

# **National Bolshevism**

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# National Bolshevism

*Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation  
of Modern Russian National Identity,  
1931–1956*

David Brandenberger

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*To Katia*



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## A Note on Conventions

The transliteration of terms, titles, surnames, and geographic locations in this work follows a modified form of the standard practiced by the Library of Congress. Exceptions occur in quotations taken from other sources and in the relatively rare instances when contradicting existing practice would create unnecessary ambiguity. In order to improve readability, frequently used terms like “the Party” and “Stalinist” are not capitalized in the text. Similar reasons explain the use of French calques like “etatist” and English constructions like “party hierarchy,” when the alternative would be the awkward anglicization of Russian colloquialisms like *gosudarstvennik* and *partiinaia verkhushka*.

Many surnames and geographic locations appear in transliterated Russian despite their linguistic origins in other republican languages (for example, David Sasunskii instead of Sasuntsi David; Zatonskii instead of Zaton’skyi; Khar’kov instead of Kharkiv). A shortcoming inherited from the sources that inform this study, it would be anachronistic to “correct” this russification. Much the same reasoning has led modern-day geopolitical entities to be referred to by their Stalin-era nomenclature (Belorussia instead of Belarus’; Kazakhstan instead of Kazakstan). Few would take exception to St. Petersburg being referred to during this time period as Leningrad; similarly, Volgograd, Tver’, and Perm’ appear on the pages that follow as Stalingrad, Kalinin, and Molotov.

Finally, although the terms “Russian” and “Soviet” are often used interchangeably in contemporary colloquial English, the subject at hand requires a clear distinction be made between ethnic nationality and citizenship. “Russian,” therefore, appears only when it refers to the former and would be translated as *ruskii*; otherwise, the term “Soviet” marks most discussions of state and society between 1917 and 1991, insofar as this practice eschews not only anachronism but any ambiguities concerning the ethnic identity of those under discussion as well.



# Terms and Acronyms

For a complete list of the terms, historical events, and personalities referred to in this study, see the Index.

ACP(b)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
Agitprop	Central Committee Directorate of Agitation and Propaganda
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
boyar / boiaryna	nobleman / noblewoman
Comintern	Third Communist International
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (post-1952 term for ACP[b])
Glavlit	committee on state censorship
komsomol	communist youth league
Narkompros	Commissariat of Education
NKGB, NKVD, MGB, OGPU	various terms for the secret police
Orgburo	Central Committee Organizational Bureau
Politburo	Central Committee Political Bureau
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federation of Socialist Republics
Sovnarkom	All-Union Council of People's Commissars
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic



# **National Bolshevism**



# Introduction: Mobilization, Populism, and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity

Soviet society witnessed a major ideological about-face in the mid- to late 1930s as the threat of war and the need for popular mobilization caused party propaganda and mass culture to assume a stridently pragmatic orientation. Paradoxical as it may seem, Russian national heroes, imagery, and myths were deployed during this time to popularize the reigning Marxist-Leninist ideology, a populist practice which at times threatened to eclipse the stress on internationalism and class-consciousness that had characterized nearly two decades of Soviet mass culture.

Examining this transformation in party ideology during the late 1930s, this study also considers the resonance that the coup elicited among Russian-speaking Soviet citizens over the course of almost twenty years. While the period's selective rehabilitation of tsarist heroes and historical imagery is sufficiently iconoclastic to justify such an investigation, no less interesting are the ways in which individual Soviet citizens perceived this ideological turnabout. Making use of sources that provide glimpses of public opinion, this work considers not only the construction and dissemination of stalinist ideology between the early 1930s and the mid-1950s, but its popular *reception* on the mass level as well.

Long a source of controversy, the ideological transformations of the 1930s were termed "the revolution betrayed," "Thermidor," and "the Great Retreat" by contemporaries like L. D. Trotskiï and Nicholas Timasheff. In the years since, scholars have returned again and again to the stalinist regime's deployment of official russocentrism. Following Timasheff, a number of commentators have linked the phenomenon to nationalist sympathies within the party hierarchy,<sup>1</sup> eroding prospects for world revolution,<sup>2</sup> and the stalinist elite's revision of Marxist principles.<sup>3</sup> Others associate the transformation with increasing threats from the outside world

(principally Hitler's rise to power in 1933),<sup>4</sup> the emergence of domestic etatism,<sup>5</sup> the triumph of administrative pragmatism over revolutionary utopianism,<sup>6</sup> and the evolution of Soviet nationality policy.<sup>7</sup> Some tend to discount the changes underway as symptomatic of larger ideological dynamics,<sup>8</sup> while others contend that the phenomenon really matured only early in the 1940s in connection with the exigencies of war.<sup>9</sup>

Much of this controversy stems from the difficulty of tracing a smooth, linear rise in the use of russocentric rhetoric and imagery during the mid-1930s. Not only do parallel propaganda campaigns promoting "Soviet patriotism" and "the Friendship of the Peoples" obscure the origins of russocentrism in stalinist mass culture,<sup>10</sup> but the absence of critical archival collections complicates even behind-the-scenes investigations.<sup>11</sup> That said, sources do exist that can shed light on how ideology evolved between 1931 and 1956. The central thesis of this study identifies a preoccupation with state-building,<sup>12</sup> popular mobilization, and legitimacy during the mid-1930s as ultimately explaining the party hierarchy's populist ideological about-face. Put another way, a new sense of pragmatism came to the fore within the party hierarchy of the 1930s, which concluded that the utopian proletarian internationalism that had defined Soviet ideology during its first fifteen years was actually hamstringing efforts to mobilize the society for industrialization and war. Searching for a more compelling rallying call, Stalin and his inner circle eventually settled upon a russocentric form of etatism as the most effective way to promote state-building and popular loyalty to the regime.

But more than just a way of mobilizing Russian-speaking society for industrialization and war, this "national Bolshevik" line marked a sea change in Soviet ideology—a tacit acknowledgment of the superiority of populist, nativist, and even nationalist rallying calls over propaganda oriented around utopian idealism. Pragmatic if not wholly cynical, the stalinist party hierarchy's use of Russian national heroes, myths, and imagery to popularize the dominant Marxist-Leninist line signaled a symbolic abandonment of an earlier revolutionary ethos in favor of a strategy calculated to mobilize popular support for an unpopular regime by whatever means necessary. Finally—and most intriguingly—this ideological coup should be seen as the catalyst for the formation of a mass sense of national identity within Russian-speaking society between the late 1930s and early 1950s, during the most cruel and difficult years of the Soviet period.

Underlying much of this study's theoretical frame of reference are the seminal works of such prominent thinkers as Benedict Anderson, Ernest

Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Miroslav Hroch.<sup>13</sup> These theorists identify print culture and mass education as playing a crucial role in the expansion of a sense of national identity from social elites to ordinary people within society at large. Contextualizing such “national awakenings” across much of Europe within the second half of the nineteenth century, Anderson frames the process of nation formation as one in which a vast, disaggregated collection of individuals, often united by little more than a common language, is induced to “imagine” itself as a national community. Rogers Brubaker, John Breuilly, Paul Brass, and others stress the role of self-interested political entrepreneurs and the state in this process.<sup>14</sup> What is critical to note, however, is that for a complex series of reasons, national identity in Russian-speaking society remained inchoate and internally inconsistent considerably longer than in other European societies, assuming a modern, systematic form only during the Stalin era, long after the fall of the *ancien régime*. This monograph analyzes the circumstances surrounding this late development of Russian national identity, as well as the consequences of its formation within one of the most authoritarian societies of the twentieth century.

In recent years, few subjects have produced a greater diversity of scholarship than the study of nationalism and national identity formation. But for all of this abstract interest in the role played by political agents, print capitalism, universal public education, and mass culture in the formation of popular national consciousness, remarkably few studies have examined the process in detail on an empirical level, considering not just the construction and dissemination of national ideology, but its popular *reception* as well.<sup>15</sup> Focusing exclusively on theory, national elites, or newspapers, most scholarship has neglected the role that common people play in the dynamic. This is unfortunate, as it would seem incautious to automatically conflate the construction and dissemination of ideology with its reception—audiences, after all, rarely accept ideological pronouncements wholesale. In an attempt to eschew such a top-down methodological bias, this study takes an explicitly multidimensional approach to the question of ideology and mass mobilization in order to account for the idiosyncrasies of national identity formation on the popular level.

Chapter 1 begins with an examination of Russian-speaking society at the turn of the century—a time when one could observe in many European countries the acceleration of societal dynamics that typically contribute to mass mobilization and national identity formation (such as the spread of literacy and print culture). Chapter 1 argues, however, that although universal education and mass culture were already facts of ev-

eryday life in countries like France during this era, a variety of factors prevented Russian-speaking society from enjoying the benefits of such basic societal institutions until the early 1930s.

Chapters 2 through 6 look at issues of identity formation in the Soviet Union during the decade preceding the Second World War by examining the party hierarchy's evolving strategy for social mobilization and the inculcation of a popular sense of patriotism. Individual chapters analyze each of the dimensions of this process: the construction of ideology within the party hierarchy; its dissemination through public education, party study circles, and state-sponsored mass culture; and its reception within the society at large. Empirical in design, this approach pays particular attention to the complexities involved in the formulation of a sense of group identity, the difficulties of transmitting it to the popular level, and the peculiarities of its mass reception.

Insofar as identity formation is a long-term process requiring commitment and consistency, Chapters 7 through 10 trace this dynamic through the war years, while Chapters 11 through 14 follow it into the mid-1950s. In each period, individual chapters address the construction of ideology, its dissemination, and its reception, detailing a tightly controlled process in which mass agitation in the public schools and party study circles was reinforced by broad attention to the same themes throughout official Soviet mass culture (literature, the press, film, theater, museum exhibitions, and so on). Long misunderstood, the stalinist party hierarchy's deployment of Russian national heroes, myths, and iconography was essentially a pragmatic move to augment the more arcane aspects of Marxism-Leninism with populist rhetoric designed to bolster Soviet state legitimacy and promote a society-wide sense of allegiance to the USSR. This study argues that Stalin and his entourage did not aim to promote Russian ethnic interests during these years so much as they attempted to foster a maximally accessible, populist sense of *Soviet* social identity through the instrumental use of russocentric appeals.

It is important to note that although these efforts to stimulate popular support for Soviet state-building reveal a quintessentially monolithic approach to agitational propaganda, they were nevertheless subject to limitations imposed by the society's educational level. This study demonstrates that selective assimilation of the official line by Russian-speaking society over the course of roughly twenty years led to an outcome that the party hierarchy only dimly anticipated—the coalescing of an increasingly coherent and articulate sense of *Russian* national identity among ordinary

individuals on the popular level. Although the official line attempted to promote Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism, and Soviet patriotism through a vocabulary of russocentric imagery and iconography, many of the philosophical dimensions of this propaganda were simply lost on its audience. Ironic in the sense that the Stalin era's incipient social *mentalité* assumed a form that was qualitatively more "Russian" than "Soviet" (at least in the classic, Marxist sense of the word), this unintended consequence of the party's populism has reverberated throughout the former lands of the USSR ever since.

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, my mapping of the dynamic of national identity formation on the popular level attributes a larger role to the state and to political entrepreneurs than Anderson, Hroch, and others have tended to suggest, insofar as it is often only these agents who possess the means to disseminate a coherent national line through mass culture and education across the entire breadth of society. The Soviet case also indicates that the popularization of ethnically uniform heroes, myths, icons, and imagery does not necessarily have to be explicitly nationalistic in order to precipitate the formation of a corresponding national community. Supplying the empirical research necessary for a detailed understanding of how a sense of national identity took shape among Russian-speakers in the USSR, this work explains not only why this phenomenon occurred so deep into the twentieth century, but why it came to pass within a society that was ostensibly geared toward the promotion of utopian social identities based on class consciousness and proletarian internationalism.

Several terms should be defined in order to clarify the dimensions of the ensuing discussion. It is axiomatic to this study that national identity be understood to stem primarily from membership within a discrete community (a "people") that defines itself both by the foreignness of other societies and by its own ethnic distinctiveness. This sense of distinctiveness associated with nationhood often endows constituents with a sense of belonging to a "superior" or "elite" group.<sup>16</sup> Historical, geographic, cultural, and linguistic particularism all play critical roles in the coalescing of this sense of affiliation, which typically supersedes other forms of allegiance based on race, class, gender, religious faith, or economic system.<sup>17</sup>

In light of the diversity of scholarly opinion concerning national identity, a caveat would seem to be in order. Commentators rarely agree on the factors that are most central to national identity formation—race, ethnic-

ity, language, culture, religious faith, and geographic contiguousness each have their proponents and skeptics. One issue that is commonly agreed upon, however, is the importance of history in defining national identity.<sup>18</sup> The regularity with which historical events are invented, suppressed, reinterpreted, and distorted testifies to the centrality of the past in people's conceptualization of the present—to paraphrase Ernest Renan, getting history wrong is part of being a nation.<sup>19</sup> This study considers the historical narrative—the myth of common national origins and its pantheon of heroes—to be the key to the formation of an articulate sense of national identity.<sup>20</sup>

Because this study concerns itself with *popular* national identity and consciousness, it focuses on views and attitudes that are nationally coherent and consistent—beliefs held throughout a given society by constituents from all social strata. Although national elites figure prominently in the pages that follow, every attempt has been made to broaden this study's scope of inquiry to account for opinions and beliefs expressed outside the intelligentsia within society at large.<sup>21</sup> At its essence, then, this is an analysis of the origins of popular Russian national identity, a widely held sense of “special significance” imparted by an awareness of an association with a common territory, state, society, and historical experience.

The distinction between russocentrism and Russian nationalism is critical to understanding the discussion that follows. Whereas the former is an expression of ethnic pride and is derived from a strong, articulate sense of Russian national identity, the latter—according to Gellner's definition—is a much more politicized concept referring to group aspirations for political sovereignty and self-rule along national lines.<sup>22</sup> Although this study spends a considerable amount of time examining expressions of Russian national pride between the late 1930s and the mid-1950s, “nationalism” as such rarely factors into the narrative. After all, the party hierarchy never endorsed the idea of Russian self-determination or separatism and vigorously suppressed all those who did, consciously drawing a line between the positive phenomenon of national identity formation and the malignancy of full-blown nationalist ambitions.<sup>23</sup>

Referred to as “national Bolshevism” by M. N. Riutin, the line promoted by the stalinist party hierarchy essentially cloaked a Marxist-Leninist worldview within russocentric, etatist rhetoric. National Bolshevism, in this sense, describes a peculiar form of Marxist-Leninist etatism that fused the pursuit of communist ideals with more statist ambitions reminiscent of tsarist “Great Power” (*velikoderzhavnye*) traditions. Insofar as the focus on

Great Power status tended to be the dominant component of this ideology, the role of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism was often limited to the level of rhetoric.<sup>24</sup>

Equally important for the purposes of this study is the distinction between state and nation. Theodore Weeks provides perhaps the most eloquent introduction to the difference between the two concepts, noting that while the terms may not vary greatly in English or French parlance, “in Central and Eastern Europe, the distinction between the nation and the state is more clear-cut, even linguistically. In German, one speaks of *Volk* or *Staat*; in Polish *naród* or *państwo*; in Russian *narod* or *gosudarstvo*. When dealing with the world outside of Western Europe . . . we must take pains not to muddle these two terms [and] not to assume that a nation ‘naturally’ has a state.”<sup>25</sup> If state refers to a country and its governing institutions, nation is best understood as a group of individuals who share an ethnically inflected sense of mass identity. Political agitation in favor of a strong central state apparatus is referred to in the pages that follow as etatism and is to be distinguished from nationalism, which describes the political ambitions of a particular nation or ethnic group.

Other terms requiring clarification include patriotism and populism. The former, a sense of loyalty and allegiance to one’s homeland, is a rallying call that is central to most states’ attempts at mass mobilization. Populism is a genre of political campaigning that is also often used during mass mobilization. It refers to a style of propaganda designed for use on the mass level and generally appeals to the lowest common denominator of society. Slogans are often simplistic and inflammatory, and play upon emotion rather than reason. Synonyms include words with more explicitly chauvinist connotations like nativism or jingoism.

Finally, as is already evident from the preceding discussion, a group of individuals referred to as the party hierarchy looms large in this study. This turn of phrase ascribes agency to those responsible for decision making in the Soviet system while attempting to improve upon more traditional nomenclature. Although recent studies have shown Stalin to have held enormous power during the time period in question, it would seem simplistic and reductionist to attribute to him every decision made during his tenure.<sup>26</sup> Such a puppet-master paradigm not only mythologizes Stalin’s leadership capacities (in a perverse inversion of his infamous personality cult), but it obscures the decisive roles played by ranking party members like A. A. Zhdanov, A. S. Shcherbakov, and G. F. Aleksandrov. But if it seems necessary to expand the scope of inquiry beyond Stalin’s chancel-

lery, it would be a mistake to suggest that power was as broadly diffused as terms like “the party” tend to imply. Composite constructions like “the party-state” likewise exaggerate the power wielded by the bureaucracy and downplay the degree to which the upper echelons of the party elite monopolized all real decision-making authority. Hence “party hierarchy” is used in the pages that follow to signify the small, exclusive group of party members in Stalin’s entourage who wielded power in Soviet society between the early 1930s and the mid-1950s.

It has long been known that the stalinist party leadership from time to time appropriated imagery and symbols from the old regime. Resolving the long-standing debate over the nature and significance of this flirtation with the Russian national past (particularly the co-option of tsarist heroes, myths, and iconography), this study argues that such practices during the mid- to late 1930s amounted to no less than an ideological about-face. Profoundly pragmatic and unabashedly populist, this ideological shift had a transformative effect on Russo-Soviet society that has remained largely unacknowledged by scholars until the present day.

The origins of this turnabout can be traced back to the mid- to late 1920s. Frustrated with the failure of early propaganda campaigns, Stalin and his entourage began to look for new ways to bolster the legitimacy of Bolshevik rule during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Their search was complicated by the need to mobilize popular support within a society that had proven to be too poorly educated to be inspired by unadulterated Marxism-Leninism alone. Distancing themselves from fifteen years of idealistic, utopian sloganeering, Stalin and his colleagues gradually refashioned themselves as etatists and began to selectively rehabilitate famous personalities and familiar symbols from the Russian national past. Earlier Marxist sloganeering was integrated into a reconceptualized history of the USSR that increasingly stressed Russian aspects of the Soviet past. At the same time, the master narrative was simplified and popularized in order to maximize its appeal to the USSR’s marginally educated citizenry. By 1937, party ideology had assumed a valence that I refer to as national Bolshevism.

More consistent and articulate than previously believed, this new catechism came to play a central role in public schools and party educational institutions for almost twenty years. Textbooks published in 1937 replaced all competing curricular materials and established a historiographic orthodoxy over almost a thousand years of Russo-Soviet history. Serving as

obligatory handbooks for students and adults alike, the new texts also scripted the depiction of historical events and personages in the works of A. N. Tolstoi, S. M. Eisenstein, and numerous other great names of the period, in fields ranging from literature and verse to the stage and screen. The dimensions of this curricular program and its accompanying agitational campaign—visible in the continuous participation of leading officials, the scale of the textbooks' print runs, and the enormity of its influence over mass culture—indicate that this new master narrative should be considered one of the great projects of the Stalin era.

Ironically, despite the monolithic nature of this national Bolshevik line, it did not fully succeed in conveying its intended message to the society as a whole. Designed to promote state legitimacy and a popular sense of Soviet patriotism, this propaganda stimulated other sorts of feeling and emotions on the mass level as well. This should come as no great surprise to many readers, as audiences rarely assimilate what they are told in toto without some degree of simplification, essentialization, or misunderstanding. In this case, despite the party hierarchy's conscious efforts to balance its populist russocentric etatism with Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the population at large generally failed to grasp this line's more philosophical "socialist" dimensions. Too complex and abstract to engage the popular imagination and play a formative role in shaping the society's historical *mentalité*, these elements were eclipsed by more familiar aspects of the party's new narrative, particularly Russian national imagery, heroes, myths, and parables. In other words, although Stalin and his entourage intended to promote little more than a patriotic sense of loyalty to the party and state between 1931 and 1956, their approach to popular mobilization ultimately contributed to no less than the formation of a mass sense of Russian national identity in Soviet society. Insofar as this new sense of social identity proved durable enough to survive the fall of the USSR itself in 1991, an appreciation of this complex inheritance from the Stalin era would seem necessary not only for those who study the past, but for those concerned with the present and future of Russian-speaking society as well.

# 1 Tsarist and Early Soviet Society's Weak Sense of National Identity

Surveys of Russian history under the old regime traditionally devote an enormous amount of attention to the doctrine of "Official Nationality" and the Slavophile-Westernizer debate in their treatments of the mid-nineteenth century. It is important to remember, however, that such articulate notions of group identity found little reflection in Russian society at that time outside gentry circles and the small urban intelligentsia. Marginally literate if educated at all, vast stretches of the empire's Russian-speaking population had trouble even conceiving of a larger political community than that defined by their provincial economic, cultural, and kinship associations. The process Eugen Weber has described that transformed peasants into Frenchmen during the nineteenth century was just barely under way in the Russian-speaking lands of Eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Thirty years later, the situation remained more or less unchanged, despite three revolutions, two wars, and one protracted period of internecine strife. This chapter examines this paradoxical lack of an articulate, coherent sense of mass identity, both in late imperial Russia and during the first decade of the Soviet experiment. Of particular note are the striking similarities between the tsarist state's failure to mobilize its population between 1914 and 1917 and the party hierarchy's inability to do exactly the same thing ten years later during the war scare of 1927. Such conclusions may not apply to the more educated segments of Russian-speaking society, whether under the tsars or the Bolsheviks. But it was on the mass level that these regimes needed to rally popular support, and their efforts in this regard during the first decades of the twentieth century go a long way to

ward providing a basic sociology of Russian society on either side of the revolutionary divide.

Sarah Davies observes in passing in a recent study of Soviet popular opinion that Russian national identity before the mid-1930s was a strikingly amorphous entity. Noting that “Russianness” tended to be “defined in implicit opposition to other groups such as Jews and Armenians, but was usually not articulated in a more positive way,” she concludes that “there was little notion of what Russianness meant for ordinary workers and peasants.”<sup>2</sup>

What can account for this absence of an articulate sense of national identity? In essence, what seems to have been lacking among Russians as late as the mid-1930s was a sense of a common heritage and an awareness of a glorious history, boasting a pantheon of semimythical patriot-heroes.<sup>3</sup> Anderson argues that it was precisely such claims of primordial pedigree, promoted by print media and mass education, that mobilized “the new imagined communities” that took shape in Europe over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tales of ruling dynasties, epic struggles, and battlefield heroics were central to these new national histories, as this was “an age in which ‘history’ itself was still widely conceived in terms of ‘great events’ and ‘great leaders,’ pearls to string along a thread of narrative.” Often highly finessed (English histories, for example, styled William the Conqueror as a national hero even though he never spoke a word of English), the creation and popularization of such narratives was a central aspect of the consolidation of national communities all across Europe.<sup>4</sup> In Russia, however, a lack of commitment on the part of the tsarist regime to such populist practices (particularly via print media and public education) prevented the coalescing of a similarly coherent and articulate sense of national identity on the popular level.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, this lack of universal public schooling did not mean that the peasantry and nascent working class were completely unaware of Russian state history. Ethnographic material collected by the Russian Geographic Society and other nineteenth-century organizations reveals that ordinary people sometimes displayed surprising familiarity with historical events and personalities, especially the “great events” and “great leaders” that Anderson identifies above. Even if such popular understandings were simplistic and lacking in nuance, these folkloric traditions demonstrate that there was considerable popular interest in prominent rulers (Ivan the Ter-

rible, Peter the Great), tsarist generals (Suvorov, Kutuzov), and peasant rebels (Razin, Pugachev). The sources are even rich enough to demonstrate considerable regional variation in the accounts: Ivan the Terrible, it seems, was remembered as a “people’s tsar” in the territories between Moscow and Kazan’, while in Novgorod he was immortalized as the “scourge of God.” Pugachev, fondly remembered in the Volga basin, was considerably less well known outside the regions in which he led a popular revolt in the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Generally speaking, then, ordinary Russians had a fairly broad—if varied—vocabulary of heroes, myths, and symbols under the *ancien régime*.

But it is precisely because of the regional variation in these accounts that such an awareness of historical events and personalities should not be mistaken for a coherent sense of national identity on the popular level during the nineteenth century. Without a doubt, modern Russian national identity today draws upon myths and legends that have been in circulation in one form or another for hundreds of years. That said, given the wide variation in historical folklore from region to region, it would be incautious to think of such notions as contributing to a single, widely held sense of national identity during the nineteenth century. Conflicting impressions of heroes, imagery, and symbols, after all, divide rather than unite, and in this instance they denied old-regime Russia the sense of a common heritage that is so critical to the possession of a mass social identity.

Instead, it seems clear that group identity among Russians during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more or less coherent only on the regional level. One scholar illustrates the primacy of local identities at this time by observing that “the language of the peasants was filled with words, phrases, and proverbs describing the uniqueness of one’s ‘place,’ where, as it was said, ‘birds sing differently and flowers bloom more brightly.’”<sup>7</sup> A good example is the word “motherland,” which Dal’s famous encyclopedic dictionary lists as functioning both as a synonym for the political term “state” and, in more colloquial terms, as a way of describing a Russian’s native region, province, or town.<sup>8</sup> A telling indication of the modest scale of the society’s “imagined communities,” this sort of evidence has led one commentator to conclude that the average peasant at the turn of the century “had little sense of ‘Russianness.’ He thought of himself, not as a ‘Russkii,’ but as a ‘Viatskii’ or as a ‘Tulskii’—that is, a native of Viatka or Tula province.”<sup>9</sup> Such understandings persisted even after peasants left their villages to join the ranks of the nascent urban working class.<sup>10</sup>

Unsurprisingly, a lack of national patriotic sentiments among the population dovetailed with this underdeveloped and inconsistent sense of national identity. Nineteenth-century commentators with considerable experience in the village wrote at length about the peasantry's lack of a feeling of allegiance to the state and society at large. L. N. Tolstoi, for instance, testified:

I lived among the Russian people for half a century and over the course of that time I never saw or heard even once any manifestation or expression of this notion of patriotism within the great breadth [*ν bol'shoi masse*] of the true Russian people, if you don't count those patriotic phrases which are learned by rote in the army or repeated out of books by the most simple-minded and spoiled individuals from among the people. I never heard from the people any expression of patriotic sentiments—quite the opposite, I frequently heard the most serious and respectable men from among the people express the most utter indifference or even contempt for every kind of patriotism.<sup>11</sup>

Provincial Russia offered little to counteract this state of affairs—it was a society with few institutions, where authority was more often associated with specific personalities than with the ranks or offices they held. For a variety of reasons, neither the public schools (to the extent to which they even existed) nor the tsarist court made any concerted effort to alter the situation.<sup>12</sup> Even the army, as Tolstoi notes above, relied on banal and simplistic forms of sloganeering (referred to in Russian as *shaphkozakidatel'stvo*) to maintain morale within the ranks.

To be sure, some lobbied the tsarist administration to take steps to ameliorate the situation. For instance, upon his return from a tour of European educational institutions in 1905, Count N. S. Musin-Pushkin urged the Ministry of Education to correct the “cosmopolitan” bias present in the country's public school curriculum by providing something more patriotic and “national.” Specifically, he reported that although educational systems all across Europe were becoming more nationally oriented, Russian officials failed to appreciate the importance of this trend as they looked to the West for educational models and templates. He complained that “we have taken our entire school system from Germany and have failed to borrow the one main thing—their school spirit, that lively, national, patriotic direction that is present throughout the German school.” Particularly important, according to Musin-Pushkin, were curricular subjects like history, which helped German students to understand “the his-

torical tasks of the German people.” This he implicitly contrasted to the situation at home, where “our Russian youth are not brought up with Russian national ideals, in the spirit of faith and loyalty to the throne and with respect for . . . the history that their native people have endured and that has created their valuable cultural heritage.”<sup>13</sup> Others seconded Musin-Pushkin’s call, contrasting high levels of national consciousness and mobilization in Europe with apathy and inertia at home. All of German society, wrote one commentator in 1910, “is filled with a national spirit that the proud nation breathes like air.” “What do we see in England?” he continued. “The English, filled with a sense of deep respect for their thousand-year history, hold their ancestors in high esteem . . . respect for the past is taken to the level of a holy cult.”<sup>14</sup> Three years later, an author named N. Dmitriev argued that the problem was essentially one of providing a more consistent and unambiguously uplifting historical narrative in the schools. Whereas Japanese, French, and German textbooks described their national pasts in positive, inspirational terms, Russian historical narratives were too inclined to equivocate.<sup>15</sup> One after another, however, proposals such as these were rejected by officials at the Ministry of Education as tendentious, untimely, or otherwise inappropriate.<sup>16</sup> Also to blame for this failure to promote a national idea, of course, was the fact that far from all Russian children were given the chance to enroll in school. Even among those who did, most dropped out after completing only two years, meaning that although they learned how to read and write in Russian, they spent far too little time in the classroom to learn how to “imagine” what it was like to be a member of the Russian national community by means of exposure to its history, literature, or geography.<sup>17</sup>

But if curricular content and popular patriotism were little more than philosophical questions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they became matters of great consequence in August 1914. The British military attaché, Colonel Alfred Knox, recounted in his memoirs after the First World War that Russian soldiers lacked an understanding of the objectives they were fighting for, as well as a sense of patriotism articulate enough to allow them to weather reversals of fortune and major defeats.<sup>18</sup> General Iu. N. Danilov, the quartermaster of the Imperial Army’s General Staff, gave a similar appraisal, noting that although the Russian peasant was willing enough to fight, he did not become personally invested in the war unless his home province was directly threatened.<sup>19</sup> General N. N. Golovin was perhaps most precise in his appraisal of morale within the ranks during the war, contending that

Patriotism was much more commonly felt [*osoznan*] among the masses of our Western allies, owing to their great social maturity. In that sense, Iu. N. Danilov is correct in comparing the attitude of our people with that of a child.

The political worldview of the multimillion-man Russian military mass in the first years of the war can be entirely summed up in the formula "For the Faith, the Tsar, and the Fatherland." . . . Russian patriotism was . . . primitive; it was—to coin a phrase—merely raw material from which more mature forms of patriotism would evolve in [more] cultured conditions, as could be observed in France, Great Britain, and America.<sup>20</sup>

Knox, Danilov, and Golovin all concluded that from the standpoint of morale and national identity, the Russian army was woefully ill-prepared for a war of attrition in 1914. Two years later, in 1916, an article in the journal *Ruskaiia mysl'* warned that the situation had not improved. Twelve months before the revolution, Russians still suffered from "a lack of a conscious principle of nationality." This, according to the article's author, was a result of negligence in the educational establishment. The school, he contended somewhat hyperbolically, "has never attempted to awaken a love for the motherland in its students . . . and it has not taught them about the Russian people."<sup>21</sup> Although it should be acknowledged that the tsarist state *did* make an attempt after the start of the war to develop a more concrete and coherent notion of what it meant to be Russian, too little effort was invested too late to have a tangible effect. As a result, negative caricatures of the German enemy did more to unite the empire than the clumsy nativist patriotic slogans that were hastily disseminated.<sup>22</sup>

In light of such an underdeveloped sense of Russian national identity, one scholar has recently observed that it is something of a misnomer to refer to the events of 1917 as the *Russian* Revolution.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, in retrospect, it is clear that the revolutionary politics of ethnic self-determination found much greater resonance among the non-Russian nationalities of the former empire than among the Russians themselves.<sup>24</sup> Eyewitnesses in major Russian cities even feared that the revolutionary crowds of the era were undermining their own claims to statehood. Iu. V. Got'e, for instance, despaired on the pages of his diary a week after the revolution that "Russia is being sold out and betrayed and the Russian people just wreak havoc, raise

hell and revolt, being absolutely indifferent to their international fate. It is an unprecedented event in world history when so numerous a people, which—despite all sorts of qualifications—considers itself to be a great, world-class people, has, with its own hands, dug itself a grave in eight months. It follows that the very notion of a Russian Great Power [*derzhava*], a Russian people, was a mirage and a bluff, that it only seemed to be so and was never really a reality.”<sup>25</sup>

Three more years of revolution and war between 1918 and 1921 did little to alter this state of affairs. Ethnographers assigned the task of preparing for the first Soviet census during the mid-1920s are known to have looked in vain for evidence of an articulate sense of a Russian national community. Instead, they “discovered that peasants did not distinguish between Belorussians, Great Russians and Ukrainians,” either referring to each other indiscriminately as “Russian” or relying on more tangible regional identities instead. Those surveying local populations just a few hundred miles from Moscow, for instance, encountered a number of self-professed “Vladimirians” and “Kostromians” who seemed utterly unaware that they might lay claim to a more broadly constructed national identity. Even more instructive is the account of a specialist in the field: “The ethnographer V. Chernyshev, who worked in central Russia, complained that the ‘uncivilized folk in our midst’ lack ‘national consciousness and a comprehension of the connection between large historical occurrences and developed tribal groups.’ He continued: ‘The well known joke [that] “a person from Pskov is not a Russian” quite truthfully defines our national consciousness.’”<sup>26</sup>

This lack of a coherent sense of mass identity left Russians with little more in common than their tendency to identify themselves in opposition to the non-Russian peoples. Indeed, to the extent to which the archival record from the 1920s and early 1930s reveals moments of ethnic self-awareness among ordinary Russians, these sentiments tend to be vague and focus on negative characterizations of other ethnic groups rather than on positive descriptions about what it meant to be Russian.<sup>27</sup> United more by chauvinism than by an articulate sense of national identity, when Russians did ascribe characteristics to themselves, they imagined an ethnic community colored by an abstract—almost maudlin—fascination with national suffering and the ability to endure hardship.

If a sense of national identity had been weakly and inconsistently developed under the *ancien régime*, the fact that little changed during the first two decades following the revolution should come as no surprise. Na-

tional identity formation is not a spontaneous or inevitable process; moreover, the early Soviet regime's commitment to proletarian internationalism actually *discouraged* the coalescing of a mass sense of Russian national identity over the course of the first fifteen years of the Soviet experiment. To begin with, positive appraisals of Russianness during the time were officially condemned as tsarist "Great Power chauvinism."<sup>28</sup> But perhaps more important was the party hierarchy's promotion of a class-based sense of popular identity, couched in Marxist-Leninist terms relating to historical materialism, social forces, and various stages of international economic development. As if implicitly referring to the line from *The Communist Manifesto* that "the workers do not have a fatherland,"<sup>29</sup> ideological tracts of the period emphasized the primacy of class consciousness over national consciousness. Even after the inauguration of the "Socialism in One Country" thesis in the mid-1920s, Soviet propagandists continued to view class as a more fundamental and decisive social category than other paradigms drawn along ethnic or national indexes. P. Stuchka, a well-known legal commentator during the 1920s, in many ways captured the early Bolsheviks' disdain for the nationalist alternative: "in our times, patriotism's role is that of an extremely reactionary ideology, the task of which is to justify imperialist bestiality and to deaden the proletariat's class consciousness." Summarizing well the prevailing view in the press, Stuchka explained that although it was reasonable for workers to show loyalty to societies organized in their interest, such an emotion had little to do with "national" or "ethnic" affinities. It was, rather, *internationalist*, proletarian solidarity forming the essence of Soviet social identity and not national borders or blood.<sup>30</sup>

In keeping with this principle of "class analysis," the party hierarchy did not even attempt to rally all segments of the society together under the banner of socialist construction. In a marked departure from the traditional notion of a "motherland" that was common to all, sloganeering in the 1920s emphasized the internationalist paradigm of proletarian "brotherhood" with such consistency that *déclassé* elements (priests and former members of the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the tsarist gendarmerie) were deemed incapable of loyalty to the workers' state.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, individuals who were perceived as a threat to Soviet power were termed "class enemies" (*klassovye vragi*) rather than "enemies of the people" (*vragi naroda*). A leftist American observer commented at the time that the emerging society was "not handicapped by patriotism" in the conventional sense. Comparing such beliefs to religiosity, he observed that they

were “sentimental idealisms to the materialist Bolsheviks” who had better ways of mobilizing mass support.<sup>32</sup>

Anderson notes that group identities are typically catalyzed by the promotion of a narrative stressing the commonality of ancestry or origins on the mass level. In the Soviet case, such a book existed—at least technically—written by M. N. Pokrovskii, the father of Marxist historiography in the USSR. Dovetailing with other ideological tracts, however, Pokrovskii’s *Brief Sketch of Russian History* had little in common with Anderson’s understanding of a national narrative. Instead of focusing on the nation, the book highlighted class as the decisive factor in the history of human and material relations and focused on broad models (*skhemy*) that detailed stages of economic development (feudalism, trade capitalism, imperialism) and class tensions (enservment, labor unrest). Dismissed were more traditional narrative forms, charted according to the reigns of great rulers (Iaroslav the Wise, Ivan the Great), the feats of famous heroes (Nevskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov), epic military clashes (the Battle on the Ice, Poltava, Sevastopol’), or even popular insurrections and their rebel leaders (the False Dmitriis, Razin, Pugachev, Shamil’).<sup>33</sup>

Much of this vision stemmed from the fact that, as convinced historical materialists and internationalists, Pokrovskii and his colleagues were deeply suspicious of the merits of history practiced along national lines. Painting the *longue durée* of Russian history in exclusively dark colors, Pokrovskii’s *Brief Sketch* narrated the story of a chauvinistic, colonizing nation carrying out the will of an oppressive tsarist system.<sup>34</sup> Repeatedly citing Lenin’s and Engels’s appraisals of Imperial Russia as “a prison of the peoples” and the “gendarme of Europe,” he was even outspoken enough to declare on occasion that “in the past, we Russians—and I am as pure-blooded a Great Russian as can be—in the past, we Russians were the biggest robbers imaginable.” Surveying the field in 1930, Pokrovskii wrote with satisfaction that “we have understood—perhaps somewhat belatedly—that the term ‘Russian history’ is a counterrevolutionary slogan, a term that comes from the same stamp as the tricolor flag and the slogan ‘united and indivisible.’”<sup>35</sup> Such distaste for the national past probably explains why, amid the giddy, utopian swirl of agitation that typified the early Soviet period, civic history received little or no systematic attention in the public schools. As far as the party hierarchs were concerned, rejection of the lessons of the prerevolutionary period was axiomatic to the rejection of the old regime itself, and historical narrative, with its potential to unite people around the myth of common origins, was summarily abandoned.

Instead, proposals were endorsed to replace the teaching of “naked historical facts” with an interdisciplinary subject called social studies (*obshchestvovedenie*), which would supposedly instill in students a Marxist worldview through its focus on subjects like “labor,” “economy,” and “class conflict.” Classroom mainstays like standardized textbooks were also to be dispensed with, so the argument went, as they tended to become obsolete as soon as they rolled off the presses. Instead, officials endorsed the use of journals that would complement the classroom’s revolutionary songs and posters with collections of newspaper excerpts concerning revolutionary holiday celebrations, important speeches and decrees, and interviews with workers and peasants. Such material was deemed to be more relevant to Soviet students’ lives than dry narrative history, especially when considered in conjunction with excursions to museums, new monuments, and factories.<sup>36</sup> Pokrovskii, one of the most prominent advocates of this approach, believed that if not for the framework provided by social studies, inexperienced teachers might succumb to the prerevolutionary classroom’s penchant for the stultifying study of chronological tables, tsars’ reigns, and state decrees, thereby neglecting the vastly more important study of social movements, stages of economic development, and mounting levels of class antagonism.<sup>37</sup> Tellingly, Pokrovskii didn’t even endorse the use of his own textbook, which would have been too difficult for students in public school anyway. If the implementation of many of the more radical prescriptions associated with this approach—the “complex method,” the “laboratory method,” and the “project method”—lagged far behind their formulation, social studies itself found widespread classroom application.<sup>38</sup> A similar agenda dominated classes designed for adults in a vast new network of literacy schools (*likbezny*) and party study circles (*kruzhki*). Both, in turn, were complemented by state-sponsored film, theater, and publishing.<sup>39</sup>

In the mid-1980s, Peter Kenez gave high marks to this hybridization of educational and agitational practices. Even without a unified historical narrative, students and adults alike apparently embraced major aspects of the official line and materialist worldview.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, due to a lack of access to secret police reports assessing the impact of such propaganda, Kenez seems to have overestimated the popular appeal and effectiveness of early Soviet mass culture. Recent research indicates that slogans stressing class consciousness, the worker-peasant alliance, and popular support for Soviet power were only inconsistently reflected in discourse on the popular level. Instead, the society appears to have been divided and fractious,

lacking a common sense of identity, whether expressed in terms of class, ethnicity, or loyalty to the state.<sup>41</sup> Outbursts at election meetings in 1925 recorded by party or OGPU informers attest to a lack of allegiance to the Soviet cause among the peasantry. One Filipp Panchuk scolded an agitator at a rally:

We are fed up with your tales. The only thing you've learned to do in seven years is wag your tongues. All you communists are like blind kittens—you do not see what you are doing. You are not improving the economy, but only ruining it. You Red butchers ought to know that the steam boiler of peasant patience may explode one day. You ought to know that the peasants curse you usurpers in their morning prayers . . . You are stealing our last cow, our last meager belongings. You won't pay the peasant invalid who lost a leg defending your revolution even a ruble, but you've found 300 a month for the tsarist general Brusilov. Where is truth? Where is justice? Why did you fool us with words such as freedom, land, peace, and equality? Now we understand that Kerenskii's government was better for us.<sup>42</sup>

Such an “us versus them” dichotomy was voiced in the city as well as the country. Reports from Tambov indicate that working-class neighborhoods were rife with leafleting, “anti-Soviet agitation,” and rumors “about the approach of war and workers' rebellions in other cities.”<sup>43</sup> In 1926 the secret police reported that in places like Moscow, outbursts such as “the party has turned against the workers” were becoming increasingly common on the shop floor. At the Moscow Tea Trust, a worker called out during a rally, “the party is strangling the working class, the workers' demands are not being satisfied, and the factory's party cell is always on the administration's side.”<sup>44</sup> The situation was little better in Leningrad, where workers grumbled at the Zinov'ev paper factory that “everyday and everywhere, the newspapers are writing about the broad democracy of our elections, but at the same time, in a dictatorial way, the Communist Party collective nominates candidates who are of no use to the workers.”<sup>45</sup> Equally embarrassing were OGPU reports in 1926 admitting that among workers, conditions were commonly believed to be worse than they had been “under the tsar.”<sup>46</sup> Rumors circulating on the shop floor in Kostroma a year later included the incendiary claim that “the party and Soviet Power want to strangle us and soon we will turn into colonial slaves [like in] China and India.”<sup>47</sup>

Such reports were probably written off by the party hierarchs as unrep-

representative of the general social scene, but a disastrous experience with popular mobilization only months later during the war scare of 1927 perhaps marks a turning point in their approach to mass agitational work. In retrospect little more than a war of words, Great Britain's rupturing of diplomatic relations in the spring of 1927, combined with reversals in China and the assassination of a Soviet plenipotentiary in Poland, triggered a major wave of alarmist articles in the Soviet press warning of an imminent attack by the capitalist powers. Although there is reason to believe that Soviet leaders knew from the outset that the threat of actual invasion was slight, they seized the opportunity to launch a major campaign designed to mobilize popular support for the regime.<sup>48</sup>

While it has long been known that the rumors of war provoked a run on consumer goods and led peasants to withhold grain from the market, secret police reports now indicate that the popular reaction to the new tensions on the international scene was considerably more troubling than previously thought.<sup>49</sup> Instead of promoting an upswell of popular support for the regime, the war scare gave rise to defeatist rumors that swept across the entire country. A decade of propaganda and agitation based on notions of class consciousness, working-class solidarity, and loyalty to the party as the vanguard of the proletariat had failed to affect vast swaths of Soviet society. Examples of individual outbursts recorded by the OGPU on the local level are instructive:

You are going to lead us out against the bourgeoisie and all of us peasants are going to lay down our bones to protect Sov[iet] Power[?] Don't hold your breath, communists [*etogo vam, kommunistam, ne dozhdat'sia*]. The peasantry wouldn't defend the regime for anything, as it hasn't given us anything and instead has given all the rights and privileges to you, the communists. Why don't you go and defend it yourselves. [Kaluga province]

England is preparing to declare war against the USSR, but the Russian man is tired of war and no one will go off to fight. Soviet Power for us is like a [bad] dream and a temporary phenomenon: sooner or later it will cease to exist and then there will be a Constituents' Assembly. [The Krivoi Rog region]

England has informed the communists that they should surrender without a fight and that a president will be appointed in Russia who is supported either by England or the peasants of Russia. If the commu-

nists do not surrender, England will go to war. Enough of our blood has already been shed—it would be good if the communists would surrender without a fight. [The Amur region]

Soon there will be war and they will give weapons to us peasants and we'll turn them against Sov[iet] Power; we do not need a workers' regime and we should overthrow it and smother the communists. [Moscow province]<sup>50</sup>

Neither the party nor its materialist propaganda, it seems, inspired popular loyalty. Although by some estimates class-oriented rhetoric worked fairly well as a means for exploiting social tensions on the domestic front both before and after 1927,<sup>51</sup> it had failed to prepare the USSR for situations that required popular mobilization against a common external enemy. Within months, orders were being sent from Moscow calling for an end to the campaign, as it was doing more harm than good.<sup>52</sup> If 1914 was often used during NEP as an index by which to measure the USSR's recovery during the 1920s, no one dared to compare the party's dismal experience with popular mobilization in 1927 with the tsarist state's equally unimpressive record during the First World War. Only the fact that rumors of war in 1927 turned out to be unfounded saved the USSR from risking a disaster of the sort that had brought down the old regime ten years earlier.

In attempting to explain the absence of a coherent sense of a common social identity among Russians during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, considerable emphasis should be placed on the reluctance of the tsarist regime to embrace a populist ideology revolving around the idea of the nation, something that would have been fully in step with trends visible throughout the rest of Europe. Equally important was St. Petersburg's lack of commitment to basic institutions that might have been capable of popularizing an articulate, coherent sense of patriotic identity, particularly the public schools. After all, the problem was not that the society lacked interest in Russian state history—it was that the peasantry's folkloric traditions were uncoordinated, inconsistent, and even contradictory due to regional variation. By the time tsarist leaders realized their error after the start of the First World War, they lacked the time and infrastructure to launch anything but the most nativist of mobilizational campaigns, the effects of which may have actually hastened the regime's collapse.<sup>53</sup>

In the wake of the revolution, the early Soviet internationalist regime

rejected the very idea of “Russianness” as a mobilizational concept. That said, the party hierarchy proved from the outset to be much more amenable than the old regime had been to the idea of social mobilization through mass culture, public spectacle, universal education, and the press. Yet the message that Soviet propagandists promoted failed to find popular resonance. Larry Holmes recounts that even in the classroom, where students were supposedly immersed in the social studies curriculum, exams demonstrated that

many students knew little about the history of class struggle, Marxism or the Soviet period. One respondent thought [the] Komsomol was an “international organization of the homeless”; another, perhaps beguiled by visions of global revolution, asserted that Persia and China were entering the USSR. The same distressing results occurred in 1927. Many students misspelled common words, misused foreign terms, [and] rambled on aimlessly in written and oral responses . . . At the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad, the Kazan Agricultural Institute, and Moscow State University, many applicants exhibited only limited knowledge about historical and recent developments essential to official ideology. They informed their examiners . . . that Bakunin was a French revolutionary who had led the Chartist movement; and that imperialism was the best path to socialism.<sup>54</sup>

If the situation in the classrooms and university lecture halls was bad, much of the rest of society understood *even less* about what it meant to be a member of the first socialist society. Indeed, questions asked at public rallies—“Why can’t we have Soviet power without the party?”—indicate just how little ordinary people understood about their society nearly ten years after the revolution.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps this failure to identify with the party’s program and ideals stemmed from the Bolsheviks’ heavy reliance on a bloodless, materialist view of the historical process, in which heroes and valor had been replaced by anonymous social forces, stages of economic development, and class antagonism. Perhaps the few heroes who were deployed by Bolshevik propagandists were either unfamiliar to their audiences (A. I. Ul’ianov, M. V. Frunze, G. I. Kotovskii), foreign (Marx, Engels, Marat) or both unfamiliar *and* foreign (Rosa Luxembourg, Karl Liebknecht, and others). Perhaps the party’s propaganda infrastructure was poorly developed, incompetently staffed, and chronically underfunded.<sup>56</sup> But whatever the underlying reason, Soviet society demonstrated a marked lack of interest in the regime’s propaganda and shrugged

off its calls to mobilize in 1927. Bolshevik complaints during that year about the society's unpreparedness for war echoed tsarist officials' descriptions of a lack of consciousness, commitment, and solidarity among Russians during the last years of the old regime.

It would be difficult to prove that the party hierarchs experienced a moment of epiphany in late 1927 that immediately led them to look for ideological alternatives that would find greater social resonance. Instead, it seems that the process was a gradual one, the issue slowly rising on the party hierarchy's agenda over the next few years to the point where it ultimately became something of an obsession for Stalin and his inner circle. If history had repeated itself in 1927, with the USSR falling victim to the mobilizational ills that had hobbled the *ancien régime* in 1917, the party hierarchy would not allow the same shortcoming to mar the twentieth anniversary of the revolution in 1937. Dramatic success in that year rewarded an intervening decade of false starts, failures, and fiascos. These difficult years during the early to mid-1930s occupy center stage in the following chapter, as they provide a critical context for understanding the triumphs that followed late in the decade.

**Part One**  
**1931–1941**



## 2 Mobilizing Stalinist Society in the Early to Mid-1930s

In the aftermath of the 1927 war scare, the party hierarchs looked with increasing urgency for a way to complement their arcane, materialist propaganda with slogans that would be more understandable and compelling to common Soviet citizens. Focusing on this gradual recognition of the need for sustainable society-wide mobilization to support priorities ranging from industrialization to national defense, this chapter examines the party hierarchy's abandonment of utopian forms of propaganda and the resurgence of more conventional styles of agitation oriented around the promotion of individual heroes, patriotism, and history itself.

Commentators have long suspected that party policy in the 1930s was characterized by a new interest in reaching a *modus vivendi* with Soviet society. This, of course, is paradoxical in light of the extraordinary cruelty, neglect, and cynicism that underscored the decade's pursuit of collectivization, breakneck industrialization, and social cleansing. Nevertheless, Robert C. Tucker has traced the origins of this reorientation to Stalin's 1934 announcement that "people must be carefully and attentively cultivated the way a gardener tends a favorite tree." Katerina Clark dates the shift to the following year's exchange of the First Five-Year Plan slogan "technology is the answer to everything" for "cadres are the answer to everything."<sup>1</sup>

Undeniable by the mid-1930s, this newfound interest in popular mobilization should actually be traced back to the very beginning of the decade, to an important turnabout in the official attitude toward patriotism. Only a few years after Stuchka had written off the love of one's country as a reactionary notion designed "to justify imperialist bestiality and to

deaden the proletariat's class consciousness," Stalin started calling this militancy into question. Acknowledging at a major conference in 1931 that Marx and Engels had been right in *The Communist Manifesto* that "in the past we didn't have and could not have had a fatherland," he cautioned against taking such a line of reasoning too far. After all, "now, since we've overthrown capitalism and power belongs to the working class, we *have* a fatherland and will defend its independence."<sup>2</sup>

What was responsible for this about-face? Apparently, the party hierarchy had become frustrated with the previous decade's ideological line, particularly its materialist and antipatriotic dimensions. Realizing that such concepts were too abstract and bloodless to effectively rally the USSR's poorly educated population,<sup>3</sup> Stalin and his colleagues began to look for a more pragmatic, populist alternative that would focus on the rather questionably Marxist notion of a "socialist" fatherland. By the mid-1930s, *Pravda* was promoting this view without reservation: "Soviet patriotism is a burning feeling of boundless love, a selfless devotion to one's motherland and a profound responsibility for her fate and defense, which issues forth like mighty spring waters from the depths of our people." Such sloganeering attempted to rally to the proletarian cause people from outside the industrial working class, ranging from peasants like A. S. Molokova to scholars like the academician A. Bogomolets and the Arctic explorer O. Iu. Shmidt.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the old orthodox view of class-based internationalist loyalty was supplanted during the first half of the 1930s by a new understanding of patriotic loyalty that revolved around the surprisingly interchangeable concepts of motherland and fatherland. The first propaganda line since 1917 to aspire to unite all segments of society together under a common banner, it was introduced in a prominent article in *Pravda* on May 28, 1934, by G. Vasil'kovskii. Echoing Stalin's 1931 commentary, he argued that although Marx and Engels had been correct in 1848 that "the workers do not have a fatherland," the October 1917 revolution had changed things dramatically by producing a workers' state in the midst of a capitalist encirclement.<sup>5</sup> In such a situation, patriotic loyalty to the fatherland was not only possible but necessary. Moreover, official coverage of the issue in the press indicated that social origin was no longer to limit one's ability to be a Soviet loyalist: not only could people from outside the ranks of the industrial proletariat like peasants and scholars now genuinely support Soviet power, but even members of the old nobility like Count Aleksei Tolstoi could be welcomed into the Soviet fold.<sup>6</sup> The decisive role of class consciousness in Soviet ideology had given way

to a new sense of allegiance based on membership within Soviet society. K. B. Radek, writing in *Pravda*, gave Soviet patriotism a firm theoretical basis in 1936, marking the maturation of a major press campaign that expanded the notion of “Soviet” from a party-oriented affinity based on class to a broader understanding that would henceforth encompass geographic and cultural semantics as well.<sup>7</sup>

A turn to populism complemented this departure from class as the sole organizational principle of Soviet society. Indeed, as early as 1931, M. Gor’kii and others concerned with societal mobilization were contending that everyday heroes could be used to popularize the nascent patriotic line “by example.” As G. K. Ordzhonikidze explained to an editor at *Pravda*, “Bathing individuals from among the people in glory—there’s a critical significance to this sort of thing. In capitalist countries, nothing can compare with the popularity of gangsters like Al Capone. In our country, under socialism, heroes of labor must be the most famous.”<sup>8</sup> In marked contrast to the focus on anonymous social forces during the 1920s, this stress on popular heroism led to the rise of what was essentially a new genre of agitational literature. Prominent projects like Gor’kii’s multivolume *History of Plants and Factories* and *The History of the Civil War in the USSR* began to assemble a new pantheon of Soviet heroes, socialist myths, and modern-day fables. This “search for a usable past” not only focused on shock workers in industry and agriculture but it also lavished attention on prominent Old Bolshevik revolutionaries, industrial planners, party leaders, komsomol officials, comintern activists, Red Army heroes, non-Russians from the republican party organizations, and even famous members of the secret police.<sup>9</sup> Such populist, heroic tales from the recent past were seen as providing a common narrative that the entire society would be able to relate to—a rallying call with greater social application than the previous decade’s narrow and impersonal focus on class and materialism.

Reflecting emergent trends in Socialist Realism as well as Stalin’s belief in the traditionalist notion of “the great men of history,” this stress on everyday “heroism” took center stage at the first conference of the Soviet Writers’ Union in 1934.<sup>10</sup> In the wake of this conference, a massive array of literature was commissioned to develop and expand upon the new Soviet Olympus and its pantheon of contemporary heroes. Films like *Counterplan*, *Chapaev*, *The Happy Fellows*, *Circus*, *The Frontier*, *Flyers*, *The Courageous Seven*, *Miners*, and *Volga-Volga* complemented the campaign with celluloid agitation. Epitomizing this type of propaganda is one of the final scenes from G. V. Aleksandrov’s film *The Radiant Path*, a late exam-

ple of the genre. While unveiling an exhibit at the All-Union Agricultural Exposition,<sup>11</sup> the heroine—an illiterate maid turned textile worker, engineer, and deputy of the Supreme Soviet—mounts a podium to lead her audience in a rousing verse from the film’s theme song, “The March of the Enthusiasts”:

In these days of great construction sites,  
In the merry din, the ringing and the lights,  
I send my greetings to this country of heroes,  
To this country of scientists, to this country of dreamers!<sup>12</sup>

Both populist and pragmatic, the campaign aimed to inspire by example, mobilizing Soviet citizens of different social origins, professional occupations, and ethnicities under the common banner of Soviet patriotic heroism.

It would be incorrect, of course, to say that film was the primary vehicle for this propaganda, since much of the content for the new campaign was supplied by a torrential wave of books and artwork rolling off the presses. Party history texts and glossy picture albums appeared in massive print runs, detailing heroism on construction sites and the factory floor, as well as in the non-Russian republics and such exotic fields as aeronautics and polar exploration.<sup>13</sup> Heroic Old Bolsheviks (such as A. S. Enukidze and Ia. E. Rudzutak), as well as prominent figures from the ranks of industry (Iu. L. Piatakov), the party (A. I. Rykov), the komsomol (A. V. Kosarev), the comintern (O. A. Piatnitskii), the Red Army (A. I. Egorov), the republican parties (F. Khodzhaev), and the NKVD (Ia. Peters and N. I. Ezhov), received tremendous acclaim and seemed destined to grace the pages of official propaganda tracts for many years to come. As noted above, such books, posters, and films were designed to elaborate upon the Soviet usable past, complementing Socialist Realism’s fictional heroes with famous and recognizable personalities from the first fifteen years of Soviet power.

It is important to note at this juncture that it was not just the role of historic individuals that had been rehabilitated. History itself—the celebration of tradition and sacred names, dates, and events—likewise returned to the fore as an effective catalyst for patriotic sentiments.<sup>14</sup> In September 1931, as a part of a general retreat from the social studies movement, the Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) reintroduced history as an in-

dependent classroom subject and announced its intention to develop both an official history curriculum and textbooks.<sup>15</sup> As George Enteen notes, if prior to this, “social studies teachers had concerned themselves mainly with definition, delineation, and comparison of universalized structures such as the proletariat, feudalism, and revolution . . . Teachers were now urged to talk about the lives of particular proletariats, to depict the distinctive qualities of feudalism as manifested in individual nations, and to narrate the causes, processes, and consequences of particular revolutions.”<sup>16</sup> Such concern about “particular proletariats” underscores the decade’s new focus on popular heroes from a variety of cultures and walks of life. Contending that “in the country of the victorious proletariat, history is to become a mighty weapon of civic upbringing [*grazhdanskoe vospitanie*],” *Pravda* voiced the same sentiment during the mid-1930s: “our generations must create unwavering revolutionaries—communists, fighters, and builders—according to the heroic models of the past and present.”<sup>17</sup>

But the shift from the interdisciplinary “sociological” pedagogy of the 1920s to instruction based on a highly differentiated curriculum proved difficult to implement overnight. Certain educational institutions continued to teach history unsystematically. On the local level, one commentator noted that in many schools, nominally differentiated subjects were continuing to be taught as subsets of an overarching social studies theme, meaning that little had changed in real terms. Part of the failure to implement the reforms can be explained by resistance on the part of communist idealists within Narkompros, who defended social studies’ continuing relevance to Soviet society despite its failing marks.<sup>18</sup>

Hesitancy in breaking with social studies on the administrative and local levels precipitated further intervention from above. In August 1932, the Central Committee again subjected 1920s teaching strategies to criticism, demanding the reintroduction of textbook-based instruction, year-end exams, and measures to reinforce the authority and competence of educators. Couched in language stressing the importance of the “instruction and upbringing [*obuchenie i vospitanie*] of the next generation,” this decree also reminded Narkompros that it had yet to publish its promised history curriculum and noted that other disciplines, including literature and geography, were also neglecting historical issues.<sup>19</sup> Six months later, a third resolution indicated that the party apparatus was growing impatient with its pedagogical cadres. Frustrated with the halting nature of the curricular conversion, the Central Committee assumed direct control

over what was being taught in the classroom, concluding that proper instruction could be guaranteed only through the creation of standardized (*stabil'nye*) textbooks.<sup>20</sup>

Narkompros responded in the summer of 1933 with the release of its long-awaited official history curriculum and, in quick succession, three textbooks.<sup>21</sup> Despite the production of the required curriculum and texts, however, a survey commissioned by Narkompros between 1933 and 1934 found that serious problems continued to preclude real improvement in history instruction. This survey, conducted in 120 schools located across 14 regions and encompassing nearly 100,000 children, noted some improvement in students' general performance in history but identified several categories of serious shortfall. First, students displayed little understanding of historical events, grasping general schematic frameworks (for example, the idea of class conflict) but proving unable to connect such concepts to specific historical contexts. Second, students failed (with their teachers) to use classroom maps effectively in discussions of specific events. Third, students had a poor understanding of the sequence of historical events, their interconnection, and the importance of chronological timelines in documenting historical progress. Finally, students possessed little sense of historical perspective, often assessing and critiquing events of previous epochs according to contemporary standards.<sup>22</sup>

The Narkompros study was not published for general consumption, but its findings did circulate within the party hierarchy. In early March 1934, A. I. Stetskii, A. S. Bubnov, and A. A. Zhdanov presented reports on the deficiencies of the history curriculum to the Politburo.<sup>23</sup> Stalin also spoke out at this session, although in the absence of a stenographic record, only Stetskii's paraphrasing of Stalin's commentary ten days later at the Communist Academy can illuminate the scene:

At the last meeting of the Politburo the issue of the teaching of history in our middle schools was brought up by Comrade Stalin . . . Everyone present is most likely aware that about three years ago history had been practically expelled from our schools . . . History, at long last, has been restored. In the past year, textbooks were created. But these textbooks and the instruction [of history] itself are far from what we need, and Comrade Stalin talked about this at the Politburo meeting. The textbooks and the instruction [of history] itself are done in such a way that sociology is substituted for history . . . What generally results is some kind of odd scenario [*neponiatnaia kartina*]

for Marxists—a sort of bashful relationship—[in which] they attempt not to mention tsars and attempt not to mention prominent representatives of the bourgeoisie . . . We cannot write history in this way! Peter was Peter, Catherine was Catherine. They relied on specific classes and represented their mood and interests, but all the same they took action. They were historic individuals [and even though] they are not ours, we must give an impression of the epoch, about the events which took place at that time, who ruled, what sort of a government there was, what sort of policies were carried out, and how events transpired. Without this, we won't have any sort of civic history.<sup>24</sup>

A more conventional political history narrative, then, was to supplant the “sociology” of the previous decade. Coinciding with the era's explosion of patriotic rhetoric in the press, history was to capture the public's imagination and promote a unified sense of civic identity, which the previous decade's proletarian internationalist ideology had failed to stimulate.

Assigned the task of presenting a follow-up report to the Politburo later in the month, Bubnov quickly convened a meeting of select historians and geographers at Narkompros to discuss the crisis. His remarks followed Stalin's closely, criticizing the excessively schematic (or “sociological”) approach to history laid out in the present generation of textbooks. Theory dominated the discussion of history, he said, leaving events, personalities, and their interconnection to play only a secondary role. As a result, “an entire array of the most important historical figures, events, wars, etc., slip by unnoticed . . . Under such conditions, we are vastly overencumbered by what can be referred to as the sociological component, and lack—almost entirely in some places—what could be referred to as pragmatic history.” Bubnov then noted that he had been reviewing old tsarist history textbooks himself and advised his audience that “although they may not be written at all from our point of view, it is necessary to remember *how* people put them together.”<sup>25</sup> N. K. Krupskaja—Lenin's widow and Bubnov's deputy at Narkompros—further criticized the sociological approach, noting that children generally have difficulty applying abstract paradigms to concrete events and therefore under the existing curriculum risked passing through the public school system without ever acquiring a true sense of historical perspective.<sup>26</sup>

Two weeks later, on March 20, the Politburo reconvened, inviting an elite group of historians to the textbook discussion. As a stenographic

transcript was either not kept or remains unavailable to contemporary researchers, only the little-known diary of one of the historians present, S. A. Piontkovskii, can shed light on the proceedings:

We went into the hall single file . . . In all, there were about a hundred people in the room. Molotov chaired the session, and Bubnov delivered a report on textbooks . . . Stalin stood up frequently, puffed on his pipe, and wandered between the tables, making comments about Bubnov's speech . . . Krupskaiia spoke in Bubnov's defense . . . After Krupskaiia, Stalin took the floor . . . Stalin spoke very quietly. He held the middle school textbooks in his hands and spoke with a small accent, striking a textbook with his hand and announcing: "These textbooks aren't good for anything [*nikuda ne godiatsia*] . . . What . . . the heck is 'the feudal epoch,' 'the epoch of industrial capitalism,' 'the epoch of formations'—it's all epochs and no facts, no events, no people, no concrete information, not a name, not a title, and not even any content itself. It isn't any good for anything." Stalin repeated several times that the texts weren't good for anything. Stalin said that what is needed are textbooks with facts, events, and names. History must be history. What is needed are textbooks on antiquity, the middle ages, modern times, the history of the USSR, and the history of the colonized and enslaved peoples. Bubnov said, perhaps not [the history of] the USSR, but the history of the peoples of Russia? Stalin said—no, the history of the USSR . . . the Russian people in the past gathered the other peoples together and have begun that sort of gathering again now.<sup>27</sup>

Although the comment did not immediately translate into a shift in ideology, Stalin was clearly rejecting a "multiethnic" history of the region in favor of a historical narrative that would implicitly focus on the Russian people's state-building through the ages. Turning to the schematic, sterile nature of a 1933 text on feudalism, Stalin noted offhandedly: "my son asked me to explain what was written in this book. I took a look and also didn't get it." A. I. Gukovskii, one of the text's authors, later recalled Stalin's laconic conclusion that "the textbook has to be written differently—what is needed is not general models, but specific historical facts."<sup>28</sup>

Returning to his advocacy of "pragmatic history" at a subsequent gathering at Narkompros on March 22, Bubnov tried to apply the new directives specifically to the task of textbook writing. Facts, dates, and heroes required proper arrangement and emphasis. Agreeing, the historian G. S.

Fridliand noted that students had learned more effectively under the tsarist system than they had in recent years because history lessons had revolved around the easily understandable paradigm of heroes and villains: “this is an issue of the heroic elements in history. [Today] a schoolchild, closing his textbook, doesn’t remember a single distinct fact or event. In the tsarist school, they beat those textbooks into our heads, but all the same, an entire array of those facts have not slipped from my mind to the present day. But our contemporary schoolchild is not memorizing a single event.” Admitting that Soviet texts would not be able to use the tsarist pantheon of heroes, Fridliand concluded, “the issue is how to select some new names, which the bourgeoisie intentionally leaves out of its textbooks.” “Not forgetting,” interrupted Bubnov, “the old names that we still have use for.” The correct balance between tradition and innovation, then, was to be the essence of the debate.<sup>29</sup>

Aftershocks of these discussions reached the central press by April 1934. *Pravda* echoed the now familiar criticism that the 1933 textbooks discussed abstract sociological phenomena like class conflict without specific historical examples. While conceding that the material was essentially Marxist-Leninist, one writer concluded sarcastically that “they are textbooks without tsars and kings . . . they’re ‘class warfare’ and nothing else!”<sup>30</sup> Later in the month, articles in *Za kommunisticheskoe prosveshchenie* argued that effective historical instruction was best pursued through the presentation of animated, interesting descriptions of the past. Colorful discussions of major figures, events, wars, revolutions, and popular movements were endorsed as the most effective way of illuminating the nature of class, the state, and historical progression for the uninitiated. Existing texts, according to their critics, not only excluded specific individuals from their descriptions of the past, but also slighted historical events in favor of abstract theories that tended to bewilder those they were supposed to inspire.<sup>31</sup> Theory needed to be deemphasized in favor of a more conventional narrative that would contribute directly to mobilizational efforts on the popular level.

These demands, formalized by a joint Sovnarkom and Central Committee resolution on May 15, 1934, entitled “On the Teaching of Civic History in the Schools of the USSR,” amounted to a total reversal of the previous decade’s party line. Calling for the renewed study of what had been disparaged during the 1920s as “naked historical facts,” the resolution emphasized the centrality of “important historical phenomena, historic figures, and chronological dates” in students’ understanding of the past.

The decree likewise underscored the need for history lessons to be composed of material suitable for those with little educational background and urged scholars to break with “sociological” trends referred to sarcastically as the “childhood disease” of Marxist historiography. To facilitate this new pedagogical requirement, university history departments in Moscow and Leningrad were reopened for the express purpose of training new teachers.<sup>32</sup> A supplementary Central Committee decision specifically defined the emphases and relative weight of the history curriculum in the public schools. Third and fourth graders were to be introduced to the subject through a beginner’s history of the USSR that would make references to general history. Fifth and sixth graders were to focus on the history of antiquity and the far east in ancient times. Sixth graders would also consider the dark and early middle ages, while seventh graders would concentrate on the late middle ages and the premodern period.<sup>33</sup> As one commentator writes, “once again events in the field of history embodied trends in evidence throughout Soviet society—the abandonment of revolutionary innovation in favor of traditional techniques and forms,” an assessment that recalls Timasheff’s description of the era as “the great retreat.”<sup>34</sup>

This supplementary Central Committee resolution also announced the formation of a number of editorial brigades composed of experienced historians who were to be assigned the task of writing heroic new history narratives designed for mass consumption. Indicative of the importance of this textbook project, a Politburo committee consisting of Stalin, Zhdanov, Stetskii, Bubnov, L. M. Kaganovich, and V. V. Kuibyshev was formed to supervise the work. Two brigades were selected to compete for the authorship of the elementary textbook on the history of the USSR, insofar as it was judged to be of particularly critical importance. As decreed on May 15, 1934, the new texts were to emphasize famous personalities, events, and dates, while a virtual prohibition was placed on excessively arcane “sociological” analysis. An unpublished article written by N. I. Bukharin, one of the central participants in the early stages of the textbook campaign, further clarifies the party hierarchy’s ambitions “on the historical front.” According to Bukharin’s manuscript, the goal was a popularized narrative revolving around statist priorities, particularly the formation and development of the Russian state (*gosudarstvo Rossiiskoe*), “both as an entity and as a ‘prison of the peoples.’” Equally important was the process by which the imperial Russian state was “transformed by revolution into a socialist union.” While Marxist stages of historical development were to be included, the narrative’s presentation was to avoid the abstraction of the previous decade at all costs. As Bukharin put it, “the autocracy must be

displayed in all its institutions: the army, courts, church, bureaucracy, etc., and princes, ministers, governors, generals, gendarmes, priests, etc., must be given as real historic personages [*zhivye istoricheskie tipy*].”<sup>35</sup>

Although state and party decrees had, by the mid-1930s, largely outlined the official expectations for public school education in general and history education in particular, satisfactory implementation lagged behind these legislative initiatives. A case in point was Narkompros’s frank admission during the 1934–35 academic year that the unsatisfactory nature of existing history textbooks was “now generally recognized,” years after this area had been identified as something deserving high priority. According to one account, some sixty mismatched texts and handbooks were being used concurrently in instruction.<sup>36</sup> Teachers tried to cope with overly schematic, inconsistent, and insufficiently heroic materials by improvising more factually oriented presentations themselves, highlighting historic names, dates, and places as best they could. Surprisingly, such efforts to compensate for weak curricular publishing were not met with enthusiasm; instead, a report for Sovnarkom on the public schools developed by Narkompros during the 1936–37 academic year warned of uneven instruction in the classroom stemming from poorly prepared teaching cadres and poor pedagogical materials.<sup>37</sup> Subjected to a highly politicized certification drive between 1936 and 1938,<sup>38</sup> teachers were further compromised by a simultaneous campaign against a popular educational strategy called pedology.<sup>39</sup> These inquisitions among teaching cadres, in turn, were compounded by the maelstrom of the purges between 1936 and 1938. These dark days for Soviet education left many schools stripped of able educators and culminated in the arrest of Bubnov and his entire staff at Narkompros on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the revolution.<sup>40</sup>

But the combination of high expectations and radical reorganization made the general situation in the public schools appear chaotic even before the onset of the purges. Unwilling to wait for the situation to right itself, the party hierarchy became increasingly convinced during the mid-1930s that standardized textbooks—essentially a prefabricated curriculum—would guarantee “proper” instruction by taking the initiative out of the hands of individual teachers. Textbook-writing projects designed to emphasize the state’s new heroic sensibilities were thrown into high gear.<sup>41</sup>

Ironically, at the same time that the party hierarchy was beginning to wager heavily on the idea of a standardized heroic history narrative for the purposes of popular mobilization, the campaign that was supposed to pro-

vide the central core of the new historical catechism abruptly faltered. As detailed above, the campaign oriented around Soviet patriotism had been launched in an effort to promote famous and recognizable personalities from the first fifteen years of Soviet power as a complement to Socialist Realism's fictional heroes. Prominent Old Bolsheviks (Enukidze), as well as prominent figures from the ranks of industry (Piatakov), the party (Rykov), the komsomol (Kosarev), the comintern (Piatnitskii), and the Red Army (Egorov), the republican party organizations (Khodzhaev), and the NKVD (Peters, Ezhov), received tremendous attention, standing at the center of a publicity campaign that was to provide the sort of unifying narrative that the party hierarchy felt would catalyze popular support for the regime.

But unexpected complications in the form of the Great Terror derailed the campaign within only a few years of its inception. The purges, which tore gaping rents in the fabric of the party hierarchy, the bureaucracy, the military high command, and the intelligentsia between 1936 and 1938, were—by their very nature—unable to leave the new Soviet pantheon of heroes unscathed. As S. V. Zhuravlev explains in his monograph about the *History of Plants and Factories* book series, the launching of the purges quickly came to wreak havoc on the new propaganda line. For instance, “work on the book [about the Moscow metro] was undermined in 1936. Mass repressions, beginning in Metrostroï [the metro construction organization], affected the members of the editorial board under Kosarev and likewise the best and most active of the workers, specialists, and construction leadership—that is, precisely those people who were supposed to ‘populate’ this fundamental book on the history of the metro.”<sup>42</sup> This same phenomenon would be repeated with histories of the party, the Red Army and the komsomol, as successive waves of purging stripped bare the emerging pantheon of heroes and depopulated the narratives under construction. Similar fates befell projects focusing on industrial zones like Magnitogorsk and Moscow’s Stalin Auto Plant.<sup>43</sup> The infamous 1934 book on the construction of the Belomor Canal had to be hastily withdrawn from circulation late in 1937 when its editorial board and many of its principle characters were arrested.<sup>44</sup> Misfortune dogged the 1934 Russian-language edition of *Uzbekistan at Ten Years* as well. A glossy photo album designed by the famous graphic artist A. M. Rodchenko, it required extensive airbrushing before appearing in Uzbek during the following year after the fall of Avel’ Enukidze necessitated his removal from group portraits printed in the volume.<sup>45</sup> Even in revised form, however, *Uzbekistan*

*at Ten Years* did not remain in circulation for long, owing to the widening maw of the party purges. Rodchenko's own copy of the book reveals particularly gruesome preparations for a third edition: blacked out in India ink are the pictures of prominent party and state functionaries like Ia. E. Rudzutak and Ia. Peters, as well as luminaries from the Uzbek party organization like F. Khodzhaev, A. Ikramov, A. A. Tsekher, D. Abikova, A. Babaev, and T. Khodzhaev, all of whom "disappeared" between 1936 and 1938.<sup>46</sup>

While the sagas involving the Belomor and Uzbek books are instructive, perhaps nothing was more dramatic than the fiasco surrounding the first volume of the celebrated *History of the Civil War in the USSR*. A narrative focusing on the prelude to the revolutionary events of October 1917, this enormous tome required reissuing in 1938 after the pages of its first edition were found to be littered with the names of Old Bolsheviks who had vanished during the ongoing purges. A brief consideration of the volume's contents graphically illustrates how the Great Terror compromised the propaganda value of such texts. Of the sixty-eight individuals who are mentioned in a positive light on the pages of the 1935 edition, fifty-eight were given treatment broad enough to be considered truly "heroic" by Soviet standards. During the first stages of the party purges in 1936, nearly half of the members of this heroic pantheon were arrested, requiring the volume to be withdrawn from circulation. When the second edition appeared in 1938, it had been stripped of numerous pictures, illustrations and some twenty-seven pages of text, not to mention all passing references to fallen luminaries like Piatakov, Rykov, and Piatnitskii.<sup>47</sup> The next volume in the series—a six-hundred-page book concerning the single month of October 1917—did not appear until 1943, the five-year delay apparently stemming from the difficulty involved in drafting a detailed narrative about the revolution without mentioning dozens of individuals now considered enemies of the people.<sup>48</sup> The third volume in the series would not appear until 1957.

But the purges' fallout was not limited to commemorative albums and picture books. A. P. Dovzhenko's film *Shchors*, a civil war epic about a Ukrainian revolutionary commissioned in 1935, had to be reshot after Shchors's right-hand man fell victim to the purges and had to be removed from the screenplay.<sup>49</sup> Such complications seem to have delayed the completion of many of the films slated for release in the mid- to late 1930s.<sup>50</sup> Prominent mention of fallen Red Army heroes like A. I. Egorov in the public school curriculum required their excision from an array of history

textbooks between 1937 and 1941.<sup>51</sup> Even the release of the seminal *Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* was repeatedly postponed as the purges' bloodletting necessitated the removal of numerous names—not only from the narrative, but from the book's editorial board as well. Finally released in the fall of 1938, the *Short Course* required additional revisions two years later to eliminate all mention of N. I. Ezhov, who had been arrested and shot during the intervening period.<sup>52</sup> Rumors of additional purges also endangered the small library of publications involving O. Iu. Shmidt, the *Cheliuskintsy*, and other hero-explorers of the far north.<sup>53</sup>

Such turmoil in state publishing and cinematography quickly spread to mobilization efforts throughout the society. Uncertainty on the ground level over what to read (and what to teach) panicked officials and propagandists alike, bringing political agitation efforts to a standstill and even inhibiting the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the October revolution in 1937.<sup>54</sup> Years later, an only marginally literate peasant described the effect that the collapse of the Soviet heroic Olympus had on him:

in the 6th and 7th grade, we see the portraits of Stalin and his closest associates, Blucher [*sic*, Bliukher] and Egorov. We learn their biography by heart and repeat it over and over again. Then, two weeks pass, and everyone of us is told that these people are the enemies of the people. They don't tell us exactly what they have done, but they simply affix this label to them and tell us that they are enemies who have had contact with foreign agents. Now, even 14 or 15 year olds begin to wonder how the closest associates of Stalin who have been associated with him for 20 years suddenly become enemies of the people. He begins to have distrust and suspicion. For instance, as a child I picked Voroshilov as my personal hero. But, say, another boy picked Tukhachevski. All the boy's fantasies are destroyed. What should he think now, this boy, who believed so blindly before?

Such emotions of dismay and anxiety seem to have been widespread in the USSR as successive waves of purging compromised individuals who had only the day before defined valor and patriotism in the society. Additional detail is supplied by the reminiscences of a veteran of the Soviet merchant marine, who recalled after the war that he had begun to lose faith in official propaganda in the mid-1930s, "let's say from 1933 to 1937." Most responsible for this was the exposure of enemies among the ranks of the USSR's heroic pantheon, specifically,

the shootings, the trials, people like Tukhachevsky, Bukharin and Sinoviev [*sic*, Zinov'ev]. But how would one believe that? One day, their pictures are on the walls in school and in the text-books. The next day, all of a sudden we were told they're enemies of the people. Now, with Tukhachevsky, for instance, I remember coming to school and someone was taking off the portrait [from the wall]. Then all of the boys would scratch out his picture in the text-books [and] scribble derogatory phrases about him. Now that made me think how could that happen, how could that be?<sup>55</sup>

As is clear from such accounts, propaganda revolving around Soviet patriotism was virtually hamstrung by events between 1936 and 1938, owing to the fact that this campaign had been predicated on the ability to wax rhapsodic about famous heroes from the recent past. Unable to even publish a tenable Stalin biography because of the purges' effect on the general secretary's inner circle,<sup>56</sup> the regime saw its attempts to rally popular support by example grind to a halt within only a few years of the launching of the campaign.

The Soviet search for a usable past provides a useful context for understanding much of the era's ideological shift from revolutionary proletarian internationalism toward the more conventional terrain of Soviet state patriotism. Problems with social mobilization in the 1920s led to the abandonment of "sociological" propaganda and the return of the hero as a populist vehicle designed to convey the ethos and aesthetics of the era to a poorly educated Soviet citizenry by example. History instruction was to be a fundamental component of this new genre of propaganda.

Conversion of the 1920s' materialist approach to history into an accessible, populist narrative was easier said than done, however. Not only were the history texts written between 1933 and 1936 ineffective, but poorly trained teachers and insufficient instruction from Narkompros further complicated the transition. Witch-hunts among pedagogues after 1935, which spread throughout society at large after the onset of the Great Terror in 1936, increased the volatility of the situation. The crowning failure of the period, however, was the debacle associated with the propaganda campaign promoting Soviet patriotism. A pragmatic bid to have the society's most recognizable individuals lead by example, it was hobbled by bloodletting between 1936 and 1938 that consumed precisely those heroes who were being celebrated as model Soviet citizens. At times,

it must have seemed as if only the *fictional* heroes of Socialist Realism—Pavel Korchagin, Gleb Chumalov, and others—did not risk arrest.<sup>57</sup> Under such conditions, the party hierarchy was obliged to resume its now increasingly frantic search for a usable past somewhere outside of the boundaries of the “Soviet” experience, a task addressed over the course of the next three chapters.

### 3 The Emergence of Russocentric Etatism

On the eve of the meltdown of the Soviet pantheon of heroes, another campaign—the “Friendship of the Peoples”—was maturing under the same patriotic rubric. Designed to aid in the mobilization of the diverse Soviet nations, it had been inaugurated by Stalin in December 1935 and celebrated the interethnic cooperation and racial harmony purportedly made possible by socialism.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the Friendship of the Peoples campaign also contained another dimension that had first surfaced in public during the previous year: the valorization of the Russian proletariat, “who have given the world the October revolution.” Taboo since 1917, this Russian ethnic particularism was supported by references to a then little-known article of Lenin’s entitled “On the National Pride of the Great Russians.”<sup>2</sup> An integral, if not officially acknowledged, component of the Friendship of the Peoples campaign, this russocentric undercurrent resurfaced again in a *Pravda* editorial in early 1936: “All the peoples—participants in the great socialist construction—may be proud of the results of their labor; every one of them—from the smallest to the largest—are Soviet patriots enjoying a full array of rights. First among these equals are the Russian people, the Russian workers, and the Russian toilers, whose role throughout the whole Great Proletarian Revolution has been exceptionally large, from the first victories to the present day’s brilliant period of development.” Several paragraphs later, *Pravda* juxtaposed Stalin’s praise of the dexterous “revolutionary Russian sweep-of-the-hand” against the underdevelopment of the non-Russian peoples.<sup>3</sup> In the wake of this article, the parenthetical expression “first among equals” would be used with increasing frequency to describe the Russian people’s place in Soviet society. Moreover, if discus-

sion of Russian ethnic primacy during the mid-1930s was initially limited to the contributions that ethnic Russians had made to the revolution, by 1936, civil war victories and the Stakhanovite movement could also be described as Russian in nature. Then, in January of 1937, this sphere of influence was expanded beyond the parameters of the Soviet experience itself, when the figurehead president of the USSR, M. I. Kalinin, declared at a major conference that “the Russian people have produced from their midst no few individuals who, by means of their talent, have raised the world’s cultural level—Lomonosov, Pushkin, Belinskii, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevskii, Nekrasov, Shchedrin, Chekhov, Tolstoi, Gor’kii, Surikov, Repin, Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rimskii-Korsakov, Mendeleev, Timiriachev, Pavlov, Michurin, Tsiolkovskii . . . All of this speaks to the Russian people’s role in the development of world culture.”<sup>4</sup> Kalinin’s triumphant identification of an array of prominent cultural figures from the *ancien régime*—and his reference to them as ethnic Russians—was immediately reinforced during the next month with the transformation of “the great Russian national poet,” A. S. Pushkin, into an icon of official Soviet literature. A selective revival of tsarist-era political and military heroes soon followed, as did discussions that placed famous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century battles like Poltava and Borodino alongside civil war epics like the defense of Tsaritsyn and Perekop.<sup>5</sup> Waxing rhapsodic in 1938 about “the Great Russian people,” *Bol’shevik*, the party’s main theoretical journal, reversed the “national nihilism” of the 1920s and early 1930s by transforming this revival of names and dates from the tsarist past into a thoroughgoing rehabilitation of the Russian ethnicity as a whole. Not only were Russians again termed “the first among equals,” but the non-Russian peoples’ cultures were said to be “historically tied to the culture of the Russian people.”<sup>6</sup> This process was completed on the eve of war in 1941 when an article in the *Minor Soviet Encyclopedia* ratified what had been said in *Bol’shevik* in 1938.<sup>7</sup>

Although such a brief survey presents an excessively teleological view of this transformation between 1934 and 1941, it is interesting in a heuristic sense insofar as it reveals that during the second half of the 1930s party ideologists committed themselves to a radically different vision of the Soviet usable past than had been under consideration earlier in the decade. If before, workers had been referred to as Soviet society’s vanguard *class*, now the Russian people were assuming the mantle of its vanguard *nation*.<sup>8</sup> But what can explain this about-face from proletarian internationalism to

national Bolshevism? What had prompted the party hierarchy to engage in such heresy?

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, it was an urgent need for social mobilization that predicated this sea change in ideology. By the early 1930s, the party hierarchy had come to regard the propaganda of the previous decade as excessively abstract, inaccessibly arcane, and insufficiently populist. In their search for an alternative, party ideologists advanced a new campaign revolving around state-building, popular heroism, and the “pragmatic history” of the recent past. But if the celebration of contemporary Soviet patriots initially dominated this propaganda, its focus shifted between 1936 and 1938 to the prerevolutionary era after the Soviet pantheon of heroes was consumed by the murderous atmosphere of the *ezhovshchina*. In a certain sense, then, the party hierarchy’s rehabilitation of Russian national themes, imagery, and iconography can be viewed as having been precipitated by the Great Terror.<sup>9</sup>

But historical contingency is only part of the explanation for the emergence of national Bolshevism.<sup>10</sup> What else contributed to the development of this line? For years, the answer to this question has proven elusive. Scholarly attempts to trace a smooth, linear rise in such russocentric rhetoric during the mid-1930s have been complicated by the proliferation of concurrent campaigns in the press concerning Soviet patriotism and the Friendship of the Peoples.<sup>11</sup> More recently, research in Soviet propaganda archives has been stymied by the absence of critical materials.<sup>12</sup> But taking advantage of the priority that the party hierarchy placed on the construction of a new historical line during the 1930s, this chapter argues that developments “on the historical front” can be used to inform the evolution of stalinist ideology as a whole. Particular attention centers on the party hierarchy’s efforts to develop an elementary history textbook for mass consumption, insofar as such a narrative was seen as capable of bolstering the legitimacy of the regime and promoting the cause of Soviet state-building. It is within the context of this pragmatic, populist project that national Bolshevism’s peculiarly russocentric dimensions are best understood.

That history stood at the center of the party hierarchy’s ideological agenda during the early 1930s is clear not only from the enormous amount of support afforded to the Soviet search for a usable past, but from the extraordinary level of anxiety and suspicion that surrounded this project.

Glavlit, the state censor, had long been tasked with preventing the publication and distribution of views antithetical to the regime, but the party hierarchy's extreme sensitivity regarding all forms of propaganda during the last stages of the 1928–1931 Cultural Revolution was truly unprecedented.<sup>13</sup> Important in this regard is Stalin's infamous letter to *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, published in October 1931. In this letter, Stalin took issue with party historians' apparent readiness to second-guess Lenin, defaming them as "archival rats" and accusing even the most loyal of "rotten liberalism." Calling for attention to be devoted to the heroic deeds of party leaders instead of source-study and other academic exercises, he made little effort to conceal his frustration with the historical discipline as a whole.<sup>14</sup>

While there is some controversy over what precisely precipitated Stalin's intervention—and even what his intentions were—the ramifications of the letter are clear.<sup>15</sup> It triggered a witch-hunt in the lower ranks of the historical profession that decimated the discipline over the next several years.<sup>16</sup> Leading scholars and editors were denounced if not dismissed; scholarly journals were heavily censored or summarily shut down; and learned societies declined in activity. Historical scholarship came to a virtual standstill. Stalin's letter and the machinations of his inner circle spawned a grassroots orgy of denunciation in the provinces, where *Bor'ba klassov* reported that "all historical work has been condemned as Trotskiist contraband or pure Trotskiism."<sup>17</sup> Members of the educated elite understood the affair to be a "turning point": henceforth, scholarship and the creative arts would no longer be permitted to be dispassionate or divergent from the party line.<sup>18</sup>

Taken together with the waning fortunes of the social studies movement and the party hierarchy's search for alternatives to the materialist propaganda of the previous decade, this hounding of establishment historians marks a period of major flux in Soviet ideology. By 1934, party and state decrees were signaling not only the demise of the "sociological" approach to history, but the revival of a more conventional state- and personality-based narrative concerning the prerevolutionary history of the USSR. No less important, the previous decade's tendency to indiscriminately blacken all aspects of the Russian past was beginning to fade from fashion as well. Complementing the increasingly ubiquitous discussion of Soviet patriotism in the press, history in the mid-1930s was to provide society with an array of cultural landmarks that would aid in the promotion of a unified sense of identity, which the materialism of the 1920s had failed to stimulate.

The redirection of historiographic priorities to highlight state-building—particularly Russian state-building—is significant in this regard, insofar as it indicates that the previous decade's preference for a broad "multiethnic" focus was being exchanged for a single national narrative. The essence of this shift was captured at a Politburo discussion in March 1934 in which Bubnov proposed that the official historical line concern not just the linear prerevolutionary "history of the USSR" but a broader and more inclusive treatment of the "history of the peoples of Russia." Interrupting him, Stalin rebuffed the proposal, considering such a focus to be excessively diffuse. Asserting that a single thousand-year political narrative ought to be at the center of the new line, Stalin declared simplistically that "the Russian people in the past gathered the other peoples together and have begun that sort of gathering again now."<sup>19</sup> Although terse, Stalin was visibly rejecting a multiethnic history of the Russian empire in favor of a historical narrative that would implicitly focus on the Russian people's state-building across time.

If echoes of this russocentrism quickly resonated throughout press commentary linked to the emergent Soviet patriotism and Friendship of the Peoples campaigns, it should be said that this trend is more visible in hindsight than it was at the time. After all, despite the launching of a major new history textbook initiative in May 1934, and despite the formation of a blue-ribbon Politburo committee to oversee the work of each respective editorial brigade, the party hierarchy failed to follow up on this groundwork with anything more than the most ambiguous of historiographic directives between 1934 and 1936. Narkompros and other institutions did little better.<sup>20</sup> (See the Appendix for a comprehensive treatment of the textbook campaign.) As a result, the development of a new narrative on the thousand-year prehistory of the USSR repeatedly ground to a halt during the mid-1930s as court historians struggled with the task of converting the party hierarchs' generalized commentary and simplistic platitudes into articulate historiographic positions.

A good example of the mismanagement of efforts to develop a new narrative during this time is the publication of the so-called "Observations" of Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kirov on the history of the USSR and the modern world. Appearing in print in January 1936 in conjunction with the public scapegoating of Pokrovskii for the sins of "sociological" historiography, these articles foreshadowed the announcement of a new stage in the textbook campaign in March of that year. As such, the "Observations" were intended to clarify the party hierarchy's expectations on the historical

front, and some of the advice they supplied was indeed quite useful. Particularly helpful was word that the histories of the non-Russian peoples were expected to be subsumed into a broad, unified narrative history of the USSR as a whole, rather than treated independently. But the “Observations” were also confusing, insofar as they had been originally written in 1934 as private communiqués to two editorial brigades and, as such, were somewhat dated by 1936. This was true especially in regard to the approving use of several formulas traditionally associated with Pokrovskii—“tsarism, the prison of the peoples” and “tsarism, the international gendarme”—which contradicted simultaneous calls in 1936 for a total break with the late academician’s “national nihilism” and “leftist internationalism.”<sup>21</sup>

Apparently aware of this awkward state of affairs, NKVD agents were instructed to watch how historians reacted to the publication of the “Observations.” One informant’s transcript of a conversation between B. A. Romanov and a colleague reveals that although these historians had grasped the fact that the non-Russian histories were to be organized around a dominant Russian line, they were intimidated by the tasks that would confront any author attempting to orchestrate the new narrative:

Would he be able [to include] at the right moment in time every one of the peoples in the USSR? The USSR is now a single entity—one has to show how this happened. One would have to be able to organize the historical performance in such a way that each people enters when it is necessary, so that the student, the schoolchild, reading, and listening, does not sense anything artificial. He must hear with his inner ear that the entrance of each individual people—even if it does not correspond to historical fact—conveys the impression of playing a part in an orchestra on cue. Until now, you know, it’s been like an artificial Christmas tree, the branches being stuck in here and there as one pleases—it can’t be like that now.<sup>22</sup>

Whereas Romanov at least correctly discerned from the muddle of publicity that prerevolutionary Soviet history was to be constructed around the Russian national past, many others did not.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the extent to which many of those trying to rewrite the Soviet historical narrative were confused by the role that the non-Russian peoples were to play is indicated by a list of questions forwarded to Zhdanov in May 1936 by his personal secretary, A. N. Kuznetsov. Apparently, many historians were mulling over the most elementary of questions: was the narrative to be presented as a

“single Russian historical process, with the inclusion of the history of individual peoples who played a major role in the development of that process, or should Cent[ral] Asia, the Transcaucasus, etc., be treated in individual historical sketches?” According to Kuznetsov, “Com[rade] Radek recommended presenting a single historical process, including the individual peoples at the specific points at which they enter into contact with Russia. But there is hesitation and ambiguity and almost all the authors are finding this to be a stumbling block.” Equally delicate were questions of judgment such as “whether or not tsarism brought ‘progress’ to the Transcaucasus and Central Asia through its conquests (the process of centralization, the development of capitalism, etc.),” a question that apparently had been provoked by spurious references in the “Observations” to the old regime as a “prison of peoples.” Related queries concerned whether slavophilism ought to receive a positive or negative evaluation and precisely which events were to script the new periodization. Kuznetsov noted that although the authors were “wrestling with these issues,” their difficulties stemmed from the fact that solutions to such ticklish questions were not to be found by consulting either official history journals or authorities in the field.<sup>24</sup>

Such ambiguities caught even veteran party members unawares. Instructive is the case of N. I. Bukharin. Despite major political defeats in the late 1920s, in the mid-1930s Bukharin retained an influential position at *Izvestiia* and remained deeply engaged with ideological issues, including the development of the all-important history catechism.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, in February 1936 he came under fire for an article characterizing Russians before 1917 as “a nation of Oblomovs” and for noting in another piece that the non-Russian peoples’ distrust of the Russians was a natural consequence of tsarist colonial policies. Even though both themes had long been a part of Bolshevik discourse (Lenin had been particularly fond of the Oblomov reference), the public scolding of Bukharin that ensued warned of the mounting sensitivity of these subjects.<sup>26</sup> One after another, popular writers like M. A. Bulgakov and Dem’ian Bednyi were similarly denounced during the same year for disrespectful treatments of the prerevolutionary Russian past. Less influential writers were arrested outright. The details of each case are discussed in Chapter 5; salient here is the fact that even the most savvy members of the Soviet elite found the orientation of the emerging line difficult to gauge. Apparently, it was evolving in private within the highest echelons of the party hierarchy, and on an ad hoc basis rather than according to a predetermined plan.<sup>27</sup> Confusion in the ranks

also indicates that contemporaries in 1936 did not necessarily see the hints of russocentrism in the press as a harbinger of things to come. Such reactions reveal the mid-1930s to have been a time of ideological transition that was surprisingly long in duration.

But even if the new historical line was uncoiling in fits and starts, it would be incautious to assume that the party hierarchs did not have general views on history, the state, and the Russian people's place therein. If the Bukharin, Bulgakov, and Bednyi scandals only obliquely characterize the major ideological shift under way, more revealing is a memorandum from December 1936 in which Bubnov described Zhdanov's impressions of the ongoing search for an acceptable textbook. Although the Central Committee secretary was willing to acknowledge that some of the textbook drafts that had come across his desk were "a big step forward in comparison to the last period (from the 'sociologizing' texts to Marxist ones)," he had decided that "none of the texts can be considered satisfactory." Concerned that historians were still "avoiding certain questions," Zhdanov highlighted this observation with his own interpretation of Russia's acquisition of its southerly possessions. Arguing that the "lesser-evil theory" was the proper paradigm to be used in explaining the integration of Ukraine and Georgia into the Russian empire between 1654 and 1801, Zhdanov noted that both societies had had religious interests that were more compatible with those of Russia than with those of Poland, the Ottoman empire, Persia, or other regional powers. Accordingly, submitting to their northern neighbor was the most palatable option for these states, insofar as "at that time (in the developing historical context), an independent Georgia wasn't meant to be." (The same judgment apparently applied to Ukraine.) Perhaps realizing the heresy implicit in this neo-colonialist position, Zhdanov added that unification with Russia "was not an absolute good, but of two evils, it was the lesser one."<sup>28</sup> Zhdanov reversed other basic historiographic positions as well, rehabilitating aspects of church history like the role of monasteries, insofar as they had contributed to the growth of the state. These directives, like others, reflected overarching etatist sympathies—as Zhdanov noted to Bubnov in a moment of unusual frankness, "the most important historical factor is 'the gathering of Rus.'"<sup>29</sup>

A subsequent textbook commission communiqué, drafted by Bubnov after additional consultations with Zhdanov, clarifies the party hierarchy's evolving sense of historical perspective. Beginning with the general complaint that historians had failed to break completely with their "Pokrov-

skiiian” brand of sociological schematicism, Bubnov listed an array of specific interpretive errors. First of all, disrespectful treatments of church history—particularly the tenth-century christening of Rus’—ignored the progressive nature of literacy and culture that were received through the Byzantine conduit.<sup>30</sup> Similarly slighted were progressive aspects of the consolidation of the Muscovite state and the reforms of Peter the Great. Criticism of the incorporation of Ukraine and Georgia into the Russian empire, according to Bubnov, was ahistorical, in that these societies’ alternatives to alignment with their northerly Orthodox Christian neighbor were uniformly unattractive.<sup>31</sup> Common to most of the indicted historiographic positions was their irreconcilability with the party hierarchy’s increasingly statist views of the historical process.

Although by the start of 1937 the ongoing search for a new history textbook had already produced quite a number of manuscripts, only a handful were judged to be worth advancing to a final stage of review. The nature of the party hierarchy’s intervention at this juncture confirms that the return to prerevolutionary Russian history was designed to support etatist priorities. Particularly illuminating is commentary issued by Zhdanov and Central Committee member Ia. A. Iakovlev concerning a strong manuscript that had been compiled under the supervision of A. V. Shestakov. After ordering that Shestakov and his brigade “strengthen throughout [the textbook] elements of Soviet patriotism and love for the socialist motherland,” the two hierarchs launched into a rambling series of specific instructions. To begin with, the historians were to rework their treatment of nine issues concerning Soviet revolutionary and industrial development. More interesting, however, were Zhdanov and Iakovlev’s recommendations concerning prerevolutionary themes—commentary that reflects not only russocentric sentiments but also a strong interest in state-building and legitimacy:

(10) bring up the Byzantine issue; (11) explain better the cultural role of Christianity; (12) provide [something] on the progressive meaning of the centralization of state power; (13) touch up the issue of 1612 and the interventionists . . . ; (14) introduce Sviatoslav’s line “I’m coming against you”; (15) give something more on the German knights, using Marx’s chronology on the Battle on the Ice, Aleksandr Nevskii, etc.; (16) don’t include medieval West[ern] Europe; (17) strengthen the history of the individual peoples; (18) remove the schematic design of certain lessons; (18) [*sic*] make corrections on

Khmel'nitskii; (20) and on Georgia; (21) [and on] the reactionary nature of the Strel'tsy rebellion.<sup>32</sup>

Two months later, Shestakov relayed more of the hierarchs' criticisms to his brigade: "there is an array of imprecise explanations and biases in the textbook's presentation and it is too schematic and lacks spirit . . . The personality of Ivan Kalita should not be entirely negative. The marriage to Sophie Paleologue should either be explained or skipped. More content and detail on the Slavs [is needed] . . . [Material] on the typography under Ivan is done poorly, as is that on the manufactory under Aleksei Mikhailovich. On . . . feudal decentralization, give more [detail] with greater clarity . . . Illuminate the time under Ivan Kalita in political terms."<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the brigade was referred to other reviews of its manuscript by senior historians including S. V. Bakhrushin, K. V. Bazilevich, and B. D. Grekov—reviews that, not accidentally, also stressed aspects of the historical narrative dealing with state-building.<sup>34</sup> Historical continuity with pre-revolutionary Russia was evidently intended to endow the stalinist regime with a sense of legitimacy that undiluted Marxism-Leninism had been unable to provide.

