

A CRISIS OF IDENTITY

Remembering Stalingrad in Anglo-America

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

University of Michigan

March 27, 2006

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*In memory of Papa Bill and Edward Newmark,
my own World War II heroes*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the University of Michigan History Department for affording me this wonderful opportunity. Professor Brian Porter, my thesis advisor, was instrumental in the development of this project, from the initial brainstorming phase to the final, frantic moments. Somehow, he always had the answer I was looking for, and for that — as well as for his unlimited enthusiasm in editing, critiquing, and supporting — I am eternally grateful. Thanks to Adam Rottenberg for his careful copy-editing and useful suggestions, and to Donna Wessel Walker for insisting that I write a thesis in the first place. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mike Miller and Rohan Shetty for taking the time to read my rough drafts. Farina Mir and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof were always helpful when I came to them with my concerns. I'm indebted to Marisa for her encouragement and for her patience during my all-nighters, and to my friends and family for their interest in the project. But most of all, I would like to thank my parents, Robin and Lori, and my brother, Alex, for supporting me, demanding to read the drafts, and pushing me to do my best.

Introduction

We often take the substance of memory for granted. But remembering an event is a process that, inherently, takes time. In different centuries, decades, years, or even months, a single instance can be represented in drastically divergent ways. Moreover, the meanings, emotions, and messages embedded in each event are dynamic and ever-changing. The Battle of Stalingrad, which proved to be a turning point toward Allied victory in World War II, is no different. Depending upon the time period and the cultures creating and consuming memories of the battle, the pivotal confrontation can be viewed in a wide range of contexts. Although the conflict took place in Russia and was limited to fighting between the Germans and their allies against the Russian Red Army, the battle's legacy has permeated the English-speaking world, as well. An in-depth examination of Anglo-American representations of Stalingrad over time demonstrates that memory can also be profoundly geographical. Although no American or British troops participated in the events at Stalingrad, the battle and its outcome left an indelible mark on Western society. From World War II-era propaganda pamphlets and United States War Department films, to mountainous heaps of Cold War literature, to post-détente engagement with the battle and its significance, a near-obsession with Stalingrad is evident in the Anglophonic world.

The Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted from August 1942 until February 1943, was one of the bloodiest conflicts in history. In all, it is estimated that both parties suffered a total of more than two million casualties. In the end, the German Sixth Army, under Friedrich Paulus, surrendered after being trapped in a pocket by the

Red Army forces, led by Georgi Zhukov and Vassili Chuikov. Historians and military scholars generally agree that the Sixth Army's defeat crushed any chance Hitler and the Germans had of winning World War II. After Stalingrad, the Wehrmacht's military machine and the myth of Nazi invincibility were simultaneously and irreversibly smashed. Despite the spotless record and overwhelming power of the Sixth Army prior to Stalingrad, the Russian troops, initially on the defensive as victims of the German siege, fought back valiantly to defend the city on the Volga named after their leader. The ensuing Russian counteroffensive, launched on November 19, 1942, succeeded in breaking through German lines; eventually, the German troops were surrounded by an uplifted Red Army. Thus began the Russians' slow process of starving, shooting, and waiting the Germans to death. The notorious Russian winter aided in the cause. When Paulus surrendered at the beginning of February along with roughly 90,000 of his troops, the Battle of Stalingrad was over. A mere 6,000 German soldiers eventually made it home to Germany.

Unsurprisingly, Stalingrad became a prevalent topic in military and popular history. In Russia, the battle and the troops who fought in it were and still are remembered in heroic terms. In fact, Volgograd, as Stalingrad is known today, is considered one of Russia's twelve "Hero Cities." A giant statue of "Mother Motherland," one of the most cherished symbols of Russian pride, was erected on Mamaev Kurgan, a hill where much of the fighting took place. In Russia, museums have been built to pay tribute to the battle and its participants. In Germany, on the other hand, Stalingrad came to be seen as a shameful black eye on the history of the

Third Reich.¹ The battle became an occasion for Joseph Goebbels and the Nazi leadership to publish misleading propaganda lying to the German people about the nature of the fighting. Goebbels and Hitler even went so far as to insinuate that the Sixth Army had fought until the last man fell, completely closing their eyes to the 90,000 German troops who voluntarily surrendered in early February.² Thus, Stalingrad and its import carried tremendous weight in both belligerent nations, which comes as no surprise due to the impact, scale, and dramatic nature of the battle.

Most historians have tended to ignore, however, the ways in which Stalingrad has been represented in the English-speaking Western world. Though a dizzying amount of Stalingrad-related material is available in English, most scholars have tended to take its existence almost for granted, instead choosing to focus on the development of Stalingrad historiography in German- and Russian-language sources. Those historians who have dealt with English-language Stalingrad representations have tended to focus their attention on extremely narrow themes and time periods. In *Victory at Stalingrad*, for example, Geoffrey Roberts devotes the bulk of his discussion of Anglo-American Stalingrad references to the Cold War years, bypassing the World War II era and only briefly touching on post-Cold War changes.³ On the other hand, Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, in their *War of Extermination*, argue against the supposedly dominant "victimization" of the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad historiography, all the while ignoring a number of important examples of

¹ For an investigation of German collective memory, see Koshar, Rudy. *From Monuments to Traces*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. For a similar examination in a different national context, see Nora, Pierre. *Realms of Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

² For more on Hitler and Goebbels distorting the events at Stalingrad, see Baird, Jay W. "The Myth of Stalingrad." *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 4, No. 3. (Jul., 1969). Pages 187-204. For another account of this practice, see Bartov, Omer. *The Eastern Front, 1941-45*. Oxford: Palgrave, 1985.

³ Roberts, Geoffrey. *Victory at Stalingrad*. London: Longman, 2002. Pages 165-179.

anti-German rhetoric denouncing the soldiers' brutality in the battle.⁴ This thesis takes a more broad-based, comprehensive approach to analyzing English-language Stalingrad representations. The sources consulted span a longer time frame than those cited by Roberts, and their depictions of the relevant actors are more diverse and nuanced than those attacked by Heer and Naumann. An analysis of how the battle has been characterized over time in a location that had no direct influence on the fighting might potentially reveal themes and messages that would otherwise be masked in German or Russian sources. The English-speaking world provides an especially interesting area of study, due to its historical relationship with each of the combatants in the years during and after the Second World War. During the war, of course, the Americans and British were allied with the Soviet Union against Germany. In the years following World War II, however, the U.S. and Great Britain saw a normalizing of relations with Germany while a rift developed between the Communist Soviet Union and the democratic Western world. At the height of the Cold War, the United States and Great Britain were at least as hostile toward the Soviets as they had been toward the Germans in the days of Hitler's Third Reich. Finally, after the Soviet Union dissolved in the late 1980s and early 1990s and East and West began to increase cooperation once again, the English-speaking world could consider neither Russia nor Germany an enemy. Thus, the progression of friendliness and hostility toward the belligerent powers in the Battle of Stalingrad has situated the English-speaking Western world at an ideal locus from which to examine representations of the battle.

⁴ Heer, Hannes, and Klaus Naumann, eds. *War of Extermination*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000. Pages 237-241.

