs, and his refusal to deal properly with minor aspects of his Party and service duties. It was only inevitable, he declared, that the naval officer would eventually commit his final error, the failure to punish immediately and drastically the violation of disciplinary regulations committed by a member of his crew.¹⁹⁹

Finally, the Party demands a set of emotional characteristics, which would be necessary in what Americans would call "an eager beaver" dedicating his life to the execution of his leaders' instructions. The model Bolshevik, for example, must be enthusiastic in his work, for obvious reasons. This is needed in his task of influencing the masses, a most important aspect of his Party assignment.²⁰⁰ Equally important is the fact that lack of enthusiasm shows lackadaisical and negligent attitudes which will never do in a Bolshevik. He may in fact be punished for such undesirable attitudes.²⁰¹

Several other mental traits are closely related to the demand for enthusiasm. The model Bolshevik is full of energy, and this is reflected in the extraordinary amount of work he is able to accomplish. Stalin, for example, who has often been called "the example of the Bolshevik," was complimented for all his "accomplishments" in his "unceasing struggle for the victory of the Leninist banner," and Communists were told that "his entire boiling activity is a model for all of us."²⁰²

A similar demand is made for such qualities as persistence, coolness in struggle, and fearlessness in facing and overcoming obstacles.²⁰³ The brochure for the edification of young Communists cites the words of the Central Committee with respect to Kirov:

Comrade Kirov represents the model Bolshevik, who did not recognize fear and hardships in the attainment of the great aims posed by the Party. His directness, iron stolicism, his amazing quality as an inspiring tribune of the revolution were combined in him with that heartiness and softness in his personal comradely and friendly relations, with that personal warmth and modesty which are basic in the true Leninist.²⁰⁴

Yaroslavski, the author of this brochure, presents this quotation and then stresses: "This is the kind of people nourished by the Bolshevik Party, this is a model for all of us, for in this way we must all train ourselves."²⁰⁵

Chapter 16

THE KOMSOMOL MEMBERS

PLACE OF THE KOMSOMOL IN THE ARMED FORCES

The All-Union League of Leninist Youth, or the Komsomol as it is more commonly known, is another instrumentality of the Kremlin, operating like a junior edition of the Communist Party.¹ Its efforts are concentrated within its special youth audience to which it brings the Party propaganda. Beyond this, the Komsomol is expected to direct the young people's energies into channels approved by the Party, to assist the Party in the fulfillment of major Soviet policies, and to prepare the most suitable Komsomol members for future membership in the Party.²

The Soviets are quite conscious of the importance of the Komsomol audience, which include particularly those young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-six.³ This age span covers precisely the period when the receptivity of young people to Bolshevik propaganda is believed to be greatest, and when youth's vigor and idealistic optimism are at their height. As one Soviet leader put it: "What is particularly characteristic of young people is their tremendous inner urge to realize their ideals in practice. Young people are always ready for self-sacrifice: they are always eager to walk to the other end of the earth, to go to sea whether before the mast or on the captain's bridge, to discover new lands, and so on and so forth. And, comrades, this is quite natural."⁴

Important, too, is the fact that the younger generation in the USSR has no personal experience or recollection of any other society than the one in which it finds itself. In Stalin's words, Soviet youths "are free from the burden of the past, and it is easiest for them to assimilate Lenin's behests."⁵ The Soviet leaders apparently feel that the Komsomol audience is inherently more favorably disposed to their propaganda than most other elements in the population. In fact, American investigators believe that the younger men in the armed forces, especially those born after 1927, have shown themselves to be far more deeply influenced by Bolshevik indoctrination than any of the older groups that had seen other conditions.⁶

The role of the Komsomol is especially significant, since the personnel of the military services is preponderantly youthful in composition, and larger numbers are becoming eligible for Komsomol membership. This fact was reflected in the report that out of a total increase of 6 million people taken into the Komsomol during the war years, some 5 million came from the armed forces.⁷ Even before this tremendous increase in the enrollment of the Army

Komsomol took place, the Komsomol members included more than one-fourth of the total personnel in the armed forces. It is obvious, therefore, that the Komsomol has become the largest single organization within the armed forces. Its relative size has grown with the postwar demobilization of the older veterans, among whom were the bulk of the Party members in the Army.⁸

The Komsomol is important in the armed forces for reasons other than sheer size. Like its civilian counterpart, it acts as a training ground for future Party members, and during the first two years of the war, 49.6 percent of new Party members came directly from the Komsomol ranks.⁹ In addition to providing Party reinforcements, the Komsomol actively assists the Party in the training of the young officers' cadres. In all the Army military schools, for example, Komsomols constitute "the overwhelming majority of the students," while in the Navy military schools, almost the entire student body are members.¹⁰

Finally, it is important to note the types of persons who are to be found in the Army Komsomol. While the Party in the armed forces is made up predominantly of technical officers and the commanding personnel, the Komsomol recruits its members from the servicemen rank and file and the noncommissioned officers.¹¹ Indeed, the Komsomol appears almost to have monopolized the entire staff of sergeants in many branches of the armed forces.¹² This fact makes the Komsomol a "grass roots" type of political organization, encompassing broad masses of young soldiers in the lower ranks, while the less-numerous Party members are largely taken from the upper echelons.

With these considerations in mind, it is easy to understand why the Kremlin's policy on the admission of new members into the Komsomol, and on the size of the organization, has undergone drastic change since 1936. In that year, the total size of the membership throughout the USSR stood at 4 million. By 1939, the figure had risen to 9 million.¹³ While requirements for admission had never been as rigid and exacting as those for the Party, the advent of the second World War caused a further and more drastic relaxation of admission standards. Indeed, the Komsomol was instructed that it must do everything possible to increase its own membership, and it was urged to show more interest in courage and leadership than in ideological views.¹⁴

Throughout the war against Germany, there was a vast acceleration in Komsomol recruitment. In a ten-day period of fighting on the Central Front, for example, *Red Star* reported that three thousand new members had been enlisted in the Army Komsomol.¹⁵ During the first 18 months of the war, 2½ million young men and women entered its ranks.¹⁶ By 1945 the total membership was estimated to have reached an all-time high of 15 million.¹⁷ All these figures pointed up the important point that, in large measure, the Komsomol had abandoned its former objective of being a highly selective group, limited in size and including only the most zealous and devoted younger citizens. It had been converted into a vast, mass organization embracing a very large segment of the younger population in the USSR.

In view of the importance placed on the extent of Komsomol membership, it was very significant that the total number of Komsomol members throughout the USSR dropped precipitantly in the postwar period. There was an over-all decline in membership from the wartime peak of 15 million to about 9 million in the postwar period, and this was also reflected in the Komsomol composition of the

military forces. The top Komsomol official in the MPA, Lieutenant Colonel Marinov, told an important conference of leading Army and Navy Komsomol workers in 1946 that serious recruiting difficulties were being experienced in a number of military districts and fleets.¹⁸ By 1948, the head of the MPA declared that "in many Komsomol organizations the reception of youthful leaders into the ranks of the Komsomol had dropped sharply and in a series of units had ceased completely."¹⁹

The seriousness of this new situation was emphasized by the constant concern of high military-political authorities over this problem. A host of reasons were ascribed as the causes of the trouble—weakness in the Komsomol's educational work, failure to create the types of programs with appeal for young soldiers, slowness and red tape in the review of applications for admission and issuance of cards, "atrophy in its leadership," and disinterest among potential members, to enumerate but a few.²⁰ Moreover, there were many indications that the decline in ranks might have been even more pronounced had it not been for continual pressure from the Party and the political organs.²¹ When one branch leader excused his failure to enroll several scores of eligible soldiers and sergeants of his battalion on the grounds that they were not all leaders in military training, and that many had obtained only average grades in their studies, he was told that if these men were disciplined and diligent, he ought to recruit them anyway, and then proceed to make them leaders in study.²²

Since the drop in membership was reflected in both civilian and military branches of the Komsomol, it was inevitable that the Soviet leaders should react vigorously to these danger signs. An All-Union Congress of the youth organization was convened in the spring of 1949, at which time the low membership figure of 9.2 million members was revealed, and an intensive recruiting campaign was launched. During the next three years, that figure was increased by some 2 million each year, and in the summer of 1952 it was announced that the total Komsomol membership had gone up to some sixteen millions—nearly one-half of the total number of eligible Soviet citizens fourteen to twenty-six years of age!²³

This high-pressure campaign was carried on, of course, in the military forces, as well as in the civilian population,²⁴ although total figures are not available about the results of the former. Press stories, however, indicate that many thousands of the privates and able-bodied seamen, and an overwhelming percentage of the noncommissioned officers, belong to the Komsomol today. The significance of this pool of manpower for political purposes was illustrated in a speech by a deputy company commander for political affairs, who pointed out that, while his company of about a hundred men had only three Communists in it, the Komsomol members made up two-thirds of the total company personnel.²⁵

KOMSOMOL OPERATIONAL METHODS AND CONTROLS

Structure and Operations

The Komsomol organizations in the armed forces follow closely the structure and operational methods of the Party branches and higher levels. The segments of the Komsomol structure include "groups" at the platoon and com-

pany level, led by small *buros* and a secretary; a primary organization, or branch, at the battalion level, conducting the basic propaganda operations of the Komsomol; and a supervising regiment *buro*, elected at periodic conferences. The Komsomol structure within the Navy is practically identical with that of the Army, with the administrative levels on the large ships being the watch, the battle unit, and the ship.²⁶ In addition, all the military schools of both the Army and Navy usually possess strong Komsomol organizations.²⁷

As in the Party, three major types of members are found in the Komsomol. The largest single group is, of course, composed of the great bulk of ordinary members who cooperate, but who do not show any special initiative nor provide any element of vital leadership. Next are the "activists," including all those members contributing in some important manner to the fulfillment of major tasks. Usually the activists are exploited by the secretary of the Komsomol *buro*, who uses the most zealous and enthusiastic members as agitators, organizers (*Komsorgs*) of the platoons, assistant leaders of political-studies classes, and as the members of the council of the Company Room for Political-Enlightenment Work.²⁸ These activists serve as leavening agents among the more numerous, passive members, and are intended to generate a spirit of purposefulness and enthusiasm to the others.

Finally, there is the third group of Komsomol officials: the elected secretaries of the battalion or company Komsomol organizations, the members of the *buros* who aid them, and the *Komsorgs* who are appointed by the battalion Komsomol *buro* and are supervised by the Komsomol secretary.²⁹ Like the Party Organizer, the *Komsorg* assists and directs his followers in the performance of political duties and in the raising of the unit's military efficiency, working under the control of the political workers and Party officials in the company.³⁰ The activities of the primary organizations at the battalion level are headed by a full-time elected secretary, assisted by an elected *buro* comprising from eight to twenty members.³¹ This *buro* meets regularly twice a month, to deal with various organizational problems and to draft the agenda for the general Komsomol meetings.³² The secretary is also active in guiding the work of the company secretaries, sometimes convening regular seminars for them to exchange experiences, and even dictating to them what their plans of work should include.³³

The principles of operation by which all these bodies at different levels are supposed to be guided are precisely those mentioned so often in Party propaganda: "democratic centralism," inner-union democracy, and self-criticism.³⁴ Democratic centralism provides for the election of Komsomol secretaries and *buros*, while justifying that element of supervision and control which each superior Komsomol organization exercises over the Komsomol body immediately subordinate to it. Decisions of a higher body are always binding upon all the lower Komsomol bodies. Within each of these bodies, however, the elected organs must give a full accounting of their yearly performance to the Komsomol membership.

Like the Party organizations, the Komsomol branches have their reporting-electoral meetings at times selected by the Central Committee of the Party in Moscow.³⁵ Here the elected officials present reports on their work of the past year, and the membership pretends to analyze and judge these reports and the activities of the leaders before proceeding to the election of new ones. Indeed, in all types of meetings of the organizations, the rank-and-file members are supposed to have the right to hold "free discussion of all Komsomol questions."³⁶

Sergeants and junior officers sit side by side with the private soldiers at such meetings, and each is supposed to be entitled to speak his piece regardless of rank. The opinions of the membership must be reported, and an effort made to build a habit of cooperation between the Komsomol officials and members, between whom a "comradely relationship" is supposed to exist.³⁷ Komsomol discipline requires, however, that once action has been decided upon, the minority must subordinate itself completely to the will of the majority.

Finally, the principle of self-criticism is used, as in the Party structure, as a means of securing information on attitudes and actions, and of learning all rumors about inefficiency and corruption. Members are urged to exercise their right of criticism "regardless of the person involved," in order "to banish from the leadership incorrigible windbags and people who shun hard practical work."³⁸

At one time, organizations permitted some criticism of the activities of the junior commanders (who frequently were members of the Komsomol). Such criticism tended, of course, to undermine the commanders' authority over their men, and eventually the Central Committee of the Party issued a directive expressly requiring the Komsomol branches to put an end to "this incorrect and harmful practice."³⁹ Despite this directive, young officers were still receiving criticism in their Komsomol organizations up to 1946; one result was that they often refused to attend Komsomol meetings or to participate in Komsomol affairs, and could thus be regarded as members only in name.⁴⁰ Today, under normal circumstances, criticism may only be conducted within sharply restricted limits, and most Komsomol members appear to feel that it is better not to criticize unless asked to speak.⁴¹

There are many public complaints that the secretaries ignore the notion of inner-Komsomol democracy, and actually run their organizations autocratically, deliberately suppressing criticism from others.⁴² Apparently this practice has been so widespread throughout the military Komsomol as to merit public condemnation expressed, at an all-Army conference of Komsomol functionaries, by N. A. Mikhailov, Secretary of the Komsomol Central Committee. He accused Army Komsomol officials of having become overproud and of conducting their work without self-criticism and refusing to permit criticism from others.⁴³

Controls

Like the Party organizations, the Komsomol branches and groups are instrumentalities for the execution of assigned military and political tasks, and they perform these functions under the direct and tight control of the political apparatus, starting with the MPA itself. In fact, the military Komsomol units and members have only scattered contacts with the civilian Komsomol officials, and these are created by the MPA. Occasionally an important figure from the civilian Komsomol's Central Committee, such as Mikhailov, V. I. Ivanov, or A. K. Shelepin, may attend a major conference of the military Komsomol summoned by the MPA and address the assemblage.⁴⁴ Apart from these infrequent encounters, however, the civilian and military branches of the Komsomol appear to operate as two separate entities, with the MPA providing leadership and direction for the activities of the military members.

The MPA contains a special section devoted exclusively to the supervision of Komsomol affairs.⁴⁵ This section convenes conferences at which the new tasks of the Army Komsomol organizations are defined and explained, issues instructions on how to carry out these tasks, and disseminates directives on various organizational matters. The agenda of one typical conference in 1947, for example, included a pronouncement on the next tasks in the ideological-political indoctrination of the Komsomol and other youth, and a plan for the participation of Komsomol organizations in the preparations for the national electoral campaign directed at all citizens.⁴⁶ The Political Administrations of the Army Groups and the military districts also contain special sections concerned with Komsomol matters in the same general manner as the MPA, but within the more limited sphere of their respective jurisdictions.⁴⁷

The most direct guidance afforded by the political apparatus comes not at these top levels, but through the political officers in the divisional and regimental headquarters. Each political organ has special personnel for this work, most of them experienced Party members concentrating on Komsomol work.⁴⁸

These political workers have full responsibility for seeing that meetings are regularly convened and properly run.⁴⁹ They apparently possess extensive authority over all Komsomol executive personnel, from the regimental level down to the group *Komsorgs* of the platoons, and they exercise a dominant role in the guidance of the *buros*.⁵⁰ They also help to train most elected Komsomol officials. Under the auspices of the political organs and political sections, seminars are held for the secretaries and *buro* personnel at various Army levels, in order to facilitate the exchange of practical experience in Komsomol work and to communicate the most recent directives from the MPA.⁵¹

Additional controls are wielded over the branches by the Communist Party units in the armed forces. The Army Communists are frequently reminded that guidance of the Komsomol organizations is "an integral part of the entire Party work." Since the political training and experience of the Komsomol members are considered inadequate, they need "constant paternal aid from their older comrade—the Communists."⁵² However, the duties of the military Party organizations do not appear to be completely regularized, and many of their activities seem to duplicate those of the Komsomol workers in the political sections. Officials of a local Party organization in the Army, for example, may assist the Komsomol *buro* in drafting the plan for future activities, and help in the recruitment of new Komsomol members.⁵³ Some Party candidates and Communists also hold elected office in the Komsomol as secretaries of *buros*.⁵⁴

The Party organizations are supposed to keep a vigilant watch over the Komsomol members' study of Marxism-Leninism, and to conduct special educational conferences and seminars. Communists also deliver political reports and lectures on current political events before Komsomol personnel, and otherwise help to raise the general level of political training in the organization.⁵⁵ Beyond this, day-to-day direction is given to the Komsomol units, and the units are utilized in the execution of Party programs.⁵⁶

In view of this subordinate relationship of the Komsomol toward the political sections and the Party organizations, whenever public criticism of Komsomol work appears in the Army press, a major share of the blame falls upon the related organizations as well. The most common charge levied against them is that insufficient attention and guidance are given to the Komsomol.⁵⁷

Indeed, some Party *burcs* are said to remember their duties only when they receive instructions from superiors or when it is time to report to their membership on Komsomol affairs.⁵⁹ Both groups are accused of failing to maintain the necessary contacts with the young soldiers, and thus do not learn of their complaints and needs.⁶⁰ Moreover the workers too often resort to administrative and bureaucratic methods in the control methods.⁶⁰

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Standards and Demands

The standards for, and the tasks imposed upon, the individual Komsomol member in the armed forces are strikingly similar to those placed on the individual military Communist. In the place of brochures like Yaroslavski's *What the Party Demands from Communists during the Patriotic War*, adherents of the junior organization receive pamphlets like *What the Komsomol Demands from the Komsomol Member*.⁶¹ These are so close in content that one could be substituted for the other by altering only the words "Communist" and "Komsomol member." From these and other published sources, and from reports from defectors, the general pattern of these demands on the Komsomol can be sketched.

As in the case of the individual Communist, the young soldier who joins the Komsomol is placed under continuous pressure to develop those personal qualities which fit the official stereotype of the model member. The first group of such qualities includes those necessary for efficient military service: "Bravery, daring, fearlessness in battle, and readiness to fight together with all the people against the enemies of the Fatherland." In addition to these qualities, the Komsomol is told to develop his "strength of will and discipline, organization, and cultural refinement," as well as "straightforwardness, honesty and truthfulness." Above all, of course, he must possess an "ardent love for the Motherland" and be devoted to the work of the Party of Lenin and Stalin.⁶²

More specific than these generalizations are the greatly emphasized demands that each member be a model in his personal behavior and that he excel in both military training and political studies. Hardly a speech or article appears concerning the Komsomol without some mention of these requirements. Frequently, in fact, the most important criterion in evaluation of the effectiveness of a particular organization's work seems to be whether or not its members are "excellent" [*otlichniki*].⁶³ The individual Komsomol member is expected to be exemplary in all aspects of his conduct. This refers particularly to his behavior as a soldier, for exemplariness includes unfailing obedience to the orders of superiors, meticulous observance of all military regulations, and the doing of everything required for good military discipline.⁶⁴

In addition, the member must willingly carry out special Komsomol duties which may be assigned to him, whether it be signing up soldiers for a new state loan, acting as an agitator, teaching military skills to backward comrades, or working on the staff of the company wall-newspaper. Almost any kind of undertaking conceived as necessary by the commander or political sections, and requiring leadership may be placed upon the shoulders of the individual Komsomol member.

In addition to fulfilling Komsomol assignments and the model performance of his service duties, the young soldier is expected, again like the Communist, to carry on intensive and continuous self-training in the Party doctrines, for "daily Marxist-Leninist study is the most important means of the political indoctrination and ideological tempering of Komsomols." The Komsomol member soon learns that he "is obliged unceasingly to study Bolshevism, to master the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist teachings, to study the theory and history of the Bolshevik Party."⁶⁵

Above all, however, the Komsomol demands that each member recognize his total subordination to the Communist leadership, and to the need to make his central aim in life the execution of Communist directives. The following concepts are frequently emphasized:

Every Komsomol is obligated to carry out the policies of the Bolshevik Party steadily and consistently.

What does this mean practically?

It means to fight for the realization of the Party's decisions and directions with all one's life, work, and conduct, and with every step of one's practical activity. The Komsomol member must so execute the work entrusted to him, Komsomol and social obligations, that those around him always see in him a faithful and honest executor of the will of the Party and the government, a person who devotes all his powers to the common good.

It means to grasp and explain to the masses the appeals of the Party; to insist upon the decisions of the Party and the government not only in words, but in deed; and to fight against all who violate them and interfere with their fulfillment. Nothing must stop the Komsomol in his battle against the open and hidden transgressors of the policies of the Party and the Soviet authority.⁶⁶

Appeals to Prospective Recruits and Members

Why do the young citizens, especially those in the armed forces, join the Komsomol? The available sources give answers to this question that are strikingly similar to that asked about the Party. Idealism, ideological persuasion, and the belief in the self-proclaimed mission of the Bolshevik leaders, provide, of course, some impetus and rationalization for many youngsters. Here, too, the idealists and those who are temporarily persuaded often become disillusioned and embittered after comparing propaganda with reality.⁶⁷

Appeals are not limited to idealism, however, since the Bolsheviks realize that "youth cannot be welded together in an organization if one relies only on an ideological basis," and that "not everyone joins the Komsomol out of ideological convictions."⁶⁸ Frequently, joining the organization to which so many of their fellow soldiers belong may be a gesture of conformity, or an effort to satisfy the individual's desire to belong to a group. As one defector put it: "The Komsomol represented a well-formed and strong collectivity. And the longing for the collectivity has always been strong in me."⁶⁹

More numerous are those individuals whose enrollments in the Komsomol stem from careerist motives.⁷⁰ "Everyone must join to get ahead," was the typical rejoinder of one man when questioned as to why he had joined; this sentiment reappears consistently in other interviews of former Komsomol members.⁷¹ Soviet officials acknowledge that the careerist motive looms large with

many individuals, and caution the Komsomol to be on guard against admitting such persons.⁷²

Most important of all reasons for joining the Komsomol, probably, is the official pressure to join which has been exerted upon young people ever since the Komsomol was transformed into a society of the masses. This is a pressure which many feel is unwise, and sometimes impossible, to resist. Usually the pressure on recruits comes from the Party Organizer or the secretary of the local Komsomol organization in each unit. So persistent are the requests from these people to enroll that often the question of choice really does not exist for the individual soldier.⁷³ The very fact that such recruitment pressure is so widely practiced may help to explain why the Komsomol appears to have lost much of its special significance as a militant political organization, and why membership in its ranks has become a purely "formal" status for many soldiers.

It is interesting to note the various arguments for joining used by one Party Organizer in 1943. He told young prospective recruits that their friends had already joined; that the organization had been given to the people by the government and they must love it; that the government had given them education and they must show their gratitude; that if they received military promotions, they would be leading other soldiers who were already members, and that the latter would have no respect for them unless they too became Komsomols; and, finally, that they themselves would not get ahead and would not be trusted if they were not members.⁷⁴ Similar arguments are used for influencing the man who has just joined the Komsomol. There is, first of all, the appeal to his sense of patriotism, assuring him that in assuming his special Komsomol duties, he is performing a service to his country. He is reminded of the various ways in which his country is superior to all others—in art, technology, science, and so forth, as well as in its socialist form of society—and told that it is a high privilege to be a soldier in the Army of the USSR, "standing guard over the peaceful, creative labor of its people."⁷⁵

The characteristics of bravery and self-sacrifice, which the soldier is expected to show on the field of battle, are exploited in the special glorification of Komsomol heroism. Thus, the deeds of Komsomol heroes, and the number of high military awards given to members, always receive much publicity in the press.⁷⁶ In addition, of course, such emphasis on Komsomol heroism represents an attempt to create a sense of pride in the individual's Komsomol status, a sort of *esprit de corps* giving the soldier a proud tradition to maintain. As a Komsomol, he is expected to be a superior soldier, and thereby uphold the prestige of his organization. For example, the man who has been content to be merely average instead of superior is reminded that now he must be another kind of soldier, for he is a Komsomol member.⁷⁷ Presumably, the man who sincerely believes in the Communist Party and its mission finds this sufficient reason to justify the performance of his Komsomol obligations.

In the Komsomol organizations, as in the Party itself, much attention is given to the system of external pressures exerted upon the Komsomol member as a major means for making him conform to the standards. Breaches of discipline or of military regulations are punished by the military authorities, but the local Komsomol organization may at the same time regard such violations as infringements of the soldier's duties as a Komsomol member. Furthermore, the

organization takes such behavior to mean that the soldier-member is lacking in correct political awareness, and the guilty individual may be given additional punishment in the branch or even expelled from the Komsomol.

Some Komsomol organizations resort to expulsion quite frequently, it seems, for defectors report instances of members having been expelled, later rejoining, and then being expelled once again.⁷⁸ Party Commissions, reviewing cases of expulsion from the Army Komsomol in 1946, decided 45 percent of these expulsion decisions by the primary organizations were not warranted, and proceeded to reinstate those previously expelled.⁷⁹ Most delinquencies committed by individuals are of a less-serious nature, however, and usually will merely require some group discussion at a meeting of the Komsomol organization. The officials will reproach the soldier for his misdeed, or for his coolness and lack of zeal, and strive to shame him before the other members by telling him that he has let down the entire organization by his bad behavior.⁸⁰ In these cases, it is hoped that the opinions of the entire membership will act as instruments of pressure to influence the individual's actions. Soviet authorities proclaim this public pressure to be a very effective method of control, and also a valuable educational technique for influencing all the Komsomol onlookers.⁸¹ Another method employed with an individual who is lagging behind in his studies, or failing to distinguish himself in military training, is to have the secretary of his organization conduct a private talk with him to try to arouse his zeal. If the laggard requires direct assistance, the secretary may assign another member to help him.⁸²

The high standard of personal conduct and achievement which has been set for the ordinary member remains, of course, a far cry from reality. There are numerous evidences that enthusiasm within the Komsomol ranks is often non-existent, that the members frequently cannot be raised to new efforts in their military duties or Komsomol work, and that the claimed militant character of the Komsomol as the helper and junior partner of the Party is often sheer rhetoric.

Some of these signs are to be found in the widespread lack of discipline amongst personnel, the lack of interest both in military and political studies, the tendency of many to drop out of Komsomol activities or even go off the membership rolls entirely. The military press also carries innumerable stories about "the significant number of Komsomol members who have been violating military discipline." In one subsection, for example, 24 penalties were handed out to personnel within a brief period.⁸³ In another organization, only one out of 12 members turned up for a meeting, while in another battalion organization, not a single meeting was held during the entire year of 1947.⁸⁴ Complaints about the low grades in study achieved by members have been very frequent, and usually these are accompanied by charges that the Komsomol's political-enlightenment work is poorly organized, that its leaders lack sufficient theoretical knowledge and are badly trained, and that propaganda directed at the membership is inadequate or out of touch with the needs of youth.⁸⁵

Training Members

Like the Communist Party, the Komsomol uses a triple system to train its members: formal study of the Bolshevik ideology, fulfillment of special assignments, and participation in intra-organizational activities. In each area, the methods used are familiar ones on the Soviet scene.