Although Zhdanov's statist priorities were popular within the party hierarchy, the russocentric nature of his developmental model troubled certain Bolshevik leaders such as K. Ia. Bauman and V. P. Zatonskii. Particularly worrisome to these two hierarchs was the fact that during the drafting and redrafting of the Shestakov manuscript, simplification and popularization of the narrative had taken place at the expense of the non-Russian peoples. Zatonskii's mid-1937 review of the Shestakov manuscript reflected his frustration with a historical line that virtually ignored the Ukrainians and Belorussians, not to mention the other non-Slavic peoples of the USSR: "it hasn't turned out to be a history of the USSR at all so far. Basically, it is a history of the Russian state." Despite these objections, the text went into production the following fall. Ironically, the sections in the manuscript that Zatonskii had criticized for their tokenist treatment of non-Russian minorities—"for decorum, a few pages at the beginning are given on the Transcaucasus, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and Siberia"—were actually pared down even further before the final typesetting began.<sup>35</sup>

In its final form, Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR* offered its audience a narrative of what Anderson would call "great events" and "great leaders," stretching from prehistoric times to the Stalin Constitution of 1936.<sup>36</sup> Stalin had declared in 1934 that "Peter was Peter and

Catherine was Catherine” and, unsurprisingly, Shestakov’s text devoted unprecedented attention to the study of figures associated with the old regime, from military commanders to the ruling dynasts themselves. Tsars like Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible epitomized state-building, the latter also symbolizing the importance of vigilance in the struggle with sedition. Many elements of the narrative revolved around the theme of national defense, from Aleksandr Nevskii’s 1242 defeat of the Teutonic Knights in the Battle on the Ice to Kuz’ma Minin and Dmitrii Pozharskii’s ejection of the Poles from Moscow in 1612 during the Time of Troubles. Symptomatic of the new stress on names, dates, and events, attention to periodization and stages of historical development (“The Creation of the Russian National State”; “Eighteenth-Century Russia as an Empire of the Landed Gentry and Merchants”; “The Great October Revolution in Russia”; and so on) was largely confined to the table of contents and denied a more important role in the narrative itself.

Zatonskii’s premonition had come true—Shestakov’s *Short Course on the History of the USSR* was little more than a Russian historical narrative, charted linearly from Kievan Rus’ through Muscovy and the Romanov empire to the Soviet Union. The non-Russian peoples appeared in the narrative only when discussions of broader imperial trends—such as territorial conquests, colonial expansion, and peasant revolts—required it. As would befit a story composed chiefly of events drawn from the Russian national past, Russian surnames dominated the list of rulers, military leaders, scientists, writers, popular heroes, and revolutionaries mentioned in the text. Non-Russian names, to the extent to which they appeared at all, most frequently figured into discussions concerning foreign invasion and domestic insurrection.

“Pragmatic history” in the sense that it conferred the legitimacy of a thousand-year pedigree upon the Soviet leadership, the Shestakov text also successfully finessed one of the most delicate paradoxes associated with such a narrative: how could a historical interpretation so much geared toward the valorization of state authority explain the rise of antiestablishment revolutionary movements during the nineteenth century? Worse, how could the narrative voice switch sides, so to speak, and transfer its sympathies to the Bolsheviks’ attempts to overthrow the state after seven chapters that had not only celebrated Russian state-building but downplayed the significance of peasant rebels from Razin to Pugachev? Shestakov’s solution to this delicate issue of emplotment was ingenious. Noticing that the 1825 Decembrists’ Revolt presented him with an op-

portunity to direct attention away from the state and toward “progressive” social forces, Shestakov then segued in quick succession to Pushkin and Gogol’ and then to Belinskii, Herzen, and Chernyshevskii. Each provided opportunities to retreat from a positive characterization of the state while at the same time foreshadowing an incipient interest in free-thinking European philosophers like Marx and Engels. Marxism, in turn, with its demand that a proletarian vanguard form the core of any truly revolutionary movement, provided an explanation for why seventeenth- and eighteenth-century peasant revolts had not merited more than passing attention.<sup>37</sup> Deft and subtle, the shift that Shestakov scripted into the events of 1825 was perfectly orchestrated, ultimately allowing the party hierarchy to claim a pedigree that was at once revolutionary *and* statist.

The publication of Shestakov’s *Short Course on the History of the USSR* in September 1937 was an event that is hard to exaggerate in importance. Massive fanfare in the press hailed the textbook as no less than “a great victory on the historical front.” Held to be free of the “sociologizing” tendencies that had plagued the Soviet historical sciences for years, it was welcomed as “a wished-for gift on the twentieth anniversary of the Great Socialist Revolution.” Reviews described the narrative as an example of “concrete history,” comprised of “facts, the dates of events, and animated personages who had in one way or another taken part in the historical process.” Moreover, the textbook’s presentation was disingenuously praised for its treatment of the prerevolutionary history of *all* the Soviet nations, rather than just that of the Russian people.<sup>38</sup>

Publicity surrounding the book’s release made it clear from the start that it was to have a role much greater than that of a standard third- and fourth-grade textbook. The journal *Istoriik-Marksist* proclaimed the text to be a template for all future historical publications.<sup>39</sup> *Bol’shevik* went even further, endorsing the text for use with the widest of possible audiences:

Not only millions of children and young people will learn according to it, but so too will millions of workers and peasants and hundreds of thousands of party activists, propagandists, and agitators. Without a doubt, the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* will be not only a school textbook, but a handbook for every party member and non-party bolshevik who wishes to understand the past in order to grasp the present and predict the future . . . [U]ntil other more detailed Marxist texts on the history of the USSR appear, there is no doubt

that this will be the fundamental study aid for adult readers and students in party, komsomol, and trade union schools.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, *Bol'shevik's* prediction did not stray far from the mark. Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR* came to be used not only in primary school, but in secondary schools as well. Red Army and party training courses relied on the text, as did discussion circles involving ordinary Soviet citizens.<sup>41</sup> K. F. Shtepa, who taught at Kiev University during the 1930s, recalled later that "until the late 1930s and early 1940s, it was the only material on Russian history for courses in these and even in the higher [collegiate-level] schools." "Only by means of this little book," Shtepa added with a touch of bitterness, "was it possible to orient oneself regarding the demands of Party policy with respect to any historical question, phenomenon, or event."<sup>42</sup>

Celebrated in the lead-up to the November holidays in 1937, the Shestakov text and its russocentric etatism should in many ways be regarded as the stalinist historical perspective *par excellence*. Moreover, the textbook's emergence marks the start of a time period in which the party hierarchy began to express this national Bolshevism with increasing openness. After reviewing the Red Square parade commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the revolution on November 7, the party hierarchs adjourned to K. E. Voroshilov's dacha, where Stalin rose to give a toast that neatly summarized the pragmatic history promoted by the new textbook:

I want to say a few words that may not seem too festive. The Russian tsars did much that was bad. They robbed and enslaved the people. They led wars and seized territory in the interests of the landowners. But they did do one good thing—they put together an enormous Great Power [stretching] out to Kamchatka. We inherited this Great Power. We Bolsheviks were the first to put together and strengthen this Great Power, not in the interests of the landowners and capitalists, but for the toilers and for all the great peoples who make up this Great Power.<sup>43</sup>

Stalin's blurring of the division between Russian and Soviet history highlights a seemingly contradictory tendency among party leaders to view themselves at once as both revolutionaries and heirs to the Russian empire. Such national Bolshevik sentiments, combined with frustration over the

purges' hamstringing of the "Soviet" usable past, had led the party hierarchy to conclude that the most effective historical narrative for the diverse Soviet family of peoples would be a Russian-centered one, emphasizing old-fashioned state-oriented patriotism and national defense. Historical treatment of the non-Russian peoples after 1937 would be increasingly relegated to narrow monographs and scholarly journals, as the simplification and popularization of the new linear national Bolshevik historical line almost completely eclipsed competing non-Russian narratives.<sup>44</sup>

As the Shestakov text was being released, theaters across the USSR were showing *Peter the First*, a film celebrating the epic feats of the first Romanov emperor. Shot by V. Petrov and based on a script by A. N. Tolstoi, the film was actually part of a cycle of Petrine-oriented works that Tolstoi had been developing under Stalin's personal guidance for a number of years, which by 1937 included several plays and novels in addition to the film adaptation.<sup>45</sup> Destined to win a Lenin Prize during the following year, the film stunned audiences with its unprecedentedly positive depiction of the Russian imperial past. Perhaps feeling the need to justify such subject matter during the twentieth anniversary of the revolution, Tolstoi noted during an interview that Stalin himself had sanctioned the film's production: "Iosif Vissarionovich went over our plans very attentively, approved them, and gave us directions on which we based our work." Tolstoi then elaborated on the vision that had underscored this historical epic, apparently paraphrasing the directions that he and Petrov had received from the general secretary:

The epoch of Peter I was one of the greatest pages in the history of the Russian people. Essentially the whole Petrine epoch was permeated with the Russian people's heroic struggle for their national independence and existence. The boyars' dark, uncultured Rus', with their backward technology and patriarchal beards, would have fallen to foreign invaders in no time. A revolution was necessary within the very life of the country in order to lift Russia up to the level of the cultured European countries. Peter was able to accomplish this and the Russian people were able to defend their independence.<sup>46</sup>

Remarkably similar to Shestakov's account of the Petrine period, this statement reflects the extent to which an interest in state-building permeated throughout Soviet mass culture during the mid- to late 1930s. In fact, Tolstoi often went one step further, arguing that Peter's eighteenth-century "Great Leap Forward" could be used to allegorically inform the

USSR's experience with shock industrialization.<sup>47</sup> Yet there were other, more prosaic reasons for Peter's popularity as a propaganda icon during these years. As a hero from the distant past, Peter often seemed more "epic" and "legendary" than contemporary celebrities drawn from the ranks of hero-Stakhanovites and Red Army commanders. This same "historic" identity also meant that Peter did not risk exposure during the unfolding purges as a Trotskiite or Japanese spy, a dynamic that was wreaking havoc with more conventional sorts of hero-based Soviet agitation.<sup>48</sup>

But if the personality cults surrounding state-builders like Peter the Great started as early as the mid-1930s, the rehabilitation of others such as Ivan the Terrible proceeded somewhat more cautiously. While glancing through Shestakov's manuscript in early 1937 before its general release, Stalin struck out a reproduction of I. E. Repin's graphic painting *Ivan the Terrible's Murder of His Own Son*, apparently believing it to be prejudicial. This move, confirmed by Zhdanov during his extensive rewriting of the same text, signaled a significant shift in official views of Ivan IV, which would be reflected in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* and subsequent textbooks.<sup>49</sup> Lack of compliance with this interpretation forced the Central Committee to issue secret directives between 1940 and 1941 on the need for all historical and literary works to present a progressive interpretation of Ivan the Terrible's reign.<sup>50</sup> Shortly thereafter, Tolstoi and S. M. Eisenstein were recruited to produce major works on the sixteenth-century tsar-state builder. Simultaneously, A. S. Shcherbakov approached T. M. Khrennikov—the future chair of the Soviet Composers' Union—with a proposal for a full-scale historical opera about Ivan. As Khrennikov recounts in his memoirs, Shcherbakov turned to him one evening during an intermission at the Stanislavskii Theater and made the following proposition:

You know, Comrade Khrennikov, you ought to write an opera entitled "Ivan the Terrible." I've just come from Iosif Vissarionovich's. We were talking about the terrible tsar [*my razgovarivali o Groznom*]. Comrade Stalin attributes a lot of significance to this theme. He sees it differently than it has been viewed up until now: despite the fact that Ivan was considered terrible and that this reputation has been strengthened since [his reign], Comrade Stalin believes that he [actually] wasn't terrible enough [*dostatocno groznym on ne byl*]. This was because if on the one hand he got even with his opponents, on the other, he then would repent and beg for forgiveness from God.

And while he would be repenting, his opponents would again gather their forces against him and attack all over again. The terrible tsar [then] had to do battle with them, etc. In other words, one has to wage an unceasing and merciless battle to eliminate one's enemies if they are interfering with the development of the state. That is Stalin's position.

Although Khrennikov managed to demur on this proposed operatic paean to the state (as did Shostakovich shortly thereafter), the list of works that would eventually celebrate the sixteenth-century tsar nevertheless remains quite impressive. Apparently assigned the task of warming the literary waters on the pages of *Izvestiia* in March of 1941, V. I. Kostylev stressed Ivan's interest in reclaiming age-old Russian territories in the Baltics and founding a border guard in addition to traditional state-building themes.<sup>51</sup>

While not as dramatic as the rehabilitation of Ivan the Terrible, the ideological shift that most effectively epitomizes the era's emergent national Bolshevism occurred at the initiative of L. Z. Mekhlis, the chief of the Red Army's Political Directorate. In the wake of the Shestakov text's release in 1937, the military—like the rest of the society's political institutions—had taken steps to diversify its ideological repertoire in such a way that mention of tsarist generals like A. V. Suvorov and M. I. Kutuzov had begun to complement more canonical propaganda regarding proletarian internationalism and civil war-era Soviet heroism. But no stranger to controversy, Mekhlis delivered a bombshell of a speech to the Red Army General Staff at a meeting in 1940 that had been convened by the commissar of defense to discuss the army's most recent bloodying during the previous winter in Finland. Noting that Red Army soldiers were not finding existing propaganda compelling, Mekhlis called for the deemphasizing of internationalist slogans in favor of a more defensive patriotic orientation.<sup>52</sup> Two years earlier at Khalkhin-Gol, for instance, agitation that had styled Soviet action against the Japanese as "aid to the friendly Mongolian people" had failed to resonate within Red Army ranks. Improvements in soldiers' performance were noted, however, once propaganda began to equate the defense of the Mongolian People's Republic with the defense of the USSR. Similarly, internationalist slogans during the 1939–40 Winter War—calls for the liberation of the Finnish people, the toppling of the "reactionary" Mannerheim regime, and the installation of a popular government—had not been found to inspire Red Army soldiers. But when agitation instead characterized the conflict as one designed to secure a *cor-*

*don sanitaire* around Leningrad, strengthen defensive positions along the northwestern borders, and launch a preemptive strike against the emerging capitalist bridgehead in Finland, troops were found to be considerably more motivated.<sup>53</sup>

But Mekhlis directed his fire at more than just propaganda about proletarian internationalism. Mistrust of all idealistic, abstract forms of agitation even led him to criticize the leading role the Red Army had assigned to an important textbook on party history that had been released a year after Shestakov's—the 1938 *Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*. Study of this difficult volume, according to Mekhlis, had apparently inhibited more practical propaganda work within the ranks: “We have gotten distracted by propagandizing only the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* and have forgotten about propaganda that is guaranteed to have universal application. Propaganda emphasizing military culture and knowledge has yet to become an intrinsic part of Red Army training. It is imperative to help the command staff study military history, master specialized and military-historical literature, and get a total understanding of the military arts.”<sup>54</sup>

In addition to criticizing propaganda that he saw as both idealistic and highly politicized, Mekhlis also attacked the “cult of the civil war.” Basing his commentary on several ambiguous statements made in passing by Stalin during the previous month, Mekhlis declared that the “experience of the old army” was more relevant to the geopolitical context of the early 1940s than the experience of the revolutionary era.<sup>55</sup> “Military history—especially Russian—is being studied poorly. We have a lot of unfair ridiculing of the old army in spite of the fact that we had such notable tsarist army generals as Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Bagration, who will always remain in the minds of the people as great Russian military leaders, and who are revered in the Red Army, which has inherited the finest military traditions of the Russian soldier . . . All of this leads us to ignore concrete historical experience despite the fact that history is the best teacher.”<sup>56</sup> Mekhlis's mention of famous tsarist-era military heroes in 1940 is instructive, considering that as late as 1938, the Political Directorate's preferred role models still consisted largely of civil war heroes like Chapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, Parkhomenko, and Lazo.<sup>57</sup> Only months later, Kalinin would echo Mekhlis's enthusiasm for Suvorov and Kutuzov in a speech in the fall of 1940.<sup>58</sup>

Like Russian heroes, the Russian people were valorized in national Bolshevik propaganda in the mid- to late 1930s, although the timing be-

hind this shift eludes precise documentation. To be sure, party leaders like Stalin had made comments in private for years about the Russian people's importance to the revolution, but it was far from accidental that such russocentric sentiments were kept hidden from public view until late in the decade.<sup>59</sup> After all, if a Russian pantheon of heroes was relatively easy to propagandize, the celebration of the Russian people as a whole was a much more delicate affair for a Marxist state. A testing of the ideological waters appears to have taken place in the press of the mid- to late 1930s as seemingly innocuous clichés like “first among equals” were gradually tied to descriptions of the Russian ethnicity. Only in 1938 did a discussion explicitly devoted to the subject of Russian ethnic primacy appear in print, and even then, the article—published in *Bol'shevik*—seemed more intent on outlining a long list of Russian national heroes than it did on detailing the features that distinguished the Russians as an ethnicity.<sup>60</sup> Written by B. N. Volin, an official who had long supervised ideological coordination and censorship efforts at Glavlit, this piece is best seen as an intermediate step in the gradual formation of an explicit ethnic hierarchy in the USSR, which was completed only three years later, in March 1941, with the publication of a complementary article (again by Volin) in the authoritative *Minor Soviet Encyclopedia*. The relative lateness of these pieces' publication speaks to the hesitancy with which they received official sanction.<sup>61</sup> Much had been implied over the course of the preceding decade about the leading role that the Russians were to occupy through the privileging of their history and heroes, but explicit endorsement of Russian ethnic primacy was apparently the source of considerable uneasiness within the party hierarchy during the interwar period.

If the Stalin era's national Bolshevism began as a prewar phenomenon reflecting the party hierarchy's preoccupation with state-building and legitimacy, its emergence was obscured—but also stimulated—by the collapse of the campaign surrounding Soviet patriotism between 1936 and 1938. The latter campaign's meltdown led the party hierarchy to view the co-optation of imperial charisma and Russian national imagery as the most expedient way to mobilize patriotic sentiments and loyalty on the popular level, a compromise similar to the “Big Deal” that Vera Dunham has identified in Soviet literature.<sup>62</sup>

Although the Stalin era's russocentric redux is often regarded as an exigency of war dating to 1941, its emergence—when properly contextualized—more accurately reflects the party hierarchy's interwar preoccu-

pation with state-building, legitimacy, and popular mobilization. In this vein, russocentric and Russian chauvinist dimensions of the official line are better understood as a consequence of the perhaps excessive and calculating use of tsarist symbols, myths, and heroes than as an indication of genuinely nationalistic beliefs within Stalin's entourage. In fact, because the party hierarchs' interest in the tsarist past was so instrumentalist, they seem to have expected, circa 1935, that a new stress on themes and imagery drawn from the pragmatic history of the prerevolutionary era could coexist quite gracefully with other, more visible campaigns concerning Soviet patriotism, the Friendship of the Peoples, and similar mobilizational sloganeering. The USSR's Olympus was to be an integrated one, it seems, with Peter the Great, Aleksandr Nevskii, and Pushkin joining Lenin, Stalin, Chapaev, Dzerzhinskii, Shchors, Frunze, Rykov, Kosior, Kosarev, Khodzhaev, Egorov, and various Stakhanovites in a heroic pantheon styled according to the reigning aesthetic of Socialist Realism.

But as manic purging in the mid- to late 1930s destabilized industry, the Red Army high command, and the party itself, many members of the nascent Soviet Olympus were swept into oblivion as well. Mobilization by example was greatly complicated by the sudden arrest or disappearance of celebrated workers, managers, party officials, and military commanders, eventualities that in the short term required the reissuing of many canonical propaganda texts and in the long term threatened to compromise the entire Soviet pantheon itself.

Ultimately, this crisis resulted in a profound transformation of the official pantheon's demographic composition. If before the purges, the party line's emphasis on russocentric themes and leaders from the tsarist past had been overshadowed by the popularization of Soviet heroes from the civil war and ongoing socialist construction, the purges' destruction of many of these prominent personalities between 1936 and 1938 radically impaired these propaganda efforts. Attrition within the ranks of the "Soviet patriots" (Rykov, Kosior, Kosarev, Khodzhaev, Egorov, and others) left the pantheon composed principally of traditional Russian national heroes (Nevskii, Peter, Pushkin) and a handful of remaining revolutionaries (Lenin, Stalin, Frunze, Shchors), many of whom had been dead for over a decade. Such circumstances made increased reliance on traditional Russian heroes virtually inevitable, insofar as they were at least as recognizable and heroic as their Soviet-era contemporaries and considerably less likely to be compromised by the ongoing purges.

The significance of these developments is difficult to exaggerate. Partic-

ularly telling is the fact that in 1939, Stalin himself called for revisions to be made in the official conceptualization of Soviet patriotism to account for the changes since 1937.<sup>63</sup> Kalinin responded to his appeal to “develop and cultivate” the concept in 1940 by announcing that Soviet patriotism was, at its core, a sense of pride and loyalty that had united both Russians and the “most conscious elements of the oppressed nationalities” under the progressive banner of Russian “national culture” since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup> National Bolshevik rhetoric of this sort indicates how blurred the division between the pre- and postrevolutionary time periods had become in the wake of the purges. It also reveals the new centrality of the Russians’ identity as “the first among equals” within the Soviet family of peoples.

Pragmatic rather than genuinely nationalist, this ideological about-face allowed emergent etatist appeals to be publicly promoted alongside Stalin’s personality cult and a slowly fading internationalist ethic for much of the second half of the 1930s. Designed to propagandize state-building and promote popular loyalty to the regime, this national Bolshevik line found its first explicit formulation in Shestakov’s history text. In that sense, it would seem quite reasonable to consider the release of the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* as marking the completion of the party hierarchy’s decade-long search for a usable past.

## 4 Ideology in the Prewar Classroom

If the release of the Shestakov text in 1937 signaled an ideological coup of sorts, the impact of this about-face can be assessed only through a thorough analysis of the text's social application. Where was it used? How deep and pervasive was its social penetration? To what extent can it be said to have defined the ideological agenda of Russian-speaking society during these years? To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the promotion of patriotic themes and imagery in Soviet public schools and party study circles during the mid- to late 1930s. Consideration of these ideological arenas is critical to characterizing the impact that the post-1937 national Bolshevik line had throughout the Soviet educational establishment.

As elsewhere in the society, the mid-1930s were years of crisis for Soviet education. Poor performance in the public schools during the 1936–37 academic year—as in previous years—was blamed on deficiencies in teaching, curricular materials, and guidance from local departments of public education.<sup>1</sup> Lacking reliable curricular guides with which to teach politically sensitive subjects like history, ill-prepared teachers floundered while their more resourceful colleagues quietly consulted tsarist-era textbooks.<sup>2</sup>

The ubiquity of such problems during the early to mid-1930s led the party hierarchy to look to traditional standardized textbooks and curricular materials as a panacea of sorts. Unsurprisingly, however, the development of such texts turned out to be far easier said than done owing to the hyperpoliticized environment of the Soviet 1930s. Repeated failures in the development of new textbooks even drove the party hierarchy in early 1937 to consider reissuing prerevolutionary “bourgeois” texts to tempo-

rarily meet educational needs.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent word that Shestakov's long-awaited *Short Course on the History of the USSR* was to be ready in time for the start of the 1937–38 school year renewed hopes—both within the party hierarchy and on the local level—that order would soon be brought to the classroom. On September 1, 1937, *Pravda* framed the issue in dramatic terms: “Enormously important tasks stand before teachers and the Soviet school. Thirty million school children need to be brought up in the spirit of boundless love for the motherland and devotion to the party of Lenin and Stalin.”<sup>4</sup> Shestakov explained the centrality of history to this process a year later while glossing the introduction to his own textbook: “He who knows history will better understand contemporary life and will struggle more effectively with the enemies of our country to strengthen socialism.”<sup>5</sup>

Shestakov's stress on socialist ideals notwithstanding, it was the practical dimensions of the new curriculum that received the most immediate attention after the textbook's release. Authorities like O. F. Leonova, a Supreme Soviet deputy and principal of Moscow's School No. 175, expressed enthusiasm about the new curriculum and its emphasis on inspirational names, dates, and events. Such descriptions of heroism and struggle, according to Leonova, could be expected to capture students' hearts and minds through their patriotic appeal.<sup>6</sup> The transcript of a 1938 classroom discussion illustrates the sort of exchange that she and others envisioned taking place:

*Teacher:* Most important here [for this lesson] is the *oprichnina*, the struggle with the boyars. Here, Ivan IV accomplished to a certain extent that which had been pursued by his predecessors beginning with [Ivan] Kalita. What was the chief aim of his activities?

*Student:* To strengthen his power?

*Student:* To conquer more land?

*Student:* To unite the principalities into a single Muscovite state?

*Teacher:* [Correct.] To unite the principalities into a single Muscovite state. Sonia, what was the name of the first of these unifiers?

*Student:* Ivan Kalita.

*Teacher:* Yes. The unification of the principalities was begun by Ivan Kalita and completed by Ivan III, while Ivan IV broadened and strengthened the Muscovite state even more. He brought to an end the independence of the individual princelings. These boyars had conducted themselves as independent rulers on their own

patrimonies, being rich and powerful. Ivan seized their lands and destroyed their independence. He did it so that the state would become genuinely united. The state was then united in the hands of a single ruler. This was necessary because otherwise the state might have collapsed into small separate parts.<sup>7</sup>

Such an explicit association of recognizable names with heroic deeds typified the instructional style of the new curriculum. Virtually every lesson connected stages in the evolution of the Russian state with great contemporaries, from Ivan the Great to Ivan the Terrible, from Mikhail Lomonosov to Mikhail Kutuzov, and from Aleksandr Suvorov to Aleksandr Pushkin. Attention to social and economic formations was downgraded to a distinctly secondary role, as were detailed discussions of “socialism” and the communist future, in order to facilitate these new priorities.

This simplified, linear trajectory, along which the state evolved from its Kievan origins into its subsequent Muscovite, Imperial Russian, and Soviet incarnations, was more than just good pedagogical practice, of course. Not only did this narrative reflect national Bolshevism’s new stress on etatism, which was becoming increasingly prevalent in official discourse, but it was blatantly populist in design, illustrated throughout with colorful descriptions of heroes and villains. I. V. Gittis, an influential pedagogue, tried to clarify the nature of the patriotism that pervaded the narrative in her popular 1940 teaching manual:

Children must hate their country’s enemies and revel in the heroism of the Russian people who defended and preserved their motherland from invaders. Such feelings should be evoked in children through a familiarization with the Battle of Kulikovo Field, the struggle with the Polish interventionists in the XVII century, and with the Patriotic War [*Otechestvennaia voina*] of 1812 . . . The people’s struggle with enemy invaders is always a fight for one’s motherland.

Gittis knew that what she was proposing was a radical departure from two decades of Soviet historical pedagogy, especially in terms of the inspirational examples that were to be borrowed from the tsarist past. Suggesting the unease with which she and many other communist idealists looked upon this new style of popular mobilization, Gittis urged teachers to draw a distinction between the prerevolutionary and the postrevolutionary eras, describing the latter as being inherently more heroic than the former.

Specifically, Gittis wrote, “only the wars with invaders after 1917 can be considered truly ‘patriotic’ [*otechestvennye*], as only with the advent of the Soviet state have the toilers acquired a genuine fatherland. On the basis of the study of history, even the youngest of schoolchildren ought to understand that [the battles of] Lake Chud’, Kulikovo Field, and Borodino are different than Tsaritsyn, Perekop, Volochaevsk, Spassk, and Lake Hasan, where the people acted as the masters of their own country.”<sup>8</sup>

Gittis’s valorization of the pedagogical value of Soviet history over the prerevolutionary period was not unusual during those years. But if the post-1917 aspects of the narrative were expected to be the most inspiring, in practice, often the opposite was true, as schoolchildren found the epic past more approachable than the complexities of the Soviet present. According to an observer in Stupino, a village in Moscow province, it was lessons like those about the early-seventeenth-century Time of Troubles that most captivated students:

In a discussion concerning what they had discovered about “The Struggle with the Polish Invaders,” the schoolchildren spoke about the past literally as if they had been witnesses to the historic events themselves. Sincere youthful hatred could be sensed in their judgments concerning False Dmitrii and the Polish interventionists. They spoke with a sense of pride about Minin and Pozharskii, as they had earlier about Bolotnikov.

“They led the people by example. So that Moscow might be saved, they didn’t spare even themselves!”

During the break, the children continued to exchange impressions from the lesson.

“I bet there were no border guards in those days and that that allowed the Poles to get to us,” said one third grader.

“There were border guards, but they just weren’t very vigilant,” answered someone else.

“Well, *our* border guards are plenty vigilant,” rang out one response. “*Ours* are eagle-eyed [*gliadiat v oba*]: they won’t let a single Polish noble slip through!”<sup>9</sup>

Although somewhat surprising, this preference for the epic past in all likelihood stemmed from its mythological nature, its lack of ambiguity, and its easily recognizable and heroic cast of characters.

Despite the perfect accord between this focus on names, dates, and events and the party hierarchy’s expectations, the departure from earlier,

more materialist “sociological” paradigms aroused concern among communist idealists. A school inspector in Leningrad province named Karpova, for instance, observed that “there is absolutely no coordination between the teaching of history and the children’s communist upbringing. History teachers proffer the most vulgar of distortions in an entire array of schools.” Specifically, she objected to a lesson “in one school, [where] a teacher explained that states are formed as a result of conquest and the movement of peoples,” a view that virtually ignored what Marx had had to say on the subject.<sup>10</sup> On the whole, however, the concerns of pedagogues like Gittis and Karpova seem to have been the exception rather than the rule. Teachers and administrators alike had longed for the security and authority of an up-to-date textbook, and Shestakov’s *Short Course on the History of the USSR* was received with great enthusiasm as the canonical statement on Soviet history.<sup>11</sup>

What then were the realities of history instruction in the Soviet public schools? Despite massive campaigns to diversify the classroom environment and wean teachers from pedagogical strategies that encouraged rote learning, much of the educational system in the 1930s continued to rely on teachers reading aloud from textbooks, engaging in Socratic question-and-answer drills, and assigning lengthy dictations or the mechanistic recopying of textual passages into notebooks.<sup>12</sup> In large part, this was encouraged by the centralization of a curriculum in which standardized lesson plans sent from Moscow prescribed the pace, the content, and even the titles of individual lessons throughout the RSFSR.<sup>13</sup> Poor qualifications and a high turnover rate among teaching cadres compounded the problem.<sup>14</sup> The result was a vicious circle of sorts in which the standardization of materials and demand for ideological orthodoxy stifled creativity and reinforced the regimentation of the classroom. Formulaic teaching and a stress on rote memorization were virtually inevitable outcomes of such conditions.

But pedagogical “formalism” was not the only problem limiting the effectiveness of the new curriculum. State publishing houses found it virtually impossible to keep up with the demand for the *Short Course on the History of the USSR*, despite assurances to the contrary in the central press.<sup>15</sup> Parents went to great lengths to secure the needed volume, even writing directly to the new commissar of education, V. P. Potemkin, to request copies.<sup>16</sup> Supply problems were exacerbated when press coverage encouraged much broader use of the text than just within the third and fourth grades of elementary school.<sup>17</sup> Not only did administrators sanction its

use in the higher grades in lieu of unavailable advanced readers, but political study circles in factories and offices also tried to obtain copies for their own discussions.<sup>18</sup> Even the armed forces used the book: the People's Commissariat of the Navy requested seven thousand copies in 1940 alone.<sup>19</sup> To compensate for the shortfall, efforts were even made to buy books back from schoolchildren each spring in order to supply the following year's cohort with needed materials.<sup>20</sup>

Comprehensive Narkompros reports on the public schools prepared following the 1938–39 and 1939–40 academic years linked the long-awaited textbook to improvements in USSR history programs. The latter report noted that the positive effect of the Shestakov text and its methodological aids and curricular plans had been heightened by the appearance between 1938 and 1940 of the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* and several USSR history texts for higher educational institutions.<sup>21</sup> Although such materials were too complex for classroom use, they enabled teachers to prepare more thoroughly for the rigors of explaining the official historical line.<sup>22</sup>

An incidental description in the 1939–40 report of a lesson on the Crimean War taught in an Arkhangel'sk school effectively illustrates the sense of patriotism that pervaded the official curriculum after 1937. According to the report, a teacher named Vlasova had successfully communicated the essence of the heroic siege of Sevastopol' to her students by invoking Karl Marx's statement that "it was always easier to kill the Russians than it was to force them into retreat." Narkompros's endorsement of such an approach—as having "enormous meaning for the nurturing of a sense of Soviet patriotism in the children"—is fascinating, insofar as it meant that educational authorities saw nothing wrong with Vlasova's harnessing of the supreme communist authority to celebrate tsarist-era heroism and Russian ethnic identity.<sup>23</sup> Such overt russocentrism was routinely written into official methodological aids ranging from lesson plans to templates that scripted classroom dialogues.<sup>24</sup>

With the curriculum more or less in order, schematic and uncreative teaching styles remained areas in need of improvement. In particular, the same 1939–40 report noted that teachers' heavy reliance on the new textbooks often precluded the inclusion of other curricular materials (such as party classics, newly published document collections, and works of literature). Although some instructors had abandoned teaching techniques that encouraged rote memorization, many others continued to depend on these practices. Even so, the report concluded, the new emphasis on fa-

mous names, dates, and events was making classroom instruction at least somewhat more animated and interesting than it had been in past years. Student performance was described as having improved somewhat as a result.<sup>25</sup>

Such positive marks notwithstanding, instruction remained Narkompros's chief scapegoat in the 1939–40 report. Teachers' reliance on rote memorization was apparently responsible for students' inability to distinguish between critical events and those of a secondary nature, which in turn denied them real mastery of the material. Students also tended to do poorly on map work and chronology exercises, failing to explain historical progression and to grasp the "big picture." In the Moscow province town of Pavlov Posad, for instance, students in a certain Kleit's third grade class failed to nuance their treatments of historical figures like Stepan Razin ("a bandit who led campaigns for plunder") and time periods like NEP ("it was a concession to the capitalist elements"). Worse were reports from Tambov, where a question about the identities of the heroes of the Sparta uprising in 660 B.C. found sixth graders making wild guesses including Marx and Engels.<sup>26</sup>

Narkompros linked such problems in the higher grades to continued delays in the release of an advanced history textbook.<sup>27</sup> Many educators expressed similar concerns, and one approached Shestakov himself at a public lecture in 1938 or 1939 to inquire how soon a sequel to the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* could be expected: "Tell us please when a textbook on USSR history for middle schools and higher education will be released—one that is based on the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin [doctrine] and in which every word can be trusted, as in the *Short Course on the [History of the] ACP(b)*."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, at first glance, it does seem odd that more detailed narratives did not appear immediately after *Istoriik-Marksist* endorsed Shestakov's initial volume as a template for all future publications.<sup>29</sup> But there were two reasons for the delays. First of all, the official historiographic line was still undergoing refinements in the late 1930s, particularly on issues concerning the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the difference between just and unjust wars, and the nature of Russian cultural backwardness.<sup>30</sup> Such shifts forced the brigade that was drafting the advanced textbook under the direction of A. M. Pankratova to rewrite its manuscript at least three times between 1937 and 1939 to comply with the party's demands.<sup>31</sup>

Potentially more treacherous than the shifting historiographic currents were the unpredictable waves of the ongoing party purge. Books during

this era could be transformed overnight from party catechism to contraband, insofar as Glavlit was under strict instructions to remove from circulation any printed material, pictorial representation, or statuary that made reference to purge victims.<sup>32</sup> Attrition within the ranks of the party elite (especially among the “old guard”) made history texts particularly vulnerable in this regard. Only months after its release, the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* itself risked withdrawal from circulation on account of its mention of Kosior, Bubnov, Egorov, and others. Mekhlis personally struck out a picture of Bliukher in November 1937 when a copy of the text crossed his desk.<sup>33</sup> Detailed orders were quickly telegraphed to the local level in an attempt to avert Glavlit’s blacklisting of the textbook, with one set of instructions from late 1938 requiring provincial officials to “ink-out or paste-over the picture of the enemy of the people Egorov on page 178.”<sup>34</sup> A copy of the textbook that circulated in Vologda in the late 1930s reveals not only blackened-out names but also newspaper clippings glued over portraits of unfortunates like Egorov and Bliukher.<sup>35</sup> Memoirists have reported similar phenomena from Moscow to the Caucasus.<sup>36</sup>

Contrary to expectations, the conclusion to the purges’ bloodletting in 1939 did not necessarily ease the situation on the textbook front. This was because following the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact with Nazi Germany in August of that year, orders were given to delete all invectives directed against “fascists” in the public schools’ curriculum. In the case of the surviving textbook from Vologda mentioned above, “fascist” was crossed out and “imperialist” dutifully handwritten into the margin in its place.<sup>37</sup> Such historiographic and political instability halted a planned second edition of the Shestakov text in early 1940 and vastly complicated simultaneous work under way on more sophisticated texts ranging from Pankratova’s advanced textbook to readers on ancient, medieval, and modern world history.<sup>38</sup> Most would appear too late for the start of the 1940–41 school year.

Concurrent with this frenzy of reediting, a review of the public schools by the Central Committee’s Orgburo resulted in calls for further reorganization of the official history curriculum in the spring of 1941.<sup>39</sup> Students were struggling with the large number of names, dates, and events included in their textbooks, it reported, and this was inhibiting their overall assimilation of the material.<sup>40</sup> Bypassing teachers (as always, the presumed weak link), the Orgburo decided to rein in the curriculum. This streamlining ultimately took place at the expense of some of the Shestakov text’s explanatory apparatus, although cuts were also made to bring the history

curriculum into closer alignment with material taught in courses on geography, the Stalin Constitution, and other official priorities.<sup>41</sup>

The nature of these reforms had the unanticipated effect of further russifying the school curriculum. Not only did the russocentrism of the Shestakov text tend to influence what was taught in other courses, but the reforms also forced Narkompros in 1940 to request an exemption from the terms of a 1934 state and party resolution that required the history of dependent nations and colonies to be taught in the public schools.<sup>42</sup> Arguing that separate instruction would needlessly encumber students, Narkompros asserted that much of the material could be incorporated into world history courses, a solution that inevitably led to the subject's total marginalization.<sup>43</sup> Attempts to develop a textbook on colonialism—entering into their sixth year in 1940—were apparently abandoned shortly thereafter.<sup>44</sup> Republican textbook projects designed to offset the Shestakov text's russocentric focus apparently faltered as well at about the same time.<sup>45</sup>

Instead, resources went to finishing the long-awaited sequel to Shestakov's text, the advanced reader on Soviet history for grades eight through ten being prepared under Pankratova's editorship. The first two volumes of this three-part *History of the USSR* finally appeared in late 1940. *Pravda* predicted that "in the pedagogue's hands, this textbook will be a good means for cultivating Soviet patriotism and for stimulating [in schoolchildren] a love for the heroic past of the Russian people as well as the other peoples of the USSR."<sup>46</sup> In practice, there was less cause for optimism, as the textbook's first edition proved to be so dense that some teachers returned to Shestakov's in despair.<sup>47</sup> Despite similar problems with readability, the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* served as a substitute as well—a curious outcome, insofar as it would hardly seem possible to replace a textbook on state history with one revolving around the party.<sup>48</sup> But to understand the plausibility of such a substitution, it is necessary to first examine the state of party education in the 1930s.

Political education courses and discussion circles during the mid-1930s were governed by many of the same principles that shaped public school education. Komsomol propagandists, for instance, were told to augment their party history lectures "with facts and examples from contemporary life to give students a complete impression of historical events," an approach that would "train students in the spirit of Soviet patriotism."<sup>49</sup> Textbooks likewise played an increasingly central role in the curricula of

courses designed for party members, civilian professionals, and Red Army soldiers. Basic readers like S. Ingulov's *Political Discussions* or the Volin-Ingulov team's *Political Grammar* introduced their students to issues that were developed more thoroughly in party history textbooks like N. N. Popov's *Outline of the History of the ACP(b)*, E. Iaroslavskii's *History of the ACP(b)*, and V. G. Knorin's *Short History of the ACP(b)*.<sup>50</sup> An array of other books were also associated with these curricular mainstays, including *USSR—the Country of Socialism*, Gor'kii's *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, L. P. Beriia's *On the Question of the History of Bolshevik Organizations in the Transcaucasus*, and Voroshilov's *Stalin and the Red Army*.<sup>51</sup>

Already something of a patchwork to begin with, this curriculum was further compromised when the party purges tore gaping rents in its textual fabric during the mid- to late 1930s. In mid-1937, for instance, orders were sent to all provincial, regional, and republican party organizations blacklisting texts by Popov and Knorin, as well as any edition of Iaroslavskii's *History of the ACP(b)* issued before 1936. Material written by the Volin-Ingulov team and the Ingulov-Karpinskii team was scheduled for removal as soon as revised editions could be issued. Although communiqués during 1937 assured anxious educators on the local level that new political grammars and party history textbooks would be released as soon as possible, successive waves of purging delayed the publication of new material until the fall of 1938.<sup>52</sup>

In the interim, organizations like the Red Army's Political Directorate recommended that supplementary texts such as Stetskii's *Our Motherland* and Kalinin's *What Has Soviet Power Done for the Toilers?* form the basis of introductory lessons.<sup>53</sup> Better-prepared students might move on to V. M. Molotov's *Toward the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution*, the *Twenty Years of Soviet Power* anthology, or *USSR—the Country of Socialism*.<sup>54</sup> This haphazardly constructed curriculum was to be grounded in a historical narrative supplied by the concluding chapters of Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR*, as official directives required party history to be studied "in connection with the country's history."<sup>55</sup>

Equally reminiscent of public school priorities were efforts to centralize political education, which was characterized in the mid-1930s by an extremely wide but apparently ineffective array of offerings designed for party executives as well as for military and civilian specialists.<sup>56</sup> Reform-oriented discussions even appeared on the Politburo's agenda during the summer of 1937, when proposals to launch a new two-tiered set of courses were discussed. These plans had to be abandoned early that fall,

however; apparently, the latest round of party purges had so thoroughly gutted the Soviet pantheon of heroes that Glavlit had had to ban virtually all of the texts necessary for such courses.<sup>57</sup>

In the wake of this debacle, only minor reforms were completed by September 1937.<sup>58</sup> Critics would later complain that the political education system's impressively high enrollments belied miserably poor quality. Courses varied in length from a few lessons to several years of meetings, and those enrolled came and went as they pleased. Compounding the problem, instruction suffered from a lack of qualified propagandists, a shortcoming that had been exacerbated, of course, by the effects of the purges.<sup>59</sup> A year later, at a major conference of propagandists in the fall of 1938, Iaroslavskii illustrated the mediocrity of local agitation with a story about a provincial lecturer who had explained to a study circle that the word "fascism" was derived from "Foch," the surname of a contemporary right-wing French General. "Well, at least he found someone to blame it on, didn't he? [*Nashelsia paren', vse-taki*]," quipped Stalin aloud to the delight of the audience.<sup>60</sup>

Joking aside, Stalin followed up his teasing of Iaroslavskii with a speech at the same conference in which he seconded his colleague's misgivings about entrusting the management of political education to local propagandists.<sup>61</sup> He expressed hope, however, that the triumphant release of the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* earlier that fall would resolve many of the problems plaguing the political educational system. Official plans envisaged this text as not only centralizing the curriculum but bringing it into alignment with courses ranging from history and political economy to economic geography.<sup>62</sup> Coordinated with other disciplines and stratified to reflect their students' varying levels of education, the newly redesigned courses and reading circles quickly received official sanction.<sup>63</sup>

It is important to note the degree to which this curriculum was to revolve around an admixture of party and state history. Reflecting the fact that each chapter of the all-important *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* began with an overview of civic and state history, a late 1938 resolution of the komsomol Central Committee reminded its propagandists that "a profound mastery of Marxism-Leninism demands a high level of schooling and knowledge of general history and the history of the peoples of the USSR." Although attention was to be focused on the history of the party, instructors were not to neglect "regular lectures on the foreign and domestic policies of the USSR and the history of our country."<sup>64</sup> Similar priorities governed Red Army courses.<sup>65</sup> Supplementary texts like *Our*

*Motherland* and *The USSR and the Capitalist Countries* were to provide introductory historical material that would in time be followed up by study of the Shestakov text.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps symptomatic of these curricula's russocentric, etatist orientation, discussions of the Friendship of the Peoples and Soviet nationality policy were virtually absent from the Red Army's political educational system between 1938 and 1940.<sup>67</sup> A similar state of affairs governed a popular series of books entitled "The Red Army Man's Library," a list that was composed of exclusively Russian-oriented historical titles.<sup>68</sup> Never justified by any explicit rationale, political instruction almost by default seems to have focused on the intersection between party and state history in a curriculum couched in patriotic, national Bolshevik sloganeering and the Stalin cult.

As in the public schools, Socratic teaching methods (recitation, reading out loud, scripted question-and-answer dialogues) and rote memorization dominated party classrooms. Nevertheless, some evaluations of student performance in the political education system were positive despite the deficiencies in instruction. For instance, of 354 Red Army party members tested in military formations in the Far East in April 1939, some 66 percent earned either good or excellent marks, while 31 percent of their comrades were listed as "fair" and only 3 percent as "poor." Among 228 komsomol members similarly evaluated, 72 percent received excellent or good grades, with 26 percent receiving fair marks and 2 percent rating as "poor."<sup>69</sup> Other reports from komsomol and Red Army sources were less sanguine, however, complaining in particular about formulaic teaching practices and the encouragement of rote memorization.<sup>70</sup> Some agitators did little more than read the Shestakov text aloud to their students.<sup>71</sup> Such approaches not only inhibited the learning process but limited the agitational value of the curriculum. Among antiaircraft forces in Leningrad, testing found that second-year soldiers and junior officers "had poorly mastered the history of the Russian people's struggle for their independence (the Battle on the Ice, the emancipation from the Mongol Yoke, and the defeat of the Polish interventionists in 1612) and the progressive events in the history of our motherland (the christening of Rus', etc.)."<sup>72</sup> Such subjects were enough of a priority that soldiers' errors in discussions concerning Russian history were regularly included in reports filed with the Red Army's Political Directorate during the prewar period.<sup>73</sup>

But if students found Russian history challenging, they had an even harder time assimilating the more esoteric *Short Course on the History of the*

*ACP(b)*. Apparently, some 40 percent of the students at the Ordzhonikidze garrison infantry school were getting “poor” grades in political studies, results that were not uncommon.<sup>74</sup> A Central Committee resolution in 1939 and a prominent article in *Bol'shevik* during the following year indicate that difficulties relating to the study of the party's main doctrinal text were both persistent and widespread.<sup>75</sup> Fundamentally, the problem seems to have been one of educational level, as the average Soviet citizen in 1940 had never gotten past the fourth grade. Even among urban residents and party members, the figures were not that much higher.<sup>76</sup> Put most bluntly, *The Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* was simply too arcane for most of those expected to master it.<sup>77</sup> Even among propagandists, komsomol reports describe instructors as being much more comfortable with Russo-Soviet history than with other subjects ranging from party history to political economy and economic geography.<sup>78</sup>

Of course, the dearth of basic books, newspapers, and reading materials in Red Army political courses and clubs did not improve the situation.<sup>79</sup> Long neglected, garrison libraries and their librarians began to benefit from increased attention and support after the mid-1930s.<sup>80</sup> That said, investigations during these years revealed that all too often, library shelves were either poorly stocked or rife with titles that had been blacklisted by Glavlit.<sup>81</sup> Some 314 volumes were removed from Red Army libraries over the span of just one month in March 1939. As late as January 1941, books about Trotskii or by Pokrovskii were still being uncovered in division libraries.<sup>82</sup> Fear of such scandals led to a fairly predictable practice whereby librarians throughout the RSFSR subjected their collections to repeated preemptive purges.<sup>83</sup> In the Red Army's Irkutsk garrison, excessively broad interpretation of Glavlit orders resulted in the library's shelves being stripped of any material containing even incidental references to known “enemies of the people,” a methodology that left the collections without basic materials like party congress protocols and back issues of important journals. In Moscow's Central House of the Red Army, Frunze's collected works and many of Voroshilov's articles and speeches were removed for the same reason.<sup>84</sup> Other libraries withdrew texts as basic as *The USSR and the Capitalist Countries* and *Our Motherland*.<sup>85</sup> Although Glavlit's fears about the accidental use of banned material in study groups occasionally turned out to be justified, the situation on the ground was more often characterized by a general shortage of books than it was by the inadvertent use of illicit literature.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, despite the truly massive dimensions of state publishing in the late 1930s, almost as many books seem to have

been removed from circulation between 1938 and 1940 as were added. Literature concerning party history and the Soviet patriotism campaigns of the mid-1930s was devastated with particular thoroughness. State publishing houses tried hard to narrow the gap between the party hierarchy's expectations and their own lackluster performance but were repeatedly hampered by shortcomings in content-control and distribution.<sup>87</sup>

Over time, such difficulties contributed to a higher profile for the Shestakov text—and its russocentric, national Bolshevik line—than had necessarily been intended by party ideologists. Initially designated as little more than background reading for those studying party history, in practice it was often the only decent textbook in the classroom.<sup>88</sup> The Shestakov text's massive print runs, official endorsement, and lucid writing, combined with the purging of most alternatives, gave the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* the status of a curricular mainstay after 1937. To be sure, academic results were never impressive: marginal classroom performance and the simplistic popularization of historical subjects left Soviet citizens with a primitive vision of their collective past that idealized national heroes and their defense of the Russian motherland.<sup>89</sup> Then again, sophisticated analysis was not the point. Political education had been designed to instill in Soviet citizens a sense of patriotic identity, and this goal was at least partially realized during the late 1930s.<sup>90</sup> One teacher's unusually frank statement at the end of the 1937–38 school year perhaps best epitomizes the spirit of Soviet prewar political education: “Perhaps my children do not know all their historical facts perfectly, but there is one thing I can say for sure: they understand who they are supposed to hate and who they are supposed to love. They hate those who have oppressed our people in the past and those who have interfered with [our] heroic struggle. They love our people and their friends and leaders, Lenin and Stalin.”<sup>91</sup>

## 5 Popularizing State Ideology through Mass Culture

In 1938, V. A. Karpinskii, the editor-in-chief of the State Political Publishing House, called for film and literature to supplement the Soviet official line. Such a suggestion at first glance seems rather puzzling, as it is generally accepted that the USSR was in many senses the world's first "propaganda state." By 1938, the party hierarchy had been using various sorts of artistic media to popularize its ideological tenets for over twenty years.<sup>1</sup> It turns out, however, that Karpinskii was actually criticizing what he saw as the haphazard coordination of propaganda efforts during the 1930s. Beginning with literature, this chapter outlines the often torturous story of how all spheres of Soviet mass culture—from theater, opera, and film to museums, memorials, and exhibitions—came to conform to the new national Bolshevik line by the eve of war.

Before proceeding, one caveat is in order. Surveys of prewar literature and the performing arts often focus on the work of famous contemporaries within the genre of Socialist Realism—Sholokhov in literature, Khrennikov in music, Gerasimov in art.<sup>2</sup> Although such analysis tends to be quite insightful, observers should resist the urge to conflate this body of work with prewar Soviet mass culture as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Library shelves and popular forums, after all, were as much defined by Pushkin as they were by Sholokhov, by Glinka as much as by Khrennikov, and by Vasnetsov as much as by Gerasimov. Hack writers and court *litterateurs*, such as V. I. Kostylev and A. N. Tolstoi, were incredibly prolific and widely read. Capturing the essence of the stalinist "propaganda state," therefore, requires no less than an archaeology of prewar mass culture to grasp precisely what was published, cast, staged, screened, and exhibited.

Although the launching of Socialist Realism between 1932 and 1934 has often been described as the beginning of a new era in Russian literature, it is important not to exaggerate the extent to which it was a total break with the past.<sup>4</sup> True, Socialist Realism appears at first glance to have been a “revolution from above,” designed to consolidate state control over the arts and to counter the literary radicalism of movements like Proletkul’t, RAPP, and LEF. But the genre’s populist dimensions must be acknowledged as well, insofar as Socialist Realism was, in a certain sense, a concession to the society’s conservative literary tastes on the mass level.<sup>5</sup> Emerging against the backdrop of an often forgotten “return to the classics” movement dating to the mid-1920s, Socialist Realism reflected the influence of works by writers such as A. S. Pushkin, L. N. Tolstoi, I. S. Turgenev, A. P. Chekhov, and N. A. Nekrasov, which had been published with some regularity during NEP.<sup>6</sup> A remarkable phenomenon within the context of the revolutionary disestablishmentarianism of the 1920s, the publication of these works inevitably reflected aspects of the early Soviet cultural milieu. Particularly visible was the selectivity of this new canon, as official demands kept it, for the most part, “ideologically neutral.” Literature with an explicitly political dimension qualified for rerelease only if its descriptions of prerevolutionary society coincided with the party hierarchy’s generally negative appraisals of the tsarist past.<sup>7</sup>

As attention to the classics intensified after the party hierarchy’s endorsement of Socialist Realism in 1932, the selectivity of these reprintings shifted as well. Dovetailing with broader ideological trends in the mid-1930s, the classical canon increasingly favored themes and subject matter that emphasized patriotism and pride in the Russian national past. The paradigmatic example of this shift involves a decision of the USSR Central Executive Committee in 1935 to use the impending 1937 centennial of Pushkin’s death as an opportunity to clarify the official line on the nineteenth-century romantic. Revolutionary-era appraisals of Pushkin among certain Futurist, Proletkul’t, and RAPP circles, after all, had tended to consider the poet’s legacy to be increasingly obsolete and irrelevant. V. V. Maiakovskii, for instance, famously proposed as early as 1912 to throw the poet “overboard off the ship of modernity,” only to add later in 1918: “we’re shooting the old generals—why not shoot Pushkin too?” Such loud declarations and manifestos were, in turn, complemented by Krupskaya’s quieter purge of Pushkin’s works from public libraries during the 1920s.<sup>8</sup> A change of heart within the party hierarchy, however, produced calls as early as May 1933 for what would eventually be Pushkin’s full-scale rehabilitation and incorporation into the Soviet cultural canon as no less

than the “founder of the Russian literary language.”<sup>9</sup> An all-union Pushkin committee was formed in December 1935 under Gor’kii that rallied to the cause a veritable who’s-who list of fifty establishment ideologists, literary critics, Pushkin specialists, and other members of the creative intelligentsia. Calling for the popularization of the “great Russian poet,” the Central Executive Committee gave Gor’kii and his colleagues some ten months to devise “an array of events aimed at immortalizing the memory of A. S. Pushkin.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite impressions to the contrary, the official commemoration’s commitment to the study of literature was ambiguous at best, something epitomized by infighting that took place during the preparation of an academic edition of Pushkin’s collected works for publication.<sup>11</sup> Although this edition was envisaged as the first comprehensive, critical compilation of the poet’s work, scholarly interests often collided with the party hierarchy’s own motives for sponsoring the Pushkin commemoration, which centered on the mass promotion of a popular hero. At a Kremlin meeting of the Pushkin committee in April 1936, for instance, the party functionary V. I. Mezhlauk denounced the scholasticism of the academic edition. K. I. Chukovskii, who was present at the meeting, recorded in his diary the bureaucrat’s ignorant outburst: “what we need is Pushk[in] for the masses, and all our paper is being used up on commentary.”<sup>12</sup> As reported later by an insider, Mezhlauk subsequently scolded Iu. G. Oksman, the project’s de facto editor, with the following barb: “Who, in the final analysis, are we publishing? Pushkin or the Pushkinists?”<sup>13</sup> As a result of such views, the vast majority of the 19 million volumes of Pushkin and Pushkiniana printed between 1936 and 1937 appeared in popularized mass editions.<sup>14</sup> Bubnov summarized the anti-intellectual sentiments guiding the project in boastful terms: “the Soviet individual does not need pseudo-scientific ‘commentary’ in which hunches and rummaging about in the irrelevant minutiae of [the poet’s] personal life substitute for the genuine study of Pushkin, his remarkable life, and brilliant work.”<sup>15</sup>

Embedded within this populism was a tendency to privilege Russian-oriented themes. Even before February 1937, such ethnic particularism was visible in comments made at the above-mentioned 1936 Kremlin meeting by Dem’ian Bednyi, a poet struggling to adapt to the new ideological climate.<sup>16</sup> Chukovskii conveys the former RAPPist’s tactless objections to the proposal of basing the Pushkin commemoration in Leningrad:

“But he was murdered there!” blurted out Bednyi and presented his own [p]antheon proposal. Pushkin’s remains should be brought to

Moscow and there, around him, a Pantheon of Russian writers should be constructed. Without warning, [V. E.] Meyerhold (who until that point had been a merciless critic of Dem'ian's) started to nod his head affirmatively: Yes, yes! A Pantheon, a Pantheon . . . a tremendous idea of Dem'ian's. Yes . . . yes, definitely a Pantheon.<sup>17</sup>

Bednyi's vision of a monument to the written word in the Soviet capital is revealing in the sense that it was not really very "Soviet" at all, celebrating neither Socialist Realism nor the literary foundations of Ukrainian, Georgian, Kirgiz, or other union languages. Instead, as a centralized monument to classical *Russian* writers, it foregrounded a single literary tradition as hierarchically superior. That Bednyi was not immediately shouted down for his identification of Russian literature as *primus inter pares* indicates the extent to which the prevailing ideological winds had begun to change: such a statement in an official forum would have been inconceivable just several years earlier.<sup>18</sup>

Although Bednyi's project was never realized, similar themes were echoed in subsequent meetings of the committee. Particularly interesting is an exchange between I. K. Luppol and Bubnov in October 1936:

*Luppol:* On the subject of the ceremony [that is to be held in the Bolshoi Theater in early February 1937], there must be a fundamental speech made by either the government or the Pushkin committee after the opening address, something that will address the question of what sort of significance Pushkin has for us and for everyone. This is a task which is not a narrow one concerning literary studies [*ne uzko-literaturovedcheskaia*], but a political task which must illuminate, among other things, the content of the government's decree on the Pushkin committee.

*Bubnov:* True. The speeches that take place must deal with the formula "the great Russian poet, the founder of Russian literature, and the creator of the modern Russian language."<sup>19</sup>

Populism and russocentrism, then, were scripted directly into the Pushkin commemoration's program, displacing scholarship and literature itself in the process.

To the present-day observer, the tone of the eventual commemoration in February 1937 ran shrill with its accentuation of Pushkin's Russian ethnicity.<sup>20</sup> Anticipating the next eighteenth months' co-option of names from the Russian national past, as well as the formal declaration of Russian

as the Soviet lingua franca,<sup>21</sup> the celebration made Pushkin the paragon of literary-mindedness for the entire USSR.<sup>22</sup> The suspicious interplay between “us” and “them” (“Russian” and “Soviet”) in the following excerpt from a front-page *Pravda* editorial is particularly telling:

The Russian people are honoring the memory of the greatest of their poets, the creator of the Russian literary language and the founder of the new Russian literature. In a brotherly way, all the peoples of the Soviet land are joining in the Russian literary celebration, as this literature has become near and dear to them . . . Pushkin opens *our* country and *our* people before *them* in poetic tones.<sup>23</sup>

Not limiting descriptions of the poet’s influence to Russian literature, “scholarly” articles identified a debt to Pushkin among Tatar, Bashkir, and other non-Russian literary traditions.<sup>24</sup> Although Shevchenko, Rustaveli, and other non-Russian writers received official recognition during the second half of the 1930s equal to that of other prerevolutionary Russian literary giants like L. N. Tolstoi and M. Iu. Lermontov, events devoted to “the founder of the new Russian literature” eclipsed them all in both scale and pretense.<sup>25</sup>

Reflecting the new line on the classics and the Russian national past, titles that had gone unpublished for twenty years were dusted off to promote new priorities ranging from patriotism to military heroism. By the eve of war, this canon included not only Pushkin’s “Poltava” and “Song of Oleg the Wise,” but Tolstoi’s *War and Peace*, Gogol’s *Taras Bul’ba*, and works concerning Ivan the Terrible by A. K. Tolstoi and Lermontov.<sup>26</sup> If Pushkin was the most frequently published during these years, L. N. Tolstoi and Lermontov were close runners-up, the enormous circulation of the former’s *Resurrection*, *The Cossacks*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Sevastopol’ Tales* being matched by the latter’s apparently “timeless” *A Hero of Our Time*.<sup>27</sup> Fairy tales written by prerevolutionary authors like I. A. Krylov were republished as well after popular interest in fables and folklore was stimulated by Gor’kii’s approving mention of the genre in 1934 at the first congress of the Soviet Writers’ Union.<sup>28</sup> But unmistakable is the fact that none of these works had anything to do with the revolution, socialist construction, Soviet patriotism, or any other aspect of stalinist society, for that matter. Indeed, from the perspective of the 1930s, most of the classics were backward-looking, sentimentalist, and linked to Socialist Realism only by genre. Yet as legitimate as such concerns may have been in regard to individual works, they were eclipsed by the perception within the party

hierarchy that co-option of the classical canon as a whole would confer upon Soviet arts and letters a sense of authority, pedigree, and tradition that had been lacking for some fifteen years.

Mounting interest in traditional literary forms created fertile ground for Soviet-era writers to publish epics of their own.<sup>29</sup> V. Solov'ev explored Kutuzov's heroism in verse, while A. N. Tolstoi and V. I. Kostylev wrote novels about Peter the Great and Kuz'ma Minin.<sup>30</sup> Remarkably enough, success with these patriotic explorations of the Russian national past led all three authors to converge on Ivan the Terrible in search of further dramatic material.<sup>31</sup> V. Ian and S. Borodin looked back still further, publishing novels entitled *Chingiz Khan* and *Dmitrii Donskoi* between 1938 and 1941. In these martial epics, there was clearly a preference for subjects set in the distant past, but some wrote on more "modern" themes as well. S. Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ, for example, emplotted his Crimean War saga *The Ordeal of Sevastopol'* around the trials and tribulations of the nineteenth-century officer class.<sup>32</sup>

Coordinating their efforts with state publishing houses, librarians tried to use such literature to instill a sense of patriotism in Soviet citizens of all ages.<sup>33</sup> Diarists, the press, and interviews report a major surge of public interest in the Russian classics and their Soviet-era imitators during these years.<sup>34</sup> *Magnitogorskii rabochii*, for instance, reported in 1936 that only a biography of Stalin by Henri Barbusse could compete with the popularity of books by Tolstoi, Turgenev, Ostrovskii, and Gor'kii.<sup>35</sup> Classical literature was also incorporated into the classroom, although not without a fair degree of rather spurious politicization. A teacher in Moscow's School No. 167 is known to have used *Taras Bul'ba* in lessons concerning "Ukraine's Struggle with Polish Rule" to illustrate the Ukrainian peasantry's age-old longing for Russian suzerainty. *Pravda* encouraged this interdisciplinary style of instruction as well, recounting how at Moscow's Kaganovich Ball-Bearing Factory, workers studying the medieval Kievan state "acquaint themselves with the notable Russian epic *The Tale of Igor's Host* and listen to musical selections from Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*."<sup>36</sup>

But as there had been no explicit statement from the party hierarchy about the extent of the ideological turn-about, many authors engaged in this "reinvention of tradition"<sup>37</sup> initially met with considerable resistance. This was due to the fact that communist-idealist editors, many of whom had come of age during the 1928–1931 Cultural Revolution, initially tried to prevent the publication of literature they found inappropriate for socialist society. Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ's *Ordeal of Sevastopol'*, for instance, encour-

tered editorial hostility after being submitted for review to the literary journal *Oktiabr'* in 1937. Fragmentary accounts suggest that virtually all of the members of the journal's board objected to what they believed to be the novel's "jingoistic tone" (*krasnoi patriotizm*), its sympathetic portrayal of the prerevolutionary officer class, and its lack of concern for the plight of the common soldier. Sensing, however, that the work corresponded quite closely to the emerging official line, F. Panferov, *Oktiabr'*'s editor-in-chief, submitted the manuscript to the Central Committee for review. The party authorities' prompt endorsement of the work vindicated Panferov's instincts and led to the novel's publication; even then, however, critics continued their campaign against the novel in the press.<sup>38</sup> That such resistance to the new national Bolshevik line was fairly common is indicated by the hostile treatment A. N. Tolstoi's Petrine project and E. V. Tarle's epic biography of Napoleon endured before catalyzing what were to become stable historical genres of fiction and popular biography late in the decade.<sup>39</sup>

Such cases of factional infighting between communist idealists and their more pragmatic contemporaries are indicative of the situation within the artistic world as a whole during these years. One of the most scandalous incidents involved N. M. Gorchakov, the director of Moscow's Satire Theater, who commissioned a comedy poking fun at Ivan the Terrible from M. A. Bulgakov. Despite the investment of considerable time and effort in mounting the play, Gorchakov was forced to scuttle *Ivan Vasil'evich* after its dress rehearsal in May 1936 on the orders of A. I. Angarov, Ia. O. Boiarskii, and other officials from the Central Committee (presumably on account of its disrespectful treatment of the Russian national past).<sup>40</sup> More dramatic was the fiasco surrounding Dem'ian Bednyi's opera *The Epic Heroes (Bogatyri)* later that fall. Despite having already been censured for derisive treatment of Russian themes earlier in the decade,<sup>41</sup> Bednyi apparently saw nothing provocative about collaborating with A. Ia. Tairov in the staging of a comic libretto about the heroes of Russian mythology and the coming of Christianity to medieval Rus'. A ribald, drunken tale, *The Epic Heroes* portrayed Vladimir the Great, the founder of the medieval Kievan state, as an indecisive coward. Notorious highwaymen from Russian folklore were depicted as revolutionaries. Not a surprising interpretation for someone with Bednyi's radical background, it won the approval of highly placed officials like Boiarskii and Orlovskii and opened in Moscow's Kamernyi Theater in November 1936. But *The Epic Heroes* was fated to be staged just a handful of times before V. M. Molotov had it shut down on

account of its inappropriate treatment of the newly revived Russian folk epic.<sup>42</sup> Overriding the opera's official sanction, Molotov engineered a Politburo decision that forced Boiarskii's superiors at the All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs to issue a resolution condemning it as an "anti-historical and insulting portrayal of . . . a positive stage in the history of the Russian people."<sup>43</sup> The fact that the Soviet artistic community and its liaisons from the party, state, and censor had all failed to appreciate the "subversive" nature of Bednyi's piece reveals the ambiguousness of the official line during the mid-1930s. Molotov would recall many years later that Vladimir the Great's acceptance of Orthodox Christianity "was not just a matter of faith, but a political step in the interests of the development of our state and people." Claiming that "there was no reason for us to cast it as foolishness," Molotov did, nonetheless, concede that the subversive quality of the piece probably "wasn't clear to all of . . . the purest Bolsheviks and communists among us" at the time.<sup>44</sup>

While Bednyi's reputation was irreparably tarnished by the debacle, Bulgakov's reaction to the scandals effectively illustrates the creative intelligentsia's anxiety during the mid-1930s as it first flailed about wildly in confusion and then, finally, in a moment of epiphany, grasped the direction of the emerging line. Within months of the banning of his *Ivan Vasil'evich* satire, Bulgakov turned his attention to rousing patriotic subjects drawn from the Russian national past. In short order, he wrote the libretto for *Minin and Pozharskii*, a new populist opera that foregrounded Muscovy's 1612 expulsion of Polish invaders during the Time of Troubles. The day after he and his wife heard about Bednyi's dramatic fall from grace, the playwright moved to accelerate the staging of this opera. Aware of the new fashionability of Russian folk heroes, Bulgakov also quickly added *Ruslan* to his developing repertoire, proposed another opera about Pugachev, and even considered adapting M. I. Glinka's 1836 *A Life for the Tsar* into a form acceptable for performance on the Soviet stage.<sup>45</sup>

Long known for his difficult relationship with the Soviet theatrical establishment, Bulgakov surprised observers with his new choice of subject matter. Congratulating the playwright, a stalinist insider named M. A. Dobranitskii chided smugly: "so it turns out that you share with us . . . common enemies after all, and, what's more, a common theme—the motherland."<sup>46</sup> B. V. Asaf'ev was similarly enthusiastic about Bulgakov's new interest in patriotic themes. A Leningrad composer, Asaf'ev suggested to Bulgakov a variety of new subjects ranging from Peter the Great to Ivan the Terrible in a letter from late 1936. Explaining in rather ram-

bling prose that he was interested in something “distinctly Russian, through and through,” Asaf’ev wrote that “it’d be nice to have a subject in which the aching of the Russian soul and the Russian philosophy of life and death could be heard.” Continuing, he noted,

For a long time, Russian history has seemed to me to be a great tragedy about national defense [*oboronnaia tragediia*], out of which emerges all our age-old Russian burdens . . . Of course, there were glimmers of light in the darkness (Novgorod and the Hanseatic League, Peter and Poltava, Alexander I and Paris) . . . but these epochs were a mirage. Reality, with its rallying call of “all to the defense” was the only way for us to exist and not turn into something like China, and this had a sobering effect on our people . . . The tragedy of Pushkin’s life was his *Bronze Horseman*; Ivan IV had to sacrifice Novgorod; Catherine II had to sacrifice her sympathies for the French culture of Voltaire, and with it, Radishchev and Novikov; Peter had to sacrifice Aleksei . . . —all these are variations of one and the same theme about national defense. Is it not from here that we get the Russian people’s exceptionally strange, disdainful relationship toward life and death and the fantastic wastefulness of all our living energies?!<sup>47</sup>

Uninterested in Asaf’ev’s melancholic nationalism and xenophobia, Bulgakov did take his advice regarding Peter the Great and began work on a new piece in early 1937. Nevertheless, Bulgakov seems to have had problems adjusting to the increasingly russocentric dimensions of the Soviet theatrical world signaled by his confidante’s letter, and party authorities had to repeatedly prod him to write with less equivocation.<sup>48</sup> *Minin and Pozharskii*, for instance, apparently depicted the Polish invaders of the Time of Troubles in insufficiently harsh terms. Indicative of the difficult new atmosphere, one party functionary apparently even lost his temper with the playwright at one point, demanding to know “why don’t you love the Russian people?”<sup>49</sup>

Frustrated by the stalling of both *Minin and Pozharskii* and his piece about Peter the Great, Bulgakov spent the fall of 1937 mulling over whether or not to switch to something entirely new concerning either the War of 1812 or Suvorov.<sup>50</sup> This dogged interest in the Russian national past says quite a bit about the Soviet creative intelligentsia during the mid-to late 1930s, even if Bulgakov’s own efforts in this regard came to naught and have largely been forgotten. Moreover, one project in which the un-

fortunate playwright served as ghostwriter—S. M. Gorodetskii's restaging of Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*—met with considerable acclaim after its premiere in February 1939.<sup>51</sup> Retitled *Ivan Susanin*, this tale revolved around its eponymous hero, a semimythical peasant-partisan who sabotaged the Polish advance into Muscovy during the Time of Troubles. Most interesting about the predictably pro-Russian, anti-Polish opera was the way in which its protagonist was framed in *Literaturnaia gazeta*: “Ivan Susanin is not a concrete, ordinary character. He is, instead, a composite model. For that reason, it is totally unimportant whether or not he was from Kostroma, what sort of dialect he spoke, or what he wore. What is important is to show that Susanins existed, still exist, and always will exist within the great Russian people, in all times and across the entire stretch of the Russian land.” Inexplicable here is *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s insistence that Susanin's love for the motherland was to be understood as particularistically Russian, rather than something stemming from a more general sense of patriotism or class consciousness.<sup>52</sup> But at least *Ivan Susanin* focused on a hero with plebian roots. Other dramatic works of the late 1930s—from A. E. Korneichuk's *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* to Solov'ev's *1812*—revived personalities associated with Russian state history who lacked even nominal conformity with Marxist ideological tenets. By 1941, people like Georgii Kulagin, a worker-diarist from Leningrad, would connect new additions to this genre like *Suvorov*, *Kutuzov*, and *Admiral Nakhimov* with the authorities' “noticeable intensification of military-patriotic propaganda” and not even sense the iconoclasm inherent in the pairing of Soviet patriotism and tsarist-era heroes.<sup>53</sup>

Efforts on the stage and in print were mirrored in the cinema's celluloid representations of the official line on the moviehouse screen. The shift in the mid-1930s from an exclusive focus on Stakhanovites and Red Army commanders to a more inclusive vision of the Soviet heroic pantheon is plainly visible in the contrast between the release of *Chapaev* in 1934 and that of *Peter the First* three years later. *Izvestiia*'s review of the latter, which premiered on the first day of school in 1937, situated the film at the center of the ongoing campaign surrounding the release of Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR*: “[The film's] appearance answers like nothing else the cultural demands of our country's population. The masses are showing an unheard-of interest in history. The works of Russian artistic masters concerning historic subjects attract enormous attention. The entire country is showing enormous interest in the appearance

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Newspaper advertisement for *Peter the First*, by V. M. Petrov. (*Vecherniaia Moskva*, September 15, 1937, 4)

of the new history textbook. The people want to know their past. They want to see the paths that have brought them to glory.”<sup>54</sup> Although *Peter the First* is sometimes described as little more than an apologia for Stalin’s dictatorial rule, it was actually a much more ambitious endeavor.<sup>55</sup> Depicting Peter as decisive, willful, and ruthless, the film ultimately vindicated these qualities by portraying the emperor as a devoted and selfless champion of Russian state-building. This message contributed to both the emerging etatist line and Stalin’s personality cult and illustrates one of Tolstoi’s artistic trademarks: the ability to depict controversial characters in terms that were complex and satisfying, yet also in conformity with the party line. Although the film was initially known for confusing its audiences with its focus on representatives of the old regime (as discussed in greater detail in the following chapter), it steadily grew in popularity to become one of 1937’s most popular films, threatening even to eclipse *Lenin in October*, M. Romm’s cinematic tribute to the twentieth anniversary of the revolution.

An even more memorable cinematic event was the 1938 release of the medieval epic *Aleksandr Nevskii*, by S. M. Eisenstein, P. A. Pavlenko, and D. M. Vasil’ev.<sup>56</sup> Stridently patriotic and uplifting, the film focused on Nevskii’s defensive struggle against the Livonian Teutonic Order. Reflecting official interest not only in the great names of the past but in the Russian people themselves, a reviewer in *Izvestiia* proclaimed hyperbolically that

the “Battle on the Ice” has remained in the people’s memory as one of the most important and decisive dates in its history. Here, in the struggle with the German mongrel-knights [*psy-rytsari*] and in the victory over them on the ice of Lake Chud’, the people’s national consciousness matured, leading to the formation of the Russian state. Aleksandr Nevskii was one of very few statesmen who placed the national interests of the Russian land and Russian people higher than the feudal strife and conflict that [until then] had been paralyzing medieval Rus’.<sup>57</sup>

Another reviewer agreed with the anachronistic assertion that the 1242 victory had catalyzed the Russian people’s “national consciousness,” connecting Nevskii’s feat to that of Dmitrii Donskoi, another epic Russian hero from the distant past. “Had there been no ‘Battle on the Ice,’ there would not have been the Battle of Kulikovo Field 140 years later, where the Russians for the first time dealt the seemingly invincible Tatar-Mongol

hordes a devastating defeat.” Noting that demand for tickets to see the film was surpassing all expectations, the latter commentator breathlessly echoed the previous year’s review of *Peter the First*: Nevskii’s popularity was “further stunning testimony to the Soviet people’s enormous interest in their native history.”<sup>58</sup>

Unsurprisingly, other historical films—devoted to Minin and Pozharskii, Suvorov, and Bogdan Khmel’nitskii—followed in short order.<sup>59</sup> Methodological aids for the public schools and Red Army courses prescribed the viewing of such films, confirming the political significance of this cinematic genre.<sup>60</sup> But it would be incorrect to suggest that all historical films shot during these years revolved around Russian state heroes, insofar as some concerned Russian rebels (Pugachev), while others focused on non-Russian revolutionaries (Semen Karo, Amangel’dy Imanov, and others).<sup>61</sup> This dissonance probably relates to hesitation about the official line found throughout stalinist mass culture during this period. The State Film Committee, after all, was no more decisive than the editors at *Oktiabr’*, or other officials elsewhere in the state publishing industry. Official reading lists published as late as 1940 iconoclastically placed titles popularizing historic Russian state-builders alongside those that concerned peasant rebels.<sup>62</sup> Ignoring the obvious contradictions and inconsistencies in this so-called historical-patriotic genre, editors and officials throughout the USSR waited for initiative from above, lobbying only for expansions in production.<sup>63</sup> Katerina Clark has found this ungainly situation in the arts to be epitomized by a 1938 *Literaturnaia gazeta* editorial calling for new writing on themes as implausibly diverse as “the Battle on the River Kalka, Arctic explorers, Alexander Nevsky, and a brigade of border guards.”<sup>64</sup> Such an awkward duality suggests that although russocentrism should be thought of as an increasingly dominant theme of the pre-war period, the transition from proletarian internationalism to national Bolshevism was surprisingly slow and halting. Even within the newly populist party hierarchy, Stalin and his entourage apparently hesitated about how far the official line’s russocentric etatism should be allowed to go.

*Izvestiia*’s review of *Peter the First* cited above indicates that museums and public expositions were just as involved in the celebration of the usable past as film and the belles lettres. In Moscow, for example, the Tret’iakov Gallery opened a massive art exhibit in early 1939 devoted to Russian historical themes, a show that *Literaturnaia gazeta* described as having been mounted in light of “the workers’ enormous interest in history, particu-

larly the heroic past of the Russian people.” Months of preparation had gone into the exhibit’s planning, during which time paintings and other works of art were borrowed from permanent collections all over the USSR.<sup>65</sup> Although it was Aleksandr Nevskii, Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, and other cult figures who benefited the most from this mobilization of oil, watercolor, and sculpture, many other national-historical themes received attention in the exhibition as well. As with the Pushkin commemoration two years earlier, the use of art in service of the state did not necessarily depreciate the aesthetic value of what was on display. Moreover, never before had such an array of masterpieces been exhibited together at one time, canvases alone ranging from V. M. Vasnetsov’s *The Epic Heroes* and Repin’s *Ivan the Terrible’s Murder of His Own Son* to M. I. Peskov’s *Citizen Minin’s Call to the Nizhnii Novgorodians*, G. I. Ugriumov’s *The Triumphant Entrance of Aleksandr Nevskii into Pskov*, V. I. Surikov’s *The Subjugation of Siberia* and *The Morning of the Strel’tsy’s Execution*, V. V. Vereshchagin’s *The Conclusion to the Battle of Borodino*, and A. E. Kotsebu’s *Victory at Poltava* and *The 1760 Capture of Berlin*.<sup>66</sup> This grand spectacle was complemented by countless other exhibits of a more modest size and scale. An installation devoted to *The Tale of Igor’s Host* at the Moscow Literary Museum attracted three thousand visitors in its first week and a half alone in October of 1938.<sup>67</sup> Across town, the State Historical Museum featured an exhibit concerning medieval Novgorod, replete with references to Aleksandr Nevskii.<sup>68</sup> Such cultural events, in turn, were matched by purely populist amusements. During the winter of 1938 *Uchitel’skaia gazeta* published a picture of life-sized ice sculptures of Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, and other epic heroes that were on display in Moscow’s Sokol’niki Park.<sup>69</sup>

In Leningrad, the State Ethnographic Museum highlighted prominent themes from Russian political and cultural history as well, a practice that tended to implicitly contrast Russian development with non-Russian underdevelopment. Museum advertisements from 1938 reveal that collections focusing on non-Russian cultures drew attention to the primitivism of these peoples’ traditional agricultural implements and dress, while other, more centrally located museum exhibits celebrated the “progressive” qualities of Russian state-building and culture.<sup>70</sup> A similar syndrome affected an exhibition across the river at the Hermitage called “The Russian People’s Martial Past.” As the title of the show suggests, the exhibit tended to conflate the Russian and Soviet historical experiences. Its official guidebook noted that “in the past, much like today, the Russian people

have had to wage just wars against foreign invaders who try to shatter the unity and inviolability of our motherland.” Perhaps concerned about the apparent exclusivity of the exhibit, *Pravda* published a photograph of the show in late 1938 that depicted a massive bust of Suvorov surrounded by an ethnically mixed group of onlookers.<sup>71</sup>

Across the Neva, Pushkin’s historic Moika canal residence was celebrating the second anniversary of its opening as a public institution devoted to the memory of the “great Russian poet.” Unacknowledged was the hasty restoration of the building to its status as a museum only late in 1936 after suffering the indignity of being partitioned into communal apartments during the giddy days of the Cultural Revolution in 1929.<sup>72</sup> In the wake of this renovation, unlucky Soviets in cities all across the USSR were evicted from their apartments and schools as authorities took similar steps to sanctify Pushkin, turning places where the poet had spent the night or drank a cup of tea into shrines to the “founder of the Russian literary language.”<sup>73</sup> Because relatively few structures connected with Pushkin’s life and works were still to be found within the Moscow city limits, the decision was made to affix his name to unrelated but otherwise prominent landmarks, including a museum, a major thoroughfare and an embankment. Leningrad party officials followed suit, rechristening Birzhevaia Square and a drama theater in his honor. Nearby towns—Ostankino and the former Tsarskoe Selo—became Pushkinskoe and Pushkin, respectively.<sup>74</sup> A veritable wave of similar renamings emanated outward from the center to the periphery.<sup>75</sup>

Within this whirl of famous names and legendary reputations, monuments at times almost seem to have become actors in the historically charged pageantry. In 1937, A. M. Opekushin’s famous 1880 statue to Pushkin in Moscow was pivoted 180° to look out over the newly widened Gor’kii Street, the figure literally turning its back on the Strastnoi Monastery, which it had faced for over half a century. More stunning, though, was the same statue’s rededication earlier that year, in which V. A. Zhukovskii’s cautious original inscription was supplanted by the following stanza from Pushkin’s “*Exegi monumentum* [Unto Myself I Erected a Monument]”: “Rumor of my fame will sweep across great Rus’ / And my name will resound in every language that they speak / By the proud grandson of the Slavs, the Finn, the still savage / Tunguz, and the friend of the steppe—the Kalmyk.”<sup>76</sup> That such a paternalistic, colonialist vision of the Romanov empire—of an imperial expanse of western Finns, southern nomads, and small peoples of the north united culturally by the Rus-

sian people—could come to be considered compatible with Soviet ideology speaks volumes about the russocentric tenor of the times. Nevertheless, these lines became an official mantra of sorts during the last years of the decade.

Of course, such renovations did not focus on Pushkin and poetry alone. As monuments came to be seen as effective mobilizational symbols during the mid- to late 1930s, this understanding necessitated the restoration of many landmarks that had been neglected since the revolution. As John Dunlop narrates: “first to be refurbished were great battlefields, such as Poltava and Borodino. Monuments to heroes of the Patriotic War [of 1812], such as General Bagration and General Kutuzov, were restored, as were monuments at Kulikovo field. Tolstoi’s estate, Iasnaia Poliana, was opened to tourists, as was the Trinity-Sergius Monastery, a major religious shrine. Pilgrimages were then sponsored to these newly opened sites.”<sup>77</sup> As this process was getting under way, *Pravda* assailed those responsible for letting the landmarks deteriorate during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Apparently in need of a scapegoat, a writer there ranted about “enemies of the people” who had spread “national nihilism” under the guise of militant internationalism.<sup>78</sup> Of course, it should be noted that not *all* tsarist-era monuments were remounted atop their physical (and symbolic) pedestals during these years. Although *Pravda* was prepared to scold Mozhaisk authorities in Moscow province for sending a statue of Bagration to the smelters in 1932, no one was reprimanded for the scraping of famous statues of Tsar Alexander III and General M. D. Skobelev in 1918.<sup>79</sup> Nor, for that matter, did anyone mourn the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, dynamited unceremoniously in 1931.<sup>80</sup> Legacies of nineteenth-century tsarist populism like K. Ton’s cathedral, it seems, did not qualify for rehabilitation, nor did representatives of the old order who had waged war against revolutionary movements during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, 1856—the end of the Crimean War—seems to mark a chronological cutoff point after which no tsarist hero could be amnestied during the prewar period.

If ultimately quite selective in its choice of themes and symbols, the national Bolshevik “reinvention of tradition” in all spheres of education and mass culture was startlingly large in scale during the second half of the 1930s. Unfolding less according to grand design than as a result of historical contingency, the evolution of the line at times seems remarkably ad hoc in nature and really only stabilized late in the decade.

Three categories of imagery seem to have been either improvised or distilled from the prerevolutionary usable past by the end of the interwar period. First, concrete prerevolutionary historical dates, events, and heroes were popularized. Exceptions aside, they were primarily drawn from the annals of the Russian state school of historiography and celebrated etatist themes dealing with the formation and maintenance of the Romanov empire as well as its Muscovite and Kievan predecessors. Hegelian elements of the reigning Marxist-Leninist ideology were emphasized to allow for the foregrounding of such decisive personalities as Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Peter the Great, and Ivan the Terrible, who had supposedly grasped the “progressive” opportunities offered by their respective epochs and social orders.<sup>81</sup>

Second, the Russian people were heralded as the “first among equals.” Related to the valorization of individual Russian state-builders, propaganda concerning the Russian people as a whole ranged from the simple acknowledgment of their role in the construction of the state to a more chauvinistic focus on their supposedly advanced cultural standing and inherent “elder brother” status vis-à-vis the non-Russian peoples. Requiring considerable spin control on a Marxist ideological level, this privileging of the Russian people was finessed by selective references to a few of Lenin’s lesser-known writings.<sup>82</sup>

A third phenomenon closely connected with the more exaggerated dimensions of prewar russocentrism could be referred to as stalinist Orientalism.<sup>83</sup> A corollary to the Hegelian identification of the Russian ethnicity as a “historical people” composed of famous state-builders, this dynamic suggested that the non-Russian peoples lacked a similar pedigree. Political history, in this sense, ceased to be something that all societies possess and became the exclusive province of the Russian people. Not only were political and military innovators seen as uniformly Russian, but Russians came to exemplify progress in the cultural sphere as well, with non-Russians epitomizing only traditionalism. Beloved institutions, from Leningrad’s State Ethnographic Museum to the Moscow metro and the All-Union Agricultural Exposition, effectively illustrate the point: although such exhibits waxed rhapsodic about many individual Soviet peoples’ cultural heritage, non-Russians were collectively cast as if frozen in time, forever clad in furs and exotic premodern textiles and surrounded with obsolete tools and field implements.<sup>84</sup> Only Russian culture stretched forward in time into the Soviet period.<sup>85</sup> Patronizing rather than intentionally disrespectful, this juxtaposition was repeated in the print media’s treatment of non-

Russian bards like Dzhambul and Sulciman Stalskii, as well as in the silver screen's casting of the Dagestani lead Musaib Gatuev in *The Swine-Tender and the Shepherd*.<sup>86</sup> Orientalist in the sense that these representations depicted an exaggerated gap in cultural development between Russians and non-Russians, they lent convenient justification to the evolving "first-among-equals" paternalism inherent within prewar Soviet mass culture.

## 6 The Popular Reception of National Bolshevism on the Eve of War

In January 1939 the theater critic V. I. Blium wrote to Stalin in despair: “the character of Soviet patriotism has . . . been distorted and nowadays is sometimes beginning to display all the characteristics of racial nationalism . . . [Our people] don’t understand that we ought to beat the fascist enemy not with his own weapon (racism), but with one that is far superior—internationalist socialism.” Protesting against the rise of russocentrism and the rehabilitation of old regime heroes during the late 1930s, Blium was extremely critical of Soviet mass culture’s increasing reliance on imagery that he termed “racist, chauvinist poison.”<sup>1</sup> A communist idealist, Blium believed that such developments amounted to an ideological about-face, if not a total betrayal of the revolution.

What is remarkable about Blium’s letter—aside from its being written in the first place—is that it provides a rare glimpse of how some Soviet citizens reacted to the emergence of national Bolshevism during the mid- to late 1930s. Full of emotion and acute observation, the letter also reveals extraordinary naïveté. A fascinating document, it is precisely the sort of source that warns of the risk of analyzing Stalin-era ideology without casting adequate attention toward its reception both among elites and on the popular level. After all, not only do audiences rarely accept ideological pronouncements wholesale, but they also tend to simplify, essentialize, and misunderstand the content of official communiqués in ways that are difficult to anticipate. Such dynamics make the analysis of popular reception an essential dimension of any study of propaganda and ideology in the modern world.

Investigating the resonance that national Bolshevism elicited among Russian speakers on the eve of the war, this chapter examines an array

of letters, diaries, and secret police reports from the 1930s in search of glimpses of Soviet popular opinion.<sup>2</sup> Triangulated against one another and assembled into a textual mosaic of sorts, these fragmentary and impressionistic accounts reveal that the popular reaction to changes in the official line was every bit as idiosyncratic as Blium's. Admittedly anecdotal, this approach would nevertheless seem to be the most methodologically rigorous, empirical way of treating the issue of Stalin-era popular opinion,<sup>3</sup> insofar as there are no comparable alternatives—whether theoretical or quantitative—that can assess and characterize popularly held sentiments among Russian speakers with a greater degree of reliability during the pre-war period.<sup>4</sup>

In her recent monograph on Soviet popular opinion, Sarah Davies argues that before the mid-1930s, Russian national identity on the mass level was “defined in implicit opposition to other groups such as Jews and Armenians, but was usually not articulated in a more positive way.” Elaborating on this analysis, she explains that “there was little notion of what Russian-ness meant for ordinary workers and peasants,” at least not in concrete, tangible terms.<sup>5</sup> Davies notes that the Soviet state attempted to rally this population after 1937 with what she terms “Russian nationalist imagery,” but she leaves the issue unproblematized, averring that it requires further research.<sup>6</sup>

Viewed within the context of the larger ideological trends examined above, the emergence of russocentric imagery in 1937 seems to have stemmed from the party hierarchy's long-standing interest in promoting not only state authority and legitimacy but also a mass sense of patriotic loyalty within Soviet society. Many of the diverse ideological dynamics of this period ultimately relate to this new sense of national Bolshevism within Stalin's entourage. But as inconsistent and hesitant as official rhetoric was during this time, some of the society's most acute observers were already beginning to sense the general direction in which Soviet ideology was headed by the mid-1930s. Some saw a growing celebration of state power and authority in the gradual reappearance of uniforms, epaulettes, and hierarchy in Soviet society.<sup>7</sup> Others found hints of the new line in the gradual reappearance of terms like “patriotism” in the press. According to a letter from Moscow published in the Mensheviks' Parisian *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, an entirely new atmosphere swept through the Soviet capital in 1935 on the eve of a state visit by an important French envoy:

They talk about it in Soviet institutions, factory smoking rooms, student dormitories, and commuter trains . . . it's a sense of *national pride*. *Russia* has again become a Great Power and even such powerful states as France desire her friendship . . . Narrow-minded bureaucrats in Soviet institutions who have long been quiet now confidently talk of national patriotism, of Russia's historic mission, and of the reviving of the old Franco-Russian alliance, [notions] that are greeted approvingly by their Communist directors . . . There is clear panic among Communist idealists.<sup>8</sup>

Framing the changes under way in traditionalist terms reminiscent of Timasheff's "great retreat" metaphor, this letter's author implicitly contrasted the new Russian Great Power ethic of the mid-1930s with the revolutionary proletarian internationalism of the 1920s. Other accounts of the time betray similar etatist suspicions.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the proximity of their professional lives to the official line, members of the creative intelligentsia devoted considerable time and energy to attempting to anticipate the direction in which it was headed. As noted earlier, scholars like the historian Romanov correctly sensed in the mid-1930s that a focus on imperial Russia's "gathering of peoples" would be part of the new orthodoxy. But if some successfully discerned what priorities lay behind the developing line, its ambiguous, shifting nature caught many others unawares. Bukharin had to be publicly scolded in early 1936 for referring to Russians before 1917 as a colonialist "nation of Oblomovs." Bulgakov narrowly averted disaster when his *Ivan Vasil'evich* satire was canceled before it could open in the spring of that year. Later in 1936, Bednyi's operatic farce about mythological Russian heroes cost its author his career. Unmistakable is the impression that even the most savvy within the Soviet intellectual elite were finding the orientation of the emerging line difficult to gauge; secret police reports indicate that only with Bednyi's denunciation did the creative intelligentsia begin to realize the perils of engaging in "insulting depictions of our country's past."<sup>10</sup> K. F. Shteppa, teaching at the time at Kiev State University, recalled later, "The cases of Demian Bedny and N. Bukharin indicate that the shift on the historical front was the beginning of a new era in the official world view. It was a swerve toward Russian patriotism—not only toward the justification but the canonization of the Russian historical past [and] toward a cult of [the] people's heroes."<sup>11</sup>

While some may have managed to approximate the dimensions of the new line from the scandals of the mid-1930s, Soviet society as a whole had to wait until September 1937 for the definitive statement on this ideological turnabout: Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR*. Disingenuously lauded in the official press for its presentation of the history of all the Soviet peoples, the textbook's russocentrism had bothered Zatonskii already during its drafting stage. Similar objections were raised after its subsequent release. A Magnitogorsk student named G. Kh. Bikbulatov, for instance, found this aspect of the text to be sufficiently frustrating to justify a letter to Shestakov himself in the spring of 1938:

The textbook is entitled *A History of the Peoples of the USSR*, but according to its contents it is nevertheless not a history of the peoples . . . The conquering of one region after another by the Russian autocracy is shown in the textbook, as is the incorporation of various national states like the Caucasus and eastern ones in chronological order. But in order to successfully present the history of the peoples of the USSR, it is necessary to direct some [more] attention to this question, particularly considering when textbooks on the peoples of the USSR will be compiled.<sup>12</sup>

But if Bikbulatov wanted a more diffuse, multidimensional treatment of the region's peoples and cultures, others welcomed the ideological sea change. Shestakov received massive amounts of mail relating to the project, much of which was congratulatory.<sup>13</sup> Even more telling is the fact that while Bikbulatov was addressing his critique to Shestakov, D. P. Petrov, a commander in the army reserves, was denouncing two orientalists—A. I. Artaruni and S. L. Vel'dman—to the Red Army's Political Directorate. Objecting to their apparently Pokrovskiiian reading of Russian history, Petrov accused them of maligning “the Russian historical process in general, the process of the Russian state's formation, and the will of the Russian working class, which has transformed [the Russian state] into the Soviet Union and the motherland of Socialism.”<sup>14</sup> Petrov saw the new official line for what it was: the revival of the Russian national past was to confer a sense of legitimacy and pedigree to the Soviet experiment that the Pokrovskiiian historiography had failed to do during the 1920s.

The ambiguity of the situation during these years makes Petrov's analysis more perceptive than it might seem at first. If some quickly grasped the implications of the ongoing valorization of Russian history and culture,

many others initially resisted it, despite the russocentric rhetoric in the press, which had been increasingly prominent since the Pushkin commemoration of early 1937. A certain Girfand's question at a Leningrad lecture revealed typical concerns about the emerging line: "Recently, in an array of journalistic articles about Suvorov, he has been referred to as a people's hero [*narodnyi geroi*]. Without doubt, Suvorov was a brilliant military leader who never experienced defeat, but at the same time he was himself an instrument of tsarist policy in Europe, the Gendarme of Europe policy. So is it really right to call him a people's hero?"<sup>15</sup> Equally instructive are the comments of the Leningrad province school inspector Karpova, who objected to the new way history was being taught in 1937. A communist idealist, Karpova disapproved of the indiscriminate rehabilitation of the prerevolutionary past, complaining in particular about the populist, heroic representation of the old ruling classes. The medieval prince Sviatoslav, for instance, "was being depicted in an array of schools as a superior prince who slept with his soldiers, ate with his soldiers, etc.—the children speak of him with such high praise that it is simply outrageous [*vozmutil'no*]."<sup>16</sup>

The party hierarchy's unwillingness—or inability—to clarify the exact dimensions of the official line meant that such confusion would persist for quite some time, even after 1937.<sup>17</sup> The description of a dispute on a crowded Moscow-bound train in early 1938 recorded in the diary of M. M. Prishvin provides one of the most interesting glimpses of the dissonance that this new line was causing on the popular level:

somewhere in the stench [of the train car] there was a marvelous choir singing an ancient Russian song. This song tugged at the heart-strings of many of the simple folk [aboard], some crooning along, some keeping quiet, some snoring, some singing quietly to themselves, [an effect that was] not only not distracting, but indeed intensified the power of the song. It was as if the entire people sang. During a pause between songs, before the beginning of a new one, a somewhat tipsy fellow said out loud:

"You sing well, but it's all old stuff—he who thinks of the past is a fool [*kto staroe pomianet, tomu glaz von*]."

From the choir came the answer: "But he who forgets the past is a bigger fool [*A kto staroe zabudet, tomu dva glaza von*]."

"But you're wrong in saying that," said the first guy. "We need

cheerfulness for our new way of life and look what you're doing: you're resurrecting the past. Forget the past."

"What about Pushkin?" asked a new voice.

This stymied the partisan of the new ways for a moment, but he quickly recovered: "Pushkin was an isolated case. Pushkin managed to foresee our time way back then and stood for it. He was an exception."

"And Lomonosov?"

"Also an exception."

"No, that's already the second, and then you can't forget Peter the First—a third."

And on and on they counted—pure logic. A feeling of discomfort swept through the train car: it was clear to everyone that Pushkin was not an exception and that one could not forget one's folk songs. But someone had raised the question and since he had, it was necessary to find a way out—the issue was no longer one of pure logic. Just then the choir led into the song "This Native Country of Mine" and everyone joined in eagerly, the song being familiar to one and all. But by then, the culprit couldn't hear it, as he was already asleep. After that, they sang a new song about Stalin and then a military march that everyone knew. And they happily sang all the way to Moscow.<sup>18</sup>

Indicative of popular confusion on the mass level, Prishvin's account also illustrates the eagerness with which many Russian speakers in Soviet society were embracing the rehabilitation of names from the Russian national past. Beloved members of the newly integrated Soviet pantheon of heroes like Pushkin, Lomonosov, and Peter had apparently found their way into the public's imagination as forward-looking Red Russian hybrids.

Perhaps some of Prishvin's fellow travelers had recently seen the film *Peter the First* or read the epic novel by A. N. Tolstoi upon which it had been based. For many in the 1930s, Tolstoi's approachable and engaging treatment of the Petrine era provided their first introduction to the rich canon of literary and artistic representations of Russia's first emperor. That said, audiences sometimes found Petrov's cinematic treatment of Peter to be somewhat disconcerting, insofar as this grandiose, legendary, heroic narrative followed in the wake of twenty years of Soviet propaganda that had represented the old regime as dark, exploitative, and corrupt. Some were disturbed enough after the film's release to interrupt Shestakov during public lectures to ask him what *he* thought of it.<sup>19</sup> Others, like John Scott,

an American engineer in Magnitogorsk, mistook *Peter the First* for a Western import, owing to the iconoclastic nature of its subject matter.<sup>20</sup>

But for many, the film's dramatic, sweeping approach to the national past was an appealing one. When the film was shown in the Nurlatsk district outside Kazan' in 1938, some eight thousand collective farmers streamed to makeshift theaters to see it.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps because of the film, a regimental commissar named Otianovskii reported during that year that Tolstoi's novel had been the only book he had found the time to read in many months. Interest in Peter's exploits among workers at Leningrad's Putilov factory and Moscow's Kaganovich Ball-Bearing Factory may likewise be attributable to the film.<sup>22</sup> But perhaps the best evidence of the profound impact that *Peter the First* had on its audiences is the fact that almost fifteen years after its premiere, interviewees with the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System still considered the film to be one of the most memorable feature releases of the Soviet cinematic industry.<sup>23</sup>

As impressive as *Peter the First* was, it was quickly followed by an even more important work in the same patriotic genre: Eisenstein's *Aleksandr Nevskii*.<sup>24</sup> Although it is sometimes argued that films with everyday subject matter, such as G. V. Aleksandrov's *Circus* and *Volga-Volga*, eclipsed their more explicitly propagandistic rivals during the mid-1930s, the return of the Russian historical hero somewhat later in the decade gave new life to the Soviet political cinema.<sup>25</sup> *Aleksandr Nevskii* drew record audiences—V. S. Ivanov, the director of Moscow's Art Cinema, told a newspaper correspondent that “not since the days of *Chapaev* has there been such an enormous flood of viewers.”<sup>26</sup> Far away in the town of Shakhty, an amateur correspondent wrote that long lines were forming every day outside the local movie theater hours before the ticket office would even open. Twenty-one thousand people in this sleepy provincial center had apparently seen the film during the first seven days of its run.<sup>27</sup> In Moscow, tickets remained virtually impossible to obtain for weeks after the film's premiere.<sup>28</sup>

*Vecherniaia Moskva* ran stories regarding *Aleksandr Nevskii* almost daily in late November and early December of 1938, one detailing what audience members had had to say about the film. This commentary illustrates in rich terms the extent to which russocentrism was becoming an intrinsic element of a greater sense of Soviet patriotism:

The film touched me to the depths of my soul. It is a genuine masterpiece [*shedevr*] of Soviet cinematography. The unforgettable “Battle

on the Ice" episode characterizes the patriotism of the Russian people, their unwavering bravery, and their deep love for their motherland. [Comrade Shliakhov, Red Army officer]

The greatness of the ideas and the grandiose nature of their staging make the film one of the best means of mobilizing our people in the struggle with those who in 1938 have forgotten the "subtle" lessons

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Newspaper advertisement for *Aleksandr Nevskii*, by S. M. Eisenstein, P. A. Pavlenko, and D. M. Vasil'ev. (*Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 4, 1938, 4)

of the year 1242. May the contemporary “mongrel knights” remember the tragic and shameful role played by their forefathers, the “crusader-scum” [*krestonosnye svolochi*]! [P. Lunin, engineer]

“Whosoever comes to us with the sword shall perish by the sword.” These words of Aleksandr Nevskii’s, pronounced seven hundred years ago, are relevant even now. We will answer every blow of the enemy with a triple-blow. The Russian people have [always] beaten their enemies, are beating them [now], and will continue to beat them. [Comrade Galotov, metalworker in the Gorbunov factory]<sup>29</sup>

Statements like Galotov’s suggest that one measure of the enduring impact of *Aleksandr Nevskii* could be the extent to which imagery and aphorisms from the film were assimilated into the *mentalité* of the era. In one case, after Leningrad teacher E. E. Kozlova finished describing Nevskii’s 1242 defeat of the Teutonic Knights, children from her class announced with confidence that if any enemies “are brave enough to attack our Union, we’ll give them a Battle on the Ice or even worse.”<sup>30</sup> Analogous sentiments were voiced by students outside a Moscow movie theater: “*Aleksandr Nevskii* is a menacing [*groznoe*] warning to the fascist aggressors whose forefathers were so thoroughly beaten by the Russian people. If the enemy attacks, he’ll be even more devastatingly rebuffed than the ‘mongrel knights’ were on the ice of Lake Chud’.”<sup>31</sup> A similar tendency appears in congratulatory correspondence sent to Eisenstein himself. Addressing the director with the ancient Slavic word for an epic hero—*bogatyr*—a sailor named V. Bunin wrote, “I’ve learned from *Pravda* about your victory over the ‘mongrel knights.’ I am very glad. I send you my congratulations and my Red Army greeting from the harsh shores of the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>32</sup>

Shaping contemporary Russian speakers’ use of language and metaphor, *Aleksandr Nevskii* also influenced their taste in cinematic subject and genre. Consider in this connection an account of the film written by a Russian worker from Central Asia named I. A. Sudnikov, whose semi-literate impressions are poignant enough to be quoted at length:

There are lines at the ticket windows . . . Many have gone to the movie several times in order to watch this notable cinematic page from the history of our motherland’s distant past again and again.