But perhaps the most interesting part of this “Stalingrad story” is what it tells us about the development of Western culture over roughly the last sixty years. After dissecting the nature of English-language Stalingrad representations from World War II, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War era, a discernable, albeit uneven, pattern emerges. During the Second World War, works relating to the battle tended to portray the participants in terms of subsuming and over-generalized national and cultural identities. Representations produced during and immediately following the battle generally failed to separate government and socio-cultural ideology from the people they influenced. In the Cold War years, a schism developed between portrayals of Germans and Russians in Stalingrad. While the German soldiers, in English-language sources, came to be recognized as somewhat separate from Hitler and Nazism, the Russians, when they were not ignored altogether, were still largely viewed as fused to the Soviet system. This dichotomy led to a “humanizing” of the German troops, while their Russian counterparts remained intertwined with Soviet Communist ideology. The disparity, also embodied by a superior volume of scholarship from the German perspective, no doubt stemmed largely from the ongoing hostilities between the Western world and the Soviet Union, which hid behind the Iron Curtain. The years following the end of the Cold War have generally continued the progression of separating individuals from ideologies. The Russian soldiers have come to be recognized as separate from, and often abused by, the Soviet system they were once presented as embodying. Meanwhile, a more civilized tint has been appropriated by more recent Stalingrad representations, emphasizing the underlying humanity in all individuals involved in the fighting and distancing them from the harmful, violent, and overwhelmingly culpable dogmas of

the Communist Stalin and the Fascist Hitler, both of whom have come to be vilified. This transition from collective national and cultural identity infused with vague hints of ideology, to individual identity separated from a more concrete national ideology, to universal identity shared by individuals on both sides, highlights a trend in Anglo-American thinking since the years of World War II. The transition tells us about more than simple leanings in Stalingrad historiography; indeed, it reveals more than patterns in the entirety of historiography. The shift helps us understand how Western culture and its conventions for observing, characterizing, and comprehending human beings have evolved.

Chapter One of this thesis is concerned with English-language Stalingrad representations from the World War II period. Central to this investigation is Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* propaganda film entitled *The Battle of Russia*. By attributing contemporary "characteristics" of "The Russian" and "The German" to the peoples' national ancestors in the distant past, Capra executes the nationalist technique to perfection.⁵ The fact that the film was shown to American troops before they headed overseas to fight in Europe is also crucial to understanding its importance, since U.S. forces participating in the war were indoctrinated by these oversimplified concepts. Three English-language propaganda pamphlets, written by Russians, are also included in the discussion. They convey a viewpoint that is both distinctly Russian and distinctly Soviet, inextricably linking the two identities. Without exception, the English-language sources examined in Chapter One characterize

⁵ *The Battle of Russia*. DVD, 131 min. Produced and directed by Frank Capra. New York: GoodTimes Home Video Corp., 2000.

Russians as heroic and productive while painting Germans as brutal and immoral beasts.⁶

Chapter Two focuses on Cold War-era Anglo-American representations of Stalingrad. During this time period, German-centric sources dominated the English-language scene. These works effectively sever the connection between the soldiers and Hitler's Nazi and Fascist ideologies, making the German troops out to be capable of experiencing a full range of human emotions. Where Russians are concerned, the troops' inescapable ties to the Soviet regime still predominate, as does a more curious and skeptical tone regarding their accomplishments in the battle.

Chapter Three deals with the post-Cold War years. The English-language sources have restored a sense of balance between German- and Russian-focused sources. More importantly, the Russian troops finally become separated from Stalin and the Soviet system in the language of the representations. The Red Army soldiers are painted as having the same degree of humanity witnessed in the German soldiers in the Cold War-era material. Yet the post-Cold War period sees an expansion of the concept of humanity, as Stalingrad representations from this time period, notably Joseph Vilsmaier's 1993 film *Stalingrad*, begin to comment on instances of cooperation and mutual understanding between the warring factions.⁷ Certain English-language representations of the battle produced since the end of the Cold War, such as Viktor Nekrasov's short story "Incident at Stalingrad," also feature elements of postmodern thought by confronting fragmented concepts of time and

⁶ Grossman, Vassili. *Stalingrad Hits Back*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library]; Krieger, Evgeni. *Battle on the Volga*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1943. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library]; Simonov, Konstantin. *Stalingrad Fights On*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library].

⁷ *Stalingrad*. DVD, 150 min. Produced and directed by Joseph Vilsmaier. New York: Fox Lorber Home Video, 1998.

memory.⁸ Ultimately, the way Stalingrad has been represented in the English-speaking world from World War II to the present mirrors and accentuates changes in Western culture and thought in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

⁸ Nekrasov, Viktor. *Postscripts*. London: Quartet Books, 1991.

Chapter One

IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE

To ascertain and understand the fluid nature of memory in relation to the Battle of Stalingrad, it is necessary to begin with an examination of representations of the conflict that existed at the time of the battle itself. Careful study reveals that Stalingrad specifically, and the Eastern Front in general, were heralded in the English-speaking West as sites of unquestioned heroism and valor on the part of the Red Army, while they brought out the most despicable qualities in the German soldiers. These World War II-era Stalingrad representations emphasize the national identities of the troops engaged in the fighting. By largely failing to comment on Russian and German soldiers in Communist or Nazi contexts, respectively; by glossing over the intricacies of ideology in the rare instances in which they do; and by generalizing the fighters' "national characteristics," works from this time period tend to paint oversimplified and one-dimensional portraits of the combatants on the Volga.

The Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow printed several pamphlets concerning Stalingrad while the battle was still raging in the streets of the beleaguered city. Several different Russian journalists and propagandists authored these small booklets, which were translated into English for distribution in the West. The translation of these documents was critical in forming and contributing to the memory of Stalingrad, since these sources were among the first emotionally-charged (i.e. non-newspaper) accounts of the battle to reach the Anglo-American world. A few themes are constant throughout the pamphlets. Each strives to present the

Battle of Stalingrad as a monumental affair, an event with the potential to alter the course of world events and, most certainly, the fate of the Russian people. Stalingrad is portrayed as a battlefield unlike any other in previously-recorded history, an arena of the worst and most hellish fighting ever experienced. The documents paint an idealized and, in all likelihood, exaggerated picture of "The Russian" as resilient, heroic, resourceful, innovative, and always prepared. On the other side, these pamphlets portray "The German" as a brutal, cowardly, pathetic, laughable, and miserably evil character devoid of any sense of pride or decorum. The concept of the individual hero is also present. After the battle, Stalingrad was christened as one of Russia's "hero cities," and much of the collective memory of World War II in Russia centers on the hero story. In these papers, the scholar witnesses Russians acting as "heroes" and paving the way for their people to follow. Emphasizing these individuals' courageous and awe-inspiring actions in the face of grave danger during the Battle of Stalingrad became a popular technique for Russian (and even American) propagandists.

Konstantin Simonov, a famous Russian war correspondent and propagandist, traveled to the battle's front lines before writing *Stalingrad Fights On*, a pamphlet published in the midst of the fighting in 1942. The cover illustration depicts defiant Russian soldiers inside a ruined building, attempting to fend off an approaching German tank with rifles and hand grenades. A medic is seen protecting a wounded comrade wearing a head bandage. All the Russian soldiers intently watch the events going on outside the hole torn in the building's wall.¹ In the text of the pamphlet, Simonov discusses the tremendous gravity and import of the

¹ See Figure 1.1 on Page 42.