Heavy stress is placed on the study of the official doctrines of the Party and the Komsomol leaders.⁸⁶ This is planned and directed by the professional political workers, in accordance with specific directives from the MPA and following the general instructions of the Party Central Committee.⁸⁷

The major stages of formal ideological training include the following: detailed analysis and memorization of the statutes and regulations of the Komsomol, compulsory for all new recruits; an elementary political course, directed by the primary Komsomol organization, in which members who have not had secondary education learn about the Soviet system and the USSR Constitution; enrollment in circles studying the biographies of Lenin and Stalin; and finally, group and independent study of *The Short Course* and other Marxist-Leninist literature.⁸⁸ The most characteristic form of training is the study of the Lenin and Stalin biographies. One estimate in 1950 indicated that almost 2 million young people throughout the Soviet were studying these under Komsomol auspices; and there are hundreds of such study circles for soldiers in each of the military districts.⁸⁹

For those members who are particularly energetic or who have had college training, advanced study of Marxism is expected. Like their Communist brethren, these "independent" students must be kept under careful control and supervision by the political workers and Party leaders. The latter are expected to consult with them on their problems, give them special talks, and report on their progress to the appropriate authorities. In addition, the Komsomol leaders are called to attend special lectures and study conferences especially designed for young military commanders who belong to the Komsomol.⁹⁰

Practical training for the members means assigning them to give talks, to lead recreational circles in sports and music, to help the Communists prepare each unit's wall-newspaper and leaflets, and to care for the Company Rooms of Political Enlightenment. Finally, the Komsomol branches and groups carry on the usual organizational business, including the planning and execution of busy propaganda programs. They are expected to utilize fully the educational possibilities of the Komsomol meetings, under the supervision of the Party and of the political workers.⁹¹

These official assemblies sometimes restrict attendance to the Komsomol members of one particular organization, but more frequently they are open to all soldiers as a means of acquainting the nonmembers with the ideals and activities of the Komsomol.⁹² One defector states that closed meetings are rare occurrences, and they usually are called, not to transmit secret information, but to discuss certain types of personal affairs and public behavior of members such as drunkenness, destruction of machinery, serious bungling, and the like.⁹³

Preparations for the open meetings are carefully made, and they usually are built around a single theme of political or military importance to the Komsomol. The following are typical themes of such meetings: "To Serve the Fatherland Is a Great Honor," "Our Generation Shall Live under Communism," "Why We Love Our Fatherland," or "Strengthen Discipline, Like Komsomol Member Brukstud."⁹⁴ Arrangements are made in advance of each meeting for those who are to speak or give reports at the meeting, as well as for the resolution to be adopted at its close. The resolution, of course, is supposed to be specific in subject matter, but inspiring in its wording, so that the members will feel "impelled to bring the resolution into realization."⁹⁵ The propaganda objectives of such meetings are obvious.⁹⁶

Komsomol members are, of course, exposed to all the various propaganda programs which beset all the other rank-and-file members of the armed forces, such as the talks by agitators and propagandists, excursions to historic sites, and other activities of the libraries, clubs, and Rooms of Political Enlightenment. A few types of educational-propaganda activities are designed especially for Komsomol and youth audiences, although not exclusively so. These include the public Komsomol-youth lectures, which, as their name indicates, are lectures on general themes of interest to the masses of youth or on subjects touching upon their theoretical studies.⁹⁷ Less formal in performance are the "Komsomol-youth evenings," usually organized by the *buro* of a battalion organization. The agenda of these may have such diverse subjects as the eyewitness accounts of an excursion to a great public project being erected under the Five-Year Plan, an illustrated talk by an officer on the superiority of Soviet tanks over all others in the world, or stories about the war told by veterans.⁹⁸

In addition to this training process for the membership, the branch officers and other Komsomol leaders are placed under special pressures. Among other things, they are required to devote much more time than their followers to intensive drill in the Party doctrines, which may mean attendance at one of the many schools.⁹⁹ They are urged, for example, to attend a divisional Party School for Activists, or to go to the Komsomol special short training course, which operates after training hours on days fixed by the political sections.¹⁰⁰

Training in the practical aspects of Komsomol leadership usually is handled at seminars organized by the political organs for all the leaders at each particular level in the regiments. Frequently such gatherings extend over a period of three days, and may include lectures and reports by important political and Party personages, as well as exchanges of experiences by those in attendance. These training seminars also present an opportunity to acquaint the Komsomol officials with new resolutions of the Party and the Central Committee, and with the directives from higher political organs.¹⁰¹ Sometimes conferences are summoned by the Political Administration of a district, or the political section of an army, to discuss Komsomol problems and political education of the youth; and in effect, these affairs perform a training function for the Komsomol leaders who attend them.¹⁰²

Special series of lectures may be organized by any one of the Komsomol organizations, or of the Houses of Officers, on its own initiative—with the approval of the political section. One battalion held four lectures to assist those members who were leading circles in the study of *The Short Course*. These lectures dealt with *The Communist Manifesto*, two of Lenin's books, and the subject of "Stalin—the Great Continuer of Lenin's Work."¹⁰³ A far more ambitious lecture series, designed for activist audiences at the Kiev District House of Officers, included 23 lectures on the history of the USSR and 25 on military history, all of them within a period of six months.¹⁰⁴

Most important of all the training methods, of course, are the continuing inspection and close supervision given on the job to the Komsomol officials by officials from the divisional political section, especially the assistant chief of the political section in charge of Komsomol affairs, and by the Party officers. Their methods are the same as those used in the control of Communist Party branches.¹⁰⁵

Part VI

**PATTERNS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
DURING BATTLE CAMPAIGNS**

INTRODUCTION: PROPAGANDA OBJECTIVES DURING BATTLE CAMPAIGNS

Many functions are assigned to the political workers during the battle campaign. Their most pressing task, however, is to create and maintain what the Bolsheviks call "battle-passion" or "the aggressive outburst" in the Soviet soldiers (and to stifle this attitude in the enemy troops). These are oversimple but graphic terms used in reference to a complex set of emotional attitudes which the political workers seek to inculcate or intensify, an emotional set which helps the soldier to overcome, and even partially ignore, the hardships and dangers of the military campaign, and perform his duties without rebelling, and even with enthusiasm. In the Soviet view, the attitudes are composed, in part at least, of a high pitch of hatred and anger against the enemy, a desperate determination by each soldier to make his full contribution to the fulfillment of orders given his small unit, and an overriding confidence in the power and justice of his cause which will give him some personal protection and guarantee national victory.¹

The second of the major functions during the campaign period is concerned with the maintenance and intensification of approved political loyalties. The Soviet leaders have obviously regarded it as vitally important, even during the crisis of a battle campaign, to ensure the continuing support of the military personnel, as expressed through attitudes of reverence for, and loyalty to, the government, the Communist Party, and Stalin. The emotions of nationalism and patriotism have been utilized without qualms, of course, as illustrated by the methods of the periods before and during World War II. Even through the worst months of the war, when the Communist ideological themes were muted in the Army propaganda, praise of the government and Stalin continued. During the dark weeks in the autumn of 1941, for example, the figure of Stalin dominated the propaganda output, and much was made of his speech of November 7, through newspaper articles and editorials, talks and lectures, radio broadcasts, and film showings.

Finally, the political apparatus has a major function during the battle campaign which is part of the continuing and intensive effort to destroy the enemy units' cohesion, efficiency, and will to fight. Obviously, the political workers have a role to play in this over-all effort, although that role is less prominent and more-poorly supported than might have been expected if one were to have judged on the basis of the Bolsheviks' self-advertised pride in their ability to influence a foreign audience.

In reviewing the techniques used to fulfill these three important functions, it is necessary to keep in mind a number of basic aspects of the propaganda situ-

ation which affect the application of the techniques. Above all, these aspects influence the types of results ultimately achieved by the Soviets—although it must be frankly stated that American analysts have little basis for judging those results.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the situation in which the political apparatus must operate is the sense of pressure which all Soviet citizens must feel, whether inside or outside the armed forces. Each knows, or believes he knows, that he is watched constantly and will be punished for any failure to fulfill his mission, or for any lack of enthusiasm and intensiveness in performing his duties. He is constantly exhorted to provide the greatest possible contribution to the Soviet cause, regardless of danger to himself, and with no concern for time limitations or other limiting conditions under which he works. He himself is forced to exert the same type of pressure upon the people about him, if he has any subordinates or colleagues upon whom he might wield such influence. The importance of this sense of pressure can not be overestimated.

A basic aspect of the propaganda activity of the political apparatus is the constantly reiterated theme that no real alternative exists to the Soviet political system and to complete compliance with the demands of that system. Not only is the enemy painted in the darkest possible colors (a process which the Nazis assisted by acting almost as badly as the propagandists said they would), but every effort is made to convince the Soviet soldier that he has absolutely no alternative to the Soviet system (however bad he may feel it is), to its leadership, its armed forces, or to the position in which he finds himself within the armed forces. Not only does he feel pressure to do his job, not only are the alternatives painted in the most reprehensible terms, but the individual is assured that bitter punishment will follow any failure to perform the tasks assigned to him. He knows about the secret police, the "block-the-way" detachments, the system of internal passports, and other controls on travel; and he hears about the concentration camps, on-the-spot shootings, and other matters that make acute his sense of fear and his belief that he must carry out his orders under all circumstances without thinking of rebellion or alternative actions.

Another aspect of the propaganda system which the Bolsheviks apparently regard as highly significant is the demand for model behavior and imitation. The Kremlin rulers are convinced that most individuals will do anything if they believe that the people about them are doing it and if models of the desired action are shown by men near them. Thus, the members of every possible special group are under the most intense and continuing pressure to provide examples of proper behavior; and these groups include the Communist and Komsomol members, the officers and noncommissioned officers, the agitators and propagandists, the veterans, the Russians, and the non-Russians. Each man of these groups is told that he is being watched, that his behavior will seriously affect the actions of others, and that he must therefore demonstrate a type of behavior far superior to that demanded of ordinary citizens. Coupled with this demand for exemplariness (a favorite Soviet word) is a most intensive campaign to publicize deeds of heroism and examples of approved behavior, and demands that all soldiers imitate those individuals performing these exploits. The object apparently is not only to get the last ounce of service from those men who have active senses of responsibility and desire praise, but to persuade others that they have no decent alternatives but to follow the lead of their own comrades.

Another fundamental of propaganda operations is concerned with the individual's concepts about the trend of events and their ultimate conclusions. There is a vigorous and never-ending campaign to convince each soldier that the armed forces, and the nation and regime behind them, are invincible. They may suffer temporary defeats, but Soviet power and strength are so overwhelming that victory is inevitable; clues and indications are brought to his attention to support this view. Thus, there is a concentrated effort to provide each soldier with a sense of confidence and power when he acts in accordance with Soviet orders and demands, supplemented by a feeling that harsh punishment and ultimate defeat will be his lot if he fails to do his duty or acts against the directives of his military and political leaders.

One final aspect of the propaganda situation should be noted. It is the task of the political apparatus to achieve results. It must secure the execution of the Kremlin's plans, and it strives to meet this heavy obligation by using appeals helpful to the Soviet cause. There is little restraint exerted on the appeals by logic, consistency, truth, or other such considerations. There may be simultaneous appeals in the propaganda output and political methods which are based on Communist ideology, patriotism, chauvinism, fear, group loyalty, or the individual's desire for glory and praise. There are limits, of course, to the choice of appeals, but these are much fewer in number and far less restrictive to action than are true in the case of propagandists in any other armed force.

Chapter 17

OPERATIONS DURING A MILITARY CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE PREPARATIONS

POLITICAL ORGANS AND POLITICAL WORKERS

According to Soviet doctrine, success in any political campaign requires a series of steps, each carried out with efficiency and enthusiasm. It requires careful planning of the main lines to be followed, timely issuance of directives which must reach selected audiences, speedy and determined fulfillment of the directives followed by immediate checking of results and correction of errors and deficiencies, and a steady flow of intelligence concerning significant aspects of the situation which are to become the bases of new directives. All these steps must be taken by the apparatus or organization responsible for conducting the political campaign, but the apparatus must be supported by the efforts of a large number of agents who work continuously and intensively to influence every individual in the audience to think and do as the leaders plan (in the Army's political apparatus, these agents are called "agitators"). In the armed forces, this complex process is assigned to the MPA and its subordinate agencies and personnel. This chapter seeks to trace, insofar as available data permit, the steps taken on each of the levels in that political apparatus during a military campaign.

It is necessary to begin by stating frankly that reliable data are not available concerning the basic plans which must control such campaigns. It appears highly likely that the basic plans for propaganda operations are made in the Kremlin during any crisis period, and that directives are sent out to govern the execution of such plans among the industrial, agrarian, military, and other population sectors of the USSR. It is noteworthy, for example, that during World War II, a Politburo member (Alexander Shcherbakov) was assigned to direct the execution of political and propaganda plans among key audiences, and he was placed in direct charge of the MPA, of the Soviet Information Bureau (which controlled much of the propaganda issued for civilian and foreign audiences), and of the Moscow organization of the Communist Party.

MPA Activities

The propaganda and political operations in a Soviet military campaign presumably begin when the basic plans for war propaganda, written in the Kremlin, are received by the MPA. These are probably supplemented and spelled out for

the military audience by the MPA's own plans and by numerous directives which it sends down through the hierarchy of political organs in the headquarters of the military districts (or fronts), armies, divisions, and regiments, and parallel units in the various service arms. Each of these political organs makes its own plans based on the directives sent to it.

An example of the type of basic instructions concerning the main propaganda lines which the MPA issues may be found in a directive issued to the organs of the armed forces shortly after war began in 1941. After a brutally frank statement concerning the shortcomings of the political apparatus (which is quoted elsewhere in this chapter), the MPA chief wrote:

For the conduct of political propaganda in the Red Army, it is recommended that:

1. All members of the Army must be given a deep explanation of the perfidious and robber character of the German attack. It must be shown that the Fascist attack is a foreign invasion, against which the entire Soviet people is rising to a Patriotic War, as in the year of 1918. Every Red Army man must understand that the fate of the Soviet power is being determined on the battlefield. Our weapons shall decide whether the peoples of the Soviet Union shall remain free or shall be slaves of German princes and barons.

It must be made clear every day that Hitler and his gang are executing a long-held plan for a field campaign in the East, with the aim of pillaging Soviet Russia, Soviet Belorussia, and the Soviet Ukraine, in order to destroy the Slavic peoples, to take away our bread, to drown our country and homeland in blood. Hitler is the sworn enemy of the Russian and other Slavic peoples. He has said that the Slavic peasants would be pushed from the land and turned into landless proletarians, and that only Germans had the right to be owners of the great estates in the entire Eastern territories. A land which will be owned by a foreign race must become a land of slaves. Hitler hates in a bestial fashion the Slavic peoples and particularly the Russian peoples.

It is to be made clear to mankind that the blitzkrieg prepared by Hitler has failed. The best Fascist divisions have been destroyed and the Red Army's self-sacrificing defense of the Soviet land has inflicted heavy damage on the enemy. The aggressive spirit must be maintained in each individual, he must be educated to an irreconcilable hatred against the enemy, with a firm determination to smash the Fascist monster and to sweep it off the face of the earth, and with readiness to struggle for each inch of the Soviet land to the last drop of blood.

2. With actual examples, there should be shown the bestial conduct of the Fascists toward their prisoners, toward the peace-loving populace, and toward the families of the commanders and Red Army men.
3. The personnel shall be given a daily report on the situation at the front. There shall be propaganda of battle experience. The heroic warriors shall be popularized, as well as the commanders and political workers who have distinguished themselves in battle. The entire personnel is to be educated in the spirit of complete execution of the soldier's oath and in the feeling of responsibility for the Homeland and for the accomplishment of the soldier's duty.
4. The infantrymen, artillerymen and tank troops are to be instructed in the military arts and in defense against enemy planes and tanks. . . [Stress to be placed on need for courage and skill.]
5. A constant effort must be made to make clear to the men that those who leave their position without orders are committing a crime. It is to be demanded from the commanders that, in conformity with Point 7 of the Disciplinary Regulations, they must use their weapons when necessary.¹

[Points 6-14 called for vigilance against enemy agents and training in methods of exposure; for intensified military training; for propaganda to convince military units cut off by the enemy that they can do much damage behind the enemy's lines; for popularization of heroism and military skill by the Army press; for improved delivery of printed propaganda; for intensified propaganda operations among the enemy troops, especially with newspapers and radio; for improvement of information methods at all levels of the political apparatus; for exemplary conduct by Communists and Komsomol members; and for improvement of the conduct of political workers, who must spend more time in the fighting units, and take their responsibilities with more seriousness, showing more initiative and better cooperation.]

By means of such directives, the MPA (working probably on instructions from the Kremlin) sets the main course and content of political work during the campaign or war. Such policy and content directives are followed by various measures intended to ensure the fullest possible execution of these policies and the most efficient operation of the political apparatus in the armed forces. Here again the initial guidance comes from the Kremlin, acting in the name of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The top civilian agencies of the Party issue organizational directives and operational instructions, convene conferences of political officials in all sectors of life, receive detailed and regular reports from all Party organizations including those in the armed forces, and send their own individual and group representatives into the field to check the information in these reports and to examine the state of the Party machine. The effects of these organizational activities upon the political apparatus of the armed forces were illustrated during World War II by: the changes in the types and positions of the lower political workers, including the abolition of the professional political workers on the company level; the restoration and later abolition of the military commissar; the changes in the requirements for admission of military personnel to the Communist Party; and the alterations in the structure of the Communist Party cell (or primary Party organization) which moved it from the regimental level to the battalion level.

In its turn, the MPA takes an active part in supervising the operations of the political units subordinate to it by transmitting the directives of the civilian Party agencies, overseeing their execution, and taking its own measures to gather information on and to improve the activities of the political personnel. An illustration of its direct concern with organizational and operational matters is to be found in the previously quoted directive, which was later captured by German troops. In analyzing the situation in the early part of the war, the head of the MPA wrote:

The experience in the first three weeks of the war with Fascist Germany has shown that the necessary purposefulness, alertness, initiative and intelligence has been lacking in our Party-political and agitational-propaganda work.

Many workers of the political organs and many deputy commanders for political affairs have shown a preference for their offices and are seldom among the troops; they are ineffective in combatting improper organization, confusion, panic, undisciplined action, and criminal lack of vigilance.

The Communists and Komsomol members often fail to show in themselves models of immovable courage in battle, have little of the ardor of the warrior and commander against the panic-monger, the coward and the deserter.

There has been little effort to popularize battle experience, and the same is true of the examples of courage and heroism, of initiative and cleverness, of persistence and

endurance, of comradesly aid on the battlefield. The military press has devoted itself to one-sided illumination of the deeds of heroism and courage, and forgets the political and military nourishment of personal endurance.

The political organs are not working actively enough in the selection of cadres, especially in the line of command, and communication, and this decreases the level of efficiency in the rear zones, among the operating units and troops, and among the enemy.²

In consequence, presumably, direct orders were given and measures taken to improve this situation and eradicate these operational weaknesses.

Illustrative of the type of specific instructions which followed the analysis of the situation was a directive issued by the MPA in the last part of 1941. It was received by the Political Administration of the Western Front, which was in charge of political operations among the troops defending Moscow. In typical Soviet fashion the directive was entitled "On the Liquidation of Neglect in Oral Propaganda and Agitation." The instructions presumably had a twofold purpose: to correct a growing tendency of the political workers to pass over Communist propaganda and ideological appeals and to concentrate on nationalist and patriotic themes; and to call attention again to the need for concrete and purposeful propaganda directly connected with the concerns and interests of the military personnel.³

Such broad directives represent, of course, only one aspect of the command methods used to transmit the orders of the Kremlin and to secure their proper execution. Group and individual staff members are sent out from the MPA, to give on-the-spot orders and to receive reports, and extensive formal reports are received daily from the political administrations directing propaganda operations on each front and in each military district.⁴ Highly important, also, are the instructions, analyses, and criticisms which are printed regularly in the organs of the MPA in such newspapers as *Red Star* and *Red Fleet*, and in special magazines such as *Party-Political Work in the Red Army* and *Agitator and Propagandist of the Soviet Army*. It is noteworthy that F. F. Kuznetsov, chief of the MPA, was assigned to edit one of the latter publications before World War II.

Another important line of communication and instruction between the MPA and the political workers in the field is through special types of pamphlets and related printed forms. Through these media, the MPA sets forth subjects to discuss among the troops, the data to present about these subjects, the order of presentation of the data,⁵ and the points to emphasize. An example of an explicit statement issued for the political workers is found in one pamphlet of a series entitled *In Aid to the Politruks*. (*Politruks*, or political guides, were junior political officers in this period.)⁶ In the opening section of the pamphlet are the following instructions:

Methodological Instructions

The task of the *politruk* and agitator is to inspire the Red Army men and junior commanders to military exploits, to nourish the personnel of the unit in the spirit of unshakable faith in our victory and the inevitable destruction of the Hitlerite robber-army.

In this brochure are collected materials from the central newspapers which tell of the victory of the Red Army troops in the liberation of the city of Kaluga on December 30, 1941.

In talking with the Red Army men and the junior commanders on the subject of this brochure, each *politruk* and agitator is obligated to utilize extensively appropriate military experience from his unit, from materials of the life of his military formation, and to popularize the warriors, commanders and political workers who have distinguished themselves in the battles with the German aggressors.

Basic attention during the time of the talk must be concentrated on the following points:

1. "The enemy is not as strong as he is portrayed by some frightened intellectuals. The devil is not as terrible as they paint him" (Stalin). The Red Army has destroyed the legend of the Hitlerite propagandists about the "invincibility" of the German Army.

2. In the bitter battles with the larger forces of the enemy, the Red Army held the opponent and went over into the offensive on the most important areas of the front. One of the chief results of the battles is that the initiative has been transferred to us. Now, in many areas, we and not the Germans will decide the course of battle, subject the enemy to our will, force him to flee, thus destroying his plans and calculations.

3. In order not to lose the initiative, and to smash the German invaders immediately, it is necessary:

a) Everywhere to anticipate the enemy, to utilize maneuvers widely, to act boldly and decisively, advancing forward, without being distracted by the fulfillment of tasks of secondary importance.

b) By sudden blows in the flanks and in the rear, to defeat the plans of the enemy, to destroy and capture his military materials, to destroy mercilessly his manpower, to drive the enemy machines and manpower from the roads and into the snowy fields and woods.

c) To pursue the enemy persistently without permitting him to recover, to disorganize his troops, to disrupt his communication and to upset his internal administration.

4. Do not be deluded by the successes that have been attained. Remember always that the foe is still not destroyed, that bitter battles are yet to come in which we expect decisive victory over the German-Fascist invaders.

5. Our forces are growing, new reserves are flowing into our ranks each day. Behind us is the Soviet land. The great Stalin is leading the Red Army to victory, to the destruction of the weakened enemy. We must triumph, we have the forces to triumph-- and we shall triumph.

6. Our task is to dispatch the enemy, and not to permit him to recover. The obligation and duty of each warrior of the Red Army is to cast aside fear in the struggle with the accursed aggressors, to be contemptuous of death in the name of victory over the hated foe, to destroy without mercy the German occupiers, and to show shrewdness, boldness, and initiative in battle.⁷

Another type of instruction is provided through special leaflets which indicate the themes of talks to be given to small groups of military personnel by agitators on the platoon level. Typical of these is a bulletin issued during World War II, entitled "In Aid to the Agitator." Two issues, Bulletins No. 2 and No. 3 of March 1942, are available, and both are devoted to topics familiar to those concerned with Soviet propaganda in the armed forces: the military oath taken by each new serviceman; and the need to safeguard and preserve military property. Each bulletin is printed on both sides of one page; each contains about one thousand words; and each is preceded by "methodological instructions" which emphasize the obligation to intersperse the talk with "concrete examples from the life of the small unit."⁸

Political Organs on the Middle Levels

While the MPA in Moscow transmits the general political strategy determined in the Kremlin, and indicates the basic propaganda and organizational lines to be taken in execution of that strategy throughout the armed forces, the Military Councils and their Political Administrations in each military district (including a group of armies or fleet of ships) have direct responsibility for the execution of military and political campaigns in their own areas. Thus, the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet was responsible for all military and political operations connected with the defense of Sevastopol in 1941-42; this responsibility included political work among the naval personnel, Air Forces, Army units, and civil population, as well as propaganda directed against the enemy forces.⁹ In accordance with such a responsibility, the Military Council (and the Political Administration which serves it) obtains all available information on the situation, receives the strategic policies from the Kremlin, determines the political plans for its campaign, issues the basic appeals and proclamations, sets the propaganda tone for the lower political bodies, and supervises their operations on all political matters.¹⁰ Examples of the performance of these functions can be found in many places.

At the end of October 1941, as the struggle for the Crimea began in earnest, the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet opened the political work of the defense campaign by issuing the following appeal to all military personnel under its command:

COMRADES RED NAVY MEN, RED ARMY MEN, COMMANDERS, AND POLITICAL WORKERS OF THE BLACK SEA FLEET!

The enemy has succeeded in breaking into the Crimea. The brutal Fascist pack of Hitlerite bandits, exerting all its power, is striving to capture our own Sevastopol--the chief base of the Black Sea Fleet.

Comrades Black Sea men!

In this terrible hour, we must close our ranks even more for the destruction of the enemy at the approaches to Sevastopol.

Do not admit the enemy to our own city!

We Black Sea men consider sacred the military traditions of the heroic Sevastopol defense, the traditions of the sailors who gave their life for the cause of the Socialist Revolution. These military traditions found their clear expression in heroic deeds, in fearless exploits of the militant sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, who gave a crushing blow to the savage Fascist bands.

All of us know the names of the glorious sailors of the Black Sea Fleet--Colonel Osipov, Helmsman Shcherbakhi, the great fliers Tsursumiya, Agagonova, and Shubinikov, Scout Nicheperenko, Political Workers Mitrakov and Khmel'nitski, ship's machinist Grebennikov and many other true patriots of the homeland, who have been glorified in the present Fatherland War. Their exploits call us to new victories, to new heroic deeds for the glory of the homeland.

Comrades Red Fleet men, Red Army men, Commanders, and Political Workers! The existence of this new and terrible danger must multiply tenfold our forces. Rally even more strongly about the Party of Lenin-Stalin! Let us mobilize our Bolshevik vigilance for the merciless struggle with saboteurs, spies, cowards, deserters, and the disseminators of panicky rumors.

Strengthen military discipline and organization, fight steadfastly for each foot of our soil! Let us give the enemy a mighty blow! Not a step backward! The more stubbornly we resist in battle, the closer the hour of destruction of the enemy!

Each warrior, commander, and political worker must fight with the enemy to the last drop of blood, to the last breath.

Comrade warriors, commanders, and political workers of the marines! Fight steadfastly against the evil and insidious enemy. Do not fear the Fascist tanks and planes. The bold and agile warrior is not afraid of the tank and the plane. Destroy the tanks with all means available to you, smash them as the glorious battery commander Zalk destroys them.

Sailors of the Navy! Smash the Fascist bandits with the accurate aim of your mighty artillery; aid the sailors struggling with the enemy in the battles on shore.

Stalinist falcons—fliers of the Black Sea Fleet! With the crushing storm of metal, smash the enemy tanks, artillery, and infantry. Strike the Fascist carrion, courageously defend our city from the enemy forces!

Artillery men of the coast and antiaircraft artillery! Your fire must be accurate and devastating. Without any misses, smash the Fascist dogs!

Sailors of the Black Sea Fleet! Fight like the warriors of the Red Army are fighting on the approaches to Moscow, like the glorious sailors of Kronstadt are fighting on the peninsula of Khabkha and on the approaches to Leningrad. Remember that the stronger your blows are against the enemy, the closer is victory and the destruction of the Fascist horde.

Comrades! The Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet is confident that you, as true patriots of your mother, our homeland, will smash at the enemy even more strongly and selflessly.

Smash the Fascist bands without mercy!

For the Soviet Motherland, for the great Stalin, Forward to Victory!

Commander of the Black Sea Fleet
Rear Admiral F. Oktyabrski
Member of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet
Divisional Commissar N. Kulakov
Member of Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet
Divisional Commissar I. Azorov¹¹

Appeals and calls of this type become the basis of intensive propaganda which reaches down through every level of the military forces and is used with all media. In the 1941-42 defense of Moscow, for example, an appeal to stand firm was made on 19 October 1941, and it became the subject of numerous talks, meetings, newspaper articles, leaflets, placards and slogans, employed in every division, regiment, battalion, and company.¹² In the case of the Stalingrad campaign, two Orders of the Day, issued by the Military Council of the Front, ended in the call: "Not a Step Backward!" This slogan was made the central theme of the entire defensive phase of that bitter campaign, repeated innumerable times, and presented in a great variety of ways.¹³

The political organs on the middle levels, working from the headquarters of the Front and the army, also provide organizational leadership to the subordinate levels in the political apparatus during the military campaign. The programs for political work in the front-line and other units must be established on the basis of, and in line with, the plans and requirements established by the front Political Administration or army political section.¹⁴ Numerous and frequent directives are sent down the line of authority to supplement these plans, and even more numerous reports on the execution of the plans and directives are received.¹⁵ These organizational functions clearly revealed when special situations arise which require extraordinary action. When it becomes evident during a battle, or within a campaign period, that "an especially difficult situation has developed" in a

particular unit, or that the political workers of that unit cannot cope with the situation, a group of plenipotentiaries are sent to the unit to assist in remedying the situation.¹⁶

The "military baptism" of a new division or regiment provides another occasion for special organizational measures by the middle political organs. During the Moscow defense campaign, the Political Administration of the Western Front was informed that a new motorized division was being sent into its jurisdiction. A team of 20 political workers was sent to meet it en route to its front-line assignment. The team made a series of studies of the new unit, examining the command staff in the political offices, the general level of the political training of the military personnel, and the condition of arms, military supplies, and uniforms throughout the division. Following these studies, and utilizing the information achieved through them, an intensive program of propaganda was launched to explain the future tasks of the division and the situation at the front, to analyze the tactics of the German troops, and to impart the best tactical methods and experience to the men in each unit of the new division.¹⁷

The Zampolits

At the level of the regiments and below, the *zampolits* (deputy commanders for political affairs) and *pompolits* (assistant commanders for political affairs, usually found on the company level) are the instrumentalities of the MPA political workers dealing directly with the military personnel and directing the agitators and other auxiliaries working among the soldiers. These political officials are the ultimate executors of the Kremlin's plans for political work, and they have very heavy responsibilities in a number of important areas as they make political preparations for a military campaign.