This is not coincidental. Our country’s best directors have created an unusually brilliant, truthful representation of the Russian people,

defending their right to independence against the middle ages' mongrel-knight feudal lords, the relatives of today's fascists.

This profoundly well-thought-out historical film opens up before us the pages of the history of what was and awakens within us a feeling of pride that strengthens [our resolve] to defend our independence forever.

. . . We need such films. I, for one, as an audience member, consider it impermissible to stop with *Aleksandr Nevskii*. It would not hurt to move toward the production of films on the subject of "The 1812 Invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte," "The Sevastopol' Campaign of 1856" [sic], "The Battle of Kulikovo Field," "The Battle of the Kalka," "The Invasion of Batyi," "Tamerlane's March," etc.

Seconded by a variety of other voices, such calls were answered in surprisingly short order.<sup>33</sup> As noted above, *Ruslan and Liudmila* and *Minin and Pozharskii* were released in 1939, with *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* and *Suvorov* following two years later.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, this cinematic celebration of the Russian national past ultimately came to influence the depiction of Soviet-era subjects as well. A description by schoolboy Iurii Baranov of 1941's *Chkalov* reveals that although this film could easily have depicted its test-pilot hero according to contemporary "man versus machine" aesthetics, it instead relied upon national folkloric tropes popularized by *Aleksandr Nevskii*: "From the first frame it was possible to sense a certain uniqueness to the film—finally it became clear: in the picture Chkalov was cast as an Old Russian epic hero. The picture was filled with that fairy tale romanticism . . . The tone was convincing and the picture unforced. I liked it."<sup>35</sup> Complementing other sorts of official rhetoric in circulation in the mid- to late 1930s, the *Nevskii* genre of patriotic historical cinema had obviously captured the public's imagination. Maya Turovskaya probably only slightly overstates the case when she asserts that the film's "costumed fairy tale heroes" Vas'ka Buslai and Gavriilo Oleksich even replaced Chapaev late in the decade at the center of children's playground games.<sup>36</sup>

Museum exhibitions evoked many of the same patriotic emotions. Characteristic is V. I. Vernadskii's account of his visit to the Moscow Literary Museum in November 1938 to see an exhibit concerning *The Tale of Igor's Host*. Reflecting on the throngs of people who had lined up to learn about this medieval Russian epic, he wrote that the scene "was not only a strident demonstration of a heightened sense of national pride, but [a sign] of the people's cultural upbringing in a spirit of national patrio-

tism.”<sup>37</sup> Put another way, Vernadskii was crediting Soviet mass culture with stimulating much of the popular interest and engagement he had witnessed at the exhibit.

Although the *Igor' Tale* exhibit attracted thousands of visitors a week during the fall of 1938,<sup>38</sup> it was soon upstaged by the opening of an exhibition at the Tret'iakov Gallery devoted to the artistic representation of themes from Russian history. A massive, long-running event, it drew enormous crowds in 1939 with its vast collection of works by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century masters like Vasnetsov and Vereshchagin. Illuminating historic events from the earliest days of medieval Kiev up to the valorous deeds of the Crimean War, the collection's focus on Russia national themes then faded—rather predictably—after 1856.<sup>39</sup>

A major event in the cultural life of the Soviet capital, the show is even mentioned in personal correspondence between members of the creative intelligentsia.<sup>40</sup> Yet at least as indicative of the show's popular reception are the comments left by more or less ordinary people in the official visitors' book associated with the exhibition. Most visible in these inscriptions are signs that the show encouraged the conflation of the Russian national past with the Soviet present. Engineering students from the Moscow Aviation Institute, for instance, noted in March 1939 that the show “helped us to reinforce our grasp over the history of our state's development.”<sup>41</sup> A similar misunderstanding about whose history was on display apparently scripted the comments made by a group of students from the Timiriachev Agricultural Institute, insofar as they claimed that the inspiring Russian imagery “will drive us to study the history of the peoples of the USSR with even more depth and determination.”<sup>42</sup> Such comments speak to the popular acceptance of an official line that had streamlined the prerevolutionary history of the Soviet peoples into a single, linear russocentric narrative.

But at the same time that the exhibit reinforced elements of the official line, it also set up a historical paradox that frustrated certain visitors, as is evident from an inscription left by a group of provincial delegates in March 1939. Struck by the power of the exhibition, these minor officials struggled to reconcile the accomplishment of the artwork with the fact that many of the pieces had been commissioned during the most reactionary years of the nineteenth century. How could such patriotic art have flourished under the repressive regimes of Alexander III and Nicholas II? Finessing a separation of the art from its historical context, the delegates noted solemnly that “this exhibit of Russian historical painting produces

an extraordinarily deep (strong) impression. It testifies to the enormous culture and talent of the Russian people, who managed to create artistic masterpieces even within the obscurantism of the tsarist autocracy."<sup>43</sup>

If some struggled with certain aspects of the exhibition,<sup>44</sup> many others accepted the show's presentation uncritically, experiencing the same feelings of national pride that Vernadskii reported witnessing at the *Igor' Tale* exhibit. A good illustration of the emotional resonance the exhibit evoked is drawn from a December 1939 diary entry of an eighteen-year-old schoolgirl named Nina Kosterina:

Last night, as I walked home from the exhibit through the center of the city, along Red Square, past the Kremlin, past the old spot where executions took place, past St. Basil's Cathedral, I suddenly felt again a sort of deep kinship with the paintings at the exhibit. I am a Russian [*Ia—ruskaia*]. At first this frightened me—were these, perhaps, chauvinistic stirrings within me? No, chauvinism is foreign to me, but at the same time, I am a Russian. As I looked at Antokol'skii's magnificent sculptures of Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible, I was swept with pride: these people were Russians. And Repin's *The Zaporozhian Cossacks*?! And Kotsebu's *The Russians in the Alps*?! And Aivazovskii's *The Battle of Chesme*, Surikov's *The Boiarynia Morozova*, and *The Morning of the Strel'tsy's Execution*—this is Russian history, the history of my forefathers.<sup>45</sup>

Remarkably, Kosterina's russocentric—if not patently nativist—reaction had been stimulated by a show designed to bolster the authority and pedigree of the state, something that speaks volumes about the impact that Soviet mass culture and public education had during these years. A "strident demonstration of a heightened sense of national pride," in Vernadskii's words, it doubtlessly owed much to "the people's upbringing in a spirit of national patriotism" since 1937.

Perhaps the only unusual aspect of Kosterina's diary entry is her concern that her newfound sense of national identity might belie more chauvinistic feelings. Such fears do not seem to have been common in Soviet society of the late 1930s, perhaps because hints of condescension vis-à-vis the non-Russian peoples were part and parcel of the society's increasingly pervasive russocentrism. Of course, the new line did not necessarily reduce the visibility of the non-Russian peoples in Soviet mass culture. Instead, a shift in focus emphasized the exotic and archaic aspects of their local cultures in a way that obliquely reinforced the Russian people's new status as the "first

among equals.” Orientalist rhetoric of this sort had a predictable effect on its readers, as is effectively illustrated by the prominent writer V. P. Stavskii. Jotting in his diary in 1938 while at a session of the Soviet of Nationalities, Stavskii mused: “So many new people have been raised up by the Party. Bilya [Mistishokhova] from Kabarda is sitting in the back. Her face is dark and dusky, and her hair is pinned up in braids around her head. The slightly slanted eyes and characteristic thin lips—all the signs of her nationality. But she’s wearing a fashionable gray *European* suit, with an Order of Lenin and a Deputy’s badge displayed on her chest.” A week later, Stavskii’s description of Mistishokhova again focused on the collective farmer’s foreign appearance and exotic origins: “She’s muscular and tall. The slightly slanting eyes, the cheekbones a little high in her face—there they are, all the signs of her nationality. She’s wearing a short jacket and a long, loosely-fitting black dress made of thin silk. And what a figure! Her legs are a little too big, though they’re strong and sturdy. Bilya has sure spent a lot of time on horseback.”<sup>46</sup> Naive and patronizing (as well as more than a bit lecherous), Stavskii was nevertheless more generous than K. I. Chukovskii, a beloved children’s author, who had been disparaging non-Russian cultures in his diary for several years. In one particularly telling example, Chukovskii—apparently disappointed over the lack of Russian folk dancing at a Moscow children’s Olympiad—wrote scornfully of the “Tatar, Italian, and every other sort of ‘ethnic dance’ [*vsiakie drugie ‘gopaki’*]” that dominated the program.<sup>47</sup> More outspoken on this topic was the conductor S. A. Samosud, whom an informant overheard criticizing a Ukrainian dance troupe for having “no high, serious art” during a celebration of that republic’s culture in the Soviet capital. His colleague, M. I. Rostovtsev, was even more blunt, grumbling in regard to the authorities that “now in general they are praising and rewarding ethnics. They give medals to Armenians, Georgians, and Ukrainians—everyone except Russians.”<sup>48</sup>

But chauvinism of this sort was not restricted to the creative intelligentsia, of course. In a letter addressed to Zhdanov in 1938, a long-time worker in Leningrad urged the party leader to spend more time on the shop floor inspecting conditions in industry. “That,” he added derisively, “would be more useful than your presence at the academic theater in Moscow ([for a] *dekada* of Azerbaïdzhani art).”<sup>49</sup> Even more obnoxious was Milovanov, a soldier working in a Gorki garrison canteen in 1939, who served the Kazakh Khaibulaev only a half a bowl of borscht. When the latter protested, the former declared: “you are a Kazakh and that means half-human so I’ve given you what you deserve.”<sup>50</sup> To be sure, an element of

chauvinism had been present in Russian-speaking society since the tsarist era,<sup>51</sup> but as such examples indicate, the Orientalization of non-Russian cultures in the Soviet press tended to trivialize them in new ways that reinforced popular russocentrism. Perhaps most telling in this regard is an excerpt from the diary of the writer V. Vishnevskii, who sat down in 1940, apparently in an agitated state, to write about his fears regarding the coming war:

Russia and the USSR are going to have to fight to the death—this is not a European joke any more. [But] we are Russians, God damn it. We have beaten the Germans and Tatars and French and Brits [*Bristov*], and many others besides—we'd sooner die because it's not worth it to live otherwise. But we'll be fighting for ourselves, for the eternal 180-million-strong Russian people. ~~It's fine if the Ukrainians fight along side us—they're sturdy fellows . . . about the others, I can't say for sure . . .~~ [W]e're going to fight . . . We are an enormous and mighty nation, and we do not want to be subordinate [to anyone]. I know the West—I saw it. It sits like a damned splinter in my soul: I saw their whole civilization, all their delights and temptations . . . [E]xchange what is nationally and historically ours for the European standard? No way, not ever.

Apparently troubled by his own chauvinism, Vishnevskii crossed out the most patronizing passage in the entry himself. Despite this self-censorship, a militant sense of national pride, along with a tendency to conflate the Russian national past with the Soviet present, is visible throughout the rest of the entry.<sup>52</sup> Although only rarely expressed in such inflammatory terms, statements testifying to the special distinctiveness of the Russian ethnicity appear throughout the diaries of people like Prishvin and Vishnevskii during the mid- to late 1930s.<sup>53</sup>

Many of the accounts cited above suggest something important about Russian-speaking society's reception of the official line during the late 1930s: few seem to have understood that the regime's propagandists intended their national Bolshevik imagery and motifs to valorize state-building and not Russian nationalism, *per se*.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps overlooking other genres of increasingly routine party propaganda (internationalism, party-mindedness), these observers were struck—consciously or unconsciously—by the state's co-option of Russian heroes, myths, and iconography from the old regime. Perhaps this led some of them to conclude that the new ideological line was on the verge of sanctioning explicitly chauvinistic slogans like "Russia for the Russians!" Blium's misgivings about the

mass culture of the late 1930s, cited at the start of this chapter, perhaps best illustrate this miscommunication:

the character of Soviet patriotism has also been distorted and now-days is sometimes beginning to display all the characteristics of racial nationalism. It seems to me that this situation is all the more serious because the people of the new generations—those who have grown up within the context of Soviet culture and who have never “seen” for themselves the bourgeois [prerevolutionary] patriotism of the Guchkovs, Stolypins, and Miliukovs—simply cannot differentiate between these two sorts of patriotism. This all began (that is, in the arts, and in particular, in dramaturgy) with a search for “our” heroes of the bygone ages, a hasty, blind search for historical “analogies.” Publishing houses and the All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs are interested in all kinds of “anti-Polish” and “anti-German” material [these days], and authors are throwing themselves at the task of fulfilling this “social commission [*sotsial’nyi zakaz*].”<sup>55</sup>

Criticizing members of the creative intelligentsia like Eisenstein and Korneichuk for promoting “a simplistic, pseudosocialist *racism*,” Blium complained bitterly about Soviet mass culture’s apparent shift from internationalism to nationalism. Called upon to investigate the letter, an Agit-prop consultant named V. Stepanov concluded that Blium’s complaints were one-sided hyperbole and noted that he had failed to recognize the progressive aspects of the historical personalities being rehabilitated. Summoned to Agitprop for a dressing-down, Blium stubbornly refused to concede that the Soviet search for a usable past was justified in harnessing Russian state-builders from the tsarist era.<sup>56</sup>

Judging by the continuity of Soviet propaganda between 1939 and 1941, the party hierarchy dismissed such criticism with little hesitation.<sup>57</sup> Although a number of communist-idealists spoke out about the nativist aspects of Soviet mass culture during the spring and summer of 1939, this protest was silenced by such a stinging rebuke later that fall that evidence of further dissent is virtually impossible to find in the sources.<sup>58</sup> Then again, the official line was so well coordinated and sophisticated by the early 1940s that it is not clear how many would have objected in the first place.<sup>59</sup> Telling in this regard is a May 1941 entry in the diary of a Molotov metalworker named Gennadii Semenov: “I am presently reading *Dmitrii Donskoi*. It’s a good read. I read Vera Inber’s *Ovid*, which I liked. But just the same, I was more moved by *Dmitrii Donskoi*. In tense times like these, it’s as if one hears the voice of one’s distant forefathers.” Explicit in his

preference for a hero of the Russian national past over a beloved contemporary poet, Semenov found the historical allegory relevant to his life as a Soviet patriot. Evidence of how deeply influenced he was by the imagery in the historical novel can be found in another diary entry written a month later. Anxious about the threat of war on the eve of the German invasion, Semenov described fir trees he had seen swaying in the wind as “the sharp-tipped helmets of the Old Russian epic heroes . . . as if Dmitrii Donskoi’s clan was marching against Mamai’s horde.”<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in June 1941 acted to spur forward many of the russocentric and etatist themes maturing in the official line on the eve of the war. Molotov publicly compared the Nazi invasion to that of Napoleon’s in 1812. Ordinary Soviet citizens responded positively to such references, familiar with this rhetoric after several years of similar historical propaganda.<sup>61</sup> Statements like that of a certain Rumiantseva, an executive at the Tel’mán factory in Moscow, were not unusual: “No one will ever defeat our people. We know from history that the Russians have always emerged as the victors, although in those days there were rich and poor in Russia, while now, because all our people are equal, a truly popular political union has come about. This is a people that no one can defeat.”<sup>62</sup>

During the first months of the war, Russians’ prominent position in the multiethnic Soviet family of peoples changed little from the late prewar years. Early wartime appeals to Soviet patriotism tended to favor Russian-oriented themes, which received Stalin’s unambiguous endorsement during his Red Square speech on November 7, 1941.<sup>63</sup> Declaring that “you must draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors,” Stalin identified a number of exclusively Russian prerevolutionary heroes who were to define patriotic conduct during the war: Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz’ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov.<sup>64</sup> The popular reaction was dramatic, underscoring the success of prewar investments in historical agitation. A professor at Leningrad State University was overheard noting that “in his speech, Stalin was able to find precisely those words which awaken hope and stimulate a Russian’s best feelings and his love for the Motherland, and, what is especially important, [he found those words which] connect us with Russia’s past.” Another professor added that “in Stalin’s speech there is a stunning understanding of the spirit of the Russian people and a sense and knowledge of their history.” A worker at Moscow’s Svarz plant named P. S. Barkov made the observation in more simple, personal terms: “Com[rade]

Stalin reminded us of the names of the great Russian military commanders. They sounded like a rallying call, a battle cry for the annihilation of the occupiers.”<sup>65</sup>

Improvements in the party hierarchy’s ability to mobilize Soviet society for industrialization and war between 1937 and 1941 stemmed in large part from the popularization of a new historical narrative in the years after 1934. This was accomplished by interpolating traditional Russian heroes, myths, and symbols into a post-Pokrovskii Marxist narrative framework in which representatives of the prerevolutionary Russian order appeared alongside famous revolutionaries and more orthodox elements of the historical dialectic. Pragmatism, in other words, precipitated the construction of a russocentric, etatist usable past to advance ideals that remained at least partially socialist.<sup>66</sup>

But the evidence surveyed above also indicates that many in the late 1930s understood this national Bolshevik line to be expressed in much more exclusively russocentric terms than the party hierarchy necessarily intended. Unconcerned with the dissonance between the ideological line’s construction and its popular reception, Stalin, Zhdanov, and others may not have even grasped the dimensions of the inconsistency. To frame this miscommunication in the idiom of the day, if the official line was declared to be “national in form, socialist in content” and expressed in terms that were “national in form, *etatist* in content,” many in society understood the line to be “national in form, *nationalist* in content” because of the party’s unabashed trafficking in Russian heroes, myths, and iconography.

More than just a question of semantics, this miscommunication reveals something important about the nature of the popular reception of stalinist ideology as a whole. It is paradoxical, after all, that although the post-1934 historical line was quite successful in attracting and holding its audiences’ attention, the ideological content of this propaganda was only selectively assimilated. Russian national mythology (Nevskii, Peter, Pushkin, “the motherland,” and Russian ethnic primacy) was met with enthusiasm and comprehension, as were the personality cults of certain party leaders (Lenin, Stalin). More sophisticated and abstract elements of the official line, however—particularly the Marxist theory and state-building ethic in which these myths and heroes were contextualized—tended to be crudely essentialized, misunderstood, or ignored entirely.<sup>67</sup>

This dissonance between the party hierarchy’s construction of national Bolshevism and its popular reception is probably best explained as a func-

tion of the society's low level of education. Put most simply, although stalinist ideologists attempted to use a narrative composed mainly of russocentric imagery to promote etatism, Marxism-Leninism, and Soviet patriotism, many of this line's more philosophical dimensions were lost on its audiences. The fact that Russian speakers in Soviet society fully understood only the most familiar, prosaic dimensions of this narrative accounts for their almost exclusively russocentric reception of stalinist ideology.<sup>68</sup>

This, of course, is not to argue that the Stalin era's russocentrism struck some sort of a primordial chord with its audiences, summoning forth an age-old sense of Russian national identity that had lain dormant since the revolution. Indeed, in Chapter 1 I note that there is good reason to doubt that an articulate, wide-ranging sense of Russian national identity ever even existed on the popular level under the old regime. Instead, the evidence assembled here ultimately testifies to the unprecedented nature of Soviet accomplishments in the realm of propaganda late in the interwar period. Succeeding where the old regime had failed, the party hierarchy and creative intelligentsia not only synthesized an inconsistent corpus of traditional myths, legends, and folklore into a coherent, systematic usable past, but they also popularized this narrative through public education and mass culture.

That there was considerable public enthusiasm for the official line is evident from this chapter's survey of materials documenting the opinions of Soviet citizens from schoolchildren and Red Army soldiers to workers and the educated elite. Just as evident, however, is the fact that many of these people often found national Bolshevism to be appealing and persuasive on their own terms; indeed, if a general sense of patriotism was widespread during these years, it seems at times to have been founded on the misunderstanding that the party hierarchy's etatist intentions were actually Russian nationalist in essence.<sup>69</sup>

Despite this miscommunication, it is clear that the new line was compelling in terms that the party hierarchy did not find objectionable. In this sense, national Bolshevism functioned as a *modus vivendi* with Soviet society (or at least its Russian-speaking majority) on the eve of war. To be sure, some were clearly alienated by the official line's ethnic particularism, especially among communist-idealists and the non-Russian peoples.<sup>70</sup> But it was precisely the pragmatic, russocentric dimensions of this line that enabled Soviet society to mobilize for war in June 1941, displaying a sense of purpose and determination that would have been unimaginable just fourteen years earlier during the war scare of 1927.

**Part Two**  
**1941–1945**



## 7 Wartime Stalinist Ideology and Its Discontents

If many accounts testify to a massive escalation of russocentric propaganda in the USSR following the June 22, 1941, Nazi invasion, it would be a mistake to see this surge as the result of a comprehensive, coordinated effort. Instead, the pages of the central press during the first days and weeks of the war reveal a cacophony of contradictory rallying calls that were only gradually arranged into a more effective propaganda campaign.

What can explain the idiosyncrasies of the official line between 1941 and 1945? The answer to this question is a complicated one, in part because of the nature of the official line on the eve of the war. After all, an increasingly russocentric, etatist orientation had come to the fore in Soviet society during the mid- to late 1930s without ever fully breaking with the previous two decades of communist idealism and proletarian internationalism. This awkward balancing act within the national Bolshevik line represented an attempt on the part of the party hierarchy to popularize its etatist and Marxist-Leninist convictions with the help of a more accessible vocabulary of Russian national heroes, myths, and iconography.

But panic destabilized this peculiar ideological equilibrium after the German surprise attack in June 1941. Barbarossa's devastation forced party ideologists to scramble for potent new slogans at a time when there was little encouraging news to report from the front. Returning to their search for a usable past, Soviet ideologists quickly found themselves stymied by disagreements over how best to adapt the post-1937 line to the new wartime context. Fallout from the ideological dualism of the late 1930s, these disagreements belied an emergent schism within the ideological establishment that pitted moderates from the prewar period against a new breed of neonationalists.<sup>1</sup> This situation ultimately precipitated a series of open

conflicts among party propagandists and “court” historians—conflicts that threatened to fracture an official wartime line already characterized by major internal contradictions. This disarray within the Soviet ideological establishment would ultimately force the party hierarchy to intervene late in the war in an attempt to restore order to “the historical front.”

Beginning with a survey of propaganda during the first year of the war, this chapter then focuses tightly on the ideologists and historians responsible for its articulation. A story of factional infighting and ideological extremism, this analysis reveals the startling extent to which national Bolshevism divided Soviet propagandists after the start of the war. Such an investigation also explains how the zigzags within the ideological establishment between 1941 and 1943 ultimately evened out during the last two years of the war into a hegemonic party line that would outlast the stalinist period itself.

It should come as no great surprise that in the days and weeks following June 22, 1941, one of the principle objectives of Soviet propaganda organs was to reassure the Soviet public that the Red Army could cope with the German invasion. Official communiqués attempted to blunt the news of the surprise attack in a rather striking way, however. Molotov, for instance, announced by radio on the first day of hostilities: “This is not the first time that our people have been forced to deal with an arrogant enemy invader. Long ago our people responded to Napoleon’s campaign against Russia with a patriotic [*otechestvennaia*] war and Napoleon was defeated and came to his end. The same will happen with the vain Hitler, who is proclaiming a new campaign against our country. The Red Army and all of our people will once again lead a victorious patriotic war for our motherland, honor, and freedom.”<sup>2</sup> This statement, jointly drafted by Stalin, Molotov, and other members of the Politburo, indicates what sort of imagery was judged to be the most effective on the popular level during this time of crisis.<sup>3</sup> Within days of the start of the war, prominent historians were enlisted to detail the rich military history of the Soviet peoples throughout the ages, particularly Kutuzov’s routing of Napoleon in 1812 and Aleksandr Nevskii’s 1242 victory over the Teutonic Knights.<sup>4</sup> If some had written monographs or textbooks on such subjects before the war, now they were to write for a much broader audience. A. M. Dubrovskii notes, “the pocket-sized paperback and pamphlet describing outstanding Russian military leaders—something which would fit into a political officer’s field kit—was the most widespread of all historical genres during

these years.”<sup>5</sup> Although much of this initial publishing revolved around Russian themes, some historians made a considerable effort to develop agitational literature for non-Russian ethnic groups as well.<sup>6</sup>

Rousing talk of military valor was aimed at civilians on the home front as much as it was at soldiers in the field. After all, party authorities knew there was unrest among industrial workers, even in Moscow. Worse, peasants in the provinces were reported to be remarkably sanguine about the German advance: “What’s it to us? It’ll only be bad for the Jews and communists. There might even be a bit more order [*mozhet bol’she poriadka budet*].”<sup>7</sup> Rumors even cast non-Russian ethnic groups as being ready to greet the Wehrmacht with open arms.<sup>8</sup> Such sentiments forced propaganda organs to search for broader themes with more universal appeal. Traditional rallying calls involving “Soviet” themes (socialism, the personality cult, and so on) were promptly deemphasized in favor of a new repertoire of slogans that played upon emotions ranging from pride and revenge to the desire



“We are fighting heartily and bayoneting daringly, grandchildren of Suvorov, children of Chapaev.” (1941 poster by Kukryniksy)

to protect friends, family, and motherland. Discussions of “patriotism and national identity” became key issues as well, as Jeffrey Brooks has noted.<sup>9</sup> Not coincidentally, Stalin spent considerable time during his first wartime speech on July 3 addressing precisely these themes, lauding in particular the friendship of the Soviet peoples and warning some twelve different Soviet ethnic groups of Hitler’s plans to enslave them.<sup>10</sup>

Yet if mention of the Friendship of the Peoples was quite prominent in the press during the opening months of the war, appeals to Soviet patriotism more often than not favored Russian-oriented themes. Not only were most of the tsarist-era heroes and battles highlighted in the press implicitly Russian, but a month into the war *Pravda* referred to the Russians as *primus inter pares*, echoing official rhetoric between 1937 and 1941.<sup>11</sup> Such evidence indicates that it was the inertia of prewar russocentrism that was responsible for the tenor of propaganda during the opening months of the war, rather than a central directive proclaiming Russian nationalism to be the order of the day, as some have argued.<sup>12</sup> This inertia, in turn, was encouraged by a profound lack of inspiring material on non-Russian themes and the fact that much of the desperate fighting was taking place on Russian soil. In the absence of fresh instructions, state publishing—as loath as ever to innovate—merely combined the existing line with snippets of new wartime speeches while waiting for initiative from above.

Five months into the war, the situation clarified itself during the twenty-fourth anniversary of the October 1917 revolution. Stalin’s public statements at such events were typically considered weathervanes for determining the “correct” line, and for those looking for direction, his November 7 Red Square speech was hardly subtle. Urging his audience to “draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors [*predkov*],” Stalin rattled off a long list of exclusively Russian prerevolutionary heroes who were to define patriotic conduct during the war: Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz’ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov.<sup>13</sup> Taking prewar national Bolshevism to the extreme, all of Stalin’s examples were defenders of the old regime if not outright counterrevolutionaries. Authoritative nonetheless, Stalin’s pantheon of heroes would script everything from *Pravda* editorials and agitational pamphlets to curricular materials and propaganda posters during the coming years.<sup>14</sup>

Although few new heroes were ever added to Stalin’s original Soviet Olympus, his November 7 association of “our great ancestors” with an exclusively Russian cast of characters spurred forward russocentric, etatist

agitation.<sup>15</sup> E. Iaroslavskii, a senior party historian, quickly published an article in *Pravda* notable for its nationalistic language and content. Announcing that the Bolsheviks were the “lawful heirs to the Russian people’s great and honorable past,” the article constructed an analogy between the party’s leading role in the state and the Russian people’s position “at the head of the other peoples of the USSR.” Needless to say, this linear relationship between the Russian people and Bolshevism whitewashed over other ethnic groups’ contributions to the society and blurred the difference between Russian empire and Soviet socialist union.<sup>16</sup> Weeks later, Central Committee ideology chief A. S. Shcherbakov would make a similar statement about the war effort: “the Russian people—the first among equals in the USSR’s family of peoples—are bearing the main bur-




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Stalin’s November 7, 1941, declaration: “In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors—Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz’ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov.” (1942 poster by D. Aliakrinskii)

den of the struggle with the German occupiers.”<sup>17</sup> Lowell Tillett summarizes such pronouncements well: “Whatever the fine points of distinction may have been between the new Soviet patriotism and old Russian nationalism, they were soon lost sight of in the great emergency . . . Without much regard for what Marx or Lenin had said on the subject [of patriotism], Soviet ideologists called for emphasis on pre-revolutionary military greatness—which meant Russian greatness, almost to the exclusion of the other nationalities.”<sup>18</sup> By the early summer of 1942, the martial traditions campaign had worked itself into a frenzy. In the press, Iaroslavskii and G. F. Aleksandrov, the head of Agitprop, repeatedly stressed the importance of popular heroes and military history in stimulating patriotic sentiments. A *Pravda* editorial in the fall announced that such inspirational stories were a “mighty fighting weapon, forged and honed in the past for the great battles of the present and future.”<sup>19</sup> At roughly the same time, new military decorations named after Suvorov, Nevskii, and Kutuzov were unveiled, their symbolic value confirmed by the simultaneous appearance of articles profiling these cult figures in the central press.<sup>20</sup>

Although the swelling prominence of a rather nationalistic propaganda line between 1941 and 1942 is clear in hindsight, it is also important to acknowledge the nuances of the developing situation. One commentator wisely cautions that russocentrism was only “one of the straws in the wind,” insofar as other significant dimensions of wartime propaganda revolved around military clashes, individual acts of heroism, the home front, the allied powers, atrocities committed by German forces, and the bankruptcy of Nazi ideology.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps more important, it would be inaccurate to conclude that the emerging line eclipsed earlier calls for work on non-Russian martial traditions. Not only did non-Russian subjects appear from time to time in the central press (and with greater frequency in the republican dailies), but authorities also called repeatedly for *increases* in the production of propaganda material concerning the non-Russian peoples. Criticizing republican publishing houses for “an almost total lack of literature on national [that is, non-Russian] heroes,” the authors of a 1942 *Propagandist* article pointed to the fact that among these peoples, “there exists a burning desire to know more about the heroism of their ancestors and about the participation of their sons in patriotic wars of liberation.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, growing russocentrism during the first years of the war should be considered more of a tendency than an articulate central line.

Yet why did wartime agitational efforts zigzag so wildly from Russian nationalist rhetoric to an interest in non-Russian martial traditions? Incon-

sistent leadership and a renewed search for a usable past within the ideological establishment certainly provide part of the answer. But the fact that court historians often played the role of ideological spokesperson makes it possible to retrace the evolution of the official wartime line through the analysis of debates within the historical discipline, a task that will consume the bulk of this chapter.

In the wake of Iaroslavskii's and Aleksandrov's fervent articles on history and patriotism in 1942, historians looked to the Russian imperial past for inspirational imagery and parables. Many found Stalin's November 7 speech and the daily content of the party press to indicate that a wide variety of names from the tsarist era now qualified for rehabilitation, even if they had had nothing to do with revolutionary movements or Marxist theory. Amateur historians submitted articles to *Istoricheskii zhurnal* on tsarist generals like Ermolov and Skobelev and called for the abandonment of the prewar period's already lukewarm endorsement of rebels like Pugachev, Razin, and Shamil'. After all, argued Kh. G. Adzhemian, historiography containing unpatriotic or anti-Russian dimensions ought to be superseded by a new emphasis on Great Power traditions, a proposal that was suspiciously reminiscent of the tsarist era.<sup>23</sup>

Established historians also took the changes to be indicative of a new official line. A. V. Efimov and A. I. Iakovlev—both prominent specialists on the modern period—began recruiting scholars in 1942 for the preparation of a new volume on historiography that promised to articulate a more patriotic “national” line. Rumors hinted that they were even flirting with the idea of rehabilitating P. N. Miliukov, V. O. Kliuchevskii, and other non-Marxist prerevolutionary historians.<sup>24</sup> S. K. Bushuev's biography of A. M. Gorchakov—nominated in 1943 for a Stalin Prize—popularized a figure known as much for his participation in the crushing of nineteenth-century Polish and Hungarian popular revolts as for his Russian patriotism and strong anti-German sentiments. Later in the war, the same author would call for the reversal of what he referred to as the 1930s' “national nihilism,” something that in practice apparently required the reassessment of such odious figures as Arakcheev, Katkov, and Pobedonostsev, as well as the doctrine of slavophilism as a whole. According to Bushuev, much of the existing historiography on tsarist foreign policy—especially that on Alexander I and the “Gendarme of Europe,” Nicholas I—needed to be revised to present events in a more positive light.<sup>25</sup> Nineteenth-century Polish revolts, in turn, needed to be regarded with greater skepticism in

view of the geopolitical “inviability” of the modern Polish state.<sup>26</sup> But if Bushuev was quite militant, his colleague Iakovlev was even more radical, as remarks during a 1944 discussion of the public school history curriculum reveal:

It seems to me that it is imperative to advance Russian nationalism as the first priority. We respect the [non-Russian] ethnicities [*narodnosti*] who have entered into our union and we relate to them with love. Still, Russian history was made by Russians and it seems to me that every textbook about Russia ought to be constructed with this *leitmotif*—what precisely from this point of view [was necessary] for the Russian people’s successes, for their development, for understanding the suffering they endured, and for characterizing their general path . . . The theme of national development so brilliantly evident throughout Solov’ev’s and Kliuchevskii’s courses on Russian history ought to be passed on to every textbook editor. It seems to me that combining this with an interest in the hundred ethnicities that entered into our state is incorrect . . . The basic idea is clear: we Russians want the history of the Russian people and the history of Russian institutions, in Russian conditions. It seems to me that celebrating the fact that the Kirgiz slaughtered Russians at some point or that Shamil’ was able to halt Nicholas I would be inappropriate in a textbook.<sup>27</sup>

An obvious outgrowth of prewar national Bolshevism, Bushuev’s and Iakovlev’s sentiments were nevertheless unprecedented in their disregard for class analysis and the Friendship of the Peoples ethic.

If somewhat less nationalistic, other historians took the etatism of the 1930s to new heights. P. P. Smirnov and E. V. Tarle personified this tendency insofar as they tended to treat the subject of territorial expansion under the old regime with a high degree of pragmatism. Acknowledging that Soviet historians’ long-standing critique of tsarist-era colonialism had been designed in part to support Soviet state priorities during the 1920s and 1930s, Smirnov argued that the present war now required historiographic exigencies of its own. In particular, he declared that it was time to recognize the accomplishments of those who had built Russia into a Great Power capable of resisting Hitler.<sup>28</sup> Tarle went somewhat further in a series of lectures in Moscow, Leningrad, and Saratov, proposing to “clarify” the meaning of the “Observations” made in 1934 by Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kirov, which had labeled tsarist Russia both “the Gendarme of Europe” and a “prison of the peoples.”<sup>29</sup> These critiques of tsarist foreign and colo-

nial policy, respectively, had long been mainstays of Soviet historiography. Now, however, Tarle argued that the “gendarme thesis” required nuancing and cited a recent article of Stalin’s in *Bol’shevik* in his defense. Stalin had apparently argued that since *all* nineteenth-century European powers had been forces of reaction, St. Petersburg was not to be considered uniquely counterrevolutionary. Accordingly, if nineteenth-century tsarist foreign policy was no longer to be considered distinctive or egregious in comparison with that of Russia’s neighbors, historians should cease referring to the Romanov empire as *the* Gendarme of Europe.<sup>30</sup> While not challenging the “prison of the peoples” paradigm as directly as the gendarme thesis, Tarle agreed with Smirnov that territorial expansion under the tsars had significantly enhanced the USSR’s ability to defend its aggregate population against the German threat. This “territoriality thesis” won Tarle considerable acclaim, despite the fact that it contradicted a long-standing official condemnation of tsarist-era colonialism.<sup>31</sup> While neither Smirnov nor Tarle were blunt enough to declare that “the end justifies the means,” their efforts to put the Russian empire’s colonial past in perspective departed markedly from the tenets that had guided Soviet historiography for over two decades.

If historians like Iakovlev, Bushuev, and Tarle expanded upon the national Bolshevik tendencies of the official post-1937 line, it should be emphasized that many others hesitated to stray from prewar historiographic positions. Although it is somewhat awkward to refer to such scholars as true “internationalists,” insofar as their writing tended to advance Russian claims to ethnic primacy,<sup>32</sup> these ideological moderates did exhibit a stubborn reluctance to abandon class analysis entirely.<sup>33</sup> More important, many of them were also engaged in the development of historiography on the non-Russian peoples. The first major wartime study to emerge from these efforts, A. M. Pankratova’s 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR from the Earliest Times to Our Days*,<sup>34</sup> epitomized the sentiments of these scholars. “In our opinion,” recalled Pankratova’s collaborator N. M. Druzhinin decades later, “it was necessary to highlight the heroic past of not just the Russian people, but of the Kazakh people, among whom we lived and with whom we amicably worked.”<sup>35</sup>

A controversial project from beginning to end, the *History of the Kazakh SSR* ultimately determined the fate of the entire genre of wartime propaganda concerning non-Russian history. Written in Alma Ata by thirty-three scholars of local and all-union prominence, the volume was earnestly advertised by its editorial brigade as an account of Russo-Kazakh

cooperation in the struggle against tsarism. A response to *Propagandist's* call in 1942 for work on non-Russian martial traditions, this volume was also a revisionist treatment of Central Asian history. In particular, the book denied the applicability of the so-called "lesser-evil" thesis to the tsarist colonization of Kazakhstan by contrasting the violence of its military conquest to the more "progressive" assimilation of Ukraine and Georgia.<sup>36</sup> Such a principled position was necessary, according to Pankratova, because "casting tsarist colonizers as the bearers of progress and freedom would mean that we would be unable to describe the Great October Revolution as the liberator of our country's peoples."<sup>37</sup> Introducing the volume with a largely negative characterization of tsarist colonial policy, Pankratova and her editorial brigade devoted a significant portion of their work to the examination of an array of revolts against St. Petersburg's rule.

Sophisticated scholarship rather than rousing agitational propaganda, the *History of the Kazakh SSR* was nevertheless nominated for a Stalin Prize after its publication in 1943, in all likelihood because it was one of the first major pieces of post-1937 scholarship to concern a non-Russian republic. Selected to evaluate the book for the Stalin Prize committee, A. I. Iakovlev composed what was generally a favorable review. Nevertheless, he objected to analysis that drew no real distinction between tsarist colonial policy and cross-border raiding emanating from the Khiva and Kokand emirates. Contending that imperial expansion had been defense-oriented, justifiable, and therefore implicitly "progressive," he also questioned the emphasis placed on Kazakh resistance to tsarist rule. Generally, he concluded, the book demonstrated "a lack of good will, not just in relation to the policies of the Russian imperial state, but in relation to the Russian people themselves."<sup>38</sup>

Because Iakovlev's review threatened the *History of the Kazakh SSR's* Stalin Prize nomination, Pankratova and her colleagues protested directly to V. P. Potemkin at the history section of the Stalin Prize committee in late 1943. Arguing that Iakovlev's objections were logically unsound and that their book contributed to the ongoing war effort by boosting Kazakh morale, Pankratova cited Lenin, Stalin, the 1934 "Observations," and various other party directives on historiography in her brigade's defense.<sup>39</sup> Elaborate objections were made in particular to Iakovlev's classification of Russian imperial expansion as progressive and defense-oriented. According to Pankratova, Iakovlev was incorrect in thinking that if the gathering of Russian lands under Ivan Kalita, Ivan III, and Ivan IV was to be considered progressive, so too should territorial expansion in the seventeenth

through nineteenth centuries. To illustrate her point, she cited a simplistic statement on the issue that Iakovlev had supposedly made at a recent meeting: "the Russian tsars, according to the inevitable laws of history, followed the general Russian tendency of supporting the security of the Russian borders and the Russian population." Such apologetic treatments of tsarist expansionism, according to Pankratova, came close to contradicting Lenin's unambiguously negative evaluation of colonialism as an economic system. Justifying their book's stress on revolts against the tsarist colonial administration, Pankratova explained that Kazakh resistance to Russian tsarism often triggered revolts against indigenous elites, thus indicating that ethnic consciousness was inseparable from class consciousness. In regard to the book's alleged pitting of Kazakh against Russian, she suggested that Iakovlev had overlooked the book's discussion of cooperation between the two peoples in the form of Kazakh support for Russian rebels like Pugachev and Russian peasant participation in indigenous Kazakh revolts. Pankratova concluded by denouncing Iakovlev's review for contradicting official policy, "as it deals a blow to the friendship of the peoples, denying the peoples of the USSR their martial traditions and heroes and even their right to their own history."<sup>40</sup>

Although Potemkin probably read the letter from Pankratova and her colleagues, he did not take any steps to restore the book's Stalin Prize nomination. This frustrated Pankratova enough for her to ask Aleksandrov and P. N. Fedoseev at Agitprop for a reassessment of the book in early 1944. Aleksandrov's refusal was instructive: "1) the book is anti-Russian, as the authors' sympathies are on the side of those revolting against tsarism and there is no effort to exonerate Russia; 2) the book is written without acknowledgment of the fact that Kazakhstan stood outside history and that it was Russia that brought [the Kazakhs] into the ranks of the historical peoples."<sup>41</sup>

Furious with this undisguised display of Russian chauvinism, Pankratova protested to Zhdanov. Defending the *History of the Kazakh SSR*, she also took the opportunity to denounce rivals including Iakovlev, Efimov, Bushuev, Adzhemian, and the entire Agitprop administration. She argued that while revising Pokrovskii's wholly negative characterization of Russian colonialism was necessary, it was questionable whether the Russianness or valor of certain infamous tsarist officials automatically justified a reappraisal of their activities. She also questioned whether it was legitimate to deny the heroism of non-Russian rebels just because they had distinguished themselves resisting tsarist colonialism or Russian ethnic domi-

nance: "I am especially worried by this last tendency, which could have major consequences of the most negative kind among the peoples of our motherland. In all the Soviet republics at the present time, books are being written intensively about the individual peoples. Interest has increased dramatically [among non-Russians] concerning their national history, their heroic past, and all those who have fought for freedom and independence." She argued that books like the *History of the Kazakh SSR* were capable of discussing the realities of tsarist colonialism and the military traditions of the non-Russian peoples, while at the same time propagandizing "the friendship of the peoples and [their] respect and love for the great Russian people." Begging Zhdanov to reverse Aleksandrov's decision, Pankratova warned that the retraction of the Stalin Prize nomination "would deeply insult the Kazakh republic's leadership." "One can't deny the Kazakh people their heroic martial traditions and declare them to be a people without a history."<sup>42</sup> Several weeks later, she appealed to Shcherbakov, phrasing her argument somewhat differently in terms of how her book was helping "to propagandize the Soviet peoples' martial and heroic traditions in the national units of the Red Army."<sup>43</sup>

Indicative of the ongoing struggle on the Soviet historical front, Pankratova's efforts to save her monograph in early 1944 were parried by Aleksandrov and the Agitprop administration, who were moving to outflank their critics and regain control over the official line. According to established practice, this meant convening a conference where contested issues would be debated and resolved. Conclusions would then be disseminated through the publication of the conference's proceedings in *Pod znamenem marksizma*. Apparently, the discussion was intended to be wide ranging—various accounts suggest that both the *History of the Kazakh SSR* and Tarle's territoriality thesis were to be publicly debated. "Among propagandists and teachers"—circulated one rumor—"people have begun talking about a 'reappraisal' of the most important and commonly accepted concepts in the historical sciences. Of particular interest is whether the 'Observations' of Comrades Stalin, Kirov, and Zhdanov on historical questions have become 'obsolete' [*ustareli*]." Oddly enough, despite the fact that several Kazakh specialists traveled all the way to Moscow in the spring of 1944 to defend their work, Agitprop failed to convene even an informal discussion.<sup>44</sup> Equally inconclusive was a meeting held at the Academy of Sciences's Institute of History at about the same time.<sup>45</sup>

If Pankratova's initial complaints earlier that year had had little visible effect on the state of affairs in the history profession, a letter of hers in mid-May finally caught the party hierarchy's attention. Why this letter

elicited a response, after so many appeals had gone unanswered, is unclear. Perhaps it was on account of the letter's addressees (Stalin, Zhdanov, G. M. Malenkov, and Shcherbakov), its length (nearly twenty typewritten pages), its sensational content or its perfect timing.<sup>46</sup> In any case, Pankratova reiterated in this new letter that Agitprop was mismanaging the historical front at a time when popular interest in history was rising at an unprecedented rate. As a result, not only were historians indulging in what she considered to be non-Marxist heresies, but members of the creative intelligentsia were also being led astray. A. N. Tolstoi and Eisenstein, for instance, had been allowed to seriously exaggerate Ivan the Terrible's populist tendencies, and this contagion had begun to affect artistic representations of Alexander I and A. A. Brusilov as well.<sup>47</sup> According to Pankratova, schoolchildren were particularly confused by the valorization of Brusilov, as this World War I general's claim to fame was based on his defense of a regime that Lenin would soon overthrow. Frustrated by years of indecision concerning the official line, Pankratova asked the Central Committee to clarify the situation through the convocation of a meeting to discuss not only the *History of Kazakh SSR* but the state of the discipline as a whole.<sup>48</sup>

Pankratova was not the only one frustrated with the status quo, however. Having failed to convene the Agitprop conference, Aleksandrov proposed correctives of his own in a series of internal memos during March and April of 1944. Although he was careful to balance his analysis with criticism of Iakovlev and Adzhemian, much of his rhetoric was directed against historians like Pankratova who were resisting the increasingly russocentric line. Broadsideing the *History of the Kazakh SSR* and a similar volume entitled *Sketches on the History of Bashkiriia*, as well as a number of recent textbooks by Pankratova, Bakhrushin, and M. V. Nechkina, Aleksandrov hissed that this work was not only unpatriotic but bore all the tell-tale signs of ideological heresy:

In Soviet historical literature, the influence of the Pokrovskii school is still very evident. In textbooks on [the history of] the USSR and different historical works, there is insufficient illumination of the most important moments in our people's heroic past and the lives and deeds of outstanding Russian military commanders, scientists, and state figures.

The influence of the Pokrovskii school also finds its expression in the fact that the non-Russian peoples' unification with Russia is appraised as an absolute evil by historians examining it independently of

the concrete circumstances in which it took place. The interrelationship between the Russian people and the other peoples of Russia is looked at solely in the context of tsarist colonial policies. In the *History of the Kazakh SSR* and *Sketches on the History of Bashkiriia*, the history of Kazakhstan and Bashkiriia is limited, by and large, to the history of Kazakh and Bashkir revolts against Russia.<sup>49</sup>

Aleksandrov's memo concluded with a recommendation similar to Pankratova's—the time had come for the Central Committee to intervene—although he envisioned this body simply ratifying recommendations being prepared by Agitprop.

If these memos reveal considerable tension within the Soviet ideological establishment during March and April 1944, Pankratova's explosive letter to Stalin, Zhdanov, Malenkov, and Shcherbakov in May drove Aleksandrov into a frenzy. He quickly returned fire with a volley of ad hominem attacks entitled "On the Serious Shortcomings and Anti-Leninist Mistakes in the Work of Several Soviet Historians," a memo coauthored with Agitprop insiders Fedoseev and P. N. Pospelov. Echoing earlier salvos, this fusillade was aimed not only at Pankratova and her "unpatriotic" colleagues, but—interestingly enough—at Iakovlev, Tarle, and Adzhemian as well, who had allegedly broken with Marxist historical materialism in their promotion of what was described as "Great-Power chauvinism" and even "restorationist" views.<sup>50</sup> If earlier, Aleksandrov had tended to side with this latter group against Pankratova, by May 1944, his strategy had changed. By declaring "a plague on both of your houses," he apparently hoped to style himself as a nonpartisan capable of correcting excesses at either end of the polarized discipline.

But Aleksandrov's loss of control over the historians had not gone unnoticed, and the Central Committee instead moved to convene a history conference *of its own* during the early summer of 1944. Malenkov announced during his keynote speech that "the Central Committee has discussed the issue and decided that it is imperative to meet with leading scholars in order to talk about controversial issues and develop a set of principle positions for all historians."<sup>51</sup> Despite this ambitious agenda, the conference turned out rather inconclusively. Although Shcherbakov's continuous presence as chair was complemented by the occasional appearance of Malenkov or A. A. Andreev, the party hierarchs' commentary was brief and unmemorable. The futility of the enterprise was compounded by fierce bickering among the historians themselves, not only during the sessions but behind the scenes and in written appeals to Shcherbakov and

Stalin.<sup>52</sup> Disbanding in early July after five sessions, the conference participants left with the understanding that the Central Committee would make an announcement about the state of affairs on the historical front in short order.<sup>53</sup>

But such a panacea never appeared. Asked to compose a Politburo resolution that would mend the ideological schism, Aleksandrov drafted a document that essentially repeated his partisan observations from earlier that spring. Unsatisfied, Shcherbakov rejected it.<sup>54</sup> Responsibility for the project then shifted to Zhdanov, who had just returned to Moscow from Leningrad, having missed the conference entirely.<sup>55</sup> Over the next several months, Zhdanov would write and rewrite a series of theses on the subject, consulting repeatedly with Stalin and referring to the conference transcript and Aleksandrov's and Pankratova's written recommendations. While preserving Agitprop's hyperbolic formulation of the problem at hand as a question of two non-Marxist heresies—a "bourgeois-monarchist" Miliukovite school (Efimov, Iakovlev, Tarle) and a "sociological" Pokrovskiiian school (Pankratova and her colleagues)—Zhdanov proved to be considerably more critical of the former than the latter.<sup>56</sup> In particular, he objected to the indiscriminate conflation of the Russian past and the Soviet present.<sup>57</sup> Work on the draft, however, ground to a halt after a number of redactions before ever seeing light as a formal statement on party ideology. Puzzlingly, the results of this major conference were limited to a minor Central Committee resolution, a speech, and the publication of a handful of book reviews during the following year.<sup>58</sup>

The failure of the party hierarchy to issue a formal resolution on the history conference confounded historians between 1944 and 1945 and has remained a source of considerable debate in the years ever since.<sup>59</sup> Pankratova may have alienated her patrons early that fall by a major lapse in judgment.<sup>60</sup> Stalin may have wanted to protect his client Tarle or focus exclusively on defeating Hitler.<sup>61</sup> Equally likely, the Red Army's expulsion of German troops from the Soviet heartland during the summer of 1944 simply may have reduced the need for mobilizational exigencies like the promotion of non-Russian martial traditions.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps non-Russian history itself (and with it, the *History of the Kazakh SSR*) had simply lapsed into obsolescence?

Circumstantial evidence seems to favor the last argument, according to which the party hierarchy lost interest in non-Russian historical subjects after the Red Army crossed over the frontier into Poland in July of 1944. Particularly revealing is a series of minor Central Committee resolutions passed between 1944 and 1945 that criticized wartime propaganda in

Kazakhstan, Tatarstan, and Bashkiriia.<sup>63</sup> In language similar to Iakovlev's critique of the *History of the Kazakh SSR*, these resolutions condemned scholarly, artistic, and literary activity that represented these regions' experience under medieval Tatar-Mongol rule as a "renaissance" and that discussed their rebelliousness under the Russian tsars in congratulatory terms. Such rulings suggest that the party hierarchy had decided it was time to put an end to all republican historical sloganeering promoting non-Russian heroes at the Russian people's expense. Shortly thereafter, Aleksandrov attacked the wartime publication of *Edigei*, a medieval Tatar epic, claiming that it expressed "nationalist ideas foreign to the Tatar people." "In it, a powerful feudal lord of the Golden Horde and an enemy of the Russian people is described as a national hero." Comparing Edigei to the notorious fourteenth-century khans Mamai and Tokhtamysh, Aleksandrov growled that this Tatar "hero" had "aimed to revive the former might of the Golden Horde through campaigns into Russian lands." The Agitprop chief then concluded that *Edigei* had been a counterproductive contribution to the war effort and should never have been published in the first place.<sup>64</sup> Numerous other republican and provincial party organizations would come under fire for similar wartime publications during the early postwar years.

The war, then, is key to understanding the waning fortunes of the non-Russian genre of historical propaganda. Whereas such subjects had been encouraged within certain circles between 1941 and 1943, after mid-1944 they were savaged one by one for stirring up non-Russian nationalism and ignoring the age-old symbiosis that has purportedly united the non-Russian peoples with their Russian brethren. In other words, once the exigencies of 1941–1943 had faded, party ideology reverted to an extreme version of the post-1937 line on the Russian people's ethnic primacy within Soviet society. This national Bolshevik agenda was confirmed by Stalin early in the postwar period in his infamous toast to the Russian people at a Kremlin reception for Red Army commanders:

Comrades, allow me to raise one more final toast.

I would like to raise a toast to the health of our Soviet people and, most of all, to the Russian people. (*Loud, continuous applause, shouts of "hooray!"*)

I drink, most of all, to the health of the Russian people because they are the most outstanding nation of all the nations in the Soviet Union.

I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people because they

earned general recognition during the war as the Soviet Union's leading force among all the peoples of our country.

I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people not just because they are the leading people, but because they have a clear mind, hardy character, and patience.<sup>65</sup>

Implicitly contrasting the loyalty of the Russian people to that of the rest of Soviet society, Stalin's May 1945 toast ratified the restoration of an ethnic hierarchy. Many read it as a call for propagandists to focus *exclusively* on the Russian people and their historic greatness during the early postwar years.

A question of timing and exigency, the wane of wartime non-Russian historical propaganda was also a function of the increasing pervasiveness of russocentrism in Soviet society between 1941 and 1945—a dynamic that at times resembled a vicious circle. Official pronouncements between 1941 and 1942 that described the Russian people as the first among equals and the USSR's principle fighting force contributed to a high level of Russian-oriented propaganda and press coverage. Over time, this rhetoric gradually eclipsed discussions of non-Russian heroism, allowing the prevailing wisdom to develop on the popular level that the Russian people were bearing the horrendous cost of the struggle alone.<sup>66</sup> Similar sentiments within the party hierarchy reinforced the imperative of russocentric propaganda,<sup>67</sup> precipitating initiatives that in turn further exacerbated the situation on the ground. Attention cast toward non-Russian heroism in the press might have slowed this escalation of Russian exceptionalism,<sup>68</sup> but neglect of such subjects during the late 1930s meant that little was ready for release when the opportunity presented itself between 1941 and 1942. Although some sophisticated material like the *History of the Kazakh SSR* and *Sketches on the History of Bashkiria* became available in 1943, by that time it was already too late. Moreover, the inertia of wartime russocentrism and the fading exigencies of war meant that by 1944 such work was increasingly viewed within the party hierarchy as not only irrelevant but misguided. As a result, despite the concerted effort of a number of highly placed ideologists and court historians like Pankratova, the post-1937 line emerged from the wartime experience in a much more russocentric and etatist form than it had been before the outset of the conflict.

If the first appearance of national Bolshevism as an articulate ideological line dates to the second half of the 1930s, this sloganeering underwent a profound transformation in the four years following June 22, 1941. Pre-

war propaganda had evolved within a quarter-century's continuum of strident proletarian internationalist rhetoric, and despite the waning of these latter themes over the course of the mid- to late 1930s, they nevertheless remained intrinsic elements of prewar official discourse. In the wake of the German invasion, this contradiction in the official line quickly came to divide party ideologists and court historians against one another. Some promoted a nativist, nationalistic genre of propaganda—a seemingly heretical move that resonated with the Soviet state's iconoclastic alliance with former adversaries within the capitalist world and the church. Other, more moderate voices remained stubbornly committed to the official line that had been developed in the late 1930s and actively participated in the wartime mobilization of both the Russian and non-Russian peoples. At times, debate was remarkably polarized and acrimonious, as the neonationalists clashed with their "internationalist" rivals. This schism ultimately confounded even the party hierarchy itself in the wake of the 1944 history conference.

Although the party leadership never directly resolved the impasse, a number of wartime dynamics ultimately contributed to an oblique resolution of the crisis. The fading imperative of non-Russian propaganda and the heavy atmosphere of wartime russocentrism meant that by 1944 the position being advanced by "internationalists" like Pankratova and her allies had lapsed into obsolescence. Although these scholars might have found support in Zhdanov's theses on historiography, the party hierarchy's failure to issue a ruling on the conference instead allowed a series of minor Central Committee, republican, and provincial party organization resolutions to solidify the now stridently russocentric line. The title of Pankratova's first postwar book—*The Great Russian People*—epitomizes with bitter irony her acceptance of this new historiographic orthodoxy as much as it indicates the postwar agenda for the historical discipline as a whole.<sup>69</sup>

## 8 Ideological Education on the Home Front

In June 1943 Comrade Kasterina, the director of a fine arts program in Moscow province, announced to her colleagues at a conference that a teacher's first responsibility was "to take charge of Soviet students' patriotic mobilization."<sup>1</sup> In itself not a surprising statement for an educator to have made during the war, it gives rise to questions about precisely what sort of patriotic sloganeering Kasterina had in mind. After all, if commentary in Soviet newspapers in 1943 verged at times on Russian nationalism, 1943 also marked the triumphant publication of the *History of the Kazakh SSR*. Within months, the Order of Khmel'nitskii would join military decorations named after Nevskii, Suvorov, and Kutuzov. And it was precisely at this time, between 1943 and 1944, that vigorous factional infighting wracked the Soviet ideological establishment with debates over what priorities were to be reflected in wartime propaganda.

So how did Kasterina and other educators understand the notion of patriotic mobilization? What sort of imagery and symbols did this concept evoke? Did national Bolshevism dominate agitational activities in the classroom, or did it alternate with appeals revolving around Marxism-Leninism and the Friendship of the Peoples? Was such propaganda linear and focused, or did it reflect the diversity of opinion found among people like Aleksandrov, Iakovlev, Tarle, and Pankratova? To what extent was all of the hand-wringing and teeth-gnashing among ideologists and court historians even visible on the popular level?

Unfortunately, the sources do not reveal precisely what Kasterina meant. But they do allow for a broader survey of what was taught in the public schools and discussed in party study circles among Russian speakers during the war years. And although such information cannot shed any

light on Kasterina, *per se*, it does make it possible to characterize the nature of her colleagues' patriotic pedagogy between 1941 and 1945.

If Soviet schooling in the mid- to late 1930s was already striving to foster a popular sense of state-oriented loyalty, efforts in this regard were redoubled after the outset of hostilities on June 22, 1941. In fact, V. P. Potemkin, the commissar of education, believed that the inculcation of a sophisticated and articulate sense of patriotic identity was the public schools' main responsibility, insofar as "an instinctive and emotional love of the motherland is not enough."<sup>2</sup> At a conference in 1943, he even illustrated his point by assuming the rhetorical role of a schoolchild in order to declare: "It is inadequate [simply] to feel that I love my Motherland—I need to know why I love it, what is dear to me within it, what I am defending and why, if necessary, I am to give my life for it."<sup>3</sup> Attention to such matters ultimately served as something of a litmus test for assessing the accomplishments of wartime public education. Reports like that of a school principal in Moscow province named Bobrovskaia—"our district has made some progress, most of all in terms of cultivating a sense of Soviet patriotism"—indicate that although the academic curriculum was never intentionally slighted during the war years, popular mobilization ranked high on the classroom agenda.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the two most important subjects in the wartime classroom were history and literature—subjects expected to illustrate by means of analogy the imperative of state policies that literally demanded "all for the front." An article from 1942 in the journal *Sovetskaiia pedagogika* elaborated on this point:

Brought up as a citizen and patriot, our schoolchild will be prepared to become the deserving heir of his forefathers, who created this national culture, and an inheritor of the glorious martial traditions of the warriors of old [*druzhinniki-voiny*], who defended their Motherland from invaders. The schoolchild must see himself as the continuer of the great work and heroic feats [*podvigi*] of Aleksandr Nevskii, D. Donskoi, A. Suvorov, and M. Kutuzov. He will want to become deserving of the feats of V. Chapaev and M. Frunze.<sup>5</sup>

Pursued in regions as diverse as Arkhangel'sk, Leningrad, Ivanovo, Sverdlovsk, Kurgan, and the Komi ASSR, this style of instruction took a variety of forms.<sup>6</sup> As before the war, connections were drawn between Peter the Great's supposedly autarchic, statist modernization strategy and the Soviet



Peasant flanked by I. Martos's 1818 Red Square memorial to Minin and Pozharskii, a combination that evokes the popular militias of 1612. The caption reads: "Our forces are innumerable!" (1941 poster by V. Koretskii)

experience with industrialization.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, civil war heroes were mobilized to characterize valorous conduct at the front.<sup>8</sup> More striking, however, was the wartime period's repeated invocation of russocentric imagery to stimulate patriotic emotions in the classroom. One teacher in Moscow province, for instance, quoted Minin's historic 1612 address to his followers—"we must give everything for the defense of the Russian lands"—without making any effort to nuance the statement's ethnic particularism. His colleague, a certain Kalita, made similarly russocentric statements in the conclusion of a presentation on battlefield heroism during the Crimean War: "the soldier demonstrated that he was a Russian person and that the motherland was more precious to him than his own life." Kalita was also known for drawing attention to Russian contributions to science, a priority that met with unqualified approval from educational authorities. "In this way," observed one report, Kalita "cultivates a sense of national pride in those students privileged enough to belong to this heroic people, which is bravely struggling with enemies in the war and contributing its share to the development of worldwide scientific thought."<sup>9</sup>

Such examples suggest that although *Pravda* tasked teachers with "raising students to be Soviet patriots," in practice what was promoted in the classroom was something considerably more Russian in essence.<sup>10</sup> This impression is borne out in a transcript of a 1944 classroom dialogue between a teacher named I. A. Portsevskii and his student Rozhkova:

*Teacher:* The theme of the last lesson was "Novgorod's and Pskov's struggle with the Swedish and German feudal lords" . . .

*Student:* The Germans and Swedes long wished to seize the Finnish lands. But no sooner had the Swedes landed at the mouth of the river Neva than Aleksandr, Prince of Novgorod, fell upon them. The Novgorodians fought bravely . . . Aleksandr came to be known as "Nevskii" after this battle. But the prince didn't get along with the boyars. The boyars had extensive power and didn't want to share it with anyone. Aleksandr wanted to concentrate it in his hands because the Swedes and Germans were threatening Russia. Soon, the Germans attacked Rus'. Novgorod summoned Aleksandr Nevskii. Then the battle on Lake Chud' took place. The Germans were forced to conclude a peace.

*Teacher:* What does the Soviet government appreciate Aleksandr Nevskii for?

*Student:* Because he defended Rus' from seizure by the Germans.

**Teacher:** How are soldiers distinguished?

**Student:** Soldiers and officers are distinguished by the Order of Aleksandr Nevskii.

**Teacher:** And what do the German knights, who lived 700 years ago, have in common with today's fascists?

**Student:** They too were engaged in the physical destruction of the Slavic population.

**Teacher:** What great person referred to them as "mongrel-knights?"

**Student:** Karl Marx called them the "mongrel-knights."<sup>11</sup>

Of particular interest in this dialogue is Portsevskii's repeated connection of events from the distant, semimythological past to the contemporary war. Emphasizing the importance of centralized state power and the timelessness of the region's struggle against German depredation, Portsevskii illustrated these themes both directly and indirectly, using historical analogy and invoking authorities like Marx and the Soviet government.<sup>12</sup> Educational officials hailed his exemplary approach to wartime instruction in the public schools.

K. Polzikova-Rubets, a Leningrad teacher, described her preparation for a lecture on current events (*politinformatsiia*) in a 1941 diary entry in terms that were similar to Portsevskii's. Apparently concerned about making her presentation approachable for young children, she wrote:

I outlined the communiqués about the situation at the front. I used material from articles by [A. N.] Tolstoi, [N.] Tikhonov, and [I.] Ehrenburg.

Lighting an oil-lamp, I lay on my bed and again and again thought over my plan for the discussion. Comrade Stalin said that Hitler resembles Napoleon no more than a kitten resembles a lion. That will amuse the kids. I ought to talk about Kutuzov's and Barclay's tactics. It'd be good to read Pushkin's "The Military Leader." Perhaps I should include several lines from the poem? And who said it so well that penetrating so deep into the country did in even Charles XII? Engels, I think.<sup>13</sup>

This description of Polzikova-Rubets's preparation for class indicates the centrality of historical analogy to wartime instruction in the public schools. Significantly, her populist mix of Tolstoi, Ehrenburg, Kutuzov, and Peter the Great eclipsed not only the current events themselves, but alternate explanations revolving around proletarian internationalism and

class struggle as well. Yet most intriguing is a tendency she shared with Portsevskii to relegate communist ideologues like Stalin and Engels to a merely auxiliary role in the classroom, in which they lent their authority to otherwise conventional discussions of Russian historical events.

These examples are quite representative of the situation in public schools all across the USSR between 1941 and 1945. Archival evidence indicates that Russian heroes from the distant past were as central to after-school reading circles as they were to history instruction, with subjects like *The Tale of Igor's Host* and the Time of Troubles providing the context for the promotion of patriotic themes.<sup>14</sup> Stalin's 1941 "valiant examples of our great ancestors" speech also proved tremendously important to such efforts. Singled out by leading educators as something that implicitly defined official pedagogical priorities,<sup>15</sup> it was reprinted frequently throughout the war starting with the first edition of Stalin's *On the Great Patriotic War* in early 1942.<sup>16</sup> Inspirational themes were also drawn from party publications like *Pravda* and *Bol'shevik*, where patriotic articles by Iaroslavskii and Aleksandrov were read and reread during these years.<sup>17</sup> In the big picture, such details suggest that wartime pedagogy—derived as it was from prewar national Bolshevik practices—differed from its predecessor largely in terms of degree and tone. History lessons between 1941 and 1945 simply became more explicit than they had been on the eve of the war, shedding the internationalist trappings that had camouflaged their calculated appeals to basic human prejudices since 1937.

But if the war encouraged stalinist populism's penchant for nativist sloganeering, it also exacerbated many of the problems that had plagued ideological agitation in Soviet public schools during the prewar years as well. Although a seven-year education had become the official standard on the eve of war, incomplete data suggest that only one in six students made it into the higher grades during the early 1940s—a record that made even the meager accomplishments of the 1930s look enviable by comparison.<sup>18</sup> Massive waves of refugees and the requisitioning of school buildings forced those educational institutions that remained open to run on a shift system (7 A.M.–11 A.M.; 11 A.M.–3 P.M.; 3 P.M.–7 P.M.), which compromised the learning process even further.<sup>19</sup> Like a row of falling dominoes, shorter schooldays precipitated shorter class hours, which in turn forced lessons to be streamlined in a way that denuded them of detail and nuance. Historical pedagogy suffered from these austerity measures in unique ways, the pressures exacerbating the curriculum's prewar tendency to downplay negative aspects of tsarist rule like serfdom and colonialism.

For the most part, only themes with a high propaganda value were preserved intact between 1941 and 1945.<sup>20</sup>

Adding to the schools' weakness was the war's aggravation of a perennial concern: the quality of classroom instruction. In a great historical irony, it seems that the introduction of standardized textbooks in the late 1930s had not invalidated the stalinist truism that "cadres decide everything." Now, with the departure of many young teachers to the front, the system was thrown into crisis. The director of the Institute for Teachers' Improvement in Moscow province—a certain Professor Ivanov—reported in the summer of 1943 that owing to the draft-related attrition of personnel, some 20 percent of all history teachers employed during the preceding school year had been new hires and had lacked classroom experience. Many, it turns out, had not even completed secondary school, much less pedagogical institute. Although Ivanov argued that they made up for a lack of knowledge with patriotic enthusiasm, less sanguine reports warned that between a third and a fourth of all teachers in the RSFSR had no business being in front of a classroom at all.<sup>21</sup> In some places like the Tatar ASSR, the statistics were even worse, with some 60 percent of teachers lacking basic qualifications.<sup>22</sup>

Some evaluations asserted that most teachers in Moscow province taught acceptably well, thanks to the fact that their lessons were scripted by standardized textbooks.<sup>23</sup> More candid appraisals revealed the downside to such a heavy reliance on the official curriculum. Apparently, teachers sometimes knew little more about history than what was outlined in elementary texts like Shestakov's, and many taught simply by reading out loud.<sup>24</sup> Formulaic teaching and the encouragement of rote memorization were epidemic, a situation exacerbated by a chronic shortage of textbooks, which prevented students from being able to study on their own.<sup>25</sup>

Although such pedagogical shortcomings clearly affected students' academic performance, officials proved to be more concerned about their effect on students' political mobilization. A 1944 Moscow province report, for instance, complained that ill-qualified teachers often failed to capitalize on opportunities to connect the past with the present through the use of historical analogy. Another report made an example of a hapless teacher named Molova from the town of Pavlov Posad. Apparently, she had forgotten during a lesson on medieval Germanic forays into eastern Europe to point out that "the contemporary German fascists are carrying out a war of annihilation similar to that which the Germanic knights led in the ninth through the twelfth centuries, e.g., the deportation of Slavs, the

transfer of their land to German colonists, the hunting down of Slavs like wild animals, and other practices of annihilationist war, which the contemporary German scoundrel-fascists are now aiming to ‘perfect.’”<sup>26</sup> Similar pedagogical oversights and missed opportunities were reported to central authorities from as far away as the Altai region on the Chinese border.<sup>27</sup>

An equal source of concern was a Narkompros official’s discovery of a Moscow province teacher named Loshakova, who—according to her lesson plans—intended to “cultivate [in students] a love for the motherland.” This was admirable, the official contended, except that “*how* she plans to ‘cultivate a love for the motherland’ Comrade Loshakova has yet to think out.”<sup>28</sup> Such gradual realization that emotions like patriotism could not be learned by rote forced institutions from Narkompros and Agitprop to the Academy of Sciences to invest considerable time and effort in providing weak teachers with material that would help them aspire to higher standards.<sup>29</sup> The well-known specialist I. A. Kairov advised in 1944 that historical parables and vignettes were absolutely critical to the process: “It is impossible to cultivate an abstract, instinctive sense of love for the Motherland founded on intuition. In one’s consciousness, love for the Motherland is always connected with concrete facts, the general character of this feeling emerging from separate, individual episodes.”<sup>30</sup> Kairov’s argument clarifies why officials were so eager to give a high profile to famous historical figures from Nevskii and Donskoi to Susanin and Suvorov: it was clearly hoped that schoolchildren would not only learn by example from these semimythological leaders, but that they would actually begin to *identify* with them. Such emotions were seen as critical to the formation of an articulate sense of patriotic identity.

Frustrated by the complexity of wartime historical pedagogy, officials briefly considered abandoning or abridging Shestakov’s and Pankratova’s basic readers in favor of a more streamlined, evocative narrative.<sup>31</sup> Predictably, these discussions touched off a firestorm within the historical profession, as rival factions argued over whether future texts should be more explicitly russocentric or more solidly grounded in proletarian internationalism and historical materialism.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, however, little changed in the dominant strategies of historical pedagogy on the mass level. Shestakov’s text was reissued and heroes—especially Russian ones—continued to preside over a linear historical narrative that deployed populist appeals in order to advance etatist values. As in the late 1930s, students in the early 1940s did not perform brilliantly, but they generally did learn enough to answer basic questions correctly. Grades were even quite good in some

cases.<sup>33</sup> Only when teachers or their students failed to grasp events critical to the formation of a patriotic identity did the authorities show real alarm.<sup>34</sup>

Running parallel to agitational work in the public schools, party study circles also focused on popular mobilization over the course of the war.<sup>35</sup> These efforts, according to one internal set of instructions, were to center on the “cultivation of a sense of Soviet patriotism and hatred of the enemy.” History played a fundamental role in this process, contextualizing the present struggle in familiar terms. As the same internal document put it, agitators on the ground were to “shed light on the patriotic upswell within the masses, on the heroism of Soviet warriors, and on the heroic past of our people.”<sup>36</sup>

“Our people” at first glance would seem to refer to a supra-ethnic conception of Soviet society as a whole, but mobilizational practices among Russian speakers suggest that it was interpreted more narrowly. At Moscow’s Krasnyi Oktiabr’ Works, for instance, “lively consultations were conducted on themes such as ‘The Formation of the Russian National State,’ ‘Ivan the Terrible,’ and ‘Peter the First.’” Discussions in the Moscow city environs intermixed topics like “The Formation and Expansion of the Russian National State” and “The Russian People’s Heroic Past” with “On Soviet Patriotism and the Soviet People’s National Pride.”<sup>37</sup> Broadly put, then, agitational work in forums devoted to party education regularly conflated Soviet patriotic identity with Russian national identity, making little mention of the non-Russian nationalities or the importance of class consciousness.

This is not to say, of course, that such populist propaganda was always easy to follow. Particularly confusing was the ideological contradiction at the core of the official line that forced agitators to alternate between celebrating tsarist state-builders and valorizing the revolutionaries who overthrew them. Many on the ground struggled with the task of connecting the era’s strident russocentric etatism to the tenets of Marxist-Leninist internationalism.<sup>38</sup> Frustration led some agitators to send questions to their local party organizations, which graphically illustrate the challenges of propaganda work on the shop floor. “How is one to convey to an audience material on Russian culture?” one asked. Another wondered: “How is one to deal with questions about the Bolsheviks being the heirs to Russian national culture? What about Russian national culture and the Russian national church?”<sup>39</sup> On occasion, of course, party organizations were able to

provide their agitators with practical hints on how to reconcile Russian national traditions with the USSR's reputation as a revolutionary workers' state. More often than not, however, the answers they supplied—"refer to Lenin's article on 'The National Pride of the Great Russians'" and so on—were little better than the cliché- and platitude-ridden "consultations" that regularly appeared in party journals.<sup>40</sup>

Accomplishing the rhetorical and intellectual gymnastics necessary to explain such questions on the shop floor was complicated by an extremely low level of formal education within the party ranks, a fact that worried top ideologists during these years.<sup>41</sup> Almost 50 percent of party members in Moscow's Proletarskii district organization, for instance, had failed to reach fifth grade. Another 25 percent had quit school after seven years. Of those with experience in higher education (13 percent), most were graduates of technical schools where political education had been a low priority.<sup>42</sup> These demographics, combined with poor leadership and a lack of resources, threatened the effectiveness of party efforts to improve the level of political awareness, in both urban and rural settings.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, many local party organizations did succeed in holding regular lectures and study sessions on historical themes. Often, they were quite jingoistic in tone, as typified by "Where and When the Russian People Beat the German Invaders," a series sponsored by the Moscow party organization in 1944.<sup>44</sup> At other times, political instruction russified lessons on such seemingly unrelated subjects as Stalin's cult of personality. This curious tendency is evident in materials such as the thematic plans that scripted the study of *On the Great Patriotic War*, Stalin's anthology of wartime communiqués and speeches. Only official russocentrism can explain why discussions of this collection were to focus on issues like "the brave image of our great ancestors, the Russian people's heroic tradition of emancipatory wars, and the patriotic war against German occupiers in 1918."<sup>45</sup> Pervasive russocentrism is also visible in local study circles' requests for information from their party organizations, insofar as the material that they asked for—on subjects like "our great forefather-military leaders" and how "the Russians have always beaten the Prussians"—indicates the direction these discussions often took.<sup>46</sup> To be sure, the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* also occupied center stage from time to time, but its narration of interminable internecine party infighting generally seems to have been upstaged by texts like Shestakov's, which foregrounded epic struggles with foreign foes in the distant past. For Russian

speakers, at least, this material was accessible, unambiguous, and easy to identify with during such insecure times.

Pedagogy and agitation on the mass level—whether in the public schools or party study circles—privileged historical themes during the war years because of this material's promise in stimulating a popular sense of patriotic identity. As elsewhere in the society, however, educators were forced to try to "do more with less," fulfilling the mobilizational aspect of their duties despite a lack of resources, facilities, pedagogical materials, and teaching cadres themselves. That many of the party hierarchy's demands were met between 1941 and 1945 is actually quite remarkable.

At the same time, much in the way of nuance and precision was sacrificed in the pursuit of these objectives. Instruction during the war became more russocentric and more etatist than ever before. Lessons in the public schools and party study circles became correspondingly less likely to reflect Marxist-Leninist and internationalist themes—less so, in fact, than at any time since the 1917 revolution. Singularly utilitarian, public and party education in the USSR during the war years showed none of the ambivalence or diversity of opinion that was present within other parts of the ideological establishment. Instead, the national Bolshevism of the late 1930s grew steadily after 1941 into what was by 1945 the routine conflation of the Russian past and the Soviet present.

## 9 Wartime Mass Culture and Propaganda

Broad surveys of Soviet mass culture during the war are sometimes confounded by the unexpected diversity of creative expression between 1941 and 1945. At the same time that court historians in Moscow were trying to reconcile nationalism and internationalism, their colleagues in the republican capitals were busy adapting the russocentric semantics of Soviet patriotism to fit local conditions, whether Kazakh, Ukrainian, or Iakut. This explosion of cultural self-expression was also reflected in the work of the Soviet creative intelligentsia, who found that the war eased some of the pressures of state supervision. A. A. Akhmatova, A. P. Platonov, and Dem'ian Bednyi were allowed to publish during this period for the first time in years. Even *Pravda*, the party's mouthpiece, displayed a strikingly unorthodox approach to the official line. According to Jeffrey Brooks, "it was more than a simple co-mingling of Soviet Communism and Russian nationalism. An assortment of narrators with different viewpoints . . . [used] the press in different ways to advance one objective: victory over the invaders."<sup>1</sup>

But how is such creativity to be interpreted in a broader treatment of Soviet mass culture between 1941 and 1945? To what extent did diversity characterize the nature of propaganda efforts on the ground? After all, for every new non-Russian heroic biography that appeared during these years, a dozen similar works concerning Nevskii, Suvorov, and Kutuzov rolled off the presses. Each new Ukrainian historical novel had to compete for recognition not only with A. N. Tolstoi, but with L. N. Tolstoi and A. K. Tolstoi as well. Kazakh and Acmeist poetry vied for public acclaim with Simonov and Lermontov. In other words, characterizing the breadth and depth of Soviet print culture among Russian speakers during the war re-

quires a distinction to be made between the diversity of cultural production and the broader context in which these works appeared on the popular level. The same is true for theater, opera, film, and the visual arts. Essential, then, to any discussion of the grand contours of Soviet wartime mass culture is a survey of what was published in the popular press, applauded at public lectures, dramatized on the stage and screen, and displayed in museums and other public exhibitions between 1941 and 1945.

In the days and weeks after June 22, 1941, state publishing houses released a massive amount of highly politicized material on themes concerning Soviet patriotism, the party, the bankruptcy of Nazi ideology, the situation at the front, and allegories to the present crisis drawn from the Russian national past. But aside from such explicit propaganda, historical fiction and biography, written by both the prerevolutionary greats and their Soviet heirs, were also given priority for their ability to rally public morale. By 1941 literature had played a broadly political role in Soviet society for almost twenty-five years, but its importance after the start of the war is difficult to exaggerate. Literary genres like the historical novel made sense of difficult times, supplying parables to the present struggle that justified agonizing hardship with the promise of honor and glory. Equally powerful were other sorts of prose and verse that touched on the landscape or the people's characteristically "national" traits, stimulating emotions of pride that were deeply personal and yet universal enough to be shared with others. V. P. Potemkin expressed the patriotic power of the written word effectively when he explained the importance of instilling in students "an inextinguishable love for our country, for the Russian language, and for Russian literature. Each pupil must know why he loves his fatherland, what within it is dear to him, and why he has to be ready to give his life for it if necessary."<sup>2</sup>

That Potemkin ascribed such patriotic qualities specifically to Russian literature—and not to Soviet literature or Socialist Realism—was far from accidental. The authority, legitimacy, and content of classical literature made it a critical aspect of the wartime canon. Pushkin, Gogol' and Tolstoi were published throughout this period, and works like V. A. Zhukovskii's poem "A Singer in the Russian Warriors' Camp" and Tolstoi's *War and Peace* served as cornerstones of the school curriculum. Gogol's dramatic tale of Cossack bravado, *Taras Bul'ba*, was also used in schools to characterize Russian bravery at the front, with particular emphasis on the work's concluding lines: "But can there really be in existence such fires, such tor-

tures or such a power that might overwhelm the Russian spirit?"<sup>3</sup> Published in cheap mass editions, these works were also excerpted into anthologies such as *The Motherland: What Russian Writers Have Had to Say about Their Native Land*. Published in 1942, this collection assembled a massive array of patriotic passages drawn from *The Tale of Igor's Host* and the oeuvre of greats like Lomonosov, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol', Herzen, Chernyshevskii, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Turgenev, and a dozen others.<sup>4</sup> The anachronistic assemblage of this collection, compounded by the inclusion of names such as N. M. Karamzin and F. M. Dostoevskii, illustrates the pragmatism that governed the wartime period's drafting of literature into the service of the state.

Massive demand for the classics was matched by popular interest in Soviet-era historical literature and biography. Books like Tarle's *Nakhimov, Napoleon*, and *The Defense of Sevastopol'* were impossible to keep on bookstore shelves, as were V. Ian's *Chingiz Khan* and *Batyi*, Borodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi*, S. Golubev's *Bagration*, and Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ's two books, *The Ordeal of Sevastopol'* and *Brusilov's Breakthrough*. Poetry such as A. A. Surkov's "Motherland" and I. Sel'vinskiĭ's "To Russia" was read with similar hunger.<sup>5</sup> More challenging works, like A. N. Tolstoi's and V. I. Kostylev's rehabilitations of Ivan the Terrible, found wide readership as well, as did hastily written biographies concerning "great Russian military commanders" including V. Mavrodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi, Peter the First*, and A. A. Brusilov, S. Anninskiĭ's *Aleksandr Nevskii*, and V. Kochanov's *Mikhail Kutuzov*.<sup>6</sup> Soviet writer Marietta Shaginian commented in her diary in 1942 on the public's newfound passion for such works,

the demand for historical literature has undergone a fundamental change: if earlier the basic demand for this literature came from middle school students and those enrolled in higher education, now demand has developed among ordinary readers for literature concerning our Motherland's heroic past, the people's struggle for their independence, etc.

Demand for artistic literature and the classics remains as high as before and demand for the historical belles lettres is growing dramatically (L. Tolstoi, A. Tolstoi, Borodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi*, Ian's *Batyi*, and others).<sup>7</sup>

Despite the popularity of this genre, many of these titles were rather utilitarian, being not only aesthetically undistinguished but, in some cases, the product of what Blium called a "social commission." That is to say,

some were written under the supervision of party authorities—a form of authorship motivated by emotions ranging from patriotism and servility to a desire to avoid the difficulties that had plagued the creative intelligentsia during the mid-1930s. A good example of this phenomenon are the latter volumes of a historical trilogy published by V. G. Ianchevetskii under the pen name V. Ian. Begun before the war, these books were to be sequels to Ianchevetskii's 1938 *Chingiz Khan* and shared with their predecessor a focus on the era of the so-called Tatar-Mongol Yoke. *Batyi* concerned a thirteenth-century Mongol overlord and the popular resistance to his subjugation of Rus', while the last volume of the series, originally titled *The Golden Horde*, was to revolve around a semimythical battle of wills between Batyi and Aleksandr Nevskii.<sup>8</sup>

Evidence for these books' status as a "social commission" stems from Ianchevetskii's decision to consult with Shcherbakov in April 1940 as he was finishing *Batyi* and starting the third part of the trilogy, despite his earlier success with the subject matter. According to his son, Ianchevetskii met with the party boss in order to "sketch out Aleksandr Nevskii, the hero of the forthcoming book, as a Russian patriot and a diplomatic visionary whose plans would only be realized by his great-grandson, Dmitrii Donskoi."<sup>9</sup> This theme of resistance, perseverance, and self-sacrifice not only won Shcherbakov's approval, but it ultimately struck a deep chord with Soviet audiences after the novel's release. In early 1943, for instance, a major general named P. G. Tiukhov wrote in his diary,

today I read Ian's novel *Batyi* to the end. It's a wonderful novel that opens up for you the distant past of our Motherland (1238). So, after enduring so much suffering and so many sacrifices, it seemed as if our country would perish. But, against all odds, [our country] was reborn, something that will always instill in us a love for our heroic ancestors. If you know the past, you'll always have faith in the future. Isn't that why our country has always suffered—and still suffers—from its foreign enemies? . . . Individual Russians may perish along the way, but the immortal Russian people shall never perish, nor shall Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The only other book Tiukhov wrote about so extensively during the war was a biography of Suvorov, published by Osip Kuperman under the pen name K. Osipov. A popularized version of his prewar biography of the eighteenth-century field marshal, Kuperman's 1942 book was greeted with considerable acclaim.<sup>11</sup> Tiukhov wrote at length about the book in

his diary, underscoring its potential as an instructional aid for his fellow officers.<sup>12</sup> What makes Tiukhov's assessment of *Suvorov* so interesting is the fact that Kuperman had been commissioned to write precisely such a book by none other than Stalin himself. As Kuperman noted to the general secretary upon completion of the manuscript in 1942, he had cut down his earlier book as requested and redesigned it for middle-ranking officers, simplifying everything except for its treatment of the Seven Years' War with Prussia ("in view of this question's relevance at the present time"). More generally, he wrote, "I've tried to give it a military-educational character and at the same time to make it a propaganda book. I also tried to make the narrative lively and clear." Eager to see *Suvorov* published, Kuperman returned again and again in his letter to the "unbreakable connection between the book's theme and the contemporary situation."<sup>13</sup>

To Kuperman's delight, his efforts were quickly vindicated with a major contract. Within a week of the manuscript's receipt, it had not only been approved, but Shcherbakov had secured Stalin's permission to send 30,000 copies to the front as soon as they could be published.<sup>14</sup> And although this was probably reward enough as far as Kuperman was concerned, Tiukhov's ecstatic reaction to *Suvorov* after its release is remarkable for the degree to which it reflects its author's original intentions:

This book makes a big impression on you. It's as if the image of the great military commander Suvorov comes alive and summons you to the struggle, to acts of valor [*podvigi*] for the Motherland. And he doesn't just summon you, he teaches you how to struggle with foreign enemies and how to distract your domestic enemies. The image of Suvorov calls you to life and conveys a heartfelt sort of strength. I'm grateful to the author for the great work that he's done in order to resurrect the image of Suvorov as a person and a military commander among the people.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time that Kuperman was working on *Suvorov*, another of Stalin's court litterateurs, K. Simonov, was drafting a play that would complement his colleague's rather conventional celebration of battlefield valor. Choosing to mythologize everyday heroes at the front instead of famous names from the distant past, Simonov titled his play—perhaps unsurprisingly—*The Russian People*. A. N. Tolstoi did the same with his short story "The Russian Character," as did Sel'vinskii with his lyrical "Russian Infantry."<sup>16</sup> United by their broad celebration of Russianness, these works speak to a symbiotic interplay between genres—historical biography,



# БЕЙ, КОЛИ, ГОНИ, БЕРИ В ПОЛОН!

А. СУВОРОВ

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A. V. Suvorov looming over Red Army soldiers, commanding, "Attack, stab, drive them back, take them into captivity!" Stalin's November 7, 1941, declaration appears in the top right corner: "In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors!" (1941 poster by V. Ivanov)

drama, fiction, and verse—that would last for the duration of the war. Agitprop was still calling for new literature on historic Russian heroes in mid-1944, a month before the Soviet armies drove German forces back across the frontier into present-day Poland. Evidence of the enduring relevancy of the subject matter, articles were commissioned to appear in *Pravda* that would complement the new books with discussions of “the origins of the Russian People,” “the formation in Russia of a Russian multinational state [*sic*],” and “the heroic traditions of the great Russian people.”<sup>17</sup>

This coordination of the press with popular literature points to another successful bridging of genres between 1941 and 1945. Before the war, prominent members of the creative intelligentsia had written for the principle dailies with some regularity, but this practice was institutionalized after the start of the war by S. A. Lozovskii, Shcherbakov’s deputy at Sovinformburo.<sup>18</sup> *Krasnaia zvezda* quickly hired Simonov, Ehrenburg, Grossman, Panferov, Surkov, and Tikhonov as staff writers, and sparred with *Pravda* over publishing precedence when it came to Tolstoi and Sholokhov. According to Brooks, such an infusion of talent utterly transformed the Soviet press, as Simonov, Ehrenburg, and others dispatched with the traditional vocabulary of stock phrases and ritualized clichés in an attempt to “address the readers in their own voices.”<sup>19</sup>

Such populism almost inevitably valorized the notion of Russianness, whether in historical perspective or in relation to the contemporary war. It may be somewhat unsurprising that people like Tolstoi repeatedly emphasized the Russian people’s historic role as “first among equals,”<sup>20</sup> but others with more unambiguously “Soviet” credentials like Ehrenburg came to indulge in neonationalist sloganeering as well. Ehrenburg is an interesting case in point, insofar as his Jewish background and extensive experience in Europe sometimes led him to emphasize issues that his editors found excessively “cosmopolitan” or insufficiently patriotic.<sup>21</sup> Although such periodic lapses did not result in scandals of the sort that complicated the careers of a number of his colleagues, Ehrenburg’s relationship with his superiors was nevertheless quite adversarial at times.<sup>22</sup> Describing one such incident in his memoirs, Ehrenburg recounted how Shcherbakov reproached him for his insufficient concern about “the mood of the Russian people.” Elaborating, Shcherbakov told him to downplay his leftist, high-brow style: “the soldiers want to hear about Suvorov and you are quoting [Heinrich] Heine . . . Borodino is closer [to us] than the Paris Commune.”<sup>23</sup>

Popular demand for nativist rhetoric and imagery was not just supplied by print media, of course. Since books and periodicals were often in short supply, public lectures also attempted to slake widespread thirst for new information and inspiration. Iaroslavskii and other prominent historians referred to episodes from the recent past, like Germany's brief occupation of Ukraine in 1918, to illustrate how temporary Nazi gains were.<sup>24</sup> Other lectures, in forums ranging from public libraries to metro-station bomb shelters, concerned not only "Soviet patriotism" but also "the Russian epic heroes," Minin and Pozharskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Nevskii, and "Brusilov's breakthrough."<sup>25</sup> At a factory in Moscow's Krasnopresnenskii district, professional historians lectured on "the origins of the Russian state" and "the defeat of the German mongrel-knights in the thirteenth century." In Gor'kii, a local historian gave talks on the topic "The Age-Old Fate of the Slavs," the War of 1812, and Suvorov.<sup>26</sup> Of course, not all lecturers were so qualified. A. N. Boldyrev made presentations on Peter, Ushakov, the Battle on the Ice, and Sevastopol' in Leningrad during the spring of 1942 despite the fact that he was actually a specialist in Iranian languages.<sup>27</sup>

Stalin's November 7, 1941, speech was a frequent topic of such lectures insofar as it seamlessly connected Russian national heroes with Soviet patriotic identity and the leader's own cult of personality. Such an impression is clear from the transcript of a July 1943 lecture in Moscow province by a certain Vygodskii. Declaring that "in his works, Comrade Stalin has underscored many times the idea of Soviet patriotism," Vygodskii continued, "he speaks of the Russian people's great past, he speaks of our ancestors, of the Russian people's glorious traditions, and he speaks of the great people of the past, of patriots—of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Chernyshevskii, Repin, and Pavlov. He instructs the army and Soviet people to be deserving of the heroic Russian people's glorious traditions."<sup>28</sup> Lectures a year later in Moscow's Frunze and Lenin districts continued to echo these themes, specifically citing "Comrade Stalin on the valiant example of our great ancestors and the great Russian nation," among others.<sup>29</sup> Such a conflation of Russian and Soviet themes seems to have been quite routine, as illustrated by the titles of the following lectures at factories in Moscow during 1945: "The War of 1812," "The History of the Kremlin," "The History of the Russian Military Leaders," "Suvorov," "Kutuzov," "Aleksandr Nevskii," "Our Great Forefathers," "The Bolshevik Party, Organizer of the Hitlerites' [*sic*] 1918 Defeat in Ukraine," and "Borodino." Lectures on current events followed the same pattern, one example concern-

ing “The Russian People’s Love for the Motherland and Their Selfless Heroism.”<sup>30</sup> Radio transmission enabled these lectures to reach the broadest possible audiences.<sup>31</sup>

Museums complemented propaganda efforts with exhibitions devoted to similar themes. Despite the evacuation of the city’s major collections, Leningrad struggled throughout the blockade to mount agitational exhibitions. In one case, over 12,000 visitors walked through an exhibit that flanked Kutuzov’s tomb in the Kazan’ Cathedral after its opening in 1943. A certain Lieutenant Krivosheev left the following note in the visitors’ book associated with the installation:

As a commander of young soldiers who have only recently entered the ranks of the heroic warriors of the Motherland, I’d like to express my grateful thanks to the museum staff for their reception and guided tour . . . I swear to you, Motherland, as an officer, that in all my affairs, both in training and combat, I will follow the example of the Great Russian military leaders [*podrazhat’ Velikim russkim polkovodtsam*]. My soldiers will be trained in such a way that they will love the Fatherland [*Otchizna*] without bounds and hate the enemies of the Russian land.

Sixth graders from Leningrad School No. 208 expressed similar feelings, testifying to the exhibit’s illustration of the connections that linked patriotism, the Russian land, and military service:

The life of the great military leader, a patriot of our beloved land, was lively and interesting. Loving his Motherland, Kutuzov bravely and fearlessly commanded his troops in battle, protected their lives and strength, and returned with a victory over the foreign occupiers. Leaving the exhibit, we as one are all the more convinced that the Hitlerlite army, which has come to enslave us, will [instead] perish on the plains of our expansive land [*na nashikh prostorakh*].<sup>32</sup>

Exhibitions in Moscow at the State History Museum and the Museum of the City’s Reconstruction echoed many of the same themes. An installation in the History Museum drew 600 people a day with its display of material associated with the 1760 occupation of Berlin during the Seven Years’ War.<sup>33</sup> Over 30,000 Moscow residents visited this museum during the first six months of the war alone.<sup>34</sup> The Museum of the Red Army mounted a show entitled “The Heroism of the Great Russian People,” which focused on events associated with the War of 1812 as well as more



**ПУСТЬ ВОДХНОВАЯЕТ ВАС  
В ЭТОЙ ВОЙНЕ МУЖЕСТВЕННЫЙ ОБРАЗ  
НАШИХ ВЕЛИКИХ ПРЕДКОВ!**

**И. СТАЛИН**

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Soviet troops on Borodino Field under the watchful gaze of M. I. Kutuzov. The monument reads, "To heroic deeds of valor—glory, honor, and remembrance." Beneath the image is Stalin's November 7, 1941, declaration: "In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors!" (1941 poster by V. Ivanov and O. Burova)

recent conflicts in German-occupied Ukraine in 1918 and on the Finnish border in 1939–40.<sup>35</sup> Mobile exhibits were mounted all across the RSFSR in places as diverse as the foyer of a Vologda theater, the Antireligious Museum in the Buriat ASSR, and an ethnographic museum in Kalinin, not to mention numerous metro-station platforms in the capital.<sup>36</sup> Visitors' books from exhibits in Moscow between 1943 and 1944 contain comments like the following:

I liked the exhibit and lecture because they illustrate the goal and significance of the Russian people's struggle with German fascism in visual terms according to the examples of our glorious forefathers.  
[Red Army soldier M. P. Sirotkin]

The great Russian military leaders' images are an example to us and require us, soldiers and commanders, to fight with the Hitlerites in such a way that not a single occupant will be left on our holy land.  
[Anonymous]<sup>37</sup>

Similar exhibitions devoted to the "Russian people's heroic past" were mounted from Astrakhan' to Sakhalin.<sup>38</sup>

Commitment to the Russian national past can also be seen in the enormous efforts that were made early in the war to protect landmarks from advancing Wehrmacht troops.<sup>39</sup> When German marauders damaged or destroyed historic sites—L. N. Tolstoi's estate at Iasnaia Poliana, Tchaikovsky's cottage in Klin, the Chekhov museum in Taganrog, the monastery complex at Novgorod, or the Catherinian palaces on the outskirts of Leningrad—Soviet propaganda used these incidents to diversify the list of German crimes against the Russian nation.<sup>40</sup> New landmarks continued to be unveiled as well, as if to symbolically compensate for the losses. In early 1944, for instance, just blocks away from the bombed-out shell of Pushkin's Moika canal apartment, the name of Leningrad's main thoroughfare was restored to Nevskii, after having been clumsily known for over a quarter-century as the Avenue of the Twenty-Fifth of October.<sup>41</sup>

Theatrical and operatic productions echoed these themes as well, despite the difficulties involved in staging major productions in a time of war. Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila* and *Ivan Susanin* (that is, the Soviet version of *A Life for the Tsar*) played during the 1941–42 season alongside Borodin's *Prince Igor*, Tchaikovsky's *Evgenii Onegin*, A. N. Ostrovskii's *Koz'ma Zakhar'ich Minin-Sukhomik* and *Warlord*, Gogol's *Inspector General*, and an adaptation of L. N. Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina*.<sup>42</sup> Almost as

**НАША ПРАВДА. БЕЙТЕСЬ ДО СМЕРТИ!**

*Дмитрий Погогарский.*



**ПУСТЬ ВДОХНОВЛЯЕТ ВАС  
В ЭТОЙ ВОЙНЕ МУЖЕСТВЕННЫЙ ОБРАЗ  
НАШИХ ВЕЛИКИХ ПРЕДКОВ!**

**И. СТАЛИН**

---

Red Army troops supported by a popular militia from 1612. Dmitrii Pozharskii is quoted as declaring: "Truth is on our side. Fight to the death!" Beneath the image is Stalin's November 7, 1941, declaration: "In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors!" (1942 poster by Pogarskii)

popular were contemporary productions like Solov'ev's *1812*, *Field Marshal Kutuzov*, and *The Great Sovereign* (about Ivan the Terrible), as well as Simonov's *The Russian People*, A. N. Tolstoi's *The Russian Character*, A. Gladkov's *A Long, Long Time Ago—The Fledglings of Glory* (about the War of 1812), K. Finn and M. Gus's *The Keys to Berlin* (about the Seven Years' War), and Sel'vinskii's *General Brusilov*.<sup>43</sup> A doctor named E. Sakharova praised a Moscow production of *Suvorov* at the Stanislavskii Theater in a diary entry from March 1942.<sup>44</sup> There was great demand for Simonov's wartime plays: between 1941 and 1942, a Moscow province drama theater put on *The Russian People* fifty-six times in fourteen major industrial regions to an estimated audience of over 45,000.<sup>45</sup> The play also debuted in Saratov during the summer of 1942, complementing the staging of *Evgenii Onegin* and *Ivan Susanin*.<sup>46</sup> As is evident from a 1944 letter written by N. A. Nikanorov, such shows were even put on in the Gulag: "I've been assigned to the Magadan theater. I am playing Brusilov in Sel'vinskii's play *General Brusilov* and get enormous pleasure from the fact that my rendering of Brusilov is received with great love by audience members who, through my Brusilov, hate the Germans even more that they did before the spectacle."<sup>47</sup>

Cinema, too, served in the mobilization campaign as it had throughout the 1930s. Prewar feature films like *Peter the First*, *Suvorov*, and *Minin and Pozharskii* complemented newsreels, as did *Aleksandr Nevskii*, which returned to the silver screen after a twenty-month hiatus precipitated by the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty in August 1939.<sup>48</sup> Authorities like I. I. Mints ascribed great popularity to these historical epics, and his appraisal would seem to be borne out in the sources.<sup>49</sup> If urban movie houses were packed during the summer and fall of 1941,<sup>50</sup> cinema was present in the countryside as well. The Sverdlovsk province party committee, for example, used portable projectors in 1942 to screen *Aleksandr Nevskii*, *Suvorov*, and *Minin and Pozharskii* for collective farmers as a part of a film festival on the theme of national defense.<sup>51</sup> Later releases, like Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* and Petrov's adaptation of Solov'ev's *Field Marshal Kutuzov*, also enjoyed considerable popularity, in part because advance publicity had given them a broad social profile years before their eventual premieres.<sup>52</sup>

Other titles in circulation during these years—*Bogdan Khmel'nitskii*, *Georgii Sakaadze*, and *David-Bek*—served in something of an auxiliary role in the realm of cinematic propaganda.<sup>53</sup> Films that at least nominally foregrounded Ukrainian, Georgian, and Armenian themes, they stemmed

from broader celebrations of non-Russian history and literature under way in the republics early in the war. As with other genres of creative expression, however, republican cinema during the war was required to cleave tightly to the dominant russocentric line. Peter Kenez notes that although the films were supposed to emphasize non-Russian martial traditions, directors “had to be careful to choose a hero who had shown his mettle by fighting an enemy other than the Russians.” “Preferably,” Kenez continues, the spirit of “‘the friendship of the peoples’ was to be projected into the past through films that showed, for example, that the safety and happiness of the Armenians had always depended on their alliance with the Russians.”<sup>54</sup> Neglect of this symbiosis condemned screenplays to the same fate that befell Pankratova’s “anti-Russian” *History of the Kazakh SSR*, as is aptly illustrated by the 1944 scandal surrounding A. P. Dovzhenko’s “nationalist” *Ukraine in Flames*.<sup>55</sup>

In a recent article, Jeffrey Brooks argues that the wartime press’s russo-centrism has traditionally been overstated in the scholarly literature: “Russian . . . themes were a minor part of the larger discourse and articles about ‘Holy Russia,’ which made a great impression on some foreign observers, were infrequent amidst the daily news of the war.”<sup>56</sup> Such a view is obviously very difficult to reconcile with the preceding discussion, which finds russocentric themes to have been virtually ubiquitous in Soviet wartime mass culture.<sup>57</sup> Alexander Werth summarized the situation well in a 1942 diary entry with the statement that “there is no longer a dividing line between Soviet and Russian.”<sup>58</sup> Looking back at the war in 1950, one witness observed to interviewers associated with the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System that “when war broke out in 1941, all the communist mottos [slogans] were taken away and Russian mottos were used in the struggle against Naziism [*sic*].” Another noted frankly that between 1941 and 1945, “Russians fought for their home-land, not for the Communist Party.”<sup>59</sup>

This is not to say that there was no coverage of non-Russian topics in Soviet mass culture. Rather, there were both quantitative and qualitative differences between discussions about Russian and non-Russian themes that placed the former in a privileged position vis-à-vis the latter. An account drawn from the diary of a Moscow journalist, N. K. Verzhbitskii, illustrates this distinction well. While commenting upon the appearance of an article in the central press about the heroic feats of a non-Russian Red Army soldier named Ibragimov, Verzhbitskii noted that such coverage

tended to appear one day and disappear the next. He contrasted this practice with the tsarist tradition during the First World War of celebrating exotic heroes like the Cossack Kuz'ma Kriuchkov for weeks on end.<sup>60</sup> Implied is the perceptive observation that non-Russians had ceased to qualify for sustained wartime press coverage, a state of affairs that condemned the Ibragimovs of the war to obscurity amid the enormous amount of attention the press afforded to Russian heroes of contemporary and historic pedigree, from Kosmodem'ianskaia to Kutuzov.