developments at Stalingrad. Simonov writes, "Those who have been here will never forget it. When after the lapse of years we look back and recall the war, the very word will conjure up a vision of Stalingrad illuminated by flare rockets and the glow of fires; and once again the incessant thunder of bombardment from land and air will ring in our ears."² The author seems to indicate that Stalingrad's meaning is so important that it will serve as a collective reminder to all Russians, whether they witnessed the battle firsthand or not. Simonov's intense experience in Stalingrad is made to represent the epitome of war. Simonov also argues that the battle has tarnished the once-beautiful city on the Volga by destroying its "cheerful cluster of white houses ... gay piers, and embankments lined with swimming boxes, kiosks and cottages."³ He notes, "Today it is grim and grey, enveloped in a pall of smoke and over it, day and night, flickering flames keep up an endless dance filling the air with soot. A soldier-city seered [sic] in battle, with makeshift forts and strongholds, and piles of heroic ruins."⁴ Simonov makes it clear that Stalingrad is now a city in the midst of war, experiencing a battle that has permanently transformed the meaning of even the most innocuous landmarks. Standards have become altered in Stalingrad. "Silence" in the city would be considered quite noisy elsewhere, as Simonov points out: "For fifteen minutes a relative silence reigns — relative because the muffled roar of artillery to the North and South and the dry rat-tat-tat of automatic rifles ahead of us never cease. But here this is called silence, because for days on end there has been no other silence — and, after all, something has to be called silence."⁵ This example

² Simonov, Konstantin. *Stalingrad Fights On*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library]. Page 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

vividly conveys the idea that Stalingrad is more than a typical city at war, and the battle is more than a typical fight. Yet more seems to be at stake in this conflict. Even military medical evacuation procedures are tossed aside at Stalingrad: Instead of setting up field hospitals in the city, attendants remove the wounded and ferry them across the Volga to safety, because there are no adequate facilities near the war zone itself.⁶ Simonov also exemplifies Stalingrad's "other-worldliness" in additional terms. The writer views the battle as a site of lost youth and innocence,⁷ a place where the Russian Staff Headquarters is located deep underground and soldiers "look tired, their eyes inflamed from sleepless nights, their faces the colour [sic] of lead. I try to light a cigarette but the matches go out one after the other — here, in this vault, there is hardly any oxygen."⁸ The lack of oxygen, man's required breathing element, conveys Simonov's description of the landscape as alien. The fact that a fully-functional bakery stands untouched in the midst of rubble and ruins, and the location of a Russian observation post examining the German front lines in a former engineer's apartment — replete with armchairs, flower pots, and books of children's school exercises — serve as additional reminders that this battle is extremely unconventional.⁹ Simonov further emphasizes that the Russian soldiers do not know specific details about the very land they are defending:

Unknown meadows, hills and glades overgrown with wormwood — such is the battle line which must not be surrendered, the battle line for which men are fighting and dying, often not knowing the name of the village that nestles to their left or the stream that flows to their right, but firmly conscious that behind them is Stalingrad for whose sake they must stand fast. Here a stand

⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹ Ibid., 9-10.

must be made even at the cost of their lives, even though death be the price, no matter what the cost.¹⁰

The single immutable and obvious fact is that Stalingrad is worth defending.

Simonov illustrates this point forcefully.

Vassili Grossman's *Stalingrad Hits Back* pamphlet, also published in 1942, expounds upon a similar theme of Stalingrad's incredible significance. Grossman creates a visual image of Stalingrad that resembles a moonscape. The author mentions hulking ruins, rusty metal, and heaps of raw materials to describe the conditions of a Siberian division's assigned area. The desolate and destroyed city is made to seem separate from anywhere else in the world by describing it in these alienating terms.¹¹ The critical nature of the battle is evident in the lines, "Behind them flowed the dark icy waters of the Volga, behind them was the fate of Russia. The Division would have to stand firm even unto death."¹² Grossman positions the Battle of Stalingrad in a way that simplifies the entire war. As Grossman sees it, the fate of Stalingrad will mirror that of Russia and, in turn, the Allies and the world as a whole. Grossman writes:

... Here in Stalingrad, the Germans intensified the smashing force of their offensive to the utmost pitch. They stabilized their efforts in the southern and central sections of the city, levelling [sic] the full weight of their numberless batteries of mortars, thousands of guns and their air armadas against the northern section of the city, against this very plant situated in the heart of the industrial district. The Germans assumed that human nature could not stand such a strain, that there were no hearts or nerves but would be subdued and give way in this frenzied inferno of fire and shrieking metal which shook the earth and rent the air like things possessed. Here was concentrated the entire diabolical arsenal of German militarism — super-heavy and flame-throwing tanks, six-barrelled mortars, armadas of dive bombers fitted with screaming sirens, splinter bombs and demolition bombs.

¹⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

¹¹ Grossman, Vassili. *Stalingrad Hits Back*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library]. Page 1.

¹² Ibid., 2.

Here, auto-riflemen, were supplied with explosive bullets, artillerymen and mortar-gunners with thermite shells. Here, was concentrated German artillery from small calibre [sic] anti-tank semi-automatics to heavy long-range guns. Here, night was as light as day from the glare of fires and flares, and day as dark as night from the smoke of burning buildings and German smoke screens. Here, the uproar was as dense as earth and the brief intervals of silence seemed more terrifying and sinister than the din of battle. And if the world pays tribute to the heroism of the Russian armies, and if the Russian armies speak with admiration of the defenders of Stalingrad, here — in Stalingrad itself — men exclaim with awe and respect:

“What we’ve done is nothing much! Now what those fellows are doing who are holding the plant — that’s something!”¹³

The dramatic, funnel-shaped crescendo Grossman constructs by narrowing the importance of the war to Stalingrad, and the importance of Stalingrad to holding the plant the Siberians have charge of, makes the odds stacked against the Russians appear heavier and the possibility of ultimate victory over the Germans more remote. Where Simonov mentions that military medical customs and the concept of silence are reformulated in Stalingrad, Grossman re-characterizes the concept of measuring distance. The author explains, “Only here, in Stalingrad, do men know what a kilometre means. It means one thousand metres, ten thousand centimetres [sic].”¹⁴ The statement of this obvious fact illustrates how intensely the area of Stalingrad was contested between the Germans and the Russians. It is clear that this battle has become a war of attrition, one in which the victor will emerge triumphant only after wearing its enemy into submission.

The 1943 pamphlet *Battle on the Volga* was published closer to the conclusion of the fighting in Stalingrad. The document, written by Evgeni Krieger, displays on its cover a bird’s-eye view of the city’s buildings nestled on the banks of the Volga River. The motion lines in the water give a sense of movement and natural beauty,

¹³ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

arousing sympathy and pity for those trapped in and defending Stalingrad.¹⁵ Krieger immediately makes it clear that Stalingrad is no typical battle: "... the conviction is forced home more and more that this is no ordinary section of the front, that what we are about to see here far surpasses anything we have ever witnessed or even read of in the annals or descriptions of war."¹⁶ Krieger magnifies the importance of every single soldier and military worker, enlarging the scope and consequences of the battle. Even "... a newcomer, who has heard so much about it, involuntarily becomes conscious of a vague feeling of anxiety, of impatient expectation."¹⁷ Krieger distinguishes the world of Stalingrad from the outside in relating his encounter with a carriage bearing a sleeping commander with dust and dirt caked on his battle-worn face. Krieger writes:

... After all he has been through in that place from which he has just come, he can stand anything, and he sleeps on peacefully in spite of the jolting of the britzska [wagon]. On the faces of the wounded men one can see the same expression of calm equanimity. They hardly pay any attention to the solitary bombs that burst at some distance from the roadside. What they have experienced is something far more serious. Here everything breathes to them of peace, of tranquility.¹⁸

The rest of the world seems far less threatening compared to the experience an individual faces at Stalingrad. This assertion distinguishes the soldiers and defenders of the city from any other war heroes of the past or present. Krieger relates an extremely powerful story about a soldier walking through the ruined streets of his native Stalingrad and having no idea where he is, since the extensive destruction has leveled every landmark. When the soldier finds a street sign, he recalls that there was

¹⁵ See Figure 1.2 on Page 43.