Characteristic of the operations of most Soviet officials, one of the first tasks of the *zampolit* is to draw up and obtain approval for a plan of future activities. This is based on the instructions given to the *zampolit* by his superiors, and is usually made two weeks in advance of being put into practice. A series of such plans, used for the political work in an aviaional regiment by Major Micheev, deputy regimental commander for political affairs, was captured by the German troops during World War II, and it gives us some concept of the specific tasks undertaken in a nonbattle period. One of these, for the period 1-15 February 1944, contains the following measures:

1. Talks in explanation of the report given by (Finance Commissar) Zverev before the Supreme Soviet—to be given by Party Organizers in each of the escadrilles (1 February);
2. For the aerial gunners: Talk on the Supreme Soviet report of Zverev, to be given by *zampolit* Micheev (2 February);
3. Assembly of aerial gunners, with the theme of "Recollections of the Battle of Stalingrad," led by an assistant of the *zampolit* (2 February);
4. An evening program for the officers, in celebration of the Red Army Victory at Stalingrad, led by the *zampolit* and another of his assistants (2 February);
5. Film showing for the flying personnel (2 February);

6. Meetings and political talks in the escadrilles, led by the escadrille commanders, on the theme "The Heroic Fighting of Our Regiment at Stalingrad" (3 February);
7. a) For the flying personnel: Study of the history of the Sixteenth Air Army (3 February) led by *zampolit* Micheev;
b) For the mechanics and other technical personnel: a film showing (3 February);
8. Seminar for the agitators: "The Supreme Soviet Session of the State Budget" (4 February) led by *zampolit* Micheev;
9. Learning of the state hymn (presumably by all hands), 4 February, led by an assistant of the *zampolit*;
10. For the Komsomol members: Meeting of the *buero* of the Komsomol regimental organization on the theme "How the Activist Must Behave on Duty" (5 February), led by *zampolit's* assistant;
11. Komsomol assembly: Discussion of the theme "The Battle-Traditions of the Komsomol of our Unit" (6 February), led by a *zampolit* assistant and the Party Organizers of each escadrille;
12. Learning of the state hymn, in the escadrilles (6 February), led by the Party Organizers in the escadrilles;
13. Talk on the contents of the world press in January 1944 (6 February), led by *zampolit* Micheev;
14. Conference of all Party Organizers and all members of the Party *bueros*, in preparation for periodic accounting meeting of all Communist Party organizations (8 February), led by *zampolit* Micheev;
15. A general lecture and discussion of the report by Molotov, "They Struggle for Their Fatherland" (9 February), led by five officers;
16. Lecture for the flying personnel of the regiment: "Vigilance as a Means of Victory for the Red Army," led by *zampolit* Micheev (10 February);
17. Organization and arrangements for graphic propaganda (10 February) by assistants of *zampolit* Micheev;
18. Learning of the state hymn (10 February);
19. For the flying personnel: Discussion of the history of the division, to be carried out in each escadrille, under the leadership of the escadrille leader (10 February);
20. Seminar for the editors of front newspapers (and probably wall-newspapers), discussing establishment of their program, compilation of the newspapers, choice of articles, meetings with correspondents (11 February), led by a *zampolit* assistant;
21. Seminar for the agitators of the troops units, and learning of the state hymn (11 February), led by the Party Organizers of the escadrilles;
22. A talk on "Lenin and Stalin as Organizers of the Red Army" (12 February), led by a *zampolit* assistant;
23. Assembly of all flying personnel on the theme: "The History of our Regiment and Its Heroic Deeds during the Fatherland War" (13 February), led by a *zampolit* assistant;
24. Talks on the Molotov report "They Struggle for Their Fatherland" (13 February), led by the agitators in the escadrilles;
25. Study of the new statute about the military orders of "Glory" and "The Patriotic War" and of the conditions under which these orders are awarded (14 February), led by a *zampolit* assistant;

26. Officer training on the theme "Wherein Lies the Strength of the Soviet State" (15 February), led by *zampolit* Micheev.¹⁸

In submitting this plan, Major Micheev noted that it contained six hours of the official political training (herein devoted to a discussion of the recent session of the Soviet parliament) and eight hours of political work on themes selected by the divisional political section.

Thus, in a relatively quiet period, as the regiment prepared for future military action, the *zampolit* and his assistants were to give some fifteen talks in fourteen days—reaching repeatedly the lower personnel in the small units, the aerial gunners, officers, and the flying personnel. Of equal importance are the indications of the *zampolit's* supervision of the network of auxiliary groups and individuals who supplemented his own work: his instructions to the agitators who talked to small informal groups on every possible occasion; the arrangements for posters and other graphic propaganda (probably made by selected Komsomol people); the seminar with those in charge of the newspapers and leaflets; and the supervision of planning for meetings of the Communists and Komsomol members (in which the latter would receive special propaganda and instructions for their own efforts to influence the nonmembers). In addition to all this, during these two weeks, there were to be informal talks by agitators, two film showings, issues of newspapers and leaflets, and study of the new state hymn and of the regulations for new medals and orders.

This glimpse of the political operations, planned at the lower levels of the political apparatus for execution among the troops of a regiment, relates to a period of relatively stable conditions, in which any future military activity will take place under conditions similar to those in the past, for which the men have been prepared by previous activity. The press of the political apparatus contains information concerning plans made for other types of units soon to operate under different conditions—for a division preparing to participate in the defense of a city, for a crew soon to go out on convoy duty, or for a large formation to contain units from several service arms.¹⁹ In each case, the *zampolit* is given some inkling of the military plans and also some instructions from his political superiors, and he is expected to plan in accordance with both.

These duties often require that the *zampolit* provide active assistance in the military preparation of the unit. He or his subordinate will check on the organization and condition of communications, on supplies, on the care of machines and technical equipment, and on the food and other provisions for the needs of the men—responsibilities which are usually left to nonpolitical officials in other armies. Moreover, he himself will undergo some military training, since he may well be given some military tasks during the coming battle, and will help train the servicemen in their military duties. He will attend conferences and classes on military problems and will work out programs, usually calling for special pamphlets and small classes, for teaching the men the special skills needed under the conditions envisaged in the future campaign: how to cross a river; how to charge the enemy dug in on a mountain side; and how to cooperate with units from other military services. The need for the political worker's own military training is obvious, and considerable stress is placed on this during the preparatory period of the campaign.²⁰

The core of the *zampolit's* duties, of course, lies clearly in the political sphere. He must put his own political organization in order, selecting men to act

as agitators, dealing with the junior military officers who will be assigned some political duties, giving all who are used as propagandists some training in the art, providing all his subordinates with approved materials for their talks and other work, and supervising the political work being carried out in this preparatory period.²¹ The *zampolit* also participates in the operations and preparations of the Party and Komsomol organizations in his unit, helps to plan their current propaganda and their future utilization in battle periods, supervises the execution of plans by their leaders and *buros*, and takes an active part in the recruiting and assignment of new members.²² Finally, the political officer must take a continuing study of the personnel in his unit, and of the effect on them of his measures and the conditions under which they are living. He spends a considerable part of his day in preparing reports on these matters to the political offices supervising his work, and in submitting for approval plans designed to exploit favorable circumstances and remove difficulties.²³

COMMUNIST AND KOMSOMOL ORGANIZATIONS

A major aspect of preparatory operations for the battle period concerns the membership of the Communist and Komsomol branches in the military units. These operations are important, of course, if only because more than half of the military personnel belong to these organizations even in peacetime, but they have special significance for several other reasons. The Soviet leaders try to entice or pressure the most influential men to join these organizations, and then hold the members responsible for exerting the desired influence on the attitudes and actions of their fellow soldiers through their own personal examples. Moreover, the members are considered the people most responsive to political and emotional appeals, already committed by their very membership in these organizations to complete loyalty to the regime and to self-sacrifice for its interests. The early period of the campaign, before battle begins, is therefore considered the period in which the Communists and Komsomol members must be prepared for their battle tasks, and their sense of responsibility must be developed and maintained.

Securing "Full-Blooded" Organizations in Key Units

Although the officials of the political apparatus never make a secret of the importance assigned to Communist and Komsomol groups during all other periods, a really extraordinary amount of attention is devoted in the preparatory period of a military campaign to securing an increased percentage of Communists (and Komsomol members, to a lesser extent) in the front-line units and at other vital places. Virtually every Soviet analysis of the political work performed in specific military campaigns stresses this recruitment and reassignment of Communists as significant tasks necessary to what the Soviets call the creation of "full-blooded" organizations — the expanding of the lower branches and groups in the Communist structure, and the enlargement of the membership of the front-line branches into their largest possible membership.

The political apparatus seeks to build up the Communist strength in these front-line units at least to a proportion of two or three men in each platoon

of about 30 men, and eight or ten in each company with 100 or 110 men.²⁴ In fact, many tank units fighting on the Leningrad Front reported that more than half of their rank-and-file personnel were Communists or Komsomols, and many front-line battalions had Communist compositions of 70 percent in their attacking lines.²⁵ Several well-publicized units, such as the divisions of Major General Panfilov in the battle of Moscow and Major General Rodimtsev's unit in the 62nd Army in the battle for Stalingrad, reportedly contained only Communist officers and mostly Communist and Komsomol soldiers.²⁶

How is this increase in Communist strength at the front lines brought about? One obvious method is to supplement the number of Communists already in the armed forces by securing large-scale enlistment of civilian Communists. This was done in large numbers during World War II, as in Leningrad where 60 percent of the Communists, including the secretaries of 142 branches, went directly into the Red Army.²⁷ However, the several hundred thousand men available from this source were obviously insufficient to maintain the desired proportion of Party to non-Party people, in a military force of 10 or 12 million men. Additional sources had to be found.

Another source of new Communist membership in the military forces was the huge mass of non-Party Red Army men, particularly among the new officers and among the rank-and-file soldiers who were distinguishing themselves in battle. It was decided not merely to comb the mass of new recruits for persons who met the old Communist standards, but to find a large number of new members even if it necessitated lowering or changing the standards of selection, and to secure a continuing flow of new blood to ensure a high proportion of Communists in spite of heavy losses at the battlefield. It is significant that one of the most detailed and technical analyses of political work in a military campaign, made by a man who was to become deputy chief of the MPA, stressed as its first point the need for strengthening and expanding the Party and Komsomol organizations in the lower unit levels and at the front lines. In a later section of his analysis, this veteran political official returned to this subject to emphasize the importance of the task of fostering an "uninterrupted growth" of Party organizations through continuing recruitment, especially before and during major military campaigns.²⁸

The types of men sought in this continuing effort to expand the Communist membership included, of course, the men "with authority," those able to influence their fellow servicemen by example and word. The most obvious types sought in the recruiting before and during a military campaign were the men with courage and other attributes needed for successful accomplishment of military assignments. The political organs advised the Party branches particularly to look for "worthy and tested men," and praise the primary organizations which accept only "completely trusted people, who have distinguished themselves in battle..."²⁹ Illustrative of approved situations was one which took place, during the defense of Moscow, in a division in which 269 of the 321 men accepted into the Party had earned medals and orders for battle performance. In another division, 6 of the men inducted into the Party were heroes of the Soviet Union, 139 already possessed orders and medals, and 60 had been recently recommended for such recognition.³⁰

In order to secure this stream of recruits, the men distinguishing themselves in battle, or showing other desirable traits, were placed under constant

pressure to join the Party by the political workers and Party officers. They were apparently called in frequently for special interviews in which the arguments for applying for membership, especially for the rewards of Party membership, were gone over thoroughly. For those susceptible to such appeals, the Party was identified with the nation, and it was emphasized that true patriotism and anti-Fascism were closely related to the strong desire to join the membership. Among the most widely publicized legends used in this campaign were the stories of brave men asking, on the eve of crucial battles, to be permitted to join the ranks of the Party, so that their mothers could be told that they had fought as Communists when they died or were wounded.³¹ The Soviet leaders apparently believed that the dissemination of such legends was useful for their purposes.

An indication of the value placed on securing great numbers of new members was the series of steps taken by the national Party leadership to minimize formalities and red tape, heretofore cherished by the apparatus as signs of its great care to accept only the most qualified soldiers as members, and only after individual selection using careful admission procedures. Very soon after the beginning of the Soviet-World War II, the Central Committee of the CPSU issued a decree which permitted servicemen with distinguished fighting records to enter the Party on the recommendations of three Party members who had only one-year records of membership (as against the three-year record formerly required and later required), even if the sponsors had only known the applicants for less than a year.³² Moreover, men distinguishing themselves in battle could be voted to full membership after only three months of probation as candidates.³³

There was also a considerable speeding up of the processing of applications for membership. Formerly, each candidate had to appear before a meeting of the branch, in which the full membership heard, and many members participated in, a thorough questioning of and discussion about each applicant. In the prewar period, the file of the applicant was sent up to the divisional and army Party Commissions for review and analysis, and a report was sent on to Moscow. Now, however, it was declared permissible to have a brief meeting of the membership, or even of the branch officers, at which time a hasty interrogation might be made of the applicant and those recommending him: the approved application form might then be sent to a Party Commission in the nearby divisional headquarters for speedy processing. Throughout this process, the political organs were expected to put pressure on all people involved, especially upon the Party Commissions. The latter were told to keep in close touch with the branches in the front-line units, and to provide swift, efficient, and complete service.³⁵

These special efforts and the heavy pressure for new members had good results, in statistical terms at least. When the World War ended, there were millions of Communists in the armed forces, and over 80 percent of them had joined the Party from military units during the war.³⁶ In special operations, such as the Soviet offensive from Warsaw to Poznan in the latter part of the war, when the armies of the Belorussian Front were in action, more than twenty thousand men were accepted into the Party during the campaign.³⁷ During the Battle for Moscow, in the period of defense and counterattack, over fifteen thousand applications were received and acted upon in three months.³⁸ On lower levels, the Communist press reported that 204 men (in a division pre-

paring to force a river against the German defense) had joined in one day, while in a company preparing to go into an attack, the number of Communists was increased from 1 to 12 and the Komsomol membership jumped from 9 to 18.³⁹

Equal in importance to the task of increasing the total number of Communists in the armed forces is that of securing the best distribution of these men. Some inefficiency in Party operations arose from the fact that in the early part of World War II the branches were set up on the level of the regiment (which totaled about two thousand men). Many branches largely consisted of officers and headquarters personnel with an isolated Communist or two in each of the companies. In the early months of 1943, the national secretariat authorized a major change in the structure of the military sections of the Party. The branch or primary organization was placed at the level of the battalion (which had about five hundred men), and it was ordered to set up active sections at the company level, thus drawing its membership from units with about a hundred men. As a result, the front-line companies had ten or fifteen Communists among their personnel, all of them privates or noncommissioned officers who were now given a greater sense of involvement in Party affairs and responsibility for the execution of Party and military orders.⁴⁰

Finally, the political workers showed their authority in what appear to be military and Party affairs, by transferring men from one military unit to another, to assure that sufficient Communists were found in each company to make an active organization. In the 1945 campaign against the Japanese, the political organs checked the distribution of Communists and Komsomols, and made sure that no company was without effective Party and Komsomol organizations.⁴¹ In this and other campaigns, Communist soldiers were actually transferred from rear-line and service units to front-line infantry companies for this purpose.⁴² In the Battle for Moscow, the political workers were ordered to use the Party registers and to have all Communists not absolutely needed in the other units transferred to front-line companies.⁴³

Readying for Battle

The propaganda for the Communists during this preparatory period before battle stresses the basic requirements for Communists at all times. Again and again, members are reminded that they have special responsibilities calling for personal action above and beyond that demanded of non-Party people, demanding that they do anything required for victory even to sacrificing their own lives, requiring that they make themselves into models of conduct and bravery, and insisting that in these and other ways they influence their fellow-soldiers to perform fully the duties placed on them. The Communists are told about these responsibilities numerous times in this prebattle period through talks, lectures, meetings, newspaper articles, and all other media.⁴⁴

A typical combination of propaganda activities took place during the Stalingrad campaign. The Party and Komsomol members devoted much time and great energy to collect signatures for a letter to Stalin, expressing the devotion of the signers and their determination to win victory for the homeland at all costs. This was followed by a letter from the Political Administration of the Stalingrad Front to all Communists, emphasizing their obligations to be in the vanguard

and to act as models for their fellow soldiers. Meetings of all Party units were held to hear the letter read, and to permit the Communists to declare their iron resolution to carry out their responsibilities. The Party members then analyzed their own military conduct in the past and discussed their future tasks, with each talk expected to be "permeated with consciousness of responsibility in this special period and of Party duty." ⁴⁵

The Communist members and Party units also have military duties, and special steps are taken to prepare them for the execution of these responsibilities too. For example, orders for a major tank raid into German territory beyond the Vistula River were given to a large tank brigade in late 1944, and careful preparations were made. Among the preliminary steps taken by the political organs was the convening of a series of Party meetings, in which these military duties were discussed in detail. The meetings of Communists in tank units went over methods of improving discipline and coordination, while those in the rear and supply sections reviewed the problems foreseen in transporting fuel, ammunition, and food to the front lines, and carrying the wounded back to the rear. Similar meetings were held for Komsomol members. ⁴⁶

Although this preparatory period must be used for inspirational purposes, primarily to heighten each Communist's sense of responsibility for victory, it must also be one of training for the officers and special groups within the Party. Special conferences, seminars, and meetings are held for the branch officers, particularly the secretaries (called the Party Organizers during World War II) and the *buro* members. In addition, the branch officers arrange for membership meetings, for the dissemination of various forms of propaganda to the Communists, supervise the Communist work with the non-Communist men, and make plans for future work to be done on the eve of, and during, battles. ⁴⁷ Some idea of their activities can be seen from the following plan for a two-week period in 1943, drawn up for the Party organization of an aviation escadrille:

1. Party meeting of total membership, agenda highlighting discussion of new applicants to Party candidacy, and talks on the role of Communists in the effort to improve military discipline. (It is noteworthy that this meeting was not held because of pressure of military work.)
2. Session of the Party *buro*, to examine report of escadrille engineer suggesting tasks for Communists to undertake as the military unit prepares for winter fighting.
3. Report of Party *buro* member on the status of training work with new Communists.
4. Issuance of wall-newspaper.
5. Training conference of agitators.
6. Group discussion with sergeants, reviewing last year's speech of Stalin, as part of the preparation for this year's anniversary celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.
7. Showing of Soviet film entitled "Two Warriors."
8. Check of fulfillment of resolutions and decisions made by the *buro* of the escadrille's Komsomol organization in connection with the effort to improve discipline.
9. Production of placards to be used in the celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.

10. Group discussions with new Party members.
11. Issuance of "militant leaflets."⁴⁹

The final organizational steps within the Communist ranks are also taken during this period. Special agitators are needed for propaganda and direct contact with the rank and file in each military unit, and they must be recruited largely from the ranks of the Communists and Komsomol members. During World War II, there were reportedly tens of thousands of these "nonstaff agitators" used in the Red Army, with each army contingent (of fifty or sixty thousand) having fifteen hundred so that at least one could be placed in every platoon.⁴⁹ In this preparatory period of the campaign, these agitators have to be selected, trained and supervised, with the aid of the Communist branches and their officers. The branches themselves have to be put in order, with structural alterations made to fit new situations created by changes in the military organizations, new officers elected and trained, and their successors selected and prepared for the day when they must take over as a result of the losses in battle.⁵⁰

PROPAGANDA AMONG RANK-AND-FILE SOLDIERS

Basic Aim in the Early Campaign Period

The ultimate target for most propaganda activities is, of course, the main body of soldiers and noncommissioned officers. The aims here in the preparatory period appear to revolve about three elements. First, there is a concentrated attempt to make each man confident of his nation's strength in military power and political aims, confident of its ultimate victory, and assured that he himself can make a significant contribution to the war effort. Second, there is a many-sided campaign to give each man a sense of belonging to a desirable group, a collective in which he has a desirable role, and which will look out for his interests, helping him to make his contribution and protecting him as much as possible. Finally, there is the effort to build each man up to the emotional pitch needed in battle, a complex of attitudes which will lead him to forget his personal desire for safety and self-protection, and to perform the actions demanded of him regardless of personal cost.

Supporting Military Training

Political operations during this early stage of the campaign take place in an atmosphere of intensive military training and organizational preparation for the coming battles, and are directly affected by such proceedings. The entire political apparatus, including the professional political workers, their staffs, and Communist aides all take an active role in the training process. For example, one of the reports of political work in the Moscow campaign, during the period when preparations were begun for the shift to the offensive of October and November 1941, tells how "the political organs and Party organizations aided the military command to organize the teaching of the art of offensive fighting in winter conditions to the troops."⁵¹

When troops in the First Far Eastern Front were being trained for the attack on Japanese positions in Manchuria, the political workers helped to teach the men how to act in the attack, in scouting missions, and on the march; they issued leaflets and short pamphlets on such subjects as "The Order of the Commander is the Order of the Homeland," and "Notebook for the Scout."⁵³ Special training was given for specific tasks: soldiers in units preparing to force river defenses were trained in the use of small boats; good swimmers were teamed with poorer ones; and each man was given tips on how to conduct himself in the future fighting; units to be used in pursuing the enemy were given talks on tactics, with great emphasis on the need for speed and uninterrupted movement forward; infantry units, some to come under fire, were told what to do when attacked by tanks and planes.⁵⁴ A report on political work in aviaional units during the start of the 1944 Crimean campaign claims that the political workers undertook on their own to give the personnel better understanding of the new aerial tactics and bombing methods recommended for aviators.⁵⁴

In all military units, regardless of the type of military campaign being planned, the political workers continue to preach the basic virtues of military discipline and eternal vigilance; they use numerous meetings, talks, placards, and other propaganda devices to inculcate the fundamental elements of good soldiering. The basic skills are also stressed, and the political agencies take an active part in such matters as the efforts to improve the infantrymen's marksmanship and the bombardiers' percentage of direct hits. Extensive utilization is made of the veterans of former wars and campaigns; the political workers make special efforts to establish the best conditions in which these men can impart their knowledge and experience to the younger men, and to ensure maximum receptivity on the part of the latter.⁵⁵

As the time for battle draws near, special tasks are given to the political staff. On the Leningrad Front, in the early months of World War II, it was decided that greater attention should be given to effective use of available ammunition, and so the Party organizations instituted a program of enrolling men as "snipers," and of popularizing the best marksmen and their methods for killing Germans. As the troops moved out for the last campaign of World War II, the attack on the Japanese in Manchuria, the political workers and Communists in the Far Eastern divisions gave numerous talks to small groups on protecting legs on the marches, digging in when attacked, the precautions to take in drinking and eating while in strange country, and the tricks and methods used by the Japanese troops.⁵⁶

Building the Servicemen's Confidence

In their psychological warfare against enemy military forces, the Soviets regard it imperative to shake and, if possible, destroy the belief of opposing troops in the justice of their own cause, in the strength of their own military services, and in their chances of eventual safety. Conversely, propagandists spend much of their time and energy in building up the confidence of their own soldiers and sailors. A great deal of attention is spent on a discussion of war aims of the Soviet struggle. Stalin's name figures extensively in this propaganda, of course, and there are many references to basic standards of human decency, and to emotions such as patriotism. In this preparatory stage of the campaign,

too, many talks are given and newspaper articles published about the objectives of the campaign, and explanations of the tactics for the coming battles.⁵⁷

A continuous effort is made by propagandists to maintain and increase confidence in Soviet military power. This is intensified in campaigns which come after defeats, for the soldiers who take part in retreats and partial encirclements are declared to be "not fully cognizant" of the true nature of Soviet power. For example, there has been much pointing with pride to Stalin's wisdom, the skill of his military leaders, the efficiency of Soviet artillery and aviation, the invincibility of Soviet infantry and tanks—often in the most stereotyped phrases, but repeated again and again on every possible occasion.⁵⁸ A much used method in World War II was to hold meetings and give talks, featuring testimony of heroes of former battles and successful campaigns such as at Stalingrad. There were many references in this period, too, to the contributions of other services and neighboring military units, and the need for cooperation with and confidence in them.⁵⁹

Insofar as personal confidence is concerned, the propagandists apparently worked along a dual line. It was made unmistakably clear to the soldier that any indications of fear or fearmongering, or acts of cowardice or unsoldierly conduct, would be sharply and quickly punished. On the other hand, he was told repeatedly that he would be helped by his comrades, that his superiors would give him precise orders which he must follow at all costs, and that his unit would protect him as much as possible on a battlefield.⁶⁰ Above all, day in and day out, the soldier was told about the mounting "proof" that sure victory lay ahead: the indications of strength found on every hand in every news communicate; the clues that the enemy was growing weaker and would soon collapse; the potential contributions of the Soviet's allies as contrasted with the signs of mounting tension and impending rebellion in the enemy's satellites, all capped by the assurance of victory in Stalin's wisdom and expressed in his speeches and orders.

Implanting Attitudes that Lead to "Battle-Passion"

Intensive and time-consuming as their other duties are for the propagandists, no effort is regarded as equal in importance to preparing the men for their duties in battle by instilling the emotional "set" which the Soviets believe makes for mass heroism and individual self-sacrifice under enemy fire. Whether or not the theories about "battle-passion" are well founded, the Soviets apparently believe in them firmly and work to inculcate this emotion into the men.

During World War II, the much desired attitude of rage toward the enemy and the urge to kill as many as possible was usually sought through use of "hate" and atrocity propaganda. In virtually every campaign, especially after the first few months when German deeds had made almost any propaganda believable, much energy was spent on this. One report of a military campaign pointed out that "in order that the warriors should struggle with great bitterness and persistence, it was necessary to inflame them even more powerfully than before with hatred toward the German aggressors. With this aim, in each company there was read aloud newspaper reports about the Fascists' barbaric acts toward the Soviet people and even toward the captured and wounded of our army."⁶¹

Similar reports were made during preparations for virtually all other campaigns, whether against the Germans, Finns, Rumanians, or Japanese.⁶²

For example, in the preparations for a large-scale tank raid into Eastern Prussia which was launched in the early days of 1945, a significant place in the political operations was given to the "nourishment of hatred for the foe." According to the extensive report made on the political work in this campaign, considerable attention was given to the building of the desired emotional tension in the troops, using both a broad and extensive treatment of the "hate" theme, and a personalized, individual approach. The political section of one division questioned 700 soldiers about their losses, and found that relatives of 686 men had lost one or more of their parents, wives, sweethearts, or children, while 103 had learned that their homes had been burned, and their cattle and other belongings taken by the Germans. This data was made the basis for a special pamphlet, which ended with an appeal for the soldiers to remember these facts and take revenge on the German malefactors. Another leaflet gave a graphic description of the murder of one soldier's mother and four children, and told how the parents and sister of another had been dragged off to slavery in Germany. Thousands of soldiers read these stories in group meetings, and were called upon to swear revenge for the crimes committed against their comrades.⁶³

Extensive work is also done during this preparatory period to intensify and exploit each soldier's sense of personal responsibility and individual dedication to the successful fulfillment of the tasks in the campaign ahead. The political workers are guided by Lenin's admonition that "it is necessary to inspire each soldier separately and to teach him that on his own bravery and resoluteness depends the successful outcome of the fighting."⁶⁴ The head of a Political Administration directing a major campaign warned his subordinates that "our success depends to a large extent on the ability of the political workers to reach each Red Army man, sergeant, and officer, and to explain to him the significance of his individual role in the forthcoming operations."⁶⁵

The consequent propaganda is full of stereotypes and artificial phrases, but the Soviets believe that these can be made effective by enthusiasm, intensity, and repetition. Veterans are reminded that they hold the trust and respect of their comrades and that the Party and government rely upon their experience and wisdom for leadership in battle. New recruits are told that they are part of a great collective of brave men, which will watch over them and guard them as much as possible, but that, in return, they must take their share of the risks and labor. Communists and Komsomol members are reminded on innumerable occasions about their obligations to be models in discipline, efficiency, and bravery, and are required to take personal oaths to fulfill these obligations. Military officers and political workers are reminded of the responsibility of leadership again and again. All soldiers are appealed to in terms of national patriotism and loyalty to the people of their regions or nationalities, and are called upon to take personal action to save their families and countrymen from death or enslavement.⁶⁶

Special gestures of all types are made in this preparatory period to heighten this sense of personal responsibility. Special meetings are held to retell the stories of each military unit's history, and everyone is warned that he must add to, and not detract from, the glory of that history. New guns and machines are received by each unit with solemn ceremonies, designed to impress the

recipients and users. The members of Guard regiments and divisions hold their own special ceremonies, in which the special honor and obligations of Guardsmen are reviewed, and oaths are taken to fulfill these obligations in appropriate forms.⁶⁷

Finally, no account of political work in preparation for a military campaign would be complete without mention of the effort to utilize and exploit the symbolisms built about Joseph Stalin. The leadership he exercised on the homefront during World War II was made the symbol of civilian support and the guarantee of an uninterrupted flow of materials and weapons; his international position was made the guarantee of increased foreign aid from International Communism and the USSR's national allies; his personal wisdom and "military genius" were made the guarantee of the proper use of manpower and strength, and his loudly proclaimed powers of prevision and prediction the bases for complete assurance that eventual Soviet victory was inevitable. Besides all this, Stalin was made a symbol for the nation and the people, the personification of national unity and loyalty, and therefore the object of fervent promises by those soldiers receptive to this propaganda approach.