That this shift stemmed from russocentric convictions rather than mere Orientalism is clear from a scandal that rocked the Ukrainian party organization in late 1943. The origins of the debacle are humble enough, involving the Ukrainian party's attempt to publish a letter in the central press that had been read aloud at a mass open-air meeting in Kiev following that city's liberation in November of that year. Referring to Russo-Ukrainian friendship and cooperation during the war, the letter waxed rhapsodic about this alliance's many precedents. Danilo Galitskii had supposedly supported Aleksandr Nevskii in his clashes with the Teutonic Knights, just as Bogdan Khmel'nitskii had reunited Ukraine with Russia. Generally speaking, the letter continued, Ukrainians had assisted the Russians "in the wars with the Polish nobility, in the battles near Poltava, in Suvorov's campaigns, in Kutuzov's armies, in Chapaev's, Shchors', and Bozhenko's brigades—everywhere where the fate of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples has been decided, where the question of the lives and armies of these two peoples [has arisen]—always and everywhere these brotherly peoples have stood together, made war together, and been victorious together." Placing Ukrainians in a clearly subordinate position, local heroes were paired with Russian mentors—Kotliarevskii with Ryleev, Gogol' with Herzen, Shevchenko with Chernyshevskii, and Kotsiubinskii with Gor'kii—while the entire relationship was underscored by the conclusion that "Ukraine can be free only in union with the Russian people."<sup>61</sup>

Forwarded to Agitprop in what seems to have been a fairly routine pre-publication practice, the piece elicited an intemperate response from G. F. Aleksandrov:

this contradicts historical facts as well as the evaluation of the role of the Russians and the other peoples in the history of the Soviet Union that is accepted by all our peoples and our party. It is known and accepted by all that the Russian people are the elder brother in the Soviet Union's family of peoples. "In Russia," Comrade Stalin has said,

“the Great Russians [*velikorossy*] took upon themselves the role of the unifier of the nationalities” (*Marxism and the National-Colonial Question*, p. 10). “In terms of historical development, we have received from the past the inheritance by which one nationality, that is, the Great Russians [*velikorosskaia*], has turned out to be more developed in political and industrial relations than the other nationalities” (p. 74). Such are the facts and such is the party’s point of view on the role of the Russians and the other peoples. But instead, the authors of the letter contend that there are two leading peoples of the Soviet Union—the Russians and the Ukrainians. The letter’s authors consider the Ukrainian people to have played the same role that the Russian people have . . . This assertion plays into the hands of nationalism.

Before concluding with a firm stand against the publication of the letter, Aleksandrov specifically refuted the claim that Danilo Galitskii had ever assisted Aleksandr Nevskii. According to the Agitprop chief, while Nevskii was occupied with the struggle against the Teutonic Knights, Galitskii was engaged in “internecine fighting with the southern Russian princes and therefore could not have aided Aleksandr Nevskii in inflicting a blow against the Germans.”<sup>62</sup>

Aleksandrov’s Russian chauvinism, bolstered by the authority of selective quotations from Stalin’s oeuvre, explains more than just the fleeting nature of references to Ibragimov or the suppression of the Ukrainian party’s letter. Chauvinism within Agitprop—and more generally among Soviet ideological cadres as a whole—led Soviet mobilizational propaganda during the war to be predicated on russocentrism, nativism, and jingoism, in addition to more traditional national Bolshevik appeals. It also led to the dismissal of concerns voiced by the likes of A. M. Pankratova about the heretical nature of ethnically oriented propaganda in a Marxist state. But if there was at least some debate over this line within the party’s ideological establishment, such a diversity of opinion was not visible on the ground. Russian-oriented appeals shaped the content of everything from literature and theater to film and public exhibition. Alternating between the celebration of the Russian national past and the valor of ethnic Russians at the front, wartime national Bolshevism by 1945 had eclipsed ideological alternatives based on either proletarian internationalism or non-Russian national themes.

## 10 Popular Engagement with the Official Line during the War

In June 1944 a Red Army soldier named Nikolai Safonov launched into a long tirade about what it meant to be Russian that was fiery enough for one of the members of his unit to transcribe the statement into his diary:

One has to be an extremely limited person not to know how enormous a place in world culture Russian literature, music, and works of art occupy. The entire civilized world takes pride in Pushkin, Tolstoi, Repin, Surikov, Tchaikovsky, Rimskii-Korsakov, and Glinka and that makes it all the more insulting that there are “Russians” who don’t understand their greatness. After all, art is a nation’s moral face and soul.

Or take science. Could any other country as perpetually in the grip of reaction as [nineteenth-century] Russia produce Mendeleev, Pavlov, Timiriazev, or Tsiolkovskii? . . . How many discoveries made in Russia [during those days] remained unutilized and how many were usurped by others?

Has any other people possessed such personalities as Peter and Lenin? Very few. And not a single other people, if you please, could sustain the stress of three revolutions and three great wars over the span of less than half a century.

This enormous country has been entirely transformed over the past 20–25 years, and an entirely new generation of people have been trained who have proven to be talented enough to withstand the insane onslaught of all of Europe.

Every Russian can have his views about life and the merits and

shortcomings of our social order, but he cannot lack a feeling of pride for his nation and people.

This diatribe is remarkable in the sense that it neatly distilled seven years of Soviet propaganda into a single impassioned statement. Indeed, sensing that Safonov was beginning to wax a bit melodramatic, another member of his unit named Iakov Kaplun gently interrupted him: “Kolia, enough already—it’s starting to sound like an agitator’s lecture.”<sup>1</sup>

But despite his eloquence, Safonov was not an agitator, nor was he an officer nor even a party member. Little more than an ordinary Red Army soldier, Safonov had been drafted into service while attending engineering courses at Moscow’s Bauman Technical Institute and was a typical “promotee” (*vydvizhenets*) of the Stalin era. Yet it is his youth and humble origins that ultimately present something of a paradox: where had Safonov learned to express himself with such fervor and demagoguery?

The answer, in a sense, is elementary: Safonov’s identity as a Russian patriot had taken shape within the hothouse of stalinist mass culture during the late 1930s, either in school or under the influence of the press, literature, theater, and film. It was national Bolshevism’s new vocabulary of Russian heroes, myths, and iconography, compounded by wartime propaganda’s undisguised ethnic particularism, that allowed Safonov to speak so articulately and with such confidence about what it meant to be Russian in 1944.

But can Safonov be considered representative of Russian-speaking society during the war? Perhaps the only way to characterize how people like Safonov responded to official propaganda between 1941 and 1945 is to scour a vast swath of letters, diaries, and secret police reports from the period in search of the glimpses of popular opinion that these sources sometimes afford. Broadly speaking, such letters and diaries reveal that Russians during these years described themselves in terms that were uncharacteristically “ethnic” for Soviet society up to that point.<sup>2</sup> Also evident in the sources is the rehabilitation of the Russian national past,<sup>3</sup> as well as the political term “Russia.”<sup>4</sup> This russification of culture and history was matched by a similar tendency to describe geographic landmarks in ethnic terms, for example, “the Russian land” (*ruskaia zemlia*) or “the Russian woods” (*ruskii les*).<sup>5</sup> Finally, these sources indicate that the conflation of the terms “Russian” and “Soviet” became commonplace during this time, especially in regard to descriptions of Red Army soldiers.<sup>6</sup> But perhaps most revealing is specific analysis of opinions expressed among soldiers, ci-

vilians, and schoolchildren between 1941 and 1945, insofar as such details are critical to a nuanced understanding of the popular reception of national Bolshevik sloganeering during the war.

It is a curious fact that when Soviet forces reclaimed territory from the Wehrmacht, Red Army soldiers were often taken aback at the amount of pornography they discovered in abandoned German bunkers.<sup>7</sup> While this reaction stemmed in part from the prudish nature of Soviet state publishing, it also relates to the troops' own reading interests. After all, Red Army soldiers—like the rest of Russian speakers in Soviet society—consumed an enormous amount of historical literature during the war, and while much of it was fairly lowbrow in execution, its influence over popular *mentalité* is impossible to overstate.<sup>8</sup> A canon chiefly composed of novels and short stories by both prerevolutionary writers and their Soviet-era heirs, it also included nonfiction narratives and historical biography—from *1812* and *The Crimean War* to *Napoleon* and *Nakhimov*. Evidence of popular enthusiasm for such literature is visible in readers' responses to specific works. N. N. Inozemtsev, for instance, was so enthralled by Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ's *Brusilov's Breakthrough* that he commented in his diary about how he had read the book from cover to cover in one sitting. The same officer found Kostylev's apologia regarding Ivan IV worthy of mention as well: "Kostylev's *Ivan the Terrible* is a new interpretation, in actual fact, of how to represent Ivan." Implicitly comparing Ivan IV's new reputation as a state-builder to the image of him as a tyrant that had prevailed before 1937, Inozemtsev noted that Kostylev's revisionist appraisal was "so different from that of 8–10 years ago!"<sup>9</sup>

Another officer—Major General and Hero of the Soviet Union I. Fesin—revealed a voracious appetite for reading when he answered *Literaturnaia gazeta's* "What I Read during the War" survey in 1944. Aside from rereading *War and Peace*, Fesin claimed to have found the time to give serious thought to a number of other related titles:

S. Golubev's *Bagration* interested me from the standpoint of the hero's biography—the details of his life, his training, and military work. But for me the image of Bagration as a strategist and his [mastery of] the art of military leadership remained obscure. In that sense, it seems to me that K. Pigarev's *Soldier-Military Leader* and M. Bragin's *Military Leader Kutuzov* were more valuable and instructive. For me, as a military man, they provide a lot of material for con-

crete conclusions and generalizations about various sorts of military phenomena, as well as the best presentation of the conditions and circumstances of wars in the past.

Fesin's colleague, Lieutenant Colonel S. Baishev, turned out to have spent a lot of time poring over A. N. Tolstoi's *Peter the First*. Describing the novel as an epiphany of sorts, he explained: "I've studied history [in the past] and read many historical books, but only now have I received a genuine impression of the epoch . . . [its specific] details and a clear sense of its history."<sup>10</sup>

Surprisingly avid readers, Red Army soldiers sometimes were engaged enough with what they were reading to communicate their enthusiasm back to their favorite authors. For instance, a certain Captain G. Ia. Kozlov wrote enthusiastically to D. S. Likhachev about the latter's article "The Culture of Kiev Rus' during the Epoch of Iaroslav the Wise," published in *Istoricheskii zhurnal* in 1943. Noting that he had read the journal before and liked it "especially now at the front during such times," he thanked the historian for the article and added in more personal terms that "it provided me with captivating pleasure and topped-off my rather modest knowledge with valuable facts from the history of our Great Russian fatherland [*otchizna*]."<sup>11</sup> A political officer named B. Rusanov wrote a letter on behalf of his entire unit to the historian N. S. Derzhavin in early 1943 in gratitude for another inspirational work:

We, as participants in the two historic battles of Stalingrad and Korsun-Shevchenkensk, especially thank you for your book, *The Slavs' Eternal Struggle with German Invaders*, which shows the greatness of the Slavic peoples' spirit and their adamant resolution in the struggle with German enslavers across the span of history. We are proud that our forefathers have always been the victors in struggles with German occupiers, and we can say now with total assurance that the Slavic peoples' descendants, along with the other freedom-loving peoples of the world, will be the victors in the Great Patriotic War as well.<sup>12</sup>

If such a preoccupation with Slavic ancestry would seem to be an odd way to represent this multiethnic society's war effort, many other letters reduced the war to a purely *Russian* affair. A. V. Manusevich, for instance, wrote to Ianchevetskii, the author of *Chingiz Khan* and *Batyi*, about his inspirational treatments of the Russian people's struggle with the Tatar-

Mongol Yoke. "Allow me to especially thank you for *Baty's* chapter 'And Then Rus' Began to Rebuild Anew,'" wrote Manusevich. It is "filled with faith in the energy and abilities of the Russian people—a people who can withstand any test. As we liberate cities that have been destroyed by the enemy and villages that have been burned to the ground, we see how once again 'Rus' Is Beginning to Rebuild' and we see that no matter how thoroughly ravished our lands have been at the hands of these new fascist-rapists, sprouts of life have already begun to poke through the charred, tortured earth."<sup>13</sup>

Such letters made a big impact on historians writing this sort of material. I. I. Mints, for instance, reported excitedly to his colleagues at a wartime conference that demand for books like *Chingiz Khan* and Borodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi* was reaching unprecedented levels. "This speaks to the fact that the people want to think about contemporary heroes through the models of the past [*skvoz' starye obraztsy*]. We must help them. We must write and publish books on these themes."<sup>14</sup> When soldiers found existing material to be inadequate, some took matters into their own hands—strong evidence of the popular interest and engagement that Mints described. Such motives, for instance, led two officers to petition Bakhrushin to write a book on Ivan the Terrible, while another asked A. N. Tolstoi for a new pamphlet series.<sup>15</sup>

Although supplying the front with new agitational literature was a major state priority, private initiatives in the rear supplemented this effort with secondhand books as well. As dictated by Eastern European tradition, many of those who sent volumes to the front inscribed a dedication inside the front cover, and these inscriptions reveal a great deal about the way people related to the ongoing war. Zhenia Prikhod'ko, for example, glossed Stalin's November 7 speech in a note that graced a book about Kutuzov: "May the example of our great ancestors—Kutuzov, Suvorov, and Nevskii—inspire you, young warrior, to perform heroic deeds in the name of our victory." Soldiers, in turn, thanked people like Prikhod'ko with letters in which they expressed gratitude for the historically oriented literature. "Among the books you've sent," wrote one, "there are many about our great ancestors—Aleksandr Nevskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov[—] and about the immortal heroes—Shchors, Chapaev, and Kotovskii. Their examples arm us in the merciless struggle with the enemy."<sup>16</sup>

No less politicized were more conventional letters from the front sent home to friends, family, and local newspapers. Excerpts from a selection of

semiliterate soldiers' letters to civilians in the Tambov region are instructive in this regard:

We will avenge, regain, and not give up to be sullied the Russian lands upon which our forefathers more than once shed considerable blood. On the field of battle we will not shame our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, who more than once defended with their breasts the great and mighty Rus' from the invasions of numerous enemies under Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kutuzov, and Suvorov, [as well as] during Minin's and Pozharskii's Time of Troubles and times of triumph . . . In this great, liberating patriotic war, I will fight to eliminate the fascist reptiles [*gady*] with all my might and with all available resources so that I will not cast shame upon [the history of] Russian arms, our honored grandfathers, forefathers, and the collective farmers of Tambov. [Senior Lieutenant V. A. Pustyrev]

May the German "knights" remember how our forefathers beat theirs. We're going to beat them now, every last one of us. [Deputy Political Commissar Demenkov]

Seven hundred years ago, the great Russian military commander Aleksandr Nevskii said: "Whosoever comes to us with the sword shall perish by the sword. Such is the law of the Russian land and such it always shall be." The German fascist invaders came to us with the sword. And by the sword they shall perish. They shall be eliminated by fire and bayonet; they will be crushed and destroyed by tanks and planes built by the hands of the Soviet people. [Lieutenants Ovdin and Subochev]

In 1812, the Russian people, rising up to fight Napoleon, held out until victory was theirs. Only the pathetic remains of Napoleon's troops were able to retreat homeward. There is no doubt that in the present Patriotic War, our people, mustering their true might, will defeat the enemy. That time is not far off. It is approaching. [Captain A. Zorin]

The historical analogies invoked by many of these soldiers clearly stemmed from sources like Tolstoi's *War and Peace* and Eisenstein's *Aleksandr Nevskii*. Another powerful source of imagery and rhetoric was Stalin's fa-



Postcards from the front, embossed with pictures of A. V. Suvorov and Dmitrii Pozharskii and underscored by Stalin's November 7, 1941, declaration: "In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors—Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz'ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov." (circa 1943, Artists' Lithographic Workshop)

mous speeches from November 1941, which a number of letters gloss in their framing of the current struggle with Germany:

Blood-thirsty Hitler and his gang [*svora*] wanted to enslave our freedom-loving people—a people who have produced such great writers as Pushkin, Herzen, Lermontov, and Nekrasov and such great military leaders as Nevskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Bagration, a people who have always beaten all those who raised the sword against the Russian state, and who will eliminate the invaders this time [as well].

The Germans wanted to force the Russian people to work for them—they wanted their Gertrudes and Elsas to eat Russian bread and wear Russian clothing. But no! Those plans have collapsed! The Russian people will not kneel before the German fascists! This was shown by our Red Army in its offensives near Moscow, Rostov, and Tikhvin. [Guards A. V. Khoprov, P. S. Pozniakov, A. A. Tarasov, I. P. Belolipetskii, P. T. Naidenov, V. V. Ivannikov, and V. I. Rakovskii]

The freedom-loving Russian people will languish in slavery . . . and our national culture will be destroyed . . . History will drop us from its pages as unworthy [of description]. Can we, the descendants of Nevskiis, Minins, Suvorovs, Kutuzovs, and Chapaevs allow this to happen? No, a hundred times, no. [Guards' officer V. Semenov]

Somewhat later, a captain named S. V. Butskikh wrote home to a Tambov paper after having heard that his native region had collected 42 million rubles for the construction of a tank column. In his congratulatory note, Butskikh attempted to place their feat within its proper historical context:

We understand the massive significance of your initiatives to increase the aid to the front. You have resurrected a wonderful tradition from the times of Minin and Pozharskii, who raised the people up in defense of the Russian land. Minin, from Nizhnii Novgorod, said, “it may cost us our wives and children, but we will defend the Russian land.” And our forefathers defended this sacred Russian land for us. Since that time, enemies have tried to enslave the Russian people many times, but nothing has ever come of their efforts. Now, our Motherland is again in danger. And the Soviet people have risen up as one in the defense of our Fatherland.<sup>17</sup>

As these letters indicate, many soldiers' understanding of the war was scripted by references to the Russian past, particularly examples of Russian valor on the field of battle.

Of course, similar imagery and symbols were supposed to mobilize non-Russian support for the war as well. Pankratova and other court historians were aware of the need among Soviet minorities for material concerning their own martial traditions, and considerable effort went into the research and writing of brochures and pamphlets that would popularize figures such as Edigei or Amangel'dy Imanov. Authorities like Kalinin and the editors of *Propagandist* placed considerable emphasis on these initiatives.<sup>18</sup> Although the appearance of much of this literature ultimately stalled owing to thematic disputes and a lack of commitment within the party hierarchy, rumors of forthcoming materials were greeted with enthusiasm from the front lines. A Kazakh soldier named D. Kosanov, for instance, wrote to the historians working on the history of his republic: "Yesterday we learned from the newspaper *Pravda* of the upcoming release of *The History of the Kazakh SSR*, a compilation in which you—our dear comrades and friends—took part. We are thrilled about your great, fruitful work and would like to read it. If it wouldn't be too difficult, would you please send us at least one copy of this long-awaited book?"<sup>19</sup> Although the Kazakhs may have ultimately gotten their book, many Azeris, Tatars, and Bashkirs never got similar materials because of intransigence at Agitprop and elsewhere within the ideological establishment. This lack of published material designed for non-Russians was compounded by the insensitivity of Red Army agitators, whose reliance on national Bolshevik rhetoric must have seemed quite patronizing at times. Senior Lieutenant B. Krivitskii, for example, described in a letter how he had used an article on the origins of the word "Rus" in order "to lead a discussion among the troops about the history of our people." Krivitskii admitted that this was touchy affair, insofar as "there are people of the most varied nationalities fighting within our forces. [But] I tried to convey this sort of idea: Russia and her traditions are a source of pride not only for the Russians, but for all the peoples and ethnicities of our country."<sup>20</sup> How far this paternalistic vision of the Soviet family of peoples got him, Krivitskii did not indicate. But many others were considerably less sanguine about agitation among minorities at the front. Reports in 1942 attributed low morale and a high incidence of self-inflicted wounds among non-Russian troops to poor agitational work within their ranks. Not only was there little effort being made to propagandize stalinist nationality pol-

icy and the Friendship of the Peoples, but there was an utter lack of printed material in non-Russian languages that might have helped these soldiers to make sense of the war on their own.<sup>21</sup>

Partisan brigades operating behind enemy lines also suffered from an inadequate supply of propaganda material, although for logistical rather than ideological reasons. One member of the Odessa underground recounted that the only books in his group's hideout had been *War and Peace* and *The Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)*. Another detachment, the Twenty-five Years of October brigade, informed Tolstoi during the war that they had had to make do with only two books for months on end—*Peter the First* and a volume of Pushkin's selected works. The former book, according to the partisans writing the letter, was even passed back and forth during lulls in the fighting.<sup>22</sup> In the absence of a broad diversity of agitational material, some partisans made do with leaflets that reflected the official emphasis placed on Russian national traditions.<sup>23</sup> Probably more common, however, were situations like that which T. A. Logunova recounted in her memoirs. A graduate of the Smolensk Pedagogical Institute and a history teacher by profession, she wrote of the usefulness of her prewar training during her agitational work among the partisans:

The partisans demanded from me the following: teach us from memory what you studied . . . I began with the history of our Motherland. I talked about the founding of the Russian state, about Dmitrii Donskoi and Aleksandr Nevskii, about the 17th-century Nizhnii Novgorod militia [of Minin and Pozharskii], and about the invasion of the Frenchmen . . . The partisans got so caught up in these stories that all I would have to do is appear in a brigade or platoon and questions would be thrown at me from all angles, asking: "What are you going to tell us about today?" [Once,] Leshchev, a brigade's political officer asked [his partisans], "What are you arguing about?" It turns out that the partisans had been arguing about Denis Davydov [a partisan from the War of 1812], whom I had told them about two weeks earlier.<sup>24</sup>

Visible throughout these accounts is the mobilizational effectiveness of national Bolshevik propaganda within Red Army ranks. Having been exposed to such rhetoric in education and mass culture since 1937, Russian speakers responded well to this sort of sloganeering during the war. Commissar of Education Potemkin said as much when he announced after the war's conclusion that "the Soviet school has defeated the fascist school,

and the Soviet teacher has defeated the German fascist teacher.”<sup>25</sup> But this rhetoric was, of course, not limited to those in the armed forces. Indeed, it turns out to have been as effective on the home front as it was in the field.

In April 1942 a Molotov metalworker mentioned in passing in his diary, “I read to the guys about Aleksandr Nevskii at lunch. These days, the heroes of our Fatherland’s past are on everyone’s lips.”<sup>26</sup> Such scenes in the Soviet rear were not uncommon. Why? Perhaps it was that news from the front was often disheartening or incomplete. Rumor mongering was discouraged and aggressively punished by the secret police. Historical parables, by contrast, were accessible and reassuring, insofar as by 1941, Soviet citizens had possessed for almost five years a fully functional patriotic vocabulary of legends, myths, and allegories, which could be used to make sense of ambiguity and hardship. Stalinist wartime ideology, at its most basic level, argued that Soviet power would be capable of resisting the German onslaught because it was heir to state traditions that had enabled Russia to resist invasion for almost a thousand years.

Key to Soviet wartime propaganda efforts was the state publishing industry, which produced a remarkable amount of rousing, patriotic material between 1941 and 1945. Books such as those by Tarle went through numerous editions at central and provincial printing houses; both volumes of his *Crimean War* were even printed in Leningrad during the grimmest days of the blockade.<sup>27</sup> But this was not Tarle’s only bestseller. N. K. Verzhbitskii noted in his diary that Tarle’s *Napoleon* was in great demand in the Soviet capital during December 1941.<sup>28</sup> Motivated by the topicality of the book’s focus on enemies at the gates of Moscow, *Napoleon*’s popularity even led people to inquire in person at the Institute of History in hopes of obtaining a copy of the much sought-after volume. “If only you could have seen what took place when Red Army soldiers and officers came by,” a historian named Gopner recalled later. “Colonels, commanders, and majors—they were all asking and pleading for an extra copy of the book.” Witnessing such scenes proved to Gopner that the war had led people “to take a real interest in history.”<sup>29</sup>

When popular titles by Tarle, Ianchevetskii, Borodin, and others sold out, people availed themselves of used bookstores, which offered out-of-print titles on related patriotic themes from Leningrad to Saratov.<sup>30</sup> Libraries also experienced a massive surge in demand for books ranging from Pankratova’s two-volume *History of the USSR* and Kliuchevskii’s *Lectures on Russian History* to Tarle’s *The Ejection of Napoleon from Moscow*, G. P.

Danilevskii's *Moscow in Flames*, and any book that even obliquely concerned the military leaders invoked by Stalin in his November 7 speech.<sup>31</sup> The value of such rare commodities is illustrated by the ecstatic entry that the Molotov metalworker G. P. Semenov made in his diary after becoming acquainted with a fellow who possessed a small private library: "He has a tiny room. But there are such wonders inside! First of all, books. Many books. What's more, they're all very old. The sort that I've never seen in libraries. Many on old Russian history: about Dmitrii Donskoi and Aleksandr Nevskii. Folklore, ballads, and so many fairy tales!"<sup>32</sup>

Why was the genre of historical literature so popular? Epic tales of Russian heroism and valor probably struck a chord with their readers on account of their narration of excruciating struggles that were usually crowned by hard-won but glorious victories. N. N. Iakovlev, the director of the Central Committee's Department of Schools, confirmed this analysis, attributing the popularity of historical literature and other similar materials to that fact that "people want to . . . grasp their personal role in this great struggle against Hitler and to think about the tasks before them now as resembling those of the past."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, reading aloud to others from a book like *War and Peace* often produced a sense of unity and pride in the Russian cultural inheritance that could compensate for the austere conditions of the Soviet home front. The writer B. V. Druzhinin remembered one such public reading of Tolstoi's masterpiece that took place in the filthy confines of an earthen shelter. "Afterward," he writes, those present "talked about Kutuzov, Napoleon, Raevskii, Pierre Bezukhov, and Natasha Rostova as if about old friends."<sup>34</sup> Far away, during a komsomol meeting on the shop floor of Moscow's Kaganovich Ball-Bearing Factory, the stoker R. Kabanov waxed rhapsodic about his experiences with the same novel: "it's as if the seemingly distant events of the Patriotic War of 1812 came alive before me . . . In those days, Russia responded to Napoleon's invasion with a popular war [*vsenarodnaia voina*]. The people are the main hero of L. N. Tolstoi's immortal novel *War and Peace*. Rereading Lev Tolstoi, I understood the Russian people's soul, their love for their Motherland, and their hatred for the enemy."<sup>35</sup> Somewhat less bombastic, Semenov noted that during insecure times, even talk on the shop floor would turn to the lessons of the past. At one point, his comrades approached an older worker named Dovgushin, who was known for being well read, and asked him "to tell us about the greatness of Old Rus.'" "Everyone listened very attentively," reported Semenov, as Dovgushin narrated for them the legendary feats of Nevskii and Donskoi.<sup>36</sup>

While it would be incorrect to say that subjects concerning the civil war or more contemporary themes did not receive public acclaim (indeed, both A. N. Tolstoi's *Bread* and Korneichuk's *Front* enjoyed widespread popularity), the range of inspirational historical narratives concerning the prerevolutionary period was certainly broader, if not more beloved, than those concerning the Soviet era. Perhaps the legends of the distant past were more "epic" and unequivocal. Perhaps victories like Poltava and Kulikovo seemed more conclusive and less subject to counterattack and reversal than the clashes being detailed in *Pravda* and *Krasnaia zvezda*. But for whatever reason, there was great demand for literature concerning everything from the heyday of tsarist military traditions in the nineteenth century to events set in medieval Muscovy. For every individual like Metrostroi worker A. Potemkin, who reported enjoying the memoirs of Major General A. A. Ignat'ev and Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ's *The Ordeal of Sevastopol'*, there were others like the civilian aircraft designer A. Iakovlev, who preferred *Batyi*, *Dmitrii Donskoi*, and *Peter the First*. The reaction of A. Zhukovskii, a military engineer, to A. N. Tolstoi's 1944 play about Ivan the Terrible, is particularly interesting. Noting that "I can't remember ever getting so caught up in something like I am in Tolstoi's play," he continued: "my impression of the Terrible Tsar from childhood has been overturned completely. He was a totally different person! A statesman and an innovator. The image of the Terrible Tsar turns out to be magnificent, and one is impressed by the sagacity of his exceptional mind. It's as if Aleksei Tolstoi has revealed to me new pages from my Motherland's history."<sup>37</sup>

But fictional literature and biography were not the only aspects of mass culture capable of calming worries and stimulating patriotic emotions. V. Vishnevskii, for instance, noted in his diary that he found inspiration in opera at a Leningrad club's November 1941 performance of Tchaikovsky's *Evgenii Oegin*. Uncomfortable at first with how tightly the audience was packed into the auditorium, he quickly forgot about such concerns when, "from the first act, the pure, harmonic music resounded everywhere and the entire nightmare of war was pushed off to the side." Perhaps not an explicitly patriotic piece, *Oegin* was important to Vishnevskii insofar as it represented "the sum of the great Russian culture celebrating victory" at a time when Soviet forces were enduring defeat after defeat on the battlefield.<sup>38</sup> I. D. Zelenskaia narrated a similar scene in her diary as she described how people sang arias from the opera *Boris Godunov* at a gathering on November 7, 1941. Apparently oblivious to the peculiar-

ity of marking the twenty-fourth anniversary of the revolution with such an opera, she mused that “before the war, no one from among the masses would have been interested in *Boris Godunov*.”<sup>39</sup>

The popularity of historical subject matter during the war ultimately provoked discussions of national identity among Russian speakers on the mass level. Like Safonov earlier, many spoke with considerable emotion about what it meant to be Russian, invoking imagery and symbols drawn from the post-1937 official line. A good example is a debate on a Lenin-grad shop floor during the blockade in April 1942 over “the essence of our Russian strength [*в чем наша русская сила*].” A subject that had apparently arisen as the beleaguered workers realized their city had made it through the desperate winter of 1941–42, it provoked an exchange about “Russianness” dramatic enough to receive lengthy reflection in the diary of one of its participants, Georgii Kulagin:

[*Kuzhelev*:] The French are a heroic people. All of their history has taken place in extreme conditions. The Germans have a pathos of discipline and nationalism approaching madness. And what do we have? Our ancestors were migrants, not conquerors. They plowed deserted lands and got along peacefully with their neighbors. The historian V. O. Kliuchevskii thought that it was difficult for our great-grandfathers to develop a sense of national unity because they were separated by dense forests.

[*Kulagin*:] I think that’s wrong. It is not only wrong today, but it was wrong even at the time it was written.

[*Old Timer*:] . . . [H]ere is the entire Russian people without exception in a difficult moment[:] they stand stubbornly, simply, and steadfast . . . The English would call this honor: everyone does his duty. But we stand [firm], not even thinking about duty, not thinking for even a moment that such an understanding exists.<sup>40</sup>

[*Kulagin*:] That’s also incorrect, or at least not all correct.

[*Gavrilov*:] Our people cannot hate even their enemy, [they] don’t know how to hate those strangling them . . . Our people are kind, [you say]? Perhaps. But in any case, you can’t foster genuine patriotism with that sort of feeling. Remember the way we related to prisoners during the last war . . . Neither . . . the Romans [*sic*: Italians] nor the Germans are so merciful to the enemy, not even to those that they defeat . . .

[*Kulagin*:] That statement bothers me. Yes, we possess such

characteristics. Yes, we are kind, gentle, and resourceful. But is this a weakness of the people's spirit or, on the contrary, is it a strength of spirit? Who knows?

Moreover, are there not facts from our history that directly contradict such claims?

Did we not have Aleksandr Nevskii? Perhaps that was a long time ago, an almost mythological period in our history, but he existed. And perhaps Novgorod was the only proud and bright spot in the darkness that descended early upon our lands, but it too existed . . .

And our Muscovite history, with the Tatar yoke [*tatarshchina*], the fierce fights at princely feasts, the decadence of its rulers and the downtroddenness of the people, the toadying, and drunkenness, the taverns, and the post-Petrine bureaucracy, which was as blindly imitative and repressive as in Europe, and as closed and ignorant as in Asia. [But] were there not also times of mass patriotism that were passionate and ecstatic, felt by one and all? Did we not have Minin and Pozharskii? Was there not the fire of Moscow and the defense of Sevastopol?<sup>41</sup>

Kulagin's rebuttal points to his internalization of the essence of the stalinist historical narrative, in which dynamic individuals struggled against adversity and foreign invaders. Russians, it seems, were a heroic people, characterized by resourcefulness, loyalty, and the ability to withstand hardship. In a sense, Stalin's postwar salute to the Russian people and their "clear mind, hardy character, and patience" merely reformulated ideas already circulating in Soviet society since the late 1930s.

But one would not want to think that this "imagining of the Russian community" was the exclusive province of the adult world. A variety of sources reveal that schoolage children also shared impressions and beliefs similar to those espoused by their elders. A schoolgirl named Valentina Barkhatova, for instance, mused in her diary about the difficulties at the front in the spring of 1942 before reaching a determined conclusion: "No! It is impossible to defeat such a people, such a country, within which were born and took shape people such as Suvorov, Kutuzov, Pushkin, Chernyshevskii, Amangel'dy, and Lenin."<sup>42</sup> Far away in Irkutsk, seventh grader Volodia Fel'dman wrote in a school essay: "May the fascists know and remember the words of Aleksandr Nevskii: 'Whosoever comes to us with the sword shall perish by the sword.'<sup>43</sup> Children, it seems, were just as likely

as grown-ups to rely on the primordialist mythologies in circulation in Soviet society since 1937.

But perhaps the best way to examine how Russian-speaking children understood their surroundings is to look at a rare collection of student essays written in Kaluga in early 1942 following the region's brief occupation by the Wehrmacht. In particular, these essays reveal the extent to which historical symbolism framed these students' impressions of the events transpiring around them. One student compared the Red Army's destruction of ammunition and military stores during the retreat from Kaluga to the burning of Moscow in 1812.<sup>44</sup> Outraged that the local population had been levied into work brigades after the Wehrmacht seized the town, another student, named Mikhail Danilov, wrote that "the Russian people were not created in order to work for the invaders, for the German occupiers—they were created to work for themselves and their Fatherland."<sup>45</sup> Two other students referred to their experience under the Germans as the "fascist yoke," alluding to the time medieval Muscovy spent under Tatar-Mongol suzerainty.<sup>46</sup> Waxing philosophical, Nikodim Blokhin declared that if one could capture on paper the hatred and rage that local citizens felt for their German occupiers, "you'd have a novel that would express the Russian individual's national pride."<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps as instructive as these schoolchildren's general reactions to the occupation were specific incidents they found particularly memorable. Anatolii Lant'ev, for instance, remembered how "the Germans set about destroying monuments connected with Russian [*sic*] culture: sculptures of Lenin, Stalin, Marx, and Engels were pitilessly destroyed in cold blood. They tore down portraits of our leaders and broke up busts of the great Russian writers."<sup>48</sup> His classmate Iurii Zotov added that "upon spotting a bust of Pushkin, a soldier picked it up and smashed it. This barbarous act shocked me even more than when they killed a dog."<sup>49</sup> Similar observations regarding the plunder of libraries and museums appear over and over in the students' descriptions of the depredations suffered under the German occupation.<sup>50</sup> A particular source of indignation was the Germans' sacking of Tsiolkovskii's Kaluga museum and L. N. Tolstoi's estate at Iasnaia Poliana.<sup>51</sup>

Russian history and "national pride," then, lay at the heart of these Soviet students' understanding of the contemporary war. German atrocities were equated more readily with Napoleon and the Tatar-Mongol Yoke than with other, more "Soviet" referents like the White armies of Denikin in 1919 or the Polish legions in 1920. The looting and destruction of

prerevolutionary Russian monuments was thought of in the same terms as the toppling of Stalin's concrete likeness. Put another way, Soviet patriotism had become more a function of Russian national pride than a belief in the imperative of a workers' state or even the 1917 revolution itself.

The glimpses of popular opinion examined above indicate much about the degree to which ordinary Russian speakers embraced the language and symbols of national Bolshevism between 1941 and 1945. Some even sensed the scale of the ideological changes that had been underway since the mid- to late 1930s. As Inozemtsev wrote during a lull in the fighting at the front in 1944, "one notices with such happiness how the notions of motherland, fatherland, and patriotism have changed before our very eyes. After all, it's only recently that all these words have received their right to be heard and to display their truly noteworthy colors." Continuing, he tried to summarize the ideological transformations since 1937 in his own words:

In overthrowing Russian backwardness, the revolution was forced to temporarily "annul" such concepts [as patriotism and the motherland] because they were too closely associated with the [ruling] class that had ceased to exist. But now, with a new state structure, built by the blood and sweat of an entire generation, there are all the preconditions for the "motherland" and "fatherland" to become beloved, lofty, integral elements [of our culture] for the greatest stretches of the masses, who will pass them on to future generations in their mother's milk. Our generation was "retrained" in the flame of war—the difficult years at the front gave to us what school wasn't always able to provide. We are the Motherland. The Russians are the most talented, the most gifted, and the most vast people in the world in terms of our feelings and inner abilities. Regardless of all our shortcomings, excesses, etc., Russia is the best state in the world.<sup>52</sup>

Statements like Inozemtsev's leave little doubt that the widespread upswell of patriotic sentiments stimulated by wartime propaganda also contributed to identity formation among ethnic Russians. Recalling for a moment that Russian national identity, circa 1935, had largely been defined in opposition to non-Russians and had not been described in more articulate ways, we can say with some certainty that this was no longer the case by 1945. Detailed discussions of what it meant to be Russian, circulating since the mid- to late 1930s in stalinist mass culture, had made Russian na-

tional identity possible to articulate even for the most ill-educated swaths of this developing society.

The product of historical contingency rather than explicit party policy, this emergent sense of identity had been catalyzed by a populist campaign designed to promote state-building and social mobilization. The effectiveness of this national Bolshevik line had been bolstered by the state's coordination of propaganda, which ensured that its portrayal of russocentric myths, legends, and iconography was, for the most part, systematic and internally consistent. Aggressive dissemination of the line from the schoolhouse to the moviehouse made it virtually ubiquitous. According to theorists like Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner, it is precisely such a potent combination of print media, mass education, and popular culture that can be expected to lay the groundwork for group identity formation.

That said, one should not conflate the construction and dissemination of ideology with its popular reception. Audiences' selectivity and their tendency to misunderstand, simplify, and essentialize, after all, can lead to serious distortions in the popular reception of ideological pronouncements. In this case, the intensely russocentric nature of national Bolshevism during the war was sometimes understood on the popular level as an endorsement of Russian chauvinism vis-à-vis the non-Russian peoples. Such sentiments are visible in another passage drawn from the diary entry quoted above:

Rus' is the foundation of our state and we shouldn't be ashamed to say so. Internationalism, the brotherhood of the peoples, and so on—these are all fine and inherent aspects of our state, but most basic [should be] the development of a sense of duty to the Motherland and a feeling of pride toward our country and all the great people who have enriched the society in untold ways in all spheres of science and the arts—basically, the cultivation of true patriots. The Motherland, our wonderful Russian motherland—above all else.

Our three revolutions, including the Great October Revolution, were possible only in Russia and are inalienable elements of our motherland and have elevated Russia to an unreachable height . . .

Pride in Russia must be preeminent in the future after the war [because] all of this has been won by the blood of a hundred thousand of the best Russian people and by millions of the Russian people's selfless fighters. Our generation, and the one that follows it, will doubtlessly bring this about.<sup>53</sup>

Openly dismissive of internationalism and other traditional Soviet slogans like the “brotherhood of the peoples,” Inozemtsev’s strident russocentrism verges at times on full-fledged nationalism. What had led to such outbursts of chauvinist militancy?

In practical terms, the official line was promoted in such a way between 1941 and 1945 that it failed to acknowledge the contributions made to the war effort by Jews, Uzbeks, Azeris, Tadzhiks, and other minorities on par with coverage devoted to the Russian people. Not only were accounts of Russian heroism and historical allegories privileged in the press, but the party hierarchs encouraged this tendency by referring to Russians as the main force in the struggle with the German invaders.<sup>54</sup> Over time, such national Bolshevik rhetoric allowed the prevailing wisdom to develop that the Russian people were bearing the burden of the agonizingly costly defense alone, a view that ultimately proved to be a source of both pride and resentment.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the perception that non-Russians were somehow less committed to the war effort than their Russian counterparts spawned a substantial Russian chauvinist subculture during the war years. Incidents of cowardice or desertion discussed in official documents and personal accounts refer to non-Russian combatants with suspicious frequency.<sup>56</sup> Diarists like Inozemtsev, who began the war thrilled with the multiethnic composition of his unit, tend to mention non-Russians only in derogatory terms after the war’s opening months.<sup>57</sup> A similar disdain for Soviet minorities appeared on the home front, even among the well educated.<sup>58</sup> An interview with A. I. Pavlov, a Hero of the Soviet Union, is fascinating for the candor with which he described conditions in the western borderlands in 1944 after the Red Army’s recapture of the region. According to Pavlov, although most aspects of the effort to repair local industry were proceeding according to plan, “maintaining security [over the warehouses] isn’t going well. The guard consists entirely of Ukrainians and is exceptionally untrustworthy. We’ve had an entire array of attempts to steal ammunition and even armaments . . . Among the local workers there are [Waffen] SS [irregulars], Polish nationalists, and *volksdeutsch*, but we are not able to get rid of them, as that would mean interrupting our work. The NKVD hasn’t yet taken them off, but expects to . . . [Also], we are very cautious in relation to the local Polish youth.” Clearly, Pavlov had internalized wartime rhetoric that described Russians as the only ethnicity that could be counted upon to be loyal to the Soviet cause. Locals were automatically described as “nationalists” and “unreliable.” Suspicion and distrust combine in Pavlov’s statement to say a great deal about the unpredictable way

in which the russocentrism inherent in national Bolshevism could inspire chauvinistic beliefs even in regard to “brotherly Slavic nations” like the Ukrainians and Poles.<sup>59</sup>

Another component of wartime Russian chauvinism was anti-Semitism, which seems to have often been expressed through ethnic jokes and slurs similar to the following examples drawn from the diary of A. N. Boldyrev:

Far in the rear, two Jews walk up to a map at the train station: “So, what have we retaken today?”

An evacuee’s telegram: “I’ve made it to Novosibirsk successfully. If the Motherland demands it, I am prepared to go even further.”<sup>60</sup>

The sentiments expressed in these two one-liners—that Jews were shirking their duty as Soviet citizens to serve at the front—appear to have been very widespread.<sup>61</sup> On the local level, such sentiments apparently sparked flare-ups. NKVD and Soviet procuracy reports from 1942 and 1943, for example, reveal dramatic increase in anti-Semitic “hooliganism” from Leningrad to Tashkent.<sup>62</sup> Further detail is supplied by a letter sent to *Krasnaia zvezda* by a writer named A. N. Stepanov: “In terms of anti-Semitism, it is mainly spread by wounded soldiers [who have been] demobilized from the army. They conduct agitation of a pogromist nature, openly saying that Jews are avoiding [active service in] the war and sitting it out on the home front. I was a witness to how Jews—even women—were driven out of [bread] lines and beaten.” In the conclusion to this letter, Stepanov suggested that such sentiments stemmed from insufficient press coverage devoted to Jewish heroism and valor at the front. Such coverage, he argued, would ameliorate public bitterness: “It would be really good if it were possible to print a couple of articles on Jewish Heroes of the Soviet Union, military commanders, and generals. That would inject a refreshing current into many people’s minds.”<sup>63</sup>

Stepanov was probably right in thinking that the wartime press’s aggressive advancement of russocentric themes was taking place at the expense of coverage concerning Soviet Jews. As noted at the end of the preceding chapter, discussions regarding the Ukrainian role in the war also tended to be stifled at times. As a result, chauvinism regarding Jews, Ukrainians, and other non-Russian peoples grew between 1941 and 1945, especially late in the war when the party authorities’ interest in propaganda oriented around non-Russian themes declined precipitously.

But it is important to acknowledge that such anti-Semitism and belit-

ting of the non-Russian peoples did not explicitly figure into the party's agenda between 1941 and 1945. Official communiqués did not foment interethnic tension or discord. Such attitudes were, instead, fallout from the party hierarchy's overreliance on myths, icons, and heroes drawn from the Russian past. As Shcherbakov indicated to Ehrenburg, the party hierarchy had decided that wartime propaganda was to give top priority to "the mood of the Russian people."<sup>64</sup> If information about non-Russian contributions to the war was suppressed or downplayed, this stemmed from the *promotion* of Russian culture rather than the *denigration* of non-Russian cultures. Nevertheless, many audience members did not understand it in this way and read the absence of newspaper commentary regarding non-Russian heroism as indicative of these peoples' lack of commitment to the Soviet cause. Evidence indicates that even high-ranking party officials got caught in this feedback loop over the course of the war.<sup>65</sup>

On the whole, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which national Bolshevism fostered Russian chauvinist sentiments during the war years. More clear is the role that this line's relentless promotion of russocentric Soviet patriotism played in precipitating the formation of Russian national identity on the popular level. Sharing for the first time a single pantheon of heroes and common impressions about their cultural primacy, Russians were capable of imagining a national community during the early 1940s that few could have visualized before 1937. Whether or not this incipient sense of national identity would continue to develop once the exigencies of war had faded is the subject of this book's concluding chapters.

**Part Three**  
**1945–1953**



## 11 Soviet Ideology during the *Zhdanovshchina* and High Stalinism

Recent scholarship argues that the Second World War came to serve as the “foundational myth” of Soviet society during the postwar period. Victory in 1945 apparently bolstered Stalin’s cult of personality and endowed the party with a sense of legitimacy that it had formerly lacked—a genuine Soviet epic that would transform the very essence of the “propaganda state.”<sup>1</sup> One commentator even goes so far as to say that leading factions within the Soviet postwar ideological establishment “wanted a return to a disciplined agitprop machine propagating good communist values like Soviet patriotism, hard work, the leading role of the party, and the importance of Marxism-Leninism rather than the Russian nationalism, religion, and bourgeois Western influences that had been allowed in 1941–43.”<sup>2</sup> It is certainly true that the party, having proven its staying power during the war, no longer had to rely exclusively on national Bolshevism’s nativism and nostalgic retrospection in its wake. Moreover, the war experience would be relived again and again in Soviet society during the coming four decades via mass culture, retroactively justifying everything from the breakneck industrialization of the 1930s to the *ezhovshchina*. But is postwar ideology best understood as having made a proverbial “break with the past?”

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to examine Soviet authorities’ attempts during the early postwar years to make sense of the war’s various ideological currents, a task that turns out to have been far easier said than done. Although Stalin’s postwar toast to the Russian people defined the official line on the 1941–1945 conflict as unambiguously russocentric, it did not specify what role this “myth” was to play in Soviet ideology as a whole during the mid- to late 1940s. Would it eclipse

national Bolshevism's prewar and wartime focus on Russian history, or would these emphases on the recent and not-so-recent past be adapted to complement one another? Would the pragmatic nativism of the wartime line be preserved, or would it be toned down by a renewed emphasis on orthodox Marxist internationalism, party-mindedness (*partiinost'*), and the Friendship of the Peoples? Would the aftershocks of the scandal surrounding the *History of the Kazakh SSR* subside, or would they continue to poison ideological work in the non-Russian republics? What form would Soviet ideology assume now that the exigencies of war had faded?

Generally speaking, it would seem unwise to exaggerate the extent to which Soviet ideologists broke with prewar and wartime national Bolshevism during the mid- to late 1940s. Indeed, postwar ideologists' principal project seems to have concerned precisely how they would reconcile the previous decade's emphasis on prerevolutionary Russian history with the war's undeniably modern, "Soviet" character. Because a conventional exploration of ideology during high stalinism is complicated by the inconsistency of party pronouncements during these years, this analysis maps the early postwar line according to landmarks supplied by the historiographic debates of the period between 1945 and 1953.

Perhaps the best way to begin charting the confusing ideological terrain of postwar stalinism in the Soviet ideological establishment is to look at an important speech on the state of the social sciences given by G. F. Aleksandrov in August 1945. Hailing the mobilizational successes of the official historical narrative during the war, the Agitprop chief nevertheless called for further refinements to be made. First, the history of the USSR was apparently still insufficiently linear. Praising work done on republican historiography during the war, he reminded his audience about the wartime debacles associated with the writing of Kazakh, Tatar, and Bashkir martial history. Unrest and revolts in non-Russian areas against Russian colonial administration were henceforth to be treated as a low research priority in view of the fact that according to Aleksandrov, "the history of the peoples of Russia is the history of their overcoming of antagonisms and their steady unification around the Russian people." Moreover, less effort was to be devoted to treatment of regional events that did not have a measurable effect on Russian history as a whole. In a somewhat convoluted formulation, Aleksandrov argued that "the history of a given people can only be properly worked out and made intelligible in relation to the history of the other peoples and, above all else, [in relation to] the history

of the Russian people.” Calling for history to be viewed as a single “unitary organic process,” Aleksandrov essentially reiterated demands made since 1937 for republican historiography to be subordinated to a central russocentric narrative.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from the Kazakh, Tatar, and Bashkir excesses, then, the official line appears to have been surprisingly unaffected by the war, and Aleksandrov seemed content to focus on matters of nuance and presentation. For instance, he thought more work could be done on the Russian experience under the Tatar-Mongol Yoke. Aleksandrov suggested that by viewing the ordeal as something that had prevented the westward expansion of the Golden Horde, Russians could take pride in having saved Europe from depredation as early as the thirteenth century.<sup>4</sup> But if such notions fit well into the post-1937 historiographic line, there was one new issue that was entirely unexpected. Announcing that work was needed to add nuance to the canonical interpretations of leading tsarist-era state-builders like Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, he stated that it would also be necessary to clarify the official position regarding rebels like Razin and Pugachev. Wartime historical narratives had apparently gone too far in their indiscriminate idealization of tsarist heroes, neglecting the merits of class analysis and the Marxist historical dialectic.<sup>5</sup> Such recommendations, which were quickly echoed by the principle history journals, must have been unnerving for those who had been involved in the development of the war’s ultra-etatist historiography.<sup>6</sup> How serious were Aleksandrov’s prescriptions? What would be their lasting repercussions?

Internal Agitprop documents indicate that developments during late 1945 continued to rein in perceived excesses in the wartime line. By the fall of 1946, even statements of the sort that Aleksandrov had made a year earlier, allegorically connecting the recent war with epic ordeals of the past like the Tatar-Mongol Yoke, seem to have become passé. A new ideological current sought to define the victorious struggle with Germany between 1941 and 1945 as a unique feat in the history of mankind and unrelated to any prerevolutionary inheritance—something Amir Weiner has referred to as “the myth of the war.” Previously eager to acknowledge or even finesse an imperial Russian pedigree, stalinist ideologists during the early postwar years argued vociferously that victory in 1945 possessed a uniquely “Soviet” character because of the society’s far-sighted commitments to industrialization and socialist construction after 1917.<sup>7</sup> Such developments hint that perhaps there were now two Soviet ideological lines operating in parallel—one revolving around the Russian historical past and

another promoting the myth of the war. Or perhaps the latter had eclipsed the former entirely?

At first glance, it does appear as if between 1945 and 1946, the myth of the war superseded the prewar and wartime fascination with the Russian national past. In these years cultural producers frequently ran afoul of ideological authorities for promoting themes that had been fashionable throughout the war. For instance, plays such as V. V. Vishnevskii's *At the Walls of Leningrad* and N. Shpanov's *Medallion* drew criticism from Agit-prop insiders like A. E. Egolin for "idealizing the highest circles of the tsarist army's officer corps" and for "calling upon Soviet commanders to learn about duty and honor from the [example of these] old officers."<sup>8</sup> Somewhat later, Egolin joined forces with Aleksandrov to draft another intemperate memorandum in early August 1946 that criticized the journal *Zvezda* for publishing poetry by A. A. Akhmatova and M. Komissarova that allegedly favored the Russian national past over the Soviet present. Several paragraphs later in the same document, S. Spasskii was taken to task for his use of historical allegory in a poem from early 1946 entitled "The Horseman." Specifically, Spasskii's connection of wartime Leningrad to the city's Petrine legacy had proven to be inappropriate, insofar as it implied that "the love that Soviet people have for their Motherland does not differ in any way from the patriotic feelings of the Russian people in the past. This erroneous point of view has led the author to idealize the image of Peter the First and even transform him into a symbol of the Soviet country."<sup>9</sup> Such comments are confusing given that references to Peter and the prerevolutionary past had been a staple of national Bolshevik propaganda since the second half of the 1930s. Was the party hierarchy now calling for the wholesale abandonment of only recently co-opted tsarist heroes and traditions?

Apparently so. In response to Egolin and Aleksandrov's memorandum, the Central Committee issued a resolution in mid-August 1946 that sternly rebuked *Zvezda* and another literary journal, *Leningrad*, for their supposed lack of editorial discretion. Shortly thereafter, Zhdanov spoke at length about the party hierarchy's displeasure with Akhmatova and other "anti-Soviet" authors like M. M. Zoshchenko in a public lynching of sorts that has traditionally marked the start of the so-called *zhdanovshchina*.<sup>10</sup> Less than two weeks after Zhdanov's famously intolerant screed, another Central Committee resolution seemed to confirm that the party hierarchy was indeed set to abandon the post-1937 historiographic line, which Aleksandrov had endorsed only a year before. This resolution, entitled

“On the Repertoire of Drama Theaters and Measures toward Its Improvement,” scolded Soviet theatrical troupes for staging plays that idealized “tsars,” “khans,” and imported Western “bourgeois” values.<sup>11</sup> While the latter part of this charge echoes the familiar strains of the *zhdanovshchina*’s strident xenophobia, the resolution’s assessment of the Soviet stage as “littered” with nostalgic portrayals of tsars and khans seemed to announce a curtain call for the vast post-1937 “patriotic” theatrical repertoire of historical dramas dominated by the likes of Glinka, Gorodetskii, and the three Tolstois.

And yet we know that sagas like the siege of Sevastopol’ and tales of Brusilov’s valor were at the height of their popularity during the mid- to late 1940s. In 1947 Stalin would personally instruct Eisenstein on how to rework the second part of his *Ivan the Terrible* trilogy for mass release.<sup>12</sup> During that same year, a statue of Prince Iurii Dolgorukii would be commissioned to replace a revolutionary-era obelisk in central Moscow in conjunction with the lavish 800th anniversary of the city’s founding. Similar pomp and circumstance would surround the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Pushkin’s birth eighteen months later. Dramatic works concerning such tsarist-era Russian heroes would be staged or screened throughout the decade without interruption. How can these facts be reconciled with the *zhdanovshchina*’s apparent injunction against prerevolutionary historical narratives? Had the Russian national past been eclipsed by myth of the war, or hadn’t it?

Perhaps Stalin’s comment to Eisenstein during their famous 1947 conversation—“we must overcome the revival of nationalism that we are experiencing with all the [non-Russian] peoples”<sup>13</sup>—provides the answer. After all, when viewed in the context of events in the republics between 1945 and 1947, Agitprop’s ostensible rollback of the Russian national past in Moscow pales in comparison to the veritable pogrom unleashed during the early postwar years against republican historiography. Starting as early as 1944, a number of republican party organizations had fallen into disfavor for propaganda that was said to challenge the Russians’ leading role in the Soviet family of peoples. First, the Tatar and Bashkir party organizations had come under fire for glorifying their societies’ experiences under the Tatar-Mongol Yoke.<sup>14</sup> In swift succession, playwrights and journalists in the Mari party organization were rebuked for treatments of the tsarist past that supposedly verged on nationalism.<sup>15</sup> Then the Kazakh party organization was scolded for its wartime efforts surrounding the ill-fated *History of the Kazakh SSR* and its inability to learn from the debacle.<sup>16</sup>

This trend continued into the postwar years. As early as August 1945, Aleksandrov was discouraging work on non-Russian resistance to imperial Russian colonialism, as well as research on republican topics predating the era of Russian cultural influence. These injunctions were reiterated a year later when the celebration of “khans” was condemned by the *zhdanovshchina*-era Central Committee resolution on theatrical repertoire. Compounding the damage done by the resolutions concerning Tatar and Bashkir historiography, these postwar strictures ultimately triggered a wave of denunciations of non-Russian historiography that swept across the USSR during the mid- to late 1940s.<sup>17</sup> In 1947, for instance, an Armenian Central Committee plenum savaged “nationalist” works on history and literature that had idealized the medieval era as Armenia’s “golden age” despite the fact that this period predated the outset of benevolent cultural contact with Russia. Not only were the Armenian Academy of Sciences’s Philological Institute and the local Writers’ Union assailed for promoting “nationalist and reactionary opinions,” but the Armenian Central Committee’s ideology chief was also subjected to a public scolding.<sup>18</sup> The Finnic Mordva’s party organization received an only slightly less severe reprimand.<sup>19</sup> A major investigation of Yakut and Buriat historiography was launched at about the same time that the Uzbek republic’s *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* was being torpedoed.<sup>20</sup> Similar problems were found in the history curriculum being taught in the Estonian republic, where “in the Soviet history division, names like Minin, Pozharskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Radishchev are not mentioned.” Worse, “during the study of the history of the USSR, the collaborative struggle of the Russian and Estonian peoples against common enemies is not presented.”<sup>21</sup> Not to be overlooked was the tiny republic of Tuva, where the local party organization was forced to engage in a spate of self-criticism after a report revealed insufficient attention being cast toward Russian cultural influence:

the institute is not carrying out scholarly research—the study and development of the history, language, and culture of the Tuvinese people—nor is it working out the issue of the historic friendship of the Russian and Tuvinese peoples, the influence that Russian culture has had on the development of Tuvinese culture [or] the historic aid that the Russian people have provided to the Tuvinese toilers in their emancipation from the cabal of foreign occupiers and domestic feudal lords . . . The work that a member [*sotrudnik*] of the Seifullin Insti-

tute has embarked upon, entitled *A Short Sketch of the History of the Tuvinese People*, must be rewritten. The progressive influence of Russian culture and the Russian state's economy on the development of the Tuvinese people's culture and economy is weakly depicted in this work.<sup>22</sup>

Even Central Asian national epics that had been celebrated in the late 1930s as complements to the medieval Russian *Tale of Igor's Host* were suddenly exposed as forgeries. In a bizarre move, ideological authorities in the early 1950s announced that Homeric poetry long billed as stemming from popular folkloric traditions—chiefly the *Dede-Korkut* (Azeri), *Korkut-ata* (Turkmen), *Alpamysh* (Uzbek), and *Manas* (Kirgiz)—was in actual fact the work of factions within the republican intelligentsias bent on propagandizing a divisive “bourgeois-nationalist” agenda.<sup>23</sup>

This campaign would reverberate until the end of the Stalin period. While some republican party organizations managed to stifle local historiographic tendencies that ran counter to the russocentric line, others, like the Kazakh and Tatar party organizations, were repeatedly rocked by scandal over the course of almost a decade.<sup>24</sup> Nationalist charges were quickly leveled at Jews as well, giving rise to the assassination of S. M. Mikhoels and the closure of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, not to mention the familiar contours of the anticosmopolitan campaign and the Doctors' Plot between the late 1940s and 1953.<sup>25</sup> The extent to which this was a radical departure from even the midwar years cannot be overstated. Tillett captures the irony of the turnabout in his observation that the ranks of those most vigorously engaged in this antirepublican backlash included many who had supported the celebration of non-Russian martial traditions between 1941 and 1943.<sup>26</sup>

But if the materials surveyed above create the impression that the *zhdanovshchina's* principle blow was directed against the Caucasian and Central Asian republics, it would be incorrect to assume that the non-Russian Slavic peoples were immune to the unfolding campaign. On the contrary, the postwar phase of the campaign against non-Russian historiography actually seems to have *begun* in the non-Russian Slavic republics. In 1946, for instance, a veritable inquisition took place in the Ukrainian republic in which historians and litterateurs alike were chastised for nationalist “escapism” into the prerevolutionary past. N. S. Khrushchev criticized important books like *The History of Ukraine* and *A Survey of the History of Ukrainian Literature* at a Ukrainian Central Committee plenum in Au-

gust 1946, indicting the former volume for “serious nationalist errors” and the latter for “bourgeois-nationalist ideas about the history of the Ukrainian people and their culture.”<sup>27</sup> His colleague, Ukrainian Central Committee ideology chief K. Z. Litvin, broadened the scope of the attack a week later, referring to the latter book as an example of scholarship that “overlooked the relationship between Russian and Ukrainian literature and exaggerated the influence of Western European literature.” More than half a dozen Ukrainian Central Committee resolutions between 1946 and 1947 would ratify these positions, leaving republican historiography and historical literature in shambles.<sup>28</sup> The Belorussian party organization too was forced to engage in a masochistic spate of self-criticism later that year. Specifically, the epic *History of the Belorussian SSR* was judged to be inappropriate for release on account of statements that ascribed to the Belorussian people a tenth-century pedigree and an eleventh-century state. Reminiscent of Aleksandrov’s wartime scolding of the Ukrainian party for its promotion of Danilo Galitskii,<sup>29</sup> any commentary on medieval Belorussian history that threatened to compromise the Russian mythic past was now subjected to withering assault: “the author [of the *History of the Belorussian SSR*] contends that the ‘Polotsk warrior formations under the command of Prince Vladimir (Polotskii—P. K.) defeated the German mongrel-knights, halting their movement eastward.’ The Polotsk people without a doubt did take part in the struggle with the German mongrel-knights, but their defeat was accomplished only by the forces under Aleksandr Nevskii.”<sup>30</sup> The text’s excessively positive description of the Belorussian people’s experience under foreign rule was equally problematic. Such views were dangerous in the sense that “from this, the reader might draw incorrect conclusions about the Western-Russian lands’ so-called ‘voluntary’ assimilation [*prisoedinenie*] into Lithuania,” a position that was totally unacceptable to stalinist ideologues. When a republican party resolution was judged to be insufficient to rectify the situation in Minsk, Zhdanov’s paper *Kul’tura i zhizn’* published two prominent articles on the affair, which led to an Orgburo rebuke as well. These actions, in turn, touched off a firestorm in the Belorussian republic, where charges of “bourgeois nationalism” were indiscriminately leveled at anyone working on local history. Historians mulling over the issue two years later in 1949 noted that Belorussian scholarship had yet to recover from the scandal.<sup>31</sup>

In practical terms, then, the *zhdanovshchina*’s principle assault was directed against republican historiography’s valorization of Central Asian

“khans” and non-Russian Slavic narratives. Even though the party hierarchy never acknowledged the existence of such an ideological tendency, acute observers on the ground like the historian S. S. Dmitriev were aware of its general contours anyway.<sup>32</sup> Simultaneous measures to tone down the societal prominence of prerevolutionary Russian historical figures and events were incomparably smaller in scale. No Central Committee resolutions were issued. No institutes were rebuked or disbanded. Only briefly, during the first two years after the war, were individual members of the creative intelligentsia even scolded for overindulgence in themes that ignored the “Soviet” accomplishments of the war.

This account of postwar historiographic trends is confirmed by Eisenstein’s 1947 interview with Stalin. Accompanied by Zhdanov and Molotov, Stalin talked at length about Ivan IV with the director and his leading actor, N. K. Cherkasov. Stalin’s views, contextualized within the xenophobic atmosphere of the *zhdanovshchina*, clearly indicate that the general secretary remained a strong proponent of an etatist line grounded in references to tsars and prerevolutionary Russian history:

Tsar Ivan was a great and wise ruler and if you compare him with Louis XI (you’ve read about Louis XI, who set up the absolutist state for Louis XIV), then Ivan the Terrible was seventh heaven in comparison to Louis XI. Ivan the Terrible’s wisdom rested on the fact that he stood for the national point of view and did not allow foreigners into his country, shielding the country from foreign influence . . .

Peter the First was also a great ruler, but he related to foreigners too liberally, opened the gate too wide to foreign influence and allowed the Germanification of the country. Catherine allowed even more. After that—was Alexander I’s court really a Russian court? Was the court of Nicholas I really a Russian court? No, they were German courts.

Concluding toward the end of the conversation that Ivan had been the more “nationally oriented” (*bolee natsional’nyi*) of the two rulers, Stalin’s commentary (with Zhdanov’s and Molotov’s numerous interjections) is very instructive.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Stalin met personally with Eisenstein to talk about the sixteenth century in 1947 indicates the priority that such subjects continued to enjoy during the second half of the 1940s. Moreover, aside from Stalin’s new emphasis on the dangers of foreign influence, his characterization of Ivan IV closely resembled official views concerning the terrible tsar that had been in circulation since before the war.<sup>34</sup> Three

months later, Stalin would repeat his critique of Peter the Great's westernizing excesses in the presence of Simonov, Zhdanov, Molotov, Mekhlis, and others.<sup>35</sup> Positive assessments of Nakhimov and panslavism also figured into the general secretary's ideological agenda during these years.<sup>36</sup> In sum, the views of the party hierarchy on the relevance of the Russian national past to the Soviet present remained largely unchanged during the early postwar period.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider changes in official rhetoric. Why had Aleksandrov attempted to put a brake on the idealization of prerevolutionary leaders? Why had Aleksandrov and Egolin criticized Spasskii's allegorical use of Peter the Great in his treatment of wartime Leningrad? Why had Zhdanov attacked the celebration of Russian tsars during his diatribe against non-Russian khans? The answer lies in the launching of the Soviet "myth of the war" mentioned briefly above. Although Soviet ideologists rarely tried to distance themselves from co-opted elements of the Russian national past, it became official practice sometime in late 1944 or early 1945 to attribute wartime accomplishments to the Soviet state instead of the tsarist inheritance. This should not be too surprising, as party propaganda had always prioritized values like legitimacy and authority, and victory in 1945, as the ultimate validation of Soviet state-building, was most striking when styled as a feat *without* historical precedent.

Thus, starting in the mid-1940s, two epics informed Soviet state legitimacy until the USSR's collapse in 1991: a thousand years of prerevolutionary Russian history and its complement, the "Soviet" experience of the war. Perhaps because this distinction was somewhat artificial during the late 1940s, descriptions of the Soviet wartime triumph were often scripted in terms that were highly reminiscent of historically oriented propaganda. The best illustration of this phenomenon is Stalin's famous salute to the Russian people in the spring of 1945, an announcement that attentive observers saw as an indication that contemporary patriotism and loyalty during the postwar period were to be measured along ethnic indexes, much as historical events had been in the 1930s.<sup>37</sup> Milovan Djilas reached a similar conclusion during this period when Stalin's reference to the Soviet Union as "Russia" indicated to him that the dictator not only considered Russian patriotism to be good for popular mobilization but identified with the sentiment himself.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, conflation of the terms "Russian" and "Soviet" became routine during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Visibly uncomfortable with the ideological implications of this Russo-

Soviet hybridization, some attempted to differentiate prerevolutionary Russian patriotism from its russified Soviet equivalent. None other than Zhdanov, the party's ideology chief, tried to explain this distinction during his famous speech assailing Akhmatova, Zoshchenko, and the Leningrad literary journals in 1946: "We are not the same Russians that we were before 1917 and our Rus' is not the same as it was, nor is our character [the same]. We have changed and grown along with the great transformations that have radically altered the face of our country." Zhdanov's move to clarify the nature of the official line was not unreasonable for someone who clearly thought of himself as an orthodox Marxist. But his attempt to distinguish the postwar USSR from the prerevolutionary era while retaining a sense of its ethnic particularism ("We Russians") and thousand-year pedigree ("Rus'") was remarkably awkward, if not totally finessed.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, this prescription proved to be impossible to enforce and was quickly forgotten.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, it was only national Bolshevism, with its populist, russo-centric, and etatist dimensions, that could accommodate these emphases on the war and the prerevolutionary Russian past. Perhaps the best summary of the early postwar years' ideological valence is contained in an internal Agitprop working document entitled "A Plan for Propagandizing the Idea of Soviet Patriotism within the Population." It deserves to be quoted at length:

While showing the greatness of our socialist motherland and the heroic Soviet people, it is imperative at the same time to point out that our people have the right to take pride in their great historical past. It is necessary to underscore that at the dawn of the contemporary era, the Russian people defended European civilization against the Tatar-Mongol Horde in a self-sacrificing struggle, later extending decisive aid to the peoples of Europe in resisting the advance of Turkish conquerors. At the start of the 19th century, the Russian people, having defeated the Napoleonic horde [*polchishcha*], liberated the peoples of Europe from the French dictator's tyranny.

It follows that it should be pointed out that our people have made an invaluable contribution to world culture. It is imperative to reveal the world-class historical significance of Russian science, literature, music, painting, the theatrical arts, etc., and wage a decisive battle against attempts to marginalize the services of our people and their culture in the history of humankind and against the antiscientific the-

ory that in the areas of science and culture, the Russian people were but students under the tutelage of the West.

It is important to demonstrate that the exploitative classes that ruled in Russia did not facilitate the growth of science and culture and halted their development in our country. As a result of this, Russian scientists' labors were often co-opted by foreigners and the credit for many scientific discoveries made by Russian scientists went instead to foreigners (Lomonosov—Lavoisier, Polzunov—Watt, Popov—Marconi, and others).

It is imperative to note that certain segments of the Russian ruling classes, detached from the people and alienated from them, aimed to marginalize the Russian people's accomplishments and sided with the foreign pox [*inostranshchina*]. Even such a progressive figure as Peter I, who introduced advanced forms of life from the West into Russia, allowed the Russian people's national degradation [*unizhenie*] in front of foreigners. In the second half of the 18th century and at the start of the 19th century the Russian nobility's leading elements blindly adopted foreign values, enforced the use of French, and marginalized their native Russian language in every way. The decadence that embraced all aspects of the ruling classes' ideology at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was characterized by signs of kowtowing to the most reactionary aspects of Western culture. The landowners and capitalists who ruled in Russia led our country into economic and political servitude under the foreign states. Russia's ruling elements aimed to spiritually subordinate the Russian people to foreigners.

By raising the toilers of Russia [to their feet] through the socialist revolution, the Bolshevik party prevented our country from being transformed into a colony for foreign imperialists and led her onto the wide path of progressive development. [This has] raised the international authority of our Motherland to unprecedented levels.<sup>41</sup>

Little needs to be added to such a programmatic statement. If Lenin's formula in the early 1920s had been "communism equals Soviet power plus electrification," by the late 1940s, Stalin's corollary apparently held that "Soviet power equals the history of the Russian people plus the myth of the war."

Although scholars have often viewed the *zhdanovshchina* as a time characterized by darkness, ignorance, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, it might



War veteran–engineer flanked by an image of the founder of Moscow, Iurii Dolgorukii. The caption reads: “Glory to the Russian people—a people of epic heroes, a people of creative talents!” (1946 poster by V. Ivanov)

be more precise to view the period as the culmination of a nativist drive that had been steadily russifying the Soviet ideological experience since 1937.<sup>42</sup> By the mid-1940s, this national Bolshevik propaganda displayed complementary historical and contemporary axes. Aleksandrov's ambitions for the first of these, a linear historical narrative, were realized during this era by the removal of any meaningful non-Russian components from an already russocentric central line. This russocentrism corresponded closely with the nativism of the other ideological axis of the late 1940s: the myth of the war. Nominally a "Soviet" experience, authoritative treatments of the war scripted it more often than not as "Russian." True, post-war ideologists took great pains to write the story of the war as a "modern" myth, connecting it to industrialization and collectivization rather than to available metaphors from the Russian national past. But in need of a recognizable, legendary *dramatis persona* to animate the myth of the war, ideologists during this period followed Stalin's May 1945 example and described the war as a fundamentally Russian experience.

Linked under the russocentric rubric of national Bolshevism and pivoting on the twin axes of history and the war, the past and present flowed together with considerable coherency during the early postwar years. Together, they provided Soviet ideologists with a tremendously evocative vocabulary of myths, imagery, and iconography with which to rally the population and defend the state's legitimacy. Thus, it would be unwise to exaggerate the extent to which Soviet ideologists during the *zhdanovshchina* and after broke with the prewar and wartime official line. Russocentrism during the second half of the 1940s intensified rather than receded. Non-Russian contributions to the region's history and culture were largely elided, as Russian history assumed an even more privileged position. Although bureaucratic infighting and intractable contradictions within the official line complicated discussions of the most arcane areas of historical and administrative debate during these years, the situation on the popular level among Russian speakers was often unambiguously russocentric.<sup>43</sup> Situating the *zhdanovshchina* within a national Bolshevik line that had been scripting historiography and mass culture since 1937 not only helps to contextualize much of the era's confusing nativism and xenophobia, but this approach also provides a new set of landmarks with which to map the ideological topography of high stalinism as a whole.

## 12 Public and Party Education during the Early Postwar Period

In September of 1946 A. Kalashnikov, the new minister of education, echoed his predecessor's commentary from a year earlier that "the Soviet school and the Soviet teacher played a considerable role in the upbringing of the Soviet generation that bore the entire burden of the Great Patriotic War on its shoulders and won for itself a world-class historical victory." Continuing, Kalashnikov acknowledged the importance of a recent Central Committee resolution on ideological work and commented on the public schools' postwar agenda in the following terms: "The task of communist upbringing relates first and foremost to the school. It is precisely the school that must provide the millions of boys and girls of our country with proper cognitive and political education, develop in them communist-style thinking and conduct, and create the durable moral prerequisites for [good] social skills."<sup>1</sup>

Such an orthodox communist approach to public schooling would seem at first glance to run counter to the more historically grounded populist line that had dominated the scene during the war. Instead, it strikes a common chord with postwar efforts that scripted victory in 1945 as a genuinely "Soviet" foundational myth designed to reinforce the state's claim to popular legitimacy. Zhdanov's invectives against the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* added weight to this ideological trend away from the historically grounded line in the fall of 1946. The head of the Moscow City Department of Public Education, Voronin, glossed Zhdanov's famously intolerant speech in January 1947 at a teachers' conference in an attempt to rein in the tsarist sentimentalism that was prevalent during these years. "This alien ideology," Voronin declared, "appears in part in the intentional extolling [*voskhrvaenie*] of the heroes of the past. Com[rade]

Zhdanov said in his report that ‘Our battles have been harder than Poltava and our love is stronger than Onegin’s’ . . . We respect and value our past, but there must be a sense of moderation [*chuvstvo mery*].”<sup>2</sup>

Yet if such calls to temper the celebration of the tsarist past were fairly common during the early postwar period, one should not necessarily take such statements at face value when considering the fate of national Bolshevism in the mid- to late 1940s. Indeed, insofar as the emphasis on the Russian national past was never abandoned, either during the *zhdanovshchina* or after, it would be more precise to think of Soviet ideology during these years as characterized by a complex double axis. On one hand, the Soviet myth of the war became the quintessential legitimation of Soviet power. On the other hand, a thousand years of prerevolutionary history continued to serve—as it had since 1937—as another source of authority and legitimacy. Unifying these two mobilizational strategies was a common *dramatis persona*—the Russian people. Yet how were these nominally complementary themes treated in practice? One way to answer this question is to examine how they were accommodated within the curricula of the public schools and the party educational system during the first postwar decade.

Although the early postwar years were marked by an increase in the level of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric in society, this should not be seen as an indication that Soviet ideologists were distancing themselves from the previous decade’s russocentrism. To begin with, national identity was an officially prescribed dimension of the postwar orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup> Illustration of this fact is supplied by a routine 1949 report on patriotic aspects of history instruction in the public schools. History instruction, according to the report, “consists of the following important principle tasks: the strengthening of the youth’s communist upbringing and the fostering of a sense of Soviet patriotism, Soviet national pride and . . . selfless devotion and love for the Motherland, the Bolshevik party, and its great leaders.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, it turns out that discussions of “Soviet national pride” in practice often devolved into little more than discourse on *Russian* national pride. Such a tendency is evident in Voroninov’s instructions on fostering patriotism in the classroom at the same January 1947 teachers’ conference mentioned above: “The history teacher’s direct task is to explain, on the basis of historical examples, all of the noble qualities of our country’s peoples, with the Russians coming first.”<sup>5</sup> Two days later at the same conference, a teacher named Paniushkina added further support to this con-

tention while discussing the merits of history instruction: "History plays an exceptionally large role in political upbringing, forming a powerful medium for the fostering of a sense of Soviet patriotism. Our fatherland's history is very rich and the Russians have shown their outstanding abilities most of all: their love of freedom, their heroism, and their humanity."<sup>6</sup> In other words, even if the *zhdanovshchina* seemed to be advancing a newly "orthodox" Soviet identity in public school instruction, russocentrism and historically oriented subject matter remained important ideological components of the line.<sup>7</sup>

Classroom transcripts effectively illustrate how russocentric historical imagery was woven into lessons nominally devoted to "Soviet" themes. For instance, V. I. Shchelokova led the following discussion in 1948 on the patriotic symbolism of the USSR's new national anthem:

*Teacher:* Now let's talk about the flag of the Soviet Union. What sort of emblem, what sort of figure is on the flag?

*Student:* The Hammer and Sickle. The Hammer and Sickle is the union of the workers and the peasants.

*Teacher:* Correct. And how would you explain the color of our state flag?

*Student:* The flag is red only in our country, in the Soviet Union.

*Teacher:* . . . "Through the thunderstorms, the sun of freedom beckoned to us." What thunderstorms is the author of the anthem referring to?

*Student:* To the struggle of the workers and peasants with the autocracy . . .

*Student:* . . . and with the landlords and capitalists.

*Teacher:* Yes, that's correct . . .<sup>8</sup>

Having begun the lesson with classically "Soviet" imagery, Shchelokova then turned her students' attention to a poem that was meant to reflect upon the history of their society:

*Teacher:* Serezha, would you please think back to Nikitin's poem which begins the fourth volume of the book *Mother Tongue* [*Rodnaia rech'*].

*Student:* That poem is entitled "Rus'."

*Teacher:* Explain that word to me.

*Student:* That's what our country used to be called.

*Teacher:* Vasia, what does the author call us to do in that poem? Read the lines to us, the concluding lines.

*Student:* “What is a mind for,  
mighty Rus’,  
but to love you,  
to call you mother,  
and to defend your honor  
against the unfriendly,  
laying down our lives  
in your hour of need.”

Shchelokova apparently found it difficult to talk about “Soviet” subjects without making reference to more familiar russocentric material. This becomes increasingly clear after her segue into a related exercise. Unveiling three posters, she announced: “Children! Look at how Comrade Stalin talks about the Russian people!” And indeed, emblazoned upon the poster board were excerpts from Stalin’s famous 1945 toast to the Russian people. The students first read the toast quietly to themselves and then repeated it out loud in unison: “The Russian people are the most outstanding nation of all the nations within the Soviet Union. The Russian people earned general recognition in the war as the Soviet Union’s leading force among all the peoples of our country. The Russian people have a clear mind, hardy character, and patience!” Shchelokova then asked a series of questions related to the famous toast in order to recapitulate this aspect of the lesson:

*Teacher:* What did Com[rade] Stalin say about the Russian people?  
What sort of nation are they?

*Student:* The Russian people are the most outstanding nation of all nations.

*Teacher:* And what was the Russian people’s role in the Patriotic War?

*Student:* In the Patriotic War they were the leading force.

*Teacher:* What did Com[rade] Stalin say about their mind and character?

*Student:* They have a clear mind, hardy character, and patience.

*Teacher:* Our Motherland, our great Motherland—Rus’—united all the peoples living with us, united them all in a mighty, unconquerable Soviet state.

Nearing the conclusion of the class hour, Shchelokova again shifted her students' attention to patriotic themes underlying the concept of "union" found in the USSR's new national anthem:

*Teacher:* Show by a literary example the way that the peoples of the Soviet Union are bound together. Look for an example in the cards which are on your desks.

*Student:* "I am a Russian person, the son of my people.

I look upon my Motherland with pride.

She was always there in years of hardship

United, unwavering and firm.

My Rus' withstood battle after battle

as a united company, a fearsome barricade."<sup>10</sup>

*Teacher:* Indeed, it's been this way across the ages [*s davnikh let*].

*Student:* "Into battle went

Istafil Mamedov,

an Azeri,

the grandson of epic warriors."<sup>11</sup>

*Teacher:* When did this take place?

*Student:* During the Great Patriotic War.

*Teacher:* "The Uzbek defends Moscow, so dear to him.

The Ukrainian thinks only of how to win,

In battle the Kazakh aids the Georgian.

Such a people cannot be beaten!"<sup>12</sup>

This lesson transcript provides a rich characterization of the Soviet classroom in the early postwar years. Consideration of Soviet symbols was superficial. Non-Russians appear in highly Orientalized descriptions that alternate between primitivist—"the grandson of epic warriors"—and loyalist, these ethnicities being cast as little more than faithful sahibs defending their colonial masters. Only Russian national imagery received sophisticated, three-dimensional treatment.

Alongside this valorization of the Russian people, a focus on prerevolutionary heroes also formed a central part of the history curriculum, despite the *zhdanovshchina*'s ostensible banning of such practices. This was due to the gap in accessibility—at least during the late 1940s—between classroom materials dealing with various Nevskiis and Donskois and those concerned with the new generation of Gastellos, Kosmodem'ianskaia, and other wartime heroes.<sup>13</sup> For instance, when Serpukhov teacher Z. V.

Korol'kova wrote the suggestive line "From Our Motherland's Past" on the blackboard and asked students to perform a free-association exercise, her class volunteered historic names like Ivan Susanin and "the military leader Suvorov." Apparently unfazed by the fact that no one in the class had offered heroes from more recent times (such as Lenin, Voroshilov, or Zhukov), Korol'kova used the stories of Susanin and Suvorov to illustrate the point that "our enemies have never reigned over the Russian lands as masters. Not once, and not twice, has our Motherland met the enemy [on the field of battle] and every time she has left victoriously." Perhaps testing her students at the end of the ensuing discussion, Korol'kova wrote "1612" on the board. A student answered promptly that "in that year, the Russian people expelled the Poles from Moscow."<sup>14</sup>

Korol'kova's classroom transcript reveals that even after the establishment of the Second World War as the "dominant" Soviet myth, the historical drama of 1612, featuring a semimythical cast of Minins, Pozharskiis, Susanins, the primordial Russian people, and a host of predatory Poles and Swedes, remained a popular historical analogy for describing the contemporary international situation. Curricular materials, popular novels, the cinema, and even opera encouraged students from all across the USSR to think about the Time of Troubles in terms similar to those expressed by a fourth grader named Phillipova from Gor'kii. Asked about the seventeenth-century interregnum, she "outlined the Russian people's struggle with the Polish occupiers, indicated the date, talked about Susanin's patriotic feat," and concluded with a stanza from a poem:

You've tried to find a traitor within me:  
but that sort in Russia you'll never see!  
Here, we love the fatherland from childhood,  
and know that treachery will do the soul no good.<sup>15</sup>

Like its prewar and wartime predecessors, the official historical narrative during the postwar years was virtually driven by prerevolutionary Russian state heroes (at least until the mid-nineteenth century). Such heroic imagery appeared over and over again in classroom presentations in order to bolster arguments, illustrate conclusions, and provide thought-provoking analogies.<sup>16</sup> A teacher named Liamina in the Krasnoiarsk town of Bogunaevsk, for instance, made a point of repeating material on Aleksandr Nevskii and his thirteenth-century defeat of Swedish and German invaders during her class's work on the 1612 expulsion of the Poles and Swedes from Moscow.<sup>17</sup> More strikingly, when revolutionary- and civil war-era

heroes came up in classroom discussions, they too were often described in terms that evoked associations with the old regime. A number of students in Moscow province “compare[d] Voroshilov’s heroism with the heroism of Taras Bul’ba, who perished at the stake, and conclude[d] their presentations with the words from Gogol’s tale: ‘But can there really be in existence such fires, such tortures or such a power that might overwhelm the Russian spirit?’”<sup>18</sup> Clearly, the point of this rather forced reading of Gogol’ could only be to imbue a modern-day Soviet myth (Voroshilov) with the authority and legitimacy conferred by such a “classical” rendering of the distant past.

But it was not just military leaders and revolutionaries who loomed large in the official heroic pantheon, especially in the wake of a Central Committee resolution calling for the popularization of scientific knowledge on the local level.<sup>19</sup> Capitalizing on initial work accomplished already in the late 1930s, numerous prerevolutionary scientists—as well as artists, writers, and composers—were formally inducted into the russified Soviet Olympus. Indicative of this trend is a report on the 1948–49 school year from Moscow province that makes special note of a presentation on Lomonosov by a Podol’sk teacher named Borisova. Not only had Borisova “profoundly and engagingly characterized the image of the genius Russian scientist, a strident patriot and a fighter for the Motherland’s greatness and prosperity, as well as for a Russian national science,” but she had managed to do it while “underscoring Lomonosov’s struggle with foreign German professors.”<sup>20</sup> As Yuri Slezkine writes, official campaigns in the second half of the 1940s dispatched with even perfunctory modesty when dealing with Russian national greatness. According to official communiqués, “M. V. Lomonosov had laid the foundation for the modern natural sciences, I. I. Polzunov had invented the steam engine, A. S. Popov had invented the radio, A. F. Mozhaiskii had built the first airplane, and P. N. Iablochkov and A. N. Lodygin had created the first light bulbs. It turned out, in fact, that Russia had always been known in the West as ‘the birthplace of light.’”<sup>21</sup> Breaking with earlier admissions of Russian cultural backwardness, the official line now argued that Russians had *always* been innovators and that any failure in the past to capitalize on their talent was due to the tsarist regime’s obscurantism.<sup>22</sup>

Students’ essay writing solidified the impact of such lessons, both during class hours and after school in extracurricular reading circles.<sup>23</sup> Pioneers in Moscow, for instance, worked during their free time in the fall of 1947 on subjects such as “the heroes of the Motherland,” “my favor-

ite hero,” and “the great Russian scientists Lomonosov, Michurin, and Timiriazev,” as well as on more conventional themes associated with the personality cult (“on the life and career of I. V. Stalin”), Soviet patriotism (“what a vast country my Motherland is”), and current events (“Moscow’s 800th anniversary”).<sup>24</sup> One Moscow province teacher named Knabergof apparently ran a history-oriented study circle in which he augmented discussions on themes like “Ivan Susanin, a popular Russian hero and patriot” with a historically informed game called “Aleksandr Nevskii” and article assignments for a wall-newspaper about Minin and Pozharskii.<sup>25</sup>

From this classroom focus on national heroes, the segue to the celebration of the nation was elementary.<sup>26</sup> Official directives calling for the fostering of national pride promoted a wide range of pedagogical approaches to the subject. A 1949 report commended a teacher named Iankovskaia in Moscow province’s Ramensk school for how she “persuasively described the enormous significance of Rus’s struggle with the Mongols, [when] like a gigantic wall, [Rus’] shielded the still-weak European civilization from the Mongol invaders, taking upon itself the full weight of the blow.”<sup>27</sup> A year later, seventh graders in the town of Liublinsk earned similar praise for their conclusions regarding the 1242 Battle on the Ice and the 1380 Battle of Kulikovo Field: “over the course of the thirteenth century, the Russian people twice [*sic*] saved the peoples of Western Europe from enslavement.”<sup>28</sup> Such grossly hyperbolic and teleological readings of thirteenth-century history echoed Aleksandrov’s comments in the fall of 1945 and anticipated an official statement on the issue in a popular teachers’ manual during the following year.<sup>29</sup> Again, Slezkine provides the most eloquent summary of the postwar scene:

During [these years], the theme of the chosen people and Russia’s manifest destiny became central in official discourse—scholarly, literary, and political. If in the 1930s the concept of socialism had been reinterpreted to mean “state-led modernization,” then in the late 1940s it came to designate a special attribute of Russians as a nation. Being superior to all other peoples, the Russians had provided the focus for world history, the articulation of mankind’s eternal yearnings, and the location for an earthly paradise that would eventually embrace everyone . . . Russian science had always been the most scientific; Russian art had always been the closest to the people; and Russian soldiers had always been the most brave.<sup>30</sup>

Generally speaking, then, the early postwar period's twin ideological axes—the USSR's thousand year prehistory of Russian triumphalism and the russified Soviet myth of the war—complemented each other gracefully. Moscow province's Paniushkina, for instance, noted that “among students, a sense of patriotism and national pride for their great people and great Motherland is fostered during the study of such themes as the struggle with the Tatar-Mongols, the struggle with the Germans, the Poles, and Napoleon and especially during the study of the ‘Great Patriotic War.’”<sup>31</sup> United under the rubric of russocentrism, the two parallel rallying calls were quite persuasive—if the national Bolshevik line during the late 1930s had sometimes seemed insufficiently revolutionary and “Soviet,” the addition of the myth of the war restored a sense of contemporary militancy and struggle to stalinist ideology.<sup>32</sup>

Of course, all of this is not to imply that students' performance in school during the early postwar years was particularly noteworthy. Perennial problems in the Soviet educational system—particularly the persistence of pedagogical “formalism” and rote learning;<sup>33</sup> poorly qualified teaching cadres;<sup>34</sup> textbooks that were too difficult, in short supply, unavailable, or entirely nonexistent;<sup>35</sup> and a high dropout rate<sup>36</sup>—had been exacerbated by the war and would take years to resolve. Such debilitating shortcomings in the classroom were compounded by educational reforms in 1945 that dictated that the entire third and fourth grade history curriculum would henceforth be taught over the span of a single year.

As dismal as they tend to be, reports from province-level departments of public education during these years indicate quite clearly what sort of material was most accessible to students and what subjects were most likely to defy assimilation. According to a 1946 report from Gor'kii, students coped adequately well with material “about past and present military leaders and heroes: Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Minin and Pozharskii, Peter the First, Susanin, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Lenin, and Stalin. The students remember dates and events connected with these names well and can talk about them.” That said, the same report went on to qualify this positive assessment with the admission that “considerably more weak is [the students'] grasp of material about worker and peasant movements, about the toppling of the tsarist regime, about the defeat of Kolchak and Denikin, and about the Five-Year Plans.”<sup>37</sup> Another report during the following year noted that even mature students had trouble with abstractions like the nature of the “bourgeois-democratic” 1905 revolution, the uniquely backward nature of Russian imperialism, the driving force behind

the proletarian revolution, and the essence of the national-colonial question. “The students do not understand Lenin’s teachings on the transformation [*pererozhdenie*] of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist [revolution], the class origins of dual-power, or the tactics and strategy of NEP.” Instead, frustrated school inspectors found that “in classes on the history of the USSR, the idealization of the roles of Ivan III, Ivan IV, Peter I, and even the Decembrists is often evident. Teachers’ . . . use of quotations from the classics of Marxism-Leninism about specific historical individuals, phenomena, and processes . . . is entirely insufficient.”<sup>38</sup>

Such a nonmaterialist approach to history stemmed, of course, from the fact that teachers remained underqualified, texts were either absent or excessively complicated, and students were too poorly prepared to absorb anything more sophisticated. This state of affairs forced central authorities at the end of the 1946–47 school year to concede quite frankly that although fundamental patriotic objectives had been met, “far from all students possess a critical understanding of cause and effect or are able to explain events in a Marxist-Leninist way.”<sup>39</sup> In other words, if students were being exposed to an integrated ideological line that combined Marxist-Leninist analysis (impoverishment of the working class, capitalist encirclement, and so on) with prerevolutionary imagery (Nevskii, Donskoi, and Susanin), they ultimately retained little more than the curriculum’s most russocentric, populist, and traditionalist dimensions. Although the public schools’ performance during this era was in many senses quite poor, it was their success in promoting a mass sense of patriotic identity among Russian-speaking Soviet youth that saved them from receiving the failing grade they probably deserved.

But if the party hierarchs were anxious about the public schools during the late 1940s, their concerns regarding the party educational system at times verged on hysterics. The Central Committee issued resolution after resolution in the early postwar years scolding regional party organizations for their lack of commitment to raising party members’ educational level.<sup>40</sup> As might be expected, the crisis stemmed from the war. Thousands of Soviet citizens had been inducted into the party ranks between 1941 and 1945, both to replace fallen comrades and as a means of mobilizing popular support for the war effort.<sup>41</sup> Many of the new recruits, while exemplary patriots, did not possess even the most rudimentary idea of what it meant to be a party member in peacetime. According to one official assessment, “a significant portion [of the new members] have fallen behind and do not

possess even an elementary understanding of party history, theory, or policy.”<sup>42</sup>

F. S. Kaulin’s answers during a routine interview in Vladimir province exemplify the party hierarchy’s concerns. The chair of a collective farm in the Viaznitskii district and a candidate party member since 1944, Kaulin revealed himself to be unprepared to answer even the most basic questions, like “when was the Bolshevik party founded?” (Kaulin believed the answer was 1917.) When the conversation shifted to current events, he proved unable to remember who was the chair of the Supreme Soviet. In his defense, Kaulin pleaded that his ignorance was a result of poor educational opportunities in his district—“if we had a study circle on party history, I would eagerly attend.”<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, the rest of the report on Vladimir province indicates that the situation in other locales was little better. Excerpts from interviews illustrate the point quite vividly:

There is a lot from the history of the party that is incomprehensible to me. I would like someone to explain to me what is socialism and communism but there is no one to tell me. [Kataeva, a party member since 1944 from Factory No. 2 in Kovrov]

I am still poorly acquainted with the party’s charter and program and I do not know the party’s history—I need help. If only discussions were led or assignments made and then questions asked . . . that would be of some help to me. [Volkov, a party member from 1945 in the Murom depot of the Kazan’ railway]

I have completely fallen behind in a political sense. I am not able to read the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* on my own and no one’s assigned me to a reading circle. I studied the party’s charter before being admitted to the party, but now I don’t remember a thing . . . [Rogozhin, a party member since 1943 at Factory No. 43 in Murom]

I’d like to listen to a discussion about what’s what [*o tom, chto gde delaetsia*], as I am falling behind in life. If only someone would do something on party history. I haven’t ever even held the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* in my hands. [Popova, a worker at Viaznitskii’s Karl Liebknecht factory]<sup>44</sup>

Of course, not all party members were so forthcoming about their lack of preparation. Repin, for instance, the party secretary in charge of political

agitation at the Georgievsk machine tractor station near Stavropol', was quite insistent in 1946 about his familiarity with the *Short Course*. His claims, however, did not prevent party officials from reporting with dismay that "Repin doesn't know when the October socialist revolution was, he doesn't know how many republics there are, he can't name a single republican capital city, to a question about who chairs the USSR Council of Ministers he answered Com[rade] Zhdanov, and he didn't know who chairs the Supreme Soviet." His colleague Tezhik proved unable to answer a single question about the *Short Course*. Worse, when asked what he had read last from "among the classics," he bluffed and volunteered the first author who came to mind. Unfortunately for him, this was Zoshchenko, whom Zhdanov had just finished denouncing in the central press. Self-righteously, Tezhik (who was the chair of the town's executive party committee) claimed to the aghast officials that knowledge of party ideology wasn't relevant to his work.<sup>45</sup>

If such problems in provincial party organizations were almost to be expected during these years, of greater concern was a note to Central Committee Secretary A. A. Kuznetsov in early 1947 which revealed that the situation was little better in regional organs of the Ministry of State Security (MGB). In Tambov, for instance, a party member named Kuiarov failed to answer basic questions about the *Short Course*, ranging from who the populists (*narodniki*) had been to what had taken place at the Second Party Congress. Equally damning was the fact that he rarely read the newspaper and was not conversant in politics, something that he freely admitted. Kuiarov's colleague, an MGB secretariat head named Strelkov, embarrassed himself by asserting that the Bolshevik party had begun its revolutionary struggle in 1895. After a similarly incompetent answer, the Tambov MGB's deputy director of cadres—a fellow named Vasil'ev—was asked why he wasn't studying more attentively. His reply was not as apologetic as it was vaguely menacing: "my head is occupied with other things [*golova ne etim zaniata*]."<sup>46</sup>

Such disastrous reports led to an expansion of the party educational system between 1947 and the early 1950s that reached proportions unprecedented in the USSR's thirty-year history. Although massive before the war, the network of reading circles, political literacy schools, and night courses had atrophied somewhat under conditions of extreme austerity during the early 1940s. Efforts to compensate for this weakness late in the decade assumed a quintessentially stalinist character, both in scale and tempo as well as technique and content. From 1947 to 1948 alone, the

number of party members studying various aspects of the party catechism grew by some accounts from 3,818,000 to 4,491,000—from approximately 64 percent to 75 percent of the total communist party membership. The table presents a more comprehensive view of enrollment in the party educational system during the late 1940s.