¹⁶ Krieger, Evgeni. *Battle on the Volga*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1943. [University of Michigan Special Collections Library]. Page 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

a toy store nearby where he bought his daughter dolls. This striking example of humanity amidst the chaos is simultaneously heartwarming and depressing. It helps to illuminate just how different Stalingrad has become since the fighting began.¹⁹

Simonov repeatedly illustrates the Russian people as determined and strong-willed in *Stalingrad Fights On*. The author mentions that “the city has no longer just mere residents. Every one of those who have remained is bent on defending it.”²⁰ In this passage, Simonov describes the Russians in an almost superhuman manner. They have become more than simply citizens: They have transformed into war machines whose guile and grit outmatch even the best-trained German soldiers. Simonov’s allegory about the mechanics who repair tanks, only to face the necessity of piloting them into a fierce confrontation with the Germans, symbolizes the general theme of Russian inventiveness and fortitude.²¹ Ever-present through all the fighting is the sense of community fostered among the Russians. Simonov relates the story of First Lieutenant Vadim Tkalenko, who grew a mustache in memory of his fallen comrades: “... a Georgian by the name of Samkharadze, said to me: ‘Look here, Lieutenant, let’s shave our beards in memory of those who were killed, but leave our whiskers until the end of the war — as long as we go on fighting for them.’ That’s how I came to make a solemn vow.”²² Even small rituals like facial-hair maintenance have a deeper purpose rooted in national pride. Tkalenko’s whiskers are a testament to his fellow soldiers and the Russian people fighting for the causes of the war and Stalingrad. Simonov is careful to point out that Russian victories have not come due to superior defenses, artillery advantages, or finer warfare

¹⁹ Ibid., 10-11.

²⁰ Simonov, 11.

²¹ Ibid., 12-13.

²² Ibid., 30.

technology. Rather, the Russians win because of the people contributing to the war effort:

The positions around Borodino were no better and no worse than many other positions between the Nyeman and the Moskva Rivers. Borodino, however, proved to be impregnable because it was here that Russian soldiers decided to lay down their lives rather than surrender. And that is why the shallow little river became impassable and the hillocks and sparse wood and hastily built trenches became impregnable.²³

This revelation further illustrates Russian displays of courage at Stalingrad. Simonov poignantly expresses this sentiment to the Anglophonic world in *Stalingrad Fights On*.

The Russians' strength, merit, and indomitable spirit are characteristics woven throughout the Grossman pamphlet, as well. The author depicts Colonel Gurtiev's Siberian Division as a microcosm of the Russian people. When the division is charged with holding the plant in the center of the city, directly in the path of the Germans' most concentrated offensive attack, Grossman describes the Siberians as:

... a sturdy folk, severe, inured to cold and hardship, taciturn, sticklers for order and discipline, and blunt of speech. Siberians — are a rugged folk, men who can be depended upon. In a grim silence they dug into the stony earth with their picks, cut embrasures in the walls of the shops, fashioned dugouts, bunkers and communicating trenches.²⁴

This idealized portrait of the group is an example of the glowing terms in which propagandist journalists such as Grossman were wont to represent Russians in the Battle of Stalingrad. Grossman proceeds to discuss Gurtiev's family at home and his sons in the army, along with his formative years of strict military training and his "Spartan life. Yes, the hour had come when all principles of military science, of morals and duty which he had instilled with stern consistency into his sons, his

²³ Ibid., 47.

²⁴ Grossman, 3-4.

students, his colleagues, were now to be put to the test."²⁵ Grossman thus reminds the reader that Russians have a human aspect to their characters, as well. The existence of Gurtiev's family dispels the notion that the colonel is merely a transient and disposable soldier. Rather, he is a man with a wife and children who cherishes his relationships with loved ones. Grossman continues to single out each one of Gurtiev's staff members and mentions positive qualities about each, from "a man who never knew fatigue," to "forthright and ruthless judgment ... based on iron faith," to "indomitable strength of mind and heart," to "a man of strong will, keen mind, ascetic modesty," to "inflexible will," to "fine spiritual qualities," to "cool bravery."²⁶ The Siberian Division embodies the best traits a soldier can have. It appears to be no coincidence that it has been assigned to stand against the "line of the main drive." Yet despite a ferocious eight-hour bombardment from the Germans, Grossman anticipates the attackers' imminently defeatist attitude when he adds, "... probably, something akin to despair must have seized the Germans when from this burning plant wrapped in a dark pall of dust and smoke, rifle volleys stubbornly continued to crack, machine-guns to rattle, anti-tank rifles to bark and anti-aircraft guns to emit their even roar ..."²⁷ Grossman frequently paints the Russians as superhuman entities throughout this narrative. When the Russians mount a counteroffensive after the German attack stalls, Grossman asks, "Were they human beings these attacking men, were they mortals?"²⁸ Grossman even personifies the Russians' weapons in supernatural terms:

²⁵ Ibid., 4.

²⁶ Ibid., 6.

²⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁸ Ibid., 9.

The artillery performed miracles. It screened infantry positions with a cloak of steel. It made matchwood out of the super-heavy German tanks with which the tank busters could not cope. It dismembered the auto-riflemen clustered to the armour [sic] of the German tanks as though with a sword. It blasted ammunition dumps and blew German batteries of mortars sky-high. Never in the course of war did the infantry feel the friendship and the powerful might of the artillery to such an extent as here, in Stalingrad.²⁹

The Russians appear flawless in their attitude and use of resources. In contrast, the German military strategy and tactics are generally seen as bumbling, disorganized, and unsuccessful. Grossman refers to the Siberians' unbelievable persistence and endurance when he mentions that some go without sleep for three or four consecutive days and do not even possess the appetite to eat their miniscule rations after a hard day's work.³⁰ Grossman also describes the intricate, collective actions of the Siberian Division as:

... a single organism working with singular perfection and in astonishing unity. The men themselves were not aware of the psychological changes that had taken place in them during the month they had spent in this inferno, in the forward positions of the great Stalingrad defence [sic] lines. It seemed to them that they were just what they had always been. ... Heroism had become part of the life, the style and manner of this Division and its men. Heroism became an everyday affair, a commonplace. There was heroism in everything — not only in the exploits of the combatants, but also in the work of the cooks peeling potatoes under a blasting, scorching fire of thermite shells. Supreme heroism was displayed in the work of the Red Cross nurses — highschool girls from Tobolsk — Tonya Egorova, Zoya Kalganova, Vera Kalyada, Nadya Kasterina, Lyolya Novikova, and many others who dressed the wounds and brought water to wounded men in the height of battle. Yes, if one were to look with the eyes of an onlooker, heroism would be seen in every commonplace movement of the men of this Division.³¹

The collective action of the Siberian Division can be seen as an attempt by Grossman to further promote the Soviet Union's Communist message, ultimately tying ideology to the generalized national image of "The Russian" he creates

²⁹ Ibid., 12.

³⁰ Ibid., 13.