In many campaigns, the men were called upon to take personal oaths in public, swearing that they would perform without thought of self-protection or selfish aims, and that they would do their duty to the homeland, to the Red Army, and to Stalin. On many occasions, as during the Stalingrad campaign, these oaths were supplemented by a series of solemn meetings dedicated to drawing up, discussing, and signing a single letter from the men of all units on the front, addressed to Stalin, and promising a struggle to the death or until victory was assured.⁶⁸ During the defense of Moscow by the troops of the Western Front, a letter was signed by all the soldiers, officers, and political workers of one brigade which ended in the words: "The bloodthirsty monster Hitler is stretching out his paws toward our heart—Moscow. This shall never be! We swear to you, dear comrade Stalin, that we shall hit at the enemy with ever-greater persistence. Our terrible guns shall not leave our hands until we have destroyed all German Fascists."⁶⁹

Every opportunity of exploiting the symbol of Stalin or utilizing his words was used by the Army political workers. In 1941, for example, thousands of small groups in the Moscow area were assembled to hear his speech on November 7; the speech was immediately followed by a multitude of meetings, group discussions, and talks in which the men "spontaneously" expressed their "love for Stalin and readiness to fight." On the next day, the Political Administration of the Western Front had copies of the speech sent to every battalion and company, and reprinted in all Army newspapers and in several million leaflets and brochures. For many days thereafter, new lectures, meetings, political-information talks, and group discussions were utilized "in order that each word of the leader be brought to every warrior and defender of the capital." This was reportedly one of the major steps taken to prepare for the offensive campaign of December 1941.⁷⁰

Chapter 18

OPERATIONS DURING THE BATTLE PERIOD

ON THE EVE OF BATTLE

During the last hours before the battle, final organizational preparations must be completed, battle assignments given to propagandists and political workers, and concluding efforts made to bring the troops to the emotional pitch regarded as so desirable by the Bolsheviks. The third task, of course, is the most difficult, and many different appeals and techniques are available for use—most of them repetitions of those used in the preparatory period of the campaign. In general, these appeals are connected with the effort to intensify the sense of responsibility of the Communists and men in other special groups, to exploit the military unit and other group loyalties, to persuade all servicemen that the immediate and inescapable consequence of the avoidance of duty is sharp punishment and disgrace, to maintain the men's confidence in eventual victory, and above all, to "enflame" each man in these final hours with bitter hatred and rage against the enemy leading to fierce desires to kill as many of the enemy troops as possible.

A general perspective of the organizational and propaganda steps taken in the prebattle hours is helpful to any analysis of the techniques used by political workers during the battle period.

The Political Apparatus and its Workers

The higher levels of the political apparatus, such as the Political Administration of the front and the political section of the army, do not take a direct part in the political operations at the battle line, but they must provide supervision and support. Supplies for the battle period are checked and sent to the responsible political organs, including forms for battle leaflets and wall-newspapers, recent issues of newspapers from Moscow and from front headquarters, and such items as red flags and the last-minute instructions. For the Communist and Komsomol branches in these front-line units, applications for membership are speedily examined and cleared, if possible, before the battle, and last minute changes in their organization and leadership must be approved. Final assignments of political officers are made, with the largest possible number of available men sent to work in the fighting units.

Intelligence reports on prebattle political conditions come into army and front headquarters; the reports must be studied, suggestions made to appropriate military offices, and composite reports sent to the Military Council of the front and to the MPA in Moscow. The key slogans and mottoes to be used in battle are determined, and the final appeals to the men are issued containing these slogans.¹

At the divisional or brigade levels, the political sections take a more direct role, particularly in the spheres of planning and supervising. This role is evident in a report concerning the Eighth Guard Division commanded by Major General Panfilov (who had once himself been a political officer). During the Moscow campaign in late 1941, the Division was ordered to take the town of Krukovo. The political section was informed for the first time of these orders at 1800 on December 6. It was told that action would begin on the following morning, that the battle instructions had been approved by Stalin himself, and that the Germans were strongly entrenched with strong artillery emplacements, particularly mortar guns, and with at least fifty tanks. A detailed plan was worked out, with these and other conditions in mind. The entire staff of the divisional political section then met with political workers of the regimental staffs, explained the political plans for the operation, and gave complete instructions for the next two days. By 2000, the regimental workers had returned to their posts, where they first conferred with the company political instructors, telling them of the basic tasks of political preparation for the coming battle, and then went out into the platoons to tell the agitators the titles and contents of the talks (without disclosing that an offensive was planned for the next day). By 2030, the agitators had begun to read selected communiqués of German atrocities, and to give the assigned talks. The divisional political section issued new instructions early the next morning, and political work continued until the hour of the attack on Krukovo.²

Where direct and immediate contact with the political section of the divisional headquarters is not possible, the regimental political workers make their own plans on the basis of instructions from their military commanders. A *Red Star* story provides some insights into such an occasion with a report on the sequence of events in an infantry regiment.³ The unit commander had just received his instructions, which called for the regiment to prepare the way for a major Soviet drive by forcing a large river and breaking through the German defenses in a frontal attack. He immediately conferred with his deputy for political affairs, Major Savchinski, informing the latter of his plans, and indicating preparations that must be made and problems solved. Savchinski took notes on this discussion, and spent the rest of the evening in drawing up his own plans.

The next morning Savchinski conferred with his own immediate staff, composed of his regimental Party organizer (a post abolished during the war with Germany), his assistant for Komsomol work, and his regimental agitator; he outlined the situation and gave specific instructions to each man. Then Savchinski went off to confer individually with the *zampolit* of each battalion and the Party Organizer of each company, discussing principally the condition of the men's morale, the immediate program of political work, and the state of the food supply and related matters. Savchinski's plan apparently called for concentration on "hate" propaganda; his next step was to decide on some basic material for this theme, which turned out to be a letter just received by a battalion

commander and reporting in some detail the German capture of his wife and children. The regimental *zampolit* ordered that this letter be immediately reproduced for wide dissemination, and then he met with his platoon agitators to give them precise instructions on their prebattle talks, including their use of the letter.

At the company and platoon levels, the agitators are extremely busy in the last prebattle hours. They are called together for last-minute briefing on the actions expected of them during the coming battle and for instructions on prebattle propaganda.⁴ A report of the 758th Rifle Regiment, made during a Soviet campaign in Eastern Poland, indicates that the platoon agitators were ordered to emphasize the following themes in their talks before an attack:

- a) We must give the Fascist beast his deathblow in his own lair;
- b) The Homeland rewards all heroes, but it punishes without mercy the deserters, panicmongers, and traitors;
- c) We shall achieve victory only after violent attack, timely cooperation in battle and uninterrupted pursuit of the enemy;
- d) Why we hate the Germans;
- e) The statutes concerning the new Order of Glory;
- f) A superior officer's orders are law;
- g) The heroic work of the collective farmers.

The agitators are also to discuss the past performances of the soldiers in battle and to tell how they had fought, repeating the content of previous talks.⁵

The agitators read aloud, with appropriate comments, such materials as last-minute appeals from the Front or divisional commanders, leaflets such as that containing the letter to Savchinski's battalion commander, and pertinent newspaper editorials, and give informal talks to small groups of men whenever possible.⁶

Communists and Komsomols

The officers of the Communist and Komsomol branches have a threefold task in this prebattle period: they must conclude the process of "inspiring" their own members for the fighting ahead; they must use the manpower available in their organizations to assist the military commander and political workers in the last-minute efforts with the non-Party soldiers; and they must make the necessary arrangements and assignments for fulfillment of their Party responsibilities in the battle period.

The Communists and Komsomol members are regarded as being most receptive to emotional appeals, and there is apparently no disposition to rule out any types of appeals as being artificial or theatrical (what the American GI might regard as "corny"). Whenever possible, meetings of the Communist and Komsomol cells and branches are held, and emotional talks given about the stakes in the coming battle, the significance of the campaign, and the need for victory at all costs. The symbols of Stalin, the Party, the Soviet homeland are all frequently mentioned, and great stress is placed on the personal and individual responsibility of each member to ensure the complete fulfillment of each unit's orders and eventual victory.⁷

Many of the Communists present at such meetings are called upon, individually or collectively, to express, often in the form of a solemn oath, their firm

determination to perform their duties and to do honor to their organizational responsibilities. In the last hours before the battle, they are encouraged to write down their sentiments and place them near their hearts. A typical propaganda story based on this practice concerned Communist Valentinov, who was killed in a battle. Before the battle, he had written a note (later found with his Party card) containing these words: "My dear Party, before going into battle, I wish to say that I have been your loyal son, and I shall remain this to the last breath. If I should meet my death, I shall go to it as befits a Communist. The cause of Lenin-Stalin is stronger than death."⁸ A note found with the Komsomol card of another soldier was reported to have contained these lines: "As I go into battle, I swear that I shall fight as the Communist heroes fight. I give my word to our people that I shall fight until that time when my eyes shall cease to see the enemy, until my hands shall cease to hold my gun."⁹

Some idea of the emotional response that the political leaders are trying to achieve may be gained from a description of a Komsomol meeting which was selected for inclusion in a history of the Crimean campaign of 1941-42. Undoubtedly it was highly glamorized, but it provided an example of the ideal meeting as visualized by the political workers. The report on the meeting was made by a junior political officer, probably assigned to Komsomol functions, and he indicated in his introduction that the meeting took place early in December 1941, when the Germans were preparing to attack Sevastopol. One of the hills leading into the city was held by several groups of sailors, and it was impossible for all the Komsomol members in that group to attend the prebattle meeting. Delegates were therefore chosen by each group, and these found their way, under heavy enemy fire, to a trench-hut in which the meeting was to be held. The meeting was described in this fashion:

On the agenda stood only one question: "The forthcoming battle." Nikolai Stupishin, secretary of the Komsomol organization, opened the delegates' conference with a short, flaming speech. "Comrade Komsomol Members! My friends! The evil Fascist beast is here, below us under our hill, not 300 meters from us. Let us perish in the death of the brave, but let us not yield to the enemy. We shall not retreat. Behind us is Sevastopol and the sea. Let us swear to our beloved Stalin, that we shall not leave our positions. Not a step backward!"

At the conference, speeches with solemn oaths were given by Communists Potapanko and Korzh, deputy political leader Glyazyrin, Political Leader Gusev, Komsomol members Kalyuzhnyi and Reshetsev. Each had one desire—to fight to the last drop of blood.

The delegate's Komsomol conference adopted this resolution:

"Over our city, the chief Black Sea base, and over all of us hangs a mortal danger. The enemy is striving to break into our beloved city of Sevastopol.
We swear to our dear Stalin:

1. Not to retreat one step!
 2. Not to surrender under any condition.
 3. To fight with the enemy in true Black Sea style, to the last drop of blood.
 4. To be brave and courageous to the end. To show models of fearlessness, heroism and bravery to the entire personnel.
 5. To print our resolution-oath in militant leaflets and to report it to all guard points, trenches and firing stations.
 6. This resolution is compulsory for all Komsomol members.
- (signed by) the Presidium of the Conference"

The men of the Red Navy signed under the oath.

In the morning militant leaflets were issued with the portrait of comrade Stalin. The resolution-oath below the portrait of comrade Stalin was signed with large letters. Comrade Stupishin, secretary of the Komsomol organization, Comrades Nadolinski and Reshetsev, editors of the militant leaflets, pasted the leaflets to shields made of plywood, and throughout December 10th, carried them through the pillboxes and trenches.

The sailors read the flaming words of the oath and placed their own signatures under the portrait of the leader and under the oath. Everyone placed his signature below the portrait of the leader. Not one faint heart was found. No one was cowardly.

Each man who placed his signature below the oath and the leader was ready to undertake mortal battle. . . . [The report goes on to recount stories of the subsequent battle, in which the men were reminded of the oath they had signed, and many deeds of heroism were performed. The report ends with this line]: They had kept their oath to the leader.¹⁰

As this report shows, the Communist and Komsomol membership must not only become inspired during this prebattle period, but must also make itself available for influencing the other servicemen. After the company receives its orders and a general statement on it is made to the men, the Communists are often used to bring the details of the orders to the men in the ranks, giving the official explanation of the objectives of the forthcoming battle, and making certain that each man is fully cognizant of his duties.¹¹ They also frequently aid the frightened and the inexperienced, assuring the former that they will have support from their comrades and helping the latter to learn the use of their weapons.¹²

Under some circumstances, the Communists prepare the men for the hardships and dangers they must encounter, by having the veterans tell of the first shock of battle on the premise that "political agitation which does not prepare for the probable difficulties of battle misses its mark."¹³ A story used to illustrate this point concerns a company commander who was told by his scouts that his men could not avoid marching through a mine field. If the men had been permitted to stumble on the field without warning, wrote a political officer in *Red Star*, the company would have been "delayed," many men killed, and the morale of the unit shattered. However, the company commander used the Communists in his company to make each soldier aware of the danger, to prepare all of them for the tension and fears, and to teach them what each must do; and so, "their mental balance was not disrupted."¹⁴

Finally, the Communist branches and groups must use this period to prepare for their tasks during the battle. Although the editors of the important militant leaflets are already selected and trained, their aides must be assigned and instructed; other special assignments must be given to Communist members; the system for intra-Party communication must be established for special messages and reports; and such Party business as admission and training of new members must be continued to the last moment.¹⁵ Above all, the necessary steps must be taken to make sure that, when the order to attack comes, there will be Communists ready to rise immediately and rush at the enemy, and to carry the men with them to fulfill all orders, regardless of the danger involved. The Communists must be reminded about their special responsibilities, inspired to live up to their Party "honor," and led to make personal pledges about their actions in the fighting ahead.¹⁶

Some of these battle assignments must be given just before the actual fighting begins. Examples of assignments can be found in a highly praised plan, made by the political worker in a company which had been ordered to take a German

pillbox. The target was situated on the high bank of a river, and protected on the land side by about a quarter-mile of woods, containing many land mines and barbed-wire barriers. The company was scheduled to reach its jump-off place in front of the woods about a half-hour before zero hour. During the wait for the signal to advance, the political worker expected to carry out the following plan:

1. [I shall announce that] from the jump-off point, I shall myself advance with the second platoon. My assistant, Alifonov, goes with the first platoon; the Party Organizer, Comrade Afanas'ev goes with the third one. Our task is to draw the warriors, with word and personal example, to the successful fulfillment of our orders.
2. Rear officers shall be: First platoon—Communist Nikishov; second—Party Candidate Merkovnikov; third—company Komsomol Organizer Comrade Ol'gin. Their task is to prevent lagging behind by any soldiers, while we close in on the enemy. This is to be announced five minutes before take-off.
3. In case the company encounters the enemy in the obstructed area, the Communists are to wait for the command and then immediately shout "Forward," and shall be the first to throw themselves into the attack. This is to be announced to all Party members and candidates at the moment before departing from the take-off position.
4. After we take the pillbox, short talks about its significance in the enemy's defense system shall be given, if the situation permits. The speakers shall be Alifanov, Afanas'ev Ol'gin. I shall myself tell them about the theme some 15-20 minutes before the take-off.¹⁷

Rank-and-File Servicemen

During the war, the political workers were told that success in any attack can only come with that "aggressive zeal" which is created by "the desire of the brave and self-confident to meet the enemy and kill him."¹⁸ It is their task, they were warned, to find the means for kindling that "zeal" in the soldier, to create an emotion which will cause him to ignore fear and danger, and to make the performance of military duties the most important thing in his world.

Although many techniques are used, the most frequent emotion exploited for this purpose in the prebattle period is hatred. The methods used may be illustrated in the reports of the agitator who was waiting with his company for the command to move into battle. He brought out his large notebook, called his comrades to gather around him, and showed photographs of German atrocities and letters received by Red Army soldiers from villagers whose homes had been destroyed by the Nazis. "The warriors," he reported, "looked over the notebook and swore that they would soon get bitter revenge on the enemy."¹⁹ An approved type of initiative was also shown by Agitator Raikman who took advantage of a rest period to have the men of his unit listen to a woman of the area through which they were marching. She told them how the Germans had burned her house, shot her sons, and destroyed her village. Reportedly "the story of the poor woman created a sensation among the soldiers, and also substantiated the agitator's stories about the enemy's atrocities."²⁰ The literature for the political workers is full of atrocity materials, and numerous exhortations to use them, especially in this prebattle period, in order that "the soldiers' hatred toward the invaders might be even more greatly inflamed, so that they will fight more bitterly against the enemy."²¹

Another important task of this period is to increase each man's sense of confidence in eventual victory, and his recognition of the obligation to make his personal contribution to that end. Stalin's image, which the political workers strove to make the symbol of wisdom, the Fatherland, and inevitable victory, was often evoked for these purposes during the war. In the 1941 struggle for Moscow, the political workers were told "to bring to the consciousness of each soldier the fact that he is going into the offensive upon the personal order of Comrade Stalin."²³ Numerous meetings were held, voluminous amounts of printed literature issued and read, and one hour before the big attack was launched, talks were given on this theme: "Today we are going into battle upon the personal orders of Comrade Stalin. Do not spare your powers or lives in the effort to fulfill Stalin's instructions. Today we must retake the towns in front of us."²⁴ A similar technique was used before launching the Iassko-Kishinev campaign through Moldavia in 1944. It was disclosed that the basic plans had been worked out by Stalin himself, and that instructions for their execution were issued in "Order No. 70 of Comrade Stalin." In a short time, special conferences were held for military and political officers, many pamphlets and newspaper articles printed, numerous meetings of Party organizations conducted, and hundreds of assemblies of servicemen held, all dealing with the need for fulfilling Stalin's order.²⁵

In many cases, the last hour before the battle was used for a meeting in which appeals were made to the men's patriotism, loyalty to their military unit, or love of Stalin. Often, at the close of the meeting, every man was asked to give definite indication of his determination to fight hard in the coming struggle. Sometimes this meant signing a letter to Stalin, as a regiment did before the Battle for Berlin, swearing to be fearless and to smash the enemy.²⁶ If conditions at the front permitted, the meetings closed with a ceremony in which each man takes a personal oath to do his duty.

The taking of the oath before battle was a ceremony often used in a Guard unit. Several hours before the battle would begin, the unit banner was brought out to the assembled men in their battalion or company and stood unfurled while an emotional speech was made. Then a well-respected soldier, usually one awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, stepped forward under the flag and said: "Let us swear, comrade warriors, before our Guard banner that we will with honor and merit fulfill our military task, hitting at the enemy until he is completely annihilated." The entire group then passed before the regimental colors, and each soldier in turn knelt, kissed the banner, and solemnly promised to bring honor to the regiment in the coming battle.²⁷

DURING THE BATTLE

Exemplary Conduct Demanded of Communists and Political Workers

A key element in Bolshevik psychological strategy for the battle period is the exploitation of the Communists' sense of special responsibility, which has been inculcated with much expenditure of time and energy in all members. Properly developed and exploited, this sense or attitude can yield double profits. Through it, each military unit can be provided with a core of men who will make a maxi-

num contribution in self-sacrifice, bravery, and disciplined fulfillment of orders in the battle. Moreover, it is hoped that the conduct of the Communists will be imitated and followed by the other men, resulting in what the Soviets like to call "mass heroism."

On the latter point, the Bolshevik leaders have the same expectations concerning human conduct under tension as those implicit in the answer given by a defector, who was asked how the Soviet soldier is prevailed upon to fight during a hotly contested battle. The defector replied: "Naturally, in any army, it is the most terrible moment when you are under fire, and you don't feel like getting up and facing everything; but if one man gets up, then they all do, if one man runs to the rear, then they all do." A political leader in the Red Army put the concept in these words: "The Communist must be concerned with the arousing of aggressive passion, and this is done, above all, when he helps his non-Party comrades with his personal example and advice to be firm and resolute, cultivates in them the ability to overcome difficulties, and intensifies their eagerness for battle."³⁷

Numerous illustrations of the Bolshevik ideals are found in the literature, particularly in Lieutenant Colonel Padorin's authoritative book on the Communist's role in the military victories of World War II. He refers repeatedly to the Communist soldier's obligation to play a "guiding and leading role" by showing high bravery and unfaltering observance of disciplinary regulation, and stresses the Communist's duty "not only to go forward himself but also to lead the Red Army masses." The Communist is reminded that Stalin himself wrote: "The power of the Bolsheviks, the Communists' strength, is found in their ability to surround our Party with millions of non-Party activists."²⁶ Padorin tells many stories to illustrate how Communists should be used, such as the tale of "Point 73.5." A rifle company had been pinned down in a desperate battle, and was suffering heavy losses. The company commander sent this message down the line of his men to the few Communists in his unit: "Comrade Communists! We are ordered to take this height, and to destroy the enemy. Let us show an example of courage and bravery, and obtain the fulfillment of our task." On the call of the commander, the Communists were the first to rise, shouting "For the Soviet land, for the great Stalin!" and rushed into the attack. The Communists were followed by the non-Communist soldiers, the hill was taken, the enemy destroyed, and all concerned given high praise.²⁹

The key to this strategy, of course, lies not merely in the Communist's acceptance of his self-sacrificing role, but in his successful effort to influence the other men to follow his example. The Communist must not merely call out slogans with basic symbolisms about the Soviet land and Stalin, but he is expected to shout "After me, comrade," and lift his comrades behind him into the attack.³⁰ According to *Red Star* instructions on "Political Work during the Course of Battle," the commanders, who are not expected to share in this role of lead dog, call out: "Do as Communist Farkhutlinov and Ishkirin are doing."³¹ As the battle rages, if the Communists are following their instructions, the non-Party men are supposed to be inspired by their cries on all sides of "Forward, into the fascist den," and "Stalin is with us, victory will be ours";³² and the men must reflect this inspiration by their deeds.

There are few elements of the mythology about the political worker, who is of course a Communist spending full time on his Party duties, that are as fre-

quently stressed as his obligations on the battlefield. The 1941 statute re-establishing the military commissar emphasized that he is "obligated, in the most serious moments of the battle, to raise the militant spirit of the military unit by his own personal example of bravery and courage, and to attain the complete fulfillment of the military order."³³ A typical political report about a World War II campaign told how a German counterattack had forced most of a Soviet regiment to retreat, leaving a large section in great danger. The stereotyped conclusion told how the commissar had made his way to the besieged unit, and personally led the men in the hand-to-hand fighting until they were out of the encirclement. The lesson of the story was that: "The presence of the commissar on the battlefield, his coolness and steadfastness, had emboldened the men, and thus the commissar had with honor fulfilled his military duty without regard for the difficulties."³⁴

The political workers are frequently reminded of this battlefield duty, through frank statements in talks and magazine articles,³⁵ and by numerous stories specifying the ideals set for them. One of the most revealing, taken from a history of political work during the Crimean campaign, is the following:

Commissar Ivanshchenko is regarded with respect and love in N regiment. He does not gamble with his life, but when it is necessary to bring up the soldiers into an attack, the commissar does not think about his own safety, and is the first to go out under the bullets.

[One day, in fierce battle], the Fascists were trying to break through a vital defense line. They opened heavy barrage with guns and mortar, and then with wild cries they rose in the attack. One of the [Soviet] soldiers, not yet completely trained, fearfully asked: "Where is the commander, where is the commissar?"

"The commissar is here," loudly answered Ivanshchenko.

"The commander is here," was heard along the line.

The warriors felt bolder and more confident, knowing that the commissar would find a way out of any situation. And when the commissar called out, "After me, into the attack," all the Red Army men rose as one and rushed against the enemy.³⁶

A political worker who was under particularly heavy pressure to demonstrate "exemplary conduct" was the regimental agitator who was entrusted with the training of agitators and propagandizing of officers. The regimental agitator was ordered "to occupy himself primarily with agitation under all circumstances, bringing the word of Bolshevik truth day after day to the masses. . . [and] inspiring the warriors to brave deeds. . ."³⁷ His chief responsibility was to work with soldiers, especially during, and in preparation for, battle, to be among the men when the going was tough and when they might be "losing faith in their own powers." He was called upon to work among them in such periods, "raising the spirit of the men, and attaining a change in the course of battle."³⁸ The press carries many stories illustrating the ideals set out for the regimental agitator, tales of self-sacrifice and heroism in which the political workers allegedly fought in the front ranks, inspiring the men with words and deeds.³⁹

The nonprofessional agitators, who do the main propaganda work on the lower levels of the platoon and squad, are under the same type of pressure. They are warned that they must influence their fellows with deeds as well as words, and that they can not be "authoritative" if they do not meet the challenge of the

battle situation. The examples given to them usually are of the following type and contain its obvious lessons:

Our agitators invariably combined the living Bolshevik work with personal example. Take for an example the platoon agitator, Comrade Korpchev. The warriors called him the most disciplined, daring and honorable of soldiers. Korpchev's agitation was always persuasive, and his words had authority. Once in the field of battle, he noted that a group of German machine gunners were infiltrating through a gully, attempting to get around to our rear. A dangerous situation had already been created. The agitator threw himself into the attack, shouting "Let us show the Hitlerites what is meant by guardmen" and "Death to the German invaders." He drew the other soldiers after him, and after a short but bitter struggle the platoon killed 20 Hitlerites and captured 35 prisoners.⁴⁰

In similar fashion, the average Communist is the object of an intensive campaign. Every effort is made to increase his sense of duty, and the belief that his Party membership obligates him to accept the role of the self-sacrificing and inspiring hero. The talks he hears and literature he reads are full of stories about other Communists who fulfilled this role with honor and distinction. Typical of these is the tale of political work on the Far Eastern Front, about Sergeant Tetkin, who was the first to rise in the attack and who brought his entire platoon up with him. He was mortally wounded, and as he lay dying, he pulled out his Party card, pressed it to his heart, and then turned to shout to his men: "I die, Comrades, for our great Homeland, for the cause of Lenin-Stalin. Go boldly into battle and destroy the Japanese Samurais."⁴¹

Another illustration of the propaganda used to inspire the Communists is the story of Soldier Ivan Lichkatski. He heard the order to attack, rose to his full height, cried: "Forward! For the Homeland, for Stalin!" and rushed forward. In the resulting "hurricane of machine gunfire," the entire company rushed forward, but soon Lichkatski was cut down. One of his crew leaned over and took a bloody Party card from Lichkatski's pocket, raised it high and shouted: "Let us revenge the Bolshevik!" The story concludes: "Communist Ivan Lichkatski was already not among the living, but even dead he was terrible to the enemy. Fighting bravely, without sparing their blood or even their lives, the warriors fought like Ivan Lichkatski, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy."⁴²

Propaganda of "Heroism"

The propaganda directed at the Communists and political workers, demanding that they provide models of courage and self-sacrifice in battle, is expected to provide the initial leadership and the examples needed by the rank-and-file military personnel. However, even if the initial effort is successful, the "aggressive zeal" and the "offensive impulse" must be maintained by encouraging the individual soldier to perform his own deeds of valor. One major technique used to accomplish this is called the "propaganda of heroism."⁴³

The basic objective of the propaganda of heroism is to convince the individual soldier that all about him are courageous spirits performing a continuous series of heroic exploits, reflecting glory upon their military units and their families, and receiving just rewards. He will presumably become convinced that

such heroism is the order of the day, that it is being followed by all the better men about him, and that it is his own obligation to do his share and get his own rewards.