Two things are visible from this table. First of all, the greatest gains were made at the most elementary levels of the party educational system: enrollment in political literacy schools and party history reading circles increased dramatically. Second, although the network of higher educational institutions did not expand significantly, the number of classes (and corresponding enrollment figures) increased quite markedly. Numbers in the early 1950s were somewhat more modest but reflect a continuing commitment to education on the part of the party hierarchy.<sup>47</sup>

The high priority placed on qualifications during the early postwar years provides an opportunity to gauge the educational level of the average party member with some precision. In Vladimir province in 1945, for in-

The party educational system, 1947–1949

	1947–1948		1948–1949		Increase	
	Number	Students	Number	Students	Number	Students
Political literacy schools	59,800	800,000	122,200	1,563,000	104%	95%
Reading circles on Lenin's and Stalin's biographies	95,000	779,000	33,820	185,700	-65%	-76%
Reading circles on party history	45,500	846,000	88,000	1,195,000	93%	41%
Evening party schools	5,676	162,000	5,748	184,700	1%	14%
Marxist-Leninist universities	184	78,000	192	104,600	4%	34%
Individual study		1,153,000		1,258,000		9%
Total		3,818,000		4,491,000		18%

Source: RGASPI 17/132/103/2. For slightly higher enrollment rates, see 17/132/105/67; also Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945–1953* (Montreal, 1999), 132–133.

stance, of the 1,602 secretaries of basic ground-level (*pervichnykh*) party organizations, some 87 percent (1,400) had either a basic elementary school education or no formal education at all. Of the 37,594 communists provincewide, some 45 percent (16,116) had only a fourth grade education while 12 percent (4,592) did not have even that.<sup>48</sup> While the situation in the higher party ranks was somewhat better, party executives were still remarkably uneducated during the late 1940s. Of the 200 students admitted in 1948 to an elite two-year program at the Moscow Party School—mostly city and district party or party executive committee secretaries, instructors, and similarly ranked officials—almost a fourth had failed to get past seventh grade. Fewer than twenty had ever graduated from a degree-granting higher educational institution.<sup>49</sup> The next classes' profiles (in 1949 and 1950, respectively) were much the same.<sup>50</sup> Fifteen years of upward mobility, purges, and war had left the party membership only marginally literate, much less capable of sophisticated abstract thinking.<sup>51</sup>

Although the party educational system offered courses that ranged from dialectical materialism to political economy and international relations during the late 1940s, in many other senses party schools during these years resembled the political literacy schools of the 1920s. The study of history—both of the party and of the USSR—dominated the curriculum, monopolizing a fifth of the two-year program at the Moscow Party School. Only the schools' commitment to Russian language and literature—which was necessary for teaching functional literacy—rivaled history's place in the curriculum. These priorities are visible not just in Moscow, but throughout the party educational system's various reading circles, seminars, courses, and tutorials.<sup>52</sup>

Once enrolled, students quickly found that in practice, the study of party history actually meant the study of the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)*. It structured lesson plans, discussions, assignments, and exams.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, so much was the *Short Course* a centerpiece of the curriculum that when students claimed to already be familiar enough with it to move on to more challenging material, they were frequently told to go back and read it again.<sup>54</sup>

This was actually pretty good advice in light of the difficulties the book presented to poorly educated readers.<sup>55</sup> Its fourth chapter, "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism," was especially notorious for its density and abstraction.<sup>56</sup> As a result, while teachers found it impossible to remove the *Short Course* from their syllabi, often they would quietly use it in conjunction with less arcane curricular supplements that presented the same mate-

rial in a more approachable fashion.<sup>57</sup> Agitprop conceded in internal documents as early as 1945 that “communists with a low level of general and political literacy are not able to study the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* and require popularized discussions on current events, party history, and the party’s charter.” Stalin acknowledged the same thing in a conversation with leading party ideologists a year later.<sup>58</sup> In the wake of these admissions, Agitprop moved during the late 1940s and early 1950s to publish supplemental pamphlets, brochures, curricular plans, and reading lists to aid students in their study of the party catechism.<sup>59</sup>

But another factor besides the impenetrability of the *Short Course* complicated its dissemination. Never revised after its release in 1938, the *Short Course* had little in common with the official line by the mid- to late 1940s.<sup>60</sup> Most obviously, it did not mention the war. No less important, it had been released too early to reflect the enormous impact that national Bolshevism and its central tenets—populism, russocentrism, and etatism—would have on Soviet ideology during the intervening decade. As a result, even the best students found it difficult to connect the *Short Course* to the postwar concerns of Soviet society.<sup>61</sup> To a certain extent, Stalin’s *On the Great Patriotic War* addressed this problem, as it reprinted his famous November 7, 1941, speech, as well as his toast to the Russian people. Still, many of the supplemental publications issued during the late 1940s were designed to bridge this gap as well, with books like *Our Great Motherland* providing a russocentric narrative within which citations from the *Short Course* could be contextualized.<sup>62</sup>

Such a subtle readjustment of the curriculum during these years is also evident in the titles of talks sponsored by the Moscow province lecture bureau in 1946. Reflecting the hybridization of the official line, this lecture series alternated between talks such as “Stalin’s February 9, 1946, Speech,” “The History of the USSR,” “The Fourth Five-Year Plan,” and “The Development of Russian Painting, Russian Theater, and Russian Music.”<sup>63</sup> Komsomol study circles in the public schools likewise prepared russocentric exhibits on themes such as “The Russian People’s Patriotism,” “Russian Scientists’ Contributions to the Development of the Biological Sciences,” and “The History of Russian Painting.”<sup>64</sup> Often, the content of party history courses seems to have differed little from courses on the history of the USSR taught in the public schools.

On the whole, students’ performance in party and Soviet state history courses may not have been particularly sophisticated or subtle, but they did receive better marks in these subjects than in any other courses offered

in the party educational system.<sup>65</sup> In all likelihood, this was as much due to the privileged place history had enjoyed in Soviet society over the preceding decade as it was due to the party schools' specific agenda. Indeed, students demonstrated the most success in classes on Soviet *state* history (and not *party* history), a record that can be explained by the subject's general familiarity and easy accessibility.<sup>66</sup> In sum, although the sophistication of the material covered in party courses and reading circles was limited by the effectiveness of the teaching cadres—particularly their poor mastery of the curriculum and the “formalism” with which they presented it<sup>67</sup>—it is undeniable that students actually did learn something. Of course, what they learned had more to do with Russian history and the myth of the war than it did with the *Short Course's* dialectical materialism, but in the final analysis, that dovetailed nicely with the party hierarchy's most basic expectations for political education on the mass level.

In reevaluating the claim sometimes advanced in the scholarly literature that the *zhdanovshchina* shifted the orientation of the official line from the past to the present, this chapter has examined the way ideology was treated at two critical sites within stalinist society: the public schools and the party educational system. In both cases, while there is little doubt that the myth of the war and the promotion of “Soviet” concerns were major state priorities, Russian history nevertheless remained at the center of the official curriculum. Underlying this paradoxical state of affairs are three basic characteristics of Soviet ideological education during the early postwar period.

First, the promotion of a sense of “Soviet” identity during the postwar era relied on an array of imagery and symbols that conflated Russian ethnic signifiers with broader all-union ones. Second, the *zhdanovshchina's* prescriptions against the idealization of the past wreaked havoc with non-Russian national expression but did not precipitate lasting changes in the russocentric dimensions of the Soviet history narrative. Third, teachers during the postwar period—much like their predecessors in the late 1930s—relied on the populist, russocentric dimensions of the national Bolshevik line to convey what was otherwise arcane and inaccessible subject matter. Undiluted Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism, after all, were subjects that were just too difficult for the majority of Russian speakers enrolled in Soviet educational institutions to grasp during these years, a problem that was compounded by the teaching cadres' and curricular materials' many inadequacies.

In the final analysis, then, the official history narrative that had been introduced by Shestakov in the second half of the 1930s was—by its tenth anniversary in 1947—a trusted and proven form of societal mobilization. No one—neither administrators nor educators, nor the students themselves, for that matter—had any interest in breaking with this familiar and approachable reading of the usable past. Both durable and effective, the post-1937 historical line had not only survived the war but would ultimately prove resilient enough to outlast Stalin himself.

## 13 Postwar Soviet Mass Culture

Typically described as the apotheosis of the Stalin cult and a time of xenophobia and ideological militancy, the mid- to late 1940s and early 1950s were an era in which other sorts of appeals played a prominent role in Soviet mass culture as well. In particular, Russian historical imagery complemented russocentric slogans promoting the myth of the war, whether in official celebrations, popular literature, theater, film, or museum exhibitions. Examining the form such sloganeering took during the *zhdanovshchina* and after, this chapter argues that this proliferation of national Bolshevik imagery justifies a reappraisal of the way in which Soviet mass culture during the first postwar decade has long been regarded.

The 110th commemoration of the death of the “founder of the Russian literary language,” A. S. Pushkin, in 1947 was in many ways strikingly reminiscent of the centenary in 1937. Russocentrism scripted official rhetoric in much the same way that it had ten years earlier. D. D. Blagoi, for instance, a leading Pushkinist, gave a lecture about Pushkin’s significance as a “great national poet” that was broadcast by state radio across the entire country.<sup>1</sup> Although some speeches during the official festivities referred to the poet as a revolutionary who struggled against the old regime,<sup>2</sup> many others sought to mobilize Pushkin as a symbol of Russian “national pride” and nationhood in much the same way that Blagoi did. S. I. Vavilov, the president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, asked rhetorically from the podium at an official event:

What is the mighty, compelling strength of Pushkin’s genius, its unwavering strength that grows with time instead of waning? Why was

Pushkin Lenin's favorite poet and why, in the decisive days of November 1941, during the Great Patriotic War, did Stalin include Pushkin in the array of great names that make up the pride and glory of the Russian people? The answer to these questions stems from the fact that Pushkin was and remains a genuine people's poet—in his own words, a genuine “echo of the Russian people.” In Pushkin are fixed the best aspects of this great nation—its simplicity, breadth, love for people, love for freedom, its sharp mind, and unusual sense of beauty. Glory to the great Russian poet! Glory to the great Russian people, who have given the world Pushkin!<sup>3</sup>

Combining the era's russocentric populism and the tendency to conflate the Russian national past with the Soviet present (under the aegis of Stalin's cult of personality), Vavilov's speech is a masterful example of the national Bolshevism that permeated mass culture during the celebration.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, at times, it must have seemed as if Stalin was being quoted more often than Pushkin himself. S. V. Chesnokov, for example, glossed Stalin's 1945 toast to the Russian people in his elegy to the nineteenth-century poet: Pushkin is “the great son of the Russian people . . . Pushkin's name is inseparably connected with the fair image of our beloved Motherland. Pushkin uncovered in his works the best characteristics of the Russian people—their selfless devotion to the Motherland, their bravery and hardiness in the struggle for freedom, their clear mind and wondrous talents. His burning patriotism and his extolling of freedom render Pushkin's works immortal.”<sup>5</sup> From the nature of this passage, it is evident that Chesnokov did not feel it necessary to acknowledge the “Soviet” semantics of terms like “our beloved Motherland” and “patriotism” in 1947, despite the impending celebration of the 30th anniversary of the October revolution later that year. Instead of praising contemporary Soviet accomplishments that could be linked to Pushkin, Chesnokov's speech was marked by pure and unabashed ethnic particularism as he focused on the eternal qualities of the Russian national character. N. S. Tikhonov echoed many of Chesnokov's russocentric commonplaces when speaking on behalf of the Soviet Writers' Union at the same event. If his speech skirted Vavilov's and Chesnokov's references to Stalin, his use of russocentric imagery was perhaps more shrill: Pushkin “is like a loyal son, like the first poet of the Russian lands . . . [Pushkin,] you gave to [later] generations the characteristics of the Russian nation, its rich specificities, its unparalleled strength, its creative power. You uncovered with enormous poetic clarity the soul and

heart of the Russian person, the beauty of his values, and the greatness of the Russian people in their historic work. You sensed their hidden strengths and their glorious future in the salvation of humankind.”<sup>6</sup> While such populism from speakers unfamiliar with classical literature would not be all that surprising,<sup>7</sup> the advancement of such a line by representatives of the usually staid intelligentsia like Vavilov, Chesnokov, and Tikhonov suggests that this tone had been dictated from above by party authorities.

Between the 110th commemoration of Pushkin’s death and the 30th jubilee of the October revolution later that year fell another ambiguously Soviet celebration: the 800th anniversary of Moscow’s founding. Celebrated during the first week of September 1947, this event—the first great state holiday to follow Victory Day in 1945—found the Soviet capital awash in imagery and iconography designed to evoke the atmosphere of a bygone age.<sup>8</sup> Because 1147 was not just the date of Moscow’s emergence, but was, by extension, also the founding date of the Muscovite state, the capital was hailed as no less than the “national center of the Russian people.”<sup>9</sup> Lectures read to packed auditoriums during August and September included titles like “Moscow, the Organizer of the Russian People” and “Dmitrii Donskoi.” Concerts featured the performance of pieces like V. Ia. Shebalin’s “Moscow Cantata,” Iu. A. Shaporin’s “Kulikovo Field,” S. S. Prokof’ev’s “Aleksandr Nevskii,” and P. I. Tchaikovsky’s “1812 Overture.”<sup>10</sup> On September 7, *Pravda* even published greetings from Stalin in which he saluted Moscow for its service to the motherland. In this statement, Stalin took the opportunity to reiterate two of his favorite themes—the continuity that linked Muscovy, imperial Russia, and the Soviet Union, and the centrality of etatism to Russian state history:

Moscow’s services do not just consist of the fact that it has, over the course of our history, saved the Motherland three times from foreign oppression—from the Mongol Yoke, the Polish-Lithuanian invasion, and the French incursion. Above all else, Moscow’s services consist of the fact that it served as the basis for the unification of fragmented Rus’ into a single state, with a single government and a single leadership. No state in the world can count on the preservation of its independence and on serious economic or cultural growth if it cannot manage to free itself from feudal fragmentation and princely squabbling [*neuriaditsa*] . . . Moscow’s historic service consists of the fact that it was and remains the basis and initiator of the formation of a centralized state in the Russian lands [*na Rusi*].<sup>11</sup>

Amid this deluge of historically oriented symbolism and regalia, the *zhdanovshchina*'s recent proscription against the idealization of the Muscovite tsars—which had never been consistently enforced in the first place—was rendered completely impotent.<sup>12</sup> True, the House of Unions near the Kremlin was draped with a silk banner adorned with Zhdanov's famous statement, "We are not the same Russians that we were before 1917 and our Rus' is not the same as it was," but few seem to have noticed this attempt to restrain popular enthusiasm for the prerevolutionary era.<sup>13</sup> The festivities ultimately culminated with the announcement of plans to erect a statue to the city's founder, Iurii Dolgorukii, on Soviet Square in the heart of downtown Moscow.<sup>14</sup> Displacing a revolutionary-era obelisk that had stood at the center of the square, the mounted warrior was envisaged as looking out over Moscow's majestic central artery, Gor'kii Street, to face Mossovet, the newly reconstructed seat of the Moscow city council. Although not completed until 1954, this monument was a dramatic gesture, as statues had long enjoyed prominent positions within the city's physical and symbolic landscape.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime, newspaper articles devoted hundreds of column-inches to the city's other denizens of note throughout the ages, a list that ranged from the political (Dmitrii Donskoi) and military (Kutuzov) to the literary (Pushkin).<sup>16</sup>

If it seems that Pushkin's name was on everyone's lips in 1947, the frequency with which the poet's memory was invoked during the 110th commemoration of his death was surpassed only twenty-two months later in 1949 during the 150th anniversary of his birth. During this celebration the official cult of the poet reached unprecedented proportions, with some 45 million copies of Pushkin's works being issued in 1949 alone.<sup>17</sup> A. A. Fadeev boasted at a gala event at the Bolshoi Theater that the poet's books could be found on virtually every Soviet family's bookshelf. As Marcus Levitt writes, the anniversary was marked by

a flood of articles, lectures, brochures, essays, and editorials; poems, novels, stories, and plays on Pushkinian themes or about Pushkin himself; works by Pushkin presented on stage, in film, or on the radio, or put to music and dance; depictions of Pushkin in sculpture, on canvas, in political cartoons, graphic and applied arts; illustrations of his life and works; and so on. Jubilee events—monument openings, dedications, exhibitions, competitions—were held across the USSR throughout the year. Pushkin museums were opened in the "city-monument" Pushkin (formerly Tsarskoe Selo, renamed in 1937) and

at Mikhailovskoe, where what had remained of Pushkin's family estate was rebuilt after its destruction by the Nazis.<sup>18</sup>

Enormous in scope, the jubilee enjoyed sufficient priority to even command the attention of party leaders with rather questionable literary credentials. The restoration of the estate at Mikhailovskoe, for instance, required the Pskov party organization to petition authorities from Voroshilov to M. A. Suslov to obtain the necessary funding.<sup>19</sup> Only Stalin's seventieth birthday celebration in December 1949 eclipsed that of the great poet.

Pushkin's status as one of the most beloved authors of the era was, of course, a reflection of the Russian classics' continued popularity among Russian-speaking audiences. This can be illustrated by reference to postwar readership surveys. For example, high school graduates in Cheliabinsk in 1946 ranked their favorite authors in the following order: L. N. Tolstoi, Gor'kii, Pushkin, Lermontov, Sholokhov, Maiakovskii, Fadeev, and N. A. Ostrovskii. A similar ranking of favorite literary characters included Ostrovskii's Pavel Korchagin, Tolstoi's Andrei Bolkonskii and Natasha Rostova, Pushkin's Tat'iana Larina, and Gor'kii's Pavel Vlasov. These results are quite similar to the findings of the more ambitious 1950–51 Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, which also revealed the classics to wield tremendous influence in Soviet society. As one Russian put it, "I read the old writers. I do not read Soviet writers. I prefer Tolstoi and Pushkin to Gorky and even Sholokhov."<sup>20</sup>

Such hyperbole aside, it is undeniable that Socialist Realism was widely read during these years. Yet contemporary writers paid considerable attention to the classics and to history itself in their contributions to the modern canon of Russo-Soviet literature. In 1946, for instance, the unfinished third portion of A. N. Tolstoi's *Peter the First* was published posthumously.<sup>21</sup> At about the same time, Kuperman finished a new book on the Seven Years' War, entitled *The Road to Berlin*. Kostylev completed the last book of his trilogy on Ivan the Terrible during the following year.<sup>22</sup> Iurii Slezkina also published a novel in 1947 about Brusilov, just as L. I. Rakovskii was completing his *Generalissimo Suvorov*. Rakhovskii's 1952 *Admiral Ushakov*, incidentally, capitalized on his success with Suvorov, as well as the popularity of other biographies about Ushakov by M. Iakhontova and G. Shtorm published immediately after the war.<sup>23</sup>

If such themes are not too great a surprise from authors working within genres like the historical novel and biography, it is worth noting that writ-

ers addressing contemporary themes also returned again and again to imagery drawn from the Russian national past. Boris Polevoi, the author of the famous 1946 *Tale of a Real Man*, set up an allusion to V. Vasnetsov's 1880 painting *After Prince Igor's Battle with the Polovtsy* to describe the carnage witnessed by his protagonist Aleksei Meres'ev during the recent war:

everywhere lay dead bodies, in padded jackets and trousers and in dirty green tunics and forage-caps pulled over the ears; bent knees, upraised chins, and waxen faces protruded from the snow, gnawed at by foxes and pecked at by magpies and ravens. Several ravens were circling slowly over the glade and this reminded Aleksei of the *The Battle of Igor*, a magnificent but mournful picture reproduced in his school history book from the canvas of a great Russian artist.<sup>24</sup>

Polevoi's interpolation of imagery from the medieval *Tale of Igor's Host* into a narrative on the Second World War by means of such a well-known painting was a masterful stroke. Displayed before the war at the Tret'iakov Gallery and widely disseminated through the media, Vasnetsov's canvas endowed Polevoi's scene with an "epic" quality that no Soviet-era imagery could have provided. V. Azhaev's Stalin Prize-winning novel *Far from Moscow*, while considerably less graceful, evoked a similar set of cultural values that were authoritative and compelling because of their eternal, mythical quality. In one scene, an engineer dreams of rebuking one of his colleagues for the fellow's lack of faith in their wartime construction project: "I look at you, my dear Petr Efimovich, and can't understand you—by what right do you call yourself a Russian? Where's your Russian 'sweep-of-the-hand,' your love of the new? What is there that is still Russian left in you?"<sup>25</sup> As these two examples indicate, not even the most contemporary of Soviet fiction was written without allusion to national Bolshevism's central thematic tenets during the early postwar period.

Although many writers quite willingly advanced this increasingly positive view of the Russian national past, the censor was also mobilized in support of the official line. In particular, Glavlit compelled all contemporary writers to refrain from promoting overly negative portrayals of the old regime. Herman Ermolaev's invaluable study of state censorship meticulously catalogs numerous editorial changes of this sort made to early postwar editions of novels such as A. P. Chapygin's *Stepan Razin*, Sergeev-Tsenski's *Ordeal of Sevastopol*, and Panferov's *Bruski*. Glavlit also enhanced the russocentrism of contemporary Soviet fiction by excising de-

tails that either ascribed negative characteristics to ethnic Russians or cast non-Russians in an excessively sympathetic light. Panferov's *Bruski*, V. V. Ivanov's *Armored Train No. 14-69*, and Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don* were especially affected by this trend.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, Glavlit purged libraries and used bookstores of out-of-print material, ranging from earlier editions of these titles to literature of Western or Central European provenance brought back to the USSR by returning soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

Radio was in many senses no less important than literature during the early postwar years, insofar as it was seen by the authorities as having considerable potential in the realms of education and propaganda. Lectures continued to be broadcast, as during the war, but arguably more central to the postwar agenda was the expansion of musical programming.<sup>28</sup> Wartime interest in Russian classical music and folksongs remained high during these years, in part because of these genres' genuine popularity and in part because the *zhdanovshchina*'s ban on "kowtowing" to the West complicated the broadcasting of classical favorites such as Beethoven, Bach, and Chopin. One fellow from Leningrad named Sharov reminded the all-union radio administration of these circumstances as late as 1952, writing that although the European classics deserved some airtime, it was also necessary to broadcast "our great Russian composers—Tchaikovsky, Glinka, and Musorgskii."<sup>29</sup> Others were more blunt, demanding to know periodically "why are there so many foreign operas being broadcast (Verdi, Puccini, and other Italians) and so few Russian ones?" Specific requests included operas like *Prince Igor*, *Boris Godunov*, *Evgenii Onegin*, *Rusalka*, and other staples of the prerevolutionary repertoire.<sup>30</sup>

Some felt that state radio should expand its programming to include more populist fare and to "broadcast more simple, good songs and arrangements from theatrical dramas." A legacy of war, the demand for Russian folksongs and other easily accessible music was considerable during the early postwar years. Interesting in this regard is a letter sent to the state radio committee by a listener in the village of Dolgoprudnaia near Moscow. Calling for more attention to be paid to Russian folk ensembles, he noted with undisguised chauvinism that "on ordinary days, aside from propaganda, there's nothing to listen to except for various Chuvash', Mordvin, Chinese, Albanian, and other such music."<sup>31</sup> A reflection of the double axis of postwar propaganda, such comments point to a popular affinity for things Russian—whether associated with the national past or the recent war—that was framed in distinctively nativist terms.

Many of the same preoccupations that influenced classical radio pro-

gramming also informed theater and opera, in regard to both the restaging of canonical mainstays and the creation of new works based on old themes. New plays like I. Bakhterev and A. Razumovskii's *Military Leader Kutuzov* flanked wartime creations like Sel'vinskii's *Field Marshal Kutuzov*, Solov'ev's *The Great Sovereign*, and other prewar and prerevolutionary pieces.<sup>32</sup> A. K. Tolstoi's *Tsar Fedor Ivanovich* opened to what one newspaper described as its 912th staging at the Moscow Art Theater in 1947.<sup>33</sup> Classical operas, such as A. P. Borodin's *Prince Igor*, M. P. Musorgskii's *Boris Godunov* and Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila* were paired with new works like Prokof'ev's *War and Peace*, M. Koval's *Those from Sevastopol'*, and V. Kriuchkov's *Dmitrii Donskoi*.<sup>34</sup> Although the *zhdanovshchina* initially gave directors cause for concern, lest such productions be denounced in print as idealizations of the past, operas of the *Ivan Susanin* genre returned to the stage *en masse* in 1948 after Zhdanov personally sanctioned the performance of the Russian classics. Indeed, his endorsement of a conservative, conventional repertoire—"beautiful, graceful music, music capable of satisfying the Soviet people's aesthetic needs and artistic tastes"—led state troupes to focus on the most traditional and familiar aspects of the classical canon.<sup>35</sup>

Similar to other dimensions of the *zhdanovshchina*, this clarification of the official view regarding the classics referred exclusively to the Russian aspects of the canon in question. No similar moves were made to rehabilitate the much maligned non-Russian repertoire.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the Russian classics—Glinka, Ostrovskii, Tolstoi, Tchaikovsky, and so on—were staged with particular frequency in republican theaters and opera houses during the early postwar years as the non-Russian party organizations tried to redeem their wartime "nationalist" indiscretions. The Kiev Opera, for instance, presented Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, *Evgenii Onegin*, and *The Tsar's Bride* during its 1946–47 season.<sup>37</sup> The Kazakh party directed republican theaters to pursue a similar course of action.<sup>38</sup> Well-known theatrical and operatic troupes from the RSFSR were dispatched to Kiev, Baku, Riga, and Alma-Ata in the fall of 1945 to give performances in part to clarify for republican authorities which pieces were to be included in the postwar artistic canon. The establishment of permanent Russian-language theaters in the republics institutionalized this practice in the ensuing years.<sup>39</sup> As one patronizing article in the leading journal *Teatr* put it, "the staging of classical Russian plays on the national [non-Russian] stage has a great significance in politico-cultural and artistically nurturing terms."<sup>40</sup>

The *zhdanovshchina*'s proscriptions against depicting Asian "khans"

hamstrung republican cinema in a way that is reminiscent of the situation on the stage. Virtually nothing was produced outside the RSFSR between 1946 and 1955.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, almost twenty films concerning prerevolutionary Russian officers, scientists, writers, and composers were shot in Russian studios during the first postwar decade (a record that confirms that the Central Committee's repertoire restrictions were not applied to Russian artistic productions with the severity with which they were applied to republican projects).<sup>42</sup> Most numerous were films that focused on nineteenth-century Russian scientists whose creative talents had ostensibly been ignored by the late tsarist regime and exploited by unscrupulous foreigners. Typical of the rhetoric in this genre of film is a scene from *Aleksandr Popov*, where the film's eponymous hero rebuffs the attempts of several American agents to buy his prototype radio with the statement: "My work belongs to the fatherland. I am a Russian person and I have the right to give all my knowledge, all my work and all my accomplishments only to my fatherland."<sup>43</sup> Similar feature films concerned N. I. Pirogov (an anatomist), I. V. Michurin (a geneticist), I. P. Pavlov (a psychologist), N. E. Zhukovskii (the "inventor" of the airplane), and N. M. Przheval'skii (a famous geographer).<sup>44</sup> Nativist themes scripted other cinematic projects as well. Genius in the arts, whether expressed by prominent composers (Glinka, Musorgskii, Rimskii-Korsakov) or famous literary figures (V. G. Belinskii),<sup>45</sup> turned out to stem from native Russian folk traditions, rather than from European training, traditions or genres. Admirals like Nakhimov, Ushakov, and Z. P. Rozhdestvenskii exemplified battlefield valor in the tradition of *Aleksandr Nevskii* and *Kutuzov*.<sup>46</sup> Cinematic authorities enforced a line during the late 1940s and early 1950s that asserted (to paraphrase Yuri Slezkine's memorable formulation) that Russian science had always been the most scientific, Russian art had always been the most beloved, and Russian soldiers had always been the most valorous.

Canonical material from years past continued to be screened as well. Historically oriented films like *Peter the First*, *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii*, and *Stepan Razin* remained in circulation throughout the period.<sup>47</sup> Many other titles were revived for "jubilee film festivals" during the days and weeks leading up to the celebration of Moscow's 800th anniversary.<sup>48</sup> Newsreels devoted to the Soviet capital were flanked by features like the first part of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (a film that was in full distribution despite what must have been considerable hesitancy on the part of the censor). Less controversial favorites, such as *Minin and Pozharskii*, *Suvorov*, and *Kutuzov*, complemented new postwar films, producing a his-

torical narrative on celluloid that was as powerful and engaging as the more conventional print media in circulation at the time.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to its presence on the library shelf, radio playlist, theatrical stage, and moviehouse screen, the official line of the early postwar years was also to be found within the display cases of the society's museums. The Hermitage's "Martial History of the Russian People" exhibition, for instance, was reopened amid considerable pomp and circumstance in the fall of 1946, to be followed only months later by the mounting of an exhibition entitled "History of Russian Culture."<sup>50</sup> In Moscow, similar shows took place—*Vecherniaia Moskva* published a picture in August 1947 of a group of visitors to the Tret'iakov Gallery standing in front of two of Vasnetsov's most famous canvases, *The Epic Heroes* and *Ivan the Terrible*.<sup>51</sup> One of those in attendance, a fellow named Radiuk, waxed rhapsodic in the Tret'iakov visitors' book that "just a glimpse of the historic jewel-paintings of the great artists awakens in you a sense of internal strength in an instant." Quoting Pushkin, he added, "here is the Russian spirit; here is the smell of Rus'." Students from the Institute of Foreign Relations reported a similar experience many months later: "C[omrade] Razumovskaia told us in clear and moving terms about the national art of the itinerant school: Perov, Kramskoi, Vasnetsov, Repin, and others. [She told us] about the Russian national way of life—sometimes sad, sometimes cheerful, and sometimes with an air of intense pensiveness—from which radiates the boldness and strength of epic warriors. We were very engaged by the beautiful Russian landscapes, so familiar and tender, with their rich splashes of color."<sup>52</sup> Somewhat later, the Pushkin Art Gallery featured an exhibition devoted to Russian graphic art.<sup>53</sup> Such exhibitions were accompanied by the unveiling of new landmarks as well. Nineteenth-century Russian writers such as N. A. Nekrasov, I. S. Nikitin, and L. N. Tolstoi were honored by new sites for pilgrimage in Voronezh, Leningrad, and Astapov, respectively, while a new monument to N. G. Chernyshevskii was erected along one of Leningrad's major thoroughfares.<sup>54</sup> Pushkin's bombed-out Moika apartment in Leningrad reopened at about the same time, having been restored at a Stakhanovite tempo to be ready in time for the 110th commemoration of the poet's death in early 1947.<sup>55</sup> Similarly frantic work aimed to erect special exhibits in time for Moscow's 800th anniversary later that September.<sup>56</sup>

Like the cinema, museums were part of an array of extracurricular educational activities that received prominent endorsement in teachers' manuals and other pedagogical aids during the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, special brochures were printed to provide museum visitors of all ages with the “correct” perspective on what they were seeing. A good illustration of this practice is the State Historical Museum’s guidebook to its sixteenth-century exhibits, which begins with a quotation from Stalin’s etatist 1947 salute to Moscow.<sup>58</sup> Evidence suggests that these institutions reached their audiences with considerable success. A school inspector in Moscow, A. N. Khmelev, reported during the 1947–48 academic year that although most of the city’s schools were not providing enough diversity in their afterschool activities, they could not be considered total failures, insofar as many at least organized regular museum field trips. Khmelev attributed this in part to the museums themselves, which were making a point to advertise their willingness to work with schoolchildren. Particularly successful in this respect were the State History Museum, the Pushkin Art Gallery, and the Museum of Eastern Cultures.<sup>59</sup> Confirmation of Khmelev’s impression that museum visits had pedagogical value can be found in sources ranging from the visitors’ books at the Tret’iakov Gallery to the diary of a schoolgirl named T. P. Mazur, who mentioned a memorable visit to the State History Museum amid a jumble of otherwise unremarkable commentary about everyday grammar school life in late 1948.<sup>60</sup>

Mass culture during the early postwar years effectively surrounded Russian speakers in Soviet society with national Bolshevik propaganda from a variety of different angles. Publishing, theater, opera, radio, film, and museum exhibition projected a populist, etatist line through references to the Russian national past and a russocentric reading of the recent war experience.

Although Soviet mass culture during the postwar period also advanced the rhetoric of “party-mindedness” and Stalin’s cult of personality, the national Bolshevik dimensions of Soviet mass culture served as a fundamental cornerstone of the party’s propaganda efforts. Authoritatively grounded in the classics, national Bolshevism had drawn upon recognizable imagery, symbolism, and iconography from the Russian national past since the mid- to late 1930s in a way that enhanced the accessibility of the material, at least in regard to Russian speakers.

Two new dimensions complemented the national Bolshevik line after 1945. First, the increasingly russified myth of the war valorized Russians’ contributions to the struggle with Nazi Germany, crediting them with leading the Soviet peoples to victory. Second, nativist tendencies that dated to 1944, and mounted after the outset of the *zhdanovshchina* in 1946, sharply curtailed the dissemination of propaganda concerning non-

Russian themes. Both of these factors had the effect of dramatically raising the profile of national Bolshevism in the Soviet cultural sphere. As noted in Chapter 11, the new emphasis on the war also had the effect of diversifying Soviet propaganda, returning a sense of struggle and ideological militancy to an official line that since 1937 had favored state-builders from the distant past. The final chapter of this book assesses the impact on popular *mentalité* of what was already a ten-year trend in 1947.

## 14 The Popular Reception of Ideology during Stalin's Last Decade

Upon the announcement of Nazi Germany's capitulation in May 1945, a worker at the Frunze factory in Moscow named Voronkova declared: "my soul is overflowing with joy. I am proud that I am Russian and that we are under the leadership of the Great Stalin."<sup>1</sup> Moskvitin, a worker at the Orthopedic factory, described the victory in similar terms: "the Russian people played a historic role in the defeat of Hitlerite Germany and in saving the people of Europe from the fascist plague. Now, in the war's aftermath, the Russian people under the guidance of the Great Stalin will be at the fore of the struggle to create a durable and lasting peace."<sup>2</sup> History was on people's minds as well, as is evident in a statement attributed to the Stakhanovite Bukharov at the Ordzhonikidze Machine-Building Factory. Seizing upon a metaphor popularized by a wartime play, he announced that "the German murderers now will bear the responsibility for their evildoing. Berlin will give up its keys to the city to our Russian troops for the third time."<sup>3</sup>

Such glimpses of public opinion, drawn from informers' reports in 1945, suggest that national Bolshevik propaganda during the war catalyzed the formation of a sense of Russian national identity on the popular level. Indeed, similar accounts, drawn from sources ranging from the files of the secret police to private letters, diaries, memoirs, and interviews between 1950 and 1951, indicate that in marked contrast to the situation during the mid-1930s, many by the mid- to late 1940s found themselves able to articulate in easily understandable terms what it meant to be members of a Russian national community. One's Russian ethnic identity could be expressed in the colorful language of metaphors ("a company of Russian warriors" [*druzhina russkikh voinov*]), the heroic imagery of semi-

mythical parables (Ivan Susanin), or the authoritative voice of official communiqués (“the most outstanding nation”). “Russianness,” it turns out, was a much more central marker of identity in high stalinist society than has been discussed until now in historical scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

Russians in Soviet society at the end of the war demonstrated a worldview that in many ways is exemplified by the statements of the three ordinary Muscovites—Voronkova, Moskvitin, and Bukharov—quoted above. No longer just a mere conflation of Russian and Soviet identity, their commentary speaks of an unabashed sense of Russian exceptionalism. Such sentiments were undoubtedly strengthened by Stalin’s victory toast to the Russian people and their “clear mind, hardy character, and patience” in May 1945. An informer reporting to the Moscow party organization quoted Denisov, an engineer at an aircraft concern, as saying: “C[omrade] Stalin spoke well regarding the Russian people. I found it particularly moving when C[omrade] Stalin spoke of the Russian people’s relationship to their government, the Russian person’s tough character, and his stamina. Indeed, only the Russians were able to endure the hardships of the war and not tremble in the face of mortal danger.” Soleiko, an engineer at Factory No. 836, shared Denisov’s sentiments, approving not only of Stalin’s valorization of the Russian people, but also of his juxtaposition of their service in the war against that of the other Soviet peoples: “C[omrade] Stalin’s speech evoked in us not only a sense of wonder, but a sense of pride as well. It was very important to underscore the leading role of the Russian nation, which has been able to pass on all of its characteristics and best traditions to the USSR’s other nationalities and lead them to the enemy’s defeat.”<sup>5</sup> A remarkably influential pronouncement, the toast would be glossed again and again in Soviet mass culture until the dictator’s death in 1953. Fragmentary evidence indicates that although many within Russian-speaking society understood the toast to be a clear endorsement of russocentrism and a radical departure from communist-idealist positions, it was generally only non-Russians who expressed discomfort with the general secretary’s sentiments.<sup>6</sup>

But if such emotions stemmed from the emerging myth of the war, popular commentary contained a variety of historical references as well. This is quite often visible in discussions relating to Eastern Europe in general, and Poland in particular, perhaps because Soviet propaganda organs had rarely had anything positive to say about the latter country in the decades following the 1920 Soviet-Polish war. Indeed, despite Poland’s history as a

Slavic country and a former tsarist possession, Soviet mass culture after 1937 had vigorously emphasized a regional rivalry dating back three centuries to medieval Muscovite times. Canonical mainstays like *Taras Bul'ba* and *Ivan Susanin* had been mobilized for this purpose, as had more modern artistic productions like Korneichuk's *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii*.

But the fact that Ivan Susanin and other historical referents framed the way Soviet citizens regarded their western neighbor meant that the announcement of an alliance treaty in 1945 with a little-known Polish provisional government had a disconcerting effect upon some Russian speakers. How could such an event be reconciled with the centuries of hostility? A workshop head named Marchenko in Moscow's Factory No. 15 offered one possible explanation: "over the span of centuries, the bourgeois [*sic*] government of Poland stirred up discord between the Polish and Russian peoples. By concluding a treaty with the Soviet government, the provisional Polish government is [showing that it is] guided by the wishes of the Polish people. This treaty will strengthen the friendship between the Russian and Polish peoples for a long time to come."<sup>7</sup> A similar opinion was voiced by a fellow named Fogel' at the Theater of the Leninist Komsomol (Lenkom), who also instinctively conflated the Russian past with the Soviet present in his attempt to contextualize the treaty:

Com[rade] Stalin has spoken of five animosities with Poland. The word "Polack" was a profane word in Rus'. "Russky" was a hated word in Poland. Poles appeared as enemies in Rus' during the Time of Troubles and in the ranks of Napoleon's armies. Russian tsarism pitilessly shot Warsaw residents and exiled Poles to barren Siberia. But a great example of humanity and creative friendship between two great Slavs also comes to mind—Pushkin and Mickiewicz. And now the hearts of the Russian people, the Soviet people, should be filled with joy, for despite the trickery of imperialist diplomacy, these two great Slavic democracies are uniting in a natural, just, and historic friendship. This speaks to the foresight of Pushkin in the poetry he addressed to Mickiewicz.<sup>8</sup>

Fogel's belief that Pushkin preordained these countries' reconciliation is fascinating, insofar as one could easily have viewed the reunion in the context of Soviet nationality policy, proletarian internationalism, or the Friendship of the Peoples instead. But Pushkin, it turns out, could be harnessed for more imperialist projects, as well. People's Artist of the RSFSR Ozerov, for instance, declared at the Bolshoi Theater that "in the second

quarter of the previous century, the great Russian poet Pushkin said in one of his poems: 'Shall the Slavic tributary streams flow into the Russian sea, or will the latter dry up? That is the question.' A hundred years have passed and the question posed by Pushkin has been answered. The present-day Slavic states of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, together with the USSR, have converged on the path of truth and justice, on the path of progress and democracy, in a common, united, limitless, and unsurpassable ocean that neither ships nor fascist obscurantism can cross or overcome.<sup>9</sup> Implicit in Marchenko's, Fogel's, and Ozerov's statements is the romantic belief that a primordial Slavic commonality united Poland, Eastern Europe, and the USSR, and that these societies' dreams of unification had long been stymied by each state's previous political elites. Such panslavic sentiments were reminiscent of official pronouncements surrounding the annexation of Polish territories in 1939, which were revived for a short time by Soviet propagandists in late 1944 and early 1945 as the Red Army swept through Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup>

Too much, however, should not be made of Soviet panslavism. As the examples above indicate, the Russian people tended to be designated (and to designate themselves) as the "elder brother" within the Slavic family of nations populating Eastern Europe. Moreover, many Russians expressed lingering ambivalence vis-à-vis their new allies—especially Poland—and it seems unlikely that any incipient sense of corporate Slavic identity could have been compelling enough to overcome the distrust instilled by years of exposure to the *Ivan Susanin* genre of historical propaganda. Indeed, the Leningrad NKGB claimed that a statement attributed to a local philology professor was "representative" of a broad societal reaction to events in Eastern Europe: "I think that we're making some major concessions in the questions about Poland and the principles regarding the solution to the problems of state-building among European countries. I am not a chauvinist, but the question of the territory of Poland and our interrelations with neighboring countries concerns me greatly after the casualties that we endured. I can't help feeling like protesting against being unnecessarily accommodating."<sup>11</sup> In other words, if panslavism was a notion with some romantic appeal, it failed to eclipse Russian *primus inter pares* exceptionalism. Indeed, much like the Friendship of the Peoples campaign, Soviet panslavism was really little more than a mirage that masked russocentric tendencies. Lidiia Chukovskaia, among others, evinced considerable disdain for the "empty words" and lip service that were devoted to such topics during the early postwar years.<sup>12</sup>

But while prerevolutionary Russian history remained a more credible source of imagery than Soviet panslavism for Russian speakers' understanding of contemporary Europe, history also framed their views of the Far East. Especially interesting in this regard is the role the 1905 Russo-Japanese War played in informing popular views of hostilities with Japan in 1945. In one case, a NKGB informer passed on to his superiors a transcript detailing how a Leningrad professor reacted to rumors of impending war with Japan during the spring of 1945: "Soviet Russia will pay Japan back for its earlier provocations; it is necessary to demand that Japan take responsibility for her hostile actions against us during the past quarter-century. The Russian people are justified in announcing their demands for the return of portions of Manchuria, Korea, the KVZhD [Chinese-Manchurian railroad], Sakhalin [Island], and compensation for all losses." One of his colleagues was only slightly less flamboyant in his attempt to characterize the situation using a similar set of Russo-Japanese War references: "Now justice will prevail and we will remind Japan of Tsushima, Port Arthur, and Manchuria. Japan will remember forever what modern Russia is all about [*Iaponiia navsegda zapomnit, chto takoe sovremennaiia Rossiia*]." <sup>13</sup> Nor were such opinions confined to the intelligentsia. An engineer at Leningrad's Factory No. 209 summarized his view of Soviet objectives in the Far East in April 1945 in analogous terms: "We need to correct the mistakes of the tsarist government and return Port Arthur, Manchuria, and Sakhalin to Russian rule."<sup>14</sup> In all three of these examples, the Soviet Union is cast not just as the rightful heir to the Romanov empire, but as an entity suspiciously reminiscent of an empire itself. Shortly after the attack on Japanese forces commenced on August 8, Poliakov, a student in Moscow at the Commissariat of the Railways' Higher Engineering Courses, was overheard justifying the conflict in similar terms: "Japan has always displayed aggressive tendencies in relation to the Soviet Union. This happened during the civil war and on Lake Hasan and at Khalkhin Gol. Japan was on Germany's side during the [First] World War and gave them aid [*sic*]. Besides that, we recall that some forty years ago, Japan took advantage of tsarist Russia's weakness and seized from the Russian people critical regions. Historical justice demands retribution."<sup>15</sup> Confidence in victory was revealed in the statement of a worker at Leningrad's Factory No. 756: "this war should be quick, like, for instance, the war with Finland in 1939. We will quickly defeat Japan and definitely take back our Chinese-Manchurian railroad, Port Arthur, and Sakhalin. This won't be [another] 1905 for the Japanese."<sup>16</sup>

Although themes revolving around this avenging of a forty-year-old insult were popular enough for Stalin to incorporate them into a speech in September 1945,<sup>17</sup> history was not the sole vocabulary for Russians' discussions of conflict in the Far East. Nevertheless, even when historical events were not mentioned, "Russian" and "Soviet" remained interchangeable, often producing statements that in retrospect resemble gross anachronisms. For instance, following the USSR's declaration of war against Japan, a shop worker at Factory No. 118 in Moscow named Podoleva proclaimed loudly: "my son is in the army in the Far East and I will give him the written order to fight hardily like a Russian warrior [*kak ruskii voïn*]."<sup>18</sup> Across town two weeks later, Mosgaz factory worker Petrovich sighed with relief following Japan's surrender: "the last enemy of the Russian people, Japan, has capitulated. The danger the Soviet Union and other freedom-loving peoples risked of invasion has now passed."<sup>19</sup> By 1945, "Russian" and "Soviet" had, in a host of contexts, ceased to be distinct concepts.

While such conflation was commonplace in discussions of the postwar world, other references to "Russianness" on the domestic scene were somewhat more demonstrative and hyperbolic. V. Vishnevskii is known to have declared on at least one occasion that "there is a single Russian and Soviet literature."<sup>20</sup> K. Simonov's memoirs contain similar statements.<sup>21</sup> In the realm of cinema, "Russianness" became a central issue as well. For instance, people debated whether the first reel of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* was "Russian enough" and whether it cast sufficient attention on "the Russian people."<sup>22</sup> Audience members found themselves similarly concerned with the issue of "Russianness" in V. Azhaev's novel *Far from Moscow*.<sup>23</sup>

This new genre of expression indicates that a profound mythologization of the Russian people themselves—and not just the trials and tribulations of their difficult history—was under way during the second half of the 1940s. An informer's report indicates, for instance, that when a woman standing in line in 1946 complained about postwar price increases, she was quickly silenced by the comment: "It's all right! The Russian people can withstand anything!"<sup>24</sup> During the same period, the diarist Tat'iana Leshchenko-Sukhomlina repeatedly referred to her own "Russianness," as well as that of her friends.<sup>25</sup> The actor Oleg Frelikh wrote at length in his diary about his sense of Russian national identity, his thoughts on the word "motherland," and his belief that his country's physical landscape

“communicates to the Russian soul its uniqueness among all other nationalities.”<sup>26</sup>

M. M. Prishvin, too, wrote at length in his postwar journals about the special qualities of the Russian nation, elaborating upon themes that had graced the pages of his diaries during the late 1930s.<sup>27</sup> In these entries, Prishvin muses over what had contributed to the Russian people’s victory during the war. Was it their boldness (*udal’*)? Was it “the collective character of their minds juxtaposed against the Germans’ individualism?” Was it their Easter prayers?<sup>28</sup> Prishvin’s approving mention of Stalin’s 1945 toast to “the primacy of the Russian people” is also worthy of mention in light of the writer’s longstanding ambivalence toward the party hierarchy and the Soviet experiment as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

Considerably less sentimental than either Frelikh or Prishvin, Leshchenko-Sukhomlina also devoted considerable space on the pages of her diary to thoughts concerning the Russian nation. Struggling at one point to reconcile her people’s “frightening and ‘incomprehensible’ poverty” with the prevalence of idealism and self-sacrifice in their midst, she concluded that it had something to do with patience. This thought reappears in another passage from a May 1946 diary entry:

In my country’s existence, there is a lot which is horrible, even unbelievably so. [And yet] I think that people have rarely lived so fantastically as we have. And all this is a direct result of the Russian character, our double vision [*droinoe videnie*] and parallel perception of reality [*droistvennoe oshchushchenie real’nosti*]. We are able to “live in the clouds” like no other people on the face of the earth. We are, as a whole, able to find consolation in our dreams.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, not everyone was as sentimental as Frelikh and Prishvin, nor as melodramatic as Leshchenko-Sukhomlina. Ivanitskaia, a doctor at Moscow’s Radiology Institute, expressed feelings of bitterness and resentment over rumors that the USSR was shipping food to occupied Berlin in the aftermath of the war:

We always are doing everything we can for Europe and are more considerate in regard to them than we are in regard to our own people. How many times in the history of humankind has Russia saved Europe from peril with her own blood? It’s time to realize that no one appreciates this and they do not relate to us any better because of it. We are “Asians” and they are “Europe.” So why not just use what is

ours to make life easier for our people[?] After all, we're going to feed the Berliners and we ourselves are hungry and dressed in tatters.<sup>31</sup>

Ivanitskaia's caustic statement reveals the degree to which she had subscribed to the mythologization of the Russians' "service" to Europe during the Tatar-Mongol era, the Napoleonic Wars, and the most recent conflict. Equally bitter was an engineer at the Lengiprogaz works, who glossed Stalin's famous toast to the Russian people a year later in comments that are strikingly similar to Ivanitskaia's: "The Soviet Union suffered exceptionally high losses but has received comparatively little from West Germany in terms of reparations. England and America endured only military expenses, but are receiving incomparably more . . . [But] the Russian people are patient and hardy—they withstood 300 years of the Mongol Yoke, 300 years of Romanov oppression, all the five-year plans, and the burden of the present war."<sup>32</sup> Interviews conducted under the auspices of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System between 1950 and 1951 echo these sentiments quite closely. Many of the respondents spoke of the Russian people as long-suffering and patient,<sup>33</sup> especially in regard to epic ordeals like that under the so-called Tatar-Mongol Yoke.<sup>34</sup> One Russian spoke of his people's dogged struggle with the Mongols, the Turks, and Napoleon as feats that had saved an ungrateful Europe from darkness and depredation.<sup>35</sup> The vast majority of respondents who talked about the Russians as a nation spoke of them as being characterized by honor,<sup>36</sup> generosity (they have a "broad soul"),<sup>37</sup> and a love for hard work.<sup>38</sup> Russians' creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness were supported by long lists of writers (Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoi)<sup>39</sup> and scientists (Pavlov, Mendeleev, Popov)<sup>40</sup> in addition to more obvious choices like Peter the Great.<sup>41</sup> A few respondents added a semimythical dimension to their characterization of what it meant to be Russian, highlighting their nation's fearlessness, modesty, or tragic sense of melancholy.<sup>42</sup> Only a handful of the Russians surveyed showed any interest in nuancing these descriptions with less flattering traits.<sup>43</sup>

As apparent from such statements, Soviet mass culture, the war, and Stalin's toast to the Russian people led many to think about their identities as Russians during the early postwar years. History played a large role in their thoughts, as did official propaganda and public pronouncements. More important, however, is a subtle shift that becomes evident when their statements are compared to similar ones made during the prewar and wartime years. Whereas during the earlier periods, people tended to ex-

press their national pride through the invocation of great names or events drawn from the national past (“Zhukov, he was a second Suvorov”),<sup>44</sup> during the war, the vocabulary of Russian national pride expanded to include rhetoric on the people’s “national character” itself. Indeed, the most famous line from Stalin’s toast, mythologizing the Russian people’s “clear mind, hardy character, and patience,” accurately summarizes popular views concerning Russian national identity during the mid- to late 1940s and early 1950s.

One result of this newfound “Russian character” was an increasingly pronounced willingness to defend the ethnicity against insult and dishonor. An incident at the center of a scandal in Yakutiia involving charges of local non-Russian nationalism serves as an able illustration of this phenomenon. According to a complaint personally addressed to Stalin in the fall of 1946, a major argument had erupted at a dinner party hosted by the Yakut ASSR Minister of Education after one of the guests questioned the Russian people’s leading role in Soviet society. Russians present immediately rose to defend their societal prominence and status against their Yakut detractors. According to the letter, “when one of the Russians who had come to [Minister] Chemezov’s began to protest and referred to You, Comrade Stalin, noting that the Russian people are an outstanding nation, this unruly horde [*orava*] of Yakut nationalists exploded with lewd profanity in Your direction as well [*razrazilas’ pokhabnoi bran’iu i po Vashemu adresu*].”<sup>45</sup> Although the details of this drunken melee are far from clear, it is interesting to note that Russians attempted to trump challenges to their status as the “first among equals” by citing Stalin’s 1945 toast and, by extension, the russified myth of the war. Invocation of Stalin’s toast in this fashion seems to have been quite common during the early postwar years: similar statements appear among the transcripts of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System as well.<sup>46</sup> In other words, Russian national identity early in the postwar period stemmed both from an awareness of a thousand-year historical pedigree *and* claims to distinction earned amid the trials and tribulations of the recent war.

Equally interesting—if somewhat less sensational—are passages from Leshchenko-Sukhomlina’s diary in which she recounts the self-righteous indignation she experienced while visiting the apartment of an American woman in Moscow who was apparently affiliated with the U.S. diplomatic corps. Implicitly contrasting the American’s standard of living to her hun-

gry everyday existence, Leshchenko-Sukhomlina writes of her frustration at being unable to put her protest into words:

Having been at Elizabeth's, I feel as if I have just been on a long trip—as if I have just been to Tahiti or Bali. Her apartment is really an exotic island in terms of its comforts and the amount of food: butter, coffee, heavenly wines, clothes, records, and wondrous books. Interesting, and yet inexpressibly sad, as one always has to be afraid of everything, to be on your guard, so as not to get into a discussion of politics . . . [Were it not] the other way around! I would like so much, being intoxicated with pride and love, to tell these conceited Americans about how great and wondrous a country the USSR is! What sorts of difficulties we endured for victory, how our people fought, and how talented and adaptable the Russian people are. I would be such an agitator! But fear, rotten fear, has shackled my Russian patriotism . . . I'm not a child, after all, nor an idiot either! And yet I have to hesitate like an idiot! Why?<sup>47</sup>

Intimidated by her surroundings, Leshchenko-Sukhomlina saved her militancy and pride for the pages of her diary—pages that reveal an articulate sense of Russian national identity. In her view, valor, fortitude, creativity, and perspective all distinguished her people from other nations who had had it “easier.” Almost a decade of national Bolshevik propaganda had left at Leshchenko-Sukhomlina's disposal a stable vocabulary of images and rhetoric with which to express her ethnically based sense of dignity and refute the allure of the “other”—in this case, the seductive appeal of foreign material prosperity.

Unfortunately, Russians' defense of their ethnicity and honor during the late 1940s and early 1950s was not always limited to vitriolic diary entries, drunken arguments over dinner, and letters to Stalin. Public denunciations made during this period in the name of Russian culture and the Russian people targeted both Russians and non-Russians alike for allegedly kowtowing to the West.<sup>48</sup> In many cases, Jews were singled out for abuse for their supposed careerist tendencies and preference for trade over “real” work on the land or the shop floor.<sup>49</sup> Epithets like “rootless cosmopolitans” in the party press insinuated that Jews were inherently alien and incapable of either assimilation or genuine patriotism.<sup>50</sup> Originating in the *zhdanovshchina's* criticism of “bourgeois” Western influences in the arts, this witch-hunt quickly acquired a life of its own in the late 1940s, ulti-

mately coming to be known as the “anticosmopolitan” campaign. At first, individuals with Jewish-sounding surnames were pilloried in the press for supposedly impeding the development of domestic Soviet art, music, and theater with their promotion of imported “bourgeois” themes.<sup>51</sup> As the scope of the campaign expanded, denunciations quickly spread to the fields of journalism, literature, industry, and the social sciences.<sup>52</sup> An official initiative—as opposed to wartime anti-Semitism, which had never received public sanction—the anticosmopolitan campaign vastly exacerbated interethnic tensions in Soviet society.<sup>53</sup>

In such a hostile atmosphere, “revelations” in the press of a conspiracy among leading Jewish doctors to assassinate the party hierarchy in January 1953 sparked hysteria about a Jewish fifth column in the Soviet midst. Several officers in the Red Army’s Political Directorate responded to news of the plot with an elaborate denunciation that demonstrated a strikingly selective view of party and state history:

The Jews have almost always come out in very large numbers against the Bolsheviks as enemies of the revolution. Who in Russia before the revolution spoke against the Bolsheviks? Liber, Dan, Markov [*sic*: Martov], Abramovich, the Bundists, and others. Who shot Lenin? Kaplan. Who organized a conspiracy against the USSR? Trotskii, Zinov’ev, Kamenev, and many others, among whom the core group were Jews (Radek, Iakir, Gamarnik, etc.).

After Russia saved the Jews from Hitlerlite fascism, who was the first to speak out in defense of American fascism? The Jews—Slanskii and his gang in Czechoslovakia; the Jews in the USSR who were so mean and base as to murder Comrades Shcherbakov and Zhdanov; and many other people with Jewish surnames (Jewish writers, artists, etc.). The facts indicate that this [Doctors’ Plot] is not a coincidental occurrence.

Similarly agitated was a worker named I. Sabeneev, who wrote to *Izvestiia* to ask why hospitals were neglecting to dismiss Jewish cadres who “relate to us Russians with such hatred.” Reminding the paper that “there are many Jews in other executive positions” throughout the country, Sabeneev claimed that “we, the workers, think that in a tight moment they will sell us out.” Calling attention to a similar situation in the town of Prokop’evsk, another worker complained that while his home factory “is located on the territory of the RSFSR, it is run almost entirely by Jews.” An anonymous letter from Moscow province followed such descriptions

with an embittered demand: “remove the Jews from administrative positions—the Russians are not the morons [*bolvanchiki*] that you may think.”<sup>54</sup> Press coverage of the Doctors’ Plot even led a group of Leningrad construction workers to declare in a letter to *Komsomol’skaia pravda*:

[We,] the workers, raise the question of the harsh measures needed to punish the wreckers. We propose the removal of all Jews from work in the food industry, the trade network, and positions connected with supply, and that they all be sent to the coal mines. It is imperative to expropriate the dachas they have built and deport them from the big cities (Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Khar’kov, Sevastopol’, Odessa, and an array of other cities). Enough of them working behind the backs of the Russian working class!<sup>55</sup>

What renders such comments relevant to this discussion is their unambiguous juxtaposition of Jews against *Russians*, rather than against Soviet society as a whole. Conventional wisdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s held that Jews were an alien influence in the USSR. Rumors cast them as being bent on undermining Soviet culture and even the state itself, institutions that tended to be described in peculiarly russocentric terms. In other words, it would not be much of an exaggeration to say that many Russians believed that what was at stake during this time period was no less than their status as *primus inter pares* within the Soviet family of nations.

While there is little agreement among scholars as to what precisely precipitated this enigmatic final chapter of the Stalin era, eyewitness accounts indicate that some believed the hostility stemmed from the society’s ubiquitous russocentrism. This is clear from several letters that were sent to *Pravda* and *Trud* during the spring of 1953 after Stalin’s death, when official announcements revealed the Doctors’ Plot to have been a hoax. Feelings of betrayal led one V. Aleksandrov to reproach the official media for its role in the affair:

all of us have witnessed how *Pravda* has repeatedly broken with the class principle and avoided propagandizing the idea of proletarian internationalism in the Leninist-Stalinist way. We remember how the campaign against cosmopolitanism was conducted in a cynical and mean-spirited manner. *Pravda* used a distinctly nationalistic tone in its shift from exposing [enemies] according to a class approach to condemning those who profess [“]cosmopolitan[”] ideals . . . Although it may not have been intentional, *Pravda* cultivated feelings

of national antagonism . . . Many people in our country are now seriously ill with the poison of *chauvinism*, especially children, which is all the more tragic.<sup>56</sup>

Confirming Aleksandrov's concluding lines, a resident of Zaporozh'e named Kantashevskii wrote to *Trud* that "if before the war, only a few dark individuals could be blamed for spreading nationalist hatred, this dark hydra has shown its face with increasing boldness since the end of the war. The last trial of the doctor-traitors gave the final go-ahead for the few to multiply into the many, and now one hears with every footstep 'yid-traitor and spying-yids' everywhere."<sup>57</sup> This deliberate use of terms such as "nationalist" and "chauvinist" indicates that Aleksandrov and Kantashevskii blamed high stalinism's anti-Semitic excesses on russocentrism in the press and society at large.<sup>58</sup> Another letter compared the antic cosmopolitan campaign to V. M. Purishkevich's pogromist prerevolutionary "Union of the Russian People," making it clear that its author had arrived at the same diagnosis.<sup>59</sup> But rather than respond to their critics in print, the editors of *Pravda* and *Trud* instead chose to forward these letters to the party's Central Committee, a decision that presents a great historical irony insofar as this was precisely the administrative complex that had overseen the escalation of russocentric sloganeering over the course of the preceding fifteen years. Popular anti-Semitism continued unabated,<sup>60</sup> something given further consideration in the conclusion to this study.

Russocentrism, it seems, loomed large in discussions of individual and group identity in Soviet society during Stalin's last decade. The varied sources that have contributed to the preceding survey display national Bolshevik tendencies much more frequently than leftist proletarian internationalism or any other strain of allegiance centered on the party, the state, or the cult of personality. The pervasive use of Russian historical mythology, heroes, and imagery in education and mass culture stimulated this tendency, as did prominent statements of the party hierarchs. In fact, the routine conflation of "Russian" and "Soviet" meant that in many cases, patriotic pro-Soviet sentiments almost *had* to be expressed in russocentric terms by the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Yet this is more than just a matter of semantics and elemental nativism. The examples offered above indicate that many Soviet citizens during the early postwar years—from schoolchildren to coal stokers—found themselves actively engaged in imagining what it meant to be members of a

Russian national community. While strident assertions of Russian national pride and ethnic primacy formed an intrinsic aspect of high stalinist Soviet patriotism, they also led to the articulation of a separate, nascent sense of Russian national identity on a mass scale.<sup>61</sup> In the words of contemporaries, the Russian people were characterized as a heroic, hardy nation known for its ingenuity, patience, and stamina. Such testimony also reveals surprisingly chauvinistic tendencies, which probably ought to be seen as a corollary to such an unrestrained sense of national pride and cultural primacy. Russians were “a chosen people,” in Yuri Slezkine’s ironic formulation, awaiting their millenarian purpose.<sup>62</sup>

Of course, the party hierarchy was quite insistent during this time period that the Russian people had been “chosen” specifically for the Marxist-Leninist task of building communism in the USSR.<sup>63</sup> The failure of the society at large to fully embrace this abstract, esoteric dimension of the official line should not distract us from a more important realization: by the early postwar years, Russians shared an articulate vocabulary of national myths, imagery, and iconography that they had not possessed fifteen years earlier. In this sense, the postwar maturation of Russian national identity on the popular level should be seen as a by-product of stalinist efforts to mobilize Soviet society via national Bolshevik propaganda between 1937 and 1953.

## Conclusion: National Bolshevism and Modern Russian National Identity

The death of Stalin on March 5, 1953, is generally seen as a moment of epiphany that led the Soviet leadership to abandon much of the extremism that had characterized the dictator's last years.<sup>1</sup> Yet little changed with respect to the relentless russocentrism that had reigned unchallenged during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Sentiments that had been in circulation in Soviet society for some fifteen years continued to resound among Russian speakers, finding echoes in forums such as the visitors' books that were laid out for guests to sign at the opening of two new Moscow metro stations in the spring of 1953. At the Arbatskaia station, a miner named Utkin wrote solemnly: "We, the Russian people, will do everything for our Motherland that the working class and collective farmers ask of us." A different sightseer expressed his admiration for the newly opened Smolenskaia station by writing: "How brilliant and talented the Russian people are under the leadership of the CPSU!"<sup>2</sup>

Less innocent was an anonymous letter mailed to N. S. Khrushchev just days after Stalin's death that illustrates the depth of interethnic tensions present within Soviet society in 1953. Questioning whether Stalin had really died of natural causes (an allusion to the ongoing Doctors' Plot), this author requested that all Jews be dismissed from positions of authority, as "the people do not trust them and have good reason not to." Further on, the author again juxtaposed "the people" against the Jews, arguing that the latter "are parasites at the people's neck. Do they really need communism, after all? What they need is gold and the chance to rip-off 'foolish' Ivans."<sup>3</sup> Use of such a traditional Russian first name to signify the innocent victim in this equation leaves little question as to the ethnicity and sympathies of the letter's author.

Prominent all-union newspapers received similar letters, especially following the announcement in early April that the Doctors' Plot had been a hoax fabricated by "renegades" within the state security services. One person mailed an anonymous note to *Pravda* that expressed disbelief over the stunning revelations: "You think that you will change our opinion about the Jews[?] No, it won't work. In our eyes, the Jews were parasites and they remain that way. They push us Russians out of all cultural institutions and don't go in for heavy work [nor] plow the land. You must silence them, not defend them."<sup>4</sup> Even more revealing is another semiliterate, rambling letter:

After today's editorial in *Pravda*, we ought to expect the mass arrest of entirely innocent Russians on the basis of the most petty of accusations from the Jews.

When will this nation calm down and when will the Russian people cease to suffer as a result of them? If this nation weren't in the USSR, the Russians would display more initiative. Why don't other nations give us such a headache [*nam golovu ne morochat*]? Take the Tatars—they all work honestly and honestly defended the motherland during the war.

And this nation gives us a headache.

It's gone to such outrageous extremes that they've already started to throw bombs at Russian people.

I ask you to take account of the Russian people and not drown them for the Jews. We'll still come in handy [*My eshche godimsia*].<sup>5</sup>

A combination of everyday anti-Semitism and innuendo drawn from the official press, these letters pit Russian against Jew in the crudest and most explicit of terms. The chauvinistic orientation these authors assumed is interesting, insofar as they characterize the Jews not so much as the scourge of the Soviet people as the scourge of the *Russian* people. Held responsible for limiting Russian cultural self-expression, the Jews—unlike the Tatars—had apparently refused to accept their place in the stalinist hierarchy of nations.<sup>6</sup> Aside from indicating the hysterical terms in which anti-Semitism was framed in Soviet society in the wake of the Doctors' Plot, such letters reveal a clear sense of Russian national identity and cultural primacy on the popular level.

This is not to say, of course, that the official line underwent no revision at all in the wake of Stalin's death. Changes, however, tended to be cosmetic, focusing chiefly on a gradual rollback of the cult of personality.<sup>7</sup>

Although rumors suddenly surfaced in the spring of 1953 that hinted of imminent changes in nationality policy and a retreat from official russo-centrism,<sup>8</sup> they receded almost as unexpectedly, linked, as they were, to the brief ascendancy of secret police chief L. P. Beria.<sup>9</sup>

Beria's prompt removal in June 1953 denied any of his innovations a chance to mature, let alone affect any sort of lasting change. Instead, the national Bolshevik line was reinforced by other initiatives that had also been launched during the first months after the dictator's death. The Academy of Sciences's Institute of History, for instance, was called upon to renew its "study of the fundamental stages and dynamics of the history of the peoples of the USSR, the history of the USSR's proletariat and peasantry, the progressive role of Russia in the history of humanity, science, and culture, the development of the international revolutionary movement, and the leading role of the Russian people in the USSR's brotherly family of nations." Such an agenda reveals the extent to which populist russocentric etatism had become an intrinsic part of the official Soviet line. Although these priorities can be traced back to discussions at the Nineteenth Party Congress in 1952, the importance of this re-endorsement of national Bolshevism at the start of the post-Stalin period cannot be overestimated.<sup>10</sup> Even connoisseurs of classical Russian high culture like the historian S. S. Dmitriev mourned this state of affairs in early 1954. In particular, Dmitriev assailed the way in which mass culture and the arts were dominated by "a nativist and jingoistic patriotism [*kvasnoi shapkozakidatel'skii patriotizm*]" that ignored lessons learned between 1941 and 1945. Condemning what he referred to as a "blind, unthinking, and ignorant sense of nationalistic self-aggrandizement," Dmitriev chose words that indicate how shrill the regime's russocentrism had become.<sup>11</sup>

The situation was little better in the public schools. To be sure, changes had been discussed in the spring of 1953, but debate did not relate to historiography as much as it did to perennial concerns over the Shestakov text's excessive length and difficulty. Recommendations went as far as replacing the study of the historical narrative in the early grades with a series of dynamic, engaging historical parables that would preserve the patriotic, agitational nature of the curriculum while reducing the number of names, dates, and events that the society's young minds would be expected to remember. Such a break with the thousand-year run-up to the Soviet era in favor of a motley assortment of "stories from the history of our mother-

land” could have diversified the russocentric atmosphere of the classroom, had the reforms restored non-Russian myths and legends (such as David Sasunskii and Manas) to even the marginal place in the curriculum they had occupied prior to the mid-1940s.<sup>12</sup> Archival documents, however, reveal that the plans instead proposed to distill the Shestakov curriculum into an even denser concentrate of russocentric heroes, imagery, and myths.<sup>13</sup> But a lack of consensus led to inaction within the party hierarchy, which in practical terms meant that this stalinist text still governed history instruction in the classroom during the 1955–56 academic year, some three years after the general secretary’s death.<sup>14</sup>

Only after Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin and the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* during his February 1956 “Secret Speech” were reprintings of Shestakov’s *Short Course* canceled.<sup>15</sup> And even then, debate over curricular reform after the Twentieth Party Congress focused on the legacy of Stalin’s cult of personality rather than the cult of the Russian people.<sup>16</sup> True, critics used the party congress’ stance against the personality cult to call into question the official line’s treatment of Ivan the Terrible and other ambiguous historical personalities.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, in the ensuing years, materialism made a comeback as well, returning to the fore of historical analysis. But the fundamental national Bolshevik orientation of Soviet historiography underwent only marginal lasting revision during the late 1950s and after. On the eve of the USSR’s collapse in 1991, Soviet students would still be studying a modified version of Shestakov’s narrative, scripted, as it was, by almost a thousand years of Russian state history before refocusing after 1825 on Marx, the early socialists, and the history of the CPSU.

Important to note, however, is that aside from a renewed focus on the party, the 1950s also set the stage for the promotion of an alternative sense of identity founded upon membership within a new imagined community composed of the “Soviet people” (*Sovetskii narod*). A corollary to the revival of the Friendship of the Peoples campaign,<sup>18</sup> this initiative is effectively illustrated by a stanza from one of the most famous songs of the era—“My address is not a house or a street / my address is the Soviet Union”—which Roman Szporluk identifies as evidence of the publicity afforded this new social identity.<sup>19</sup> Although commentators like Rogers Brubaker are probably right that the “Soviet people” as a concept was never really advanced as a *replacement* for national identity, such a clarification does not entirely undermine Szporluk’s point.<sup>20</sup> After all, it is difficult

to deny that Soviet ideologists promoted a nonethnic, all-union sense of popular identity more aggressively during the 1950s and 1960s than they had under Stalin, taking advantage of imagery associated with modernization, progress, urbanization, and optimism. This “new historical community of people,” as it was referred to in 1971 at the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress, would remain a Soviet ideological mainstay until 1991.<sup>21</sup> That said, it is unclear to what extent this new identity was embraced on the popular level—one scholar has recently written that Russian speakers must have found the “Soviet people” campaign rather abstract and un compelling in the wake of the lush russocentric populism under Stalin.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, the persistence of national Bolshevik tendencies during these years testifies to the lasting impression made by Stalin-era propaganda between the late 1930s and the mid-1950s. In what might be considered an epilogue to this book, Yitzhak Brudny has recently traced the genealogy of contemporary Russian nationalist movements back precisely to this period. Arguing that Khrushchev’s heavy-handed approach to the Soviet intelligentsia alienated members of the Russian elite enough to cause some of them to drift toward nationalist positions, Brudny offers the first serious analysis of how this nascent movement came to amass the vast power and influence that it did under Khrushchev’s successor, L. I. Brezhnev. The first half of his thesis—that the party leadership’s lack of sympathy for rural culture, environmental protectionism, and the preservation of historical monuments during the “Thaw” gave rise to movements like the “village prose writers” (*derevenshchiki*)—is well established in the scholarly literature.<sup>23</sup> New is Brudny’s revelation that these nationalist movements actually benefited from state support and patronage after Brezhnev’s assumption of power in 1964. Apparently, the Brezhnev party hierarchy’s attempt to co-opt the village prose movement was part of a plan to divide restless elites and the intelligentsia *and* rally new popular support for the regime in one brilliant stroke.<sup>24</sup>

Brudny’s description of this gamble—“an attempt to strengthen the regime’s legitimacy and its mobilizational power”<sup>25</sup>—is strikingly reminiscent of the motives underlying the populist etatism of the Stalin era. Massive print runs allocated to sentimentalist novels, regular invitations to publish in *Roman-gazeta* and other mass forums, control over the editorial boards of three prominent literary journals, and extensive coverage in the press all played a role in the party’s twenty-year flirtation with Russian nationalist writers like F. Abramov, V. Astaf’ev, V. Belov, E. Nosov, V. Rasputin, V. Shukshin, V. Soloukhin, G. Troepol’skii, and S. Zalygin. Ad-

aptation of their prose for the stage and screen publicized their political views even more broadly.<sup>26</sup> Other russocentric echoes of the Stalin era accompanied the Brezhnev regime's populist agenda in contemporary literature. For instance, a revival of the cult surrounding the *Tale of Igor's Host* attributed no less than all-union significance to the medieval Russian epic. Such hyperbole in the press affected even specialists: the prominent literary historian D. S. Likhachev declared matter-of-factly to a colleague in 1964 that "all the citizens of the USSR have a stake in the *Tale*."<sup>27</sup>

Yet as interesting as the fact that the Brezhnev regime mimicked Stalin's strategy for popularizing Marxism-Leninism is the actual resemblance of the rhetoric of the era to that of its stalinist predecessor. Just as it had during the 1940s, literature during the 1960s and 1970s described the Russian nation as a hardy, resourceful, and patient people awaiting their millenarian calling. If the emphasis had shifted somewhat from a fixation on Russian state-builders to a more direct focus on the Russian people themselves, the former continued to play an auxiliary role in the works of sentimentalist writers of all stripes. One of the most famous of the nationalists' programmatic statements connected the origins of the "diffident Russian character" to a mythological cycle that oscillated between

constant labor on the land, the monastery, and the tavern and, once or twice in each century, on the ice of Lake Chud' or the prairie grass of Kulikovo Field, Poltava, or Borodino . . . This is why our history seems empty in the face of the lush European chronicles, overflowing with a mass of important happenings. Here there was no loquacious chatter [*obil'nogo slovogovoreniia*], no early parliamentarianism, nor daily rhetoric regarding eternal values . . . It was Nekrasov who said that "there, in the depths of Russia, there are centuries of silence." [Indeed,] once every century, the roughly spun, often flogged, and forever put-upon Russian peasant would set out for the next Kulikovo Field and, compressing a hundred years into one night on the eve of the battle, he'd think about his motherland, about good and evil, and about the world in which he lived.<sup>28</sup>

Il'ia Glazunov likewise alternated between paintings depicting everyday scenes and those portraying state leaders like Dmitrii Donskoi or Ivan the Terrible.<sup>29</sup> It would not be an exaggeration to conclude that Russian ethnic exceptionalism was one of the major themes at the center of a number of literary and artistic genres between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s.

Rough data drawn from surveys of popular readership in the 1970s and

early 1980s reveals the influence of these movements to have been extensive: among the twenty-four top contemporary authors identified in one poll, six came from the ranks of the village prose writers, and four others were known for nationalist tracts in other literary genres.<sup>30</sup> The popularity of films like Shukshin's *Red Snowball Berry* echoed developments in the literary world, as did the massive turnout for art exhibitions featuring Glazunov's portraits of tsars and saints and other historically themed canvases.<sup>31</sup>

It is, of course, no accident that works displaying a content and idiom reminiscent of the 1940s and early 1950s would enjoy great popularity under Brezhnev. Virtually all of these writers and artists had spent their formative years under Stalin, something they shared not only with their audiences but with their patrons in the party hierarchy as well.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it would be curious if their tastes in literature and art during the 1960s and 1970s did *not* reflect this upbringing, especially in terms of the wartime and postwar paens to the "great Russian people" that were ubiquitous during those years. Although Iu. N. Andropov attempted to distance the party from its nationalist fellow travelers in the early 1980s, the resurgence of similar movements promoting similar ideas in similar terms since 1991 speaks to the enduring popularity of national Bolshevik themes decades after the end of the Stalin era.

In contrast to the imperial Russian and early Bolshevik regimes, which failed to formulate an articulate sense of group identity, the stalinist state enjoyed considerable success in stimulating and shaping its subjects' collective impressions of fellowship and community between the early 1930s and the mid-1950s. When concerns regarding labor mobilization and military preparedness brought this issue to the fore during the First Five-Year Plan, education, literature, film, theater, and the arts were all infused with content designed to foster in Soviet citizens a sense of popular loyalty. In the wake of the agitational debacle surrounding early efforts to promote Soviet patriotism during the mid-1930s, the party hierarchy resorted to the populist practice of using familiar heroes, myths, and imagery from the Russian national past to maximize the mobilizational potential of the official Marxist-Leninist line. Coordinating this age-old corpus of myths, legends, and traditions into a consistent coherent official line, the stalinist state went to unprecedented lengths to disseminate the resulting national Bolshevik narrative throughout the society via public schooling and mass

culture. Books were rewritten, classics reissued, plays rescripted, operas restaged, and representatives of the *ancien régime* rehabilitated.

If ultimately quite successful, this celebration of feudal lords, tsarist generals, common, salt-of-the-earth heroes, and the Russian people in general added an unmistakably russocentric character to what was intended, first and foremost, to be populist, etatist propaganda. Quintessentially stalinist in scale and content, many of the official canon's sentimental russocentric themes not only achieved genuine popularity in Soviet society during the Stalin era and the decades that followed, but have survived the collapse of the USSR to enjoy considerable social resonance in the contemporary post-Soviet order.<sup>33</sup>

This increasing ability of ordinary Russian speakers to articulate what it meant to be members of a Russian national community—in terms that could easily be understood all the way from Petrozavodsk to Petropavlovsk—testifies to the formation of a coherent sense of popular Russian national identity during the Stalin era. This is visible in the hundreds of accounts quoted here, which illustrate how Russian speakers on the mass level reacted to the national Bolshevik line promoted by Soviet elites ranging from Shestakov, Aleksandrov, and Shcherbakov to Tolstoi, Eisenstein, and Stalin himself. Schoolchildren, workers, bureaucrats, writers, scholars, and Red Army soldiers—many of them of peasant origin—all seem to have been affected by the post-1937 official line in ways that they had not experienced during earlier mobilizational campaigns, whether in the 1920s or under the old regime. To be sure, this was not an uncritical audience, and many assimilated national Bolshevism selectively, embracing only its most familiar, populist dimensions. But it is precisely this phenomenon that accounts for the paradoxical emergence of a popular sense of ethnic identity among Russian speakers within a society that was ostensibly committed to the promotion of social identity based on class and proletarian internationalist values.

In investigating the formation of a modern sense of Russian national identity, this study has not only analyzed the construction, dissemination, and reception of the stalinist regime's national Bolshevik line, but it has also argued that the trafficking of Russian national heroes, myths, imagery, and iconography between 1937 and 1953 set the stage for both the latent russocentrism and full-blown nationalist sympathies present within contemporary Russian society today. Highlighting the stalinist ancestry of many of the rallying calls that are used by such leading figures as G. A.

Ziuganov and V. V. Putin, this book points to why such sloganeering continues to find resonance among Russian speakers in the former Soviet space. Highly reminiscent of the national Bolshevism that came to dominate Soviet ideology and mass culture under Stalin, this rhetoric is at its heart intimately connected with the formation of a modern sense of Russian national identity during some of the most difficult years of the twentieth century.

**Appendix**

**Notes**

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## Appendix: Civic History Textbook Development, 1934–1955

The ideological, political, and social dynamics analyzed in this book are crucial to understanding the emergence of national Bolshevism during the mid- to late 1930s. That said, the actual construction of the developing catechism is also revealing, especially in regard to the historical contingency of the new official line. If the contours of this story date to 1931, when the need for standardized history textbooks was recognized, the origins of the eventual master narrative itself are probably best traced to March 1934, when Stalin spoke about the need for a civic history textbook at a Politburo meeting devoted to the deficiencies of the public schools' history curriculum. It was in connection with this Politburo discussion that A. S. Bubnov and A. I. Stetskii were instructed to prepare proposals on editorial brigades (*avtorskie gruppy*) that would be assigned the task of designing a new generation of history textbooks.<sup>1</sup> Later that month, proposals for six such brigades were ratified, and on June 25 the Politburo established a special committee to supervise the development of the texts.<sup>2</sup>

As decreed, the brigades immediately began working on texts concerning the history of antiquity, the middle ages, modern history, and the history of the colonial world, as well as elementary and advanced histories of the USSR. According to the resolutions, abstracts (*konspekty*) were to be completed by their respective editorial brigades by the end of the summer and the manuscripts themselves nine months after that. In light of the importance of the elementary text on the history of the USSR, it was decided that two versions of the textbook would be developed in parallel by two separate teams of historians: a Moscow brigade under I. I. Mints and a Leningrad group under A. I. Malyshev.<sup>3</sup> Gor'kii referred to the new genera-

tion of textbooks in his address at the first congress of the Soviet Writers' Union several months later, indicating the high priority the initiative enjoyed.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the priority the party hierarchs afforded the project just about led to its undoing. The first in a long wave of scandals broke in August 1934, when the brigades working on the text concerning modern history and the advanced text on the history of the USSR were shaken by the circulation of unpublished "Observations" concerning their abstracts over the signatures of Stalin, Zhdanov, and S. M. Kirov.<sup>5</sup> Savaging the abstracts, the hierarchs were particularly critical of the abstract of the advanced history of the USSR being developed under N. N. Vanag. Declaring that this brigade had "not fulfilled its task nor even understood what that task was," they observed that the brigade's abstract had skirted the nature of tsarism's relationship with both the non-Russian peoples and Russia's European neighbors. Not only had the brigade failed to characterize the tsarist state as internally oppressive and externally reactionary (both a "prison of the peoples" and an "international gendarme"), but no effort had been made to assimilate non-Russian history into the narrative. Similarly slighted were Western thinkers' positive influence on nineteenth-century Russian revolutionaries and Western capital's predatory colonialist ambitions within the Russian empire. According to the party hierarchs, only such a dual emphasis on capitalism and imperialism could adequately convey the importance of 1917 in both class *and* ethnic terms. Stylistically, the abstract was also deemed inappropriate for use in the public schools, since "the task is to produce a *textbook* in which each word and definition is well chosen rather than irresponsible journalistic articles that babble on and on irresponsibly." Concepts like feudalism and prefeudalism had been "lumped together," as had reaction and counterrevolution. Even the term "revolution" had been used indiscriminately. Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kirov sternly rebuked Vanag and his brigade for such shortcomings and ordered them to remember their responsibility "to teach our youth scientifically grounded Marxist definitions." The review of the abstract on modern history was only slightly less devastating.<sup>6</sup>

Although the various editorial brigades had originally been required to finish drafting their respective texts by the summer of 1935, the complexity of the task at hand meant that not a single manuscript was submitted on time. Only in the fall of that year were Narkompros authorities able to forward the texts to the Central Committee for final review. There, B. M. Volin, the head of the Central Committee's Department of Schools,

took charge of vetting the manuscripts on the elementary history of the USSR—a task he performed with considerable fervor. Extremely dissatisfied with both manuscripts, Volin lashed out in his report at Bubnov for being too easygoing, especially in regard to the Moscow brigade’s text:

I find the work that Bubnov has done on the book to be extremely deficient, as evidenced by some, if not all of my marginalia . . . (1) the [Moscow] text is dull, written without style, and will not interest schoolchildren; (2) the textbook surprisingly digresses into discussions of figures from Greek, Roman, Scythian, and feudal times, etc., which may complicate the children’s mastery of our own history; (3) there is very little information and few drawings referring to the culture of the Slav-Russians [*slaviane-russkie*] (art, architecture, weaponry, writing); (4) there is much repetition about slavery, serfdom, and so on . . . There is no way the book can be published in this form. The textbook needs very serious revisions.<sup>7</sup>

Stalin was no more impressed with the manuscripts than Volin. While looking through the Moscow brigade’s draft, he noticed with disfavor that Minin’s and Pozharskii’s activities during the Time of Troubles were included in a section on “counterrevolution.” He scribbled in the margin, “Huh? The Poles and Swedes were revolutionaries? Ha-hah! Idiocy!”<sup>8</sup>

The advanced text on the history of the USSR produced under Vanag by B. D. Grekov, Pankratova, and Piontkovskii fared little better. Reconceptualized after the circulation of the 1934 “Observations,” the manuscript was completed only in the second half of 1935. Then, according to Vanag’s wife, Stalin read the draft with care and made comments in the margins of several of the chapters, only to allow the manuscript to languish in his chancellery until late 1935. At that point, the Politburo committee sent the draft to V. A. Bystrianskii, the director of the Leningrad party committee’s Institute of Party History, whose damning review torpedoed its prospects for publication.<sup>9</sup>

Such examples indicate that the unpredictable nature of party oversight vastly complicated the task of writing the official narratives. This was in no small part due to the extremely arbitrary and unsystematic nature of the hierarchs’ criticism. Rather than being prescriptive and thorough, their reviews tended to randomly list subjective, factual, stylistic, and interpretive disputes with little rhyme or reason. It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that this meant that historians considered their involvement in the brigades futile: indeed, the publicity given to their efforts and the

emergence of works such as the epic *History of the Civil War in the USSR* in 1935 created the impression that it was still quite possible to write history under Stalin. Little known, of course, was the fact that the writing of this famous book literally *did* take place under Stalin: after the general secretary's repeated interference in what was officially Gor'kii's project, the writer cautiously asked Stalin if he would like to be formally included in the editorial brigade. "I'll gladly join [*okhotno voidu*]," he replied. Participants later recalled that particularly during the final stages of the drafting, editorial discussions ranged widely from historiography to stylistics. Stalin, according to Mints, "was pedantically interested in formal exactitude. He replaced 'Piter' in one place with 'Petrograd,' 'February in the Countryside' as a chapter title (he thought that suggested a landscape) with 'The February Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution,' [and] 'Land' as a chapter title (a 'modernism,' he called it) with 'The Mounting Agrarian Movement.' Grandiloquence was mandatory too. 'October Revolution' has to be replaced by 'The Great Proletarian Revolution.' There were dozens of such corrections."<sup>10</sup> Dozens is in fact an understatement—Stalin spent hours studying the book's page proofs, methodically transforming clichés like "October" and "the party" into the more complete "October Revolution" and "Bolshevik Party." Other corrections were by and large more substantive, however, stressing the arming of the working class in 1917, the differences that separated the Bolsheviks from their Menshevik-SR rivals, and the supposed readiness of A. I. Rykov, V. P. Nogin, and L. B. Kamenev to betray Lenin to the Provisional Government. Stalin also underscored the Imperial Army's "Russianness" during the First World War and added "non-Russian" and "nationalistic" to descriptions of secessionist movements.<sup>11</sup> Such meticulous attention to the revolution and civil war would actually prove to be a tremendous help to others writing on the period later in the decade. The presence of an officially sanctioned monograph meant that scholars could narrow the risk of intervention from above by regarding such works as templates. Scholars, as well as authors and playwrights, followed such "approved" texts religiously.<sup>12</sup>

So history continued to be written, albeit quite differently than it had been in the years before Stalin's 1931 letter to *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia* brought the profession under intense political scrutiny. In the wake of Volin's scathing review of the Moscow and Leningrad elementary textbook manuscripts in 1935, a new commission on history textbooks was formed in January 1936 to resume work on the public school history curriculum. Established under the joint authority of the Central Committee and Sovnarkom and chaired by Zhdanov, the commission consisted of

party functionaries, establishment historians, and highly placed consultants like G. S. Fridliand, the chair of Moscow State University's History Department.<sup>13</sup> Meeting for the first time on January 17, 1936, the commission members attempted to determine whether anything could be salvaged from the two existing textbook manuscripts on elementary Soviet history. Deciding that it was best to start again from scratch, the commission called for articles to appear in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* in late January 1936 that would explain the official position on the manuscripts' deficiencies and the party's ambitions for historical pedagogy. Particular emphasis was to be placed on the creation of a usable past populated by recognizable heroes that would advance the cause of state-building. Open criticism of M. N. Pokrovskii at this meeting apparently acquired considerable momentum, propelled in part by N. I. Bukharin (and perhaps K. B. Radek and Bystrianskii). Zhdanov seized on the denunciation of Pokrovskii's "school" and included parenthetical mention of it in his draft of the commission's resolution, which Stalin reedited prior to the article's publication on January 27, 1936.<sup>14</sup>

Utterly unprecedented, this explicit criticism of Pokrovskii in the press unleashed a firestorm within the discipline that has been detailed elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> Many of the scholars taking part in the pogrom evidently did so in hopes of obscuring their own personal or professional ties to Pokrovskii.<sup>16</sup> More important, however, are the motives behind the campaign. To personify aspects of Soviet historiography that had failed to correspond to the party hierarchy's needs, Pokrovskii was blamed for the sins of a sterile, schematic approach to history that had unpatriotically described the Russian past as remarkable only for its traditions of tyranny, backwardness, and chauvinism. While the late academician's work had never elicited such criticism during his lifetime (he died of cancer in 1932), the political and historiographic climate had changed and Pokrovskii now made an ideal scapegoat. Although the anti-Pokrovskii campaign did, from time to time, focus on refuting his contributions to Marxist historiography, most of Pokrovskii's critics attacked him in caricature, few concerning themselves with anything more than straw-man renditions of his scholarship. In essence, the anti-Pokrovskii campaign should be viewed as a subset of the larger campaign against "sociological" trends in historical pedagogy and publication. New historical writing was to be more fact- and personality-oriented, more accessible, and more patriotic. While Pokrovskii's death spared him from the need to engage in "self-criticism," many of his associates and former students, essentially in the wrong place at the wrong time, did not escape so lightly.

As the articles opening the anti-Pokrovskii campaign were going to press in late January 1936, the new commission on history texts met again to discuss the feasibility of holding a public competition to solicit a more diverse array of texts on the history of the USSR. It was hoped that such an approach would result in the creation of a truly accessible history text, written by established historians, their colleagues in the provinces, ground-level agitators, or even common citizens. Although it is somewhat unclear where the idea for a competition originated, it was not particularly iconoclastic for its time—similar campaigns associated with the promulgation of the 1936 Stalin Constitution stressed mass participation in state-building projects as well.<sup>17</sup> In mid-February 1936, the commission nominated a panel to judge the competition and assigned Bukharin and Bubnov the task of authoring the competition announcement, something that Bukharin ultimately accomplished alone.<sup>18</sup> Zhdanov then inexplicably cut the piece down to fashion it into the core of a joint resolution of the Central Committee and Sovnarkom entitled “On the Organization of a Competition for the Best Primary School Textbook for an Elementary Course in the History of the USSR with Brief References to General History.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Zhdanov did not feel like writing the decree himself. Perhaps Bukharin’s declining fortunes or his recent “nation of Oblomovs” gaffe in the central press had compromised his authority to author a signed article of such importance.<sup>20</sup> In any case, the formal competition announcement was issued anonymously on March 3, 1936, in the form of a terse document containing little in the way of instructions. Instead, it referred interested parties to several articles that had recently appeared in the press,<sup>21</sup> as well as to relevant government communiqués and the recently published transcripts of Stalin’s, Zhdanov’s, and Kirov’s 1934 “Observations.”<sup>22</sup> Four days later, *Pravda* reiterated the rationale of the project: “In the country of the victorious proletariat, history is to become a mighty weapon of civic upbringing [*grazhdanskoe vospitanie*].” More specifically, “our generations must create unwavering revolutionaries—communists, fighters, and builders—according to the heroic templates of the past and present.”<sup>23</sup>

The competition attracted not only the attention of historians but that of nonprofessionals as well, ranging from the celebrated playwright M. A. Bulgakov to an utterly unknown mechanic named A. Lokhvitskii. In all, over forty drafts were ultimately submitted. The vast majority of the manuscripts, written by collective farmers, workers, and other amateurs, were dismissed with a minimum of formality.<sup>24</sup> Others, however, required

more serious attention at a time when outside factors were seriously complicating the winnowing process. Solid manuscripts, like that of V. N. Astrov, a researcher at the Voronezh Provincial Museum of Regional Studies, had to be discarded when their authors fell victim to the ongoing purges. The Leningrad editorial brigade, initially shaken after the ouster of Malyshev in early 1935, had to endure the arrest of his replacement, Z. B. Lozinskii, in mid-1936. Pankratova's group of senior historians lost their leader, Vanag, at about the same time.<sup>25</sup>

Owing to the atmosphere of terror, work at times ground to a standstill, and only in January 1937 did the panel and its enlisted consultants manage to narrow the field to seven superior manuscripts. These included submissions from the editorial brigade at Moscow's Bubnov Pedagogical Institute under the direction of A. V. Shestakov; Vanag's former group, including Pankratova, K. V. Bazilevich, S. V. Bakhrushin, and A. V. Fokht; Lozinskii's former Leningrad group, consisting now of only V. N. Bernadskii and T. S. Karpova; Mints's Moscow group, now including only M. V. Nechkina and E. B. Genkina; a group known as "The East," consisting of S. M. Dubrovskii and B. B. Grave; another duo consisting of *Pionerskaia pravda* correspondent S. V. Gliazer and publishing house editor O. I. Zhemchuzhina; and, finally, a teachers' collective from Moscow's Krasnopresnenskii district under the direction of P. O. Gorin.<sup>26</sup> Difficulties emerged, however, when the consultants and panelists tried to rank the seven manuscripts. While there was a general consensus that the eventual selection would have to be substantially reworked for publication, deciding which had the fewest liabilities became the subject of major debate. In particular, most of the submissions were judged to be insufficiently popularized for their intended audiences.<sup>27</sup>

A memo written by Bubnov in early December 1936 describing Zhdanov's disposition reveals considerable frustration within the party hierarchy. Only somewhat less schematic than its predecessors, this new generation of texts was still too complicated and often failed to correspond to Zhdanov's conception of the Russian historical process.<sup>28</sup> At the final meeting of the panel in late January 1937, heated debate erupted over its concluding recommendations and associated questions of historical interpretation and methodology. Bubnov, following Zhdanov, presented a report in which he chastised the seven collectives for being unwilling to break with schematic Pokrovskiiian "sociology" and for their incorrect treatment of the christening of Rus', the incorporation of Ukraine and Georgia into the empire, and other key events. A bitter exchange between

Zhdanov, Gorin, and Bauman followed the report, the latter two objecting to the presentation of a number of historiographic debates and the plan to move toward the mass printing of an untested textbook.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these objections, Bubnov's communiqué received the jury's endorsement as its concluding resolution. Redrafted with Ia. A. Iakovlev, the final version of Bubnov's communiqué preserved much of the harsh language of the initial report in regard to both Pokrovskii's legacy and the specific interpretive errors. No first or second prize would be awarded, but two formulas provided for a joint third prize to be awarded to Shestakov's group from the Bubnov Pedagogical Institute and either the Gliazer-Zhemchuzhina team or Mints's brigade. Once revised, these manuscripts would serve as textbooks on the history of the USSR for the third and fourth grades.<sup>30</sup> Forwarded to Zhdanov in late January for his approval, the communiqué was rejected when the Central Committee secretary did an about-face; one commentator suspects that this was due to Stalin's dissatisfaction with the document's rather uncongratulatory tone.<sup>31</sup> Although such a conclusion is not possible to confirm with existing archival sources, it is clear that someone's dissatisfaction within the party hierarchy had again allowed the process to grind to a standstill.

After the February–March 1937 Central Committee plenum, the party hierarchs returned again to the ongoing question of the history curriculum. Frustrated with the sluggish progress on the textbook front, Stalin apparently discussed the possibility of reediting tsarist-era textbooks with S. A. Lozovskii in mid-April, speaking fondly of one authored by P. G. Vinogradov.<sup>32</sup> The general secretary also went over certain issues of historical interpretation with Iakovlev and Bystrianskii, which allowed the former to finally draw up an acceptable communiqué on the results of the textbook competition.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to Bubnov's draft, Iakovlev's resolution avoided some of the former's hyperbole and generally focused on the modern period instead of the controversial feudal epochs. As before, no first prize was to be awarded, but Shestakov's text now merited a second prize and would be reworked into an official textbook. The groups under Mints, Pankratova, Gorin, and Gudoshnikov were to be awarded "incentive prizes" as motivation to reedit their work into supplementary public school readers.<sup>34</sup> With Stalin's consent, Zhdanov organized another committee to monitor the revisions of Shestakov's text.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly thereafter, a number of senior historians were enlisted to assist Shestakov's brigade with its revisions.<sup>36</sup> Most were scholars who had been trained under the old regime; they were drafted both because of their experience with narrative history and because the ranks of the younger

Marxist historians had been thinned by scandals associated with the Cultural Revolution, Stalin's letter to *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, the fall of the Pokrovskii "school," and the ongoing party purge.<sup>37</sup> Bazilevich, Bystrianskii, Grekov, N. M. Druzhinin, and V. I. Picheta were joined in this endeavor by Bakhrushin and A. Z. Ionnisiani, who played particularly large roles. Even greater influence was wielded by Zhdanov himself—the importance of his personal corrections to the manuscript are impossible to exaggerate.<sup>38</sup> The final text emerged from its redrafting considerably shortened and more explicitly russocentric, its narrative celebrating state-building and tsarist heroes in addition to more conventional socialist motifs.<sup>39</sup>

Toward the late summer of 1937, it became clear that only Shestakov's manuscript would survive this reediting process.<sup>40</sup> Gorin's draft was discarded after he was arrested in July, joining other historians associated with the competition in NKVD detention such as Dubrovskii, Grave, Fridliand, and V. M. Friedlin.<sup>41</sup> Pankratova's manuscript stalled, eventually forming the basis for an advanced text that would be published only in 1940.<sup>42</sup> Mints' and Gudoshnikov's projects languished for more inexplicable reasons. On the eve of going to press, the page proofs of Shestakov's text were circulated among members of the party hierarchy by Zhdanov's secretariat. Voroshilov attempted to remove passages that exaggerated his revolutionary pedigree and civil war service but was overruled. Zhdanov, acting on the suggestions of his personal secretary, shifted a reproduction of V. Vasnetsov's famous portrait of Ivan the Terrible to the front of the text's fifth chapter. He also struck out the names of all the editorial brigade members (with the exception of Shestakov), a change that meant that when the textbook rolled off the presses a few weeks later, its title page would be graced only by Shestakov's name and the words "approved by an All-Union Governmental Commission."<sup>43</sup> A. N. Artizov identifies the irony of this correction as being twofold: not only had Zhdanov repeatedly overruled the commission's decisions and rewritten much of the manuscript himself, but as the book went to press, one third of the commission's members were already under arrest. The purges would claim all but two of those remaining during the next year.<sup>44</sup>

As published in 1937, Shestakov's *Short Course on the History of the USSR* consisted of 223 pages of text with fifteen chapters, six maps, a chronological table, and numerous pictures. As noted in Chapter 3, acclaim greeted the text in the official press, where it was heralded as "a great victory on the historical front" and a "wished-for gift on the twentieth anniversary of the Great Socialist Revolution." Breaking with the "sociologi-

cal” tendencies that had handicapped history for years, Shestakov had supplied a narrative that consisted of “facts, the dates of events, and animated people who in one way or another took part in the historical process.”<sup>45</sup>

But despite the glowing appraisals, it was not an ideal text. K. F. Shteppa, who taught at the time at Kiev State University, cursed the *Short Course on the History of the USSR* as unimaginative and Rankeian in nature.<sup>46</sup> Shestakov himself was already cautioning audiences some two months before the text even came off the presses that they would have to teach aggressively to compensate for the density of the curriculum. That this speech was immediately published in *Istoricheskii zhurnal* indicates the level of official concern in regard to this issue.<sup>47</sup> Be that as it may, the fanfare with which the new curriculum was launched characterized Shestakov’s *Short Course on the History of the USSR* as the paradigmatic statement on Soviet history during the late 1930s. On the local level, rumor even had it that the euphemism “approved by an All-Union Governmental Commission” actually meant that Stalin himself had edited the book.<sup>48</sup> Such suspicions made the authority of the volume practically unimpeachable.