³¹ Ibid., 14-16.

throughout *Stalingrad Hits Back*. The Siberians also provide an example of how the Russian soldiers are idealized in Stalingrad representations. Grossman makes special note of how the Russians are well-trained, politically educated, and disciplined. He delves into detail about the “Russian character,” and harps on the reader with nationalist fervor. Grossman’s stance is very extreme in its patriotism and pride. Grossman adds, in similar fashion to Simonov, that Russian *people* withstand German attacks, rather than just Russian guns, shells, and tanks: “It was their [troops’ and their commanders’] iron will, their stalwart hearts, their blood, shed so profusely, that held Stalingrad against the enemy drive. . . . It seemed as though no power on earth could possibly withstand the torrent of fire that raged over the city. But the Red Army men withstood the strain.”³² Despite all their hardships, the Russians are still in high spirits. The fact that the soldiers and commanders remain humble and focused on the task at hand is admirable and shows the great Russian spirit and lack of boastfulness. Grossman makes a call to arms when he writes, “We are confident that the Stalingrad advance will be a worthy counterpart of the great Stalingrad defence [sic].”³³ This statement is likely intended to make all Russian citizens proud, supportive, and dedicated to bolstering the soldiers at Stalingrad.³⁴

Simonov portrays the Germans and their culture as diametrically opposed to the Russians in terms of virtue and spirit in *Stalingrad Fights On*. The Russians’ enemies are characterized as overly-violent, bloodthirsty, and timid under duress. Simonov mentions “charred remains of women and children, burned alive by the Germans on one of the river steamers. . . . It is impossible to live here as a passive

³² Ibid., 22.

³³ Ibid., 28.

³⁴ Krieger’s heroic and admirable treatment of the Russians in *Battle on the Volga* closely resembles those of Simonov and Grossman.

bystander. To live here to fight, to live here to kill Germans — here it is possible, here it is necessary and here we shall live ...”³⁵ Simonov’s difficulty in remaining objective is interesting in that his stance turns the reader against the Germans on an emotional level, through the author’s carefully-chosen diction and writing style. The dead bodies of Russians are a testament to the Germans’ despicable actions. Simonov seems to almost request the reader to enlist to aid in the defense of Stalingrad because of the inhumane crimes committed by the Germans. Simonov also delves into detail when describing Tkalenko’s account of his fellow companions being brutally murdered when he served as a partisan in the countryside. By including scenes of Germans tearing old men apart by stretching them between two tanks and crushing young children underneath tank treads, the reader is moved to feel disgust and outrage toward the Germans. Simonov explains Tkalenko’s ferocious determination to kill the enemy:

Whenever anybody mentioned “Germans” to him he had a vivid recollection of that village square. Whenever he was ordered to attack — he saw that village square. It has remained seared forever on his memory, and everything he has witnessed since — all the battles, all the days and nights, all the victories and defeats — he has seen, as it were, through the spectrum of that village square. His eyes, the eyes of a young man of twenty-three became relentless; they no longer sparkled with the buoyancy of youth but grew bitter with hatred. Ever since, only hate’s scorching fire gleams from his eyes.³⁶

The reader sympathizes with Tkalenko for the terrible sights he has witnessed due to German brutality. The fact that the First Lieutenant’s hatred for the Germans crystallized in that village square comes as no surprise to the reader. Tkalenko’s desire to “go on killing Germans”³⁷ is understandably justified. Simonov, in mentioning the Russians as wanting “to get at the Germans with one’s bayonet, see

³⁵ Simonov, 4-5.

³⁶ Ibid., 21.

³⁷ Ibid., 22.

them dead under one's feet, leap over their still warm bodies — this is what infuses one with strength, with what a man needs more than ever when going into action for the first time,"³⁸ portrays the Germans as almost subhuman and unworthy of compassion, pity, or understanding. Despite the violent atrocities the Germans are charged with, though, Simonov makes light of a prisoner's plight later in the pamphlet. When a German is captured by Russian war hero Semyon Shkolenko, Simonov notes that:

... it seemed funny to [Shkolenko] that the German, himself, was being made to carry the machine-gun back to our lines. And so they went back — the German in front with the machine-gun on his shoulder, and Shkolenko behind him. The German walked slowly, stumbling along, making no attempt at resistance.³⁹

In this instance, Simonov views the enemy soldier as a pathetic shell of his former self and his fellow soldiers. The German, who was so bloodthirsty and war-mongering among his own people, has become passive, timid, and complacent once captured. This example helps Simonov illustrate that Germans in general are emotionally vulnerable, rather than the invincible and unfeeling statues they were often made out to be. Simonov relates a similar tale after Shkolenko captures another German. This time, the newly-minted prisoner, who had recently been forcing captive Russians to dig a mass grave for themselves before executing them, finds himself the victim of a role reversal. Shkolenko catches the German and his fellow soldiers by surprise and takes the lone survivor captive. As the prisoner is marched behind Russian lines, Simonov writes:

He walked along, his hand pressed to his head, moaning every now and then and looking with terror-stricken eyes at the naked, blood-smearred men around him. Five minutes ago they had been digging their own graves, but

³⁸ Ibid., 23.

³⁹ Ibid., 38-39.

now he was scared of them as though they were dead men who had come to life, scared of them even more, perhaps, than of Shkolenko.⁴⁰

German soldiers, symbolized by a few individual examples, are painted as despicable, hypocritical, and cowardly in the face of Russian determination.

In a contrast similar to that presented by Simonov, Grossman denigrates the Germans throughout his writing in *Stalingrad Hits Back*. The latter describes the Germans' appearance when they advance close enough to be seen in detail, making special note of "their grimy faces, their tattered grey coats, heard them shouting words of menace in broken Russian."⁴¹ The Germans are made to appear vulgar, subhuman, and evil by nature. Grossman refuses to credit them as honorable enemies. The author takes advantage of another opportunity to disparage the Germans when he observes prisoners of war in captivity. Grossman relates:

There must be over three thousand prisoners in this column. The convoy consists of a few score of Red Armymen. Batches of two hundred prisoners are usually escorted by two or three Red Armymen. The war prisoners step out willingly; many of the columns march in serried ranks, in step. Some of the Germans have quite a fair command of Russian.

"We don't want war," they cry. "We want to go home. Damn Hitler!"

The men who escort them remark sarcastically:

"Now, when our tanks are in their rear and have cut off all the roads, they're ready enough to shout about not wanting war; but before that the thought never entered their heads — they kept on firing away and, what's more, they flogged our old folk in the villages."⁴²

The staggering deference and passivity shown by the Germans is shocking. The fact that just a few Russians are necessary to guard hundreds of prisoners seems incredible. At the same time, the Germans' pleas for mercy seem to fall on deaf Russian ears. The Russians poke fun at their captured enemies for the perceived

⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

⁴¹ Grossman, 11.

⁴² Ibid., 23-24.

change in the Germans' attitude once they are captive. This example illustrates Grossman's disgust with the Germans' dishonorable behavior. Compared to the valiant images of Russians throughout the pamphlet propaganda, these Germans appear pathetic and broken. Grossman even mentions that a German prisoner who has his belongings confiscated is found to be in possession of women's peasant clothing. The obvious intimation is that he robbed, and perhaps even raped or murdered, poor Russian women on the steppe, another reason to believe in the Germans' lack of character.

Krieger's treatment of the Germans in *Battle on the Volga* is similar to those of Simonov and Grossman in that he crafts a generalized portrait of a vile, barbaric, and unquestionably cruel national character. Krieger also includes infrequent references to Nazi ideology, interweaving its tenets with the prevailing image of "The German." Krieger refers to the German troops' assault on Stalingrad by writing, "But ... the bombed and battered city gave battle. Hitler's divisions beat against it by the score, but in vain — it stands like a rock. His tanks gnaw at it, his planes pound it, his mines sap it, his soldiers perish on its threshold by the thousand, but still the city holds out, still the city goes on fighting."⁴³ Elsewhere, Krieger characterizes the German offensive as "the savage onslaught of the Hitlerites."⁴⁴ By identifying German troops and their actions as directly related to the wicked Nazi dictator, Krieger effectively links the national and ideological aspects of Russia's enemies.