Much of this propaganda of heroism during battle is done through the circulation of special types of single-sheet "leaflet-flashes" or "flying leaflets," many of which bear such titles as "Our Heroes," "Who Distinguished Himself Today," or "Pass Along the Line."⁴⁴ In the simplest form, the platoon agitator is given a series of blank forms; he writes a short description of each new exploit on one form and then has it passed from man to man, or thrown in a large-calibre cartridge shell from trench to trench. He is expected not only to praise the hero, but to call for similar deeds from the other men. As one set of instructions puts it: "It is important not only to recognize the heroes and their deeds, but also to use the facts of heroism in order to secure mass heroism among the soldiers. From this point of view, swift commendation of heroes has great significance."⁴⁵ For this reason, presumably, many "leaflet-flashes" end like this: "Glory to the daring and courageous warriors. Warriors! Fight like Red Army Krylovski and Veliakhmetov did. Bring glory to the Soviet Army and multiply the glory of the unit."⁴⁶

A report on political work in the Perekop campaign during 1944, typical of many such reports in the literature for the political workers, tells how the stories about heroism were passed, verbally in many cases, through the battalions at the front lines during the most violent battles. Most of the time, however, printed "flying leaflets" were disseminated, of which the following is typical:

Pass this along through the line: Guard Sergeant Varush, of the 2nd Rifle Company, was wounded in the hand, but he remained in the line and continued to kill Germans. Machine gunner Dema was also wounded in the hand, but he continued to shoot Germans with his trusty machine gun. Guard Private Gibleev, of the 8th Rifle Company, was the first to break through to the center of the enemy's defenses, and he immediately annihilated the Germans in their trenches. Glory to the bold!⁴⁷

The regimental and other political workers also spend a considerable amount of their time looking for such stories, and they personally write them up for wide distribution during the fighting.⁴⁸ In many cases, these leaflets are handwritten in several copies as soon as the political worker hears about the heroic deed, and one copy is sent to each platoon or company.⁴⁹ The higher staff workers select the most significant, and use them for their own leaflets and other publications to be distributed throughout the division, army, or Front.⁵⁰

Another major aspect of the propaganda of heroism is the special recognition given to the hero. This may go beyond the mere mention of his name in a leaflet, although the latter is the most common form. The hero might receive on the field of battle, during a break in the fighting, a medal noted "For Bravery," or a note of greetings, and a military unit might receive a commendation from a commanding officer.⁵¹ Simonov, who served as a political worker at the front, tells in one of his stories about World War II how, in the midst of a prolonged tank battle, a messenger rode up from divisional headquarters and told the hero: "The divisional commander asked me to convey his thanks."⁵²

If such immediate recognition is impossible, the hero is supposed to receive an award or medal in a day or two, and shortly afterwards, a formal letter of

congratulations in commemoration of his exploits. The following is a publicized letter, sent to a sniper in a Red Army Guard regiment:

Dear Alexander Ivanovich! The commanding officers of the regiment hail you in your recent victory in our battle with the Hitlerite hordes. You acted as a daring warrior, a knight of our Russian land. Because of your bullets, seven Hitlerites found their graves. The command is nominating you for a governmental award, and knows that in the battles for the Fatherland you will multiply our guardsmen honors. I wish you further success! I firmly press your hand.

Guard Lieutenant Colonel Sabinov
Regimental Commander⁵³

Such letters are widely publicized in the regiment, and descriptions of the brave deed and its reward are sent in other letters to the home area of the hero and to his parents. In many cases, tanks and other equipment will be named after him, and photographs of them circulated among his friends and relatives.⁵⁴ It is pertinent to note the remark of a former soldier, who thought it worthwhile to mention as one of the factors necessary for understanding the Soviet Army: "There are plenty of Russian soldiers who will do a lot for the sake of an award, a decoration, a medal You know there are always those people who want to appear as heroes and at least swagger about these medals to their own people. For the sake of getting such medals and getting in the limelight, a good many people undertook heroic deeds."⁵⁵

Stimulating "Battle Passion"

The most important task placed before the political worker during the battle period is to stimulate the mood, or frame of mind, which the Soviets call "battle passion," and which is expected to lead to an "aggressive outburst." In theory, these are attitudes which weaken the force of the self-protective instinct, and lead the men to ignore obstacles and danger in their furious desire to smash the enemy.⁵⁶

Among the methods used to stimulate this mood, although hardly discussed in the literature for the political workers, is the use of vodka and other liquors, which were considered essential commodities in World War II. A former supply officer in the Soviet Army declares that vodka was "the most important" of all materials during battle periods, which he was expected "to deliver at all costs to the men in the front line even if they got nothing else."⁵⁷ Most reports indicate that the service men in the fighting units received at least 100 grams daily, and the defectors making these reports believe that this liquor played an important part in strengthening the sense of collectivity within each unit and made easier the stimulating of hatred against the enemy and the ignoring of danger.⁵⁸

The "hate" propaganda, which had previously been strenuously developed in the prebattle period in most units, is brought now to a high pitch. The political officers and their agitators are expected to use the most moving stories in an effort to secure a release of the men's inhibitions against rushing the enemy or placing themselves in personal danger. Defectors reported that in some units of the Soviet Army, at least, there existed a mood of fierce anger and an overriding desire to destroy the Nazis, rather than a calculated desire for

vengeance or self-protection. One former Soviet soldier described this in terms of "a rage to destroy" the enemy, and reported that this was often expressed in discussions between the men in his unit.⁵⁹ Whether or not this mood was actually widespread, there is no doubt that the political workers were frequently and insistently told to strive to evoke and stimulate it.⁶⁰ The men were encouraged to "avenge themselves," to kill and destroy—and this was taken by the men to include the German civilians and their property as well as the German troops. When they entered German territory, for example, some ex-soldiers report that they were told by huge Bolshevik placards: "You are now entering Germany; kill Germans and burn the hated German enemy's land."⁶¹ In point of fact, the public literature for the political workers tells about the wide use of placards and other graphic materials in this period.⁶²

In their efforts to evoke the "aggressive outburst," the political workers were expected to exploit fully the hatred of the Germans, which unquestionably existed after 1942 even among anti-Communist Russians.⁶³ They were also to utilize widespread feelings of nationalism and patriotism, and a degree of enthusiasm and "upsurge" of fighting spirit that followed the great victories of 1943, as well as the group loyalty which existed in some units.⁶⁴ On the other side of the ledger, however, the average political worker found that the stereotyped instructions for this battle period were often extremely difficult to carry out.

The battle period is a time of high tension, when the soldier's impatience with the artificialities of the Party's political stereotypes is likely to be at its highest; when the military commander's resentment must be particularly strong against the political workers and commissars who undercut his authority, often argue about his operational decisions, and always act as spies in reporting on his actions, errors, and oversights; when the political worker himself must often feel that the absurdities in his own instructions and in the propaganda which he must conduct, can lead not merely to embarrassment in speaking to uninterested men, but can endanger his own life (especially when he is supposed to inspire the men to charge the enemy). Nevertheless, the political workers, particularly those at the battalion and company levels, are given full instructions about the propaganda tactics to use during the battle period, are told about numerous model workers whom they are expected to emulate, and are placed under constant pressure to carry out these instructions and to exploit the agitators, Communists, and Komsomols in their military units.

Another important task in this battle period, after arousing the "aggressive outburst," is to help the commander to bring the men up when the order for the charge is given, to lead them forward in that charge, and to take the steps necessary to ensure that the forward surge will continue after the initial impetus has waned. The basic instructions for the political worker are frequently repeated within the Party press, and he is expected to execute them regardless of danger to himself and his aides.

The actual battle situation varies, of course, from unit to unit and from battle to battle, although a fundamental pattern can be set forth to illustrate the instructions given to the political workers. In a typical attack, the order to advance comes to the battalion commander who, in conference with his staff and company commanders, makes decisions for the disposal of each company and platoon. At the appropriate moment for the platoon to attack, the senior lieutenant gives the order. At this point, in the theory of the political apparatus at least,

one of the soldiers, preferably a Communist or Komsomol, should jump to his feet and shout something like "Forward! For the Motherland and for Stalin!"⁶⁵ There are, of course, many variations in practice. Often, when something is shouted, it is merely the cry (traditional in the Russian Army) of "Forward! Hurrah!"⁶⁶ A senior sergeant who saw plenty of action in the Soviet Army told interrogators that someone would cry "Get up! For the Motherland! For the Liberation of Russia!"⁶⁷ Some defectors reported that occasionally the political worker would call for an advance in the name of Stalin,⁶⁸ but this is often ridiculed by other defectors.⁶⁹

Whatever the cry, the men are expected to rise together, and together with the squad or platoon commander and the local political worker,⁷⁰ rush at the enemy and maintain the charge forward until they are physically exhausted or the enemy line is completely broken. A foreign military observer has described a model Soviet attack against an enemy with defense in depth in these terms:

At the end of the artillery preparation, the tanks and infantry attacked the first line of trenches, and, when these were captured, they rushed forward to take the other successive lines of trenches. The first echelon continued this procedure until it was exhausted, and then the second echelon took over. The echelon following the attacking echelon mopped up the trenches that the attacking echelon had taken or passed, and eliminated any strong points remaining in the area. The mission of the first echelon was generally the capture of the initial or forward enemy positions, up to a depth of about one or two miles. The second echelon then continued the advance to the second positions, up to a depth of about three to four miles. Here the second echelon was leapfrogged by another echelon which was expected to reach the third positions, up to a depth of about eight to nine miles. The various echelons continued this process until they achieved a complete breakthrough, reaching a depth of about 19 to 25 miles.⁷¹

In this type of military operation, the political workers are given models (which may or may not have a connection with actual facts) from which they are expected to learn and which they are called upon to imitate. A typical story of political operations in the Perekop offensive in 1944 told of the "whirlwind attack" of Captain Bakirov's battalion, which had earned for them the German's nickname of "the fiends' assault." As the battle began, a Communist leader in the first attacking wave arose, shouting: "Forward, for the Soviet Ukraine! Death to the Germans!" The other Communists and their non-Party supporters in the group rushed forward. Behind them the entire battalion swiftly followed driving toward the German trenches. Throughout the rush forward, agitators in each group kept shouting, urging the men onward. The places of fallen Communists in the front lines were quickly taken by other Party or non-Party agitators, who had been named in advance, each shouting the selected slogan. Within 40 minutes, according to the story, the four lines of German trenches had been taken.⁷²

Another report on political work described the methods used in the Soviet offensive through Eastern Pomerania in early 1943. In this campaign, which carried the Red Army into Germany proper and toward Berlin, the pattern remained the same but the slogans were slightly different. In one battle, the fighting was begun when selected Communists charged forward, and soon all over the field were heard their cries of "Forward to the destruction of the Fascist lair!" and "Stalin is with us, Victory is with us!" The other men took up the calls and followed the Communists. The Soviet lines moved forward with

increasing impetus and power until they reached the enemy, and the Communists led the charge into the German trenches, still presumably shouting their slogans.⁷³

The pattern is slightly different in the report of political work during the forcing of a German-held river. The soldiers in the regiment had temporarily dislodged the Germans in the first defense line, but had then been forced to retreat under strong fire. The political workers, after a conference with the regimental commander, decided to hold a series of short inspirational talks in each platoon and company. When these were concluded, so the story went, each man swore to take the city which was burning before their eyes. The signal was given for the attack, and the soldiers rushed forward, shouting: "Hurray!" As they moved along, the agitators called out: "Forward, heroes! The Fatherland expects great deeds from us!" In one company, the men sang the hymn of the Soviet Union. The forces burst forward with such force, declared the report, that the Germans could not hold their lines and fled in wild retreat.⁷⁴

Another approved method is found in the story of political operations at Stalingrad, and illustrates what is expected from the platoon agitators in battle. As the attack began, Agitator Efimenko charged at the Germans, shouting: "For Stalingrad, comrades! For Stalin! Smash the Fascist beasts!" In another platoon, Agitator Ovchinkov cried: "Act like me!" and rushed upon the Nazis, destroying several as he went. Behind him, someone shouted: "Comrades! Ovchinkov has already killed seven. Forward, do not stop!" The enemy was, of course, reported to have been destroyed by the "invincible" charge of the entire unit.⁷⁵

The Soviets put great stock in the psychological effect of well-chosen and significant symbolism, particularly slogans. In the 1941 retreat, one political worker was given high praise for finding a meaningful slogan which utilized the Russians' determination to defend their ancient capital. After a propaganda talk to 26 Guardsmen, he declared: "Friends, Russia is great, but there is no place to retreat now. Behind us is Moscow."⁷⁶ In the same campaign, a political worker tried to illustrate the effect of this type of slogan by telling how a Communist shouted: "Let us die, but not retreat from here!" The commissar took up the cry, and he was followed by another, a third, a fourth, and then the entire company, so that "all, even the most faint-hearted and those who had not yet been under fire, stayed in their place."⁷⁷

A symbolism of another type, in a visual form which the Bolsheviks believe has a powerful effect on any group, including military servicemen, is the Red banner. It is used by the Bolshevik political workers when bitter fighting has been in progress, and they try to present it as a symbol of high purpose and impending victory. Usually it appears after the taking of one important point in a battle—the storming of a vital peak in an assault on a hill, or the capture of a key building in an attack on a city. A report on the Soviet Warsaw-Poznan campaign, which ended with the taking of the city of Poznan, included the following: "During the street battle in Poznan, great significance was given to the practice of raising flags on objects and borders taken by storm groups and detachments. This was a strong means of influencing the participants of the battle. As a rule, the appearance of a red banner on an object called forth a new militant outburst among the attacking warriors."⁷⁸

Calls for the use of banners are found in the reports of many campaigns. A captured Soviet report on the fighting on the German border of Western Poland

(which took the Red Army into Germany), tells how the Nazis were fighting with the courage of despair and laying down a terrible fire with weapons. At the crucial moment, a Komsomol member led a storming group directly into this fire and took a Red banner over the border into German territory. According to the press story, he was followed by Soviet soldiers who threw their hats high in the air as they rushed over the frontier.⁷⁹ Similarly, a Soviet report on the Berlin campaign tells how the final storming of the city began on the morning of April 17. A Komsomol named Zolotarev, especially selected for this honor, heard the signal for attack, raised a Red flag high over his head, and threw himself into the attack with the shout: "To Berlin, for the Homeland! For Stalin! Forward!"⁸⁰

It need hardly be said that a favorite symbolism of the Bolshevik propagandist has, in the past, been the name and image of Joseph Stalin. Numerous model attacks indicated that charges should be led by Communists shouting: "For Stalin! For the Fatherland!" A typical story, much repeated in the political literature, tells of a division participating in the Soviet campaign in 1943 to retake the great port city of Sevastopol. It had previously received the personal commendation of Stalin for its exploits, and one of its battalions was now engaged in an assault upon a steep hill. The battle had been difficult, and the Soviet losses great, when a Party Organizer rose to lead a new attack with the shout, "Remember the message of Comrade Stalin!" According to the report: "This was sufficient; the warriors stood up, charged up the hill, broke through the wall of fire, and captured the German trenches."⁸¹

An important article on approved propaganda devices for an offensive campaign included the following: "One of the main requirements for agitation during an attack is that the words of Stalin's commendations and decrees should be brought to each soldier."⁸² Frequent stories told of the "joy" spread through the ranks when news of such commendation was received, and how men went "cheerfully into battle" as a result of this inspiration. When Stalin "announced his gratitude" to a unit, a personal notification of it, signed and transmitted by the regimental commander, was delivered to each man. The notifications were distributed with all ceremony possible under the circumstances, often accompanied by speeches.⁸³

Similar importance was given to orders and instructions which came from Stalin. These were widely publicized, brought by the platoon agitators to each man's attention, and made the subject of frequent inspirational talks.⁸⁴

The effort to invoke the symbolism connected with Stalin's name was most dramatically illustrated by the letters sent to him during the war, which had been signed in the midst of battle and swore to carry out his instructions. Typical of these was a message from the men of the Sixth Army during the Stalingrad fighting, which ended: "We who send this letter from the trenches to You that we shall defend Stalingrad to the last drop of our blood, to the last breath, to the last beat of our hearts, and we shall not permit the enemy to reach the Volga!"⁸⁵

Combating Fear and Lack of Confidence

The control of combat fear, of course, is a major function of those in charge of morale in any army. The Soviet political workers are given a number of

approved methods for performing this function, varied in types and including both negative and positive approaches to the problem.

On the affirmative and constructive side are the instructions given for dealing with new and inexperienced recruits. These men are plagued with an overriding fear of the unknown, with bewilderment about the actions expected of them, and with terrible loneliness in the chaos of battle. The political workers and their Communist aides must try to "encourage the recruit by giving him the feeling that he is not alone amidst the dangers of battle, that his comrades are supporting him, that his collective is watching out for him." Properly done, the political worker is told, this attempt can be effective, for "the feeling of being in a collective is an exalted one." When propaganda makes the soldier "conscious that he is a member of the powerful collective that is the Red Army, this consciousness helps him to become a hero."⁶⁶ In addition to telling the frightened novice about the power of the Soviet armed forces and boasting of its victories, one or two veterans will be assigned to fight near him when the battle begins, and to give him moral support and practical advice.⁶⁷

An effort is made to provide all Soviet servicemen with the same sense of membership in a powerful collective, of being a part of an invincible military force marching over a difficult road to inevitable victory. Whenever possible, this sense of power is communicated through talks about the various sources of military strength and the many "guarantees" of victory, and the broad developments which show the trend to eventual success. During the tense period of the military campaign, this propaganda is continued primarily through the dissemination of news from other military fronts and on vital political developments. Although the political reports on the results of such dissemination are probably exaggerated (as are items in most political reports), there is probably a real eagerness for war news on the part of men who realize that their chances for survival depend upon the tide of battle on many Fronts. A typical claim of the usefulness of this technique is the following statement of a high political officer:

The timely explanation to the soldiers of the Sovinformburo communiqués and the delivery of newspapers to the very front lines played an extremely important role. In each squad and platoon there were lectures, reading aloud of newspapers, and each company always had up-to-date newspapers. The delivery of the latest news was considered to be on a level with the delivery of war materials and food. The greatest concern for bringing all important political events to the soldiers is an essential requirement for each deputy commander for political affairs.⁶⁸

During World War II, the most important sources of war news for the soldier and Army agitator were the communiqués of the Soviet Information Bureau (Sovinformburo), which was under the control of the same Politburo member that supervised the MPA, Alexander Shcherbakov. Virtually every available account of political work during the war stressed the need for disseminating these communiqués.⁶⁹

For the units at the front, the news was usually received in the political section at the divisional headquarters, and then wired or radioed to subordinate units. During a battle period, the regimental political workers often used their own radio equipment to get the news, and then worked out a short talk for their platoon agitators from their notes.⁷⁰ The radio was also used to send selected news items to the agitator in each tank during a major advance.⁷¹ Moreover, on occasions when it was difficult to make direct communications during unfavor-

able battle circumstances, airplanes have been used to drop leaflets with the latest Sovinformburo communiqués about Soviet victories. One report of such action in the Moscow campaign of 1942 told how "the political workers and agitators swiftly brought the glad news to each soldier," and how "the warriors threw themselves with new enthusiasm upon the enemy, forgetting their exhaustion."⁹²

The agitators brought the news items to each group of soldiers in the unit, even if it meant (as many stories reported) that they had to crawl along the front lines, moving from shell hole to trench, in spite of enemy fire or other dangers of battle.⁹³ Whenever possible, the agitator tried to do more than deliver or read the communiqué or news item. He was expected to explain the news in interesting language and make its significance intelligible to his audience, whether that be one man or thirty. Often graphic aids, such as mimeographed maps, were used to illustrate the talk. Sometimes he supplemented the official communiqués with items of news about the home towns of his men, using the available newspapers (usually found at divisional headquarters) and the latest letters from home.⁹⁴

Considerably less well-publicized, but much used in the battle period, are the negative techniques for controlling fear—techniques which exploit fear itself and the threat of violence to secure the fulfillment of military duties. The soldier must be taught, by the political workers and others, that he has no better alternative than to continue to hold his position in the lines; the only other alternative would be injury from his own superiors. The situation may be symbolized by the plans of *zampolit* Gorkhorov, whose prebattle plans were discussed in the preceding section of this chapter. A soldier in his company would have been exposed to many talks by Gorkhorov stressing the shame and disgrace that come to the coward and the deserter. But as the platoon moved forward toward the enemy, the soldier would have had not only the memory of Gorkhorov's words, but the actuality of a Communist holding the rear behind each platoon, gun in hand, to deal with any laggards.⁹⁵

Gorkhorov planned the precaution of maintaining the rear officers behind each platoon, but in other cases, the political workers may find situations on the battlefield for which no plans were made, but which require decisive action. This happened in a battle near the city of Goldap in Eastern Prussia, during 1944, according to a report written by the Regimental Agitator of the 758th Regiment, a report which was later captured by the Germans.⁹⁶ The battle for Goldap had been particularly bad, with the enemy fighting stubbornly and staging numerous counterattacks. "In such battles, especially high political-moral condition of the troops is necessary, and therefore in the front lines were placed the battalion deputy commanders for political affairs, the battalion Party organizers, and Komsomol organizers." Then the enemy attacked in superior strength and with great artillery support. The Soviet left flank, consisting of the 331st Rifle Division, collapsed, and the account continued:

In this battle, Captain Topyrik (a political worker) showed extraordinary courage, self-sacrifice and initiative. He mobilized his entire staff, including all couriers, in order to halt the fleeing soldiers of the 331st Rifle Division.

The enemy poured an unceasing fire at us from his extraordinarily strong artillery, mortar throwers and machineguns.

In the rain of bullets and shells, (regimental *zampolit*) Captain Kishin, Captain Topyrik and I used our guns to hold back the fleeing soldiers and even some officers of the 331st Rifle Division.

There was a moment in which the soldiers of our regiment also began to weaken and to prepare to take flight. However, the Communist and Komsomol agitators [account named seven of them] and others restored order with the use of their weapons.

AFTER THE BATTLE

As soon as the fighting subsides, the political workers are expected to begin the psychological preparations for the next battle. They help to review performances in the battle just ended, and try to exploit the rewards and punishments of specific individuals in their propaganda for the entire personnel. In their effort to maintain the sense of "membership in a warm collective," they check on the care of the wounded and keep in touch with some of those sent to hospitals, arrange for funeral ceremonies, and send letters to relatives of the deceased.⁹⁷ Finally, together with their aides, particularly those of the Communist membership, they examine the political work done during the battle and make plans to ensure improvement in the future.

Among the most pressing duties of the political workers is to inhibit any personnel tendencies toward weakness. The basic legislation defining that function at the beginning of 1941 specified that they must "conduct a merciless struggle with cowards, panic makers, and deserters, implanting military discipline and revolutionary vigilance with a firm hand."⁹⁸ They try to deal with each case in a fashion best calculated to make the deepest impression on the men committing the misdeeds, and at the same time to permit them to exploit the incidents for general propaganda purposes.

When the problem concerns a new recruit, the political workers often try to make him confess his cowardice in public, and then permit him to swear it will never happen again. A report of political work in the Stalingrad campaign, for example, illustrates this method. A soldier named Petrakov was brought into a group listening to a father and son talk about their deeds against the Germans in 1918 and in 1942. He listened for a time, then came forward, dropped to his knees, and said: "I confess, friends, I was a coward in the last battle, and hid behind my comrades. I swear to you that this shall never happen again; I shall pay for my cowardice with my blood, and I shall fight fearlessly with the foe."⁹⁹

The political workers are expected to be less gentle with the feelings of older soldiers, and to speak plainly or act sharply with them. During the battle for Moscow in late 1941, two soldiers, given a machine gun formerly used by the regiment's hero, abandoned it during a German attack. The gun was saved by a Communist, and after the battle, the *zampolit* talked to the men. He described the talk in these words:

I talked with the guilty men, Ryzhev and Melekhov. They were terribly embarrassed, but I did not spare their self-esteem. I called them cowards, and told them directly that they could be shot on the spot for such a crime. They promised that never again would anything similar occur with them. That may be, but they will remember the disgrace for their whole life.¹⁰⁰

Talking to the cowards and laggards is obviously only part of the task; the lessons implicit in their performances must be brought home to the entire

personnel of the unit. For this purpose, many talks are given to small groups, special meetings of the entire company are held to dramatize the lessons, and numerous leaflets and pamphlets are disseminated; the speakers and literature frankly reveal the names of the disgraced men, and warn that their examples should not be followed.¹⁰¹

Another important postbattle task is connected with the highly rated 'propaganda of heroism.' During the battle, the political workers collect every story of bravery and self-sacrifice for immediate use while the fighting goes on; now the most significant of these must be reported for possible nomination for official awards. When awards are announced, the political workers must arrange appropriate, solemn ceremonies, and then secure the widest possible publicity on them through talks, newspaper articles, leaflets, and letters to the home areas.

The heroes themselves must not only be honored, but the lessons implied in their feats must be made plain to the other men. They must be shown the rewards of heroism, persuaded that the performances of these heroes are expected of all good soldiers and patriots, told, usually by the heroes, how the deeds were done, and instructed to go and do likewise.¹⁰² During the Stalingrad battle, for example, 12 members of a Guard regiment distinguished themselves in a night attack. On the day after battle, they were awarded medals inscribed with the words "For Bravery," and the Party Organizers and platoon agitators in each company of the regiment organized a series of group discussions to exploit the event. Talks were given about the exploit; in some cases the heroes were present to give details and teach others how the brave deeds were accomplished; and everyone was encouraged to imitate the Guardsmen.¹⁰³

Closely related to this praise of the individual hero is the effort to glamorize the accomplishments of the military unit, and to make worthwhile the sacrifices and losses in the battles of the past and future. As soon as possible after the fighting subsides,¹⁰⁴ the political worker tries, through meetings of the entire unit or in talks to small groups, to explain what was accomplished in the battle,¹⁰⁵ how the results fit into the total strategy, what is being done by other units and on other fronts, and what the unit must try to do next. If the military unit has performed satisfactorily, commendations of various types will be received amid due ceremony and with much publicity.

A form of commendation frequently used during wartime, which lent itself to exploitation by the political workers, was the congratulatory letter from the army's headquarters. An example of this type of commendation (captured by the Germans) was sent to the 88th Rifle Division after it had played an important role in the capture of Goldap, Eastern Prussia. The text read:

To the Men, Junior Officers and Officers of the 88th
Vitebak Red Banner
88th Rifle Division

Dear Comrades!

The Military Council and the Political Section of the Army send you warm greetings and congratulations on your recent and glorious victory over the German-Fascist scoundrels, when you took important enemy strong-points covering the passes to the central areas of Eastern Prussia, and the railroad and key points in the city of Goldap.

With the taking of the city of Goldap, you have inflicted a new and heavy blow on the opposing enemy forces, and demonstrated once more the invincible power and strength of the Red Army.

In the struggle for the complete and lasting annihilation of the German aggressors on German soil, your new victory is a milestone on the road to the approaching final collapse of the German imperialists and their armies.

The Soviet people and our entire homeland are proud of your new and overwhelming victory over the worst foe of the Soviet people—the evil German-Fascist oppressors.

I am convinced that in the coming battles you will inflict even stronger blows against the hated Hitlerites, and will help to annihilate them. Wreak unmerciful revenge on the Fascist child-murderers and hangmen for the blood and tears; destroy in tireless struggle the German-Fascist aggressors.

Long live the glorious Red Army!

Long live the great leader and strategist of the Red Army and the Soviet people, the great comrade Stalin!

Commander of the 31st Army, Hero of the Soviet Union
Colonel General Glagalev

[Countersigned by members of the Military Council
and head of the political section of the 31st Army]¹⁰⁸

Commendations and congratulations of this type were not only read at meetings and referred to in talks and articles, but were often presented in leaflet form to each soldier in the military unit. The most important form of commendation, of course, was that coming from Stalin himself, when a unit was mentioned in one of his Orders of the Day or frequent communiques, or was sent a special message. An example of what was expected to follow such commendations was found in a report on political work in the 1945 Japanese campaign:

When a commendatory Order was sent by the Supreme Generalissimo, Comrade Stalin, to the troops, our Party-political work was completely concentrated on the task of bringing this document to the entire personnel, and through it to raise even higher their offensive spirit. Individual commendatory leaflets, with extracts from the text of Comrade Stalin's Order, were printed by political sections of the formations. These leaflets were distributed among the troops and handed to each warrior who had distinguished himself in battle. In many units Communist and Komsomol meetings were conducted with the agenda reading "The commendatory Order of Comrade Stalin, and the tasks of the Communists (or, of the Komsomol members)!" The commendation of Comrade Stalin evoked tremendous joy and enthusiasm among the troops. In their statements at numerous meetings, gatherings and group discussions, soldiers and officers swore to give all their powers to the fulfillment of the tasks posed for them by the commanders, the Bolshevik Party and the Homeland.¹⁰⁷

A function usually given high priority on the Soviet scene is the review of past political work. Discussions are held on this subject, defects pointed out, plans made for improvement in the future, and reports made to superior levels.¹⁰⁸ Not only is this review incumbent upon the professional political workers, but it must be taken seriously by the Party organizations as well. An example of the meetings held up for them as models may be seen in a report in *Red Star*, of a postbattle meeting visited by a political officer in 1944.¹⁰⁹ Incidentally, actual reports of such meetings (captured later by the Germans) indicate that the pattern of this model is followed in practice.