Massive print runs resulted in the release of some 6.5 million Russian-language copies before the end of 1937, with 5.7 million more printed over the course of 1938. Translated into dozens of union languages, 3 million more copies were printed in Russian alone in 1939. Printing started again with a modified version of the text in early 1941, and plans indicate that 1.5 million copies would have been produced annually thereafter, were it not for the German invasion that June. As a result, production did not resume until late 1945 with a new postwar edition. Figures are incomplete for the postwar period, but at least 3 million copies were released between 1946 and 1947. Each successive year found the text going through further reprintings, the last Russian edition of 300,000 being issued in August of 1955. The following month, what would be the final run of Shestakov’s text—in Tadzhik—came off the presses in a run of 10,000.<sup>49</sup>

In print for nearly twenty years and withdrawn from the curriculum only after Khrushchev’s 1956 Secret Speech, the text acquired a significance that is difficult to overstate. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that between 1937 and the mid-1950s, the Shestakov text functioned as *the* Soviet history text, not only for students but for adults in all walks of life.<sup>50</sup>

# Notes

## Archival Repository Abbreviations

Arkhir RAN	Arkhir Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences)
Arkhir UFSBg.SPbLO	Arkhir Upravleniia Federal'noi sluzhby bezopasnosti po g. Sankt-Peterburgu i Leningradskoi oblasti (the former secret police archive of Leningrad, presently the St. Petersburg Archive of the Federal Security Service)
GAAO	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Arkhangel'skoi oblasti (State Archive of Arkhangel'sk Province)
GAIO	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Irkutskoi oblasti (State Archive of Irkutsk Province)
GAKO	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Kaluzhskoi oblasti (State Archive of Kaluga Province)
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (the former Central State Archive of the October Revolution and the former Central State Archive of the RSFSR, presently the State Archive of the Russian Federation)
HP	Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System
MIRM OF	Muzei istorii i rekonstruktsii Moskvu, Otdel fondov (Archive of the Museum of the History and Reconstruction of the City of Moscow)
NA IRI RAN	Nauchnyi arkhiv Instituta Rossiiskoi istorii Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (Scholarly Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences's Institute of Russian History)
OR GTG	Otdel rukopisei Gosudarstvennoi Tret'iakovskoi gallerei (Manuscript Division of the State Tret'iakov Museum)
OR RGB	Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi gosudarstvennoi biblioteki (Manuscript Division of the Russian State Library)
RGALI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art)

RGANI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (the former “current” archive of the Central Committee, presently the Russian State Archive of Recent History)
RGASPI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (the former Central Party Archive, presently the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History)
RGIA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (Russian State Historical Archive)
RGVA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv (Russian State Military Archive)
TsA FSB RF	Tsentral’nyi arkhiv Federal’noi sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (the former central archive of the secret police, presently the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service)
TsAODM	Tsentral’nyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii Moskvy (the former Moscow party archive, presently the Central Archive of Social Movements of the City of Moscow)
TsDNA	Tsentr dokumentatsii “Narodnyi arkhiv” (“People’s Archive” Documentation Center, presently affiliated with GARF)
TsGAIPD SPb	Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov v Sankt-Peterburge (the former Leningrad party archive, presently the Central State Archive of Historical and Political Documents of the City of St. Petersburg)
TsGA UR	Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Urdmurtskoi respubliki (Central State Archive of the Udmurt Republic)
TsKhDMO	Tsentr khraneniia dokumentov molodezhnykh organizatsii (the former central archive of the Komsomol, now integrated into RGASPI)
TsKhIDK	Tsentr khraneniia istoriko-dokumental’nykh kollektzii (the “trophy archive,” presently affiliated with RGVA)
TsMAM	Tsentral’nyi munitsipal’nyi arkhiv Moskvy (Central Municipal Archive of the City of Moscow)

## Introduction

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2. Klaus Mehnert, *Weltrevolution durch Weltgeschichte: Die Geschichtslehre des Stalinismus* (Kitzingen-Main, 1950), 11, 72–73.
  3. Roman Szporluk, "History and Russian Ethnocentrism," in *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: The Dilemma of Dominance*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York, 1980), 44–45; Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List* (New York, 1988), esp. 219–220; Dmitry V. Pospelovsky, "Ethnocentrism, Ethnic Tensions, and Marxism/Leninism," in *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: The Dilemma of Dominance*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York, 1980), 127; Yuri Y. Glazov, "Stalin's Legacy: Populism in Literature," in *The Search for Self-Definition in Russian Literature*, ed. Ewa Thompson (Houston, 1991), 93–99; Robert J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton, 1994), 144; E. A. Rees, "Stalin and Russian Nationalism," in *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, ed. G. Hosking and R. Service (New York, 1998), 77, 97, 101–103.
  4. Mehnert, *Weltrevolution durch Weltgeschichte*, 12–14; P. K. Urban, *Smena tendentsii v sovetskoj istoriografii* (Munich, 1959), 9–11; John B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton, 1983), 10–12; S. V. Konstantinov, "Dorevoliutsionnaia istoriia Rossii v ideologii VKP(b) 30-kh gg.," in *Istoricheskaia nauka Rossii v XX veke* (Moscow, 1997), 226–227; Ronald Grigor Suny, "Stalin and His Stalinism: Power and Authority in the Soviet Union," in *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, ed. Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), 39; Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford, 1998), 252–253; Jeffrey Brooks, *"Thank You, Comrade Stalin": Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), 76; Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London, 2000), 305.
  5. C. E. Black, "History and Politics in the Soviet Union," in *Rewriting Russian History: Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past* (New York, 1956), 24–25; K. F. Shteppa, *Soviet Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1962), 124, 134–135; Marc Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems, 1917–1977*, 2d ed. (New York, 1977), 268; M. Agurskii, *Ideologiya natsional-bol'shevizma* (Paris, 1980), 140–142; Mikhail Agursky, "The Prospects for National Bolshevism," in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, 1986), 90; Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the So-*

- viet System: Essays in the Social History of Inter-War Russia* (London, 1985), 272–279; M. Heller and A. Nekrich, *Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present*, trans. Phyllis Carlos (New York, 1986), 269; Hugh Seton Watson, “Russian Nationalism in Historical Perspective,” in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, 1986), 25–28; Alain Besançon, “Nationalism and Bolshevism in the USSR,” in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, 1986), 4; Gerhard Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik in der Sowjetunion: Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nachstalinischen Gesellschaft* (Baden-Baden, 1986), 172–173; Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York, 1990), 50–58, 319–328, 479–486; V. B. Kobrin, “Pod pressom ideologii,” *Vestnik AN SSSR* 12 (1990): 36–37; Stephen Velychenko, *Shaping Identity in Eastern Europe and Russia: Soviet-Russian and Polish Accounts of Ukrainian History* (New York, 1993), 22; Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism*, 145; Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona*, 7–8; Suny, “Stalin and His Stalinism,” 39; Maureen Perrie, “Nationalism and History: The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia,” in *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, ed. G. Hosking and R. Service (New York, 1998), 107–128; Timo Vihavainen, “Natsional’naia politika VKP(b)/KPSS v 1920-e–1950-e gody i sud’by karel’skoi i finskoi natsional’nostei,” in *V sem’e edinoi: Natsional’naia politika partii bol’shevikov i ee osushchestvlenie na Severo-Zapade Rossii v 1920–1950-e gody* (Petrozavodsk, 1998), 15–41.
6. Roman Szporluk, “Nationalities and the Russian Problem in the USSR: An Historical Outline,” *Journal of International Affairs* 27:1 (1973): 30–31; Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, 10–12; George O. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923–1934* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 51–52, 158–159, 178–179; Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or, How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53:2 (1994): 415–452; Mark von Hagen, “Stalinism and the Politics of Post-Soviet History,” in *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, ed. Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), 305; Suny, *Soviet Experiment*, 289–290; G. Bordiugov and Vladimir Bukharev, “Natsional’naia istoricheskaiia mysl’ v usloviakh sovetskogo vremeni,” in *Natsional’nye istorii v sovetskom i poslesovetskom gosudarstvakh* (Moscow, 1999), 21–73, esp. 39; Andreas Kappler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton (London, 2001), 378–382; Lieven, *Empire*, 292, 305–307; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 432–433.
7. Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment,” 415–452; Timo Vihavainen, “Nationalism and Internationalism: How Did the Bolsheviks Cope with National Sentiments,” in *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: National Identities in Russia*, ed. C. Chulos and T. Piirainen (Aldershot, Eng., 2000), 75–97; Terry Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism?”

- Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism,” in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York, 2000), 348–367; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001), esp. chap. 11.
8. Stephen Kotkin classifies the cultivation of Russian national sentiments as derivative of a greater shift from “the task of building socialism to that of defending socialism.” See Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), 357, 229–230. Martin Malia and Andrzej Walicki likewise consider these changes to be mere components of ideological dynamics associated with Soviet socialism and totalitarianism, respectively. See Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York, 1995), chap. 7, esp. 235–236; Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, 1995), chap. 5, esp. 444–447. Simon Dixon flatly denies the existence of a russocentric mobilization drive in his “The Past in the Present: Contemporary Russian Nationalism in Historical Perspective,” in *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, ed. G. Hosking and R. Service (New York, 1998), 158.
  9. Harold Swayze, *Political Control of Literature in the USSR, 1946–1959* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 28; Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 49–61; Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society—the Soviet Case* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981), 181; Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York, 1984), 120, 249–250; Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham, 1990), 12, 17, 41, 66; Stephen K. Carter, *Russian Nationalism: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (New York, 1990), 51; John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London, 1991), 69; G. D. Burdei, *Istoriik i voina, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 47–48, 147, 209; Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York, 1994), 63; G. A. Bordiugov, “Bol’sheviki i natsional’naia khorugv’,” *Rodina* 5 (1995): 74; Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, 1997), 255–257; E. Iu. Zubkova, “Mir mnenii sovetskogo cheloveka, 1945–1948: Po materialam TsK VKP(b),” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3 (1998): 34; Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945–1953* (Montreal, 1999), 257.
  10. For attempts at such linear narratives, see Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätspolitik*; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, chap. 11, esp. 451–457.
  11. For instance, little remains of the voluminous paperwork generated by the Central Committee’s various propaganda departments (Kul’tprop, Agitprop) and their denizens (A. I. Stetskii, etc.) during the 1930s. For further details, see pp. 6–7 of RGASPI’s guide to inventory 125 of collection 17.
  12. The term “state-building” stems from party hierarchs’ repeated use of termi-

nology like *gosudarstvo* and *gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo*. Etatist by nature, “state-building” refers not only to territorial expansion but to internal systemization, processes that are served by statist forms of patriotism.

13. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York, 1990); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of the National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985).
14. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 20–24, 46–49, 55–62, 97; Gale Stokes, “Cognition and the Function of Nationalism,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4:4 (1974): 536–542; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 19–38, 48–49; Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), 21–24, 46–47, 56, 115–116, and elsewhere; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1993); Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London, 1991), chap. 2.
15. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Randall (Berkeley, 1984), xii–xiii and chap. 3; Stefan Tanaka, “History—Consuming Pasts,” *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 4:4 (1994): 257–275.
16. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 7.
17. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7. This is, of course, not to say that individual identity is ever defined by a single factor like nationality, class, or gender. Indeed, contemporary scholarship views identity (the “self”) as an unstable and fragmented constellation of such volatile factors. This study, therefore, is an investigation of but one aspect of the “self”—national identity—for Russian speakers in stalinist society between 1931 and 1956.
18. Ronald Grigor Suny, “History,” in *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander J. Motyl (Burlington, Mass., 2001), 335–358.
19. Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (Paris, 1882), 7–8.
20. See, for instance, Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), 213.

The present study differentiates between elementary awareness of one's membership in a language community and a more articulate sense of group identity. The latter is often gauged by members' ability to express to one another commonly held claims of ethnic distinctiveness based on myth, legend, or other cultural characteristics.

21. Popular notions of history are at times more important than sophisticated scholarly understandings of the past. Referring to the “kind of history that common men carry [about] in their heads,” Carl Becker argues that such assumptions affect popular decision making, particularly “in critical times, in times of war above all. It is precisely in such times that they form (with the efficient help of official propaganda!) an idealized picture of the past, born in their emotions and desires[,] working on fragmentary scraps of knowledge

- gathered, or rather flowing upon them, from every conceivable source, reliable or not." See Carl Becker, "What Are Historical Facts?" in *Detachment and the Writing of History: Essays of Carl L. Becker*, ed. Phil L. Snyder (Ithaca, 1958), 61–62.
22. "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent." Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1. I agree with Ted Weeks that "ethnic" and "national" are essentially synonymous. See Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb, 1996), 4.
23. Here I differ with Yuri Slezkine's provocative statement that "Soviet nationality policy was devised and carried out by nationalists." See Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 414.
24. M. N. Riutin, "Stalin i krizis proletarskoi diktatury," published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 9 (1990): 76. Contrary to the use of the term promoted during the 1920s by N. V. Ustrialov and the *smenavekhovtsy*, I do not view national Bolshevism as inherently "nationalist," as its end goal was Great Power status and not Russian ethnic advancement or self-rule. Russian national imagery, in other words, was co-opted on account of its mobilizational potential and not because it bestowed a special political identity upon the Russian nation. For other understandings of the concept, see L. A. Bystriantseva, "Mirovozzrenie i obshchestvenno-politicheskaia deiatel'nost' N. V. Ustrialova (1890–1937)," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 5 (2000): 162–190; Agursky, "The Prospects for National Bolshevism," 87–108; Lev Kopelev, *Derzhava i narod: Zametki na knizhnykh poliakh* (Ann Arbor, 1982), 57–85.
25. Weeks, *Nation and State*, 6.
26. O. V. Klevniuk, *Polisbiuro: Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody* (Moscow, 1996).

## 1. Tsarist and Early Soviet Society's Weak Sense of National Identity

1. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976); David Moon, "Peasants into Russian Citizens? A Comparative Perspective," *Revolutionary Russia* 9:1 (1996): 43–81. See also Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus, 1990); Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875–1975* (Princeton, 1997).
2. Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1933–1941* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), 88–89.
3. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), 213.
4. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York, 1991), 109–110, 11.
5. On education, see Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village*

- Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861–1914* (Berkeley, 1986), 125–126; Scott Seregny, “Teachers, Politics, and the Peasant Community in Russia, 1895–1918,” in *Schools and Society in Tsarist and Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof (London, 1993), 121–148; Seregny, *Russian Teachers and Peasant Revolution: The Politics of Education in 1905* (Bloomington, 1989). It can be argued that the autocracy actively discouraged the emergence of a single mass sense of Russian national identity out of the fear that popularizing an ethnically based form of solidarity might inadvertently undermine monarchical authority. See Hans Rogger, “Nationalism and the State: A Russian Dilemma,” *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 4:3 (1962): 253–264; Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb, 1996), 4–11 and elsewhere; Ana Siljak, “Rival Visions of the Russian Nation: The Teaching of Russian History, 1890–1917” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997), 279–282.
6. See A. V. Buganov, *Ruskaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian XIX veka i natsional'noe samosoznanie* (Moscow, 1992), and my review in *Europe-Asia Studies* 50:2 (1998): 385–386. On reading habits, see Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Culture, 1861–1917* (Princeton, 1985), chap. 6; Ben Eklof, “Peasants and Schools,” in *The World of the Russian Peasant: Post-Emancipation Culture and Society*, ed. Ben Eklof and Stephen Frank (Boston, 1990), 126.
  7. Esther Kingston-Mann, “Breaking the Silence,” in *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800–1921*, ed. Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixer with Jeffrey Burds (Princeton, 1991), 15; also Vera Tolz, *Russia: Imagining the Nation* (New York, 2001), 178–181.
  8. Robert J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton, 1994), 45.
  9. Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1990), 203.
  10. Robert E. Johnson, “Peasant and Proletariat: Migration, Family Patterns, and Regional Loyalties,” in *The World of the Russian Peasant: Post-Emancipation Culture and Society*, ed. Ben Eklof and Stephen Frank (Boston, 1990), 81–99.
  11. L. N. Tolstoi, “Khristianstvo i patriotizm,” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 39 (Moscow, 1956), 52.
  12. See Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, vol. 2 (Princeton, 2000), esp. 525; also Tolz, *Russia: Imagining the Nation*, 100–104, 179. Only at the very end of the old regime were local institutions beginning to take steps to promote a broader sense of identity. See Scott Seregny, “Zemstvos, Peasants, and Citizenship: The Russian Adult Education Movement and World War I,” *Slavic Review* 59:2 (2000): 290–315.
  13. RGIA 922/1/147/1–13. I am grateful to Ana Siljak for this reference.
  14. M. I. Trostianskii, *Patriotizm i shkoly* (Kiev, 1910), 3–4.
  15. N. Dmitriev, *Natsional'naiia shkola* (Moscow, 1913).
  16. Siljak, “Rival Visions of the Russian Nation,” 253–254.

17. Eklof, "Peasants and Schools," 123; Klas-Göran Karlsson, "History Teaching in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Classicism and Its Alternatives," in *Schools and Society in Tsarist and Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof (London, 1993), 203.
18. Alfred Knox refers to an articulate sense of loyalty as "thinking patriotism" in his *With the Russian Army, 1914–1917*, vol. 1 (London, 1921), 32; also S. A. Dobrorol'skii, "Mobilizatsiia Russkoi armii v 1914 g.," *Voennyi sbornik* 1 (1921): 114–115.
19. Iu. N. Danilov paraphrases peasant draftees as saying, "We're from Tula, Viatka, and Perm'—the German won't make it to us [My tul'skie, viatskie, permskie—do nas nemets ne doidet]" in his *Rassia v mirovoi voine, 1914–1915 gg.* (Berlin, 1924), 112, 115–116.
20. N. N. Golovin, *Voennye usilia Russii v mirovoi voine*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1939), 124–125, 121. Although recent studies have contradicted eyewitnesses like Golovin, they typically conflate inarticulate nativism with a more coherent and well-defined sense of Russian national identity. See Josh Sanborn, "The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation: A Reexamination," *Slavic Review* 59:2 (2000): 267–289; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 457–461; Boris Kolonitskii, "The 'Russian Idea' and the Ideology of the February Revolution," in *Empire and Society: New Approaches to Russian History*, ed. T. Hana and K. Matsuzato (Sapporo, 1997), 57–60; Allan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Old Army and the Soldiers' Revolt, March–April 1917* (Princeton, 1980), 116–117 and elsewhere.
21. D. Muretov, "Shkola i vospitanie," *Russkaia mysl'* 2 (1916): 22, 24; also S. V. Zavadskii, "Na velikom izlome," in *Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1991), 70–71.
22. The definitive study of tsarist propaganda during the First World War demonstrates that deficiencies in popular agitation denied Russian society an agreed-upon set of symbols around which an articulate sense of group identity might have coalesced. See Hubertus Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, 1995), esp. 172–175; also Siljak, "Rival Visions of the Russian Nation," chap. 6. For an example of the nativist style of imperial agitation, see *Geroicheskii podvig Donskogo kazaka Kuz'my Firsovicha Kriuchkova* (Moscow, 1914). On Kuz'ma Kriuchkov, see Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia*, 24, 87, 158, 174. See generally Kolonitskii, "The 'Russian Idea' and the Ideology of the February Revolution," 57–60; Eric Lohr, "Enemy Alien Politics within the Russian Empire during World War I" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999), 23–60; O. S. Porshneva, "Rossiiskii krest'ianin v pervoi mirovoi voine," in *Chelovek i voina: Voina kak iavlenie kul'tury*, ed. I. V. Narskii and O. Iu. Nikonova (Moscow, 2001), 190–215.
23. Roman Szporluk, "The Russian Question and Imperial Overextension," in *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspec-*

- tive, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Armonk, 1997), 75; also John-Paul Himka, "The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920: The Historiographical Agenda," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 94–110; Tolz, *Russia: Imagining the Nation*, 180–181.
24. Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1964); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, 1993).
  25. November 16, 1917, entry in Iu. V. Got'e, "Moi zametki," *Voprosy istorii* 7–8 (1991): 173. Some elites did consider 1917 to be a Russian national revolution—see Kolonitskii, "The 'Russian Idea' and the Ideology of the February Revolution," 55–57. On the gap between the Provisional Government and the population, see Szporluk, "The Russian Question and Imperial Over-extension," 75.
  26. Francine Hirsch, "The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category of Nationality in the 1927, 1937, and 1939 Censuses," *Slavic Review* 56:2 (1997): 259; Hirsch, "Empire of Nations: Colonial Technologies and the Making of the Soviet Union, 1917–1939" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1998), 87–88.
  27. For examples of inarticulate Russian chauvinism, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001), 94–96, 103–112, 137–139, 148–154, 158, 161; Matthew J. Payne, *Stalin's Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism* (Pittsburgh, 2001), 10, 127, 135–155, 235, 292; Jeffrey J. Rossman, "Worker Resistance under Stalin: Class and Gender in the Textile Mills of the Ivanovo Industrial Region, 1928–1932" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1997), 123–131, 278–279; Lesley Rimmel, "The Kirov Murder and Soviet Society: Propaganda and Popular Opinion in Leningrad, 1934–1935" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 128–136; David L. Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941* (Ithaca, 1994), 124–125; A. Rozhkov, "Internatsional durakov," *Rodina* 12 (1999): 60; *Sovershenno sekretno: Lubianka Stalinu o polozhenii v strane, 1922–1934*, 10 vols. (Moscow, 2002–).
  28. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 156–159, 388–389; Gerhard Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik in der Sowjetunion: Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nachstalinischen Gesellschaft* (Baden-Baden, 1986), 83–91; Hans Kohn, *Nationalism in the Soviet Union* (London, 1933), 65.
  29. See the German-Russian academic edition: K. Marks [Marx] and F. Engels, *Manifest kommunisticheskoi partii* (Moscow, 1937), 108–109.
  30. P. Stuchka, "Patriotizm," in *Entsiklopediia gosudarstva i prava*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1927), 252–254; also "Kommunisticheskii manifest," in *Noveishii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, vol. 8 (Leningrad, 1926–1927), 1951; M. Vol'fon, "Patriotizm," in *Malaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1931), 355–356.

31. For instance, such social categories were not permitted to bear arms in defense of the state. See *S<sup>pe</sup>zdy sovetov RSFSR v postanovleniakh i rezoliutsiakh*, ed. A. Ia. Vyshinskii (Moscow, 1939), 90–94, 306; S. A. Krasil'nikov, "Tyloopolchentsy," *Ekho* 3 (1994): 176–177.
32. Samuel Harper, *Making Bolsheviks* (New York, 1931), 18.  
 If radical leftist internationalists preached that class ought to be the decisive principle in Soviet society and that the world revolution of the proletariat was imminent, others within the party hierarchy were prepared to be more pragmatic. As early as 1920, Karl Radek called for the workers of the world to defend Russo-Soviet state interests as a way of supporting the cause of eventual world revolution. Stalin shared these sentiments, as illustrated by various speeches, his famous Socialism in One Country thesis, and the marginalia in his copy of Radek's 1920 book. Indecision within the party ranks stymied any resolution of this debate during the second half of the 1920s. See I. V. Stalin, "O kompartii Pol'shi: Rech' na zasedanii pol'skoi komissii Komintern, 3-go i iunia 1924 g.," in *Sochineniia*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1952), 265–266; and his marginalia in K. B. Radek, *Razvitie mirovoi revoliutsii i taktika kommunisticheskoi partii v bor'be za diktaturu proletariata* (Moscow, 1920), 84–85 (RGASPI 558/3/299/84).
33. M. N. Pokrovskii, *Ruskaia istoriia v samom szhatom ocherke* (Moscow, 1922).
34. Roman Szporluk, "History and Russian Ethnocentrism," in *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: the Dilemma of Dominance*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York, 1980), 42.
35. *Trudy Pervoi Vsesoiuznoi konferentsii istorikov-markсистov* (Moscow, 1930), 494–495, ix. The tricolor flag was a tsarist state symbol, and "Russia—united and indivisible" (*Rossia—edinaia i nedelimaia*) was a prerevolutionary monarchist slogan sometimes associated with the Black Hundreds.
36. Larry Holmes, *The Kremlin and the School House: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917–1931* (Bloomington, 1991), 36, 80; Karlsson, "History Teaching," 213–214.
37. M. N. Pokrovskii, "Istoriia i sovremennost'," *Na putiakh k novoi shkole* 10 (1926): 101; Pokrovskii, "Ob obshchestvovedenii," *Kommunisticheskaiia revoliutsiia* 19 (1926): 61; Pokrovskii, "K prepodavaniiu obshchestvovedeniia v nashikh shkolakh," *Na putiakh k novoi shkole* 11 (1926): 44; "Iz stenogram dokladov v metodicheskoi seksii O-va Ist.-Markсистov," *Istoriik-Markсист* 3 (1927): 167–169.
38. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the School House*, 37–42, 51–61, 63, 128–129.
39. On party education, see Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State, and Community in Leningrad, 1917–1941* (Montreal, 1999), 111–116; Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918–1929* (Ithaca, 1997). On early Soviet film, see Paul Babitsky and Martin Lutich, *The Soviet Movie Industry: Two Case Studies*, no. 31, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeo-graph Series* (New York, 1953), 19–20; Peter

- Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985), chaps. 6–7, 9–10.
40. See Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State*, 133, 140–144, 251, 253–255.
  41. *Golos naroda: Pis'ma i otkliki riadovykh sovetskikh grazhdan o sobytiakh 1918–1932 gg.* (Moscow, 1998); *Krest'ianskie istorii: Rossiiskaia derevnia 1920-kh godov v pis'makh i dokumentakh* (Moscow, 2001).
  42. RGASPI 17/16/175/165; also Rozhkov, “Internatsional durakov,” 61–66.
  43. RGASPI 17/84/741/134.
  44. RGASPI 17/87/200a/42.
  45. RGASPI 17/87/200a/94ob.
  46. RGASPI 17/87/200a/42.
  47. RGASPI 17/87/201/89.
  48. Alfred G. Meyer, “The Great War Scare of 1927,” *Soviet Union/Union soviétique* 5:1 (1978): 1–27.
  49. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1932* (Oxford, 1982), 111.
  50. TsA FSB RF 2/5/394/71–89ob, published in *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni—kollektivizatsiia i razkulachivanie: Dokumenty i materialy, 1927–1939*, vol. 1, *Mai 1927–Noiabr' 1929*, ed. V. Danilov et al. (Moscow, 1999), 73–75, 80–81, 84–85; also RGASPI 17/85/289; 17/85/19/138–140, 180–182.
  51. See, for instance, James Hughes, *Stalinism in a Russian Province: A Study of Collectivization and Dekulakization in Siberia* (New York, 1996).
  52. V. P. Danilov, “Collectivization, Dekulakization, and the 1933 Famine in Light of New Documentation from the Moscow FSB Archive” (paper delivered at the Davis Center for Russian Studies, Harvard University, April 29, 1999); *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 1, 21–22, 25–27.
  53. Lohr, “Enemy Alien Politics,” 357–372.
  54. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the School House*, 60–61; also Anne E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, and Delinquents* (Bloomington, 2000), 75–79; Karlsson, “History Teaching,” 217. The teachers’ daily reported similarly unimpressive findings in the public schools. According to one account, “when seventh graders in a Moscow school were asked in the spring of 1928 to list the most important recent events in the capital . . . almost as one they responded: ‘Amanulla has come,’ referring to the reforming Afghan monarch who passed through Moscow on his Grand Tour. Few pupils mentioned the Eighth Komsomol Congress and no one knew who Bukharin was.” M. Orlov, “Itogi obsledovaniia,” *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, June 22, 1928, 3.
  55. RGASPI 17/84/1023/12–13; also Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Boston, 1958), 412–413; Rozhkov, “Internatsional durakov,” 61–66.
  56. See Vladimir Brovkin, *Russia after Lenin: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1921–1929* (New York, 1998), 48–50, 85, 90–93, 193–194; Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule*, 418, 421; Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State*, 136–142, 163–166.

## 2. Mobilizing Stalinist Society in the Early to Mid-1930s

1. Compare “Metallurgi u tovarishchei Stalina, Molotova, i Ordzhonikidze,” *Pravda*, December 29, 1934, 1; and Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1929–1941* (New York, 1990), 320; with “Rech’ tov. Stalina v Kremlevskom dvortse na vypuske akademikov Krasnoi Armii, 4-go Maia 1935 g.,” *Pravda*, May 6, 1935, 1; and Katerina Clark, “Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature,” in *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York, 1977), 184.
2. Emphasis added. I. V. Stalin, “O zadachakh khoziaistvennikov: Rech’ na pervoi Vsesoiuznoi konferentsii rabotnikov sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti, 4-go fevralia 1931 g.,” in *Voprosy Leninizma* (Moscow, 1934), 445.
3. Evidence of this can be found in Stalin’s 1934 critique of Comintern propaganda as excessively schematic and arcane. According to G. Dimitrov, Stalin denounced the materialist approach with the comment that “people do not like Marxist analysis, big phrases and generalized statements. This is one more of the inheritances from Zinov’ev’s time.” Anecdotal evidence verifies Stalin’s appraisal—for a former political officer’s commentary on the difficulties of basing agitational work on unadulterated historical materialism, see [Anonymous], *Lenin Schools for [the] Training of Political Officers in the Soviet Army*, no. 12, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeograph Series* (New York, 1952), 5. For Stalin’s commentary, see the April 7, 1934, entry in Georgi Dimitrov, *Dnevnik (9 Mart 1933–6 Fevruari 1949)* (Sophia, 1997), 101. I am grateful to Terry Martin for this reference.
4. “Sovetskii patriotizm,” *Pravda*, March 19, 1935, 1; A. S. Molokova, “I ia govoriu synam: Zashchishchaite nashu stranu,” *Pravda*, June 18, 1934, 2; A. Bogomolets, “Pochva, kotoraiia rozhdaet geroev,” *Pravda*, June 18, 1934, 3; “Za rodinu,” *Pravda*, June 9, 1934, 1.
5. G. Vasil’kovskii, “Vysshii zakon zhizni,” *Pravda*, May 28, 1934, 4.
6. “Rech’ tov. V. M. Molotova o novoi konstitutsii,” *Pravda*, November 30, 1936, 2.
7. K. Radek, “Sovetskii patriotizm,” *Pravda*, May 1, 1936, 6; also Radek, “Moia rodina,” *Izvestiia*, July 6, 1934, 2; Chapter 1, n. 32. Generally, “Kniga o sotsialisticheskoi rodine,” *Sputnik agitatora* 19–20 (1937): 73–76; K. Sokolov, “Sovetskie patrioty,” *Sputnik agitatora* 3 (1938): 13–14; Sokolov, “My—sovetskie patrioty,” *Sputnik agitatora* 14–16 (1938): 14–16; E. Sitkovskii, “O sovetskom patriotizme,” *Pod znamenem marksizma* 9 (1938): 39–57; “Patriot” and “Patriotizm,” in *Tolkovyi slovar’ russkogo iazyka*, vol. 3, eds. B. M. Volin and D. N. Ushakov (Moscow, 1939), 68; Vasetskii, “Moral’no-politicheskoe edinstvo sovetskogo obshchestva,” *Bol’shevik* 13 (1940): 35–46; M. Kammari, “O proletarskom internatsionalizme i sovetskom patriotizme,” *Bol’shevik* 15–16 (1940): 28–42; “Patriotizm,” in *Politsicheskii slovar’*, ed. G. Aleksandrov, V. Gal’ianov, and N. Rubinshtein (Moscow, 1940), 410.

8. Account by Ia. Ia. Mushpert, cited in S. R. Gershberg, *Rabota u nas takaiia: Zapiski zhurnalista-pravdista tridtsatykh godov* (Moscow, 1971), 321.
9. "Iz perepiski A. M. Gor'kogo," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 3 (1989): 183–187; S. V. Zhuravlev, *Fenomen "Istorii fabrik i zavodov"* (Moscow, 1997), 4–5, 153–154, 180–181; A. M. Gor'kii i sozdanie "Istorii fabrik i zavodov" (Moscow, 1959), 3–12; A. V. Mitrofanova et al., "Itogi i perspektivy izucheniiia istorii predpriatii SSSR," in *Rabochii klass strany sovetov* (Minsk, 1980), esp. 365–366; Jeffrey Brooks, *"Thank You, Comrade Stalin": Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), 115. See also Henry Steele Commager, *The Search for a Usable Past and Other Essays in Historiography* (New York, 1967), 3–27.
10. On the emergence of the hero in Socialist Realism, see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1980), 34–35, 72, 119, 136–148, 8–10; Clark, "Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five-Year Plan," in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, 1978), 205–206; Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), esp. 265–266, 278–288. Although there was little room for individual actors in the classic Marxist understanding of historical materialism, Stalin identified in 1931 a prominent role for decisive leaders aware of the possibilities and limitations of their historical contexts. See "Beseda s nemetskim pisatelem Emilem Liudvigom," *Bol'shevik* 8 (1932): 33; also I. Merzon, "Kak pokazyvat' istoricheskikh deiatelei v shkol'nom prepodavanii istorii," *Bor'ba klassov* 5 (1935): 53–59; *Istoriia Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov): Kratkii kurs* (Moscow, 1938), 16; F. Gorokhov, "Rol' lichnosti v istorii," *Pod znamenem marksizma* 9 (1938): 58–78; L. Il'ichev, "O roli lichnosti v istorii," *Pravda*, November 27, 1938, 2; P. Iudin, "Marksistskoe uchenie o roli lichnosti v istorii," *Pod znamenem marksizma* 5 (1939): 44–73. Gor'kii and A. N. Tolstoi, among others, led the new interest in heroes with the support of A. A. Zhdanov. See *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s'ezd sovetских pisatelei, 1934: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1934), 8, 17, 417–419, 4.
11. The All-Union Agricultural Exposition, or VSKhV, is better known by its post-war title, the All-Union Exhibition of Economic Achievements (VDNKh).
12. A loose translation of "V budniakh velikikh stroek, / V veselom grokhote, v ogniakh i zvonakh, / Zdravstvui, strana geroev, / Strana mechtatelei, strana uchenykh!" For more on the heroic in film, see Paul Babitsky and Martin Lutich, *The Soviet Movie Industry: Two Case Studies*, no. 31, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeograph Series* (New York, 1953), 7–8, 34–40; Richard Taylor, "Red Stars, Positive Heroes, and Personality Cults," in *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, ed. Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (London, 1993), 69–89. See also *Vstrechnyi* (F. Ermiler and S. Iutkevich, 1932), *Chapaev* (the Vasil'ev "brothers," 1934), *Veselye rebiata* (G. V. Aleksandrov, 1934), *Tsirk* (Aleksandrov, 1935), *Letchiki* (Iu. Raizman, 1935), *Granitsa* (M. Dubson, 1935),

- Semero smelykh* (S. Gerasimov, 1935), *Shakhtery* (Iutkevich, 1937), *Volga-Volga* (Aleksandrov, 1938), *Svetlyi put'* (Aleksandrov, 1940).
13. The best treatments of Stakhanovite iconography are Clark, *The Soviet Novel*; Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity, 1935–1941* (Cambridge, Eng., 1988), 223–246; Victoria E. Bonnell, “The Iconography of the Worker in Soviet Art,” in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny (Ithaca, 1994), 362–364, 373–375.
  14. For different readings of history’s revival, see E. Dobrenko, “‘Zanimatel’naia istoriia’: Istoricheskii roman i sotsialisticheskii realizm,” in *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*, ed. H. Günther and E. Dobrenko (St. Petersburg, 2000), 874–895; Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, 2000), 11–12, 150, 158.
  15. *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 8 (Moscow, 1934), 350–355. For accounts of the ineffectiveness of such teaching methods, see HP 25s/a/3/24–25; HP 40/a/4/31.
  16. George Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat: M. N. Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians* (University Park, 1978), 189; Klas-Göran Karlsson, “History Teaching in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Classicism and Its Alternatives,” in *Schools and Society in Tsarist and Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof (London, 1993), 215. On higher education, see Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State, and Community in Leningrad, 1917–1941* (Montreal, 1999), 154–157.
  17. “Znat’ i lubit’ istoriiu svoei Rodiny,” *Pravda*, March 7, 1936, 1.
  18. *ShKM: Programmy*, 1st ed. (Moscow, 1932); *FZS: Programmy*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1932); K. Mal’tsev, *Za marksistsko-leninskoe sodержanie shkol’nykh program* (Moscow, 1932), 15–20.
  19. *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 8, 355–359.
  20. *Ibid.*, 359–360.
  21. *Programmy srednei shkoly*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1933); N. M. Nikol’skii, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo, Drevnii Vostok, Antichnyi mir—Uchebnik dlia 5-ogo klasse srednei shkoly* (Moscow, 1934); A. I. Gukovskii, O. V. Trakhtenberg (and V. N. Bernadskii), *Istoriia: Epokha feodalizma—Uchebnik dlia srednei shkoly, 6–7-oi gody obucheniia* (Moscow, 1933); A. Efimov and N. Freiberg, *Istoriia: Epokha promyshlennogo kapitalizma—Uchebnik dlia srednikh shkol* (Moscow, 1933). On Nikol’skii’s textbook, see GARF 2306/69/2178.
  22. L. P. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol’nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v SSSR* (Moscow, 1961), 255 (the loss or destruction of archival material during the reorganization and transfer of Narkompros’s holdings to the RSFSR state repository in the early 1960s has made it impossible to verify some of the information contained in Bushchik’s account). A meeting of social studies teachers at Narkompros in March 1934 confirmed that the existing curriculum was too turgid and complex to teach effectively. See GARF 2306/69/2177/68–

- 69ob; also P. Erin, "Iz opyta prepodavaniia istorii v shkole," *Istoriia v srednei shkole* 1 (1934): 57–59; P. Grinevich, "Uchebnik istorii v samosoznatel'noi rabote uchashchikhsia srednei shkoly," *Istoriia v srednei shkole* 1 (1934): 11–20.
23. RGASPI 17/3/942/7–8; 17/120/358/72.
24. Arkhiv RAN 350/1/906/1–3ob. For more on this critical source, see A. M. Dubrovskii and D. L. Brandenberger, "'Grazhdanskoi istorii u nas net': Ob odnom vystuplenii I. V. Stalina vesnoi 1934 goda," in *Problemy otechestvennoi i vsemirnoi istorii* (Briansk, 1998), 96–101.
25. RGASPI 17/120/358/72; GARF 2306/69/2177/1–3.
26. GARF 2306/69/2177/11–12.
27. Piontkovskii, who perished in the purges, left a diary behind, which remains sealed in the former NKVD archives (TsA FSB RF r-8214). Excerpts appear in Aleksei Litvin, *Bez prava na mysl': Istoriik v epokhu Bol'shogo terrora—oчерk sudeb* (Kazan', 1994), 55–57. Piontkovskii also noted that in Stalin's attack on the schematic texts, he took a passing shot at Pokrovskii ("all this mess [*vsia eta beda*] stems from the time of Pokrovskii's influence"), indicating the extent to which the party hierarchy's views were changing.
28. A. I. Gukovskii, "Kak ia stal istorikom," *Istoriia SSSR* 6 (1965): 97.
29. GARF 2306/69/2177/56ob-57.
30. D. Osipov, "Skelety v shkole," *Pravda*, April 5, 1934, 1.
31. "Za podlinnuiu istoriiu—protiv skholastiki i abstraktsii," *Za kommunisticheskoe prosveshchenie*, April 10, 1934, 1; [A. Z.] Ionnisiani, "Bez ucheta istoricheskoi obstanovki, faktov i lits," *Za kommunisticheskoe prosveshchenie*, April 24, 1934, 3.
32. "O prepodavanii grazhdanskoi istorii v shkolakh SSSR," *Pravda*, May 16, 1934, 1. New pedagogues were needed because most teachers in the mid-1930s had entered the profession during NEP and had no familiarity with anything but social studies. See *Trud v SSSR: Statisticheskii spravochnik* (Moscow, 1936), 323.
- These changes in the history curriculum were accompanied by a reorganization of the public school system itself. Early in 1934, the Seventeenth Party Congress had mandated the establishment of universal seven-year education, and on May 15 a joint decree of the Central Committee and Sovnarkom unveiled a bifurcated system in which primary schools (grades one through four) would feed into both "complete" and "incomplete" secondary schools. Complete secondary education—preparing those bound for higher education—continued through tenth grade, while incomplete secondary schools terminated after the seventh grade. See "O strukture nachal'noi i srednei shkoly v SSSR," *Pravda*, May 16, 1934, 1; *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiashchenii SSSR* 47 (1935): art. 391.
33. *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1935), 137. For background, see GARF 2306/69/2177. In 1940, further courses on modern history were added to the curriculum of eighth through tenth grade in complete

- secondary schools, basically translating into more material on the prerevolutionary period. See *Programmy srednei shkoly: Istoriia SSSR, Novaiia istoriia* (Moscow, 1940).
34. Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat*, 189; also Karlsson, "History Teaching," 217.
  35. See RGASPI 17/120/359/10–11; also 77/1/829/12–15. The etatist emphasis of this manuscript contradicts Stephen Cohen's determination that Bukharin resisted "the neo-nationalistic rehabilitation of czarism." See Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888–1938* (New York, 1973), 358, 468–469. That the piece was written after the "nation of Oblomovs" scandal described in Chapter 3, p. 49 may account for its tone.
  36. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 299 (and n. 22 above); A. N. Artizov, "V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia (Konkurs 1936 g. na uchebnik po istorii SSSR)," *Kentavr* 1 (1991): 126.
  37. I. Klabunovskii, "Uchitel' istorii i povyshenie ego kvalifikatsii," *Bor'ba klassov* 5 (1933): 60–66; Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 299 (and n. 22 above). Konstantin Shtreppa, who taught history at Kiev State University during the 1930s, described the situation in similar terms in his *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, 1962), 133–135.
  38. E. Thomas Ewing, "Stalinism at Work: Teacher Certification and Soviet Power," *Russian Review* 57:2 (1998): 218–235.
  39. An educational approach that harnessed physiology, psychology, and pedagogy in addressing the needs of troubled students, pedology was denounced in 1936 for linking rising levels of despondency and hooliganism among youth to recent upheavals in Soviet society. See Mark S. Johnson, "From Delinquency to Counterrevolution: Subcultures of Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Stalinist Pedagogy in the 1930s," in *Education and Cultural Transmission: Historical Studies of Continuity and Change in Families, Schooling, and Youth Cultures* (Paedagogica Historica, supplementary series), ed. Johan Sturm et al., vol. 2 (Ghent, 1996), 283–303.
  40. Mark S. Johnson, "Russian Educators, the Communist Party-State and the Politics of Soviet Education, 1929–1939" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1995), 302–374; GARF 2306/69/2293/52.
  41. For testimony on the increasing emphasis placed on a centralized curriculum, see HP 14/a/2/9–10; HP 64s/a/6/6.
  42. Zhuravlev, *Fenomen "Istorii fabrik i zavodov"*, 113 and 73–77, 154. The dimensions of arrests among Stakhanovites require quantification, as one specialist contends that few were ever purged. See Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity*, 225.
  43. Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), 372; Kenneth M. Straus, *Factory and Community in Stalin's Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1997), 332.

44. Cynthia Ruder, *Making History for Stalin: The Story of the Belomor Canal* (Gainsville, 1998), 88–89, 207, 43; generally, *Belomorsko-Baltiiskii kanal imeni Stalina: Istoriia stroitel'stva*, ed. M. Gor'kii, L. Averbakh et al. (Moscow, 1934).
45. See the juxtaposition of photographs from the two editions of *10 let Uzbekistana* in David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* (New York, 1997), 136–137.
46. The relevant pages from Rodchenko's copies of both editions are in *ibid.*, 126–137.
47. Twenty-six were recast as traitors or stricken from the narrative entirely: Ia. A. Berzin, A. A. Bitsenko, G. I. Bokii, N. P. Briukhanov, M. P. Bronskii, A. S. Bubnov, N. I. Bukharin, G. F. Fedorov, Iu. P. Gaven, K. K. Iurenev, P. F. Kodetskii, A. L. Kolegaev, S. V. Kosior, N. N. Krestinskii, G. I. Lomov (Oppokov), V. I. Miliutin, N. Osinskii (V. V. Obolenskii), A. N. Paderin, Ia. Ia. Peche, G. L. Piatakov, O. A. Piatnitskii, N. A. Pozharov, F. F. Raskol'nikov, A. I. Rykov, I. T. Smigla, and G. Ia. Sokol'nikov. Generally, compare the 1935 and 1938 Moscow editions of *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR*, vol. 1, *Podgotovka Velikoi proletarskoi revoliutsii (ot nachala voiny do nachala Oktiabria 1917 g.)*.
48. *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR*, vol. 2, *Velikaia proletarskaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow, 1943).
49. For more on the purges' hamstringing of *Shchors*, commissioned in 1935 at the height of the Soviet patriotism campaign but not released until 1939, see George O. Liber, *Alexander Dovzhenko: A Life in Soviet Film* (London, 2002), chap. 7; Babitsky and Lutich, *The Soviet Movie Industry*, 62, 27, 7; and Paul Babitsky and John Rimberg, *The Soviet Film Industry* (New York, 1955), 161.
50. According to one source, of some 102 films due to be completed by November 1, 1936, only 15 percent were delivered. RSFSR studios fulfilled about 22 percent of their orders, while studios in Belorussia, Ukraine, and Georgia completed between 14 and 20 percent. Studios in Azerbaidzhan, Armenia, and Central Asia failed to release a single film. See "Kak realizuetsia plan vypuska fil'mov," *Iskusstvo kino* 11 (1936): 36–40. In their memoirs two Soviet film industry insiders illustrate even more clearly the difficulty of shooting films with contemporary subject matter. Despite party directives that called for the majority of films shot in 1935 to concern the Soviet present, 75 percent ended up focusing on historical subjects because of difficulties encountered with contemporary themes. See Babitsky and Lutich, *The Soviet Movie Industry*, 51–52 (referring to D. Nikol'skii, "Siuzhety 1936 goda," *Iskusstvo kino* 5 [1936]: 21–26).
51. Compare p. 178 of the 1937 and 1941 editions of A. V. Shestakov's *Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR*.
52. E. Iaroslavskii, P. N. Pospelov, and V. G. Knorin were to jointly edit the *Short Course* until Knorin's purge in 1937. See N. N. Maslov, "Kratkii kurs istorii

- VKP(b)'—entsiklopediia kul'ta lichnosti Stalina," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 11 (1988): 54. Mention of Ezhov (pp. 197, 234, and 313 of the 1938 edition) was excised from successive editions of *Istoriia Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov): Kratkii kurs*. See RGASPI 17/125/10/111. I am grateful to Peter Blitstein for this reference.
53. On the purges' effects on those involved with arctic exploration, see John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932–1939* (Oxford, 1998), 149–168.
54. For instance, in late 1937 or early 1938, the city procurator of Magnitogorsk expressed concern that local libraries were still lending out copies of the *History of the Civil War in the USSR* that contained portraits of traitors including Bukharin, Zinov'ev, and Trotsky. See Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 583–584; see also Appendix, n. 11. On the atmosphere surrounding the 1937 revolutionary jubilee, see Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, chap. 6, esp. 168–170.
55. Idiosyncratic syntax and punctuation in the original. See HP 27/a/3/36–37; HP 7/a/1/24; also HP 11/a/2/36; HP 41/a/4/24.
56. See D. L. Brandenberger, "Sostavlenic i publikatsiia ofitsial'noi biografii vozhdia—katekhizisa stalinizma," *Voprosy istorii* 12 (1997): 141–150.
57. In a sense, of course, they did. Although they remained in print, virtually all the Socialist Realist classics were repeatedly savaged by the censor during the period. See Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917–1991* (New York, 1997), 51–140.

### 3. The Emergence of Russocentric Etatism

1. "Rech' tov. Stalina na soveshchanii peredovykh kolkhoznikov i kolkhoznits Tadzhikistana i Turkmenistana," *Pravda*, December 5, 1935, 3. For different readings of the Friendship of the Peoples campaign, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001), chap. 11; Igor Vinogradov, "Zhizn' i smert' sovetского poniatia 'druzhba narodov,'" *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 36:4 (1995): 455–462.
2. G. Vasil'kovskii, "Vysshii zakon zhizni," *Pravda*, May 28, 1934, 4; V. I. Lenin, "O natsional'noi gordosti velikorossov," in *Sochineniia*, vol. 18 (Moscow, 1936), 80–83. Stalin associated 1917 specifically with the Russian working class in his 1923 essay "K voprosu o strategii i taktike russkikh kommunistov."
3. "RSFSR," *Pravda*, February 1, 1936, 1. The article obliquely quotes Stalin's 1924 essay "Ob osnovakh leninizma," parts of which are reminiscent of the colonial syndrome identified by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).
4. M. N. Kalinin, "O proekte konstitutsii RSFSR: Nasha prekrasnaia rodina," *Pravda*, January 16, 1937, 2; also "Velikii russkii narod," *Pravda*, January 15,

- 1937, 1; “Konstitutsiia geroicheskogo naroda,” *Pravda*, January 16, 1937, 1. Alternately, Jeffrey Brooks, *“Thank You, Comrade Stalin”: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), 76–77.
5. Synchronized with the revival of tsarist-era political history was the suppression of leftist holdovers who had criticized or satirized the old regime in historiography and the arts—see the discussion of the Pokrovskii “school” and Dem’ian Bednyi in Chapters 5 and 6.
  6. B. Volin, “Velikii russkii narod,” *Bol’shevik* 9 (1938): 26–37, esp. 36, 34. This article also appeared as a pamphlet under the same title.
  7. B. Volin, “Russkie,” in *Malaiia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1941), 326.
  8. I paraphrase Sheila Fitzpatrick’s memorable statement at the University of Chicago’s “Empire and Nation in the Soviet Union” Conference, October 26, 1997.
  9. While this shift in emphasis was by no means inevitable, there were few available alternatives. In particular, the xenophobic nature of the Great Terror seems to have precluded the celebration of foreign revolutionaries like Marat, Robespierre, Luxembourg, and Liebknecht.
  10. To be sure, russocentric sympathies had been visible in intraparty discussions and correspondence since the early 1920s; some historians argue that they explain changes in Soviet nationality and language policy as early as the first half of the 1930s. That said, these sentiments were never explicitly incorporated into the official party line until the mid- to late 1930s. See Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, chaps. 8–11; Peter Blitstein, “Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Language Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938–1953,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and State-Building in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York, 2001), 253–274.
  11. Although Timasheff, Simon, and others have attempted to chart the emergence of this ideological line in the press during the mid-1930s, their work appears somewhat selective at times, given the sheer diversity of campaigns propagandized in this forum.
  12. See Introduction, n. 11.
  13. See, for instance, the persecution of senior historians detailed in *Akademicheskoe delo 1929–1931 gg.: Dokumenty i materialy sledstvennogo dela, sfabrikovannogo OGPU*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1993). On Glavlit, see M. V. Zelenov, *Apparat TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), tsenzura i istoricheskaia nauka v 1920-e gody* (Nizhnii Novgorod, 2000); *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury: Dokumenty i kommentarii* (Moscow, 1997); A. V. Blium, *Za kulisami “Ministerstva pravdy”: Tainaiia istoriia sovetskoi tsenzury, 1917–1929* (St. Petersburg, 1994).
  14. I. V. Stalin, “O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii bol’shevizma,” *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia* 6 (1931): 3–21.
  15. John Barber contends that the letter was triggered by a lack of confidence in

- party historians, while Robert Tucker links it to Stalin's nascent cult of personality. See John Barber, "Stalin's Letter to the Editors of *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya*," *Soviet Studies* 28:1 (1976): 39–41; Robert C. Tucker, "The Rise of Stalin's Personality Cult," *American Historical Review* 84:2 (1979): 355–358.
16. Professional rivalries that had been smoldering among historians since the late 1920s contributed to the firestorm. See George M. Enteen, "Marxist Historians during the Cultural Revolution: A Case-Study in Professional Infighting," in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, 1978), 154–179; Dzh. Entin [Enteen], "Intellektual'nye predposylki utverzhdeniia stalinizma v sovetskoii istoriografii," *Voprosy istorii* 5–6 (1995): 149–155; A. N. Artizov, "Kritika M. N. Pokrovskogo i ego shkoly," *Istoriia SSSR* 1 (1991): 103–106.
  17. "Za boevuiu perestroiku istoricheskogo fronta," *Bor'ba klassov* 2–3 (1932): 12; Barber, "Stalin's Letter," 22–23; Tucker, "The Rise of Stalin's Personality Cult," 358–360; Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton, 1993), 55–57.
  18. Nadezhda Mandelshtam, *Vospominaniia* (New York, 1970), 277.
  19. Stalin's commentary, recorded in S. A. Piontkovskii's diary, is excerpted in Aleksei Litvin, *Bez prava na mysl': Istoriik v epokhu Bol'shogo terrora—oчерk sudeb* (Kazan', 1994), 56. This mention of the Russian people's historic consolidation of the non-Russian peoples echoes a similar statement in Stalin's famous 1913 essay "Marxism and the National Question." Striking, though, is Stalin's extension of his formula to identify an analogous role for the Russian people in Soviet construction. See "Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros," in *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros: Sbornik izbrannykh statei i rechei* (Moscow, 1934), 10.
  20. Later, the Academy of Sciences's Institute of History would be scolded for its poor leadership during the mid-1930s. See "Ob idiotskoi bolezni-bespechnosti v zhurnale 'Istoriik-Marksist,'" *Pravda*, March 15, 1937, 4; "Politicheskaiia slepota i bespechnost'—zhurnal 'Istoriik-Marksist' za 1936 g.," *Pravda*, March 20, 1937, 4; "Ot redaktsii," *Istoriik-Marksist* 2 (1937): 32–39, esp. 36–38; "Boevaia programma dal'neishego pod"ema istoricheskoi nauki," *Istoriik-Marksist* 3 (1937): 146–147.
  21. Frequently miscontextualized by scholars, the "Observations" are analyzed in the Appendix, n. 6. V. A. Bystrianskii condemned Pokrovskii's supposed "leftist internationalism" in his "Kriticheskie zamechaniia ob uchebnikakh po istorii SSSR," *Pravda*, February 1, 1936, 2.
  22. TsGAIPD SPb 24/2v/1829/93. I am grateful to Sarah Davies for this reference.
  23. For memoirs dealing with the confusion caused by the denunciation of the Pokrovskii "school," see E. V. Gutnova, "Na istfake," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta (Serii 8 Istoriia)* 6 (1993): 73.
  24. RGASPI 77/3/113/16–17. A. V. Shestakov, the editor of the era's most successful history text, confirmed late in the decade that his brigade's progress

- had been slowed by the need to simultaneously resolve interpretive problems and streamline the entire span of Russo-Soviet history into a course appropriate for a mass audience. See Arkhiv RAN 638/2/105/25.
25. David Brandenberger, "Who Killed Pokrovskii (the Second Time)? The Prelude to the Denunciation of the Father of Soviet Marxist Historiography, January 1936," *Revolutionary Russia* 11:1 (1998): 67–73; TsGAIPD SPb 24/2v/1829/92. Another embattled Old Bolshevik, K. B. Radek, led the drafting of a textbook on colonialism that was never published.
  26. Bukharin's statement about colonialism can be found in an article hailing the Russian people as "the first among equals," while the "nation of Oblomov" epithet appears in a piece about Lenin. See N. Bukharin, "Mogushchestvennaia federatsiia," *Izvestiia*, February 2, 1936, 1; Bukharin, "Nash vozhd', nash uchitel', nash otets," *Izvestiia*, January 21, 1936, 2. Assailed in *Pravda* in early February, he quickly published an apology. See "Ob odnoi gniloj kontseptsii," *Pravda*, February 10, 1936, 3; A. Leont'ev, "Tsenneishii vklad v sokrovishchnitsu marksizma-leninizma," *Pravda*, February 12, 1936, 4; N. Bukharin, "Otvét na vopros," *Izvestiia*, February 14, 1936, 1. On Lenin's use of the Oblomov reference, see V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1958–1970), vol. 43, 228; vol. 44, 365, 398; vol. 45, 3–4, 13. Generally, see Roy Medvedev, *Nikolai Bukharin: The Last Years*, trans. A. D. P. Briggs (New York, 1980), 103–106; L. Dymerskaia, "Demarsh protiv Stalina? (o povesti Bruno Iasenskogo 'Nos')," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 3 (1998): 144–154.
  27. Many view ideology during the 1930s as evolving according to a premeditated plan (e.g., Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above* [New York, 1990]; Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* [New York, 1994], chap. 7). Such a static interpretation fails to account for the contingent nature of the official line during these years. The failure of the Soviet patriotism campaign, for instance, could hardly have been anticipated within the party hierarchy. Likewise, the 1936 denunciation of the Pokrovskii "school" does not seem to have been inevitable—see my "Who Killed Pokrovskii?" 67–73.
  28. Although Zhdanov's early December 1936 comment seems to be the first mention of the "lesser-civil" theory, M. V. Nechkina attributed it to Stalin in her "K itogam diskussii o periodizatsii istorii sovetskoj istoricheskoi nauki," *Istoriia SSSR* 2 (1962): 74. Many have followed Nechkina's attribution, e.g., Lowell Tillelt, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 45–46 and n. 19.
  29. RGASPI 17/120/359/13–14.
  30. This analysis first appeared in S. V. Bakhrushin, "K voprosu o kreshchenii Rusi," *Istoriik-Marksist* 2 (1937): 40–77. Generally, A. M. Dubrovskii, *S. V. Bakhrushin i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1992), 87–88.
  31. RGASPI 17/120/359/18–33; 17/120/359/167–184. Some of these issues were summarized publicly in Ia. A. Iakovlev's unsigned "Postanovlenie zhiuri

- pravitel'stvennoi komissii po konkursu na luchshii uchebnik dlia 3 i 4 klassov srednei shkoly po istorii SSSR," *Pravda*, August 22, 1937, 2.
32. Arkhiv RAN 638/2/105/17–18.
  33. Arkhiv RAN 638/2/105/16. At the same time that Zhdanov and his colleagues were criticizing Shestakov's manuscript for its schematicism, A. A. Andreev was writing on the cover of a komsomol textbook prospectus, "theorize less and add more animated historical materials and facts." See TsKhDMO 1/23/1253/1.
  34. A. M. Dubrovskii, "Veskii uchebnik' i arkhivnye materialy," in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1996* (Moscow, 1998), 181–195. These senior historians played a curious role in the discipline after 1917 as they struggled to reconcile their prerevolutionary training with the new regime's historical materialism. Hounded as non-Marxists during the Cultural Revolution (and exiled in some cases), they were rehabilitated after the ranks of the newer generations of Marxist historians were thinned by the condemnation of the Pokrovskii "school" and the party purges. Cowed by their experiences, Tarle, Grekov, Bakhrushin, Druzhinin, Iakovlev, Bazilevich, and others found their prerevolutionary training invaluable during the development of the russocentric etatist line of the late 1930s.
  35. RGASPI 17/120/359/178; 77/1/847/3–4. On the reediting, compare chap. 1 of an early 1937 draft at 558/3/374 with that of a subsequent draft from July 1937 at 77/1/854.
  36. *Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR*, ed. A. V. Shestakov (Moscow, 1937).
  37. Zhdanov reversed the 1920s valorization of peasant rebels like Bolotnikov, Razin, Bulavin, Pugachev, and Shamil' by observing that they lacked the consciousness necessary for truly Marxist revolutionary activity. The confusion sparked by this about-face forced Narkompros to scramble to help teachers adapt to the new line. On Zhdanov's interpretation, see pp. 20, 45, 55, 64, 73, 93–94, 104, and 134 of the July 1937 draft at RGASPI 77/1/854. On the confusion and Narkompros's response, see Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/47–49, 65; S. Liuboshits, "Anekdoticheskie dialogi," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, February 7, 1938, 3; A. Fokht, "Istoriia SSSR i politicheskoe vospitanie uchashchikhsia," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, March 23, 1938, 2.
  38. "Bol'shaia pobeda na istoricheskom fronte," *Istoricheskii zhurnal* 8 (1937): 6; V. Losev, "Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR," *Istoricheskii zhurnal* 9 (1937): 98; A. K., "Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR," *Bol'shevik* 17 (1937): 84–96.
  39. "Boevaia programma dal'neishego pod"ema istoricheskoi nauki," *Istoriik-Marksist* 3 (1937): 146.
  40. A. K., "Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR," 85–86; also "Bol'shaia pobeda na istoricheskom fronte," 7.
  41. RGVA 9/29s/355/18–20; A. Fedorov, "O podgotovke mladshikh politrukov," *Propagandist i agitator RKKA* 12 (1938): 9; "Programmy eksternata za [sic] Voенno-politicheskoe uchilishche v 1939 godu," *Propagandist i agitator*

- RKKA 15 (1939): 40; “Literatura k XX godovshchine Krasnoi Armii,” *Propaganda i agitatsiia* 3 (1938): 64; RGVA 9/29s/355/15–17; *Kak rabochie i krest’iane zavoevali vlast’ i postroili sotsialisticheskoe obschestvo* (Moscow, 1937).
42. Konstantin Shteppa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, 1962), 128–129.
  43. For Stalin’s toast, see the November 7, 1937, entry in Georgi Dimitrov, *Dnevnik (9 Mart 1933–6 Fevruari 1949)* (Sophia, 1997), 128–129. According to Voroshilov’s adjutant, R. P. Khmel’nitskii, this scene repeated itself the following day in the Kremlin in a more elaborate form. There, Stalin noted that “Old Russia has been transformed into today’s USSR where all peoples are identical . . . Among the equal nations, states, and countries of the USSR, the most Soviet and the most revolutionary is the Russian nation.” Robert C. Tucker published an English translation of this account in his *Stalin in Power*, 482–485. I am grateful for his willingness to share the original Russian transcript, which is misdated to 1938. See also RGASPI 558/11/1122/158–159.
  44. Calls for non-Russian materials were issued on a broader scale, but their slow assembly signifies a lack of commitment to the project. See “Boeviaia programma dal’neishego pod’ema istoricheskoi nauki,” 147; “Monografii po istorii narodov SSSR,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 26, 1939, 6.
  45. When Tolstoi’s play *On the Rack (Na dybe)* was denounced by RAPP critics during its 1929–30 run at the Second Moscow Art Theater, Stalin defended the play on account of its political merits, complaining only that Tolstoi’s Peter “wasn’t depicted heroically enough.” Claiming that Stalin’s intervention had given him “the right historical approach to the Petrine epoch,” Tolstoi then focused on Peter for much of the 1930s, despite plans to the contrary. See R. Ivanov-Razumnik, *Pisatel’skie sud’by* (New York, 1951), 39–43; A. N. Tolstoi, “Kratkaia biografiia (1944),” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1951), 87. Generally, Nicholas Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought* (New York, 1985), 250, 280–282; Kevin M. F. Platt, “Historical Rehabilitation, Fiction, and Political Success under Stalin: Aleksei Tolstoi’s Petrine Project,” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming).
  46. “Beseda s rabochimi Fabriki ‘Skorokhod’” (September 11, 1937), in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13:535.
  47. Already at work on the first volume of his epic novel about the “great transformer” in 1933, Tolstoi declared in a speech that “Peter’s epoch and ours—despite the difference in priorities—speak to one another through their explosion of forces and their bursts of human energies and willpower designed to free themselves from foreign dependence.” See “Kommentarii k romanu A. Tolstogo ‘Petr pervyi,’” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 9:785.
  48. Linda Colley makes a similar point about the usefulness of long-dead heroes in her *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992), 168–169.

49. In one chapter, Zhdanov removed gratuitous details concerning Ivan's *oprichnina* guard and his sacking of Kazan' and inserted a new conclusion on the tsar's accomplishments: "With this he essentially completed the gathering of uncoordinated principalities into a single strong state begun by Kalita." On Stalin's excision of Repin, see pp. 108–109 of Stalin's copy of an early 1937 draft at RGASPI 558/3/374; on Zhdanov's editing, see pp. 37–40 of the July 1937 draft at 77/1/854. Also, S. V. Bakhrushin, "Moskovskoe gosudarstvo," in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaiia entsiklopediia*, vol. 40 (Moscow, 1938), 458–467; *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. V. I. Lebedev, B. D. Grekov, and S. V. Bakhrushin, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1939), 389–390. On the general contours of this campaign, see Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, "Terribly Romantic, Terribly Progressive, or Terribly Tragic: Rehabilitating Ivan IV under I. V. Stalin," *Russian Review* 58:4 (1999): 635–654; Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia* (New York, 2001); David Brandenberger and Kevin M. F. Platt, "Terribly Pragmatic: Rewriting the History of Ivan IV's Reign, 1937–1956," in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming).
50. B. G. Verkhoven's graphic assessment of Ivan the Terrible in his *Rossia v tsarstvovanie Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1939) may have triggered the Central Committee's intervention. Although the actual wording and circumstances surrounding the directives are elusive, an unsigned memo apparently written by A. S. Shcherbakov in 1942 describes its intent in detail. See RGASPI 17/125/123/161–195. Perrie argues that the surge of propaganda surrounding Ivan IV in 1939 was related to new foreign policy objectives in the Baltics. While this confluence of events and available propaganda imagery was certainly a factor in the growth of the campaign surrounding Ivan IV, it does not explain the campaign's earlier dimensions between 1937 and 1939. See Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible*, chaps. 3–4.
51. Tikhon Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo: Tikhon Khrennikov o vremeni i o sebe*, ed. V. Rubtsova (Moscow, 1994), 110. To Khrennikov's relief, the war distracted Shcherbakov from following up on the proposal. It should be noted that despite clear indication that the Ivan saga was an allegory for Soviet state-building, Khrennikov accepts the interpretation that the campaign was a component of Stalin's cult of personality. See also S. Khentova, *Shostakovich: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo*, vol. 1 (Leningrad, 1985), 519; V. Kostylev, "Literaturnye zametki," *Izvestiia*, March 19, 1941, 4.
52. Mekhlis completed this ideological coup on December 10, 1941, when he banned the domestic use of the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" and replaced it with "Death to the German Occupiers!" explaining that the former "might incorrectly orient certain sorts of military personnel." See "Dos'e voiny," *Rodina* 6–7 (1991): 75.
53. RGVA 9/36s/4252/131–132. Cited here and below is the corrected copy of Mekhlis's speech. For the incomplete stenographic transcript, see 9/36s/4252/46–61. Generally, see D. L. Brandenberger, "Lozhnye ustanovki v dele

- vospitaniia i propagandy': Doklad nachal'nika Glavnogo politicheskogo upravleniia RKKA L. Z. Mekhlisa o voennoi ideologii, 1940 g.," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 5–6 (1997): 82–99. Iu. Rubtsov repeats this argument without attribution in his *Alter ego Stalina* (Moscow, 1999), 125, 133, 136–137.
54. RGVA 9/36s/4252/150.
55. Stalin had apparently been the first to attack hagiography of civil war-era heroes and refer back to tsarist martial traditions in late March 1940 at a Central Committee plenum and then in mid-April at the Main Military Council. See RGVA 9/36s/4252/116; V. Malyshev, "Proidet desiatok let, i eti vstrechi ne vosstanovish' uzhe v pamiaty," *Istochnik* 5 (1997): 110; *Zimniaia voina, 1939–1940*, vol. 2, *Stalin i finskaia kampaniia* (*Stenogramma soveshchaniia pri TsK VKP[b]*), ed. E. N. Kul'kov and O. A. Rzheshhevskii (Moscow, 1999), 274–278; RGVA 4/14/2768/64–65; *Istoriia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soiuzna*, ed. P. N. Pospelov, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1960), 277; Carl Van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland, 1939–1940* (London, 1997), 202.
56. RGVA 9/36s/4252/121, 138–40. An earlier draft of the speech had made the point more elaborately: "The best traditions of the Russian army are not being popularized and everything relating to it is being savagely ridiculed, which results in a practical ignorance of the past in terms of the performance of the tsarist army. Stereotyping abounds. All the Russian generals are lumped together as idiots or embezzlers. Outstanding Russian military leaders are forgotten—Suvorov, Kutuzov, Bagration, and others." RGVA 9/36s/4252/11.
57. Compare RGVA 9/36s/355/114, 151 with 9/36s/4252/138. The Georgian general Bagration was mentioned as something of an afterthought in the speech (his name being added above the margin in the typescript) and appears only in about half of the associated materials. See 9/36s/4252/138, 51, 72, 100.
58. M. I. Kalinin, "Rol' i zadachi politrabotnikov Krasnoi Armii i Voennomorskogo flota," in *O molodezhi* (Moscow, 1940), 317.
59. Scholars from Tucker to Martin have drawn attention to Stalin's repeated valorization of the Russian people in private during the 1920s and 1930s. The fact that few of these statements were published until the 1950s testifies to the party's ambivalence on the subject.
60. Volin, "Velikii russkii narod," 26–37. Indicative of this delay, specialists like N. M. Druzhinin were called in to help promote the Russian people relatively late in the decade, in October of 1938—see "Dnevnik Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Druzhinina," *Voprosy istorii* 6 (1997): 101–102.
61. Volin, "Russkie," 319–326. Although some historians have recently argued that Ukrainians and Belorussians were also elevated to the status of "great peoples" between 1939 and 1941, this would seem to be a component of the campaign to justify the Sovietization of eastern Poland rather than an independent ideological development bent on valorizing the Ukrainian or Belorussian people, per se. Not only does the timing of the campaign point directly to the 1939 partitioning of Poland, but the historical parables that received the most

publicity (e.g., 1654, Bogdan Khmel'nitskii, and the Polish Yoke) are too convenient to be merely coincidental. Of course, regardless of the reasons behind the promotion of "the great Ukrainian people" and "the great Belorussian people" between 1939 and 1941, these developments should be seen as fully compatible with the Russian people's official designation as "the first among equals." See Serguei Ekelchik [Serhy Yekelchuk], "History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2000), esp. 21–33; Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, 2001), 351–352.

62. Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham, 1990), 4–5. Explicitly concerned with postwar stalinist society, Dunham concedes on p. 66 that the party's interest in mass mobilization dated back to the 1930s.
63. "Doklad tov. Stalina," in *XVIII s'ezd Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii(b), 10–21 marta 1939: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1939), 26–27.
64. M. I. Kalinin, "O kommunisticheskom vospitanii," in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1962), 410–412; see the October 1940 draft at TsKhDMO 1/23/1389/30–32.

#### 4. Ideology in the Prewar Classroom

1. GARF 2306/70/2427/42.
2. GARF 2306/70/2425/17–20; Konstantin Shteppa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, 1962), 135; Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/12; Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917–1931* (Bloomington, 1991), 37; HP 11/a/2/33–34. In an otherwise blanket attack on the teaching profession in July 1937, Bubnov defended pedagogues with prerevolutionary training. Apparently, older teachers were adapting more easily than their younger colleagues to the traditionalist teaching methods reintroduced between 1931 and 1936. See GARF 2306/69/2286/51–52; Chapter 2, n. 32.
3. RGASPI 17/120/360/140. See Appendix, n. 32.
4. "Bol'shevistskaia ideinost' i pedagogicheskoe masterstvo," *Pravda*, September 1, 1937, 1.
5. A. V. Shestakov, *Ob izuchenii istorii SSSR* (Moscow, 1938), 39.
6. O. F. Leonova was essentially paraphrasing the introduction to the official 1938 curricular plan, *Programmy nachal'noi shkoly* (Moscow, 1938), 38–39. See her "Vospitatel'naia rabota uchitel'ia (iz opyta raboty v III–IV klassakh)," in *Vospitatel'naia rabota v nachal'noi shkole: Sbornik statei*, ed. S. N. Belousov (Moscow, 1939), 7. This was reiterated in a mass-produced teacher's manual in 1940: I. V. Gittis, *Nachal'noe obuchenie istorii: Ocherki po metodike prepodavaniia istorii* (Leningrad, 1940), 17. Shteppa remembered the dynamic in his memoirs—see his *Russian Historians*, 134–136.

7. A. M. Khmelev, "Oprichnina (stenograficheskaia zapis' uroka)," in *Opyt prepodavaniia istorii SSSR v nachal'noi shkole* (Moscow, 1938), 27.
8. Gittis's statement glosses Stalin's 1931 declaration that "in the past we didn't have and could not have had a fatherland. But now, since we've overthrown capitalism and power belongs to the working class, we have a fatherland and will defend its independence." See Gittis, *Nachal'noe obuchenie istorii*, 15.
9. Emphasis added. S. Dziubinskii, "Vospitatel'naia rabota na urokakh istorii SSSR," in *Vospitatel'naia rabota v nachal'noi shkole: Sbornik statei*, ed. S. N. Belousov (Moscow, 1939), 104.
10. GARF 2306/70/2427/11. Shtepa mentioned similar reactions in his *Russian Historians*, 131–132.
11. On the relief experienced after the release of the Shestakov text, see HP 33s/a/4/30. The text's endorsement by the "all-union government commission" was suggestive enough for an editor to report to the Central Committee that "someone has started the awkward and now quite widespread rumor that the textbook was edited by Comrade Stalin himself(!) As a result, many do-nothings have arrived at the conclusion that the text is unimpeachable and that only the most bitter Trotskiites, Bukharinites, and those malevolently disposed toward Comrade Stalin are capable of criticizing it." See RGASPI 17/120/365/170.
12. G. Kompantseva, "Kak ia dobivaius' prochnykh znanii po istorii," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, September 3, 1938, 3; V. Chukhov, "Metodika raboty s uchebnikom istorii," *Nachal'naia shkola* 9 (1940): 26–29.
13. See *Programmy nachal'noi shkoly* (Moscow, 1938), 37–54.
14. For examples of classroom shortcomings, see S. Liuboshits, "Anekdoticheskie dialogi," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, February 7, 1938, 3. The best work on the subject is E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Power, and Practice in Soviet Schools of the 1930s* (New York, 2002), chap. 5; also Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York, 1994), 227–230.
15. GARF 2306/69/2640/1; "Izdanie Kratkogo kursa istorii SSSR," *Izvestiia*, September 30, 1937, 3.
16. When the commissar's office supplied a copy to a schoolgirl named Zina Stroganova, her thank-you note to Potemkin expressed considerable awareness of history's significance: "I promise to get perfect scores in history, as without a knowledge of history, it will be impossible to build a communist society." GARF 2306/69/2641/42; also Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/44, 78, 103–107, 160; HP 2/a/1/24; HP 5/a/1/35; HP 14/a/2/9.
17. See Chapter 3, n. 40.
18. See, for instance, GAAO 2618/1/135/120, published in *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo na Severe, 1917–1941 gody: Dokumenty i materialy* (Arkhangel'sk, 1986), 225; GARF 2306/70/2593/1–2; Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/12; A. Fokht, "Istoriia SSSR i politicheskoe vospitanie uchashchikhsia," *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, March 23, 1938, 2; TsKhDMO 1/23/1304/26. Adults even asked

- Shestakov directly when he would issue a textbook designed for more mature audiences—see Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/40–42, 47, 54, 58, 74; 638/3/330/21.
19. GARF 2306/69/2641/99.
  20. GARF 2306/69/2586/12–14; 2306/69/2642/172; 2306/70/2425/3.
  21. *Khrestomatiia po istorii SSSR*, ed. V. I. Lebedev, M. N. Tikhomirov, and V. E. Syroechkovskii, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1939); *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. B. D. Grekov, S. V. Bakhrushin, and V. I. Lebedev, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1939); *Istoriia SSSR: Al'bom nagliadnykh posobii*, vols. 1–4 (Moscow, 1939–1940); *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. M. V. Nechkina, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1940); *Posobie dlia prakticheskikh zaniatii po istorii SSSR*, ed. I. I. Polosin, vols. 1–2 (Moscow, 1940); *Posobnyi material po izucheniiu istorii SSSR*, ed. A. V. Shestakov, vols. 1–2 (Moscow, 1940); Gittis, *Nachal'noe obuchenie istorii*. For a complete bibliography, see L. P. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia sbkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v SSSR* (Moscow, 1961), 514–517.
  22. GARF 2306/69/2494/15–16; 2306/70/2631/179–180. On the anxiety among teachers and propagandists about mastering the often treacherous central line, see G. V. Shumeiko, *Iz letopisi Staroi ploshchadi: Istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow, 1996), 97–98; Iurii Baranov, *Goluboi razliv: Dnevnik, pis'ma, stikhotvoreniia, 1936–1942*, ed. E. Starshinov (Iaroslavl', 1988), 71.
  23. GARF 2306/70/2631/188.
  24. Dziubinskii, “Vospitatel'naia rabota na urokakh istorii SSSR,” 100–114; *Opyt prepodavaniia istorii SSSR v nachal'noi sbkole* (Moscow, 1938), esp. 14–16; I. V. Gittis, *Uroki po istorii SSSR* (Leningrad, 1938), esp. 5–38; Gittis, *Nachal'noe obuchenie istorii*, esp. 9, 15; M. V. Bogorodskaia, “Kak ia gotovliu's' k urokam istorii,” *Nachal'naia sbkola* 9 (1940): 30–34.
  25. GARF 2306/70/2631/188, 180–182.
  26. GARF 2306/70/2631/183–184.
  27. GARF 2306/70/2631/191, 197; also 2306/69/2641/46–47.
  28. Mention of the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* apparently stemmed from the publicity in 1938 surrounding its release. See Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/47; also 40–42, 54, 58, 74; 638/3/330/12, 21.
  29. See Chapter 3, n. 39.
  30. GARF 2306/70/2631/179–180. On the difference between just and unjust wars, see *Istoriia vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov): Kratkii kurs* (Moscow, 1938), 158–161; M. Vaskin, “Voiny spravedlivye i nespravedlivye,” *Sputnik agitatora* 2 (1939): 27–29; and Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/34, 43–45, 52, 67, 121, 132–133, 136. On backwardness, see A. N. Artizov and O. V. Naumov, “M. V. Nechkina o prichinakh otstalosti Rossii,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 2 (1993): 210–216; 3 (1993): 176–208.
  31. See Appendix, n. 42.
  32. See, for example, the March 1938 issues of the official Glavlit circular at RGVA 9/35s/92/34–35, 83.
  33. See Mekhlis's copy, at RGASPI 17/120/373/99–99ob, 103ob, 108. This

- odious figure's hatred of Bliukher was legendary—see Iu. Rubtsov, *Alter ego Stalina* (Moscow, 1999), 43–150.
34. RGVA 9/35s/92/120. Such orders, issued by military and Narkompros authorities and probably coordinated by Glavlit, do not seem to have been routinely preserved.
  35. *Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR*, ed. A. V. Shestakov (Moscow, 1937), 151, 157, 177–178, 181–182, 188, 199 (in my personal collection).
  36. Nadezhda Mandelshtam, *Vospominaniia* (New York, 1970), 366; Nina Nar, “The Campaign against Illiteracy and Semi-Illiteracy in the Ukraine, Transcaucasus, and Northern Caucasus, 1922–1941,” in *Soviet Education*, ed. George L. Kline (London, 1957), 149; HP 7/a/1/24.
  37. *Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR*, 206–209 (in my personal collection). The State Instructional Pedagogical Publishing House was also instructed in 1939 to change “fascist” to “bourgeois” in the new edition of A. Dubovnikov and E. Severin's *Khrestomatiia po sovremennoi literature*. See GARF 2306/69/2642/154–157.
  38. Included in the list of those texts undergoing extensive reediting were A. Mishulin's *Uchebnik istoricheskogo drevnego mira*; E. Kosminskii and S. Skazanin's *Uchebnik istorii srednikh vekov*; A. Efimov's *Uchebnik novoi istorii*; I. Galkin's *Uchebnik novoi istorii*; and Pankratova's *Istoriia SSSR*. See GARF 2306/69/2640/1–3; 2306/69/2586/250; 2306/69/2642/148–153.
  39. RGASPI 17/126/2/142–143.
  40. V. Kartsev, “Istoriia v chetvertykh klassakh,” *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, November 5, 1938, 3; E. Thomas Ewing, “The Teachers of Stalinism: Pedagogy and Political Culture in the Soviet Union, 1931 to 1939” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1994), 162–163.
  41. RGASPI 17/126/2/144. Intriguingly, this streamlining involved serious consideration of tsarist curricular priorities as well as those in practice in the United States, Britain, and France.
  42. See Appendix, p. 251.
  43. RGASPI 17/126/2/152–155.
  44. Arkhiv RAN 638/2/64/30–43.
  45. Arkhiv RAN 638/2/101/3; 638/2/10/4; 638/2/114/1–2.
  46. V. Bystrianskii, “Tsennii podarok shkole,” *Pravda*, November 19, 1940, 4. Highlighting the text's attention to the non-Russian peoples, Bystrianskii nevertheless made it clear that “at the center of the narrative is the history of the great Russian people, the first to raise the banner of the victorious proletarian revolution, the people whose working class aided in the liberation of the numerous nations and tribes imprisoned in the tsarist prison of the peoples.”
  47. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 292–293.
  48. GARF 2306/70/2742/85–87; RGASPI 17/88/552/218. I am grateful to Peter Blitstein for the latter reference.
  49. TsKhDMO 1/23/1253/36–37.
  50. S. Ingulov, *Politbesedy: Kratkii uchebnik politgramoty* (Moscow, 1934, 1935);

- B. M. Volin, *Politgramota: Uchebnik dlia kandidatskikh partiinykh shkol*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1932), apparently coedited with Ingulov in later editions; N. Popov, *Ocherk istorii VKP(b)*, 15th ed., corrected and enlarged (Moscow, 1932); *Istoriia VKP(b)*, ed. E. Iaroslavskii, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1926, 1929–30); V. G. Knorin, *Kratkaia istoriia VKP(b)* (Moscow, 1934).
51. SSSR—*strana sotsializma: Statisticheskii sbornik*, ed. L. Mekhlis, E. Varga, and V. Karpinskii (Moscow, 1936); L. P. Beria, *K voprosu ob istorii bol'shevistskikh organizatsii v Zakavkaz'e* (Moscow, 1935); K. E. Voroshilov, *Stalin i Krasnaia Armiia* (Moscow, 1936); generally, see TsKhDMO 1/23/1253/3–100.
  52. TsKhDMO 1/23/1251/10–11; RGVA 9/29s/321/1; 9/35s/92/34–35.
  53. *Nasha rodina*, ed. A. Stetskii, S. Ingulov, and N. Baranskii (Moscow, 1937); M. I. Kalinin, *Chto dala sovetaskaia vlast' trudiashchimsia?* (Moscow, 1937).
  54. V. M. Molotov, *K 20-letiiu Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1937); *20 let sovetaskoi vlasti: Statisticheskii sbornik (tsifrovoi material dlia propagandistov)* (Moscow, 1937).
  55. RGVA 9/29s/355/15–20; 9/29s/349/69. The komsomol and armed forces serialized this text and attendant supplements or printed them as booklets, e.g., *Komsomol'skii propagandist i agitator* 5 (1938); *Propagandist i agitator RKKA* 34 (1937); *Sozdanie russkogo natsional'nogo gosudarstva (v pomoshch' gruppovodam politzaniatii)* (Leningrad, 1938).
  56. RGVA 9/29s/323/100; RGASPI 17/120/307/15–19.
  57. See RGASPI 17/3/989/16; RGVA 9/29s/323/110–119. The only existing material on these “party” and “Leninist” courses is fragmentary and stored at RGVA. The file was apparently left incomplete after the suicide of its addressee—Ia. Gamarnik—on the eve of his arrest in 1937. Duplicate copies that should be at RGASPI seem to have disappeared along with the Agitprop archives from the 1930s.
  58. RGVA 9/29s/349/2–4, 7, 165–171, 313–316; “Programma po istorii VKP(b) dlia partiinykh kruzhkov (proekt),” *Bol'shevik* 11 (1937): 68–90; A. Fedorov, “O podgotovke mladshikh politrukov,” *Propagandist i agitator RKKA* 12 (1938): 8–9.
  59. RGASPI 17/120/307/289, 85–86, 122–125, 148–149, 38; Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State, and Community in Leningrad, 1917–1941* (Montreal, 1999), 135–137, 138–141; [Anonymous], *Lenin Schools for [the] Training of Political Officers in the Soviet Army*, no. 12, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeograph Series* (New York, 1952), 3–6.
  60. Italics added. RGASPI 17/120/307/238–239. Later that fall, A. S. Shcherbakov recounted another story of incompetence on the local level: “it’s no joke that one propagandist responded to the question ‘What is the Tokyo-Berlin Axis?’ with the answer: ‘I don’t exactly remember what it is but it is something like a meridian that runs somewhere close to Tokyo.’” See RGASPI 88/1/779/31.
  61. RGASPI 17/120/307/238–239.
  62. See RGASPI 17/120/307/167–173, 104–106, 169, 131. At the 1938 con-

ference, V. A. Bystrianskii applauded the fusing of party and USSR state history and compared the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)*'s significance to that of the Shestakov text. Others, however, like the communist idealist A. V. Morozov, the leader of the Moscow Moskvoretskii district party committee's seminar for propagandists, felt that the Shestakov text had eclipsed other kinds of party work for too long.

63. "O postanovke partiinoi propagandy v sviazi s vypuskom 'Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b),' " *Pravda*, November 15, 1938, 1–2. During preliminary discussions, Stalin rebuffed calls for expanding enrollment on the local level by some four times to roughly 8 million, instead proposing an approach that would complement existing courses with a new emphasis on independent study for well-educated party members, Red Army soldiers, and civilian specialists. In some discussions of these developments, it is mistakenly assumed that all courses on party history were to be disbanded in favor of individual study, when in reality this was a concession made only to the intelligentsia. See RGASPI 17/120/307/252–254; also 246, 131, 10–11, 33, 63, 154, 289–290; V. V. Volkov, "Kontsepsiia kul'turnosti, 1935–1938 gody: Sovetskaia tsivilizatsiia i povsednevnost' stalinskogo vremeni," *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal* 1–2 (1996): 210–211; Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Background Practices* (Berkeley, 1999), 166.
64. TsKhDMO 1/23/1342/22ob–24.
65. RGVA 9/29s/513/48, 88, 438.
66. *SSSR i strany kapitalizma*, ed. L. Mekhlis, E. Varga, and V. Karpinskii, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1938); RGVA 9/29s/513/35–36, 98; TsKhDMO 1/23/1342/22ob–24; "Programmy eksternata za Voенno-politicheskoe uchilishche [sic] v 1939 godu," *Propagandist i agitator RKKK* 15 (1939): 38–40.
67. See the massive amount of curricular materials at RGVA 9/29s/513 (exceptions occur on pp. 75, 91, and 331); also "O politicheskoi uchebe krasnoarmeitsev i mladshikh komandirov RKKK v 1938–1939 uchebnom godu," *Pravda*, December 9, 1938, 3. While less russocentric than the Shestakov text, Stetskii's *Nasha Rodina* foregrounded paternalistic statements like the following: "the more advanced peoples of the USSR generously came to the aid of the toiling masses of those peoples which had been particularly oppressed under tsarism. The Russian working class did much for those peoples who had been oppressed in the past, arming the toiling masses of all the peoples of the USSR with their experience in the communist struggle. The Russian toiling masses brought Russian culture to the workers and peasants of those peoples oppressed by tsarism, which had a big influence on the cultural development of all the peoples of our great union." See *Nasha Rodina*, 60; also a review of the textbook's 1937 edition in "Kniga o sotsialisticheskoi rodine," *Sputnik agitatora* 19–20 (1937): 73.
68. E.g., *Nashestvie Baryia, Ledovoe poboiushche, Kulikovskaia bitva, and Suvorov*. See S. Gurov, "Biblioteka Krasnoarmeitsa," *Pravda*, December 7, 1938, 6; B.

- Iakovlev, "Biblioteka patriotov," *Krasnaia zvezda*, September 16, 1939, 2. Fascinatingly, the latter article criticizes this exclusively russocentric orientation, calling for new volumes on non-Russian military heroes like Bogdan Khmel'nitskii, Ustin Karmeliuk, Amangel'dy Imanov, and Semen Karo. See Chapter 5, p. 89, and nn. 61–63.
69. RGVA 9/29s/491/27–28; 9/29s/452/191, 205–206, 449; 9/39s/95/137–140.
70. TsKhDMO 1/23/1462/25–35; RGVA 9/29s/452/194, 206, 212, 234–235, 240–248, 326–328, 359–364, 450. Particularly troubling to the author of one report was that weak instruction was handicapping agitation within the ranks: "the study of the history of the peoples of the USSR has turned into an end in and of itself, into the raw [*goloe*] memorization of individual formulas and dates without an analysis of events. Red Army soldiers' training on the basis of the heroism of the Russian people and their representatives is being poorly carried out" (p. 234).
71. RGVA 9/36s/3778/104. For more on the nervousness and incompetence of agitators on the local level, see HP 14/a/2/7–9; HP 28/a/3/7; HP 59/a/5/42.
72. RGVA 9/29s/452/361.
73. A report concerning the 6899th formation complained that "in an array of study circles, Red Army soldiers in their second year and junior commanders among the enlisted men have a poor grasp of historical dates and events and are not able to give a political evaluation of historical facts." For instance, in unit 5424, soldiers announced that "Italy and Abyssinia clashed on the Kulikovo Field" instead of connecting the 1380 battle to Dmitrii Donskoi. Similar reports emanated from as far away as the Caucasus, where "the heroic history of the Russian people, or of the peoples of the USSR in general, in their struggle against foreign interventionists, has not accomplished its [designated] goal in training and serves only as a distracting and unnecessary tale from the past." See RGVA 9/36s/3778/44, 392; also 9/36s/3778/64, 73; 9/29s/452/361.
74. RGVA 9/39s/95/68. More generally, see 9/39s/95/98–104; 9/29s/452/49–50.
75. "O postanovke propagandy Marksizma-Leninizma v Belorusskoi SSR, Orlovskoi i Kurskoi oblastiakh," *Bol'shevik* 15–16 (1939): 48–50; also "Protiv samoteka v propagande Marksizma-Leninizma," *Bol'shevik* 15–16 (1939): 51–58; "Bol'shevistskuiu propagandu—na vysshuiu stupen'," *Bol'shevik* 10 (1940): esp. 4–7.
76. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Interwar History of Soviet Russia* (New York, 1985), 39–41, 209–240; K. B. Litvak, "K voprosu o partiinykh perepisiakh i kul'turnom urovne kommunistov v 20-e gody," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 2 (1991): 79–92; John Barber, "Working Class Culture and Political Culture in the 1930s," in *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, ed.

- Hans Günther (New York, 1990), 3–14. Of the minority of children who attended school during the late nineteenth century, most dropped out after two years—see Chapter 1, n. 17.
77. I. N. Tsybin, a cadet and komsomol member in the Ordzhonikidze garrison infantry school, got so frustrated with the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* that he declared, “if I knew who had compiled this history, I would crack him over the head [*pobil by ego po golove*].” RGVA 9/39s/95/68; also 9/39s/95/19, 9/39s/75/35. See also *Poka stuchit serdtse: Dnevnik i pis'ma Geroia Sovetskogo Soiuza Evgenii Rudnevoi* (Moscow, 1995), 76–78, 64, 46; Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), 309, 331; HP 14/a/2/6–8; HP 17/a/2/35.
78. TsKhDMO 1/23/1304/30; also 1/23/1304/46–47; *Poka stuchit serdtse*, 71. Unintentionally revealing is *Pravda*'s flanking of a picture of Moscow residents buying copies of the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)* with an article entitled “Agitators Study the Russian People's Heroic History.” See *Pravda*, October 3, 1938, 3.
79. RGVA 9/29s/452/192, 242–246, 334; 9/29s/349/1; 9/29s/378/64, 89, 98; 9/29s/90/259; 9/35s/90/212–213; 9/39s/95/509; also HP 1/a/1/49; HP 66/a/6/23.
80. RGVA 9/29s/491/40–47; GARF 2306/69/2286/43–48; 2306/69/2363/11ob; 2306/69/2525.
81. See RGVA 9/32s/90/241, 255, 260–261, 280; 9/35s/92/83–84. Offending materials remained in circulation despite explicit demands in Glavlit circulars: “the directors of libraries, book warehouses, stores, clubs, exhibitions, photo libraries, museums, archives, theaters, publishing houses, and newspaper editorial boards are required to turn over to local Glavlit organs all printed or reproduced material that qualifies for seizure under Glavlit orders.”
82. RGVA 9/35s/92/70; 9/39s/95/326; 9/32s/90/256–257, 261; 9/35s/92/226.
83. RGVA 9/32s/90/247–248; 9/32s/92/34–85.
84. RGVA 9/29s/491/152–153. The situation was even worse in the non-Russian regions. For instance, vast amounts of literature in non-Russian languages was indiscriminately purged from Central Asian military district libraries in the late 1930s. See RGVA 9/32s/90/11.
85. RGVA 9/35s/92/211.
86. RGVA 9/35s/92/120; also 9/36s/3594/17.
87. Comments at the 1938 conference organized for Moscow and Leningrad propagandists reveal an almost Orwellian conviction that tight control over the press could ensure hegemonic influence over popular *massaliti*. Perhaps such expectations explain the dissatisfaction with which these individuals regarded state publishing efforts. Newspaper-based agitation was held to be poorly organized and ineffective, as were more specialized forums like *Pod znamenem marksizma*. Flagship journals like *Bol'shevik* were apparently not even reaching the local level. Worst of all, state publishing houses (especially provincial ones)

were having problems producing material that was not ideologically suspect. See RGASPI 17/120/307.

88. See, for instance, RGVA 9/36s/3778/119.
89. F. Vinogradova, "Na uroke istorii," *Pravda*, November 14, 1938, 3.
90. One wartime observer credited the prewar curriculum with stimulating patriotic sentiments on the eve of the war: "the complete changes made by Stalin in the teaching of Russian history in schools struck me as something profoundly significant." See Alexander Werth, *Moscow War Diary* (New York, 1942), 15.
91. Dziubinskii, "Vospitatel'naia rabota na urokakh istorii SSSR," 109–110.

## 5. Popularizing State Ideology through Mass Culture

1. RGASPI 17/120/307/271; Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985); James von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917–1920* (Berkeley, 1993).
2. Edward J. Brown, *Russian Literature since the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 13–16, 168; *Agitatsiia za schast'e: Sovetskoe iskusstvo stalinskoi epokhi* (Moscow, 1994).
3. See, for example, *Russian Art of the Avant Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1920–1934*, ed. John E. Bowlt (New York, 1988), 291.
4. See, for example, Victor Terras, *A History of Russian Literature* (New Haven, 1991), 520–522.
5. Although Dobrenko probably exaggerates the degree to which Socialist Realism was a response to grassroots frustration with the literary radicalism of the 1920s, it does seem likely that the party hierarchy's canonization of the genre was precipitated by the desire to court this audience's literary "tastes." See Evgenii Dobrenko, "The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste, or, Who 'Invented' Socialist Realism?" in *Socialist Realism without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham, 1997), 153–164; and Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia: Sotsial'nye i esteticheskie predposylki retseptii sovetskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg, 1997), chap. 3.
6. Gor'kii lobbied early on for writers to pay more attention to the classics. See M. Gor'kii, *O literature* (Moscow, 1937), 115–142; Michael S. Gorham, "Mastering the Perverse: State-Building and Language 'Purification' in Early Soviet Russia," *Slavic Review* 59:1 (2000): 133–153.
7. Maurice Friedberg, *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* (New York, 1962), 35, 195–198.
8. Purgings by Glavlit and Narkompros in the late 1920s and early 1930s was complemented by critics' "sociological" condemnation of Pushkin's work on account of his class origins. As one interviewee noted in 1950, "up to 1935, you couldn't read Pushkin, you couldn't read Tolstoi, because they were considered the nobility." See A. V. Blium, "'Sniat' kontrrevoliutsionnuiu shapku . . .': Pushkin i leningradskaia tsenzura 1937 g.," *Zvezda* 2 (1997): 209; HP 1/a/1/41. It should be noted that this marginalization was limited

to official mass culture; unofficial Pushkin scholarship often continued uninterrupted. See O. S. Murav'eva, "Obraz Pushkina: Istoricheskie metamorfozy," in *Legends i mify o Pushkine* (St. Petersburg, 1994), 123.

9. L. L. Domgerr, "Sovetskoe akademicheskoe izdanie Pushkina," *Novyi zbornal* 167 (1987): 233; K. I. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik, 1930–1969*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1994), 116.
10. The committee ranged from party functionaries (A. S. Shcherbakov, A. A. Zhdanov) and court *litterateurs* (D. Bednyi, A. N. Tolstoi, A. A. Fadeev, N. Tikhonov) to prominent Pushkin specialists (M. A. Tsiavlovskii, Iu. G. Oksman, D. D. Blagoi). Apparently as an afterthought, a dozen representatives of non-Russian republican literary circles were also added to the end of the list. See *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii SSSR* 64 (1935): art. 911; "Velikii russkii poet," *Pravda*, December 17, 1935, 1; generally, GARF 305/1/1, 2.
11. A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 16 vols. (Moscow, 1937–1949).
12. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik*, 139; also GARF 305/1/1/67ob–69.
13. Unfortunately, the "Pushkinists" underappreciation of such warnings led to the banning of the first volume of the poet's collected works later that year, its distribution becoming possible only after the scholarly apparatus was gutted. This, combined with the arrest of Oksman and others in 1937, condemned successive volumes to appear in print denuded of their scholarly commentary. See Domgerr, "Sovetskoe akademicheskoe izdanie Pushkina," 228–252, esp. 239; also Domgerr, "Iz istorii sovetskogo akademicheskogo izdaniia Polnogo sobraniia sochinenii Pushkina (1937–1949)," *Zapiski Ruskoii akademicheskoi gruppy v SShA* 20 (1987): 295–348; Domgerr, *The Pushkin Edition of the USSR Academy of Sciences*, no. 43, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeo-graph Series* (New York, 1953).
14. See GARF 305/1/1/49–90ob; 305/1/10, 15.
15. A. S. Bubnov, "K pushkinskim dnam," *Pravda*, December 17, 1936, 2; also GARF 305/1/10/71.
16. A patronizing attitude toward the Russian people in print had gotten Bednyi into trouble in 1931 when Stalin and L. Z. Mekhlis chastised him, in private and public, respectively. See Stalin, "Tov. Dem'ianu Bednomu (Vyderzhki iz pis'ma)," in *Sochineniia*, vol. 13 (Moscow, 1951), 23–27; L. Mekhlis, "Za perestroiku raboty RAPP," *Pravda*, November 24, 1931, 2–3. See pp. 83–84 above.
17. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik*, 140.
18. See Chapter 1, n. 28.
19. GARF 305/1/1/66ob–67.
20. Clichés like "the great Russian national poet" became indelibly associated with Pushkin in the popular mind only in the wake of the commemoration, as is clear from sources that predate the publicity campaign surrounding the 1937 events. The visitors' book from a 1936 Pushkin exhibit at the Tret'iakov Gallery, for instance, contains only one mention of Pushkin's ethnicity among

hundreds of comments left by ordinary Soviets. See OR GTG 8.II/629/39ob. I am grateful to Jan Plamper for bringing this source to my attention.

21. RGASPI 17/3/997/103–107.
22. “Privet izbrannikam velikogo naroda,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, January 15, 1937, 1; “Natsional’naia gordost’ Pushkina,” *Pravda*, February 7, 1937, 4. For a complete survey of the commemoration’s events, see the newspaper clipping files at GARF 305/1/17, 18. On the planning of the events, see 305/1/3–7, 11, 13, and 16. Also, Jeffrey Brooks, *“Thank You, Comrade Stalin”: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), 77, 118–120.
23. Emphasis added. “Narodnye pushkinskie torzhestva,” *Pravda*, February 2, 1937, 1; also Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, 2000), 128–131.
24. On Georgian, Armenian, Ukrainian, Bashkir, and other national literatures, see *Revolutsiia i natsional’nosti* 1–4 (1937). Emphasis of this debt is ironic in the sense that Pushkin’s colorful descriptions of the Transcaucasus lent support to the Orientalization of these regions during the Soviet period by focusing attention on the quaint and exotic aspects of traditional cultures and by highlighting the contrast between Russian development and non-Russian underdevelopment. See M. Azadovskii, “Pushkin i fol’klor,” *Pravda*, February 5, 1937, 2; A. Egorin, “Velikii narodnyi poet,” in *Pushkin: Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1941), 6. A useful explanatory paradigm for the Soviet period, Said’s notion of Orientalism is difficult to apply to the nineteenth century. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: The Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoi* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), 7–8; Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?” *Slavic Review* 59:1 (2000): 74–100 (and his exchange with Adeeb Khalid and Maria Todorova in *Kritika*, 1:4 [2000]: 691–727).
25. This reading contradicts analysis in Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or, How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53:2 (1994): 448.
26. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 5, 17–64, vol. 2, 243–246; L. N. Tolstoi, *Voina i mir* (Moscow, 1936); N. V. Gogol’, *Mirgorod* (Moscow, 1947); A. K. Tolstoi, *Dramaticheskaiia triologiia: Smert’ Ivana Groznogo, Tsar’ Fedor Ivanovich, Tsar’ Boris Godunov* (Leningrad, 1939); M. Iu. Lermontov, “Pesnia pro Tsaria Ivana Vasil’evicha, mladogo oprichnika, i udalogo kuptsa Kalashnikova,” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1935), 315–330. See Stephen Moeller-Sally, “‘Klassicheskoe nasledie’ v epokhu sotsrealizma, ili pokhozheniia Gogolia v strane bol’shevikov,” in *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*, ed. H. Günther and E. Dobrenko (St. Petersburg, 2000), 509–522.
27. L. N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols. (Moscow, 1928–), vols. 4, 6,

- 18–20, 32–33; M. Iu. Lermontov, *Geroi nashego vremeni* (Moscow, 1947); Friedberg, *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets*, 36–37, 195–198. Dostoevskii was bypassed in this frenzy of republishing. “A great writer,” Stalin once remarked, “[he was also] a great reactionary. We are not publishing him because he is a bad influence on the youth. But, a great writer!” See Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York, 1962), 157.
28. *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s'ezd sovetskikh pisatelei, 1934: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 10; I. A. Krylov, *Basni* (Moscow, 1935); Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk, 1990), 7–11.
29. See E. Dobrenko, “‘Zanimatel’naia istoriia’: Istoricheskii roman i sotsialisticheskii realizm,” in *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*, ed. H. Günther and E. Dobrenko (St. Petersburg, 2000), 874–895. Work on popular readership indicates that already by the late 1920s, the ideal novel was in many ways supposed to be reminiscent of the monumental literature of the prerevolutionary period. Dobrenko writes (paraphrasing actual reader surveys): “novels should be big, thick books with realistic, well-developed plots . . . [that] should be absorbing and full of adventures, simply narrated in language that’s artistic but comprehensible.” See “The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste,” 148–149.
30. V. Solov’ev, *Fel’dmarshal Kutuzov* (Moscow, 1940); A. Tolstoi, *Petr Pervyi*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1930, 1937); V. I. Kostylev, *Koz’ma Minin* (Moscow, 1939).
31. See Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, “Terribly Romantic, Terribly Progressive, or Terribly Tragic: Rehabilitating Ivan IV under I. V. Stalin,” *Russian Review* 58:4 (1999): 635–654; Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia* (New York, 2001), chaps. 4–6.
32. V. Ian, *Chingiz-khan* (Moscow, 1938); S. Borodin, *Dmitrii Donskoi* (Moscow, 1940); S. Sergeev-Tsenskiĭ, “Sevastopol’skaia strada,” *Oktiabr’* 7–9 (1937); 1–3 (1938).
33. N. M. Golovin, “O vospitatel’noi rabote v shkole,” in *Vospitatel’naia rabota v nachal’noi shkole: Sbornik statei*, ed. S. N. Belousov (Moscow, 1939), 45; RGVA 9/32s/90/25–26, 29–30; 9/35s/92/215.
34. See *Devushka iz Kashina: Dnevnik i pis’ma iunoi partizanki Iny Konstantinovoi* (Moscow, 1958), 34; Iurii Baranov, *Goluboi razliv: Dnevniki, pis’ma, stikhotvoreniia, 1936–1942*, ed. E. Starshinov (Iaroslavl’, 1988), 27–29; Maurice Friedberg, “Russian Writers and Soviet Readers,” *American Slavic and Eastern European Review* 14:1 (1955): 108–121. To be sure, not everyone “returned to the classics.” For instance, during a 1939 inspection, a commissar of a junior Air Force officers’ school named Zatiatik claimed to have read *War and Peace* but couldn’t remember either its author or its plotline. Unable to name the commander of the Russian forces (Kutuzov), he believed that the novel concerned events during the First World War. See RGVA 9/29s/452/236.
35. “Liubimye avtory magnitogortsev,” *Magnitogorskii rabochii*, September 1, 1936, 4; also “U prilavka knizhnogo magazina,” *Pravda*, November 5, 1938, 4.