Simonov touches on an additional theme by perpetuating the cult of the hero in *Stalingrad Fights On*. In several instances, the writer singles out individual Russians

⁴³ Krieger, 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.

for their brave deeds and honorable actions, ostensibly to serve as a model for their comrades to follow in battle. Simonov writes:

... We, quite by chance, came across one of the four men to whom the newspapers devoted leading articles about a month ago. At that time these four anti-tank riflemen — Alexander Belikov, Pyotr Samoilov, Ivan Oleynikov and our new acquaintance, Pyotr Boloto, who so unexpectedly proved to be here — set fire to fifteen German tanks. But after all, why should his appearance here be considered unexpected? A man of his calibre [sic] should certainly be here, in Stalingrad. It is people like he who are defending the city today. And it is precisely because there are such people to defend it that the city has been carrying on amidst ruins, fire and bloodshed.⁴⁵

The author goes so far as to mention Boloto's newfound fame and indicates that these are the men who *should* be fighting at Stalingrad, perhaps in an effort to motivate readers to follow Boloto's lead. While much Russian propaganda during the battle focused on the collective effort and importance of all Russian people, this differentiation serves an important purpose. Sure enough, though, Simonov manages to incorporate Boloto into the group of greater Russians by mentioning:

Different people go to make up the defenders of Stalingrad. A lot of them, yes, quite a lot of them, have the same broad, confident smile I saw on Pyotr Boloto's face, the same firm, steady, soldier's hands which never miss their mark. And that is why the city is fighting tooth and nail, fighting even at times when in this or that section the position seems to be almost untenable.⁴⁶

Ultimately, Simonov does pay tribute to the mass effort of the Russian people, all the while holding Boloto aloft as a shining example of courage and bravery. Tkalenko is also singled out as a proud Russian hero. Simonov explains a specific incident in which Tkalenko spots a Russian deserter during a battle and kills him when he refuses to return to the fighting. The emotional scene jars the reader into realizing that certain regrettable actions are necessary when ideological concepts and the

⁴⁵ Simonov, 14-15.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

defense of Stalingrad are at stake: "He felt heavy at heart just then because he had only a moment ago killed a man who, had he not proved himself to be a coward, would himself be killing Germans."⁴⁷ Simonov's language in this passage is noticeably charged. The author describes the deserter's face as "distorted beyond recognition, distorted not so much by fear as by an abject, disgusting concern for his own fate. His fishy eyes seemed to scour the ground as though searching for some hole to drop through!"⁴⁸ Shkolenko's story is also told to emphasize the impact that each individual can have on the battle. Simonov includes Shkolenko's family history to create a legacy of Russian determination. Shkolenko comes from a lineage of miners who have occupied the Stalingrad region for generations. His young son is a testament to the Russian will to keep control of the area, so that the next generation will be able to flourish on the ancestral land of the Russian people.⁴⁹ In Simonov's eyes, Shkolenko's actions in the heat of battle deserve high praise. The writer explains how the soldier single-handedly killed several German troops and destroyed their machine guns, taking a couple prisoners in the process. Shkolenko even criticizes recently-dead Russian soldiers he finds along the way:

"There's no doubt about it," he thought. "They went out of here, most likely walking along at full height without taking cover, and the German caught them with a spurt from his automatic rifle from some place over there." Shkolenko was really vexed at the carelessness which had caused the men's death. "Had they been with me I wouldn't have let them go on like that," he thought, and this thought led to a string of others, to thoughts that he brooded over, that our men, when they went out reconnoitring [sic], didn't go about it in the right way; very often did not show sufficient caution. But there was no time to ponder over the subject, he had to look for a German.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 36.

While critiquing the faults of fellow Russians is not a typical weapon in Simonov's propagandist arsenal, the inclusion of Shkolenko's insight helps Simonov demonstrate to fellow Russians and even Westerners reading the pamphlet that incompetence is being weeded out of the Red Army and that the soldiers have good, responsible examples to follow. Another passage witnesses Shkolenko acting relieved when he is sent back into the field on a solo reconnaissance mission.⁵¹

While this attitude might seem out of place, Simonov explains Shkolenko's rationale in the soldier's own words, which convey that a soldier must have a close friendship with a scouting partner. If there is any lack of disclosure between the two, the mission becomes far more dangerous and mistake-prone. Furthermore, when Shkolenko carries out the mission successfully, his actions appear far more heroic than if he had been part of a team.⁵²

The propaganda pamphlet was not the sole medium through which Anglo-Americans were exposed to the Battle of Stalingrad during the Second World War. *The Battle of Russia* was a film released after the conclusion of the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943 and shown to American troops who were preparing to journey overseas to fight the Germans in the European theater. The Russian-themed production was the fifth installment in a seven-part series of films produced by Frank Capra and jointly entitled *Why We Fight*.⁵³ The production of the film aimed to boost morale among United States soldiers traveling far away to fight the German war machine, while at

⁵¹ Ibid., 40.

⁵² Ibid., 46-47.

⁵³ *The Battle of Russia*. DVD, 131 min. Produced and directed by Frank Capra. New York: GoodTimes Home Video Corp., 2000.

the same time creating a sense of sympathy for their allies in the Soviet Union.⁵⁴ Heralded as a great success during the war and in its aftermath, the *Why We Fight* films — including *The Battle of Russia* — accomplished their goal, instilling a hatred for Hitler's troops in American military men while fostering a sense of brotherhood with the Russians in the East. *The Battle of Russia* draws largely on Stalingrad as a climax to the heroic Russian war effort in the face of German aggression. Capra crafts the film's tone differently from those expressed in the pamphlets composed by the aforementioned Russian writers. Since the Russians had already won the battle, Capra uses Stalingrad as a different kind of symbol, one of triumph rather than an occasion for a call to arms. Showing American troops that the Russians were actually defeating the Germans acted as powerful ideological ammunition in attempting to convince soldiers to join in the fight to defeat the invaders. Words, images, and messages both subtly and blatantly expressed in this Capra documentary reveal how Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall and the United States War Department sought to characterize the actors at play in this violent drama on the Eastern Front while simultaneously expressing the importance of the Russian victory on the Volga.

From the film's outset, the viewer is burdened with the historical significance of the events at Stalingrad. Capra magnifies the collective histories of the Russian and German peoples by displaying a scrolling message at the beginning of the footage, stating:

Just as the thirst for power that animates our enemies springs from their historic past, so the indomitable will for freedom of our allies is born out of their historic traditions. To understand their deathless struggle, we must

⁵⁴ Schoenherr, Steve. 2000. "Why We Fight." <http://history.acusd.edu/gen/Filmnotes/whywefight.html> (Accessed January 31, 2006).

know and understand the past that created them. Therefore, in the film you are about to see, free use has been made of motion pictures that illustrate this historical background.⁵⁵

This grave forewarning leaves no doubt that German aggression and Russian heroism will be presented in the film as being long-ingrained in the cultures and societies of their respective nations. Capra subsequently presents a series of quotations from American military titans such as Marshall, Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of War), Frank Knox (Secretary of the Navy), Ernest J. King (Commander in Chief, United States Fleet), and General Douglas MacArthur (Commander in Chief in the Pacific). The excerpts enthusiastically praise “great displays of courage . . . by the people of Soviet Russia,” an “everlasting debt of gratitude to the armies and people of the Soviet Union,” “gallantry and aggressive fighting spirit of the Russian soldiers,” “admiration for the Soviet Union’s heroic and historic defense,” and the “SCALE AND GRANDEUR of the (Russian) effort” as the “GREATEST MILITARY ACHIEVEMENT IN ALL HISTORY.”⁵⁶ Such bombastic admiration for the Russian feat is designed to pique the viewer’s interest in the details of the Red Army’s monumental feat. Interestingly, the quotations equate Russian nationality with Soviet Communist ideology, essentially blurring the separation between the two and classifying all Russians as intrinsically Soviet and Communist. Moreover, the statements cast the Russians in a positive and friendly light, developing a sense of brotherhood between the American recruits and their Eastern allies. Meanwhile, Alfred Newman’s musical score blares in the background throughout the segment, its patriotic trumpeting serving as a reminder of the honorable element at stake in the American war effort.