The major covering the meeting arrived shortly after the battalion had left the battle, and he found the Communists assembling in a hut. "Their twisted

features and tired eyes, red from lack of sleep, told of the men's fatigue." Although the situation was still tense and the Communists knew that their unit might have to re-enter the battle, they had decided to meet because "it was necessary to talk over the results of the battle, to weigh the positive results thus far produced, to note the deficiencies, to hear the orders of the commander and to assign tasks." For this, they felt, "it was worth sacrificing an hour of rest."

The meeting was conducted by the battalion Party Organizer, Sgt. Mikhail Statnikov, a young man who had only recently come into Party work and who had been a company *partorg* only two months earlier, when this offensive campaign had just begun. The tone for the meeting was set by the battalion commander who reported on the results of the fighting, the contributions of the Communists, the lessons to be drawn, and the problems which lay ahead. Then several Communist members spoke, complaining particularly about the shortcomings of several new men, and the need for further training. Finally, a group of speakers turned to the problems demanding immediate solution, especially the tasks of preparing for the special conditions of night battles. Plans were made, and specified in the resolution which ended the meeting's main business. Then the battalion commander called on the Communists to honor the memory of their dead comrades, and they all took this oath: "We swear, Comrades, to take revenge for the blood of our comrades, for the blood of the Soviet people, for all who have been slain by the German butchers."

Chapter 19

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DIRECTED AGAINST ENEMY TROOPS

CONCEPTS AND AIMS

Soviet concepts and aims in psychological warfare are clouded in mystery, and are rarely disclosed in public materials. There is some basis for analysis by Western observers, however, in the materials issued by the political apparatus for the edification of its own propaganda workers in the armed forces, data from non-Soviet sources on such special experiments as the Free Germany Committee in World War II, examples of the propaganda actually disseminated to the enemy, and the basic principles inherent in all Communist propaganda activity. Properly analyzed, these can provide a basis for a hypothesis on the general aims of Soviet psychological warfare in a military campaign, and can give some information on the techniques and methods used to achieve these aims.

Judging from these materials, psychological warfare is viewed by the political leaders and propagandists as an attack upon the cohesive elements that bind together the multitude of individual personalities in the enemy forces and form them into an integrated and efficiently functioning unit. Among the most important of these elements, in the Soviet view, are the system of military discipline (especially when it provides an effective officer-soldier relationship), the sense of loyalty binding military personnel to the political regime of their homeland, and the troops' confidence in their military power and eventual victory.

One major aim of Soviet psychological warfare is the exploitation of any weaknesses in these binding elements, in order to secure the disintegration and "decomposition" of the enemy forces' unity. This purpose is evident in a significant statement by a political officer who directed Soviet psychological warfare in a minor campaign against the Japanese, and who headed the organizational unit in the armed forces which supervised psychological warfare against enemy troops in World War II. In a history of the Khalkha-Gol campaign against the Japanese in 1939, written for the training of the political workers in the armed forces, Commissar Burtsev referred to an important type of information as being needed in operations "calculated to bring about the weakening and decomposition" (*razlozhenie*) of the enemy forces. He stressed his belief that ignorance of the factors which made the Japanese soldiers obedient to the orders of their officers made it difficult for the Soviets to "subvert" (*podorvat'*) and "weaken the morale condition of the Japanese army."¹ In another place in the same study, he indicated that the propaganda directed at the Manchurian puppet

troops in the Japanese forces was also intended to facilitate the process of "decomposition" of the Manchurian units.²

These concepts and purposes are clearly evident in the techniques used by the Soviets during military campaigns of the past two decades. In the 1939 campaign against the Japanese, major emphasis was placed on the effort to subvert the authority of the Japanese officers over their men, even to the extent of encouraging the latter to make physical attacks on their commanders. During the short campaign of September 1939 against Poland, propagandists sought to convince the Polish soldiers that their national leaders and military officers were their "class enemies." During World War II, the Soviets attempted to persuade their prisoners of war who were Wehrmacht officers to adopt an anti-Nazi (but non-Communist) political program and use their military influence to overthrow the Nazi regime.

Another major concept is related to proper exploitation of military power. In the Soviet view, military victory depends not only on military superiority, but upon the enemy audience's belief in this superiority. Day in and day out, propagandists strive to convince the enemy troops that their cause is doomed to failure, and that they are themselves moving toward inevitable doom. In his report on the 1939 campaign, Burtsev was particularly pleased with the alleged results of the Soviets' praise of their own "invincible forces" and "awesome armaments," and he asserted that this propaganda "greatly influenced the morale of the Japanese soldiers," because it "subverted their faith in their own officers and their own arms, and consequently subverted the military capabilities of the Japanese-Manchurian troops."³

What results do the Soviets hope to achieve with these methods? At the very least, they seek a diminution of the enemy soldiers' eagerness to fight—the opposite, in other words, of that "aggressive zeal" that they seek in their own soldiers. If they see hope of somewhat greater success, they may seek to intensify resentments within the enemy ranks, and to encourage the manifestation of these resentments in slowness to fulfill orders, in talk within informal groups against individual officers, in anxiety about the homefront, and in the individual soldier's growing fear that he will never get home again. If their propaganda is moderately effective, the Bolsheviks hope for desertions on the part of individuals or small groups, either by escaping back of their own lines or coming over to the Soviets, before the enemy unit has been completely smashed. They also want overt manifestations of friction between various groups of enemy soldiers and officers, and particularly between officers and their subordinates. Results of this type can be achieved under ideal conditions, on what might be called the tactical level, through propaganda directed at the enemy audience at the front lines and on the battlefield.

When conditions are believed to be extremely favorable, which means, among other things, when large-scale military victories are being won or Soviet military superiority is obvious, the Soviets may aim their sights higher and seek results on the strategic levels. That is, they may aim at exploiting major antagonisms believed to exist within the enemy nation in order to create civil war or its equivalent. In the 1939-40 war with Finland, for example, they actually announced that a new Finnish government (obviously dominated by Comintern employees and Soviet citizens) was challenging the regime in Helsinki, and was coming "home" behind the "liberating" Red Army. In the German-Soviet war

of 1941-45, the Free Germany Committee was created in an effort to break down the relationship between the Nazi regime and the German military officials. In both cases, the Soviets evidently hoped that a large element in the enemy Army would turn from fighting the military forces and direct its power against its own civilian government—resulting in a political revolution, a civil war, or at least large-scale confusion among the enemy military personnel. None of these strategic aims was achieved, of course, in these particular wars.

BASIC OPERATIONAL FACTORS

In their efforts to attain these objectives, Soviet propagandists must cope with various factors which affect the methods to be used by them. These factors are reflected, for example, in the types of personnel available for their operations. The narrowing and xenophobic effects which the Soviet system has upon the inhabitants of the USSR has a definite influence on the type of men used by the MPA. The typical citizens (certainly the counterparts of those who would be normally available in other countries) are not usually useful here. Few of the trusted have traveled abroad, are able to understand the elements that concern the soldiers of other lands, or have a real grasp of foreign languages. For these and related reasons, they are hardly promising timber for psychological warfare. Three special types of persons are available in their place.

Among the citizenry, there are a few men who can be used, although there is obviously need for them in other parts of the bureaucracy. From the diplomatic corps comes a small number, such as the handful who helped to set up the Free Germany Committee in World War II. A few others can be transferred from the apparatus in control of the international Communist movement, where they were trained to direct foreign operations in propaganda and subversive fields. This group is completed when the MPA selects from its own apparatus a few men who have some knowledge of foreign languages. Typical of the last are General Burtsev, who headed the MPA's Section for Work with Foreign Troops in World War II, and Colonel Tulpanov, who directed psychological warfare operations on an important Front in that conflict.

A second manpower pool is composed of the foreign Communists who come to Russia on assignment or as refugees. The Kremlin's relationship with the international Communist movement ensures that such men will be available from virtually every country of the world, and new propagandist cadres can be secured whenever needed. In the war with Germany, the Soviets used such men as Pieck and Ulbricht, long associated with the German Communist Party. There were also Comintern agents such as Zaisser (who became head of an "anti-Fascist school" to train prisoners of war) and "Professor Arnold" (who was largely responsible, apparently, for the execution of plans to establish the Free Germany Committee), and some men used in front-line propaganda, such as Friedrich Wolf.⁴ However, there are serious limitations in this type of personnel, for these men are themselves usually reprehensible to the soldiers of their own nations; their partisan appeals normally do not find significant response among non-Communists; and they are often out of tune with any army audience.

The third type available is the prisoner of war, who is not only necessary to psychological warfare operations of the Soviet military forces, but who is tra-

ditionally well used by the Bolsheviks. Perhaps the classic campaign for successful propagandizing and use of prisoners of war was conducted by the Soviet work in the period of 1917-18.⁶ In campaigns of the past two decades, these war prisoners have been indispensable to the Soviets. Not only do they have the necessary language skills, but they alone can provide the direct appeal and the personal approach to their audience which the Soviets have always deemed important in their own propaganda operations. In the German war, the Soviets were able to find a few former Communists among the German troops, some who willingly became Communists, such as Captain Hadermann,⁶ and such personages as Count von Einsiedel, Bismarck's great-grandson, who lent himself to Soviet exploitation without many qualms.⁷

A second major factor which influences psychological warfare methods involves the Russian reputation among foreign peoples, especially in Europe, for animal-like brutality and toughness. It is a great obstacle, especially if the Soviets are suffering defeats in the early part of a war, for those who have the task of persuading enemy soldiers to surrender when their own armies may win. German and Japanese sources, for example, tell of the terror which their men expressed at the thought of falling into the hands of the Soviets; many were convinced that they would be tortured and perhaps murdered. On the other hand, this reputation can be useful as the fury of the fighting increases and the enemy troops weary of the long, bitter campaign. Under such circumstances, the men may become more receptive to propaganda claims that the Russians will never admit defeat and will eventually win regardless of early setbacks.

As a matter of fact, one of the invariable characteristics of Soviet propaganda is the continuous emphasis on the great military resources of the USSR, the toughness and determination of its people, and the invincibility of their armed forces. The men in charge of Soviet propaganda have never appeared to doubt that their psychological warfare operations are only auxiliary to military activities, and they try to exploit the latter.

Of less importance, but used nevertheless by the MPA in its enemy propaganda, is the widespread curiosity about the Soviet Union. Many men have a deeply rooted fear of the Russian people and the regime, but they couple this with considerable puzzlement concerning the country that has been the subject of so much propaganda, and they wonder whether the USSR is a Hell or Utopia. This curiosity is exploited, although only as a minor theme, in the propaganda output to the enemy soldiers in the front lines. It is difficult to judge the extent of actual interest on the part of this audience, but it is noteworthy that most of this propaganda is reserved for the special and captive audience of the prisoners of war.

A final aspect of Soviet psychological warfare methods which should be noted is the propagandists' complete lack of concern about consistency. There are often sharp contradictions and contrasts between the materials issued to different audiences during the same period, or even to the same audience during different periods. Thus, the Soviets ridiculed Emperor-worship in Japan in propaganda to their own people and to Western audiences, at the very time when they were referring in respectful terms to the Emperor in propaganda to Japanese soldiers, and trying to exploit the men's reverence for their sovereign in the effort to incite distrust of their military officers. The Soviets were demanding vengeance upon all Nazis and those who had worked with them, at the same

time that the Soviet-sponsored Free Germany Committee was appealing for support from repentant Nazis. The Soviet propagandists were inciting their own people to bitter anger through stories about the cruel treatment inside Germany meted out to workers brought from conquered countries, and at the same time were telling the German soldiers that they were suffering on the Eastern Front while foreign workers were living well within Germany and basking in the affections of wives of absent soldiers.

OPERATIONAL PATTERNS

Structure for Psychological Warfare

A striking characteristic of the psychological warfare operations of the MPA in recent campaigns and wars has been the *ad hoc* nature of its organizational structure in this field. In fact, descriptions of the political apparatus of the armed forces in peacetime make no mention of any units concerned with planning or executing such operations. Thus, Burtsev's detailed report of the military campaign against the Japanese in 1939 clearly indicated that, in the headquarters of the Special Far Eastern Corps assigned to conduct this campaign, the political section did not at first have a psychological warfare unit.

Fighting in the Far Eastern campaign began in early July 1939, but very little was done at first about propaganda directed at enemy troops, because of "great organizational-technical difficulties." After the actual fighting had begun, the head of the MPA sent a "guiding telegram" which directed that something be done immediately so that "the ideological struggle is developed along a broad front."⁸ On July 10, three political workers were assigned to organize and guide this operation, and only by August 15 was there formed the Section for Work Among the Enemy Troops. Even then, the Section suffered from many handicaps, and the MPA chief had to intervene personally to secure adequate cooperation from the Air Forces for the dissemination of printed materials among Japanese and Manchurian troops.⁹

The Soviets had at least paper plans for psychological warfare when the German war broke out in 1941, judging by a detailed program for political operations written on May 1 and captured by the Germans in early August of that year. The later plan called for the establishment of a Section for Work Among the Population and Enemy Troops, which would issue a German newspaper and large numbers of leaflets, begin radio broadcasts, and carry on propaganda among prisoners of war.¹⁰

It was only with the unfolding of World War II that the Kremlin established a broad network of units supporting the armed forces by propaganda to enemy troops. Supervising this network was Politburo member Shcherbakov, in his capacity as chief of the MPA of the USSR Armed Forces, and he himself took a personal hand in such important matters as the experiment with the Free Germany Committee.¹¹ The general operations of the Army's system for psychological warfare were the responsibility of the MPA's Seventh Section, headed by Burtsev who had been in charge of the Section for Work Among Enemy Troops in the Japanese campaign of 1939. Count von Einsiedel, who was captured during the Stalingrad campaign and was later used at various places in the Soviet propa-

ganda system, tells in his diary of being permitted to see Burtsev when he had a complaint. He describes Burtsev as a man who had originally been a glass blower, and was now "an uncouth churl, whose fat jowls hung down over the collar of his uniform."¹²

Within the Political Administration of every Front was established a Section for Work Among Enemy Troops, to direct psychological warfare within the group of Soviet armies under its command. On the important Fourth Ukrainian Front, for example, where the army group was headed by Marshal Tolbukhin, the chief of the Section for Work Among Enemy Troops was Col. Sergei Tulpanov; on the Second Belorussian Front commanded by Marshal Rokossovski, the Section in the Political Administration was under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Sposhdanski.¹³

Tulpanov probably represented the most successful political officer in psychological warfare at this level, and he was given an important post in Russia's postwar military government in the Soviet Zone of Germany, in charge of the Information Section of the Soviet Military Administration.¹⁴ Count von Einsiedel gives Tulpanov a place of honor in his own valuable report by printing a front-page photograph of the Russian, second only to the photographs of von Einsiedel himself. Tulpanov was a teacher (allegedly of literature) in a military academy in Leningrad before World War II. He had a good command of the German language, and apparently knew how to handle those Germans with whom he had to deal.¹⁵

A Section for Work Among Enemy Troops was established at the brigade and divisional levels in most front-line units. It was relatively small, and apparently relied for some of its personnel on the available supply of foreign Communists and trustworthy prisoners of war. In the war with the Nazis, very extensive use was made of this foreign personnel. By the end of the second year of the war, each Soviet front or army group had at least one "Front Plenipotentiary" sent by the Free Germany Committee, but under the direct control of the MPA,¹⁶ and as many as 60 "Front-Helpers."¹⁷ These men were used primarily to assist in propaganda work—writing, translating, otherwise helping with the production of leaflets and other published materials, manning the radio and loud-speaker equipment at the front lines, and advising on other media. Moreover, they were expected to assist in intelligence operations, interrogating prisoners and studying reports received from other sources, to begin the process of converting prisoners, and to help organize special groups that would infiltrate the German lines in the hope of establishing illegal groups within the Wehrmacht.¹⁸ In a recent letter to an American researcher, von Einsiedel estimated that there were some six hundred Germans used in these auxiliary capacities during the war.¹⁹

Intelligence Methods

In his analysis of psychological warfare techniques, Burtsev emphasized the Soviet view that it is imperative to secure adequate intelligence concerning "the morale-political condition" of the enemy troops, declaring that "without this knowledge, it is impossible to develop any successful political work" among them.²⁰ In actual fact, Soviet concepts and techniques in propagandizing demand detailed information about the cohesive elements in the enemy organization that

must be weakened, potential sources of conflict between the various groups that make up the enemy audience, and the bases of resentment and tension that influence the attitudes of each soldier.

In specific terms, Soviets are interested in intelligence concerning the system of indoctrination used by the enemy military organization, especially the efficiency of the methods used, the attitudes and ideas encouraged, and the subsequent resistance or receptivity of the men to the usual propaganda themes. The political officers are particularly alert for clues about the "moods" of the men, their attitudes toward and relationship with their officers, their complaints and anxieties about conditions in their military units and news from home, and their expectations about the immediate future.²¹ This information is gathered through formal questionnaires, in "comradely talks" with those prisoners who are the most likely prospects as informational sources, through careful scrutiny of enemy newspapers and other indications of propaganda output, and by intensive study of captured mail of the enemy troops and of letters found on dead and captured soldiers.²²

Some valuable insights can be gained from an examination of a directive issued by the head of the MPA in the early part of World War II, setting forth the type of questions to ask German prisoners for purposes of psychological and political intelligence.²³ This questionnaire, which contains over 140 topics and bases for discussion, was found in German files, and the story of its capture from the Soviets appears to be authentic. Part I asks for general data about the captured soldier, and suggests 25 initial questions about such matters as his military rank, education, civilian occupation, family status, and the conditions under which he was captured. Special interest also seems to be shown in political questions, including the organizations and political party to which he belonged during and before the war, and the existence of any political refugees among his friends or relatives, particularly those who had been persecuted or punished for political reasons.

Part II of the questionnaire is a detailed interrogation concerning conditions within the German Army. Section A, "The Soldier's Life," calls for reports on rations, equipment, medical care and health conditions, time given for rest and sleep, frequency of mail from home and censorship, opportunities for sexual intercourse, and the soldiers' main topic of conversation. Part B, dealing with "spiritual guidance and morale of the soldier," inquires concerning classes for political instruction, topics of talks and lectures given to the soldiers, availability and types of books and periodicals, use made by the prisoners of these materials and the extent of their knowledge about the military situation at the front, the role of the chaplain, use made of radio and films, and the activities of the German propaganda companies. Section C, investigating "relations with superiors," seeks information concerning the population strata from which the officers come, their treatment of subordinates, their concern about the needs and complaints of subordinates, evidence of their mistreatment of the soldiers, and their methods of winning confidence of the troops under them. The last sections of this part concern relations among the men themselves, data about the military situation, matters of discipline in each soldier's unit, and operations of the security organizations in the German forces.

Part III involves the captured soldier's knowledge of conditions in the rear areas and homefront. It seeks data on how the workers and farmers are getting

along under Nazi rule, the effect of the war on the average German family's standard of living and relations with the bureaucracy, and the political situation at home. Special attention is given to any data that can be secured on conflicts between workers and foremen in factories, clashes between the civil population and the police or the SS, stories about the Nazi leaders on the village and district level and the people's feelings about them, activities of any anti-Hitler groups at home and in the armed forces, evidences of suppression of the churches, and reports of attitudes about Goebbels' propaganda and the war with Russia.

The final part of the questionnaire concerns political convictions and feelings of the prisoner, and his reactions to Soviet propaganda. He is asked about his attitudes toward the Hitler regime, the national socialist "leaders," and "so-called 'German' Socialism." His reactions are checked on such matters as the German occupation of various European countries, the policies of looting and violence, and the doctrines of racial hatred and class supremacy. Detailed examination is made of his memories concerning the outbreak of the war against Russia, his attitude at that time about Russia, and his experiences before and during the early battles of the war. An effort is made to secure all possible data about the conduct of the German soldiers toward the Russian population, particularly any cases of cruelty and mistreatment by the former. Then the prisoner is asked about his attitudes toward Russian people, the Soviet power, the combat efficiency of the Red Army, and his ideas about Communism, Bolsheviks, and military commissars.

There is considerable interest in whether the German soldiers read the Russian leaflets and newspapers, whether they hear German-language broadcasts of Radio Moscow and the Soviet loud-speaker broadcasts at the front. The soldier's opinions are solicited about any and all aspects of Soviet propaganda, his questions and his suggestions are requested, and to conclude, he is asked for his ideas about the reasons that German soldiers are reluctant to surrender to the Soviet troops. The same Soviet types of interest are evident in the reports by Germans who underwent such political interrogations when they were Soviet prisoners.²⁴

Use of Media

The MPA is concerned primarily with propaganda directed toward the enemy troops at or near the front lines. Those methods and media are selected for utilization, therefore, which will have the most direct, personal, and moving effect on that audience. The Soviets rely most heavily upon leaflets and other printed matter, and, wherever possible, use the radio and loud-speaker.

Most frequently used are the leaflets and pamphlets, most of which can be written, produced, and disseminated with the facilities available to the Sections for Work Among Enemy Troops, at the divisional and army levels. During the early months of the German war, *Red Star* claimed that some 35 million copies of printed materials had been distributed among the German troops on one front during a period of several weeks.²⁵ German reports from individual armies sometimes indicated that their territory was virtually inundated by Soviet leaflets in the desperate efforts to reach the vulnerable German soldiers and to influence the receptive ones.²⁶ Some indication of the variety of approaches used may be seen from the German report that, during one week in early 1942,

some 57 types of leaflets were dropped in the German-occupied territories in the Baltics and Poland, of which 32 were completely new in content.²⁷

Newspapers and other periodicals have less direct appeal and are more difficult to adapt to front-line conditions, but the Soviets usually have at least one of them in each campaign. During the 1939 fighting with the Japanese, the MPA issued a newspaper entitled *The Soldier's Voice* in the Japanese language and another in Chinese. In World War II, the MPA put out several in German, such as *Truth, Soldier's Truth*, and others. An illustrated periodical entitled *New Life* was issued twice monthly in Swedish, for the Swedish-speaking soldiers in the Finnish Army. Another type of publication was composed of Soviet leaflets made up to look like the first page of German Army newspapers, with such titles as *The Break-Through, The Front-Fighter, and The Front*.²⁸

One of the most elaborate periodicals was the four-page *Front Illustrierte für den Deutschen Soldaten (Illustrated Front Periodical for German Soldiers)*, which was widely disseminated. One copy, issued near the end of the Stalingrad campaign, had a large photograph on the front page which showed a view of the wrecked city, with large piles of German corpses lying in front of ruined buildings. On the two inside pages were many photographs of prisoners, crippled German tanks, and other signs of German defeat, all under a streamer headline which simply said "Seventy Thousand," this being the number of soldiers who had already surrendered before Christmas. On the last page was a drawing of huge pincers closing in on the remaining German troops, with the caption beneath reading: "GERMAN SOLDIERS! Remember that one who surrenders is no longer our enemy. His life is saved. Seventy thousand of your colleagues have already escaped this. They have saved themselves. Follow their example!"²⁹

The Soviet emphasis on the direct appeal and the personal impact in psychological warfare tends to heighten the importance of oral media, especially the radio and the loud-speaker at the front lines. In actual fact, the radio has less importance, since its impact is rather diffuse and its range very wide. Official German analyses tended to discount the effectiveness of Soviet radio activity.³⁰ It is noteworthy, however, that when the Soviets had decided to invest in the Free Germany Committee during World War II that they permitted the officials of that body to have from three to eight broadcasts daily.³¹

The Soviets have made continuous use of the loud-speakers in most of their recent campaigns.³² In the German war, they made special use of their POWs and German Communists for intensive efforts. A microphone would be set up on a truck parked within one or two kilometers from the enemy's front line, and the German-speaking propagandists would be audible to the troops across the line. The German Communists would read the latest news and make general appeals, but the prisoners of war would be much more specific in their efforts to influence their former comrades and friends. Often men would be used soon after their capture, when they could speak to the units they had just left, referring to common complaints, naming their officers, and trying to answer questions that they knew were in the minds of the soldiers.³³

An example of the direct appeal is found in a report of a talk given during a battle in early 1942:

Attention soldiers. This is your comrade, Corporal Hans Mueller speaking. Yesterday I surrendered to the Russians. I will no longer give my life for the madman Hitler. Think before it is too late. Trust me, your friend. You are caught like rats in a mouse-

trap. If you don't cease this insane struggle you will be exterminated. Surrender! This is the only way to have your life. You hear me, Jchann? I, your friend, am telling it to you. Hear me, Peter, Karl, Michel? Enough crawling in the mud before that scoundrel Lieutenant Vogel—he will send you straight to the grave.³⁴

A similar method of direct appeal, symbolic of the Soviet urge for a personal impact on its audience, may be illustrated by the tactics used in the Cherkassy encirclement. All generals and high officers of the Free Germany Committee were ordered to write individual notes to their acquaintances among the German commanders in the encircled troops urging them to end their resistance, and thus save seventy-five thousand lives and avoid a repetition of the damage of Stalingrad. Generals von Seydlitz and Korfes were placed near the front lines, and they made personal appeals to the staffs of the surrounded units.

MAJOR THEMES AND TECHNIQUES

Soviet Might and the Senselessness of Fighting It

A very large part of Soviet propaganda content is concerned with describing sources of power, containing obvious lessons for the enemy audience. The leaflets and other media used in every campaign are replete with references to Soviet military might and the USSR's superiority in armament quality and quantity, in trained and courageous men, and in skilled leadership.³⁵ In the early part of the war, this was supplemented by references to the additional power contributed by the USSR's allies. A pamphlet series entitled *Auslands Nachrichten* [*Foreign News*] specialized in the reporting of news items about American and British military preparations for a Second Front in Europe.³⁶ Other leaflets made much of the fact that not only did Germany have merely 80 million inhabitants as against Russia's "200 million patriots," but that in addition "520 million citizens of the British Empire are fighting fascism. The whole of mankind is with us."³⁷

Above all, however, the stress was on Soviet military efficiency and invincibility, and the senselessness of efforts to conquer the USSR. A typical leaflet, distributed during the German 1942 campaign in the Crimea when the seaport of Sevastopol was the chief target, warned:

Read and pass along to your comrades

SEVASTOPOL IS UNCONQUERABLE

German Soldiers!

Again your commanders are making a senseless attempt to seize the unconquerable fortress of Sevastopol.

The senseless plan of the Hitlerite generals in October and December of the past year cost the German Army 75,000 fallen soldiers and officers, 482 guns, 350 tanks and other military vehicles, 275 flying machines and other military material.

The present effort to seize Sevastopol is costing you an even dearer price.

In 10 days alone, from June 7 to 16, the German Wehrmacht has had destroyed 60,000 men dead and wounded, 150 tanks and 120 airplanes.

On June 12, 3 infantry regiments and a cavalry squadron were destroyed.

Your commanders have been forced to bring in their reserves here, although these also will be destroyed.

Foreseeing the failure of their senseless undertaking, the Hitler-fascists are holding in readiness an excuse for their defeat. On June 11, the German radio declared that Sevastopol is very strongly fortified, and therefore the struggle will last for a long time.

Sevastopol is unconquerable. Your attack will be smashed on the iron courage of its defenders.³⁶

Another factor which adds much to the Soviets' defensive power, and one also used to great propagandistic advantage in the German war was the much publicized weather of eastern Europe, especially the Russian winter. The German soldiers were frequently reminded of its horrors in such leaflets as this one about an old German mythological figure, comparable in some ways to Mother Nature:

Read and pass along

FRAU HOLLE IS ALREADY HERE

In the Don steppes, she is something different than in Germany.

This is not the famous, kindhearted Frau Holle, who pours out her cheerful flock throughout the world.

The Russian Frau Holle—this is

ICE-COLD WINDS

ANGRY FROSTS

FEARFUL SNOWSTORMS

German Soldier!

Has Frau Holle yet paid you a visit?³⁸

Another widely disseminated leaflet had two photographs, one of a German soldier who had wisely surrendered and found himself surrounded by smiling Soviet officers, and the other of a German private frozen to death somewhere on the Eastern Front. The captions below them read: "Do you want this or this?"⁴⁰

This theme of power exploits the enemy soldiers' very human fears of injury and death. Burtsev's analysis of psychological warfare stressed the need to "intensify the antiwar moods" of the enemy.⁴¹ Much of the propaganda disseminated during the German war, as well as during the fighting with the Japanese in 1939 and in 1945, stressed the horrors of war, described the cripples of former battles, and made innumerable references to death, the sad faith of soldiers' widows, and the loneliness of their families.