36. GARF 2306/70/2631/188; “Rabochie ‘Sharikopodshipnika’ izuchaiut istoriiu SSSR,” *Pravda*, March 19, 1938, 6.
37. See *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (London, 1983).
38. See V. Surganov, “Slovo o Fedore Panferove: K 90-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia,” *Moskva* 10 (1986): 194; K. Mironov, “Ob istoricheskikh i psevdohistoricheskikh romanakh,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 26, 1938, 3.
39. See Kevin M. F. Platt, “Historical Rehabilitation, Fiction, and Political Success under Stalin: Aleksei Tolstoi’s Petrine Project,” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming); E. V. Tarle, *Napoleon* (Moscow, 1936); B. S. Kaganovich, *Engenii Viktorovich Tarle i peterburgskaia shkola istorikov* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 58–60; G. D. Burdei, *Istoriik i voina, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 180–187.
40. *Dnevnik Eleny Bulgakovoi* (Moscow, 1990), 72, 120–121. Furer, one of the party officials identified in the 1990 edition of Bulgakova’s diary as a member of the Moscow party organization, is linked instead to the Central Committee in *Mikhail Bulgakov—Dnevnik, pis’ma, 1914–1940* (Moscow, 1997), 407. For more on the scandal, see Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible*, chap. 3; Perrie, “The Terrible Tsar as Comic Hero: Mikhail Bulgakov’s ‘Ivan Vasil’evich,’” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming). Lur’e’s belief that the play was canceled because the party hierarchy had already lost confidence in Bulgakov seems excessively teleological. See Ia. S. Lur’e, “Ivan Groznyi i drevnerusskaia literatura v tvorchestve M. Bulgakova,” in *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, vol. 45 (St. Petersburg, 1992), 321.
41. See n. 16 above.
42. A relative of the nineteenth-century composer A. N. Scriabin, Molotov often served as the Politburo’s self-appointed operatic watchdog.
43. “O p’ese ‘Bogatyri’ Dem’iana Bednogo,” in *Fal’sifikatsiia narodnogo proshlogo* (Moscow, 1937), 3–4. On Bednyi’s fall from grace, see A. M. Dubrovsky, “Chronicle of a Poet’s Downfall: Dem’ian Bednyi, Russian History, and *The Bogatyri*,” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming); Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Crisis in Russian Literature* (New York, 1953), 188–190; Leonid Maksimenkov, *Sumbur vmesto muzyki: Stalinskaia kul’turnaia revoliutsiia, 1936–1938* (Moscow, 1997), 212–222; N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniia: Izbrannye fragmenty* (Moscow, 1997), 44–45; Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, ed. and trans. George Shriver (New York, 1989), 407.
44. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika Feliksa Chueva* (Moscow, 1991), 269.
45. *Dnevnik Eleny Bulgakovoi*, 120–126, 154, 144.
46. *Ibid.*, 146.
47. The letter is dated December 12, 1936. See *Mikhail Bulgakov*, 420–421.

48. Note the caustic comment in a trade journal: “up until the present time, directors and critics have ‘been ashamed’ to speak of plays’ national character and in general about Russian art’s national form.” See V. Ivanov, “MKhAT—natsional’nyi russkii teatr,” *Teatr* 4 (1937): 23.
49. The functionary was A. I. Angarov. April 7, 1937, entry in *Dnevnik Eleny Bulgakovoi*, 138.
50. *Ibid.*, 170–172. Perhaps because of failing health or despair at being denied recognition as an accomplished playwright, Bulgakov instead focused on *Don Quixote* and *Batum*.
51. *Ibid.*, 157, 176–178, 373–374. Generally, Susan Beam Eggers, “Reinventing the Enemy: The Villains of Glinka’s *Ivan Susanin* on the Soviet Stage,” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming).
52. B. Mordvinov, “Ivan Susanin’ v Bol’shom teatre,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 15, 1939, 6. Confused by such iconoclasm, L. V. Shaporina despaired over the question of repertoire at the Leningrad Puppet Theater: “What should we be doing? All I know for sure is that in the theater we ought to be concentrating only on things Russian. Russian history, the Russian epic, [the Russian] song. To inculcate it in the schools. To familiarize children with this, the only wealth that is left to them.” See August 24, 1939 entry, adapted from *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, ed. Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen (New York, 1995), 373. I am grateful to Thomas Lahusen for furnishing me with the passage in its original Russian.
53. Georgii Kulagin, *Dnevnik i pamiat’* (Leningrad, 1978), 25.
54. Iu. Olesha, “Petr I,” *Izvestiia*, September 2, 1937, 4.
55. Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above* (New York, 1990), 114–118. See Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, 159–160.
56. Note the fervent national pride expressed in S. M. Eisenstein and P. A. Pavlenko, “Patriotizm—nasha tema,” *Kino*, November 11, 1938, 3–4. Generally, see my “Whosoever Comes to Us with the Sword Shall Perish by the Sword’: Historicizing the Production and Reception of S. M. Eisenstein’s *Aleksandr Nevskii*,” in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming).
57. “Mongrel-knights” is Marx’s term. See K. Marks, “Khronologicheskie vypiski,” in *Arkhiv Marksa i Engel’sa*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1938), 344.
58. I. Bachelis, “Aleksandr Nevskii’: Novyi fil’m S. M. Eizenshteina,” *Izvestiia*, November 11, 1938, 4; N. Kruzhkov, “Aleksandr Nevskii,” *Pravda*, December 4, 1938, 4; also M. Kol’tsov, “Narod-bogatyir,” *Pravda*, November 7, 1938, 2.
59. *Minin i Pozharskii* (Pudovkin, 1939), *Suvorov* (Pudovkin and Doller, 1941), *Bogdan Khmel’nitskii* (I. Savchenko, 1941).
60. “Primernyi spisok kinofil’mov,” *Propagandist i agitator RKKA* 22 (1939):

- 49; I. V. Gittis, *Nachal'noe obuchenie istorii: Ocherki po metodike prepodavaniia istorii* (Leningrad, 1940), 133.
61. *Pugachev* (P. Petrov-Bytov, 1937), *Karo* (A. Ai-Artian, 1937), *Amangel'dy* (Levin, 1938).
62. Compare S. Zlobin, *Salavat Iulaev: Istoricheskii rasskaz* (Moscow, 1938); Zlobin, *Stepan Razin* (Moscow, 1939); and I. Rakhmanov, *Amangel'dy Imamov: Istoricheskii rasskaz* (Moscow, 1938), with S. Gliazer, *Ledovoe poboishche* (Moscow, 1938); Gliazer, *Suvorov: Istoricheskaiia povest'* (Moscow, 1939); G. Shtorm, *Na pole Kulikovom* (Moscow, 1939). Generally, see *Chto chitat' detiam: Ukazatel' knig dlia uchashchikhsia 3–4 klassa* (Moscow, 1940). For the Children's Publishing House agenda, see TsKhDMO 1/23/1307/11, 16, 48, 52, 77; 1/23/1344/50; 1/23/1406/32–35, 59; 1/23/1465/23–26, 54ob, 57ob, 62, 91.
63. One memo from 1940 called for publications celebrating both Russian and non-Russian heroes: "There is a need for books on Peter the First's inexhaustible epoch, as well as books on the martial history of the brotherly peoples of the Soviet Union, on Bogdan Khmel'nitskii, Ivan Bogun, Dovbush, about the great Mouravi Georgii Saakadze, [and] about the Kalmyk and Kazakh revolts." A similar discussion of epics included mention of Dzhangr (Kalmyk), *Manas* (Kazakh/Kirgiz), and David Sasunskii (Armenian) alongside Il'ia Muromets. That few of these volumes were ever published testifies to a lack of commitment within the party hierarchy on these issues. See TsKhDMO 1/23/1446/17–18, 62; 1/23/1251/135ob.
64. See Katerina Clark, "Engineers of Human Souls in an Age of Industrialization: Changing Cultural Models, 1929–41," in *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization*, ed. William G. Rosenberg and Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Bloomington, 1993), 249 (citing "V poiskakh temy," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, April 10, 1938, 1).
65. See OR GTG 8.II/879–883, 1042.
66. "Russkaia istoricheskaiia zhivopis'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 10, 1938, 5; "Vystavka russkoi istoricheskoi zhivopisi," *Pravda*, November 11, 1938, 6; "Russkaia istoricheskaiia zhivopis' v Gosudarstvennom muzee," *Vecherniiaia Moskva*, November 13, 1938, 3; N. Morgunov, "Vystavka russkoi istoricheskoi zhivopisi," *Krasnaia zvezda*, February 26, 1939, 4. For the exhibition's catalog, see M. Aptekar', *Russkaia istoricheskaiia zhivopis'* (Moscow, 1939).
67. See "Vystavka 'Slovo o polku Igoreve,'" *Pravda*, October 18, 1938, 4; "Vystavka 'Slovo o polku Igoreve,'" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, September 26, 1938, 6; A. Romm, "Drevnee slovo i iunoe vremia," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 11, 1938, 3.
68. "Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda," *Pravda*, November 18, 1938, 6; *Istoricheskii muzei—Moskva: Putevoditel' (zaly 1–7, 8, 14–20)* (Moscow, 1938–1940); *Istoricheskii muzei—Moskva: Tematika vystavok po kursu Istorii SSSR* (Moscow, 1940).

69. *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, January 3, 1938, 4.
70. "Gosudarstvennyi muzei etnografii [reklama]," *Propaganda i agitatsiia* 23 (1938): 70. For background, see Francine Hirsch, "Empire of Nations: Colonial Technologies and the Making of the Soviet Union, 1917–1939" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1998), 165–207; GARF 2306/69/2442; *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington, D.C., 1991). I am grateful to Katia Dianina for her insight into museums as institutions of power.
71. *Voennoe proshloe russkogo naroda: Vystavka v Gos. Ermitazhe* (Leningrad, 1939), 1; *Pravda*, November 4, 1938, 4.
72. See Domgerr, "Sovetskoe akademicheskoe izdanie Pushkina," 231; M. A. Tsiavlovskii and T. G. Tsiavlovskaiia, *Vokrug Pushkina: Dnevnik, stat'i, 1928–1965 gg.* (Moscow, 2000), 88. Although the Pushkin committee archives do not openly discuss this embarrassment, fleeting references mention the hurried displacement of tenants—see GARF 305/1/11/76, 22ob.
73. See GARF 305/1/6/6; 305/1/11/23; "Muzei Pushkina v Gurzufu," *Pravda*, February 7, 1937, 4; "Pushkinskaia komnata-muzei v dome Goncharovykh," *Pravda*, February 5, 1937, 6.
74. "Ob oznamenuvanii 100-letnei godovshchiny so dnia smerti velichaishego russkogo poeta A. S. Pushkina," *Pravda*, February 10, 1937, 1; RGASPI 17/3/983/5.
75. Marcus C. Levitt, *Russian Literary Politics and the Pushkin Celebration of 1880* (Ithaca, 1989), 164.
76. A loose translation of "Slukh obo mne proidet po vsei Rusi velikoi / I nazovet menia vsiak sushchii v nei iazyk: / I gordyi vnuk slavian, i finn, i nyne dikoi / Tunguz, i drug stepei kalmyk." See GARF 305/1/11/68–69; "Dvadtsatipiatitysiachnyi miting u pamiatnika A. S. Pushkinu v Moskve," *Pravda*, February 11, 1937, 4.
77. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, 12; also see "Turisticheskie lageri v Iasnoi Poliane i na Kulikovom pole," *Pravda*, June 18, 1939, 4.
78. N. Kruzhkov, "Skazhi-ka, diadia . . . (malen'kii fel'eton)," *Pravda*, August 31, 1938, 4. The *feuilleton's* title is drawn from Lermontov's "Borodino."
79. *Ibid.*; also "Zabroshennye pamiatniki," *Pravda*, March 23, 1938, 4; "Razrushaiut istoricheskie pamiatniki," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, December 15, 1938, 6.
80. *Khram Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve: Istoriia proektirovaniia i sozdaniia soborn—stranitsy zblizni i gibeli, 1813–1931* (Moscow, 1992), 220, 246–267. Only a Russian-born Western correspondent noticed the absence of Skobelev—see Alexander Werth, *Moscow War Diary* (New York, 1942), 42.
81. See Chapter 2, n. 10.
82. See Chapter 3, n. 2.
83. Generally, see Said, *Orientalism*. For different readings of the Soviet exotic "other," see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Na-*

*nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001), 436–444; Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, 36–39, 76–78; Michael G. Smith, “Cinema for the ‘Soviet East’: National Fact and Revolutionary Fiction in Early Azerbaijani Film,” *Slavic Review* 56:4 (1997): 669–678; Greg Castillo, “Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question,” in *Socialist Realism without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham, 1997), 91–119; John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932–1939* (Oxford, 1998), 100; Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, 1994), chaps. 6–8.

84. On the Moscow metro’s Orientalized imagery of non-Russians in festive, traditional dress, see Karen L. Kettering, “Sverdlov Square Metro Station: ‘The Friendship of the Peoples’ and the Stalin Constitution,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7:2 (2000): 39–42 (although Kettering is insufficiently critical in her reading of the non-Russians’ quaint costuming). The implicit contrast between traditionally clothed non-Russians and Russians in jacket and tie or military uniform in All-Union Agricultural Exposition guidebooks is another telling example of this widespread phenomenon: *Vsesoiuznaia sel’skokhoziaistvennaia vystavka—putevoditel’* (Moscow, 1940); *Smotr pobed sotsialisticheskogo sel’skogo khoziaistva* (Moscow, 1940); *Vsesoiuznaia sel’skokhoziaistvennaia vystavka 1939* (Moscow, 1939); *Kirgizskaia SSR na Vsesoiuznoi sel’skokhoziaistvennoi vystavke* (Moscow, 1940). See George O. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923–1934* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 181.
85. Greg Castillo, it should be admitted, has arrived at diametrically opposite conclusions in Castillo, “Peoples at an Exhibition,” esp. 106–107. At times, he seems insufficiently critical of the implications of official cultural production. See also Brooks, “*Thank You, Comrade Stalin*,” 75–76, 95–97, 113–114.
86. *Svinarka i pastukh* (Pyr’ev, 1941).

## 6. The Popular Reception of National Bolshevism on the Eve of War

1. RGASPI 17/120/348/63–65; see pp. 108–109.
2. Scholarly work on Soviet popular opinion includes E. Iu. Zubkova, *Obshchestvo i reformy, 1945–1964* (Moscow, 1993); Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost’, 1945–1953* (Moscow, 1999); G. D. Burdei, “Bytovanie istoricheskikh znaniĭ v massovom soznanii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Rossia v 1941–1945: Problemy istorii i istoriografii* (Saratov, 1995), 39–54; N. A. Lomagin, “Nastroeniia zashchitnikov i naseleniia Leningrada v period oborony goroda, 1941–1942 gg.,” in *Leningradskaia epopeia* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 200–259; Lomagin, “Soldiers at War: German Propaganda and the Morale of the Soviet Army during the Battle for Leningrad, 1941–1944,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and*

*East European Studies*, vol. 1206 (Pittsburgh, 1998); S. A. Shinkarchuk, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie v Sovetskoï Rossii v 30-e gody (po materialam Severozapada)* (St. Petersburg, 1995) (and also my review in *Russian Review* 58:2 [1999]: 338–339); Lesley Rimmel, “Another Kind of Fear—the Kirov Murder and the End of Bread Rationing in Leningrad,” *Slavic Review* 56:3 (1997): 481–499; Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997); E. A. Osokina, *Za fasadom “stalinskogo izobil’iia”: Raspredelenie i rynek v snabzhenii naseleniia v gody industrializatsii, 1927–1941* (Moscow, 1998); Ol’ga Velikanova, “The Function of Lenin’s Image in the Soviet Mass Consciousness,” in *Soviet Civilization between Past and Present*, ed. Mette Bryld and Erik Kulavig (Odense, 1998), 13–38; Richard Bidlack, “The Popular Mood in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War,” *Russian Review* 59:1 (2000): 96–113. For sophisticated theoretical approaches to reader reception, see Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin’s Russia* (Ithaca, 1997), chap. 11; E. Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia: Sotsial’nye i esteticcheskie predposylki retseptsii sovetskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg, 1997).

3. Although one commentator has recently quipped that “the plural of anecdote is not data,” such standards seem unrealistic for the study of popular *mentalité* before the mid-1950s, insofar as truly systematic public opinion research is largely a postwar phenomenon of the Western democracies. In the absence of reliable statistical surveys, the analysis and triangulation of admittedly impressionistic accounts remains the only profitable way of assessing popular reception during the Stalin era. See Robert E. Johnson, “‘Stalin’s Peasants,’ by Sheila Fitzpatrick [review],” *Slavic Review* 55:1 (1996): 187; Peter Holquist, “Anti-Soviet *Svodki* from the Civil War: Surveillance as a Shared Feature of Russian Political Culture,” *Russian Review* 56:3 (1997): 445–450.
4. In particular, NKVD-generated digests (*svodki*), memoiristic writing, and contemporary oral histories suffer from enough institutional and teleological biases to warn against their broad application.
5. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, 88–89. For similar material, see Chapter 1, n. 27.
6. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, 90, 124–144.
7. November 7, 1935, entry at GARF 9602/1/229, published in A. G. Solov’ev, “Tetradi krasnogo professora (1912–1941 gg.),” in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia—XX vek*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1993), 182–183.
8. A., “Sovetskii patriotizm—legalizatsiia obyvatel’skogo patriotizma,” *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, March 25, 1935, 24. For a discussion of Menshevik and other émigré reactions abroad, see David Brandenberger, “Soviet Social Mentalité and Russocentrism on the Eve of War, 1936–1941,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 48:3 (2000): 388–406, esp. 401–402.
9. See TsGAIPD SPb 24/2b/185/50–52, quoted in Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, 172.

10. See TsA FSB RF 3/3/121/98–107, published in *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia: Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kul'turnoi politike, 1917–1953 gg.* (Moscow, 1999), 333–341; P. M. Kerzhentsev, “Fal'sifikatsiia narodnogo proshlogo (o ‘Bogatyriakh’ Dem'iana Bednogo),” *Pravda*, November 15, 1936, 3.
11. Konstantin Shtepa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, 1962), 127.
12. Bikbulatov was using a copy of the Shestakov textbook issued under a different title for adults. See Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/35. An anonymous émigré identified as an interwar political officer in the Red Army agreed that this curriculum “was based on the study of Russian history (under the title ‘The History of the Peoples of the USSR’).” See [Anonymous], *Lenin Schools for [the] Training of Political Officers in the Soviet Army*, no. 12, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeograph Series* (New York, 1952), 9.
13. Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/62, 83, 88–90, 96, 99, 103–104. Note the positive evaluation of a related set of textbooks in V. I. Vernadskii, “Dnevnik 1940 goda,” *Druzhiba narodov* 9 (1993): 176.
14. See RGVA 9/29s/355/68–69. This denunciation glosses Stalin's famous 1924 essay “Ob osnovakh leninizma.”
15. Girfand's note dates to 1938–1940. See Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/21. A similar question—“Were Suvorov and Kutuzov national heroes?”—was asked at a different lecture (638/3/333/126).
16. See GARF 2306/70/2427/11.
17. Oblique evidence of this indecision is visible in *Pravda's* reluctance to even hint at the new line until mid-January 1938, when a *feuilleton* appeared that argued vociferously for the reinstatement of a teacher who had been dismissed for russocentric remarks in class. See N. Kruzhkov, “Prestuplenie starogo uchitel'ia,” *Pravda*, January 19, 1938, 4. I am grateful to E. Thomas Ewing for this reference.
18. January 2, 1938, entry in M. M. Prishvin, “Dnevnik 1938 goda,” *Oktiabr'* 1 (1997): 108. The last two sentences were removed by the Soviet-era censor. See Prishvin, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 8, (Moscow, 1986), 334.
19. Arkhiv RAN 638/3/333/4, 6, 120–125, 130, 136. For other accounts of frustration with the film, see “Dnevnik Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Druzhinina,” *Voprosy istorii* 7 (1997): 129–132; A. G. Man'kov, “Iz dnevnika, 1938–1941 gg.,” *Zvezda* 11 (1995): 173–176, 181.
20. John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*, ed. Stephen Kotkin (Bloomington, 1989), 236.
21. “Zvukovoe kino v kolkhozakh,” *Pravda*, November 12, 1938, 3.
22. RGVA 9/29s/452/224; “Bol'shoi interes k politicheskim zaniatiiam,” *Pravda*, March 19, 1938, 3; “V zavodskoi biblioteke,” *Vecherniiaia Moskva*, October 10, 1938, 2.
23. See HP 61/a/5/37, 64/a/6/35. For another positive response, see “Diary

- of Galina Vladimirovna Shtange,” in *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, ed. Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen (New York, 1995), 210.
24. Before its release, *Nevskii* was assailed by several historian-consultants for its tendency to essentialize historical events and interpolate overtly anti-German and anti-Japanese imagery into the medieval tale. See R. Iurenev, *Sergei Eizenshtein—zamysly, fil'my, metod*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1988), 144–145. More seriously, communist idealists denounced the film’s screenplay in the press for its “faux patriotism” (*susal'nyi patriotizm*), a reference that reveals their unease with the idea of a medieval prince serving as a mascot for the Soviet socialist state. See A. Akhutin, “Za khudozhestvennuiu pravdu,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 30, 1938, 3.
  25. See Shinkarchuk, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie*, 123–124; Richard Taylor, “Ideology and Popular Culture in Soviet Cinema,” in *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, and Art in Soviet Cinema*, ed. Ann Lawton (New York, 1992), 61–62; Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917–1953* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 162.
  26. L. V., “Zritel' o fil'me ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 4, 1938, 3; Maya Turovskaya, “The Tastes of Soviet Moviegoers during the 1930s,” in *Late Soviet Culture: From Perestroika to Novostroika*, ed. Thomas Lahusen, with Gene Kuperman (Durham, 1993), 103.
  27. RGALI 1923/1/2289/27–29ob.
  28. “Uspekh fil'ma ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 2, 1938, 3; N. Kruzhkov, “Aleksandr Nevskii,” *Pravda*, December 4, 1938, 4.
  29. “Zritel' o fil'me ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” 3; also L. V., “Na prosmotre fil'ma ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, November 29, 1938, 3.
  30. S. Dziubinskii, “Vospitatel'naia rabota na urokakh istorii SSSR,” in *Vospitatel'naia rabota v nachal'noi shkole: Sbornik statei*, ed. S. N. Belousov (Moscow, 1938), 102. In a Leningrad Military District study circle, concern was expressed over a certain private Erofeev, who failed to realize that *Aleksandr Nevskii* allegorically informed the “contemporary international situation.” See RGVA 9/36s/3778/64.
  31. “Zritel' o fil'me ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” 3.
  32. RGALI 1923/1/2289/24.
  33. RGALI 1923/1/2289/32–32ob; also 1923/1/2289/65–66ob, 102; “Zritel' o fil'me ‘Aleksandr Nevskii,’” 3.
  34. For diarists’ mentions of *Ruslan* and *Suvorov*, see RGVA 34980/14/84, published in A. I. Matveev, “Prodolzhaem prodvigat'sia v glub' Bezuiutnoi Strany,” *Istochnik* 3 (1993): 43; Man'kov, “Iz dnevnika, 1938–1941 gg.,” 181; Iu. Baranov, *Goluboi razliv: Dnevnik, pis'ma, stikhotvoreniia, 1936–1942*, ed. E. Starshinov (Iaroslavl', 1988), 83; HP 64/a/6/35.
  35. Baranov, *Goluboi razliv*, 109. Four days after seeing *Chkalov*, Baranov saw *Sailors*, which he understood to be “a typical film about national defense [*oboronnaia kartina*] concerning a future naval war. An answer to ‘Tsushima,’ etc.”

36. Turovskaya, “The Tastes of Soviet Moviegoers,” 103. For persuasive analysis of film’s ability to shape popular memory, see Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 196–198. I am grateful to Katia Dianina for this reference.
37. November 17, 1938, entry in V. I. Vernadskii, “Dnevnik 1938 goda,” *Druzhiba narodov* 3 (1991): 263. Vernadskii was the father of Russian émigré historian George Vernadsky.
38. “Vystavka ‘Slovo o polku Igoreve,’” *Pravda*, October 18, 1938, 4.
39. M. Aptekar’, *Ruskaia istoricheskaia zhivopis’* (Moscow, 1939).
40. “Pis’mo M. V. Statkevich” (April 4, 1939), in M. V. Nesterov, *Pis’ma: Izbrannoe* (Leningrad, 1988), 420.
41. OR GTG 8.II/995/1.
42. OR GTG 8.II/995/17.
43. OR GTG 8.II/995/1ob; also 8.II/995/23ob. A rather opportunistic way of insulating the Russian people from inconvenient moments in their history, this explanation typically was used to contextualize the productivity of late-nineteenth-century scientists and inventors. Apparently quite persuasive, this slight-of-hand was accepted by even highly educated elders like M. M. Litvinov. See June 22, 1939 entry at GARF 9602/1/230, published in A. G. Solov’ev, “Tetradi krasnogo professora (1912–1941 gg.),” in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia—XX vek*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1993), 203.
44. Some reacted to the exhibition’s odd selectivity. Moscow Aviation Institute students, for instance, noted that “the workers’ revolutionary movement is poorly represented.” A student group from Voronezh was more critical, complaining that “we would have liked to see paintings depicting the heroic feats of the Soviet people in our times.” “Wouldn’t it be a good idea to show the life and struggle of the Red Army at Lake Hasan or the Stakhanovite movement?” they added chidingly, not realizing the degree to which the Great Terror had complicated such a focus on contemporary heroes. See OR GTG 8.II/995/30, 1; Aptekar’, *Ruskaia istoricheskaia zhivopis’*.
45. December 10, 1939, entry in “Dnevnik Niny Kosterinnoi,” *Novyi mir* 12 (1962): 84.
46. Emphasis added. August 14 and 19, 1938, entries in “Diary of V. P. Stavskii,” in *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, ed. Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen (New York, 1995), 228, 234. For an Orientalist treatment of the Kazakh bard Dzhabul, see GARF 9602/1/230/11, published in Solov’ev, “Tetradi krasnogo professora,” 189–190.
47. August 18, 1936, entry in K. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik, 1930–1969*, vol. 2, (Moscow, 1994), 145.
48. TsGAIPD SPb 24/2v/1839/272–273, quoted in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism—Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York, 1999), 168–169. The impression that Russian artistic traditions were being slighted is also evident in the 1937 complaint that “combinations of words like ‘Soviet Russian painting’ seem unusual. Such statements are

- frequently made about Georgian, Armenian and other artists, but people avoid the word ‘Russian’ for some reason, substituting fillers like ‘Muscovite,’ ‘our,’ ‘contemporary,’ or the even more cautious ‘artists of the RSFSR’ in its place. What is the reason for this national ‘bashfulness?’” See V. Kemenov, “O natsional’noi gordosti russkikh khudozhnikov,” *Pravda*, August 13, 1937, 3.
49. TsGAIPD SPb 24/2g/149/129, quoted in Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, 128. A *dekada* is a ten-day festival.
50. RGVA 9/39s/75/56–59, esp. 56.
51. Generally, see Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, esp. chap. 4.
52. May 18, 1940, entry in RGALI 1038/1/2077/64–65. Vishnevskii regularly conflated Russian and Soviet identities—see 1038/1/2077/37, 47, 69; 1038/1/2079/31–32, 37.
53. Prishvin, “Dnevnik, 1905–1954,” 322, 334–335, 360–364, 381, 386, 390; RGALI 1038/1/2075/17, 37, 45; 1038/1/2077/47, 97; 1038/1/2079/12.
54. See the discussion of these terms in the Introduction.
55. “Anti-Polish and anti-German material” refers to Gorodetskii’s *Ivan Susanin*, Korneichuk’s *Bogdan Khmel’nitkii*, and Eisenstein’s *Aleksandr Nevskii*. See RGASPI 17/120/348/63–64. In a different letter to Stalin, N. K. Krupskaiia expressed similar sentiments in reference to the infamous 1938 Russian language decree: “I am very troubled by *how* we are going to carry out this [unionwide Russian language instruction]. It seems sometimes that the small horns of Great Power chauvinism are starting to show.” See “K 120-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia N. K. Krupskoi,” *Izvestiia TsK* 3 (1989): 179.
56. RGASPI 17/120/348/65–77. For more on Blium, see my “‘Vse cherty rasovogo natsionalizma . . .’: Internatsionalist zhaluetsia Stalinu (ianvar’ 1939 g.)” (coauthored with Karen Petrone), *Voprosy istorii* 1 (2000): 128–133. This letter is published in English in *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Language in Stalinist Propaganda*, ed. Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger (forthcoming).
57. See Ewa Thompson, “Soviet Russian Writers and the Soviet Invasion of Poland in September 1939,” in *The Search for Self-Definition in Russian Literature*, ed. Ewa Thompson (Houston, 1991), 158–166; Gerhard Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik in der Sowjetunion: Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nachstalinischen Gesellschaft* (Baden-Baden, 1986), 196–198. Although Soviet ideological principles did not fundamentally change after August 1939, the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty did tame the anti-German dimensions of the official line (provoking the withdrawal of Eisenstein’s *Aleksandr Nevskii* from circulation). This caused predictable confusion: a chemical engineer in Leningrad, for instance, asked out loud at a meeting, “How will our historians feel now? After all, they’ve been shouting about the mongrel-knights, about the Battle on the Ice, about Aleksandr Nevskii, etc., and now they’re going to have to shout about a century, even several centuries, of friendship.” Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in

- Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie glazami leningradtsev, 1941–1945 (iz Arkhiva Upravleniia Federal'noi Sluzhby Bezopasnosti po g. Sankt-Peterburgu i Leningradskoi oblasti)* (St. Petersburg, 1996), 10. See the confusion described in three interviews from 1950 (HP 7/a/1/30; 8/a/1/25; 46/a/4/15), as well as S. Dmitriev, *Party and Political Organs in the Soviet Army*, no. 36, *Research Program on the USSR Mimeograph Series* (New York, 1953), 18–19.
58. Dissenting speeches by A. Gurvich and F. Levin (see “Na zasedanii prezidiuma SSP s aktivom,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, April 26, 1939, 2–3) precipitated an official rebuke in August 1939 on account of their reluctance to join the patriotic campaign. See the articles accompanying an unpublished party resolution: “Istoriia i literatura,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 26, 1939, 1; “O literaturno-khudozhestvennykh zhurnalakh,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 30, 1939, 2; “O nekotorykh literaturno-khudozhestvennykh zhurnalakh,” *Bol'shevik* 17 (1939): 51–57. Only the resolution's supporting materials directly mention the controversy. See RGASPI 17/116/9/2–3; 17/117/19/54–58.
59. For a rare example of dissatisfaction with the official line regarding the rehabilitation of Ivan the Terrible, see B. L. Pasternak's 1941 correspondence in B. M. Borisov and E. B. Pasternak, “Materialy k tvorcheskoi istorii romana B. Pasternaka ‘Doktor Zhivago,’” *Novyi mir* 6 (1988): 218.
60. May 26 and June 24, 1941, entries in Gennadii Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh: Dnevnik frontovoi brigady* (Perm', 1990), 18, 22. The book described is Borodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi*.
61. “Vystuplenie po radio Zam. Predsedatelia Soveta narodnykh komissarov SSSR i Narodnogo komissara inostrannykh del tov. V. M. Molotova,” *Pravda*, June 23, 1941, 1. Georgii Kulagin noted one of his friends' comments on the shop floor: “Molotov's mentioning of Napoleon's invasion means it's serious, comrades.” See Kulagin, *Dnevnik i pamiat'* (Leningrad, 1978), 17; also Baranov, *Goluboi razliv*, 117; V. I. Vernadskii, “‘Korennye izmeneniia neizbezhny . . .’: Dnevnik 1941 goda,” *Novyi mir* 5 (1995): 200.
62. TsA FSB RF, published in *Moskva voennaiia, 1941–1945: Memuary i arkhivnye dokumenty* (Moscow, 1995), 206.
63. Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik*, 206; Klaus Mehnert, *Weltrevolution durch Weltgeschichte: Die Geschichtslehre des Stalinismus* (Kitzingen-Main, 1950), 70–74.
64. “Rech' Predsedatelia Gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony i Narodnogo komissara oborony tov. I. V. Stalina,” *Pravda*, November 8, 1941, 1.
65. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie glazami leningradtsev*, 19–20; NA IRI RAN 2/X/1/1/54, published in *Moskva voennaiia*, 153; also K. Simonov, “Moskva,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, November 6, 1942, 3.
66. Although misdated to the wartime period, Burdei's interpretation concurs with this analysis. See G. D. Burdei, *Istoriik i voina, 1941–1945* (Moscow, 1991), 47–48, 170–178.

67. Such misunderstandings are evident throughout Davies's *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*. One might also cite John Scott's apt appraisal: "to give students of a very limited general education 'Anti-Duehrung,' [*sic*] 'The Dialectics of Nature,' or 'Materialism and Empiro-Criticism' to read was only to invite blatant superficiality." See Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 45.
68. For a Bakhtinian reading of this phenomenon, see D. L. Brandenberger, "Vospriatie rusotsentristskoi ideologii nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (1936–1941 gg.)," in *Otechestvennaia kul'tura i istoricheskaia mysl' XVIII–XX vekov* (Briansk, 1999), 33–60.
69. Compare with Kotkin's view that the principal Soviet identity signifiers of the era were socialist. See Brandenberger, "Soviet Social Mentalité and Russocentrism," 388–406.
70. For instance, L. N. Seifullina confided to Il'ia Ehrenburg during the war that "my father was a russified Tatar, my mother was Russian, and I have always considered myself to be Russian, but when I hear such things, I feel like saying that I am a Tatar." See Il'ia Erenburg, *Liudi, gody, zhizn': Vospominaniia v trekh knigakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1990), 257.

## 7. Wartime Stalinist Ideology and Its Discontents

1. In contrast to those of the prewar period, some propagandists during the war advanced positions that essentially called for Russian self-determination. Such a political program is, by definition, nationalistic. See Introduction, n. 22.
2. "Vystuplenie po radio Predsedatelia Soveta narodnykh komissarov SSSR i Narodnogo komissara inostrannykh del tov. V. M. Molotova," *Pravda*, June 23, 1941, 1. "Patriotic war," a term of prerevolutionary origins, had been shunned by Soviet historians until 1940. See *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. M. V. Nechkina, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1940), 76.
3. The drafting excluded only A. A. Zhdanov, who was caught unawares in Sochi at the start of the war. See *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika Feliksa Chueva* (Moscow, 1991), 51, 38.
4. The more recent expulsion of German forces from Ukraine and Belorussia in 1918 also received prominent mention. See E. Iaroslavskii, "Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina Sovetskogo Soiuz," *Pravda*, June 23, 1941, 4; "Dadim sokrushitel'nyi otpor fashistskim varvaram," *Pravda*, June 24, 1941, 1; M. Khozin, "O khvastlivoi vydumke zaznavshegosia vraga," *Pravda*, June 25, 1941, 4; "Nashe delo pravoe—vrag budet razbit," *Pravda*, June 26, 1941, 1; "Izverg Gitler—liutyi vrag russkogo naroda," *Pravda*, July 13, 1941, 4; S. V. Bakhrushin, *Geroicheskoe proshloe slavian* (Moscow, 1941). On the first day of the war, a Central Committee meeting discussed war-oriented publishing, and within a matter of days production plans at major state publishing houses were reworked to accommodate the new priorities. Typical (if somewhat surprising amid wartime cutbacks) was the call at the State Instructional Pedagogical Publishing House for "five or six books for the Pupil's Library se-

ries illuminating the heroism of the Russian people and their historical past, e.g., ‘The Battle on the Ice,’ ‘the expulsion of Napoleon from Russia,’ ‘Peter I and his times,’ etc.” See G. D. Burdei, *Istoriĭ i voĭna, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 148–149; GARF 2306/69/2785/10–11. On priorities later in the war, see RGASPI 89/3/10/20ob, 125ob–126ob.

5. A. M. Dubrovskii, S. V. Bakhrushin *i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1992), 119.
6. See RGASPI 89/3/10/12–12ob; 17/125/224/12–12ob; N. M. Druzhinin, *Vospominaniia i mysli istorika*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1979), 66–67; “Idegeevo poboishche’ TsK VKP(b),” *Rodina* 3–4 (1997): 117. This process was accelerated by the mass evacuations of scholars to Central Asia in late 1941 and 1942.
7. TsA FSB RF, published in *Moskva voennaiia, 1941–1945: Memuary i arkhivnye dokumenty* (Moscow, 1995), 49–50; RGASPI 17/125/85/79; HP 13/a/2/42.
8. *Iosif Stalin—Lavrentiĭu Beriia: “Ikh nado deportirovat’”—dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii* (Moscow, 1992), 86–87, 99–100, 129–134; *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*, 277.
9. Jeffrey Brooks, “*Pravda* Goes to War,” in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington, 1995), 14; Brooks, “*Thank You, Comrade Stalin*”: *Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), chap. 7.
10. See “Vystuplenie po radio Predsedatelia Gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony tovarishcha I. V. Stalina,” *Pravda*, July 3, 1941, 1.
11. “Velikaia družba narodov SSSR,” *Pravda*, July 29, 1941, 1.
12. After the invasion, Vishnevskii and Druzhinin wrote essays for print on historic Russian military prowess even before receiving explicit instructions, something that reveals the influence of the prewar line. See D. I. Ortenberg, *Iiun’-dekabr’ sorok pervogo: Rasskaz-khronika* (Moscow, 1986), 9; Druzhinin, *Vospominaniia*, 62–66. Among those positing an explicit nationalist call at the start of the war are Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 61–62; and John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London, 1991), 69.
13. Stalin’s Olympus mirrored Shestakov’s from 1937. Although Stalin skipped Ivan the Terrible, Tolstoi mentioned him in that day’s edition of *Pravda*. See “Rech’ Predsedatelia Gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony i Narodnogo komissara oborony tov. I. V. Stalina,” *Pravda*, November 8, 1941, 1; A. Tolstoi, “Rodina,” *Pravda*, November 7, 1941, 1. On the eve of the anniversary, Stalin had provided a different list of heroes while detailing the German leadership’s intentions to lead a savage war: “these people, without conscience and honor . . . with the morals of animals, have the audacity to call for the extermination of the great Russian nation, the nation of Plekhanov and Lenin, Belinskii and Chernyshevskii, Pushkin and Tolstoi, Glinka and Tchaikovsky, Gor’kii and Chekhov, Sechenov and Pavlov, Repin and Surikov, Suvorov and

- Kutuzov!” See “Doklad Predsedatelia Gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony tovarishcha I. V. Stalina,” *Pravda*, November 7, 1941, 2.
14. *Pravda* editorials frequently reprinted the list of heroes verbatim (e.g., November 10, December 27, and February 11, 1942). On pamphlets, see S. Bushuev, “Muzhestvennye obrazy nashikh velikikh predkov,” *Bol'shevik* 7–8 (1942): 57–64; regarding the formative role of the speech in the schools, see *Prepodavanie istorii v usloviakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny: Metodicheskoe posobie dlia uchitelei srednikh shkol Kazakhskoi SSR*, part 1, *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. A. M. Pankratova (Alma Ata, 1942), 11.
  15. Calls for the rehabilitation of non-Russian heroes were largely ignored in Russian-language publishing. A similar lack of concern was expressed toward the bitter complaints of organizations like the Belorussian Communist Party, which decried V. I. Picheta's *The Heroic Past of the Belorussian People* in 1944 for downplaying or ignoring altogether various Belorussian heroes. See Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 65; M. Morozov and V. Slutskaiia, “Broshiuiry mestnykh izdatel'stv o geroicheskom proshlom nashogo naroda i o geroiakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” *Propagandist* 17 (1942): 46–48; RGASPI 17/125/224/65. The only prerevolutionary non-Russian hero promoted on an all-union level during the war was Bogdan Khmel'nitskii, around whom a campaign was launched in 1943 in conjunction with the Red Army's advance into Ukrainian territory. See K. Guslistyi, “Velikii syn ukrainskogo naroda Bogdan Khmel'nitskii,” *Sputnik agitatora* 22 (1943): 40–42.
  16. E. Iaroslavskii, “Bol'sheviki—prodolzhateli luchshikh patrioticheskikh traditsii russkogo naroda,” *Pravda*, December 27, 1941, 3.
  17. “Doklad tov. A. S. Shcherbakova 21 ianvaria 1942 goda,” *Bol'shevik* 2 (1942): 10.
  18. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 61. German sources found this dynamic important enough to report to the Nazi high command in late 1941: “Soviet propaganda is taking advantage of national-patriotic slogans.” See TsKhIDK 500/1/775/41–42, published in *Moskva voennaia*, 211. Such appraisals, it should be noted, had been in circulation in German diplomatic circles since at least 1939, when a Foreign Ministry report revealed that “the integration of Bolshevism and Russian national history, expressed in the celebration of great Russian individuals and feats (the celebration of the Battle of Poltava, Peter the First, the battle on Lake Chud' and Aleksandr Nevskii), has changed the international character of Bolshevism.” See *Oglasbeniia podlezhit: SSSR—Germaniia, 1939–1941* (Moscow, 1991), 30.
  19. E. Iaroslavskii, “O blizhaishikh zadachakh istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR,” *Istoricheskii zhurnal* 6 (1942): 17–24; Iaroslavskii, “Za boevuiu, dokhodchivuiu, pravdivuiu agitatsiiu,” *Pravda*, July 10, 1942, 2; G. [F.] Aleksandrov, “Otechestvennaia voina sovetского naroda i zadachi obshchestvennykh nauk,” *Bol'shevik* 9 (1942): 35–47; Aleksandrov, “O reshaiushchikh usloviakh pobedy nad vragom,” *Pravda*, July 13, 1942, 4; “Boevye traditsii sovetskikh voinov,” *Pravda*, September 17, 1942, 1.

20. In addition to the articles and editorials about the decorations, see “Aleksandr Nevskii,” *Pravda*, July 30, 1942, 3; “Mikhail Kutuzov,” *Pravda*, July 31, 1942, 3; “Aleksandr Suvorov,” *Pravda*, August 2, 1942, 3. During the war, portraits of Suvorov and Kutuzov were hung in Stalin’s spartan Kremlin office next to those of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. See V. Malyshev, “Proidet desiatok let, i eti vstrechi ne vosstanovish’ uzhe v pamiati,” *Istochnik* 5 (1997): 121; G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmysleniia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1974), 343; *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*, 292.
21. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 65; also Brooks, “Thank You, Comrade Stalin,” chap. 7.
22. Morozov and Slutskaia, “Broshiury mestnykh izdatel'stv o geroicheskom proshlom,” 46–48; M. I. Kalinin, “Edinaia boevaia sem'ia,” *Sputnik agitatora* 15–16 (1943): 7–10. Both articles subtly limited the campaigns involving non-Russian heroism. Noting that the celebration of non-Russian heroes should focus on those who struggled against foreign invaders, *Propagandist's* writer implicitly warned against the rehabilitation of domestic rebels. Kalinin went further, clarifying that non-Russian heroes were to operate as a subset of the all-union “examples of our great ancestors” campaign. Nevskii, Peter, Suvorov, and Kutuzov were to be considered heroes throughout the USSR, while non-Russian historical figures were to be celebrated on a more local basis, within their corresponding national communities.
23. RGASPI 17/125/224/4–5, 106ob; also 88/1/1049/47–50, 17/125/225/15–85.
24. The idea of such a collection of articles was apparently first suggested by S. K. Bushuev in April 1942—see RGASPI 89/3/10/8.
- Efimov’s interest in revising prewar historiography brought him into conflict with more cautious scholars when he criticized an article of Pankratova’s in late September 1942 for maligning the accomplishments of prerevolutionary historians. He even reportedly proposed at an Institute of History meeting that the war’s united front with bourgeois foreign powers and the “old bourgeoisie and churchmen” *required* a more respectful treatment of prerevolutionary history and historiography. Furious with Efimov and other former students of Kliuchevskii, “who openly boast of their affiliation with that school,” Pankratova promptly wrote a thinly veiled denunciation to Agitprop in an attempt to silence her rival. Apparently also split on the issue, Agitprop failed to arbitrate the dispute, Iaroslavskii perhaps siding with Pankratova against Aleksandrov. Her piece was ultimately published in *Dvadtsat’ piat’ let istoricheskikh nauk v SSSR* (Moscow, 1942), 3–40. See 17/125/224/11–11ob, 2–3. Interestingly, Pankratova justified her objections to prerevolutionary historiography by arguing that it had failed to stimulate genuinely patriotic sentiments on the popular level between 1914 and 1917 (89/3/10/6).
25. Referring to an article of Stalin’s published in early 1941, Bushuev contended that because *all* European powers had been forces of reaction in the nineteenth century, St. Petersburg should not be singled out for condemnation.

- See I. Stalin, "O stat'e Engel'sa 'Vneshniaia politika russkogo tsarizma,'" *Bol'shevik* 9 (1941): 3–4. Stalin had originally written the article as a letter to his Politburo colleagues on July 19, 1934—see RGASPI 77/1/906/42–43; Latyshev, "Kak Stalin Engel'sa svergal," 4; and n. 30.
26. RGASPI 17/125/224/3–4, 106.
  27. RGASPI 88/1/1049/9; also 5–5ob. The historian E. V. Tarle agreed, noting sarcastically that despite Shamil's valorous conduct, "he was the head of a primitive theocracy—is it really that bad that today we are governed by the Stalin Constitution and not Shamil?" (7ob).
  28. RGASPI 17/125/224/71ob–72.
  29. Evidence of the ambiguity of the official line during the mid-1930s, party directives like the 1934 "Observations" of Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kirov and the 1937 conclusions of the textbook jury combined traditional Marxist-Leninist demands with newer statist priorities. Regarding the issue of colonial policy, both documents demanded that attention be given to the old regime's oppression of the non-Russian peoples (the so-called "prison of the peoples" concept) so that 1917 could be understood as emancipatory in both class and ethnic terms. In regard to tsarist foreign policy, the 1934 "Observations" condemned imperial Russia as the Gendarme of Europe for its hard-line stance against nineteenth-century radicalism in Poland and Hungary. On the 1934 "Observations," see Appendix, n. 6; "Postanovlenie zhiuri pravitel'stvennoi komissii po konkursu na luchshii uchebnik dlia 3 i 4 klassov srednei shkoly po istorii SSSR," *Pravda*, August 22, 1937, 2. Never repealed, the "Observations" vastly complicated nationality policy after the emergence of the post-1937 russocentric line—see Peter Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations: Soviet Nationality Policy between Planning and Primordialism, 1936–1953" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999), esp. chaps. 1–2.
  30. Tarle's and Bushuev's interpretation of Stalin's 1941 article is somewhat tenuous, for while Stalin noted that all major European states were reactionary, he also affirmed the original thesis of the "Observations," according to which tsarist representatives had *led* the fight to crush revolution in nineteenth-century Europe. A more conventional reading of Stalin's thesis is presented in *Istoriia diplomatii*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1941), 299–300. See n. 25.
  31. Reconstructing Tarle's thesis is complicated by the subjective way in which he and Pankratova recounted it later. See RGASPI 88/1/1049/16–25; 17/125/225/134–168; 17/125/224/72ob–73, 104ob–105ob.
  32. See, for instance, Pankratova, *Prepodavanie istorii v usloviakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny*, 4–8; M. Nechkina, *Istoricheskaia traditsiia russkogo voennogo geroizma* (Moscow, 1942), 198; RGASPI 89/3/10/12ob.
  33. S. V. Bakhrushin, for one, felt uneasy about Efimov's 1942 historiography project. Somewhat later, I. I. Mints and A. L. Sidorov challenged Tarle on his proposals to revise the 1934 "Observations" and abandon class analysis. See RGASPI 17/125/224/67ob, 70–72ob.
  34. *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, ed. M.

Abdykalykov and A. Pankratova (Alma Ata, 1943). M. Abdykalykov was ideology chief of the Kazakh communist party.

35. Druzhinin, *Vospominaniia*, 66. For other discussions of wartime efforts among the non-Russian peoples, see Serguei Ekel'tchik, [Serhy Yekel'chyk], "History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2000), 33–104; George Liber, *Alexander Dovzhenko: A Life in Soviet Film* (London, 2002), chap. 8; Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations," chap. 1.
36. First advanced by Zhdanov in 1936 to justify the incorporation of Georgia and Ukraine into the Russian empire, this theory posited that these geopolitically inviable states preferred the "lesser evil" of integration into the Russian empire over their Polish and Ottoman alternatives because of common religious beliefs. The concept was subsequently expanded to justify the "lesser evil" of Central Asia's annexation by Russia on account of the alternative powers' relative economic backwardness. See Chapter 3, n. 28.
37. While not denying the Leninist thesis that colonialism was "progressive," insofar as it expanded the amount of territory united under the Russian empire's fragile capitalist canopy, Pankratova stubbornly insisted that all true European-led enlightenment in Kazakhstan had followed the October 1917 revolution. See RGASPI 17/125/224/9–21ob, 26–35.
38. RGASPI 17/124/224/24ob; 88/1/1049/51–52.
39. Oblique references are made to Lenin's "O natsional'noi gordosti velikorossov," "O karikature na Marksizm," "O broshiuere Iuniusa," "Vozzvanie o voine," and "Sotsializm i voina," in *Sochineniia*, vol. 18 (Moscow, 1936), 80–84, 181–185, 199. Similar references are made to Stalin's "K voprosu o proletarskom metode razresheniia natsional'nogo voprosa: Iz stat'i 'Mezhdunarodnyi kharakter Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii' (1927 g.)," in *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros: Sbornik izbrannykh statei i rechei* (Moscow, 1934), 189. See also n. 29 above.
40. RGASPI 17/125/224/36–43ob, 4, 24, esp. 43.
41. RGASPI 17/125/224/8, 74. Aleksandrov's reference to "historical" and "unhistorical" peoples is derived from Hegel.
42. RGASPI 17/125/224/1–10, esp. 7, 10.
43. RGASPI 17/125/224/22.
44. RGASPI 17/125/224/72–74ob. The fact that Aleksandrov came under heavy fire in April 1944 at a philosophy conference may explain the fiasco. See note 46.
45. Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 151.
46. While S. V. Konstantinov is probably correct in observing that Pankratova's letter was "composed in the best denunciatory traditions of the time," his attempt to single her out for criticism is less fair. The atmosphere in the profession was such that hyperbole formed an intrinsic part of the discipline's vernacular. See S. V. Konstantinov, "Nesostoiaivshaiasia rasprava (o soveshchaniia istorikov v TsK VKP(b) v mae-iiule 1944 goda)," in *Vlast' i obshchestvennye*

*organizatsii Rossii v pervoi treti XX stoletia* (Moscow, 1994), 254–268, esp. 256.

G. Kostyrchenko notes that it was no coincidence that Pankratova wrote to Stalin, Zhdanov, Malenkov, and Shcherbakov again after Aleksandrov came under fire during a Central Committee–orchestrated philosophy conference and in the subsequent Politburo resolution of May 1, 1944, “O nedostatках v nauchnoi rabote v oblasti filosofii.” See RGASPI 17/125/254/62–71, 6–47; G. Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona: Politicheskie presledovaniia evreev v SSSR v poslednee stalinskoe desiatiletie* (Moscow, 1994), 21–22.

47. Tolstoi and Eisenstein had developed a play and film script, respectively, concerning the reign of Ivan IV. Alexander I had apparently been mishandled in the film *Kutuzov*, while the image of Brusilov had been distorted in Sel'vinskii's play *General Brusilov* and several unrelated mass brochures.
48. RGASPI 17/125/224/66ob–70.
49. RGASPI 17/125/221/71–72; also 17/125/221/101.
50. RGASPI 88/1/1053/1–27. Aleksandrov's cover letter to the Central Committee accompanying his memos contained a series of personal insults aimed at Pankratova. It was apparently “impossible to discuss any sort of question” with her, as she would always “distort all the recommendations of the Agitprop staff and spread them virtually throughout Moscow in a perverted form.” See RGASPI 17/125/224/90.
51. RGASPI 17/125/224/105ob.
52. Perhaps because it seemed that Shcherbakov was favoring Pankratova's faction, B. I. Syromiatnikov and Tarle protested to him in written form, Efimov petitioned both Shcherbakov and Stalin, and Adzhemian sent letters to Stalin and the Politburo as a whole. See RGASPI 17/125/223/166–185, 81–83; 17/125/225/67–82, 169–171ob; 88/1/1050/42–50ob.
53. RGASPI 88/1/1051/254. *Voprosy istorii* has published a serialized transcript of the entire conference—see “Stenogramma soveshchaniia po voprosam istorii SSSR v TsK VKP(b) v 1944 godu,” *Voprosy istorii* 2–7, 9 (1996). For analysis of the conference, see Iu. N. Amiantov's introduction in *Voprosy istorii*; Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 152–159; Konstantinov, “Nesostoiaivshaiasia rasprava,” 254–268; G. Bordiugov and V. Bukharaev, “Natsional'naia istoricheskaia mysl' v usloviakh sovetskogo vremeni,” in *Natsional'nye istorii v sovetskom i postsovetskom gosudarstvakh* (Moscow, 1999), 41.
54. RGASPI 17/125/222/1–10. Shcherbakov scrawled “this won't do [*ne goditsnia*]” in the margin.
55. Kostyrchenko is likely correct in asserting that Zhdanov's participation was motivated by personal frustration with Aleksandrov as well as continuing interest in the historical line. Zhdanov made special note of Pankratova's criticism of Agitprop by underlining related passages in her letter to him on May 12, 1944. See RGASPI 77/1/971/2–3; Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona*, 21–22.

56. Note Zhdanov's underlining at RGASPI 77/1/971/5-7. For a detailed analysis of Zhdanov's theses, see A. M. Dubrovskii and D. L. Brandenberger, "Itogovi partiinyi dokument soveshchaniia istorikov v TsK VKP(b) v 1944g. (Istoriia sozdaniia teksta)," in *Arkheograficheskiĭ ezhegodnik za 1998* (Moscow, 1999), 148-163. Three of Zhdanov's drafts that were not declassified until after this article's publication are at 558/11/731/19-118.
57. While affirming the leading role of the Russian people, Zhdanov linked this prominence to the role that the Russian working class had played in the emancipation of the Soviet peoples. Declaring that Russian tsarism was not to be exonerated and that the "prison of the peoples" thesis was not to be abandoned, Zhdanov defended the use of the "lesser-evil" thesis: "Some of our historians apparently do not understand that there is a *principle difference* between *recognizing the progressiveness* of this or that historical phenomenon and [actually] *endorsing it* . . . Although Marxists may note the progressive nature of exchanging one means of production for another, or one economic formation for another, they have never concluded that it was necessary to support capitalism." See RGASPI 17/125/222/44.
58. See RGASPI 17/3/1053/10, discussed in "Zadachi zhurnala 'Voprosy istorii,'" *Voprosy istorii* 1 (1945): 3-5; S. V. Bakhrushin, "Kniga B. I. Syromiatnikova 'Reguliarnoe gosudarstvo Petra I,'" *Bol'shevik* 22 (1944): 54-59; Bakhrushin, "O rabote A. I. Iakovleva 'Kholopstvo i khology v Moskovskom gosudarstve v XVII v.,'" *Bol'shevik* 3-4 (1945): 73-77; M. A. Morozov, "Ob 'Istoriĭ Kazakhskoi SSR,'" *Bol'shevik* 6 (1945): 74-80; N. N. Iakovlev, "O knige E. V. Tarle 'Krymskaia voina,'" *Bol'shevik* 13 (1945): 63-72; G. F. Aleksandrov, "O nekotorykh zadachakh obshchestvennykh nauk," *Bol'shevik* 14 (1945): 12-29.
59. See n. 53 above.
60. Although Pankratova emerged relatively unscathed from the conference (especially in comparison with her rivals), Aleksandrov seized the opportunity to deal her a crushing blow in the fall of 1944. Perhaps overly confident, Pankratova had indiscreetly sent a newsletter of sorts to her former students throughout the USSR during the conference that contained not only her sardonic commentary on the proceedings but also copies of her letters to the Central Committee. When one of these students turned his packet over to the Saratov province party committee, Pankratova's ill-advised circulation of unofficial and confidential information quickly came to Aleksandrov's attention. Summarily accused of distributing secret materials and engaging in factional activity (*gruppovshchina*), Pankratova was promptly called in for a dressing down by Zhdanov and Shcherbakov in early September 1944 and dismissed from her post as deputy director of the Academy of Sciences's Institute of History. To save her career, she reversed herself on the issue of progressive expansion and the "lesser-evil" thesis and apologized for lobbying against Aleksandrov. See RGASPI 17/125/224/103-146ob.

61. It is widely believed that Stalin facilitated Tarle's professional rehabilitation after the historian was exiled to Kazakhstan in 1931 in connection with a series of purges among the scholarly intelligentsia. See Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 180–187; B. S. Kaganovich, *Evgenii Viktorovich Tarle i peterburgskaia shkola istorikov* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 45–60. Regarding Stalin's focus on Hitler, see Dubrovskii and Brandenberger, "Itogovyi partiinyi dokument," 148–163.
62. Such an argument is made in passing in Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko, *The Time of Stalin: Portrait of a Tyranny*, trans. George Saunders (New York, 1981), 290.
63. Even before the history conference, the Kazakh party organization had been criticized in an April 1944 Central Committee resolution followed up by calls for further investigation in October 1945. See RGASPI 17/125/340/78–85; 17/311/108–144. The Tatar and Bashkir party organizations were savaged in Central Committee resolutions from August 1944 and January 1945, published in *Propagandist* 15–16 (1944): 19–22, and *Propagandist* 3–4 (1945): 16–18, respectively. Each resolution forced its respective party organizations to take similar actions, e.g., the October 1944 Tatar party committee resolution at TsGAIPD RT 15/5/1143/51–69, reprinted in "Idegeevo poboishche' TsK VKP(b)," 116–117; and discussion of a similar Kazakh resolution in "O podgotovke 2-go izdaniia 'Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR,'" *Bol'shevik Kazakhstana* 6 (1945): 49–51.
64. Aleksandrov, "O nekotorykh zadachakh," 18, 17; also Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 150; M. Usmanov, "O tragedii eposa i tragediikh liudskikh," in *Idegei: Tatarskii narodnyi epos*, trans. S. Lipkin (Kazan', 1990), 248–249.
65. I. V. Stalin, "Vystuplenie I. V. Stalina na prieme v Kremle v chest' komanduiushchikh voiskami Krasnoi armii, 24 maia 1945 goda," in *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuza* (Moscow, 1947), 197; also "Russkii narod—rukovodiashchaia sila sredi narodov strany," *Bol'shevik* 10 (1945): 3–12; Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 45–47. Elena Zubkova underestimates the importance of this speech in her *Poslevoennoe sovetское obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow, 2000), 36.
66. Although official figures have never been released, battlefield losses in the war seem to have been more or less proportional to the ethnic breakdown of the USSR's population. See G. Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätspolitik in der Sowjetunion: Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nachstalinischen Gesellschaft* (Baden-Baden, 1986), 213–215.
67. For examples of the party hierarchy's wartime interest in promoting "Russianness" and downplaying other cultural influences, see "*Literaturnyi front*": *Istoriia politicheskoi tsenzury, 1932–1946—sbornik dokumentov*, ed. D. L. Babichenko (Moscow, 1994), 77–155; Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona*, 9–18.
68. See Chapter 10, p. 179.
69. A. M. Pankratova, *Velikii russkii narod* (Moscow, 1948).

## 8. Ideological Education on the Home Front

1. TsAODM 3/82/2/11.
2. John Dunstan, *Soviet Schooling in the Second World War* (New York, 1997), 135; V. E. Chernik, "Politicheskoe vospitanie uchashchikhsia sovetskoï shkoly v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–1945" (Candidate's diss., Moscow Lenin Pedagogical Institute, 1989), 46.
3. "Rech' Narodnogo komissara prosveshcheniia RSFSR V. P. Potemkina na sobranii aktiva uchitelei," *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 5–6 (1943): 7.
4. TsAODM 3/82/2/10ob–11.
5. S. G. Bobrov, "Rabota literaturnogo kruzhka v VIII-X klassakh shkoly," *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 3–4 (1942): 71; also V. Ivashin, "Prepodavanie grazhdanskoi istorii v shkolakh Sverdlovskoi oblasti v dni Otechestvennoi voiny," *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 7 (1942): 54.
6. Almost all regions are included in materials stored at GARF 2306/70/2766/67–70; 2306/70/2850/35; 2306/70/2781/11; 2306/70/2775/54–58; 2306/70/2857/48; 2306/70/2897/139–142; 2306/70/2966/61; 2306/70/2904/108; generally Ivashin, "Prepodavanie grazhdanskoi istorii," 53–54.
7. TsAODM 3/82/9/168.
8. I. Avtukhov, *Vospitanie sovetskogo patriotizma: V pomoshch' uchiteliam i klassnym rukovoditeliam* (Alma Ata, 1942), 6.
9. TsAODM 3/82/9/4lob; also 3/82/9/153; M. Doltov, "Vospitanie patriotizma," *Kommunist*, July 23, 1942, 4.
10. "Zabota o detiakh—vsenarodnoe delo," *Pravda*, June 14, 1943, 1.
11. TsAODM 3/82/9/177–178; also GARF 2306/70/2764/77–78.
12. Portsevskii also contributed to the cult of personality during his discussion of the Battle on the Ice. Explaining the nature of the maneuver that had blunted the Teutonic Knights' attack, he noted: "Aleksandr Nevskii greeted them with a trick [*piatakom*]. When the Germans came at them in their "pig" formation [*poshli 'svin'ei'*, a triangular ramlike style of advance], he weakened the center of his lines but strengthened the flanks. Driving them inward, he destroyed them. Stalin's armies similarly surrounded and destroyed the German fascists at Stalingrad." See TsAODM 3/82/9/177–178.
13. December 4, 1941, entry in K. Polzikova-Rubets, *Oni uchilis' v Leningrade: Dnevnik uchitel'nitsy* (Moscow, 1948), 74.
14. See TsAODM 3/82/9/155, 52ob–53ob; 3/82/18/12, 26–27, 39ob; Avtukhov, *Vospitanie sovetskogo patriotizma*, 9; N. A. Trotsenko, "Patrioticheskoe vospitanie starshikh shkol'nikov v obshcheobrazovatel'nykh shkolakh RSFSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–1945 gg. (Na materialakh vostochnoi Sibiri)" (Candidate's diss., Moscow State University, 1973), 102, 107. For analysis of afterschool activities based on regional archival holdings, see V. L. Bolobonov, "Voенно-patrioticheskaia napravlennost' vneklassnoi

- raboty s uchashchimisia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Iz istorii sovetskoi shkoly i pedagogiki* (Kalinin, 1973), 62–76.
15. *Prepodavanie istorii v usloviakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny: Metodicheskoe posobie dlia uchitelei srednikh shkol Kazakhskoi SSR*, part 1, *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. A. M. Pankratova (Alma Ata, 1942), 11.
  16. I. V. Stalin, *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuza* (Moscow, 1942–1950). This was an anthology of the general secretary’s wartime speeches and public statements in the press.
  17. See GARF 2306/70/2883/83–84; 2306/70/2904/109.
  18. RGASPI 17/126/15/145–164; 17/126/125/225/3; GARF 2306/70/2749/27–28; TsAODM 3/82/2/1–23, esp. 9, 19. Compare to Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin’s Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York, 1994), 224–232.
  19. See RGASPI 17/126/2/164–172; 17/125/26/117–125; GARF 2306/70/2678/128–131; 2306/70/2847/5; generally, *Programma nachal’noi shkoly: Istoriia SSSR (elementarnyi kurs)—IV klass* (Moscow, 1943); *Programma srednei shkoly: Istoriia SSSR, Novaiia istoriia* (Moscow, 1942); A. V. Koloskov, “Shkol’noe istoricheskoe obrazovanie v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny,” *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 5 (1983): 17–18.
  20. RGASPI 17/126/2/164–172; 17/125/26/120; GARF 2306/70/2678/130–131, 199–201.
  21. TsAODM 3/82/2/1–23, esp. 15; RGASPI 17/126/15/145–164; also 17/125/225/18–19; TsAODM 3/83/9/128; 3/83/18/37; generally, G. D. Burdei, *Istoriia i voina, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 81.
  22. RGASPI 17/126/15/166.
  23. TsAODM 3/82/9/37–38.
  24. RGASPI 17/126/15/166.
  25. See RGASPI 17/125/221/8–9; 17/126/15/145–164; 17/125/225/17; TsAODM 3/82/9/38, 151; GARF 2306/70/2841/10; TsAODM 3/82/2/1–23.
  26. TsAODM 3/82/9/39–39ob, 113–114, 130.
  27. GARF 2306/70/2764/79–80; also RGASPI 17/125/221/10; Burdei, *Istoriia i voina*, 80–81.
  28. Italics added. See TsAODM 3/82/9/113.
  29. See A. Pankratova, “Prepodavanie istorii SSSR v srednei shkole v dni Otechestvennoi voiny protiv fashizma,” in *V pomoshch’ uchitelin*, vol. 1 (Iakutsk, 1944), 1–13; *Prepodavanie istorii v usloviakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny: Metodicheskoe posobie dlia uchitelei srednikh shkol Kazakhskoi SSR*, part 1, *Istoriia SSSR*, ed. A. M. Pankratova (Alma Ata, 1942); GARF 2306/70/2940/79–81, 72; 2306/69/2782/48, 54, 60; 2306/69/2783/49; Burdei, *Istoriia i voina*, 78–80.
  30. A. I. Kairov, “Vospitanie liubvi k Rodine,” *Sovetskaiia pedagogika* 1 (1944): 9.
  31. See GARF 2306/70/2749/143ob, 194, 166ob, 188, 191–192; L. P. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol’nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v SSSR* (Mos-

- cow, 1961), 319–320; RGASPI 88/1/1049/1; TsAODM 3/82/9/41ob-42, 149–153.
32. See Chapter 7, esp. p. 122; Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 173; and Pankratova's 1944 appeal to the Central Committee in the name of "historians" against Agitprop's relentless pursuit of russocentric motifs: "Recently, tendencies have appeared among executives on the ideological front that are impossible to sanction, as their foundation rests on a total renunciation of Marxism-Leninism and the proffering of the most reactionary and backward theories under the banner of 'patriotism': a fallback to all sorts of Kadetish and even more outdated and reactionary conceptions and evaluations in the historical sphere; a renunciation of the application of class analysis in historical questions; and the exchange of class principles in social development for national ones, the rehabilitation of idealism, panslavism, etc." See RGASPI 17/125/224/1. Interestingly, N. N. Iakovlev, the head of the Central Committee's Department of Schools, and Svetlov, an Agitprop insider, agreed with elements of this analysis. See 17/126/15/145–164; also 17/126/125/225/1–19; 17/125/221/11, 37, 101.
  33. See Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 330–334; Chapter 2, n. 22.
  34. In one admittedly extreme example, the regional party committee secretary of Khabarovsk, Borkov, wrote to Stalin in 1944 upon his discovery that students in his region "don't know about Dmitrii Donskoi, don't know anything about the Tatar invasion," and so on. See RGASPI 17/126/15/131–140, esp. 133; also 17125/254/79–88.
  35. G. D. Komkov, "Ideino-politicheskaia rabota partii v massakh v pervyi period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 6 (1990): 44–58; V. Ia. Ashanin, "Politotdely MTS v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 4 (1960): 51–61.
  36. RGASPI 17/125/221/29, 97.
  37. TsAODM 4/39/31/10, 22–24, 29, 54, etc.
  38. Questions sent by grassroots agitators to their party organizations reveal that the state's celebration of the Russian national past sometimes undermined its ostensible commitment to the internationalist vision of the Marxist historical dialectic. One discussion leader, for instance, struggled to interpret the Napoleonic era correctly: "is it possible to say that the War of 1812 was just from Russia's point of view, but not progressive—and would it be correct to say that Napoleon led unjust wars, although, as Stalin has said, he derived support from progressive forces?" See TsAODM 4/39/25/5–5ob.
  39. Ibid; also V. Karpinskii, "V chem velikaia sila sovetskogo patriotizma," *Sputnik agitatora* 5 (1943): 5–10, esp. 6; N. Tarakanov, "O liubvi russkogo naroda k svoemu otechestvu," *Sputnik agitatora* 13 (1943): 9–13.
  40. See, for instance, bimonthly advice columns in *Sputnik agitatora* and *Bol'shevik*.
  41. RGASPI 17/125/221/1, 4.

42. TsAODM 4/39/35/46; 4/39/31/24.  
 43. RGASPI 17/125/107/9, 13, 43; 17/125/108/2, 71–83; 17/125/219/158–162; GARF 2306/69/3142/22–23.  
 44. TsAODM 4/39/31/24; also GARF 2306/70/2883/83–85; 2306/70/2904/108ob–109, 136; 2306/70/2284.  
 45. TsAODM 4/39/25/48.  
 46. TsAODM 4/39/25/7, 4.

## 9. Wartime Mass Culture and Propaganda

1. Serguei Ekeltchik [Serhy Yekelchyk], "History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2000), 33–104; Peter Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations: Soviet Nationality Policy between Planning and Primordialism, 1936–1953" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999), chap. 1; V. Terras, "The Era of Socialist Realism," in *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, ed. Charles A. Moser (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), 504–508; Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York, 1963), 439–442; Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), chap. 7, esp. 160; *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington, 1995).
2. V. P. Potemkin, "Doklad o rabote shkoly," in *Sbornik materialov Vserossiiskikh i respublikanskikh soveshchaniï po narodnomu obrazovaniiu* (Iakutsk, 1944), 8.
3. V. A. Zhukovskii, *Pevets vo stane russkikh voïnov* (Moscow, 1943); HP 59/a/5/34; Maurice Friedberg, *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* (New York, 1962), 118–124; GARF 5462/31/36/44; S. M. Petrov, "O prepodavanii literatury v dni Otechestvennoi voïny," in *V pomoshch' uchiteliu: Metodicheskie ukazaniia o prepodavanii obshcheobrazovatel'nykh predmetov v dni Otechestvennoi voïny*, vol. 1 (Saransk, 1942), 18–19, 22–28. The co-option of *Taras Bul'ba* to inform Russian battlefield valor is fascinating in light of the ambiguous ethnicity of the tale's Cossack *dramatis personae*.
4. *Rodina: Vyskazyvaniia russkikh pisatelei o rodine* (Moscow, 1942).
5. E. V. Tarle, *Nakhimov* (Moscow, 1942); Tarle, *Napoleon* (Moscow, 1940); S. Golubev, *Bagration* (Moscow, 1944); S. N. Sergeev-Tsenskii, *Brusilovskii proryv: Istoricheskii roman*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1943–1944); A. Surkov, "Rodina," "Rossiia," in *Izbrannye stikhi* (Moscow, 1947), 137–141; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voïne, 1941–1945 gg.: Pis'ma chitatelei*, ed. P. E. Shames (Moscow, 1946), 104; I. Sel'vinskii, "Rossii," *Oktiabr'* 8 (1942): 81–82; *Pis'ma s fronta (1941–1945)* (Krasnodar, 1983), 150; TsAODM 4/39/26/8–10, 35–57.
6. A. N. Tolstoi, "Ivan Groznyi," *Oktiabr'* 11–12 (1943): 5–70; V. Kostylev, "Ivan Groznyi (Moskva v pokhode)," *Oktiabr'* 5–6 (1942): 20–80; 7 (1942): 35–93; 8 (1942): 25–80; V. Mavrodin, *Petr Pervyi* (Moscow, 1941); Mavrodin, *Brusilov* (Leningrad, 1941); "Izdanie massovoi politicheskoi

- literatury v Leningrade,” *Kommunist*, August 28, 1942, 1; G. D. Burdei, *Istori i voina, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 107–108.
7. Marietta Shaginan, *Dnevnik Moskvicha* (Moscow, 1942), 26–27. On libraries’ role in popularizing such literature, see TsAODM 4/39/26/10–27; M. P. Mazuritskii, *Massovye uchrezhdeniia kul’tury v period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow, 1992), 31–46.
  8. V. Ian, *Nashestvie Baryia* (Moscow, 1941); Ian, *Baryi* (Moscow, 1941). Illness forced Ianchevetskii to abandon his original plans for a third volume in 1949. A separate story concerning Nevskii—*The Military Leader’s Youth*—was published in 1952, while a simplified sequel to *Baryi*, *Toward the Last Sea*, appeared posthumously in 1955. Stalin apparently nominated *Chingiz Khan* and Borodin’s *Dmitrii Donskoi* for a Stalin Prize in 1941 to call attention to their important subject matter. See K. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego vremeni: Razmyshleniia o I. V. Staline* (Moscow, 1988), 161.
  9. M. V. Ianchevetskii, *Pisatel’-istorik V. Ian: Ocherk tvorchestva* (Moscow, 1977), 124.
  10. February 12, 1943, entry in “‘Nikogda ne pogibnet russkii narod i Rossiia’: Dnevnik general-maiora P. G. Tiukhova, 1941–1944 gg.,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 2 (2000): 99. Similar letters addressed to the author are quoted in Ianchevetskii, *Pisatel’-istorik V. Ian*, 136–137, 162–163.
  11. K. Osipov, *Suvorov*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1939); Osipov, *Suvorov* (Moscow, 1942).
  12. “‘Nikogda ne pogibnet russkii narod i Rossiia,’” 80.
  13. RGASPI 558/11/1599/1–3.
  14. RGASPI 88/1/941/3. Stalin lightly edited the text, adding ethnonyms (e.g., Russians, Prussians, Germans), furnishing the Ottomans with French military advisers, and striking out commentary on Suvorov’s objections to the tsarist system. See RGASPI 558/11/1599/4–194.
  15. November 19, 1942, entry in “‘Nikogda ne pogibnet russkii narod i Rossiia,’” 80.
  16. K. Simonov, *Russkie liudi: P’esa* (Moscow, 1942); *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine, 1941–1945 gg.*, 85; V. E. Chernik, “Politicheskoe vospitanie uchashchikhsia sovetskoi shkoly v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–1945” (Candidate’s diss., Moscow Lenin Pedagogical Institute, 1989), 79; A. N. Tolstoi, “Russkii kharakter,” in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow, 1945), 719–726; I. Sel’vinskii, “Russkaia pekhota,” in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1956), 190–192.
  17. RGASPI 17/125/221/136–144.
  18. Il’ia Erenburg, *Liudi, gody, zhizn’: Vospominaniia v trekh knigakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1990), 235–236.
  19. D. I. Ortenberg, *Iiun’-dekabr’ sorok pervogo: Rasskaz-khronika* (Moscow, 1986), 39; Ortenberg, *Stalin, Shcherbakov, Mekhlis, i drugie* (Moscow, 1995), 131–133; Erenburg, *Liudi, gody, zhizn’*, 235–236; Brooks, “*Thank You, Comrade Stalin*,” 167–168.
  20. A. N. Tolstoi, “Za sovetskuiu rodinu,” *Pravda*, February 23, 1942, 3.

21. Draft edits to Ehrenburg's seminal "Sud'ba Evropy" can be found at RGASPI 89/7/4/146. That this article was published in *Pravda* on April 6, 1943, without revision fueled rumors that Stalin occasionally allowed Ehrenburg to overrule his editors. See Joshua Rubenstein, *Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg* (New York, 1996), 195.
22. On I. Sel'vinskii and A. Prokof'ev, for instance, see "*Literaturnyi front*": *Istoriia politicheskoi tsenzury, 1932–1946—sbornik dokumentov*, ed. D. L. Babichenko (Moscow, 1994), 81–82, 93–94, 124.
23. Ehrenburg, *Liudi, gody, zbizn'*, 322; also RGASPI 17/125/221/25–26. On Ehrenburg's popularity, see HP 25s/a/3/40; HP 64/a/6/34.
24. RGASPI 88/1/844/62; also Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 53–60, 105–107, 113.
25. TsAODM 4/39/26/19–21; NA IRI RAN 2/IX/31/3/1–3, published in *Moskva voennaiia, 1941–1945: Memuary i arkhivnye dokumenty* (Moscow, 1995), 461; RGASPI 17/125/225/169–171ob.
26. TsAODM 4/39/35/14, 22; "Iz dnevnikovykh zapisei N. M. Dobrotvora," in *Zabveniiu ne podlezhbit*, vol. 3 (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1995), 520, 529.
27. A. N. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis' (blokadni dnevnik)* (St. Petersburg, 1998), 76–77, 80–83, 90, 121.
28. TsAODM 4/39/25/45–46; also 4/39/35/103.
29. TsAODM 4/39/25/12, 14.
30. TsAODM 4/39/21/27, 36, 57.
31. GARF 2307/70/2847/191–199; RGASPI 89/3/10/15; also Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 42, 61–67, 113; James von Geldern, "Radio Moscow: the Voice from the Center," in Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, 44–61.
32. Arkhiv RAN 457/1a-43/9/15. At the time, the Kazan' Cathedral housed the USSR's Central Museum of Religion and Atheism.
33. Items on display included keys to German castles and Kotsebu's painting *The Russians in Berlin*. G. D. Komkov, "Ideino-politicheskaiia pabota partii v massakh v pervyi period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 6 (1960): 52; *Rabota muzeev RSFSR v usloviakh voennogo vremeni: Informatsionnoe pis'mo* 1 (1942): 3, 18, cited in Mazuritskii, *Massovye uchrezhdeniia kul'tury*, 67–68. The work of prerevolutionary artists like Kotsebu were complemented during the war with new material, e.g., P. Korin's *Aleksandr Nevskii*, P. Sokolov-Skal's *Ivan the Terrible in Livonia*, M. Avilov's *The Duel of Peresvet and Chelubei*, and A. P. Bubnov's *Morning on the Kulikovo Field*. According to an official account, Stalin's speech on the "valiant example of our great ancestors" had "great significance for the selection of themes and subjects for historical paintings during this period." A. M. Kuznetsov, "Sovetskaia istoricheskaiia kartina," in *Tritsiat' let sovetskogo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva* (Moscow, 1947), 98–114, esp. 108.
34. Mazuritskii, *Massovye uchrezhdeniia kul'tury*, 68.
35. N. V. Fatiganova, "Muzeinoe delo v RSFSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi

- voiny: *Aspekty gosudarstvennoi politiki*,” in *Muzei i vlast’*, vol. 1, *Gosudarstvennaia politika v oblasti muzeinogo dela (XVIII–XX vv.)*, ed. S. A. Kasparinskaia (Moscow, 1991), 194–195.
36. Alexander Werth, *Moscow War Diary* (New York, 1942), 271; Fatiganova, “Muzeinoe delo v RSFSR,” 194–195; NA IRI RAN 2/IX/31/3/1–3, published in *Moskva voennaiia*, 461; Mazuritskii, *Massovye uchrezhdeniia kul’tury*, 67. Moscow journalist N. K. Verzhbitskii took special note of an exhibit at the Okhotnyi riad metro station. See December 24, 1941, entry in “Dnevnik N. K. Verzhbitskogo,” RGALI 2250/3/15, published in *Moskva voennaiia*, 497.
37. MIRM OF 1/27, cited in G. D. Burdei, “Bytovanie istoricheskikh znaniu v massovom soznanii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Rassia v 1941–1945: Problemy istorii i istoriografii* (Saratov, 1995), 46.
38. Fatiganova, “Muzeinoe delo v RSFSR,” 195.
39. Mazuritskii, *Massovye uchrezhdeniia kul’tury*, 14–22; Fatiganova, “Muzeinoe delo v RSFSR,” 175–193; Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 72–75.
40. See the archival materials from Narkompros quoted in Chernik, “Politicheskoe vospitanie,” 79, 82. Virtually every issue of *Ogonek* during 1944 contained coverage of Nazi depredations, e.g., “Gospodin Velikii Novgorod,” *Ogonek* 9–10 (1944): 8–9. Outrage at the destruction of statues of Nevskii, Peter I, and Suvorov in Novgorod’s 1862 monument to the Russian millennium appears in the memoirs of Marshal K. A. Meretskov—see K. A. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu: Stranitsy vospominanii* (Moscow, 1968), 356.
41. *Posledniaia kvartira A. S. Pushkina* (Moscow, 1949), 4; Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis’*, 318; Alexander Werth, *Leningrad* (New York, 1944), 18.
42. Werth, *Moscow War Diary*, 134, 74, 147–150; “‘Ivan Susanin’ v Kuibysheve,” *Literatura i iskusstvo*, May 23, 1942, 4.
43. *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 26–27, 86; I. Kruti, “V gody Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Sovetskii teatr*, ed. M. S. Grigor’ev (Moscow, 1947), 199; Harold B. Segel, “Drama of Struggle: The Wartime Stage Repertoire,” in Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, 108–114, 117–119; *Pis’ma s fronta (1941–1945)*, 150.
44. March 14, 1942, entry in NA IRI RAN 2/IX/5/16/25.
45. TsAODM 3/81/1/39; Werth, *Moscow War Diary*, 269; I. Moskvin, “Khudozhestvennyi teatr v Saratove,” *Literatura i iskusstvo*, June 27, 1942, 3. Agitprop’s T. M. Zueva endorsed Simonov’s *The Russian People* and L. Leonov’s *Invasion* as two of the few decent plays of the wartime period. See RGASPI 17/125/221/21–22.
46. “Teatry,” *Kommunist*, July 24, 1942, 4; “‘Russkie liudi’: P’esa Konstantina Simonova v postanovke Saratovskogo oblastnogo dramaturgskogo teatra imeni K. Marksa,” *Kommunist*, July 31, 1942, 3.
47. “Iz kolymskikh pisem zakliuchennogo K. A. Nikanorova . . .,” in *Vozvrashchenie k pravde (Iz istorii politicheskikh repressii v Tverskom krae v 20–40-e i nachale 50-kh godov): Dokumenty i materialy* (Tver’, 1995), 78–79.

48. Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of Russian and Soviet Film* (New York, 1960), 365–366. *Aleksandr Nevskii* was a component of the Red Army's wartime political indoctrination program. See HP 27/a/3/21.
49. RGASPI 89/3/10/15.
50. Georgii Kulagin, *Dnevnik i pamiat'* (Leningrad, 1978), 34, 27, 21; TsMAM 2872/1/71/9–13, published in *Moskva voennaia*, 574; RGALI 2250/3/12–14.
51. "Prodvizhenie oboronnykh fil'mov v kolkhoz," *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo* 2 (1942): 45; also "Massovaia politicheskaiia rabota v period uborki urozhaia," *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo* 13 (1942): 34.
52. *Fel'dmarshal Kutuzov* (Petrov, 1944); *Ivan Groznyi* (Eisenstein, 1944–1946). See, for instance, "Nakanune s'emok fil'ma 'Ivan Groznyi,'" *Literatura i iskusstvo*, August 1, 1942, 4. On the popularity of *Kutuzov*, see TsAODM 4/39/31/117; for a detailed account of the reception of *Ivan Groznyi* among the elite, see Joan Neuberger, "The Politics of Bewilderment: Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* in 1945," in *Eisenstein at One Hundred*, ed. Al Lavalley and Barry Scherr (New Brunswick, 2001), 227–252.
53. T. V. Podavalova, "Narodnoe obrazovanie i kul'tura v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (na materialakh Gor'kovskoi i Kirovskoi oblastei)" (Candidate's diss., Moscow State University, 1995), 190. See *Georgii Saakadze* (M. Chiaureli, 1942). Of course, contemporary themes were reflected in titles like *Rainbow* (*Raduga*, M. Donskoi, 1943), *She Defends the Motherland* (*Ona zashchishchaet rodinu*, Ermler, 1943), *Zoia* (L. Arnshtam, 1944), and others. Revolutionary-era films were mobilized to condemn the Germans' 1918 occupation of Ukraine: *The Defense of Tsaritsyn* (*Oborona Tsaritsyna*, the Vasil'ev "brothers," 1942), *Aleksandr Parkbomenko* (L. Lukov, 1942), and even *How the Steel Was Forged* (*Kak zakalialas' stal'*, Donskoi, 1942).
54. Peter Kenez, "Black and White: The War on Film," in Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, 157–175.
55. See Babichenko, "Literaturnyi front," 107–121; Yekelchyk, "History, Culture, and Nationhood," 86–91; George O. Liber, *Alexander Dovzhenko: A Life in Soviet Film* (London, 2002), chap. 8.
56. Jeffrey Brooks, "Pravda Goes to War," in Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, 14.
57. Brooks seems to have retreated somewhat from this extreme position in his recent monograph—see "Thank You, Comrade Stalin," chap. 7.
58. Werth, *Moscow War Diary*, 102. Even "internationalist" stories that received widespread press coverage carried russocentric undertones. The Panfilovtsy-28, for instance, a Central Asian unit known for its multiethnic composition, received much attention for its heroism during the defense of Moscow in November 1941. Interestingly, the unit's commander, Vasilii Klochkov, ordered his Russian, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Karelian, and Ukrainian troops into battle with a russocentric battle cry: "Not a step back! Russia may be vast, but there is no-

where to retreat! Moscow is at our backs!” See “Zaveshchanie 28-mi pavshikh geroev,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, November 28, 1941, 1; A. Iu. Krivitskii, *28 geroev-panfilovtsev* (Moscow, 1942).

59. Idiosyncratic syntax and punctuation in original. See HP 25/a/3/49; HP 62/a/6/30.
60. December 14, 1941, entry in “Iz dnevnikovyx zapisei zhurnalista N. K. Verzhbitskogo,” RGALI 2250/3/15, published in *Moskva voennaiia*, 494–495. On Kuz’ma Kriuchkov, see Chapter 1, n. 22.
61. RGASPI 17/125/190/28–33, esp. 29. This line had been developing since 1939—see Yekelchik, “History, Culture, and Nationhood,” 21–104, esp. 21–33; Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, 2001), 351–352.
62. RGASPI 17/125/190/25–27. Acceptable excerpts from the letter were blended into the sanitized “Miting v osvobozhdennom Kieve,” *Pravda*, December 3, 1943, 2; RGASPI 17/125/190/34–37. On Agitprop oversight, see Burdei, *Istoriik i voina*, 41–43. Months later, Aleksandrov’s subordinate, A. E. Egorin, expressed related concerns about the Ukrainians’ failure to embrace another symbol of Russian-Ukrainian unity: “Gogol’ was Ukrainian by birth. In his creativity and choice of thematics, he celebrated Ukraine and the glorious history of the Ukrainian people. Gogol’ celebrated nature. [But] Gogol’ is not popular at all [in Ukraine] because he was a writer who wrote in Russian.” Comparing the writer to Khmel’nitskii (who was seen as pro-Russian in spirit), Egorin continued: “After all, Gogol’ is a figure who symbolized brotherhood between peoples—Russian and Ukrainian . . . It is necessary to understand Gogol’ in the cultural realm [but] Ukraine values only Shevchenko and avoids Gogol’.” See RGASPI 17/125/221/16–17.

## 10. Popular Engagement with the Official Line during the War

1. Note the anti-Semitic innuendo that laced Safonov’s reply to Kaplun: “Sure thing, Iashka—of course this sort of thing doesn’t mean much to you.” June 8, 1944, entry in N. N. Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy v toi samoi voine: Frontovoi dnevnik* (Moscow, 1995), 154.
2. Tat’iana Leshchenko-Sukhomlina, *Dolgoe budushchee: Dnevnik-vospominaniia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1991), 171, 214–219, 233–238; A. Leifer, *Budu vseгда zhiva: Dokumental’noe povestvovanie o Valentine Barkhatovoi i ee druz’iakh—dnevnik, pis’ma, vospominaniia, kommentarii* (Omsk, 1987), 38, 56–58, 68; A. G. Kopenin, “Zapiski nesumasshedshego: Iz dnevnika sel’skogo uchitel’ia,” *Rodina* 2 (1996): 94–97; Gennadii Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsek: Dnevnik frontovoi brigady* (Perm’, 1990), 27, 110–111, 157, 189; *Govoriat pogibshie geroi: Predsmertnye pis’ma sovetskikh bortsov protiv nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatnikov (1941–1945 gg.)* (Moscow, 1973), 85–87, 278, 419; K. Polzikova-Rubets, *Oni uchilis’ v Leningrade: Dnevnik uchitel’nitsy* (Moscow, 1948), 105; E. Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik* (Moscow, 1942), 34–35, 43,

- 88–89, 95–99; T. Lin'kov, *Zapiski partizana* (Moscow, 1949), 9, 21, 28, 41, 62, 69–73, 91, 100–108, 129–131; S. V. Rudnev, *Legendarnyi reid (dnevnik o karpatskom reide, pis'ma)* (Uzhgorod, 1967), 101; Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 32, 45, 89, 114–119, 154–158, 164–165, 265; Georgii Kulagin, *Dnevnik i pamiat'* (Leningrad, 1978), 188–193; V. Grossman, "Iz zapisnykh knizhek," *Voprosy literatury* 6 (1987): 170; Marietta Shaginian, "Ural'skii dnevnik (iul' 1941–iul' 1943)," *Novyi mir* 4 (1985): 135; Shaginian, *Ural na oborone: Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (Moscow, 1944), 19, 41; *Pis'ma s fronta i na front, 1941–1945* (Smolensk, 1991), 125–126; *Pis'ma s fronta, 1941–1945* (Arkhangel'sk, 1989), 34, 58, 120, 148, 224; *Pis'ma s fronta (1941–1945)* (Krasnodar, 1983), 26, 46, 83, 105, 147–148, 190; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine 1941–1945 gg.: Pis'ma chitatelei*, ed. P. E. Shames (Moscow, 1946), 20–27, 33, 58, 114; *Pis'ma s fronta* (Tambov, 1943), 11, 17, 39–42, 60, 81–86, 107, 112–115, 132–137, 152, 164, 173, 196; "Iz zapiski soldata Stepana Markovicha Krutova," in *Istoriia Otechestva v dokumentakh, 1917–1993*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1995), 123.
3. *Govoriat pogibshie geroi*, 390; Polzikova-Rubets, *Oni uchilis' v Leningrade*, 84, 174; Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik*, 37, 43–44, 56, 89–95, 120; Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 92, 148, 212, 270; Lin'kov, *Zapiski partizana*, 7–8, 118; "Dnevnik Iriny Dmitrievny Zelenskoi," NA IRI RAN 2/III/1/10/10ob; "Dnevnik A. K. Demidchik," NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/63/52; A. Poliakov, *V tylu vruga: Dnevnik voennogo korrespondenta* (Moscow, 1942), 7; *Pis'ma s fronta i na front* (Arkhangel'sk, 1985), 166; *Pis'ma s fronta i na front, 1941–1945*, 65–66; D. Shcheglov, *Tri tiri (dnevnik ofitsera)* (Moscow, 1963), 6, 75; *Pis'ma s fronta (1941–1945)*, 147, 167; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 62, 84, 128.
4. M. M. Prishvin, "Dnevnik, 1905–1954," in *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 8 (Moscow, 1986), 390–391; Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 183–185; *Govoriat pogibshie geroi*, 397, 463, 474–475; Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik*, 36–43, 78, 94–98; "Dnevnik Vs. V. Vishnevskogo," RGALI 1038/1/2081/9–11, 28; 1038/1/2085/56, 69–70, 105, 121; N. N. Kolbin, "V kol'tse smercha: Dnevnik voennykh let," *Dal'nii vostok* 7 (1995): 205; Mikhail Koriakov, "Frontovoi dnevnik," *Znamia* 5 (1992): 174, 182; *Pis'ma s fronta i na front*, 50–57, 166–171; Shaginian, *Ural na oborone*, 93, 96; *Pis'ma s fronta i na front, 1941–1945*, 79; *Pis'ma s fronta, 1941–1945*, 232; *Pis'ma s fronta (1941–1945)*, 18, 100; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 83.
5. Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 27, 158; *Govoriat pogibshie geroi*, 63, 80–87; Polzikova-Rubets, *Oni uchilis' v Leningrade*, 89, 105; Poliakov, *V tylu vruga*, 7; Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik*, 30, 85; Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 27, 131; A. N. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis': Blokadnyi dnevnik* (St. Petersburg, 1998), 66; *Voina glazami detei: Sbornik dokumentov iz Gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Kaluzhskoi oblasti* (Kaluga, 1993), 13, 39, 109, 134; "Dnevnik Vs. V. Vishnevskogo," RGALI 1038/1/2081/19, 28; 1038/1/2085/70, 92; "Dnevnik Iriny Dmitrievny Zelenskoi," NA IRI RAN 2/III/1/10/29ob;

- “Dnevnik A. K. Demidchik,” NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/63/8, 23–24, 30; “Stenogramma besedy s t. Gorbel’ L. F.,” NA IRI RAN 2/III/2/42/2; “Vospominaniia o boevykh deistviiakh v partizanakh’ N. Sozinoi,” NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/64/3, 3ob; Koriakov, “Frontovoi dnevnik,” 174, 182; *Pis’ma s fronta i na front*, 169; Shaginian, *Ural na oborone*, 41; *Pis’ma s fronta, 1941–1945*, 24; *Pis’ma s fronta (1941–1945)*, 18–23, 167; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 58–62, 84, 114; “Iz zapiski soldata Stepana Markovicha Krutova,” 124.
6. Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 101, 126, 145, 181–190, 201–205, 257–264; *Voina glazami detei*, 21, 67, 71–75, 100–107, 113, 122; “Dnevnik Vs. V. Vishnevskogo,” RGALI 1038/1/2081/31; 1038/1/2085/17, 100–105; A. Perventsev, “Krylatoe plemia: Iz dnevnika voennykh let,” *Oktiabr’ 1* (1985): 194–197; “Vospominaniia o boevykh deistviiakh v partizanakh’ N. Sozinoi,” NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/64/3–3ob; *Pis’ma s fronta i na front, 1941–1945*, 108; *Pis’ma s fronta, 1941–1945*, 148, 205, 224; “Iz dnevnikovykh zapisei N. M. Dobrotvora,” in *Zabveniiu ne podlezhit*, vol. 3 (Nizhniĭ Novgorod, 1995), 532; *Pis’ma s fronta (1941–1945)*, 46, 106, 147, 184–190; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 20–27, 46, 73, 127–128; “Nikogda ne pogibnet russkii narod i Rossiia’: Dnevnik generala maiora P. G. Tiukhova, 1941–1944 gg.,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv 2* (2000): 99.
7. Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik*, 85; Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 102, 130; also Iu. Rubtsov, *Alter ego Stalina* (Moscow, 1999), 168.
8. On the demand for historical literature in 1942, see RGASPI 89/3/10/15.
9. July 15 and August 14, 1944, entries in Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 166, 172. It should be noted that even before the war, people like the Molotov metal worker G. F. Semenov were already intrigued by the new interpretations of Ivan the Terrible: “I am [presently] reading *Ivan Fedorov*. It’s true that there were many noteworthy people in Old Rus’. Ivan IV’s struggle with the boyars is well done. As a Soviet individual, it seemed odd to me: why would a tsar suddenly clash with his boyars? What for? It turns out that it was so that Rus’ might be truly great.” June 7, 1941, entry in Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 21; also HP 4/a/1/27; HP 11/a/2/40; I. Bas, *Ivan Fedorov* (Moscow, 1940).
10. “Chto ia chital vo vremia voiny,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 7, 1944, 4; generally, *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 14, 28; K. V. Pigarev, *Soldat-polkovodets: Ocherki o Suvorove* (Moscow, 1943); M. Bragin, *Polkovodets Kuzuzov* (Moscow, 1943).
11. RGASPI 89/7/40/60. On the journal editors’ awareness of their publication’s role as agitational literature, see Arkhiv RAN 827/4/645/9.
12. Arkhiv RAN 827/4/645/9, cited in G. D. Burdei, “Bytovanie istoricheskikh znaniĭ v massovom soznanii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Rossia v 1941–1945: Problemy istorii i istoriografii* (Saratov, 1995), 40–41. Note that Burdei’s footnotes 3, 4, and 5 are scrambled in an apparent typesetter’s error. See *Vekovaiia bor’ba slavian s nemetskimi zakhvatchnikami* (Moscow, 1943).
13. The letter is dated July 3, 1944. See M. V. Ianchevetskii, *Pisatel’-istorik V. Ian:*

- Ocherk tvorchestva* (Moscow, 1977), 137; Ianchevetskii, “Stranitsy dobresti: Knigi V. Iana na frontakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” *Literaturnoe obozrenie* 5 (1985): 110–111.
14. RGASPI 89/3/10/13ob; also G. D. Burdei, *Istori i voina* (Saratov, 1991), 16–17, 148. A Red Army unit fighting in the vicinity of Pskov and Novgorod in 1942 wrote to court historians on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the Battle on the Ice: “From the banks of the old Il’men’ and ancient Lovata, the soldiers, commanders, and political officers send their battle greetings to the Soviet historians. The Hitlerite frites more and more often are experiencing the power and destruction of the glorious blows of the descendants of Aleksandr Nevskii’s warriors . . . The German-fascist horde under von Busch will receive what the horde of mongrel-knights under von Valk got 700 years ago—they will get a ‘Battle on the Ice.’ We wish you fruitful work.” A. M. Pankratova, “Sovetskaia istoricheskaia nauka za 25 let i zadachi istorikov v usloviakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,” in *Dvadsat’ piat’ let istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR* (Moscow, 1942), 34.
  15. Arkhiv RAN 624/1/335/37ob, cited in A. M. Dubrovskii, *S. V. Bakhrushin i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1992), 123; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 8.
  16. Note the subordination of Bolshevik heroes to Russian ones. G. Burdei, “Komsomol—frontu,” *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, May 7, 1985, 14. Some people, of course, sent more than just books. In 1942 the priest V. A. Stepanov contributed 300,000 rubles toward the purchase of two fighter planes. Hoping to help “cleanse our sacred Russian land of the fascist evil [*nechist’*],” he asked that they be christened with “the names of our great fighter-forefathers Aleksandr Nevskii and Dmitrii Donskoi.” A year later, A. N. Tolstoi bought and outfitted an entire T-34 tank for the Red Army, which he named Groznyi in an unmistakable reference to Ivan the Terrible. See TsGA UR 546/2/159/306–308, published in *1941–1945: Urdmurttia v Velikoi otechestvennoi voine—sbornik dokumentov* (Izhevsk, 1995), 143–144; D. I. Ortenberg, *Stalin, Shcherbakov, Mekhlis, i drugie* (Moscow, 1995), 200.
  17. *Pis’ma s fronta* (Tambov, 1943), 81, 77, 11, 196, 107, 39, 177. Note the curious interchangeability of Motherland and Fatherland in Butskikh’s letter.
  18. See Chapter 7, p. 120 and n. 22.
  19. Arkhiv RAN 457/1a-43/32/37–43, cited in Burdei, “Bytovanie istoricheskikh znani v massovom soznanii,” 40–41 (see n. 12 above). According to Pankratova, her brigade had received a considerable number of such letters. See RGASPI 17/125/224/36ob–37ob.
  20. B. Krivitskii, “Budet snova zhizn’ nastoiashchaia, chudesnaia (pis’ma gv. st. leitenanta . . . k materi A. A. Krivitskoi, 1941–1945 gg.),” *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, March 3, 1985, 4. Other reports of Russians’ insensitivity toward non-Russian troops appear in a draft Central Committee resolution that languished in the party bureaucracy. See RGASPI 17/125/85/44, 49.
  21. See the array of reports at RGASPI 17/125/85/53–68. There were similar problems supplying non-Russian workers in Moscow with mobilizational ma-

- terial. See TsAODM 4/39/21/18–19; 4/39/26/29–30; Polzikova-Rubets, *Oni uchilis' v Leningrade*, 144; generally, Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 76–78.
22. “Stenogramma besedy s t. Gorbel' L. F.,” NA IRI RAN 2/III/2/42/5; *Pisateli v Otechestvennoi voine*, 24.
  23. *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, ed. John A. Armstrong (Madison, 1964), 263–269; *Listovki partizanskoj voiny v Leningradskoj oblasti, 1941–1944*, ed. A. Sheverdalkin (Leningrad, 1945).
  24. T. A. Logunova, *V lesakh Smolenshchiny: Zapiski komsomolki-partizanki* (Moscow, 1947), 230–231; also B. V. Druzhinin, *Dvadsat' piat' frontovykh tetradci* (Moscow, 1964), 182.
  25. V. P. Potemkin, “Rech' na Vserossiiskom soveshchanii po narodnomu obrazovaniiu,” in *Star'i i rechi po voprosam narodnogo obrazovaniiia* (Moscow, 1947), 264. Potemkin was paraphrasing a statement traditionally attributed to Stalin that “the war was won by rural schoolteachers.” See *Stalin v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov i dokumentakh epokhi*, ed. M. Lobanov (Moscow, 1995), 262.
  26. April 23, 1942, entry in Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 52.
  27. Pankratova, “Sovetskaia istoricheskaia nauka za 25 let,” 26–27.
  28. December 24, 1941, entry in “Dnevnik N. K. Verzhbitskogo,” RGALI 2250/3/15, published in *Moskva voennaiia, 1941–1945: Memuary i arkhivnye dokumenty* (Moscow, 1995), 497.
  29. RGASPI 89/3/10/21. Tarle's newspaper articles were also very popular—see HP 64/a/6/34.
  30. “Bukinisty Leningrada,” *Ogonek* 48–49 (1944): 16; “Redkie knigi,” *Kommunist*, August 2, 1942, 4.
  31. “Chto chitaiut moskvichi—segodnia v bibliotekakh Moskvy,” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, November 13, 1941, 3; “V Biblioteke im. Lenina,” *Literatura i iskusstvo*, January 26, 1942, 4; “Na knizhnom bazare,” *Literatura i iskusstvo*, July 26, 1942, 4; Pankratova, “Sovetskaia istoricheskaia nauka za 25 let,” 34. See V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs ruskoj istorii* (Moscow, 1937); E. V. Tarle, *Izgnanie Napoleona iz Moskvy: Sbornik* (Moscow, 1938); G. P. Danilevskii, *Sozhzhennaiia Moskva: Istoricheskii roman* (Moscow, 1939), reprinted from *Russkaia mysl'* 1 (1886): 1–110; 2 (1886): 1–110.
  32. May 8, 1943, entry in Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 61–62.
  33. See RGASPI 89/3/10/15; also V. P. Potemkin's commentary at Arkhiv RAN 457/1a-43/32/37.
  34. Druzhinin, *Dvadsat' piat' frontovykh tetradci*, 177.
  35. “Vernye druz'ia (iz vystupleniia tokaria R. Kabanova),” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 8, 1944, 3.
  36. September 15, 1943, entry in Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 146. A day later, Semenov recounted the downside to such rousing talk in an account of some unpleasantness on the shop floor that involved a Tatar worker:

Rustam Shakhabutdinov comes running up to me, his lips quivering, and his hand covering one cheek.