⁵⁵ Capra, *The Battle of Russia*.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

In stark contrast to the cheerful, upbeat attitude toward the Russians in the introduction to *The Battle of Russia*, Capra juxtaposes images of the Nazi war machine and its subsequent defeat. The narrator speaks of “shattered Nazi invincibility”⁵⁷ — using language that erases the division between German nationality and Nazi ideology — while the viewer witnesses footage of an orderly, sparkling German military parade. The camera angle frames the soldiers’ polished black boots marching in strict formation. This menacing image, however, is quickly followed by a shot of limping feet wrapped in tattered rags, a representation meant to symbolize German prisoners marching into captivity through the harsh snow of the Russian winter. Thus, the Germans are boldly painted as the powerful, evil force now broken by Russian victory, while at the same time being automatically labeled as Nazis.

The film’s next segment is perhaps its most creative. Capra orchestrates historical reenactments from the thirteenth through twentieth centuries, demonstrating contempt for deep-rooted German aggression and upholding traditional Russian defiance in the face of a seemingly endless line of foreign invaders. From a party of Teutonic knights invading northeastern Russia in 1242, to Peter the Great’s defense of his Russian homeland against the Swedes at Poltava in the early 1700s, to the French dictator Napoleon’s failed invasion of Moscow one hundred years later, to the Russians’ repulsion of Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm II in World War I despite “oppression and corruption in their own country”⁵⁸ under the Czars, repeated references show Russia as a site of courage and bravery. Germany, meanwhile, is denigrated as a homeland of belligerence and unnecessary force.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Especially notable is the way in which Russia's enemies are cast in a negative light. During the 1242 scene, the Teutonic knights are accompanied by dark, menacing music. When a German count removes his iron helmet, he appears hateful and unpleasant. At the same time, Russian Prince Alexander Nevsky is shown in a dignified and heroic light, replete with triumphant music. The historical background information Capra presents in *The Battle of Russia* serves to simplify and generalize national characteristics of the combatants at Stalingrad. The film presupposes a direct lineage from the distant past to the contemporary situation, which serves to cast the Russians and Germans fighting in World War II as descendants of immutable and concrete ancestries.

Capra makes sure to draw comparisons between the Soviet Union and the United States in *The Battle of Russia*. When the film's storyline moves to a statistical summary of Russia's general facts, the narrator points out that the massive country covers one-sixth of the earth's surface, "our own country three times over, or all of North America and a million miles to boot."⁵⁹ By using familiar Western standards to describe the Soviet Union's land area, Capra makes another direct link between the two allied nations. When the narrator describes Russia's various natural resources, the viewer is confronted with images of satisfied, contented farmers and peasants. To prevent the overwhelming, impersonal sentiments aroused by listening to figures such as "173,600,000 tons of coal" or "213,000,000 barrels of oil,"⁶⁰ the narrator matches the smiling faces to the comforting statement, "Russia is also a people."⁶¹ Capra proceeds to describe "people of every race, color, and creed,"⁶² no

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

doubt appealing to Americans' concept of their own homeland as a melting pot of disparate cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities. This emphasis on diversity within Russia — including an indication that over one hundred languages were spoken in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — serves to further arouse a feeling of outrage upon hearing of the progressing German campaign to eradicate the Soviet people. Capra describes a long sequence of civilizations within the Soviet Union, showing the viewer images of ethnic life for Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Armenians, Georgians, and Mongols, among others. Capra depicts these minority ethnicities enjoying their own music, freedom, and other socially unique events, as he intends to arouse a sense of sympathy, optimism, and pride in individualism from the viewer at the same time. Capra includes another human element in the film's narrative by listing a variety of Soviet occupations. By doing this, the producer-director succeeds in proving the degree of solidarity of the Soviet people and further presenting Russians as comparable to Americans, and thus worthy of fighting with and for. Factory workers, soldiers, bricklayers, traffic cops, sailors, riveters, schoolchildren, farmers, nurses, engineers, window-washers, salesgirls, housewives, postal clerks, radio announcers, stewardesses, scientists, typists, musicians, and ballerinas are found in both locales. Moreover, displaying this wide array of social roles is a strong testament against the perception of the Soviet Union as a bleak, uniformly-downtrodden entity devoid of the United States' vibrant way of life. When the narrator claims that "all [Russians] have one thing in common: love of their soil,"⁶³ this group of people is once again painted in a sympathetic light. Capra makes yet another comparison between Russia and the United States by including the nations'

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

industries in the narrative. The dialogue states that Russia's industries were "like our own, designed for ways of peace" before being "converted for war."⁶⁴ This explanation serves to both reinforce the notion of the Soviet Union as a pacifist power — which is extremely difficult to justify in the first place — and the idea that it shared even more common ground with the United States and its cause for war. Casting Russia's need to reluctantly enter war as similar to the U.S.'s motivation arouses a sense of brotherhood and shared association surrounding the conflict. Especially notable in this segment of the film is the interchangeable nature of the concepts of "Russian" and "Soviet," a device by which Capra serves to further categorize, without exception, all such citizens into a clear-cut national and ideological framework.

Capra contrasts his favorable perspective of the Russians with the evil Germans and their historical legacy of violence and aggression. Hitler is labeled a "modern would-be conqueror"⁶⁵ in the mold of the ancient Teutonic warriors and their descendants. The narrator even goes so far as to claim, "Germany's spirit of aggression was handed down from generation to generation."⁶⁶ Amidst the backdrop of this serious threat, Capra depicts the Russians as a peaceful people searching for collective security. The Soviet Union and its Foreign Commissar, Maxim Litvinoff, are shown as active in the League of Nations, pleading for "indivisible peace" and desiring to "avert or arrest aggression."⁶⁷ Upon learning of the Soviet Union as a power coveting peace, the viewer has no choice but to label Germany as the wrongful aggressor and Russia the unfortunate victim. The

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Germans are also cast in negative terms when the film describes Hitler's invasion of Greece. Menacing images of German airplanes flying over the ancient city of Athens serve to emphasize Hitler's apparent disregard for the well-respected history, philosophy, and society of ancient Greek culture. When the Acropolis comes into view with a fighter plane's shadow looming above it, the viewer is jarred by the surprisingly strong image. Similarly, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union is depicted in strictly negative terms. Capra's narrative states that the German army "smashed into submission one European country after another" before coming against Russia, a nation that "did not submit."⁶⁸ The Russians are portrayed as clever and improvisational in their defensive tactics. The narrator explains, "The Russians used their cities as strongholds and made the Germans come to them down alleys."⁶⁹ This piece of information makes the Russians appear to be resourceful, creative, and dynamic in their approach to the war. The Germans, meanwhile, are viewed as undertaking the military campaign in a static, inflexible, and naive way. The Germans, as the narrator emphasizes, "overlooked people. . . . Generals may win campaigns, but people win wars. . . . The Russians' grim faces told of their determination to fight and to die, but never to surrender."⁷⁰ By portraying the Germans as inhumane, impersonal, and sterile in their attitude and tactics, Capra seeks to make fighting against them more palatable to the American troops watching the film. The Germans are also earmarked as villains for destroying sites of Russian cultural history. The viewer is introduced to the home of world-famous Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, whose music, according to the narrator, "is and

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

always will be inspirational to countless millions. But it brought only one inspiration to the Nazis: Vandalism."⁷¹ Writer Leo Tolstoy and his accomplishments are also mentioned, since "his home, too, was a museum. Until the Germans came."⁷² Capra completely ignores the Germans' appreciation for high art, a phenomenon that has been widely documented and researched. For Capra's purposes, anything that makes the Germans appear to demonstrate hatred, brutality, and simplemindedness is used as evidence to their villainy.