Among a collection of propaganda material shown to foreign correspondents during World War II was a picture postcard depicting a field of wooden crosses with vultures fluttering above them and a single helmet in the foreground, and entitled: "Living space in the East."⁴² Another had photographs of three German women, each carrying a baby in her arms, above a caption declaring: "It was Hitler who made widows of these women, orphans of these children."⁴³ Many of the other leaflets shown to foreign correspondents harped on enemy casualties at some length and with considerable frequency;⁴⁴ a Communist correspondent stressed this point in an article on leaflets, writing: "Red Army propaganda is linked up above all with what the German soldier daily sees before his very eyes, namely, the unparalleled German losses and the endless character and complete absence of perspective of the war they [the Germans] are waging."⁴⁵

Climaxing the materials stressing this theme, and closely connected with many others, are the continuing claims of minor successes and major victories which become salient features of Soviet psychological warfare in any war. Soon after the beginning of hostilities, there is issued a steady flow of communiqués, news stories, and summary statements, all emphasizing the trend toward victory and the foolishness of any dream that the Soviet Union could be defeated. Many pamphlets about Soviet power and invincibility are signed by prisoners of war to give them greater persuasive power and credibility.⁴⁶

Among the results that the Soviets apparently seek through the "power" propaganda is to give a foreboding of inevitable doom to every enemy soldier receptive to suggestion. That objective seems to be well expressed in a large sepia print that was dropped over the German lines, during Christmastime in 1942. It bore a large picture of a Christmas tree glowing with tinsel and candles. The scene about the tree was one designed to evoke memories of home to many Germans: on one side sat a kindly grandmother, her knitting in her lap; in the other chair sat a plump German *hausfrau*, with two small children playing at her knee, as she read a letter from the front. The only caption at the bottom of the picture said simply: "You'll never see home again."⁴⁷

Moral Weakness of the Enemy Leadership

In contrast to themes proclaiming Soviet power and might, a great deal of Soviet propaganda contains highly moralistic preaching intended to discredit the enemy leadership and destroy the enemy soldier's faith in it, to stimulate doubts concerning the worthwhileness of his own sacrifices, or the desirability of further loyalty to his own officers or to his nation's existing civil government. Thus, the Soviets always devote much attention to "exposing" the enemy's purported war aims, presenting their own versions of the true aims of the enemy, and calling on the enemy troops to consider why they are risking life and limb. Many pamphlets of 1941-45 asked German troops: "Why are you fighting in the Soviet Union? We never had any designs on Germany."⁴⁸

The Soviet analysis of their propaganda in the 1939 campaign against the Japanese stressed the special importance of criticism of war aims. On the basis of information obtained from POW questionnaires and counterintelligence activities, it was decided that although the Japanese soldiers definitely did not want to fight, their morale was still surprisingly high when they were ordered into the front lines and sent into battle. The Soviet political officers decided that the key to this paradox was the ability of the Japanese officers to convince the soldiers that the Manchurian-Mongolian battle had been started when the Soviet-Mongolian troops had launched an attack which imperiled vital Japanese interests in the puppet state of Manchukuo. That was why most Japanese soldiers insisted that they did not want to fight, but were "obligated to fulfill the order of the Emperor to defend the Homeland and the friendly state of Manchukuo."⁴⁹ In order to hasten the "disintegration" of the enemy forces, the Soviet propagandists decided it was imperative to expose this "delusion" and persuade the soldiers that the Japanese generals alone were responsible for the war, and a special campaign was devoted to this purpose.⁵⁰

In keeping with Soviet ideological propaganda, discussed in the following section, enemy soldiers are usually told that they are fighting and dying on

behalf of the capitalists or imperialists of their own people, and are called upon to refuse to risk their lives for such causes. A leaflet issued in the Japanese language urged:

Japanese soldiers!

What are you getting and what will you get from the conquests of new lands and the enslavement of other peoples? Hundreds of thousands of your fellow soldiers, who fought in China, became cripples. With outstretched hands, like beggars, they go along the streets and villages. They are starving, they live on the streets, dying like flies. They are wanted by no one and are helped by no one. You may all expect the same fate. The war is necessary only to the generals and to the rich people. They grow wealthy on this war. Soldiers! Throw away your arms; leave the front!⁵¹

Many similar leaflets about the true aims of the Nazis were circulated during World War II.⁵²

A favorite Soviet propaganda theme used on Soviet troops concerns the inhuman conduct of the enemy, one of the arguments to prove that his military power must be destroyed. The "hate" themes, used so extensively and effectively in propagandizing the soldier, depend in part on continuing charges of enemy atrocities and inhuman conduct toward the civilian population and military prisoners. It has been used, and will continue to be used, in virtually every propaganda campaign against a military enemy, including the Finns, Japanese, Germans, and the Americans. To a lesser extent, this propaganda material is also found in propaganda disseminated among enemy troops, used in an effort to arouse a sense of shame among the enemy soldiers, a feeling of revulsion against their own leaders, and a desire to break with them by deserting or surrendering.⁵³

Another aspect of this moralistic propaganda concerns the relationships existing among people of the enemy nation, particularly those affecting the enemy soldiers. The Soviets try to exploit any active or potential resentments stemming from these relationships, whether they be due to disparities between the rich and the poor, officers and privates, military men and civilians. An excellent example of the Bolsheviks' lack of principle in propaganda, and their willingness to utilize all resentments, may be seen in an issue in 1943, of the Soviet publication *Illustrated Front Periodical for German Soldiers*. One page was devoted to a group of cartoons, contrasting the life of foreign workers in Germany with that of the German soldier at the front.

The first cartoon shows a foreign worker at the family table eating a tremendous meal, in the company of the German soldier's wife; an accompanying cartoon shows a lonely soldier in a foxhole. The caption under these two cartoons: "The foreigner is filling himself up with the food that you are sending home and, in addition, courts your wife. You get very little food and You are not encumbered by the company of ladies." The second group of cartoons shows the foreign worker in shirtsleeves, passionately embracing the soldier's wife, while the soldier is at the front, being shot in the back by a partisan girl. The text under them reads: "The foreigner makes love to your wife—you get the tenderness of the partisan girl." A final set of cartoons shows the foreign worker in top hat, escorting the soldier's wife, while a battle is taking place at the front; the caption underneath reads: "Can you compare the fate of a foreign worker with that 'happy life' of a German soldier?"⁵⁴ It should be remembered that during the same period, the Bolsheviks were calling upon Soviet soldiers to "liberate" their "enslaved brothers and sisters" from the Nazi bondage.

Typical of Soviet satirical propaganda is a pamphlet containing a poem entitled "German Soldiers Are Having a Good Time," written by the German Communist author, Erich Weinert.⁵⁵ The pamphlet begins by noting that Hitler has personally taken over supreme command of the German forces, and goes on to invite him to come down to the trenches and spend the rest of the war with the soldiers amidst blood and filth, among lice, without decent food. It goes on to describe Hitler's way of thinking for the soldiers, Goering's eating for them, Ley's drinking for them, Goebbels' talking for them, while all they are called upon to do is to die at the front. Many pamphlets and leaflets are also issued describing tension and inequity on the homefront—the misery, poverty, and lack of care for soldiers' families, which allegedly have led to continuous strikes and demonstrations by the friends and relatives of the soldiers.⁵⁶ The Soviet propagandists issued a series of pamphlets throughout the German war, entitled *Was Geht in Deutschland Vor?* concentrating on this theme; No. 192, dated September 1942 (shown to foreign correspondents in Russia), told of hunger and poverty at home, with the German bread ration decreasing in size while Hitler conquered more lands. After a number of paragraphs on the shortage of consumer goods in Germany, and the warning that "hunger and poverty are knocking at your home," there was a cartoon showing a fat profiteer eating an enormous meal, with the waiter in the background bringing still more food. Next to this was a drawing of a couple of half-starved kids looking dismally at a small piece of bread on the table; below was the caption: "German soldiers! Your blood flows in the Russian fields, while your families are hungry. Is it not folly to go on with this, so that a handful of Nazi parasites can grow rich and fat? Think it over!"⁵⁷

Many types of resentments are, of course, exploited in this type of propaganda, and virtually all groups of leaders are made the subject of criticism. However, it is characteristic of Soviet methods that eventually one special group is selected for special treatment. In the propaganda disseminated to the German troops during World War II, Hitler and his gang were made the center of intensive propaganda. During the campaign against the Polish Army, when Soviets moved into Eastern Poland to take their share of the spoils resulting from the Soviet-Nazi pact, propaganda to the Polish soldiers attacked the "landlords and capitalists" who allegedly controlled all prewar Poland and were the only ones really resisting the embrace of the Russian "brothers."⁵⁸

In the 1939 campaign against the Japanese, the intensive treatment concentrated on the Japanese officers, who were regarded as the chief bulwarks of discipline and loyalty in the Japanese Army. A decision was made to undermine the authority of the officers and to turn the soldiers against them as directly and sharply as possible.⁵⁹ In numerous pamphlets, leaflets, and periodicals, the officers were discredited, presented as immoral and reprehensible, and accused of a wide variety of crimes. They were described in graphic language as deluding the soldiers and filling their minds with lies, of beating and even killing their subordinates, and defiling their sisters at home. The following was presented to Soviet propagandists as a good example of this theme:

Japanese Soldiers!

Your officers get drunk and debauched. They send you to the slaughter for the favors of the rich, while in the Japanese homeland your family is in dire need and starves. Your

wounded comrades die in the hospitals from poor care. Your wives and sisters are outraged and defiled by the debauching officers. End the war. Kill your own enemies—the officers. In organized fashion with your guns, return to the homeland. Save your life and your family! ⁶⁰

It is most revealing of Soviet methods that little effort was made to attack or criticize the Japanese Emperor. According to the Soviet report: "Knowing that the deluded masses of the Japanese soldiers have a fanatical belief in the god-like origin of the Emperor and revere him, we utilized this matter to introduce confusion in the midst of the soldier masses." In the name of "a group of [politically] conscious Japanese soldiers of the 64th Infantry Regiment," a leaflet was written which described the alleged Japanese defeats at the front and strikes at home, and declared that "our government and the Emperor have decided to cease the military activities" in this area, but the "officer gang is hiding from us the decision of the government and the Emperor about the conclusion of the war." ⁶¹

Ideology and Politics

The skill of the Soviet leaders in the political sphere has been justly famous for some three decades, and it is reasonable to expect that their skill would be fully utilized in psychological campaigns during wars involving the future existence of the regime. Certainly, there are no indications that the leaders have lost their desire to work in this sphere, and many examples of political propaganda have been disseminated during military campaigns. However, another important trait of the Soviet leaders is their insistence on desirable results, and their propagandists in military campaigns have been able to show such results only through appeals involving not only Communism but also nationalism.

Soviet wartime propaganda in the field of politics can be divided into three classes: Communist and ideological propaganda, pro-Soviet propaganda advertising the Soviet system, and propaganda concerning non-Communist nationalism. With reference to the first class, the leaders appear to have been disappointed by the results and to have ordered the minimizing of the ideological theme in the latter stages of each campaign. In the early part of the war with Germany, for example, the Soviets themselves announced that appeals by the German Communist Party and the Comintern were being made. ⁶² These did not call for a Communist revolution or the immediate establishment of a Soviet-German regime, but they did make direct appeals to the workers and peasants; they defended the Soviet Union and called for support of its policies; and they did refer to the need for a "People's Germany" in which "peace and freedom" would be achieved. ⁶³ According to the German generals, however, the German soldiers showed no interest in these and similar appeals, ⁶⁴ and the Soviet leaders apparently received similar reports.

In the campaign against the Japanese, there were many curious references in the propaganda to the Japanese soldiers about the need for concerted action to be taken after the soldiers formed "Soldiers' Soviets"—presumably a concept harkening back to the Soldiers' Soviets or Councils in the Tsarist armies which hastened the disintegration of those military forces during the latter part of World War I, and played an important role in preparing the ground for the Bolshevik Revolution. At any rate, several pamphlets called on the Japanese

soldiers to "organize Soldiers' Soviets."⁶⁵ One of the most political of these pamphlets, signed by a group of Japanese prisoners, contained the following message:

To Japanese soldiers!

Dear fellow countrymen: Throughout our country there is a wave of strikes and demonstrations, directed at the robber-land unjust war in China and Manchuria. Our troops have suffered disasters in the Khalkha-Gol River area [there follow attacks on the officers]. . . . Elect Soviets of soldiers, and return to the fatherland in an organized fashion for a reckoning with the organizers of the robber-war, which has brought such privations to the Japanese people.

Down with the bloody war!

Long live the labor-loving Japanese people!⁶⁶

Significantly enough, however, a Soviet political officer, analyzing the propaganda experience of this campaign wrote, after much self-praise, that "it is necessary to recognize that our slogans of 'Kill the officers' and 'Organize Soldiers' Soviets' were not intelligible to the politically untrained masses of Japanese soldiers."⁶⁷

These appeals from the Communist Parties and the Comintern for "People's Governments" and for "Soldiers' Soviets" received decreasing weight in the Soviet propaganda output during each campaign. However, it should be noted that some remnant of the Marxist interpretation lingered on in various ways. Thus, throughout World War II, there were many attacks on the enemy's war aims, and the enemy soldiers were assured that they were merely fighting for the profits of the big capitalists in their own country and for imperialism abroad. According to an article in *Izvestiya* on Soviet propaganda, the German troops were told that: 34,000 German landowners have four times more land than 5 million small peasant householders; the Fascist leaders were investing in foreign banks the money they had plundered from German people; von Ribbentrop had bought horse stables valued at 50 million;* while Goering had bought his bride a diamond costing 5 million; the leaflets added: "You are being sent to death to save Mrs. Goering's diamond necklace and von Ribbentrop's stables."⁶⁸ These themes may be expected to appear in Soviet propaganda in any military campaign.

Another political theme which the propagandists might be expected to emphasize is praise of the Soviet Union and its institutions, a theme which forms an important part of the output in peacetime. A plan for political work during a military campaign, drawn up a few months before the Soviet-German war began in 1941, called for the dissemination of pamphlets, among enemy troops and the civil populations, on such topics as "The Life of the Worker in the USSR," "What is the Red Army?" and "The Choice between the Capitalist and the Socialist System."⁶⁹ During the actual fighting, a heavy diet of this type of propaganda was apparently fed to all prisoners of war, on the pretense that they wanted information about the Soviet world and that they needed a more friendly attitude toward the land of their captors.⁷⁰

*The denomination was unavailable in the article.

However, so far as evidence is available, most of the materials actually disseminated to enemy troops in the field tended to emphasize other themes, and to refer to the Soviet Union in nonideological contexts. There was a good deal of propaganda about the happy Soviet people (before the Nazi invasion, of course), and the smiling and contented people who were found near the prison camps, but these materials were usually part of the effort to overcome the enemy soldiers' fear that they would be murdered or brutally treated if they surrendered. This fear of the Russian people and the regime was a serious obstacle to the acceptance of surrender appeals, and there was a vigorous effort made to overcome or to minimize it. There were also many references to the stability, strength, and industrial might of Soviet society and the Soviet system, related to the major theme of power. Thus, there was a publication issued for dissemination among German soldiers in enemy units, entitled *The Truth about Soviet Russia*. In answer to Nazi allegations about the "bankruptcy of the Soviet system," one issue (in early 1942) contained a facsimile of an official Nazi newspaper printed in early 1941, when the Soviet-Nazi pact was still in existence, and thus threw back at the Nazi propagandists the favorable things said by them about many aspects of Soviet life.⁷¹

There were, of course, many other items about the Soviet Union and its institutions circulated by the Red Army propagandists. Speeches by the Soviet leaders, particularly Stalin and Molotov, were disseminated in large numbers of pamphlets and leaflets.⁷² Nevertheless, it seems probable that lack of response from the enemy troops caused propagandists to decrease the amount of ideological propaganda about the system, saving much of it for the prisoners of war who had no choice but to listen.

The Bolsheviks were obviously disappointed in the lack of response to their ideological propaganda about Communism and the Soviet system, and they turned to a more intensive use of nationalist appeals. The most recent example of this utilization is the Free Germany Committee, created during World War II to exploit conservative nationalist attitudes among the Germans, particularly among the German military professionals, and used in an effort to turn the Nazi armed forces against Hitler. Some aspects of this experiment are discussed later in this chapter.

The Call to "Subversive" Action

Although one of the aims of psychological warfare is to alter some basic political and related attitudes among its enemy audience, this is not the most important aim. For the Soviet propagandist at the front lines, as for his counterpart in all armies, the ultimate goal must be to persuade the receptive members of his audience to undertake one or more actions which will decrease the fighting ability of their own forces. The best publicized of such actions is that of surrendering. In every conceivable form, on every possible occasion,⁷³ surrender propaganda is issued in every Soviet battle where their psychological warfare teams are active.⁷⁴

One of the major factors influencing audience reception of Soviet surrender propaganda is the Russian reputation for brutality, coupled with the Soviet-Communist reputation for inhuman treatment of people under their control. These reputations were largely responsible for the great fear which the German

soldiers had of being taken prisoners, and this fear had to be given serious consideration by the Soviet propagandists. (The existence of this fear was substantiated by the postwar analysis made by the German generals of the major elements in World War II.)⁷⁶ There were constant assurances made, for example, that Soviet legislation and military orders called for kind and humane treatment of all prisoners, and that this was actually the condition of their treatment. Typical of the Soviet leaflets which were dropped over the German lines was the following:

READ AND PASS ALONG TO YOUR COMRADES
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR

observes scrupulously all international laws with reference to prisoners of war. In conformity with the decision of the Soviet Government No. 1798 of July 1, 1941, and in conformance with People's Commissar for Defense Stalin's Order No. 55 of February 22, 1942, every one who surrenders to the Red Army shall be guaranteed his life and his return home after the war's end.

All prisoners of war are brought to special camps, which are visited by representatives of the International Red Cross. The camps for prisoners of war are established in territories having a moderate climate.

The working day for prisoners of war lasts 8 hours. Payment is made for work.

Prisoners of war in the USSR receive warm food three times a day: 400 grams of bread, 500 grams of vegetables and potatoes, fats, meat, fish, sugar, tea and tobacco; those who work receive 800 grams of bread.

The prisoners of war have the right to maintain correspondence with their families through the International Red Cross.

[The following appears in both German and Russian]:

This leaflet serves as a pass in surrender.⁷⁷

Other surrender leaflets and appeals stressed the joys of surrender and the good treatment that followed. A foreign correspondent, shown copies of such leaflets, compared them to the prewar travel booklets which praised the beauty of the scenery, the glorious sunshine, the awe-inspiring natural surroundings, the good food, and the wonderful sports.⁷⁷ Along with these Soviet descriptions, there were many letters and photographs purporting to be "testimonials" of the good treatment, as shown in the faces of German prisoners or described in statements signed by them.⁷⁸

Soviet propagandists apparently strived to make their arguments for surrender a combination of allure and threat, exploiting for the latter theme their countrymen's reputation for brutality. Frequently the same leaflet contained both aspects of the theme, contrasting the misfortunes to be suffered by the reader if he did not surrender, with the peace and happiness he would enjoy if he did.⁷⁹ The "threat" aspects were presented, of course, with some consideration for the military position of the enemy audience and the current fears of the individual soldiers likely to read the leaflet. The following leaflet was presented as a model for Soviet propagandists when their audience would be encircled, or in imminent danger of encirclement:

To Japanese soldiers!

You are surrounded by Mongolian-Soviet troops. You are sitting in trenches without water. Your military supplies are going fast. Your reserves of provisions, military

supplies and fuel have been destroyed. The Japanese artillery has been smashed by Mongolian-Soviet tanks. It has virtually ceased to fire. The Japanese artillery has been destroyed, and Soviet-Mongolian aviation rules in the air. If you wish to preserve your life, surrender immediately. Colonel Ekki's unit tried to resist and it was entirely annihilated on August 23. You shall receive the same fate if you do not surrender.⁸⁰

An intensive effort at persuading the German soldiers to surrender was made during the Stalingrad campaign. During the encirclement of the Sixth Army, special leaflets were dropped containing maps which traced the advance of the Red Army and showed the closing of the Soviet ring about the German troops. A concise statement accompanied the map "We are warning you, if you continue your resistance, there will be no mercy for you. You will be treated like burglars who broke into other people's homes. Throw down your arms and you will live peacefully in captivity until the war is over."⁸¹

For the propagandist in psychological warfare on the battlefield, a major obstacle is the feeling of the individual enemy soldier that the act of surrendering which he is considering will make him stand out alone as a coward and traitor. The Soviets tried to meet this problem by assuring the soldier that he was not alone, that other wise and brave men had already taken the same step and did not regret it, and that his own action would contribute to a good and desirable cause. Many references were made to the thousands who allegedly had already surrendered, and quotations from some of the more prominent prisoners were widely exploited in the Soviet pamphlets and leaflets.⁸²

A graphic example of this type of propaganda was a leaflet which featured the figure of seventy thousand, placed prominently in a broad column running across the center of the page. On the one-third page above the statistic was a montage of ruined guns, tanks, and other war materials; on the one-third page below the statistic was another montage showing a great number of men, all in uniform and apparently in a single scene. On the central column of the page, parallel with "Seventy Thousand," were three more items: a large figure of a German soldier with his arms upstretched in token of surrender, and these two captions:

[the caption on the left reads]

70,000 German and Rumanian soldiers and officers have given themselves up as prisoners.

70,000 of your comrades are living proof that the Red Army executes scrupulously Order No. 55 of Stalin, People's Commissar for Defense. This Order guarantees life and good treatment to the German officers and soldiers who have laid down their arms.

[the caption on the right side reads]

The man who gives himself up as a prisoner is acting not dishonorably but rationally. The history of war knows many examples where the most courageous soldiers and officers lay down their arms when further opposition is senseless.

From the proclamation of the Red Army Command to the German soldiers and officers encircled in the Stalingrad area.⁸³

A similar type of appeal was the leaflets on which the following message was spread in large letters: "German soldiers! 1942 is to be the year of the final annihilation of the Hitlerite Army. Save your life for benefit of your Homeland, for the future Free Germany."⁸⁴

For those soldiers who were at least partially receptive to Soviet propaganda, but who were confused as to what they should do, specific advice was often given by the Bolsheviks. One leaflet, which was widely disseminated during the German war, was entitled "Ten Commandments for German Soldiers," and it gave precise instructions on the way in which troops could arrange their desertions to the Soviet lines.⁸⁵ Most detailed was another leaflet entitled "Advice to the German Soldiers," which began with assuring the readers that a clever man could always find a way out of his problems, and then stated explicitly what the Germans should do:

First, stay away from your commanders and try to lag behind the others in your group. The Russian population in the rear will help you and hide you from your officers and the Gestapo if you present the pass on the rear side of this leaflet.

Second, expose a toe or finger to the cold for awhile and try to get it frozen. It is better to lose a finger than your life.

Third, put your rifle out of commission; do the same with motors of cars, tanks, and planes.

Fourth, carry out orders as slowly as possible. Fifth, skip out when sent on scouting trips. Sixth, stay in your dugout during an attack. Seventh, but the best way of all is to come over to the Red Army.

We receive every volunteer prisoner as a brother.⁸⁶

The content of the preceding pamphlet illustrates an important point concerning Soviet psychological warfare. While a vigorous and intensive effort is made to secure the surrender of individual enemy soldiers, this is important only as it is related to the major objective of minimizing and eventually destroying the enemy unit's combat ability by every available and eventually destroying the enemy unit's combat ability by every available method. As the leaflet shows, the soldiers are encouraged to commit sabotage and to desert to their own rear lines. More significant is the continuous campaign to destroy the cohesion of the enemy's organization and to secure its very disintegration, by attacking the authority of its officers, and encouraging the men to turn their resentments and even their guns against the latter.

Examples of these tactics under normal war conditions may be found in the reports on the 1939 campaign against the Japanese. The Bolshevik propagandists began their efforts with the knowledge that they had a difficult task, for they had to use slogans which were unintelligible and reprehensible to the "unenlightened" Japanese soldiers. Moreover the slogan, "Beat up your own officers," often frightened the enemy soldiers away from the leaflets, since this was a shocking suggestion to men who had been drilled into believing that their officer was their "father, teacher, chief—placed in his post by the Emperor himself."⁸⁷ Yet the Communists felt it necessary to persevere, for the officers' authority and influence were major elements in the cohesive strength of the Japanese forces. The enemy troops were therefore warned against believing their officers, were reminded of many resentments in the past and present and told these were caused by the officers, and were called upon to hate and kill them. One leaflet, signed by Japanese prisoners of war, accused the Japanese officers of inability and treason, and ended with this appeal: "It is time that we Japanese soldiers ceased to be cannon fodder and toys in the hands of the officers. Rise, Japanese soldiers, and destroy your cursed enemies, the officers."⁸⁸ Other literature called on the troops to turn their arms against their officers and to kill them.⁸⁹

Another aspect of these same efforts at subversion is illustrated by the Soviet efforts to send secret agents, individuals and groups, into the enemy lines. In the war with Germany considerable pressure was placed on the Free Germany Committee to provide the manpower for these efforts, and at first the Committee apparently cooperated. However, the preparations for the infiltration attempts were allegedly so badly managed that the Committee leaders soon came to feel that there was little chance that the groups could be successful. These agents were expected to disseminate Soviet propaganda within the German lines and to establish secret illegal groups within the Wehrmacht, ready to cooperate with the Free Germany Committee when the proper time came. Several groups were sent over into German-held territory, but there is no evidence that any of them accomplished anything.⁶⁰

THE FREE GERMANY COMMITTEE

Development of the Committee

The most publicized propaganda experiment made by the Soviets in a military campaign took place during World War II, and it concerned *Das National Komitee für ein "Freies Deutschland."* Its importance has been somewhat exaggerated, but an analysis of the available data concerning that experiment can provide some valuable insights on Soviet strategy and techniques in psychological warfare.

From the first weeks of the war, the Bolsheviks conducted their usual efforts to persuade the enemy troops of the undesirability of fighting the Soviets, primarily with the use of claims of Soviet power and appropriate statements by prisoners of war. During the first winter, special "anti-Fascist" schools were established to convert the most receptive of the prisoners to pro-Soviet or Communist views, and to train them for use in propaganda operations against their former comrades.⁶¹

Within the first half-year of the conflict, the Bolsheviks began to develop a new mechanism, in which selected prisoners of war were brought together for so-called "conferences." These were apparently believed to be useful for obtaining and issuing group statements to be used in the Soviet propaganda, and they helped to build up the pretense of mass support among the enemy troops for Soviet-approved aims. It seems likely today that the conferences were initial steps in experiments with new types of political appeals. At least four such "conferences" for German prisoners were held during the first year of war, with a total of five others for Rumanian, Finnish, Hungarian, Austrian, and Italian prisoners.⁶²

The first publicized meeting of German war-prisoners took place in October 1941, under the open control and leadership of German Communists. The Chairman of the conference was Walter Ulbricht, a member of the German Party's Central Committee who had been active in the Communist International. Participation in the conference was restricted to rank-and-file soldiers, more than half of whom reported that they had been industrial workers before being drafted into the Army. The conference ended with an appeal addressed to the German laboring classes and intelligentsia. A similar pattern was followed by a con-

ference of German war-prisoners, held in June 1942. One of the speakers, a former factory worker, asserted that the best forces of the German people had already begun a great struggle against Hitler and the German bankers and plutocrats back of him. The prisoner told of alleged strikes and women's demonstrations which were taking place, and reported that German soldiers were refusing to go to the Soviet front. The appeal, signed by the participants in the conference, denied that the German people wanted war with Russia, and declared that it was perpetrated not only by the Nazis and the generals, but also by "the upper ten thousand, by the plutocrats like Krupp . . . and others who are raking in colossal profits."⁶²

Semiofficial Soviet sources indicate that there was considerable dissatisfaction with the results of their propaganda efforts throughout this early period. A Soviet correspondent, in a cablegram to the Communist organ in New York City, warned that his country's "propaganda, of course, cannot be expected to yield quick, spectacular results," since years of Nazi influence had left their mark. He indicated that, judging by the captured letters and diaries of German soldiers, it was the Red Army's military strength and resistance which were having the most effect on German minds.⁶⁴ An American newspaperwoman, who was *persona grata* at the time to the Soviet rulers, reported after interviewing Russian leaders that little success had been attained until the victory of Stalingrad.⁶⁵

The report of the American newspaperwoman appears to be borne out by direct sources. Erich Weinert, perhaps the most prominent of the German Communists working for the Soviet propaganda organization, disclosed that only in 1943, was it possible to secure widespread support from the German war-prisoners. Not only were the professional officers and soldiers suspicious, but "even the old opponents of Hitler from the bourgeois camp—conservatives, liberals, and others—kept aloof" and were unwilling to join the Communists and other anti-Fascist German residents of Moscow in the open struggle against Hitler.⁶⁶ When *Pravda* greeted a new German organization, formed in the summer of 1943, it said candidly that such a mass movement had been impossible several months earlier.⁶⁷

The great change came only after the Battle of Stalingrad, when, in spite of Hitler's frequent announcements of certain victory, the Soviets halted the German advance, smashed the much vaunted Sixth Army, and took a hundred thousand prisoners. The effect on the mental attitude of the soldiers in the German ranks and in the Soviet prison camps was further intensified after Goebbels' effort to exaggerate the importance of the Nazi summer offensive of 1943. When the Soviets stopped this almost immediately at Kursk, and began a powerful counteroffensive of their own, Moscow was ready to open a new stage in its warfare on the psychological front.