“Boss, someone hit me with a tool.”

“Accidentally?”

“Like hell accidental! They say the guys are cursing ‘Beat the Tatar!’”

“Why’s that?”

“What do you mean why? Yesterday Dovgushin said that the Tatars beat the Russians, but what does that have to do with me?”

I got the guys together and had a talk with them. They won’t do it again.

37. “Chto ia chital vo vremia voiny,” 4. See A. A. Ignat’ev, *Piat’desiat let v stroiu* (Moscow, 1941); A. Tolstoi, *Ivan Groznyi: Dramaticheskaiia povest’ v dvukh chastiakh* (Moscow, 1945).
38. November 21, 1941, entry—see RGALI 1038/1/2085/109.
39. NA IRI RAN 2/III/1/10/29ob.
40. Somewhat later, Kuzhelev said: “we have our own form of national heroism: bravado. This is when a Russian guy goes berserk [*vykhodit v razh*], spits into his hands, tosses his hat to the ground, says ‘Damn it, you mother— . . .’ [*akh, mat’ tvoiu tak*], and then does unbelievable things.”
41. Formatting added. April 11, 1942, entry in Kulagin, *Dnevnik i pamiat’*, 187–190. Regarding Asia and “Oriental despotism,” see Kopenin, “Zapiski nesumasshedshogo,” 96.
42. Amangel’dy Imanov, a Kazakh revolutionary, seems oddly out of place in Barkhatova’s otherwise exclusively Russian pantheon of heroes. April 30, 1942, entry in Leifer, *Budu vseгда zhiva*, 41.
43. GAI0 1929/1/192/64, cited in N. A. Trotsenko, “Patrioticheskoe vospitanie starshikh shkol’nikov v obshcheobrazovatel’nykh shkolakh RSFSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–1945 gg. (Na materialakh vostochnoi Sibiri)” (Candidate’s diss., Moscow State University, 1973), 95; also N. S. Karpinskaia, “Otrazhenie Otechestvennoi voiny v shkol’nykh sochineniiakh uchashchikhsia,” *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 10 (1943): 14–19; L. P. Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol’nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v SSSR* (Moscow, 1961), 337 (and Chapter 2, n. 22).
44. See GAKO r-751/3/27/26–29, published in *Voina glazami detei*, 21. All subsequent references to the Kaluga essays include the GAKO cipher and the publication’s corresponding page number in parentheses.
45. GAKO r-751/3/65/10–11ob (67). A. Kurianov wrote virtually the same thing. See GAKO r-751/3/65/16–17 (43).
46. GAKO r-751/3/67/22–23ob; r-751/3/13/32–33ob (103, 134).
47. GAKO r-751/3/26/22–24 (62).
48. GAKO r-751/3/37/26–29 (22).
49. GAKO r-751/3/38/20–21ob (47).

50. GAKO r-751/3/38/23–24; r-751/3/65/12–13; r-751/3/66/12–14; r-751/3/30/78–79 (13, 65, 74, 86); also TsAODM 146/3/129/2–39ob, published in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia—XX vek*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1993), 366–384.
51. See GAKO r-751/3/38/23–24; r-751/3/66/12–14 (13, 74); also Shcheglov, *Tri tiri*, 6–10. Evgenii Petrov expressed outrage at the destruction of Tchaikovsky's cottage in Klin in a December 1941 diary entry. A week later, Petrov's discovery of a monument that the Germans had failed to defile near the ruined village of Tarutino moved him to note: "Just like us, probably a hundred and twenty-nine years ago, Russian troops dried their boots on an oven in a Tarutino hut, smoked tobacco, and ate the same rye bread and the same cabbage soup in order to save Russia and Europe." December 16, 1941, entry in Petrov, *Frontovoi dnevnik*, 50–53, 56–57, 95.
52. Italics added. June 10, 1944, entry in Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 164. It would be a mistake to say, of course, that no one was frustrated or confused by this exchange of symbols. For instance, the announcement of the Comintern's dissolution in 1943 led to the following questions in Leningrad: "Will the anthem 'The Internationale' remain as before the anthem of all freedom-loving countries?" "Does the slogan 'Workers of the World, Unite!' remain in force?" More cynical were comments attributed to workers in Sverdlovsk, where rumors circulated that the singing of the "Internationale" had been banned. Workers sniped among themselves: "What will we sing now? 'God save the Tsar?'" Elsewhere, there was grumbling: "First epaulets, then priests, and now the [closure of the] Comintern." TsGAIPD SPb 24/2v/6258/206–208, published in *Leningrad v osade: Sbornik dokumentov o geroicheskoi oborone Leningrada v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–44* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 480; RGASPI 17/125/181/4.
53. June 10, 1944, entry in Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 164–165.
54. See, for instance, "Doklad tov. A. S. Shcherbakova 21 ianvaria 1942 goda," *Bol'shevik* 2 (1942): 10.
55. In Semenov's May 1944 description of the entire society's participation in the war, for example, the Molotov metalworker tellingly populated his statement with exclusively Russian-sounding last names: "In this war, the people have earned the right to be spoken to with respect. After all, we're all fighting for victory—everyone from Stalin to some Ivanov or Sidorov." Semenov, *I stal nam polem boia tsekh*, 183.
56. See n. 21 above; Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*, 97, 180–181; "Dnevnik A. K. Demidchik," NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/63/73; HP 6/a/1/77–78; HP 33/a/4/35; HP 40/a/4/24, 29–30; HP 56/a/5/20; HP 62/a/5/17; HP 64/a/6/56; HP 79/a/6/4–5.
57. For instance, compare pp. 15, 24, 52, and 77 (through October 19, 1941) with 84, 97, 162, and 180–181 in Inozemtsev, *Tsena pobedy*. Rumors circulated throughout the war that Russian officers hazed non-Russian draftees and even sent them into battle unprepared in order to soften up Wehrmacht

- lines—practices that resulted in massive casualties. In one case, an officer arrested for such conduct justified his actions quite frankly: “We need to save the Cossacks and Russians—they’ll come in handy later.” See RGASPI 17/125/85/64.
58. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis’*, 137, 327–328, 335, 340, 344; Elena Skriabina, *V blokade (dnevnik materi)* (Iowa City, 1964), 36–38, 62; also n. 36 above.
59. “Beseda s Geroem Sovetskogo Soiuzu Pavlovym A. I.,” NA IRI RAN 2/III/1/9/7–7ob; also HP 4/a/1/24; HP 5/a/1/51; HP 6/a/1/76; HP 8/a/1/30; HP 11/a/2/39; HP 18/a/2/10; HP 26/a/3/69; HP 28/a/3/18; HP 33/a/4/34; HP 34s/a/4/15; and elsewhere in that collection.
60. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis’*, 319.
61. This sort of opinion is epitomized by a letter sent to a leading Soviet newspaper in 1953 following the announcement of an anti-Soviet Jewish conspiracy, something that quickly became known as the Doctors’ Plot. The letter’s anonymous author wrote: “I was at the front and have 9 state decorations and fought alongside Georgians, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs—we were all one family. We valued that family and still do. But there weren’t any Jews in it. They sat in the rear, the bastards, [guarding] barracks, and warehouses . . . Take Moscow in 1941, for instance! Everyone knows that those bastards were the first to run off, leaving our proud capital to the caprices of fate. Then the war ended. Who was the first to return to Moscow? Them again. And now, the bastards, they say to Russians and to the other peoples that you, it seems, stayed in Moscow to wait for Hitler, and we are the real patriots because we didn’t.” See RGANI 5/16/602/33. I am grateful to Sheila Fitzpatrick for this reference. For other examples, see “Dnevnik Iriny Dmitrievny Zelenskoi,” NA IRI RAN 2/III/1/10/10ob; “Dnevnik A. K. Demidchik,” NA IRI RAN 2/X/7/63/8, 31; I. I. Zhilinskii, “Blokadni dnevnik,” *Voprosy istorii* 5–6 (1996): 22; RGASPI 17/125/190/16; Leshchenko-Sukhomlina, *Dolgoe budushchee*, 148; HP 6/a/1/77; HP 33/a/4/35; HP 56/a/5/34; *svodki* at TsGAIPD SPb like 408/1/1115/32, cited in Richard Bidlack, “Political Attitudes in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War,” unpublished ms., 1997, 5; Amir Weiner, “The Making of a Dominant Myth: The Second World War and the Construction of Political Identities within the Soviet Polity,” *Russian Review* 55:4 (1996): 647–648.
62. For NKVD material unavailable to most scholars, see N. A. Lomagin, “Nastroeniia zashchitnikov i naseleniia Leningrada v period oborony goroda, 1941–1942 gg.,” in *Leningradskaiia epopeia* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 209, 212, 216, 227, 250; G. Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona: Politicheskie presledovaniia evreev v SSSR v poslednee stalinskoe desiatiletie* (Moscow, 1994), 15–16. Jewish communist idealists talked among themselves as if the developments were temporary. Mints rationalized to Lev Kopelev in the summer of 1942 “that it was all justifiable: the war had provoked a new intensification of class and national contradictions which made national and even ‘Great Power’ patriotic propaganda imperative—imperative in a tactical and a strategic sense.

This was necessary to understand, understand clearly and, if necessary, [to understand even if it meant] to put up with unavoidable extremes and excesses. I thought this way five years, even ten years later.” Lev Kopelev, *Khranit' vechno* (Ann Arbor, 1975), 528–529. Others were not so forgiving—Alexander Werth reports that some Jewish war heroes refused to be awarded the Order of Khmel'nitskii in light of the pogroms generally associated with the tenure of this seventeenth-century Ukrainian hetman. See Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York, 1962), 744.

63. RGASPI 17/125/190/16. This letter is addressed to “Vadimov,” the pseudonym for *Krasnaia zvezda*'s editor-in-chief. See D. I. Ortenberg, *Sorok tretii: Raskaz—khronika* (Moscow, 1991), 399–400.
64. See Chapter 9, n. 23.
65. Agitprop staffers, for instance, circulated memoranda during the war that asserted that because of Jewish leadership, prominent Soviet institutions (the Committee for Artistic Affairs, the Bolshoi Theater, and others) were denying the Russian people the central role they supposedly deserved in artistic productions. See Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona*, chap. 1; G. Bordiugov, “Bol'sheviki i natsional'naia khorugv',” *Rodina* 5 (1995): 75–76.

## 11. Soviet Ideology during the *Zhdanovshchina* and High Stalinism

1. Jeffrey Brooks, *“Thank You, Comrade Stalin”: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), esp. 198–206; Amir Weiner, “The Making of a Dominant Myth: The Second World War and the Construction of Political Identities within the Soviet Polity,” *Russian Review* 55:4 (1996): 638–660; Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York, 1994).
2. Italics in original. Timothy Dunmore, *Soviet Politics, 1945–53* (New York, 1984), 130. Also, R. G. Pikhov, *Sovetskii soiuz: Istoriia vlasti, 1945–1991* (Moscow, 1998), 62; Chris Ward, *Stalin's Russia* (London, 1993), 177; John B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton, 1984), 23–28; Werner Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation* (Ithaca, 1982), 9–13, 19–20, and elsewhere; William McCagg, *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit, 1978), esp. 98–117, 249–254; Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York, 1964), 941–945; Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism* (New York, 1956), 42–43; Harold Swayze, *Political Control of Literature in the USSR, 1946–1959* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 32; Sergius Yakobson, “Postwar Historical Research in the Soviet Union,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 263 (1949): 123–133.
3. G. Aleksandrov, “O nekotorykh zadachakh obshchestvennykh nauk v sovremennykh usloviakh,” *Bol'shevik* 14 (1945): 12–29, esp. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, 17. N. G. Chernyshevskii's statement to this effect had been frequently

quoted during the war, e.g., “Velikie traditsii russkogo naroda,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, May 22, 1943, 1. Similar opinions voiced even earlier—by Karamzin and Pushkin, among others—were also readily cited. I am grateful to Serhy Yekelchuk for connecting Aleksandrov’s rhetoric to such venerable pre-revolutionary sources.

5. Aleksandrov, “O nekotorykh zadachakh,” 16–17.
6. “Zadachi zhurnala ‘Voprosy istorii,’” *Voprosy istorii* 1 (1945): 3–5; “O perspektivnom plane v oblasti istoricheskoi nauki,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 3 (1945): 60–75.
7. I. V. Stalin, “Rech’ na predvybornom sobranii izbiratelei Stalinskogo izbiratel’nogo okruga goroda Moskvy” (February 9, 1946), in *Sochineniia*, vol. 3 (16) (Stanford, 1967), 4–7; “Mirovoe znachenie russkoi kul’tury,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, April 20, 1946, 1.
8. RGASPI 17/125/366/210–221, published in “*Literaturnyi front*”: *Istoriia politicheskoi tsenzury, 1932–1946—sbornik dokumentov*, ed. D. L. Babichenko (Moscow, 1994), 162–163.
9. RGASPI 17/117/628/10–17, in *ibid.*, 191–197; also “O literaturnom zhurnale ‘Zvezda,’” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, August 10, 1946, 4; “Ideino-vospitatel’naia rabota sredi pisatelei,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 10, 1946, 1.
10. “O zhurnalakh ‘Zvezda’ i ‘Leningrad’: Iz postanovleniia TsK VKP(b) ot 14 avgusta 1946 g.,” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, August 20, 1946, 1. Two speeches that Zhdanov gave to party activists and members of the creative intelligentsia in Leningrad on August 15 and 16 were synthesized together into “Doklad t. Zhdanova o zhurnalakh ‘Zvezda’ i ‘Leningrad,’” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, September 30, 1946, 1–3. See RGASPI 77/1/978/111–118; 77/1/803; 558/11/732/3–46.
11. “O repertuare dramaticheskikh teatrov i merakh po ego uluchsheniiu’: Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) ot 26 avgusta 1946 goda,” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, August 30, 1946, 1. Zhdanov alluded to the perils of a “one-sided infatuation with historical themes” in his August 15–16 speeches.
12. “Stalin, Molotov, i Zhdanov o 2-i serii fil’ma ‘Ivan Groznyi’: Zapis’ Sergeia Eizenshteina i Nikolaia Cherkasova,” *Moskovskie novosti*, August 7, 1988, 8–9. Simonov is incorrect in his assertion that the second part of *Ivan the Terrible* was banned because Stalin no longer considered the subject matter timely. See K. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego vremeni: Razmysleniia o I. V. Staline* (Moscow, 1988), 164; Chapter 13, n. 42.
13. Lev Kopelev, *Khranit’ vechno* (Ann Arbor, 1975), 533.
14. See Chapter 7, n. 63.
15. See RGASPI 17/125/311/26–28.
16. A devastating central review of the book (M. Morozov, “Ob ‘Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR,’” *Bol’shevik* 6 [1945]: 74–80) led to a Kazakh party resolution detailed in “O podgotovke 2-go izdaniia ‘Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR,’”

- Bol'shevik Kazakhstana* 6 (1945): 49–51. Subsequent waves of criticism are detailed at RGASPI 17/125/340/78–85; 17/125/311/108–144; Peter A. Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations: Soviet Nationality Policy between Planning and Primordialism, 1936–1953" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999), 63–71.
17. For similar readings, see Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism*, 62–63; Serhy Yekelchyk, "Celebrating the Soviet Present: The *Zhdanovshchina* Campaign in Ukrainian Literature and the Arts," in *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917–1953*, ed. Donald J. Raleigh (Pittsburgh, 2001), 255–275. The best treatments of the era's historiographic and literary scandals are Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), chaps. 5–9; and Evgenii Dobrenko, "Sumerki kul'tury: O natsional'nom samosoznanii kul'tury pozdnego stalinizma," *Druzhiba narodov* 2 (1991): 249–271, esp. 63–67; Dobrenko, *Metafora vlasti: Literatura stalinskoï epokhi v istoricheskom osveshchenii* (Munich, 1993), 297–389.
  18. "Plenum TsK KP(b) Armenii," *Pravda*, September 26, 1947, 2. Generally, see RGASPI 17/125/570/270–291; 17/117/702/106–123. The scandal persisted into 1948, as is clear in "TsK KP(b) Armenii o zadachakh ideologicheskoi raboty," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, March 21, 1948, 2.
  19. See RGASPI 17/125/254/222–263, esp. 222–224, 261–263.
  20. On Yakutiia, see RGASPI 17/125/507/9–197, 239–253, 300–316; RGANI 6/6/767/83–86; Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations," 71–89; on Buriatiia, see V. Shunkov, "O razrabotke istorii Buriat-Mongolii," *Voprosy istorii* 5 (1949): 87–89; on Uzbekistan, see RGASPI 17/125/507/172.
  21. RGASPI 17/125/626/83–85; E. Iu. Zubkova, "Fenomen mestnogo natsionalizma: 'Estonskoe delo' 1949–1952 godov v kontekste sovetizatsii Baltiki," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3 (2001): 89–103.
  22. RGASPI 17/125/617/224.
  23. A. A. Bennigsen, "The Crisis of the Turkic National Epics, 1951–1952: Local Nationalism or Internationalism?" *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 17:2–3 (1975): 463–474.
  24. On Tatarstan, see V. Piskarev and B. Sultanbekov, "Etot uchebnik ne vyderzhivaet bol'shevistskoi kritiki," *Ekho vekov* 1–2 (1997): 81–110; on Kazakhstan, see "Za marksistsko-leninskoe osveshchenie voprosov istorii Kazakhstana," *Pravda*, December 26, 1950, 1; RGANI 5/18/53/3–14; Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations," 63–71.
  25. Critical to understanding the campaign against Jewish cultural expression in the late 1940s is its contextualization among other campaigns against non-Russian "bourgeois nationalism." To be sure, the era's anti-Semitism was the most vicious and destructive of all the attacks, but framing it this way is less exceptionalist than if the anti-Semitism were viewed as an isolated and idiosyncratic travesty of justice. See my review of books by Kostyrchenko and A.

- Borshchagovskii in *Europe-Asia Studies* 51:2 (1999): 347–350. I am grateful to Peter Blitstein and Joshua Rubenstein for conversations that aided in refining this interpretation.
26. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 80, 58. The best example is Morozov, who published such calls with V. Slutskaia in *Propagandist* in 1942. See Chapter 7, nn. 15, 22.
  27. “Uluchshit’ podbor, rasstanovku i vospitanie kadrov (na plenumе TsK KP(b) Ukrainy),” *Pravda*, August 23, 1946, 2. See *Istoriia Ukrainy*, ed. N. N. Petrovskii (Ufa, 1943); *Narys istorii ukrainskoi literatury* (Moscow, 1945).
  28. “Obshchegorodskoe sobranie pisatelei Kieva,” *Pravda*, September 2, 1946, 2. Generally, see *Natsional’ni vidnosyny v Ukraini u XX st.* (Kiev, 1994), 291–296; *Kulturne budivnytstvo v Ukrainskii RSR, cherven 1941–1950: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kiev, 1989), 253–256; K. Litvin, “Ob istorii ukrainskogo naroda,” *Bol’shevik* 7 (1947): 41–56. The best accounts of this complex series of events is Yekelchik, “Celebrating the Soviet Present: The Zhdanovshchina Campaign in Ukrainian Literature and the Arts,” 255–275; Yekelchik, “History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954” (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2000), 104–148. Also, Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: Ukraine after World War II* (New Brunswick, 1964), 394–395.
  29. See Chapter 9, pp. 158–159.
  30. P. K. Klimov, “Pervyi vypusk ‘Istorii BSSR,’” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, November 30, 1946, 2.
  31. RGASPI 17/125/425/54; Klimov, “Pervyi vypusk ‘Istorii BSSR,’” 2; “Pervyi vypusk ‘Istorii BSSR,’” *Kul’tura i zhizn’*, January 11, 1947, 4; RGASPI 17/117/695/4–5, 11, 33–34; June 20, 1949, entry in “Iz dnevnikov Sergeia Sergeevicha Dmitrieva,” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3 (1999): 153.
  32. June 30 and December 31, 1951, entries in “Iz dnevnikov Sergeia Sergeevicha Dmitrieva,” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 4 (1999): 117, 121.
  33. “Stalin, Molotov, i Zhdanov o 2-i serii fil’m’a ‘Ivan Groznyi,’” 8–9.
  34. See Chapter 3, pp. 57–58.
  35. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego vremeni*, 129, 133.
  36. On Nakhimov, see *ibid.*, 159; July 29, 1952, entry in V. Malyshev, “Proidet desiatok let, i eti vstrechi ne vosstanovish’ uzhe v pamiaty,” *Istochnik* 5 (1997): 138. On Stalin’s panslavism, see Malyshev’s stunning March 28, 1945, entry in “Proidet desiatok let,” 128.
  37. See Chapter 7, pp. 130–131. Even former internationalist stalwarts like Pankratova saw Stalin’s remarks as a programmatic statement and obediently fell into step, referring to the toast as unimpeachably authoritative. Unsurprisingly, Malenkov and Beria referred repeatedly to this statement in later years as well. The latter’s commentary—delivered at the Nineteenth Party Congress—is of particular note as its timing, seven years after Stalin raised his fate-

ful glass, spoke volumes about the toast's enduring currency within Soviet affairs. See A. M. Pankratova, *Velikii russkii narod* (Moscow, 1948), 4; Pankratova, "Velikii russkii narod—vydaiushchaia sila i rukovodiashchaia sila Sovetskogo Soiuzna," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, January 11, 1947, 2; G. M. Malenkov, *Tovarishch Stalin—vozhd' progressivnogo chelovechestva* (Moscow, 1949), 16; L. P. Beria, *Speech at the Nineteenth Congress of the CPSU(b)* (Moscow, 1952), 21–22. Also, "Velikii russkii narod," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 24, 1950, 1. Beria's allusion to the toast also speaks to the peculiarity of ethnic particularism within the Soviet elite that would lead one Georgian to quote another Georgian about the primacy of the Russian people.

38. Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York, 1962), 62.
39. "Doklad t. Zhdanova o zhurnalakh 'Zvezda' i 'Leningrad,'" 2–3. See n. 10 above. Kostyrchenko agrees that Zhdanov resisted the nativist excesses of the party line—see G. Kostyrchenko, "Malenkov protiv Zhdanova: Igrы stalinskikh favoritov," *Rodina* 9 (2000): 90.
40. For examples of the difficulties experienced in differentiating prerevolutionary Russian patriotism from its Soviet successor, see "Patriotizm sovetskikh liudei," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, April 12, 1947, 1; Swayze, *Political Control of Literature*, 47.
41. RGASPI 17/125/503/43–44.
42. Barghoorn accepts Zhdanov's statement somewhat uncritically and concludes that there was a sense of "Soviet nationalism [that], although it has many important links to the past, is not a purely Russian product." See Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism*, 155–182, esp. 182; also Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, 23–28. Tillett's view of the era as a break from earlier historiographic practices stems from his insufficiently critical analysis of the late 1930s. See Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, chap. 5.
43. A fine reading of Soviet nationality policy in the late 1940s reveals it to have been fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies that confused officials charged with the administration of non-Russian issues. Such ambiguities were overshadowed on the popular level among Russian speakers, however, by the incessant barrage of russocentric heroes, myths, and imagery in Soviet mass culture. See Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations."

## 12. Public and Party Education during the Early Postwar Period

1. GARF 2306/69/3526/2, 13.
2. TsAODM 3/82/55/1–2.
3. See *Nachal'naiia shkola: Nastol'naiia kniga dlia uchitelia*, ed. M. A. Mel'nikov (Moscow, 1950), 50–53, 164; "Prepodavanie istorii v shkole—boevoi uchastok ideologicheskogo fronta," *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 4 (1950): 22.

4. TsAODM 3/82/84/23; also GARF 2306/70/3381/53.
5. TsAODM 3/82/55/18; also M. Volin, "O vospitanii sovetskogo patriotizma i programme po istorii dlia srednei shkoly," *Partiinaiia zhizn'* 5 (1947): 53–54; *Nachal'naiia shkola*, 52, 168–172.
6. TsAODM 3/82/55/24; also RGASPI 17/125/626/184–185.
7. Some teachers continued to combine these various themes as they had during the war, despite postwar recommendations against it. One lesson on Aleksandr Nevskii, for instance, connected the struggle with the Teutonic Knights to the Second World War, insofar as the latter was a product of "the Germans' new plans for the enslavement of our people." Quoting Stalin's words about "our great ancestors," the teacher then reminded students of the Order of Aleksandr Nevskii, which had been widely publicized during the war. See RGASPI 17/132/142/158.
8. RGASPI 17/132/192/142–142ob. Shchelokova's line about thunderstorms is drawn from the second verse of the Soviet national anthem, which hybridized the Russian past and Soviet present from its very first stanza: "An unbreakable union of free republics was bound together for centuries by Great Rus', / Long live that which was created by the peoples' will, the mighty, united Soviet Union!"
9. A loose translation of I. S. Nikitin's "Um i est' na chto, / Rus' moguchaia, / Poliubit' tebia, / Nazvat' mater'iu, / Stat' za chest' tvoiu / Protiv nedruga, / Za tebia v nuzhde / Slozhit' golovu!"
10. A loose translation of V. Gusev's "Ia russkii chelovek, syn svoego naroda. / Ia s gordost'iu gliazhu na rodinu svoiu. / V godinu bed ona vseгда byvala / Edinoi nesgibaemoi stal'noi. / Na vstrechu bitvam Rus' moia vstavala / Odnoiu družhinoi, groznoiu stenoi."
11. A loose translation of M. Isakovskii's "Poshel na bitvu / Istafil Mamedov, / Azerbaidzhanets, / Vnuk bogatyrei."
12. A loose translation of V. Gusev's "Uzbek Moskvu rodnuiu zashchishchaet. / Ukrainets k pobede ustremlen, / Kazakh v boiu gruzinu pomogaet. / Takoi narod ne budet pobezhden." For Shchelokova's classroom transcript, see RGASPI 17/132/192/141–142; also 155.
13. See TsAODM 3/82/55/13–14; *Nachal'naiia shkola*, 531–532.
14. TsAODM 3/82/97/33.
15. A loose translation of K. F. Ryleev's "Predatel'ia mnili naiti vy vo mne: / Ikh net i ne budet na russkoi zemle! / V nei kazhdyi otchiznu s mladenchestva liubit / I dushu izmenoi svoiu ne pogubit." See GARF 2306/70/3263/34.
16. A. I. Strazhev, "Problema sopostavleniia proshlogo s sovremennost'iu v shkol'nom kurse istorii," *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 2 (1948): 25–37.
17. GARF 2306/70/3278/91.
18. TsAODM 3/82/84/30.
19. "Ob organizatsii nauchno-prosvetitel'noi propagandy," in *KPSS v rezoliiu-*

- tsiakh i resheniakh s'ezdov, konferentsii, i plenumov TsK*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1971), 121–123.
20. TsAODM 3/82/84/17–31, esp. 30. Such discussions may have been related to postwar scandals in several scientific disciplines—see Werner Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation* (Ithaca, 1982), 70–84; Jeffrey Brooks, *“Thank You, Comrade Stalin”: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 2000), 97–100, 212–214.
  21. Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, 1994), 304; also *Rasskazy o russkom pervenstve*, ed. V. Orlov (Moscow, 1950).
  22. Volin, “O vospitanii sovetskogo patriotizma,” 54–55.
  23. See GARF 2306/70/3271/25.
  24. TsAODM 3/82/47/41; also 3/82/84/56; 3/82/97/141; “Za vysokoe kachestvo ucheby: Itogi shkol'nogo goda,” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, July 9, 1947, 2. On reading circles, see TsAODM 3/82/55/10.
  25. TsAODM 3/82/55/30.
  26. Typical classroom presentations included history lectures like Krasnoiarsk's “The Great Russian People—an Outstanding Nation.” See GARF 2306/70/3278/91.
  27. TsAODM 3/82/84/27.
  28. TsAODM 3/82/97/33; 3/82/18/10. See Chapter 11, p. 185.
  29. *Nachal'naiia shkola*, 52–53.
  30. Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 304.
  31. TsAODM 3/82/55/26–27.
  32. Local history also contributed to the dynamic, e.g., “the history of the city of Gor'kii is inextricably intertwined with such themes as the Tatar-Mongol Yoke, the struggle of the Russian people with the Polish occupiers, the Revolution of 1905, and many others.” See GARF 2306/70/3263/35.
  33. See the 1945–1947 reports from the all-union level, as well as Vladimir, Kemerovo, Leningrad, and Moscow provinces: GARF 2306/69/3311/14; 2306/70/3254/24; 2306/70/3285/151–152; 2306/70/3271/26; 2306/70/3381/38; 2306/70/3383/8; TsAODM 3/82/55/7–12, 19.
  34. Fourth grade teachers often knew little more about history than what was written in the Shestakov text. See the 1945–1947 reports from Vladimir and Moscow provinces: GARF 2306/70/3254/24; TsAODM 3/82/47/5; 3/82/53/159–160, 180.
  35. For criticism of both Shestakov's and Pankratova's texts, see GARF 2306/70/3234/11; N. Iakovlev, “O shkol'nykh uchebnikakh po istorii,” *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, November 30, 1946, 4; RGASPI 17/125/557/198–199; 17/132/57/12, 17–18; TsAODM 3/82/97/89–90. On the stillborn planning of new texts, see RGASPI 17/132/57/9, 22–25. For mention of shortfalls in textbook supply, see the 1946–1950 reports from the all-union level, as well as from Leningrad and Moscow provinces: GARF 2306/70/3234/9–10, 16–18; 2306/70/3235/9–10; 2306/70/3236/9–10; 2306/70/3285/151;

- 2306/70/3381/37–38; “O snabzhenii shkol uchebnikami,” *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, December 31, 1946, 1; RGASPI 17/125/626/97, 184; 17/132/57/30, 43; TsAODM 3/82/97/93–94.
36. At a time when the state was contemplating adding an eleventh grade to the existing primary and secondary school system, one in ten urban students and one in three rural students were not making it past fifth grade. Of those who did, only a fraction managed to graduate from seventh grade, which was supposed to be the legal minimum. See several reports from 1946–1948: RGASPI 17/125/557/75–76; 17/132/49/20–23. On eleven-year education, see RGASPI 17/125/557/61; 17/132/49/11–13; 17/132/193/2142; 17/132/192/120.
37. GARF 2306/70/3263/32–33; see reports from Vladimir, Briansk, and Krasnoiarsk as well: GARF 2306/70/3254/24, 33; 2306/70/3252/50; 2306/70/3278/101.
38. GARF 2306/70/3381/56–57; 2306/70/3252/45. The comparative aspect of the curriculum fared no better, as few teachers managed to elicit expected comparisons between Ivan III or Ivan IV and Louis XI, Henry VII, or Charles V. See GARF 2306/70/3381/56.
39. GARF 2306/70/3383/7–8; I. G. Dairi, “K itogam ekzamenov,” *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 5 (1950): 82–83.
40. For instance, see the January–February 1947 Central Committee resolutions on Ivanovo, Vladimir, Stavropol', and Pskov provinces: RGASPI 17/117/693/115–117; 17/117/696/173; 17/117/699/23. Internal postwar memoranda indicate further concern about Krasnodar (17/117/698/52–64), Orlov province, the Crimea, and the Urdmurt ASSR (17/132/471/17–22, 38–43, 84–89), as well as Krasnoiarsk and the provinces of Astrakhan', Leningrad, and Kuibyshev (17/132/114/91–100, 122–128, 159–163, 175–182).
41. See E. Iu. Zubkova, “Mir mnenii sovetskogo cheloveka, 1945–1948: Po materialam TsK VKP(b),” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 4 (1998): 102–103.
42. RGASPI 17/125/311/150. On this crisis in party ranks, see Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945–1953* (Montreal, 1999), 132–133; Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, 2001), 82–126.
43. RGASPI 17/125/311/150.
44. RGASPI 17/125/311/149–150.
45. RGASPI 17/125/425/21–22; also Boterbloem, *Life and Death*, 124–125.
46. RGASPI 17/117/693/56.
47. RGASPI 17/132/454/202.
48. RGASPI 17/125/311/148. A similar impression is supplied by Moscow and Kalinin province archives: TsAODM 4/39/201/91, 105; Boterbloem, *Life and Death*, 102, 110–113, 119–121, 202.
49. TsAODM 5/1/60/29.
50. TsAODM 5/1/87/37–38; 5/1/112/1–2, 44–48. On the improvements re-

sulting from this renewed stress on education within the party ranks, see “KPSS v tsifrakh,” *Partiinaiia zhizn'* 14 (1973): 25; *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 18 (Moscow, 1974), 378–381, 395–396.

51. Soviets' jokes about their leaders' low level of education are legion. One involves N. S. Khrushchev, who apparently decided one day to write his own speech, an unprecedented event. When finished, he gave it to Suslov, Il'ichev, and Adzhubei for proofreading.

*Suslov*: In ideological terms, it's well done.

*Il'ichev*: In political terms, it's also correct.

*Adzhubei*: Everything's fine, Nikita Sergeevich, except that *nasrat'* [roughly, “to give a shit”] should be written together as one word, while *v zhopu* [roughly, “up the ass”] should be written separately.”

See *Istoriia SSSR v anekdotakh, 1917–1992* (Smolensk, 1991), 85.

52. See RGASPI 17/132/103/30, 44.
53. For example, see RGASPI 17/132/103/30.
54. See TsAODM 5/1/60/9, 4, 12; 5/1/87/19.
55. See, for example, TsAODM 5/1/81/225, 23ob.
56. RGASPI 17/132/454/7. Chapter 4 was the only major stretch of the book that had been written by Stalin.
57. TsAODM 3/81/228/74, 1–9.
58. See RGASPI 17/125/311/149; Stalin proposed his own *Short Biography* as an introductory text—see 629/1/54/23. On the poor quality of local agitation, see Boterbloem, *Life and Death*, 131–133.
59. See, for instance, *Partiia bol'shevikov v period podgotovki i provedeniia Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii: Konsul'tatsii k VII glave Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b)* (Moscow, 1949); *Partiia bol'shevikov v bor'be za vosstanovlenie i dal'neishee razvitie narodnogo khoziaistva SSSR v poslevoennnyi period: Konsul'tatsii k XIV teme uchebnogo plana kruzhek po izucheniiu Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b)* (Moscow, 1950); *Partiia Bol'shevikov v bor'be za diktaturu proletariata: Konsul'tatsii k V, VI, i VII glavam Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b)*, ed. G. D. Kostomarov (Moscow, 1951). Generally, see RGASPI 17/132/103/6. These pamphlets followed a tradition that had been started before the war—see *V pomoshch' izuchaiushchim istoriiu VKP(b)—konsul'tatsii k II glave “Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b)”* (Moscow, 1939); *V pomoshch' izuchaiushchim istoriiu VKP(b)—konsul'tatsii k V glave “Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b)”*, ed. A. M. Gurevich (Moscow, 1940).
60. The only alterations ever made to the *Short Course* involved the excision of “enemies of the people” like N. I. Ezhov. Suggestions for more substantial revisions of the text—even from such authoritative figures as B. Volin—were summarily dismissed. See RGASPI 17/125/254/218–219; also 17/132/464/10–12.
61. Mikhail Baitalsky noticed the discrepancy, observing that even words like “motherland” and “Soviet patriotism” were absent from the text. See his

*Notebooks for the Grandchildren: Recollections of a Trotskyist Who Survived the Stalin Terror*, trans. Marilyn Vogt-Downey (Atlantic Highlands, 1995), 101. Even more problematic, the *Short Course* tended to advance themes that were no longer considered priorities, e.g., the Friendship of the Peoples, which an Agitprop staffer admitted in the mid-1940s had ceased to receive broad press coverage. See RGASPI 17/125/340/71.

62. *Nasha velikaiia Rodina*, ed. A. M. Pankratova, B. M. Volin et al. (Moscow, 1946, 1949, 1953).
63. TsAODM 3/81/128/37.
64. See TsAODM 3/82/84/54; 3/82/97/141.
65. See TsAODM 3/82/60/5–6; 3/82/112/17, 31, 37–38, 53; 3/82/134/20, 58, 63; 3/82/209/26–27, 76–78.
66. For example, see TsAODM 3/82/60/5–6; 3/82/112/32–38, 54.
67. See the 1947 reports from Gor'kii and Molotov at RGASPI 17/125/507/6, 207–208, as well as a variety of 1947–1951 reports from the all-union level, and Molotov, Vologda, Kaliningrad, Kemerovo, Tambov, and Moscow provinces: RGASPI 17/125/507/202–207; 17/132/103/7–8; 17/132/456/9, 43–54, 97–101, 125–134, 146–147; 17/132/290/29–32; TsAODM 4/39/165.

### 13. Postwar Soviet Mass Culture

1. V. Frolovskii, “‘Pushkinskie chteniia’: Zametki radioslushatelia,” *Vechniiaia Moskva*, February 6, 1947, 3.
2. TsAODM 4/39/224/12, 24.
3. TsAODM 4/39/224/28–29, 31.
4. For another example of such rhetoric, see A. A. Fadeev’s 1949 criticism of a belief supposedly present in the West that “the people of the so-called Atlantic community possess a ‘monopoly’ on culture and humanism, and that we, the Soviet people, the heirs of Pushkin and Tolstoi, Mendeleev and Pavlov, who have created the first socialist country in the world . . . are somehow enemies of ‘Western,’ ‘Atlantic’ culture.” “Vsemirnyi kongress storonnikov mira: Vystuplenie A. A. Fadeeva,” *Pravda*, April 22, 1949, 3.
5. TsAODM 4/39/224/14, 22.
6. TsAODM 4/39/224/10. Tikhonov’s Dostoevskian pose was reminiscent of a speech he had given ten years before—see “Torzhestvennoe zasedanie v Bol’shom teatre, posviashchennoe stoletiiu so dnia smerti A. S. Pushkina,” *Pravda*, February 11, 1937, 3. Months later, Tikhonov and Fadeev launched a campaign to “defend” Pushkin against literary critics who supposedly downplayed his appreciation of native Russian literary practices and overemphasized the degree to which the poet had been influenced by Western literature. Although they initially attributed this position to I. Nusinov’s monograph *Pushkin i mirovaia literatura* (Moscow, 1941), the pogrom quickly spread to engulf much of A. Veselovskii’s “school” of literary criticism. See N.

- Tikhonov, "V zashchitu Pushkina," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, May 9, 1947, 4; A. Fadeev, "O sovetskom patriotizme i nizkopoklonstve pered zagranitsej," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 29, 1947, 1; generally, Robert M. Hankin, "Post-war Soviet Ideology and Literary Scholarship," in *Through the Glass of Soviet Literature: Views of Russian Society*, ed. Ernest J. Simmons (New York, 1953), 265–279.
7. A hero of socialist labor named I. S. Morozov, for instance, saluted Pushkin for the fact that "he always thought of his country, of Russia, and honored the Russian people, extolling its heroic feats." TsAODM 4/39/224/17.
  8. "Moskva prazdnichnaia," *Pravda*, September 7, 1947, 2; "Navstrechu slavnomu iubileiu," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 2, 1947, 1; "Nakanune 800-letia Moskvy," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, August 20, 1947, 1; I. Vlasov, "Moskva—natsional'naia gordost' sovetskogo naroda," *Pravda*, September 5, 1947, 4. Generally, see *Moskva Poslevoennnaia, 1945–1947: Arkhivnye dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow, 2000), 221–229, 234–258.
  9. "Navstrechu slavnomu iubileiu," 1; also TsAODM 4/39/114/152.
  10. TsAODM 3/81/89/6, 10, 62; also *Literaturnaia gazeta's* entire September 6, 1947, edition.
  11. "Privetstvie tov. I. V. Stalina," *Pravda*, September 7, 1947, 1.
  12. Chapter 11, pp. 185–187.
  13. TsAODM 3/81/89/102; also Chapter 11, p. 193.
  14. "Zakladka pamiatnika Iuriiu Dolgorukomu," *Pravda*, September 8, 1947, 2; also S. Boianov [S. O. Shmidt], "Iurii Dolgorukii," *Leningradskaia pravda*, September 6, 1947, 3.
  15. A report on Moscow schools in 1948, for instance, noted one teacher's reference to Ivan Martos's 1818 Red Square statue of Minin and Pozharskii at School No. 520. See RGASPI 17/132/192/156ob; also "Ekskursiia na Krasnoi ploshchadi u Sobora Vasilii Blazhennogo," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, February 12, 1947, 2.
  16. L. Nikulin, "Kolybel' russkoi kul'tury," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, August 28, 1947, 3; S. Bogomazov, "Moskva v russkoi literature," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, September 5, 1947, 2; "Rech' akademika S. I. Vavilova," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, September 8, 1947, 2.
  17. Marcus C. Levitt, *Russian Literary Politics and the Pushkin Celebration of 1880* (Ithaca, 1989), 167. For print runs, see *Bibliografiia proizvedenii A. S. Pushkina, 1949: Iubileinyi god* (Moscow, 1951). Generally, RGASPI 17/132/232.
  18. A. Fadeev, "Svetlyi i vseob'emliushchii genii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, June 8, 1949, 1; Levitt, *Russian Literary Politics*, 167–168. At times, of course, the postwar mobilization of Pushkin preceded rather less than gracefully. Pushkin's "Exegi monumentum," which had been an official mantra of sorts during the late 1930s, is a good example. According to one account, the poem had to be recited in the public schools during the late 1940s without the lines "and the friend of the steppe—the Kalmyk [*i drug stepei, Kalmyk*]," insofar as this

ethnic group had been deported by the NKVD in 1944 along with the Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and others for alleged collaboration with Nazi occupiers. Interview with G. I. Bogin (Tver'), December 29, 1999. On "Execi monumentum," see Chapter 5, n. 76.

19. See RGASPI 17/132/79/7–25.
20. See RGASPI 17/125/424/60; HP 46/a/4/22. Also, the remarks of thirteen other respondents: HP 1/a/1/20, 41, 46; HP 2/a/1/35; HP 18/a/2/65; HP 17/a/2/78; HP 25s/a/3/40; HP 26/a/3/74; HP 34/a/4/41; HP 34s/a/4/33; HP 41/a/4/46–47; HP 46/a/4/22; HP 61/a/5/35; HP 62/a/6/32; HP 66s/a/6/17. For another reading survey, see A. Bobrov, "O chtenii sel'skoi molodezhi," *Bibliotekar'* 9–10 (1946): 36–38. Others inflated the popularity of Soviet fiction by excluding prerevolutionary titles from their scope of inquiry. See P. Gurov, "Chto chitaiut molodye chitateli moskovskikh bibliotek iz sovetsskoi khudozhestvennoi literatury," *Bibliotekar'* 8 (1948): 33–35. Generally, Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetsskogo chitatelia: sotsial'nye i esteticheskie predposylki retseptssii sovetsskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg, 1997), chap. 8.
21. A. N. Tolstoi, *Petr I*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1946).
22. K. Osipov, *Doroga na Berlin: Istoricheskii roman* (Moscow, 1946); V. I. Kostylev, *Ivan Groznyi, Nevskaiia tverdynia* (Moscow, 1947).
23. Iu. Slezkin, *Brusilov: Roman* (Moscow, 1947); L. Rakovskii, *Generalissimus Suvorov* (Moscow, 1947); Rakovskii, *Admiral Ushakov* (Moscow, 1952); M. Iakhontova, *Korabli rykhodiut v more* (Moscow, 1945); G. Shtorm, *Flotvodets Ushakov* (Moscow, 1947).
24. Boris Polevoi, *Povest' o nastoiashchem cheloveke* (Moscow, 1947), 14.
25. Vasilii Azhaev, *Daleko ot Moskvy* (Moscow, 1948), 339, 416, 482, 539, and Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Ithaca, 1997), 236. The engineer's statement is an oblique reference to Stalin's famous celebration of the "revolutionary Russian sweep-of-the-hand"—imagery that Molotov would use almost four decades later in *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika F. Chueva* (Moscow, 1991), 90.
26. Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917–1991* (New York, 1997), chap. 3, esp. 106–115; also Thomas Lahusen, "The Ethnicization of Nations: Russia, the Soviet Union, and the People," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94:4 (1995): 1110–1113.
27. See, for instance, RGASPI 17/132/103/119. Used bookstores trading in "trophy" literature—chiefly European pornography, sensationalist novels containing explicit descriptions of heterosexual or homosexual intimacy, and politically unsanctioned tracts—were particularly targeted. See RGASPI 17/125/442/30–44, esp. 32–33; also Ermolaev, *Censorship*, 131–136.
28. Apparently only 10 percent of the letters received by the All-Union Committee for Radio Broadcasting during the first postwar decade concerned political programming. See Elena Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetsskoe obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow, 1999), 184.

29. GARF 6903/10/3/5.
30. See GARF 6903/10/3/10–37.
31. See GARF 6903/10/3/3. The characterization of state radio's repertoire by one of those calling for more folk music—"at present, it's just *Ivan Susanin* and more *Ivan Susanin*; there's nothing more to listen to"—obliquely testifies to the already high profile of the Russian classical canon. These musical tastes persisted into the post-Stalin period—see 6903/10/10/2, 6–8.
32. B. Rostotskii, "Geroicheskii obraz: 'Polkovodets' v Tsentral'nom teatre Krasnoi armii," *Teatr* 2 (1945): 6–10; Iurii Osnos, "P'esa o tsare Ivane IV," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, June 29, 1946, 4.
33. "49-i sezon MKhATa," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, June 8, 1947, 3.
34. "'Boris Godunov': Narodnaia muzykal'naia drama Musorgskogo na stsene Bol'shogo teatra," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, May 21, 1947, 4; V. Bogdanov-Berezovskii, "'Voina i mir' Prokof'eva: Leningradskii Maliy opernyi teatr," *Teatr* 7 (1947): 6–8; E. Varvatsi, "'Sevastopol'tsy': Opera M. Kovalia v Molotovskom teatre opery i baleta," *Pravda*, December 26, 1946, 4; K. Samoilov, "Opera o Dmitrii Donskom," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, August 2, 1947, 3. Scandal dogged *Boris Godunov*. After a difficult season under M. Khrapchenko in the spring of 1947, the opera was restaged under a different director in 1948. Liberties were taken at that time with the original script in order to make "the people" in the piece more animated and heighten Godunov's profile as a strong, "willful leader." Agitprop, however, remained unsatisfied. See RGASPI 17/132/84/87–88.
35. "Razvivat' i sovershenstvovat' sovetskuiu muzyku," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, March 21, 1948, 3. On early hesitation regarding the Russian classics, see V. Surin, "Repertuar opernykh teatrov," *Teatr* 1 (1947): 17–27; generally, Kiril Tomoff, "Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 179–241.
36. As with historiography, the *zhdanovshchina's* criticism of sentimentalism vis-à-vis the past on the theatrical and operatic stage seems to have been directed primarily against backward-looking *republican* theatrical works. Zhdanov's comments, addressed to a gathering of influential members of the Soviet musical world on January 13, 1948, followed the party hierarchy's criticism of modern opera. See "Ob opere 'Velikaia družba' V. Muradeli," *Teatr* 3 (1948): 4; "Za klassicheskuiu sovetskuiu operu," *Teatr* 4 (1948): 3–6; V. Kukharskii, "Russkaia klassika v opernom teatre," *Teatr* 7 (1948): 28–35.
37. Surin, "Repertuar opernykh teatrov," 24. Exceptions to this rule, e.g., Korneichuk's *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* or I. Kocherga's *Iaroslav the Wise*, had already received approval from the party authorities. See M. Krushel'nitskii, "Traditsii, repertuar," *Teatr* 2 (1945): 60; Serguei Ekeltchik [Serhy Yekelchik], "History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2000), chap. 8.
38. RGASPI 17/125/311/127–129.
39. "Russkaia klassika v natsional'nykh teatrakh," *Teatr* 2 (1945): 59; "Smotr

- russkoi klassiki," *Teatr* 3–4 (1946): 64; M. Grigor'ev, "Klassika i sovremenost'," *Teatr* 5–6 (1946): 17–22; "Russkii teatr v bratskoi respublike," *Teatr* 7 (1948): 3–5.
40. "Russkaia klassika v natsional'nykh teatrah," 59.
  41. "Bol'she vysokokhudozhestvennykh fil'mov," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, October 10, 1947, 1; M. Chiaureli, "Nasushchnye zadachi sovetskoï kinodramaturgii," *Pravda*, January 15, 1949, 3. Two exceptions were the Orientalist *Taras Shevchenko* (I. Savchenko, 1951) and *Dzhambul* (E. Dzigan, 1953).
  42. Although the banning of the second part of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* would seem to contradict this reading of the resolution, a more sophisticated examination of the affair reveals that *Ivan the Terrible* was banned for insufficient idealization of the first Russian tsar. Both Eisenstein and Pyr'ev were subsequently offered the chance to continue work on the subject. See G. Mar'iamov, *Kremlevskii tsensor: Stalin smotrit kino* (Moscow, 1992), 94; also RGASPI 17/132/88/63–86; 17/132/249/114–116; Chapter 11, n. 12.
  43. Quoted in Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917–1953* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 242.
  44. See Pirogov (G. Kozintsev, 1947), *Michurin* (Dovzhenko, 1948), *Akademik Ivan Pavlov* (G. Roshal', 1949), *Aleksandr Popov* (G. Rappaport, 1949), *Zhukovskii* (Pudovkin, 1950), *Przheval'skii* (S. Iutkevich, 1951); also RGASPI 17/132/251/1–3, 72–80. Przheval'skii's portrayal in Soviet mass culture as someone with great love and respect for Asian cultures required the excision of a number of particularly "uncharitable" passages from his works regarding the Chinese. Compare, for instance, the original edition and the Soviet reprint of his *Mongoliia i strana Tangutov: Trekhletnee puteshestvie v vostochnoi nagornoi Azii* (St. Petersburg, 1875; Moscow, 1946). I am grateful to David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye for this reference.
  45. *Glinka* (L. Arnshtam, 1946), *Musorgskii* (Roshal', 1950), *Rimskii-Korsakov* (Roshal', 1953); also V. Kozhevnikov, "Fil'm o velikom russkom kompozitore," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, February 11, 1947, 4; *Belinskii* (Kozintsev, 1950).
  46. *Admiral Nakhimov* (Pudovkin, 1946), *Kreiser 'Variag'* (V. Eizymont, 1947), *Admiral Ushakov* (Romm, 1953). When Pudovkin initially cast Nakhimov as a matchmaker who enjoyed coordinating his officers' romantic liaisons at balls and other courtly events, the Central Committee intervened swiftly and decisively. See "O kinofil'me 'Bol'shaia zhizn'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, September 14, 1946, 1. When recut, the film won a Stalin Prize—see V. Stepanov, "Kinofil'm 'Admiral Nakhimov,'" *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, December 31, 1946, 4; Stepanov, "Vydaiushchiesia proizvedeniia sovetskoï kinematografii," *Kul'tura i zhizn'*, June 10, 1947, 4.
  47. See *Vecherniaia Moskva*, October 23, 1947, 4; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, November 11, 1947, 4.
  48. "Kinoteatry gotoviatsia k iubilciu," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, August 11, 1947, 2; "Iubileinyi kinofestival'," *Pravda*, August 23, 1947, 3.

49. "Svodnaia programma No. 1," *Vechniaia Moskva*, August 25, 1947, 4; also *Vechniaia Moskva*, October 13, 1947, 4. See n. 42 above. On the popularity of historical film, see HP 25s/a/3/40; HP 41/a/4/47; HP 64/a/6/35.
50. "Novye otdely Ermitazha," *Pravda*, October 13, 1946, 2; "Istorii russkoi kul'tury: Novyi otdel v Ermitazhe," *Pravda*, December 22, 1946, 4. See also *Geroicheskoe voennoe proshloe russkogo naroda [Putevoditel' po vystavke v Gos. Ermitazhe]* (Moscow, 1953); *Vystavka materialov po istorii russkoi kul'tury XVIII veka: Putevoditel'* (Leningrad, 1949).
51. "V Tret'iakovskoi gallerce," *Vechniaia Moskva*, August 28, 1947, 3.
52. OR GTG 8.II/12/59ob, 139ob. I am grateful to Jan Plamper for bringing this source to my attention.
53. "Vystavka russkoi grafiki," *Pravda*, January 16, 1949, 4.
54. "Vosstanovlen muzei I. Nikitina," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 18, 1946, 1; "Muzei N. A. Nekrasova," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 16, 1946, 4; "Muzei L. N. Tolstogo v Astapove," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 23, 1946, 4; "Otkrytie pamiatnika N. G. Chernyshevskomu v Leningrade," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 8, 1947, 3.
55. "Pamiati A. S. Pushkina," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 8, 1947, 4; "Pamiati velikogo poeta," *Vechniaia Moskva*, January 31, 1947, 3; *Posledniaia kvartira A. S. Pushkina*, 4; also "Dom, gde zhil Pushkin," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 18, 1946, 1.
56. "K 800-letiiu Moskvy," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 1, 1947, 4; "Vystavki, posviashchennye istorii Moskvy," *Pravda*, July 19, 1947, 2; "Khudozhestvennaia vystavka k 800-letiiu Moskvy," *Pravda*, July 31, 1947, 2; "V Muzee istorii i rekonstruktsii Moskvy," *Pravda*, August 10, 1947, 4; A. Shabanov, "V Muzee istorii i rekonstruktsii Moskvy," *Pravda*, August 26, 1947, 2.
57. TsAODM 4/39/201/94–95, 102–103; G. Z., "Konferentsiia uchitelei istorii g. Moskvy," *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole 1* (1947): 72; *Nachal'naiia shkola: Nastol'naiia kniga uchitelia*, ed. M. A. Mel'nikov (Moscow, 1950), 164; E. N. Medynskii, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR* (Moscow, 1952), 22.
58. *Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii muzei: Putevoditel' po zalu "Obrazovanie Russkogo gosudarstva"* (Moscow, 1951), 3; also *Galleriia Petra I [Putevoditel' po vystavke v Gos. Ermitazhe]* (Leningrad, 1949).
59. RGASPI 17/132/192/218ob.
60. OR GTG 8.II/12, 27; November 3, 1948, entry in "Dnevnik T. P. Mazur, 1947–1948," TsDNA 314/1/23/36.

#### 14. The Popular Reception of Ideology during Stalin's Last Decade

1. TsAODM 4/39/88/74.
2. TsAODM 4/39/88/767. A brigadier named Bykoder at Moscow's Factory No. 10 was more belligerent in a statement made upon the Red Army's entrance into Berlin: "Germany will remember for a hundred years that one

- shouldn't mess with the Russians." Similar sentiments were expressed by coal stoker Noskov at the Borets factory. See 4/39/88/74/37–38.
3. TsAODM 4/39/88/73–74. Students also drew comparisons between the Russians' entrance into Germany during the Seven Year's War and the 1945 capture of Berlin. See GARF 2306/70/3252/46. On the play *The Keys to Berlin*, see Chapter 9, p. 156.
  4. See, for instance, E. Iu. Zubkova, "Mir mnenii Sovetskogo cheloveka, 1945–1948 gody: Po materialam TsK VKP(b)," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3, 4 (1998): 25–39, 99–108; Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow, 2000); Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945–1953* (Montreal, 1999), esp. chap. 4; Amir Weiner, "The Making of a Dominant Myth: The Second World War and the Construction of Political Identities within the Soviet Polity," *Russian Review* 55:4 (1996): 638–660; Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Postwar Soviet Society: the 'Return to Normalcy,' 1945–1953," in *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union*, ed. Susan J. Linz (Princeton, 1985), 129–156.
  5. TsAODM 3/61/46/135–136, published in *Moskva poslevoennaia, 1945–1947: Arkhivnye dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow, 2000), 52–53.
  6. To be sure, objections were rare and informers may have had ulterior motives for ascribing dissenting views to non-Russians. Nevertheless, an executive at a book printing factory named Pasmannik noted to Ianushpol'skaia, a communist official, "it surprises me that C[omrade] Stalin, who has always underscored the importance of internationalism in our country, now has singled out the Russian people." An engineer at the People's Commissariat of Electricity named Epshtein commented, "I am anxious, as C[omrade] Stalin's appraisal of the Russian people's role in the Patriotic War might lead to their self-aggrandizement and to the setting of one nation against another." Equally interesting is the grumbling of workers at the Stankolit factory, who wondered "why C[omrade] Stalin spoke only of the Russian people, as the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples endured greater hardship and also heroically fought against the enemy." See TsAODM 3/61/46/135–136, published in *Moskva poslevoennaia*, 53. Other objections ranged from those of the communist idealist Z. L. Bentskovich-Ligetti (the wife of Hungarian revolutionary Karoi Ligetti) to those of a Sverdlovsk schoolteacher named A. S. Ladeishchnikov, who wondered if Stalin's emphasis on "patience" didn't flirt excessively with the legacy of nineteenth-century slavophilism, Dostoevskian *pochvennichestvo* nativism, and Tolstoian idealization of the peasantry. See NA IRI RAN 14/11/6–9, cited in G. D. Burdei, *Istoriik i voina, 1941–1945* (Saratov, 1991), 196–199.
  7. TsAODM 4/39/88/33.
  8. TsAODM 4/39/88/34. The "five animosities" were apparently detailed in "Rech' tov. I. V. Stalina pri podpisanii dogovora o druzhbe, vzaimnoi pomoshchi, i poslevoennom sotrudnichestve mezhdru Sovetskim Soiuzom i

Pol'skoi respublikoi" (April 21, 1945), in *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuza* (Moscow, 1946), 182–184. "Polack" and "Russky" are loose translations of "liakh" and "moskal'."

9. TsAODM 4/39/88/33. The verse is a loose translation of "Slavianskie l' ruch'i sol'iutsia v russkom more? Ono l' issiaknet? Vot vopros," a line from Pushkin's 1831 poem addressed to Adam Mickiewicz, "To the Detractors of Russia," which supported that year's suppression of a Polish uprising.
10. On prewar panslavism, see Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 1988); Eva Thompson, "Soviet Russian Writers and the Soviet Invasion of Poland in September 1939," in *The Search for Self-Definition in Russian Literature* (Houston, 1991), 158–166. Generally, A. M. Dubrovskii, "Ves' slavianskii mir dolzhen ob'edinit'sia': Ideia slavianskogo edinstva v ideologii VKP(b) v 1930–1940-kh gg.," in *Problemy slavianovedeniia: Sbornik nauchnykh statei i materialov*, vol. 1 (Briansk, 2000), 195–209. Panslavism found considerable sympathy—albeit quite briefly—among ordinary Soviet citizens. Starkova, a worker at Plant No. 18 in the Moskvoretskii district of Moscow, said that "the treaty [with Yugoslavia] will beat the fascist bands across the head like a hammer [and show that] never again will the Slavic peoples allow new aggression from Germany." A week later, when a second treaty was announced, Mishukova, a weaver at the Krasnokholmsk combine, and Dem'ianovskii, head of a workshop at Factory No. 381, agreed that "the Germans' determination to annihilate the Slavic peoples has been defeated. Stalin's nationality policies are leading to the unification and friendship of all the Slavic peoples." Moscow workers like Rybakov at Factory No. 70, Dubnetskii at Motorzavod, Kirsanov at an instrument factory, and Solov'ev at the Svarz plant made similar statements. See TsAODM 4/39/88/6, 12, 31–33, 98–99.
11. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie glazami leningradtsev, 1941–1945 (iz Arkhiva Upravleniia Federal'noi Sluzhby Bezopasnosti po g. Sankt-Peterburgu i Leningradskoi oblasti)* (St. Petersburg, 1996), 133. Russian respondents described Poles as "vengeful" in interviews for the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System. See HP 19/a/2/14; HP 51/a/5/47.
12. January 8, 1948, entry in Lidiia Chukovskaia, "Iz dnevnikovykh zapisci," *Literaturnoe obozrenie* 2 (1990): 93. Some effort was made among intellectuals during the second half of the 1940s to add substance to the poorly developed Soviet panslavist line. See N. A. Gorskaia, *Boris Dmitrievich Grekov* (Moscow, 1999), chaps. 4–5.
13. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie glazami leningradtsev*, 137.
14. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *ibid.*, 143.
15. TsAODM 4/39/88/81.

16. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie glazami leningradtsev*, 159. Schoolchildren echoed this sentiment even in 1950. See I. G. Dairi, "K itogam ekzamenov," *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 5 (1950): 78.
17. "Obrashchenie I. V. Stalina k narodu," in *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine*, 203–206.
18. TsAODM 4/39/88/77.
19. TsAODM 4/39/88/113. Of course, intrinsically "Soviet" historical analogies also informed people's understanding of current events. When a metallurgist at the Molotov plant named Zubritskii heard about Winston Churchill's famous 1946 iron curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri, he wondered aloud: "What does Churchill want? He wants war against the Soviet republic. Let him remember the year 1920," a reference to Soviet forces' purported defeat of interventionists from fourteen foreign countries during the civil war. See TsAODM 4/39/114/14.
20. RGASPI 17/117/1032/46–67, published in *"Literaturnyi front": Istoriiia politicheskoi tsenzury, 1932–1946—sbornik dokumentov*, ed. D. L. Babichenko (Moscow, 1994), 204.
21. Konstantin Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego vremeni: Razmysleniia o I. V. Staline* (Moscow, 1988), 129.
22. RGALI 1038/1/2117–40, excerpted in V. Vishnevskii, "Iz dnevnikov 1944–1948 gg.," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 38 (1998): 67, 74–75; also E. Levin, "Istoricheskaiia tragediia kak zhanr i kak sud'ba: Po stranitsam dvukh stenogramm 1944 i 1946 godov," *Iskustvo kino* 9 (1991): 83–92; Iosif Iuzovskii, "Eizenshtein," in *Eizenshtein v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1974), 412; R. Iurenev, *Sergei Eizenshtein—zamyssly, fil'my, metod*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1988), 276–279; RGALI 1923/1/2289/113ob; 2073/1/11/154–155.
23. See Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Ithaca, 1997), 153.
24. TsAODM 4/39/114/78. Interviews with Soviet refugees in postwar refugee camps in Germany revealed similar sentiments. See Eugenia Hanfmann and Helen Beier, *Six Russian Men: Lives in Turmoil* (North Quincy, Mass., 1976), 52–55, 66–67, 80, 97.
25. Tat'iana Leshchenko-Sukhomlina, *Dolgoe budushchee: Dnevnik-vospominaniia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1991), 238, 252, 256–258, 277.
26. See the May 9, June 15, and August 24, 1945, entries in Oleg Frelikh, "Chelovek 'ne sovetskikh nastroenii': Iz pisem i dnevnikov," *Iskustvo kino* 6 (1993): 144; Frelikh, "Chelovek vozvrashchaetsia domoi: Iz zapisei 30-kh godov," *Moskovskii nabliudatel'* 10 (1992): 61.
27. See Chapter 6, n. 53.
28. June 14, 1945, entry in Mikhail Prishvin, "Iz dnevnika 1945 goda," *Obraz* 2 (1995): 41. Philosophizing more broadly about the essence of the Russian character itself, Prishvin declared at one point that "the Russian's malady is his

- health and his idealism.” See June 4, 1946, entry in Prishvin, “Dnevnik,” *Literaturnoe obozrenie* 8 (1990): 104.
29. May 25, 1945, entry in Prishvin, “Iz dnevnika 1945 goda,” 39.
  30. February 1 and May 16, 1946, entries in Leshchenko-Sukhomlina, *Dolgoe budushchee*, 256, 258.
  31. TsAODM 3/61/46/137–140, published in *Moskva poslevoennaiia*, 50.
  32. Arkhiv UFSBg.SPbLO, published in *Mezhdunarodnoe polozenie glazami leningradtsev*, 156.
  33. Three interviews: HP 4/a/1/25; HP 14/a/2/51; HP 18/a/2/67.
  34. HP 6/a/1/74; HP 18/a/2/66.
  35. HP 8/a/1/32.
  36. Four interviews: HP 2/a/1/33; HP 14/a/2/51–52; HP 25/a/3/49; HP 33/a/4/34.
  37. Nine interviews: HP 6/a/1/74, 77; HP 13/a/2/47; HP 18/a/2/67; HP 25/a/3/49; HP 26/a/3/76; HP 28/a/3/18; HP 33/a/4/34; HP 34/a/4/35; HP 51/a/5/49.
  38. Four interviews: HP 2/a/1/33; HP 4/a/1/24; HP 14/a/2/51; HP 26/a/3/69.
  39. Thirteen interviews: HP 1/a/1/20, 41, 46; HP 2/a/1/35; HP 18/a/2/65; HP 17/a/2/78; HP 25s/a/3/40; HP 26/a/3/74; HP 34/a/4/41; HP 34s/a/4/33; HP 41/a/4/46–47; HP 46/a/4/22; HP 61/a/5/35; HP 62/a/6/32; HP 66s/a/6/17.
  40. Seven interviews: HP 1/a/1/20; HP 5/a/1/56; HP 10/a/1/23–24; HP 11/a/2/43; HP 17/a/2/74, 78; HP 26/a/3/74; HP 56/a/5/38.
  41. Five interviews: HP 5/a/1/56; HP 11/a/2/43, 49; HP 17/a/2/78; HP 26/a/3/75, 82; HP 33/a/4/45.
  42. HP 14/a/2/53; HP 18/a/2/60.
  43. These included recklessness, irresponsibility, and backwardness. See, for instance, HP 6/a/1/74; HP 14/a/2/51; HP 51/a/5/49.
  44. HP 56/a/5/25; also HP 5/a/1/33a.
  45. It is possible that the “profanity” referred to by the letter writer was merely a snide comment pointing out the lunacy of a Russian quoting a Georgian to a Yakut in an argument about the Russian people’s inherent primacy. See RGASPI 17/125/507/10.
  46. In describing the legitimacy of the Russian people’s claims to ethnic primacy, one respondent noted that “after the war, Stalin said, ‘Thanks to our Russian brothers, we have won the war.’” See HP 60/a/5/25. The Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System documents Russians’ tendency to patronize and Orientalize non-Russians (especially Ukrainians, Jews, Georgians, Armenians, and Kalmyks) in great detail.
  47. December 15, 1945, entry in Leshchenko-Sukhomlina, *Dolgoe budushchee*, 251.
  48. Iu. S. Aksenov, “Poslevoennyi stalinizm: Udar po intelligentsii,” *Kentavr* 1 (1991): 80–89.

49. On careerism, see seven interviews: HP 6/a/1/76–77; HP 28/a/3/18; HP 34/a/4/34; HP 42/a/4/35; HP 56/a/5/34; HP 58/a/5/24; HP 60/a/5/25; on trade, see ten interviews: HP 1/a/1/16; HP 4/a/1/24; HP 5/a/1/51; HP 6/a/1/76–77; HP 28/a/3/18; HP 33/a/4/34–35; HP 34/a/4/34; HP 42/a/4/35; HP 56/a/5/34; HP 61/a/5/51; on the shop floor, see eight interviews: HP 4/a/1/24; HP 6/a/1/76; HP 18/a/2/61; HP 26/a/3/69; HP 33/a/4/35; HP 58/a/5/24; HP 60/a/5/25; HP 61/a/5/51.
50. For early examples of the postwar tendency to juxtapose Russian and Jew, see the May 21, 1945, entry in Prishvin, “Iz dnevnika 1945 goda,” 39; and the July 11, 1945, entry in A. N. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis': Blokadnyi dnevnik* (St. Petersburg, 1998), 348.
51. Such claims are ironic in the sense that Agitprop had quietly purged the mainstream Soviet arts of non-Russian influence during the war. T. M. Zueva, the deputy chief of the Central Committee's Department of Cultural Enlightenment, reported to Shcherbakov already in the spring of 1944 that in the theatrical world, “the disdain [of the 1930s] for Russian culture has been more or less liquidated, although here and there moments remain. An array of concrete measures is being carried out. The Russian classics have been introduced into all the theaters. As a result of this, the repertoire has been enriched via the individual works of the Russian classics and Russian dramaturgists. The Directorate for Artistic Affairs' attention has been directed toward the issue of the development and strengthening of Russian national culture.” See RGASPI 17/125/221/20. Generally on the wartime purges, see Aksenov, “Poslevoennyi stalinizm,” 84–86; G. Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona: Politicheskie presledovaniia evreev v SSSR v poslednee stalinskoe desiatiletie* (Moscow, 1994), 9–14.
52. Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona*, 153–288; Kostyrchenko, “Ideologicheskie chistki vtoroi poloviny 40-kh godov: Pseudopatrioty protiv pseudokosmopolitov,” in *Rossia—XX vek*, vol. 4, part 2, *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: Vozniknovenie, razvitiie, istoricheskii final* (Moscow, 1997), 90–149.
53. For examples of the societal tensions, see Efim Kilinskii, “Vrachi-ubiitsy i ubiitsy vrachei,” in *SSSR: Vnutrennie protivorechiia*, vol. 14 (Benson, N.H., 1985), 197, 249. This is not to suggest that anti-Semitism became a problem only during the postwar period, of course. Sarah Davies shows conclusively that there was a more or less constant background noise of popular anti-Semitism in Soviet society during the 1920s and 1930s. See Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1933–1941* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), 83–88, 125–129, 132, 136.
54. RGANI 5/16/602/4–34, esp. 12, 35, 44–45. I am grateful to Sheila Fitzpatrick for bringing these *svodki* to my attention. See A. Lokshin, “‘Delo vrachei’: ‘Otkliki trudiashchikhsia,’” *Vestnik Evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve* 1 (1994): 52–62.

55. RGANI 5/16/602/43–47, esp. 43; also Boterbloem, *Life and Death*, 148.
56. RGANI 5/30/5/32.
57. RGANI 5/16/602/49–52, esp. 51–52.
58. As early as 1949, the historian S. S. Dmitriev was already blaming nationalism for his discipline's anti-Semitic excesses. See his "Iz dnevnikov Sergeia Sergeevicha Dmitrieva," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3 (1999): 149.
59. RGANI 5/30/5/36. An anonymous letter from Kuibyshev made the same point in more dramatic language: "For shame, for shame, comrades [*styd i sram, tovarishchi*]*—*fostering nationalist hatred instead of the class approach! This was not willed to us by Lenin. You have turned your backs on Marxism and Lenin's testament and have misled our Soviet people and started a pogrom in the spirit of the [tsarist-era] 'Union of the Russian People,' 'Union of the Archangel Michael,' and the Purishkeviches and Markovs." See RGANI 5/30/5/36.
60. For a study of anti-Semitism in the Soviet army during the spring of 1953, see V. Lazarev, "'Posledniaia bolezn' Stalina': Iz otchetov MGB SSSR o nastroeniakh v armii vesnoi 1953," in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia—XX vek*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1994), 253–260.
61. Compare this observation to others' discussion of high stalinism's single hybridized Russo-Soviet identity. See Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism* (New York, 1956), esp. 182; Jeffrey Brooks, *"Thank you, Comrade Stalin": Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 1999), esp. 195, 212–216, 226–227.
62. Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, 1994), 304.
63. See *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika F. Chueva* (Moscow, 1991), 90.

## Conclusion

1. On the Doctors' Plot, see G. Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona: Politicheskie presledovaniia evreev v SSSR v poslednee stalinskoe desiatiletie* (Moscow, 1994), 355–366; on the renunciation of mass political terror and the "socialist legality" campaigns, see N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniia: Izbrannye fragmenty* (Moscow, 1997), 285–299; on a settlement in Germany, see Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton, 1993), 185–191; Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, 1997), 17.
2. TsMAM 278/1/23, published in "Kusok kommunizma: Moskovskoe metro glazami sovremennikov," in *Moskovskii arkhiv: Istoriko-kraevedcheskii al'manakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1996), 348, 355.
3. RGANI 5/30/6/1ob.
4. RGANI 5/30/5/14. I am grateful to Sheila Fitzpatrick for bringing the letters in this file to my attention.

5. RGANI 5/30/5/45. The mention of bomb throwing is a confused reference to the enigmatic explosion at the Soviet diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv on February 9, 1953.
6. For other patronizing descriptions of non-Russian “loyalists” (in this case, ironically enough, the Kalmyks), see four interviews conducted in 1950: HP 1/a/1/17; HP 2/a/1/33; HP 26/a/3/70; HP 51/a/5/46.
7. For early directives denouncing the personality cult, see RGANI 5/30/7/51.
8. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniia*, 274. In an apparent effort to curry favor with Beria, Aleksandrov opportunistically lashed out against russocentric tendencies at the Academy of Sciences in March 1953. He asserted that there was no reason for the Academy’s Institute of Slavic History to exist, “as it is imperative to conduct the history of the peoples not according to the principle of their ethnic affiliation, but according to social-economic formations.” See RGANI 5/30/7/55.
9. Knight, *Beria*, 186–191, 227.
10. RGANI 5/30/39/23. Led by the Institute of History’s new chair, A. L. Sidorov, this campaign was explicitly juxtaposed against the accomplishments of the institute under B. D. Grekov, whose medieval interests had led more modern historical periods to be neglected. See 5/30/39/11–12, 20–26, 51.
11. February 13, 1954, entry in “Iz dnevnikov Sergeia Sergeevicha Dmitrieva,” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 6 (1999): 119; also 131.
12. RGANI 5/30/82/47–48.
13. See RGANI 5/30/82/99–100; also 5/18/41/89–91.
14. RGANI 5/18/75/90, 121. One of the most striking complaints about the Shestakov text came from the publisher of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a former U.S. senator named William Benton, who inexplicitly threatened to report the narrative’s distortions to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The Central Committee’s Department of Schools responded to its American critic by citing a 1951 article in the *New York Times* entitled “Schools Accused of Ignoring Russia” in order to undermine his “holier-than-thou attitude.” An internal memo was more straightforward, admitting that “this textbook, written ten years ago [*sic*], has ceased to answer the demands of modern science. The Ministry of Education is preparing a new fourth grade schoolbook on the history of the USSR at the present time.” See RGANI 5/18/77/11; Benjamin Fine, “Schools Accused of Ignoring Russia,” *New York Times*, March 5, 1951, 23.
15. In the days and weeks following the Secret Speech, internal memos indicate plans to rework one out of every four public school textbooks, including almost every title associated with history instruction. Singled out were Pankratova’s three-volume advanced history of the USSR and *Rodnaia rech’*. See RGANI 5/18/76/6, 9–10, 14–24, 30–33. Withdrawal of such central textbooks led officials to consider canceling the senior grades’ year-end exams to minimize the impact of the now bankrupt catechism.
16. RGANI 5/18/76/37–42.

17. It was Pankratova at the head of *Voprosy istorii* who helped undermine the stalinist mythology concerning Ivan IV. The best account of the transformation is “Iz dnevnikov Sergeia Sergeevicha Dmitrieva,” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 1 (2000): 158–172, esp. 164–171. For examples of two incendiary articles that hint at the controversy it precipitated in the historical establishment, see S. M. Dubrovskii, “Protiv idealizatsii deiatel’nosti Ivana IV,” *Voprosy istorii* 8 (1956): 121–129; and M. D. Kurmacheva, “Ob otsenke deiatel’nosti Ivana Groznogo,” *Voprosy istorii* 9 (1956): 195–203. Generally, see L. A. Sidorova, “Anna Mikhailovna Pankratova,” *Istoricheskaia nauka Rossii v XX veke* (Moscow, 1997), 429–433; and Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia* (New York, 2001), 179–191. S. M. Dubrovskii, best known for leading the attack on the cult of Ivan the Terrible, also assailed the erection of Moscow’s statue to Iurii Dolgorukii during the Khrushchev thaw. It was inappropriate, according to the scholar, for monuments to leaders as “socially alien” as a twelfth-century prince to occupy prominent positions in the capital of a socialist state. For one polemic, written as a letter to the editor of *Izvestiia*, see OR RGB 797/17/12/1–6, published in *Moskovskii arkhiv: Istoriko-kraevedcheskii al’manakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1996), 341–342.
18. Lowell Tillelt, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 194–284.
19. A loose translation of V. Kharitonov’s 1972 lyrics “Moi adres ne dom i ne ulitsa / Moi adres—Sovetskii Soiuz!”—see *Russkie sovetskie pesni, 1917–1977* (Moscow, 1977), 505. See also Roman Szporluk, “The Russian Question and Imperial Overextension,” in *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Karen Darwisha and Bruce Parrot (Armonk, 1997), 82; Szporluk, “Introduction: Statehood and Nation-Building in the Post Soviet Space,” in *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Roman Szporluk (Armonk, 1994), 5; Szporluk, “Nationalities and the Russian Problem in the USSR,” *Journal of International Affairs* 27:1 (1973): 40; also Vera Tolz, *Russia: Imagining the Nation* (New York, 2001), 182–183, 203–204.
20. Rogers Brubaker contends that association with the “Soviet people” served as a parallel sense of *supranational* identity linking the ethnically defined Soviet nations—see his *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), 28.
21. “Otchetnyi doklad TsK KPSS XXIV s’ezdu Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzna,” *Kommunist* 5 (1971): 61. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that republican elites were actually unnerved by announcements that the Soviet nations were “drawing closer together” toward a state of “complete unity,” which might eventually render the USSR’s federal structure obsolete. This was likely seen as little more than russification “with a human face”—and the presence of stalinist euphemisms within the party platform (“the great Russian people”) as well as chauvinistic claims about the Russian language’s role as the nationalities’ link to world culture could not have helped much.

- See, for instance, “Rezoliutsii i resheniia Dvadsat’ vtorogo s’ezda KPSS” (1961), in *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s’ezdov, konferentsii, i plenumor TsK*, vol. 8 (Moscow, 1972), 206, 212, 284–285.
22. Yitzhak Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 43.
  23. See, for instance, John B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton, 1984), 32–36, 63–92; Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 553–562, 592; *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: The Dilemma of Dominance*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York, 1980). For another view, see Mikhail Agursky, “The Prospects for National Bolshevism,” in *The Last Empire: Nationalism and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, 1986), esp. 96–106.
  24. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 59. On the nationalist *samizdat* movement, composed of radicals unwilling to reach a *modus vivendi* with the regime, see Liudmila Alekseeva, *Istoriia inakomyслиia v SSSR* (Benson, Vt., 1984), 396–413.
  25. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 60.
  26. *Ibid.*, 103–107.
  27. Jack V. Haney, “The Consequences of Seeking Roots,” in Allworth, *Ethnic Russia in the USSR*, 73; L. V. Sokolova, “K istorii spora o podlinnosti ‘Slova o polku Igoreve’: Iz perepiski akademika D. S. Likhacheva,” *Ruskaia literatura* 2 (1994): 221.
  28. Ellipses in original. V. Chalmayev, “Neizbezhnost’,” *Molodaia gvardiia* 9 (1968): 264. On the scandal surrounding this piece, see Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, 281–227.
  29. Artists who favored similar themes include A. Shilov and Iu. Raksha.
  30. Abramov, Astaf’ev, Belov, Rasputin, Shukshin, and Soloukhin, with their allies Iu. Bondarev, A. Ivanov, V. Pikul’, and P. Proskurin, outnumbered two-to-one the more liberal and less russocentric contingent on the list: Ch. Aitmatov, V. Bykov, Iu. Nagibin, Simonov, and Iu. Trifonov. See Klaus Mehnert, *Russians and their Favorite Books* (Stanford, 1983).
  31. Over 62 million people were reported to have seen *Kalina krasnaia* (Shukshin, 1974), while Glazunov’s famous 1978 Moscow exhibition and 1979 Leningrad exhibition drew crowds of visitors numbering upward of 400,000 and 1 million, respectively. See “Chto proiskhodit v kino,” *Literaturnaiia gazeta*, January 14, 1987, 8; O. Volkov, “‘Ia uvidel Rossiiu’: Zametki o tvorchestve Il’i Glazunova,” *Nash sovremennik* 3 (1979): 174–183; S. Bobrikov, “Otzyvchivost’,” *Volga* 9 (1979): 159–164; generally, Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 109.
  32. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 36–39.
  33. On the popularity of the official line before 1953, see Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, ed. George Shriver (New York, 1989), 716–717.

## Appendix

1. The best published pieces on Soviet history textbooks in the 1930s are A. N. Artizov, “V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia (konkurs 1936 g. na uchebnik po istorii SSSR)” *Kentavr* 1 (1991): 125–135; A. M. Dubrovskii, “Veskiu uchebnik’ i arkhivnye materialy,” in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1996* (Moscow, 1998), 181–195; Dubrovskii, “A. A. Zhdanov v rabote nad shkol’nym uchebnikom istorii,” in *Otechestvennaia kul’tura i istoricheskaia nauka XVIII–XX vekov: Sbornik statei* (Briansk, 1996), 128–143.
2. RGASPI 17/3/942/7; 17/120/358/72. The committee consisted of Bubnov, L. M. Kaganovich, V. V. Kuibyshev, Stalin, Stetskii, and Zhdanov.
3. Mints’s Moscow brigade consisted of E. A. Morokhovets, M. V. Nechkina, V. E. Syrocchkovskii, and B. E. Syrocchkovskii; Malyshev’s Leningrad group included V. N. Bernadskii, I. V. Gittis, T. S. Karpova, and L. I. Fel’dman. For the preliminary composition of the textbook brigades not detailed here, see *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1935), 137. The composition of the two brigades working on the elementary history of the USSR texts was not published. See generally RGASPI 17/120/358/72–73.
4. *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s’ezd sovetskikh pisatelei, 1934: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1934), 18.
5. The review process, taking place in Sochi, was in all likelihood dominated by Stalin. One possibly apocryphal account has Kirov trying to avoid participating entirely: “But Iosif Vissarionovich, since when am I a historian? [*Kakoi zhe ia istorik?*]” Stalin’s reply would set the tone for the collaborative effort: “Don’t worry—sit down and listen! [*Nichego, sadis’ i slushai!*]” See S. Krasnikov, *Sergei Mironovich Kirov: Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’* (Moscow, 1964), 196; also Alla Kirilina, *Rikoshet, ili skol’ko chelovek bylo ubito vystrelom v Smol’nom* (St. Petersburg, 1993), 85–88; Kirilina, *Neizvestnyi Kirov: Mify i real’nost’* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 324–328.
6. Initially issued as private communiqués to editorial brigades concentrating on modern history and the history of the USSR in August 1934, the “Observations” became widely known to historians only in late January 1936 after their publication in *Pravda*. Because they appeared in print out of context and eighteen months late, commentators ever since have struggled to interpret the “Observations” correctly. See, for instance, M. V. Nechkina, “K itogam diskussii o periodizatsii istorii sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauki,” *Istoriia SSSR* 2 (1962): 73; Nicholas Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York, 1947), 222; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, Eng., 1979), 232.

Typically, the “Observations” are seen as a stalinist endorsement of the internationalist historiography of the 1920s, as they invoke paradigms popularized by M. N. Pokrovskii in his vigorous critique of the prerevolutionary Rus-

sian treatment of domestic minorities and foreign neighbors (“Russia—prison of the peoples” and “Russia as the international gendarme”). Characterized in such a fashion, they are rarely recognized as a transitional stage between the internationalist historiography of the 1920s and the emerging russocentric statist tendencies of the late 1930s.

A close reading of the “Observations” reveals that their Pokrovskiiian echoes were intermixed with new calls for the assimilation of the histories of the non-Russian peoples into a unified narrative on the history of the USSR—a style of history writing that inherently privileged aspects of the Russian national past. Moreover, references in the “Observations” to tsarism as the international gendarme must be interpreted in light of Stalin’s nuancing of this thesis in a July 1934 letter to the Politburo, in which he argued that because *all* European powers had been forces of reaction in the nineteenth century, St. Petersburg should not be singled out for condemnation on account of its repressive actions. Finally, the rewording of “Russia—prison of the peoples” and “Russia as the international gendarme” into “tsarism—prison of the peoples” and “tsarism as the international gendarme” shifted the semantics of these epithets from a broad critique of an ethnic empire to a narrow critique of its administrative system. In essence, although “prison of the peoples” and “international gendarme” had been damning indictments of the Russian past in the mid-1920s, a decade later they were undergoing a gradual neutralization. In this regard, the “Observations” belie the regime’s gradual embrace of a more pragmatic view of history while retaining elements of earlier, more idealistic internationalism. Generally, see I. Stalin, A. Zhdanov, S. Kirov, “Zamechaniia po povodu konspekta uchebnika po ‘Istorii SSSR,’” and “Zamechaniia o konspekte uchebnika ‘Novoi istorii,’” *Pravda*, January 27, 1936, 2; also RGASPI 558/1/3156, 3157. For Stalin’s views on the “international gendarme,” see I. Stalin, “O stat’e Engel’sa ‘Vneshniaia politika russkogo tsarizma,’” *Bol’shevik* 9 (1941): 3–4; A. Latyshev, “Kak Stalin Engel’sa svergal,” *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, December 22, 1992, 4.

7. RGASPI 558/3/217/1. See the page proofs to *Elementarnyi kurs istorii SSSR: Uchebnik dlia nachal’noi shkoly*, ed. Z. B. Lozinskii, V. N. Bernadskii, I. V. Gittis, T. S. Karpova, and L. I. Fel’dman, and *Elementarnyi kurs istorii SSSR dlia nachal’noi shkoly*, ed. I. I. Mints, E. A. Morokhovets, M. V. Nechkina, B. E. Syroechkovskii, and V. E. Syroechkovskii, at RGASPI 558/3/189, 190, 217, 218.
8. RGASPI 558/3/189/86–87.
9. A. N. Artizov, “Shkola Pokrovskogo i sovetskaia istoricheskaiia nauka (konets 1920-kh—1930-e gody)” (Doctoral diss., Gos. akademiia sfery byta i uslug, 1998), 123–124; Artizov, “V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia,” 127; RGASPI 17/120/356/108–113; also V. A. Bystrianskii, “Kriticheskie zamechaniia ob uchebnikakh po istorii SSSR,” *Pravda*, February 1, 1936, 2–3. An acceptable advanced text on the history of the USSR would not be produced until late 1940—see n. 42 below.

10. Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1929–1941* (New York, 1990), 531–532; I. I. Mints, “Stalin v grazhdanskoi voine: Mify i fakty,” *Voprosy istorii* 11 (1989): 48.
11. See the page proofs to *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR* at RGASPI 17/120/355, esp. 217, 235, 299; 106, 145, 150; 134, 146, 158; 20–25, 78, 102, 124; 156; 127, 201, 45, 118, 247. Mints recalled that on the eve of publication, Stalin insisted that pictures of Trotskii, Zinov’ev, and Kamenev be included in the book in the name of historical accuracy. Kaganovich and Voroshilov protested, warning that “the people won’t understand the inclusion of portraits of people who’ve undergone such sharp criticism.” Ultimately, the pictures were included in the book’s deluxe edition and excised from the edition intended for mass audiences. See Mints, “Stalin v grazhdanskoi voine,” 49.
12. See Boris Zaks, “Censorship at the Editorial Desk,” in *The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR*, ed. Marianna Tax Choldin and Maurice Friedberg (Boston, 1989), 157.
13. The commission consisted of Bubnov, K. Ia. Bauman, Bystrianskii, N. I. Bukharin, G. S. Fridliand, P. O. Gorin, Ia. A. Iakovlev, F. U. Khodzhaev, I. M. Lukin, K. B. Radek, A. S. Svanidze, and V. P. Zatonskii. See RGASPI 558/1/3156/8.
14. See David Brandenberger, “Who Killed Pokrovskii (the Second Time)? The Prelude to the Denunciation of the Father of Soviet Marxist Historiography, January 1936,” *Revolutionary Russia* 11:1 (1998): 67–73.
15. A. N. Artizov, “Kritika M. N. Pokrovskogo i ego shkoly,” *Istoriia SSSR* 1 (1991): 102–121; George Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat: M. N. Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians* (University Park, 1978), 187–199. The 1936 press campaign against Pokrovskii, timed with the landmark publication of Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kirov’s 1934 “Observations,” created the impression that the anti-Pokrovskii line had been sanctioned two years earlier than it actually had. As a result, the campaign acquired considerable inertia practically overnight. See M. V. Nechkina, “Vopros o M. N. Pokrovskom v postanovleniakh partii i pravitel’sтва 1934–1938 gg. o prepodavanii istorii i istoricheskoi nauki,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 118 (1990): 232–246, esp. 236–239.
16. A. A. Chernobaev, “Professor s pikoi,” ili *Tri zhizni istorika M. N. Pokrovskogo* (Moscow, 1992), 203; Artizov, “Kritika M. N. Pokrovskogo,” 110.
17. Zhdanov seems to have developed the idea for the competition, although he subsequently gave Stalin formal credit. See RGASPI 558/1/3156/8, 12; 77/1/571/22. On mass campaigns, see J. Arch Getty, “State and Society under Stalin: Constitutions and Elections in the 1930s,” *Slavic Review* 50:1 (1991): 18–35.
18. The jury’s preliminary composition included Zhdanov, Bauman, Bubnov, Bukharin, Bystrianskii, Gorin, Iakovlev, Khodzhaev, Svanidze, and Zatonskii. See RGASPI 17/120/358/4. For Bukharin’s communiqué, see 17/120/359/9–12; also 77/1/829/12–15.

19. "Ob organizatsii konkursa na luchshii uchebnik dlia nachal'noi shkoly po elementarnomu kursu istorii SSSR," *Pravda*, March 4, 1936, 1.
20. See Chapter 3, p. 49.
21. See [N. I. Bukharin,] "Nuzhna li nam marksistskaia istoricheskaia nauka? (O nekotorykh sushchestvenno vazhnykh, no nesostoiatel'nykh vzgliadakh tov. M. N. Pokrovskogo)," *Izvestiia*, January 27, 1936, 3–4; [K. B. Radek,] "Prepodavanie istorii v nashei shkole," *Pravda*, January 27, 1936, 1; Bystrianskii, "Kriticheskie zamechaniia," 2–3.
22. See *Na fronte istoricheskoi nauki: V Sovnarkome Soiuzna SSR* (Moscow, 1936).
23. "Znat' i liubit' istoriiu svoei Rodiny," *Pravda*, March 7, 1936, 1.
24. RGASPI 17/120/359/185–189, 158–164; also 17/120/365/235–238. Despite his interest in the competition, Bulgakov apparently failed to submit his manuscript. See *Dnevnik Eleny Bulgakovoi*, ed. V. I. Losev and L. Ianovskaia (Moscow, 1990), 116, 367; Ia. S. Lur'e and V. M. Paneiakh, "Rabota M. A. Bulgakova nad kursom istorii SSSR," *Ruskaia literatura* 3 (1988): 183–193; Lev Shubin, "Goriat li rukopisi?" in *Surovaia drama naroda: Uchenye i publitsisty o prirode stalinizma* (Moscow, 1989), 453; E. F. Aleshina, "Partiinoe rukovodstvo istoricheskim obrazovaniem v srednei shkole v usloviakh sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v SSSR (1928–1927 gg.)" (Candidate's diss., Moscow State University, 1990), 147–148. The manuscript is stored at OR RGB 552.
25. Artizov, "V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia," 130; Artizov, "Sud'by istorikov shkoly M. N. Pokrovskogo (seredina 1930-kh godov)," *Voprosy istorii* 7 (1994): 37–38.
26. Artizov, "Sud'by istorikov," 47; Artizov, "V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia," 130–131.
27. Enormous amounts of material remain unstudied—see RGASPI 17/120/361–365; GARF 2306/70/2421.
28. RGASPI 17/120/359/13–14.
29. RGASPI 17/120/359/167–184, 18–33.
30. RGASPI 17/120/359/34–48.
31. Artizov, "V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia," 132. Insofar as Stalin and Zhdanov were not meeting regularly at the time, this conclusion seems somewhat tenuous. See "Posetiteli kremlevskogo kabineta I. V. Stalina: Zhurnaly (tetradi), zapisi lits, priniatykh pervym gensekom, 1924–1953," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 4 (1995): 32–37.
32. RGASPI 17/120/360/140. Ironically, Vinogradov had been one of Pokrovskii's professors.

Apparently asked to examine the possibility of reworking tsarist textbooks in lieu of continuing to struggle with the competition manuscripts, Stetskii showed little enthusiasm for the idea. He wrote: "prerevolutionary editions of Russian history textbooks (Ivanov, Platonov, Ilovaiskii, and others) cannot be used. All these textbooks promote religious-monarchist notions; in fact, the falsification of history in this sense strengthens particularly with the start of

- Catherine II[’s reign] . . . The history of the peoples of the USSR is not illuminated at all. The presentation ends abruptly at the end of the 19th century. Reworking these textbooks would be just as difficult as publishing new textbooks.” See RGVA 9/29s/323/110, 115.
33. RGASPI 17/120/359/49–63, 118–129.
  34. See “Postanovlenie zhiuri pravitel’svennoi komissii po konkursu na luchshii uchebnik dlia 3 i 4 klassov srednei shkoly po istorii SSSR,” *Pravda*, August 22, 1937, 2; also RGASPI 17/120/359/131–140.
  35. Artizov, “V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia,” 133.
  36. Shestakov’s brigade included N. G. Tarasov, N. D. Kuznetsov, A. S. Nifontov, D. N. Nikiforov, N. D. Firsov, and possibly A. Kazakov. Early consultants to the project included B. A. Gardanov, Iu. V. Got’e, Z. G. Grinberg, A. I. Kazachenko, D. Ia. Kin, and S. A. Nikitin. See RGASPI 588/3/374/2.
  37. Artizov, “Sud’by istorikov,” 34–48. In fact, they often worked in collaboration with surviving Marxists, the latter essentially serving as political commissars, policing what was really a return to the old state school of imperial historiography. Konstantin Shtepa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick, 1962), esp. 179; A. L. Sidorov, “Nekotorye razmyshleniia o trude i opyte istorika,” *Istoriia SSSR* 3 (1964): 132; Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat*, 190–191, 198.
  38. See RGASPI 17/120/363–365; 77/1/854; “Dnevnik Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Druzhinina,” *Voprosy istorii* 6, 7, 8 (1997): 98, 102–103; 121–123, 127, 131; 78–79, 85, 90; Dubrovskii, “A. A. Zhdanov v rabote,” 128–143; Dubrovskii, “Veskii uchebnik,” 181–195.
  39. Compare the page proofs at RGASPI 558/3/374 and 77/1/854 with *Kratkii kurs istorii SSSR*, ed. A. V. Shestakov (Moscow 1937).
  40. See Arkhiv RAN 638/2/105/16.
  41. Artizov, “Sud’by istorikov,” 37, 43; Artizov, “V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia,” 130, 134.
  42. Pankratova’s brigade reworked its manuscript to bring it into alignment with the 1937 critique, only to have to further modify it in 1938 to conform to the *Short Course on the History of the ACP(b)*. Bad reviews by Bystrianskii and Aleksandrov required two more full revisions before the text was sent to press in August 1939. See RGASPI 17/125/26/30; O. M. Shchodra, “Prepodavanie istorii SSSR v Moskovskom Gosudarstvennom Universitete (1934–1941),” *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta (Serii 8–istoriia)* 6 (1986): 15–24; “Dnevnik Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Druzhinina,” *Voprosy istorii* 10, 12 (1997): 88–92, 100–106; 63, 66–76, 81; *Istoriia SSSR: Uchebnik dlia srednei shkoly*, 3 vols., ed. A. M. Pankratova, S. V. Bakhrushin, K. V. Bazilevich, and A. V. Fokht (Moscow, 1940).
  43. RGASPI 17/120/373/5; 334, 628, 143, 725ob, 218. Typical of the era, P. P. Postyshev, in semi-exile in Kuibyshev, forwarded a copy of the text to Zhdanov in November 1937 with a memo warning that he had found swastikas hidden in engravings of Stalin and Pushkin. Mekhlis investigated the issue and in-

- formed Zhdanov that Postyshev was overreacting. See 17/120/373/1, 3, 413, 450. For other examples of this paranoiac reaction to the text, see Arkhiv RAN 638/3/330/158, 168. On Postyshev's swastika fixation, see O. V. Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody* (Moscow, 1996), 222.
44. Artizov, "V ugodu vzgliadam vozhdia," 130, 134; Artizov, "Kritika M. N. Pokrovskogo," 108; and Artizov, "Sud'by istorikov," 34–48.
  45. "Boevaia programma dal'neishego pod"ema istoricheskoi nauki," *Istoriik-Marksist* 3 (1937): 146.
  46. Shteppa, *Russian Historians*, 126–127.
  47. A. Shestakov, "Kak prepodavat' istoriiu SSSR po novomu uchebniku," *Istoricheskii zhurnal* 9 (1937): 79–80.
  48. RGASPI 17/120/365/170–170ob.
  49. Print-run figures are compiled from a survey of weekly editions of *Knizhnaia letopis'* between 1937 and 1955. Postwar editions after 1947 report reprintings but do not indicate the print runs. Prewar printing plans are detailed in GARF 2306/69/2782/26; RGASPI 17/125/26/27.
  50. A. G. Koloskov, "Shkol'noe istoricheskoe obrazovanie v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 5 (1983): 16–22.

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