On 12 July 1943, a group of 34 delegates met in Moscow and formed the National Committee of Free Germany. About a third were officials of the German Communist Party, including the three leaders of the Party Central Committee—Wilhelm Pieck, Walter Ulbricht, and Wilhelm Florin. Another third were members of the German left-wing intelligentsia who had come to live in the Soviet Union during Hitler's rule, most of whom belonged or worked with the Communist Party machine. Most prominent among these were Erich Weinert, Johannes R. Becher, poet and one-time editor of the Berlin Communist organ,

and Friedrich Wolf, author of the anti-Fascist play, *Dr. Mamlock*. The remaining third was composed of young war-prisoners, many of whom were professional soldiers, and all of whom had been connected with the Germany of Hitler, some as members of the Nazi Party. The most widely publicized of this group was Count Heinrich von Einsiedel, scion of a Saxon Junker family dating back to the twelfth century, and a great-grandson of Bismarck.

The manifesto issued by this body was in sharp contrast to anything issued in the early days of the Bolshevik movement. It was sharply nationalistic, made no radical proposals, and sought the support of a broad audience from workers to Nazis. The basis for its appeal was not the need for social revolution or the class struggle, but as the Committee itself put it, "the mortal danger hanging over our country and threatening its very existence." It called upon the German people to form a national government which could free Germany from Hitler, for if he were permitted to remain in power until the inevitable defeat by the Allied Forces, it would "signify the end of our national independence and of our state of existence, the dismemberment of our fatherland." The spirit of the manifesto is found in the fact that it referred specifically, not to the traditions of Marx and Engels, but to the work of Stein, Clausewitz, and others.

The new Committee called upon Germans to work for a new government, the main attributes of which would be strength and patriotism, and which would grant the citizens their elementary personal liberties. It was to be "a strong democratic power that will have nothing in common with the helpless Weimar regime." While a just and equitable trial was promised for the real war criminals, the Committee promised "amnesty for all Hitler adherents who renounce him and join the movement for a free Germany."

The proposals made by the Committee to the German people were very different from the appeals made to enemy troops in the 1939 Japanese and Polish campaigns. German soldiers were told not to turn their guns against their officers, but to "hold on to them" and use them "under the leadership of those commanders who recognize their responsibility." Working men and women on the homefront were told to organize fighting groups, to refuse to obey Hitler or to "be used as accomplices in the continuation of the war," and to "fight with all means available in conformity with your position in the state and economic life." The manifesto ended with these slogans: "For People and Fatherland! Against Hitler and His Criminal War! For Immediate Peace! For the Salvation of the German People! For a Free and Independent Germany!"⁸³

On 11 September, more than a hundred delegates from a number of prison camps met in Moscow in response to appeals from the Free Germany Committee. Nearly all were survivors of the German Sixth Army which had been smashed at Stalingrad, and included five generals and many colonels. These represented not only the professional army caste, but also the SS formations of the Nazi Party, and were headed by Artillery General Walter von Seydlitz, descendant of an old Silesian Junker family. They formed a "Union of German Officers," affiliated themselves to the Free Germany Committee, and von Seydlitz took his place on the Presidium of that body as one of its Vice-Presidents.

The Officers' Union explicitly endorsed the program of the Free Germany Committee, and issued its own appeal to the officers of the German Army, declaring that the war "is continuing exclusively in the interest of Hitler and

his regime." It called for "a government which would enjoy the confidence of the people," for "only such a government is capable of creating conditions for our Fatherland's honorable withdrawal from the war."⁹⁹

Erich Weinert, who became president of the Free Germany Committee, epitomized the wide appeal of his organization when he explained that it had been formed because "the time had come to create the broadest, all-inclusive national front of all honest Germans." He claimed that the National Committee, "representing all social strata of Germany and all political and religious convictions," was "authorized to speak on behalf of all German people."¹⁰⁰ It is noteworthy that his group adopted as its emblem the flag of the Imperial German Reich, thus appealing not only to the Communists and Weimar liberals (who would join an anti-Hitler movement in any case), but also the monarchists, conservatives, and right-wing veterans of World War I.

It was clear from the first that the Free Germany Committee was determined that its audience would not be restricted to the leftist workers of Germany, although it did not of course exclude them. Its point of view was expressed in an article in *Freies Deutschland*, which was broadcast over the Soviet radio, entitled "Workers and the New Germany." The author, a member of the Committee, declared that he spoke as "a representative of the workers of Germany," which he called the greatest social group in Germany and the most abused by Hitler's regime. He acknowledged that "the workers are justified in cherishing special expectations in the new free Germany," and voiced his belief that "the bulk of German workers are today inclined to solve their problems in a radical way." However, he warned of "disastrous results" if there were any effort to put the special interests of one social class or group before those of other groups, or "to impose them on the general public." He therefore called upon each class and group to consider "the justified vital interests of other groups of society which are essential constituents of the nation," and to work out by compromises the common interests of the nation.¹⁰¹

This statement was one of many designed to show that this was not a narrow segment of the Communist Party, but a broad national movement. A sharp and unmistakable exposition of this view was given by General von Seydlitz, in an article which was broadcast by the Soviet radio. He asserted: "Russia has made it possible for us to form a Free Germany National Committee and a Union of German Officers . . . not on a Communist-Bolshevik basis but on the basis of the concentration of all forces willing and capable of freeing Germany of Hitler and his destructive system. Although formed on the soil of the Soviet Union, the National Committee is a German movement with German aims."¹⁰²

Although the Soviets gave the Committee fairly extensive facilities through most of 1944,¹⁰³ the propaganda results achieved on the battlefield were hardly sensational. By the latter part of 1944, Committee hopes for a broad strategic success had waned sharply, and its members were largely used on the battlefield in tactical propaganda.¹⁰⁴ The Free Germany Committee, and its auxiliary body known as the Union of German Officers, were dissolved shortly after the close of the war, on 2 November 1945.¹⁰⁵

Soviet Strategy and Methods

From the hindsight of a decade after the founding of the Free Germany Committee, there is little difficulty in suggesting the probable aims of the Kremlin

in this experiment. Several of them seem quite plausible, each useful at a particular level, some more important than others, but any one of them worthwhile from the Soviet point of view. Before examining these probable aims, it is necessary to stress these points: the Soviets had very little to lose, from their point of view; and the very logic of events dictated a new psychological warfare campaign. In the period preceding the establishment of the Committee, Soviet efforts to influence the enemy troops had had such minimal results that the Kremlin was ready to try almost anything. Certainly, unless they backfired sharply, few programs could decrease the results already achieved. In view of the self-confidence that the Soviet leaders have always shown in the field of foreign propaganda, it seems obvious that they were highly dissatisfied with the barren results of the first two war-years, and that they were bound to try some major operation of this type.

Four possible objectives, each significant at a different level of success, may be suggested as aims for the Free Germany Committee experiment. Firstly, at the very least, the Free Germany Committee may be viewed as merely a stage in the development of the normal Soviet effort to propagandize prisoners of war, and to use the more receptive of them in political operations on the front lines. It was, in other words, a culmination of the normal operational pattern that began with the outbreak of the Nazi war when the Soviets used anti-Nazi statements by German prisoners in their propaganda, and was continued with the so-called "conferences" which were held at various intervals from October, 1941. Seen in these terms, it might be suggested that one series of objectives in establishing the Committee was to facilitate the efforts to control and propagandize the German prisoners, to increase the number of prisoners who could be used at the front, and to intensify the possible impact of anti-Nazi propaganda on the front lines.

Secondly, if the efforts of the Committee were moderately successful, the Soviets must have hoped that the cohesive elements within the Nazi state would be weakened, and antagonisms within the Wehrmacht sharpened. This would require that large numbers of German officers and soldiers be made aware of the existence of the Committee and receptive to its appeals. In that case, there would be a decreasing sense of loyalty toward the Nazi regime, diminished eagerness to see the fulfillment of its war aims, and growing disharmony between the pro-Nazi officers on one hand, and their colleagues and subordinates on the other. The results might be a sharp increase in the number of voluntary surrenders (perhaps after token resistance), and an expansion of "soft spots" in the German defenses.

Thirdly, should their maximum hopes be realized as results of the Free Germany Committee experiment, the Bolsheviks would see a major split within the Wehrmacht, with large segments of the German Army joining with the Committee to demand the cessation of fighting against the Red Army, and even turning their own arms against their comrades and the Nazi regime. It does not seem probable, at the present time at least, that Stalin would have wanted the leaders of the Wehrmacht to overthrow Hitler's regime and substitute a nationalist, conservative, and anti-Nazi one in its place; and it appears even less likely that Stalin believed this possible.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the Soviets were already looking to the postwar period by the time that the Free Germany Committee was founded.

Preliminary negotiations with the Western Allies had been underway for some time, and formal conferences were soon to begin. On the Soviet side, the victory at Stalingrad was completed on 1 February 1943, the break with the Polish Government-in-Exile soon followed, and the preparations for the founding conference of the Free Germany Committee were actively underway by June. Stalin was preparing the ground for his demands at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences of late 1943, and his independent actions in Eastern and Central Europe which followed them.

It is true, of course, that some risk was involved in the Committee, and a certain price had to be paid. The entire plan might have backfired if the appeal of the Committee failed completely, the Wehrmacht's loyalty to Hitler strengthened, and the German ranks closed for a more bitter struggle against the Soviets. Moreover, there was involved in the new strategy a decision to soft-pedal the appeals to the enemy troops to distrust, fight, and even kill their own officers, to throw away their arms and simply come over to the peace and quiet of the Soviet prison camps—and these appeals had been very important in Soviet enemy propaganda during other military campaigns.

Yet, in spite of these risks, the Soviets were probably bound to try something which promised an opportunity for better results than they were achieving. They had some important tools which could be used for the campaign. Because of the very scope of the German-Soviet war, both sides held many prisoners of war, and many of the Germans were willing to consider means of improving their position.

Of course, an effective political appeal was needed for most of the German prisoners; they had to be persuaded that the Soviets had not only a good appeal, but also the kind of military power that would probably win the war. But it is necessary to remember that many of these prisoners were in mortal fear of the Russians, and expected to be mistreated, if not killed, by their captors if they did not cooperate with the latter. Moreover, there was a high correlation between the desire for better treatment and the willingness to cooperate with the Free Germany Committee, according to members of the latter movement.¹⁰⁶ From the Soviet point of view, they were bound to have some profit from the utilization of men who would otherwise vegetate and grow bitter in prison camps. At least, in the service of the Committee, these men would be making some contribution to the Soviet cause, and this psychological involvement in a Soviet-sponsored political movement would possibly make them more receptive in the postwar period to Soviet propaganda.

It was characteristic of the Soviet leadership that they should make full use of their ideological supporters among the Germans in the Comintern apparatus, as well as the German Communists and left-wing refugees in Russia and in other areas accessible to Soviet influence. Men like Ulbricht and Weinert were not only to be found useful,¹⁰⁷ but channels and appeals like those available to the Comintern and the German Communist Party were fully exploited.

With these sources of manpower and their own means at their disposal, the Soviets apparently made a careful analysis of the types of propaganda appeals available to them. They had used ideological appeals through the German Communist Party and left-wing channels, speaking largely to the former workers and idealists in the German forces, but it soon became obvious that the German Communist audience was small, that it was naturally anti-Nazi anyway, and

that it would be receptive to other appeals. The Soviets could use antiwar, pacifist themes, as they had done with some effectiveness against the Japanese, but these were obviously not particularly effective against the well-trained Germans. Finally, they could use appeals to the nationalist elements among the Germans, and could exploit the strong sense of military pride and loyalty among the German officers, who would be unreceptive to the Communist and pacifist propaganda, and yet were a large group and important in influence within the Wehrmacht.

It is worth noting that the Soviet leaders did not show that inflexibility of mind and complete inability to abandon stereotyped ideas, which their enemies sometimes expect from them. Instead, they experimented with various appeals and groups, tried, and largely abandoned, the Communist approach even though they would have probably preferred it, and apparently decided to concentrate on the nationalist and militarist appeals as their major themes, while using others in a minor key. This flexibility and willingness of the top Soviet leadership to experiment is a source of strength which should never be underestimated in psychological warfare. Democratic opponents often find these traits lacking on the lower levels of the Communist apparatus, and expect to find the same weakness on the higher levels. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the Soviets are far less effective with their ideological appeals to liberals and workers than has usually been believed.

Although the total Soviet propaganda output to the military and nationalists was extensive and varied, of course, it was based on five vital propaganda premises which formed a solid basis for the campaign. These premises exploited existing attitudes among the audience, and were intended to lead the more receptive to the desired ideas and actions.

The first premise was that it was Hitler who was guilty of the errors that put Germany in her desperate position.

Thus, it was not the German Wehrmacht or the German people who should be blamed for the defeats, but Hitler, who had ignored Bismarck's admonitions about German-Russian relations, rejected the advice of the German High Command, and insisted upon a military strategy that caused a world-wide coalition to be formed against Germany. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to most other Soviet propaganda which emphasized the moral crimes committed by the Nazis, this material referred largely to military errors and the lack of sufficient power. The manifesto of the Free Germany Committee stressed, among other things:

The defeats of the last seven months are unparalleled in the history of Germany—Stalingrad, the Don, the Caucasus, Libya and Tunisia. *Full responsibility for these defeats rests with Hitler* Hitler led Germany to political isolation. *He irresponsibly challenged the three greatest world powers with the result that they have united for ruthless struggle against Hitlerism.* He has turned the whole of Europe into an enemy of the German people and has covered their name with shame. He is responsible for the hatred which today surrounds Germany. Never has a foreign foe hurled us Germans into such a gulf of disasters as has Hitler.

The second assumption was that Germany was in the greatest danger in history and the most desperate measures were justified.

The Soviets clearly recognized that their propagandists were calling for actions which would be most reprehensible to their audience under normal

conditions, and they would be successful only if the audience was convinced that the situation warranted the most desperate action. Therefore the propagandists not only told of the possibility of German defeat and of death for many German soldiers, but declared that the very existence of Germany itself was at stake. Declared the Committee's manifesto:

The facts implacably show that the war is lost. Germany can prolong the war for a while longer at the price of unheard[of] sacrifices and deprivations. The continuation of a hopeless war, however, would be tantamount to the nation's doom. But *Germany must not die!* If the German people continue resignedly and submissively to allow themselves to be led to their doom, not only will their forces be sapped and dwindle with every passing day of the war but also their guilt will increase. Hitler will then be overthrown only by the force of the coalition armies. But this will signify the end of our national independence and of our state existence, the dismemberment of our fatherland. And we shall have only ourselves to blame afterward.

Premise three asserted that Germany could be saved only if the German people, led by the German Wehrmacht, rose to the occasion and overthrew the Nazi regime.

There was no doubt left in the minds of the audience about the significant step that must be taken, but in sharp contrast to the usual Bolshevik incitement to revolution, this propaganda called for an orderly change, under respectable people, occurring in order to make the Fatherland stronger and restore its honors:

Hence the formation of a genuine national German government is the most urgent task of our people. . . . This government must be strong and possess the necessary power to render harmless the enemies of the people—Hitler and his patrons and satellites. It must resolutely put an end to terror and corruption, establish firm order and with dignity represent Germany before the outside world. . . . It will be supported by the fighting groups which will unite to overthrow Hitler. There are forces in the army that are loyal to the Fatherland, and the people must play a decisive role.

The fourth premise was that the overthrowal of the Nazi regime could be done only by a united national movement, which admitted repentant Nazis and other types, and was led by a strong and efficient Wehrmacht.

This theme was perhaps the most graphic indication of Soviet flexibility in psychological warfare. The Soviet, Communist, and fellow traveler propagandists throughout the rest of the world were loudly proclaiming the danger of German militarism and its professional officer corps, as well as the need for elimination of all Nazis high and low. But the Free Germany Committee was proclaiming its own willingness to accept all applicants and all support, including that of former Nazis; and several of its founders were openly proclaimed to have been Nazis.¹⁰⁰ Far more significant was the reversal of the former Soviet efforts to hasten the destruction of the enemy military organization by persuading the enemy soldiers to oppose and even kill their officers, and to throw away their guns. Now much of the Committee's propaganda emphasized the need for order and discipline, and called for the preservation of the German Wehrmacht. A prominent member, Maj. Herbert Soesslein, called the German Army "a valuable instrument which must be preserved at any cost and in full," and declared: "We are opposed to fomenting demoralization in the Wehrmacht. We do not intend to incite the soldiers to abandon their army and to retreat in dis-

order. . . . We must avoid all anarchy and undisciplined behavior. . . . Our slogan is reconstruction, not destruction."¹⁰⁹

The final premise was that, if all these aims could be accomplished, Germany might be able to earn peace in which she could negotiate for honorable terms and secure international equality.

This theme illustrated the Soviet willingness to deceive its audience if the deception would help to achieve a desired result. There was little possibility that the Kremlin ever intended, after the Stalingrad victory, to negotiate with any German group, and certainly no evidence that it would permit (much less help!) a strong and nationalist nonsatellite regime to be established with full equality on the borders of the Soviets' new empire. On the contrary, four months after the establishment of the Free Germany Committee, the Soviets agreed to the "unconditional surrender" formula at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers. Yet the manifesto of the Free Germany Committee, later supplemented by much propaganda along the same line, declared:

If the German people in good time are courageous enough and prove in deed that they want to be a free people and that they are determined to free Germany from Hitler, they will then win the fight to decide their own fate, and other nations will take them into consideration. . . . This government will immediately cease military operations, will recall the German troops to the Reich's frontiers and embark on peace negotiations, renouncing all conquests. In this manner it will attain peace and once again place Germany on an equal footing with all nations.

Some Lessons of the Experiment

For those primarily interested in Soviet concepts and techniques in psychological warfare, an evaluation of the Free Germany Committee experiment must take note of the several factors that probably influenced Stalin. The turning point in the war had been reached in January 1943, with the great victory at Stalingrad, and this experiment came after that victory. The Soviets were no longer in desperate need of a major psychological warfare success. The time had passed when propaganda weapons could help to decide whether the Bolshevik regime would survive. At best, the most successful propaganda campaign would have saved some Soviet and German lives, and while the advantages of increased manpower for future use may have appealed to Stalin, they were apparently not of overriding importance to him in this situation.

Within this perspective, it can be said that the Kremlin was led by the logic of its position, and by the Bolsheviks' past history of interest in propaganda, to make the Free Germany Committee experiment, but the stakes were apparently not important enough to warrant the kind of intensive and concentrated effort that the Bolsheviks give to a vital objective. There is no evidence that Stalin himself gave it the serious attention evident in the military phases of the war, that he sent down the kind of orders that would have secured military commanders' efficient and conscientious cooperation with those trying to influence the attitudes of the enemy soldiers, or that he took any major steps necessary to secure proper conditions for the experiment.

Thus, the treatment of German prisoners of war, particularly near the front lines, continued to be outrageous right down to the last year of the war.¹¹⁰ Presumably, Stalin considered it more important to encourage what the Soviets

call "aggressive passion" in his own troops through "hate" propaganda and the deliberate encouragement of unrestrained violence off the battlefield as well as on it, rather than to try to establish conditions which would have been more attractive to those German soldiers considering surrender. In similar fashion, it may be noted that the central theme of propaganda to the Germans was Soviet military and physical power, and the emotional reaction sought was terror; these hardly facilitated the Free Germany Committee's efforts to persuade the German officers to adopt a new political strategy based on attitudes of nationalism and patriotism.

There is little evidence that the Free Germany Committee was able to make its identity known and its program understood to its German audience.¹¹¹ Yet the Soviets failed to take the drastic steps necessary to remedy that situation and to get the message of the Committee across to the German officers, perhaps by the type of bold political stroke that the Bolsheviks and the Nazis knew how to use. It may well be that Stalin simply did not believe it necessary or desirable to make this type of effort, or to pay the price necessary to get this type of effect. Such action may well have had a poor propaganda effect on the Soviet people, hindered Stalin's own freedom of action in the future, and weakened the powerful argument of military power demonstrated in a clean-cut military victory in Germany's Eastern Front.

The results, or rather, the lack of significant results, achieved by the Free Germany Committee should be evaluated within this perspective. One objective, that of putting the Western Allies on notice that Russia demanded a full place in the world's councils and hegemony in Central Europe, was probably achieved. The hopes that a part of the Wehrmacht would turn against Hitler were, of course, completely unrealized, and there is no reason to believe that the Committee helped to sharpen antagonisms within the German Army or to weaken German defenses. Except for some vague claims which are not supported by available evidence,¹¹² there are no indications that the Committee's propaganda helped to increase the number of men surrendering to the Russians before their position was obviously hopeless. The Soviets secured thousands of prisoners, but even the Committee's own members do not claim that many were influenced by the Committee's appeals.

In point of fact, it is fairly clear that the Russians tended to lose interest in the Committee within the first year of the latter's existence, although they did continue to use some of its personnel (as Front-Plenipotentiaries and Front-Helpers) and its propaganda materials throughout the war. Several intensive efforts to use the Committee were made, particularly in February 1944 when nine infantry divisions, a tank division, and an SS brigade were trapped between Cherkassy and Belaya Tserkov, in the Ukraine. All the resources of the Committee were called into play, but the result was "a great military success for the Russians and a decisive defeat for the Committee," to use von Einsiedel's appropriate words.¹¹³ About ten thousand German prisoners were taken, but only a few hundred showed even the vaguest knowledge of the Committee.¹¹⁴

It was the contention of the German Front-Helpers that the actions of the Russians themselves doomed any of their efforts to failure. In their view, the Soviet central government did make printing presses and radios available to the Committee members, and facilitated their work to some extent, but there was only spotty support from the military commanders in the field, and confusion

and incompetency among the political workers in the front-line units.¹¹⁵ Most important of all, the brutality and savagery of the Russian soldiers, stimulated by the "hate" propaganda, nullified any efforts to persuade the Germans to do anything desired by the Soviet leaders.¹¹⁶ Von Einsiedel tells of meeting in early 1945 with the German Front-Helpers working within Marshal Rokossovski's army group, and he describes them as "60 bewildered, whining, embittered persons, full of hate." Although most of them were Communists and all had gone through the Soviet anti-Fascist schools, they were horrified by the atrocities committed against the German prisoners and civil population, and heart-sick at the futility of their own efforts.¹¹⁷

The German aides had many serious complaints to make against their Soviet directors, particularly in the propaganda operations at the front lines. The political workers at these levels were lacking in self-confidence and afraid to take any initiative even when it was obvious that the existing methods and orders were not appropriate to the situation. They refused to take any suggestions from their German assistants, even though the latter assured them that changes were absolutely necessary. According to the Germans, the Soviets believed it a sacrilege if their leaflets were not spotted with Marxist dogmas, hymns of praise for the invincible Red Army, and references to the Great Socialist October Revolution. Many of the materials carefully worked out by the Free Germany Committee were inadequately used, or exploited in the wrong way. Worst of all, perhaps, the Soviets were careless in their psychological warfare preparations although the most dangerous consequences might ensue, even in such enterprises as sending secret agents over the German lines.¹¹⁸ It was after an effort of this type ended in complete disaster that a Soviet officer told von Einsiedel: "If the entire Red Army had fought as poorly as the Political Department, we would have lost the war long ago, but its work here has been particularly poor."¹¹⁹

For their own part, the Soviets could hardly point to any great success in persuading the enemy troops to surrender, desert, or establish anti-Nazi groups within the Wehrmacht. A most revealing statement was reportedly made by Colonel Tulpanov, who was certainly in a position to know the data available to the MPA. Von Einsiedel cites him as saying that, even in the Stalingrad encirclement, the number of Russians deserting to the entrapped Germans was greater than that of Germans coming over to the victorious Soviets. Moreover, in November 1943 when the entire German line was in full retreat and the Allies were beginning to make their plans for the postwar world, Tulpanov declared that this situation was continuing.¹²⁰

It is significant that, in spite of the situation described by the agents of the Committee and pointed up by Tulpanov's remarks, the Kremlin found no reason to take drastic action. The Soviet leaders were obviously disappointed, but they were, in the long run, content to win their war by the sheer weight of military power and the expenditure of vast amounts of Soviet blood. There can be no doubt that for them, propaganda played a minor and auxiliary role in their World War II operation.

In spite of the Bolsheviks' reputed skill in propaganda, in spite of their alleged ability to exploit the resentments against authority and antagonisms within opposing groups, their propaganda efforts in this war depended primarily upon fear, military power, and the exploitation of geographical advantages. Even

before the Stalingrad victory, the most effective psychological advantages for the Soviets were the German terror of Soviet brutality, German amazement and despair concerning the ability of the Soviet people to fight on when any "civilized people" would have recognized defeat, and the German fear of the Russian winter. The Bolshevik propagandists never ceased to exploit these advantages, while pressing continuously and intensively their claims of superior power.

The last theme, that of superiority in physical, economic, and military power, was the central refrain in Russian propaganda throughout the war. The Soviets never ceased to rely upon it, even during the period of greatest hope for the Free Germany Committee. Their attitude concerning this theme is illustrated by Burtsev's analysis of the 1939 campaign against the Japanese, written for the Soviet political officers, when he stressed the effect of "systematic propaganda of the successes of our troops, and the propaganda about the invincible Red Army and its terrible weapons." He insisted that it was this "propaganda which subverted [the enemy soldiers'] faith in their own officers and in their own arms, and consequently subverted the military capabilities of the Japanese-Manchurian troops."¹²¹ It is significant that the "sensation" of the founding conference of the Free Germany Committee was provided by a German officer who had shortly before deserted from the Wehrmacht, and who explained his decision to desert in terms of the Soviets' immense superiority in military armaments and skill and his reactions to the annihilation of his battalion.¹²²

One final point needs to be made. The experiment with the Free Germany Committee should not be interpreted as conclusive proof of Soviet ineptness in psychological combat on the battlefield. It does indeed show that in 1941 the Bolsheviks started with a wealth of misconceptions and amazing awkwardness in this field, and that they were slow to move when no overriding purpose moved them. It is important to remember, however, that the Russians hoped for results from the Committee only during a period of a half-year, and they virtually abandoned the experiment. They did not concern themselves with improvement of its operations because they did not feel any great need for it.

The entire history of World War II, however, shows that the men in the Kremlin can overcome difficulties after a poor start, and that, under pressure, they are able to meet the exacting military demands of a major war, if it becomes plain to them that their survival depends upon it. In the field of psychological warfare, the Soviets showed that they were flexible enough to shift from a reliance upon Communist appeals to an experiment with an organization which made its major appeals in non-Communist, patriotic, and nationalist terms. In another military conflict, if they regard it important enough to warrant the use of their full resources and more effective leaders, the Bolsheviks could produce a surprise in psychological warfare equal to the Soviets' feat in the military arena of World War II.

Armed Services Technical Information Agency

Because of our limited supply, you are requested to return this copy WHEN IT HAS SERVED YOUR PURPOSE so that it may be made available to other requesters. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

AD 32799

NOTICE: WHEN GOVERNMENT OR OTHER DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS OR OTHER DATA ARE USED FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN IN CONNECTION WITH A DEFINITELY RELATED GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OPERATION, THE U. S. GOVERNMENT THEREBY INCURS NO RESPONSIBILITY, NOR ANY OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER; AND THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE FORMULATED, FURNISHED, OR IN ANY WAY SUPPLIED THE DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS, OR OTHER DATA IS NOT TO BE REGARDED BY ANY PERSON OR CORPORATION, OR OTHERWISE AS IN ANY MANNER LICENSING THE HOLDER OR ANY OTHER PERSON OR CORPORATION, OR CONVEYING ANY RIGHTS OR PERMISSION TO MANUFACTURE, REPRODUCE, OR SELL ANY PATENTED INVENTION THAT MAY IN ANY WAY BE RELATED THERETO.

Reproduced by
DOCUMENT SERVICE CENTER
KNOTT BUILDING, DAYTON, 2, OHIO

UNCLASSIFIED