In stark contrast to his negative portrayal of the Germans, Capra romanticizes Russia's war mobilization. Even child labor is conveyed to the viewer as a positive development, because, after all, "If you were 12 years old, there was work for 12-year-olds to do. ... Sex [also] had nothing to do with it. If you could hold a rifle, you were a soldier."⁷³ Youths working long hours in factories producing munitions and other war materiel would normally be viewed as an atrocity or an encroachment on basic liberties. Capra, however, presents child labor as a positive development that would expedite the mobilization process, regardless of its potentially harmful effects on children. The Russian guerilla army is also described in glowing terms. Those who fought as guerillas aimed at "destruction of communication lines, supplies, the invaders themselves. Their weapons were dynamite, and the terror of surprise. ... Their only goal was merciless destruction."⁷⁴ Still, since the Russian guerillas are combating the wicked German onslaught, Capra presents these ambassadors of annihilation as heroes. In describing the Russian counteroffensive against the German invasion, Capra uses interesting camera angles

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

to mirror the change in momentum of the war's progress. Overhead footage filmed from Russian planes showing strafing fire raining down on the snowy ground demonstrates the change in fortunes. By watching footage from the Russians' perspective, Capra provides the American troops with another opportunity to view the war through the Red Army's eyes. Capra arouses compassion for the Russian cause by filming a scene where the camera pans a row of distressed Soviet citizens as they recite the following oath:

For the burned cities and villages; For the deaths of our children and our mothers; For the torture and humiliation of our people; I swear revenge upon the enemy ... I swear that I would rather die in battle with the enemy than surrender myself, my people, and my country ... to the Fascist invaders. Blood for Blood! Death for Death!⁷⁵

Such close proximity to this emotional statement gives the viewer a sense of the turmoil and desperation in the Soviet Union during the German invasion and places the viewer on a similar plane with the Russians. Witnessing these individuals' determination to fight back evokes compassion in the viewer.

Capra employs different camera angles in using footage from the siege of Leningrad. In stark contrast to the earlier view from the Russian aircraft during the Soviet counteroffensive, Capra utilizes images filmed from the ground, looking up to a sky filled with German planes firing on the city. This technique helps to convey a sense of helplessness in the face of the German aerial onslaught. When the city is shown in ruins from the bombardment, Capra compares Leningrad's situation to that of London, Rotterdam, and Warsaw when those cities were shelled. This association further facilitates a familiarization of the viewer with Russia, preventing a detached or abstract feeling that might occur due to the extreme distance between

⁷⁵ Ibid.

the Soviet Union and the United States. Capra also makes a point to emphasize that, in the summer of 1942, propaganda posters “greeted and welcomed [Russian] allies”⁷⁶ in Moscow. By depicting Russia as grateful and appreciative of its fighting companions, the viewer becomes more confident that United States involvement is warranted and morally justifiable. Thus, Capra makes American troops watching the film realize that their assistance will not go unnoticed or underappreciated.

The recently-concluded Battle of Stalingrad serves as the film’s climax, the crystallization of Russian resistance to the German offensive and the point where the tide turns in the Red Army’s favor. The city’s importance is established by claiming that it was “the pride of this generation of Russians, for it was their city, built in their time.”⁷⁷ At the same time, “Russian mountains and Russian determination”⁷⁸ are presented as the only obstacles that stood between the Germans and their prime objective: the Baku oil fields in the Caucasus. The viewer is given a sense of the monumental stakes in this confrontation. Footage of soldiers fighting in the city’s ruins, shooting enemies through holes broken into brick walls, and images of soldiers being shot and collapsing on the ground illustrate that Stalingrad was a grueling battle of attrition. Newman’s music builds to a crescendo as the Russian forces become increasingly successful, since “as November dawned, the Russians were no longer defending their city inch by inch. Inch by inch, they were regaining it. . . . The whole world spoke in admiration of the City of Steel.”⁷⁹

When two segments of the Red Army meet each other, indicating that Russian forces have successfully encircled the German army at Stalingrad, the

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

narrator states, "Emotional as children they greeted each other. . . . It is a happier Christmas this year."⁸⁰ Capra uses yet another element of Western culture to draw connections between the United States and the Soviet Union. By including a reference to Christmas, the viewer is made to associate the Russian situation with his own in the United States. Images follow showing Santa Claus, presents, and Christmas trees. These familiar holiday icons serve to further demonstrate common ground between the two allied yet drastically different cultures. On the other hand, when the film reaches the moment of the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad, Capra paints the German commanders in simplistic — and extremely negative — terms. General Friedrich Paulus is described as "the man who told his soldiers that if they surrendered, he would see to it that their families died in reprisal."⁸¹ Capra makes no mention of the identical order issued by Soviet Premier Josef Stalin and the Soviet High Command, but rather employs the ultimatum to portray the Germans alone as barbaric.

The film concludes by reviewing a list of Nazi offensive failures in the German campaign in the East. The narrator warns, "In 1943, and for as many more years as necessary, [the Germans] will not only be resisted wherever their failing power strikes, but they will be attacked, attacked, and attacked, by these united people of these united nations."⁸² The camera then pans over a series of Allied flags. Those of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Australia are most visible, but several others are also included. The statement, coupled with the visual images, demands a call to action on the viewer's part. The film's final frame shows a quote

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

from Marshall reading, "... Victory of the democracies can only be complete with the utter defeat of the war machines in Germany and Japan."⁸³ Marshall's signature is even superimposed above his name, giving an aura of endorsement and an apparent command from the highest reaches of American authority advocating the film and the ideas it expresses.

The Battle for Russia is a propaganda film that strictly simplifies, perhaps to a fault, the Russians as heroic, victorious, and virtuous people in contrast to the evil, invading, and ruthlessly violent Germans. The Battle of Stalingrad occupies a vital role in the film's narrative, and it is cast as a black-and-white confrontation between Good and Evil, proving that courage and bravery can overcome aggression and inhumane tactics. Perhaps most interesting is the way in which Capra frames the combatants. In essence, Capra boils the battle down to a clash between German and Russian cultures, largely ignoring the Communist, Fascist, and Nazi ideologies at play. By presenting Stalingrad as a confrontation between nations, the producer-director manages to avoid the more complex and nuanced conflict between the dueling totalitarian regimes. When Capra does mention the belligerent ideologies, he does so superficially, freely interchanging "Russian" for "Soviet" and "German" for "Nazi." This approach paints a one-dimensional picture of the troops fighting on both sides, as it simplifies the interplay between national and ideological identities. The segment tracing positive Russian characteristics, negative German traits, and the deep-seated feud between the two nations centuries into the past is especially poignant and instrumental, since it serves to further remove the battle from its more immediate causes and realities. Ultimately, Capra's call to American troops to aid the

⁸³ Ibid.

Russians against the Germans functions far more effectively than a mobilization to support Communists against Nazism and Fascism would have.

The Battle for Russia had important political and social consequences in America. Historian Warren F. Kimball discusses Stalingrad's importance in the political realm in his article, "Stalingrad: A Chance for Choices." After noting Stalingrad as a "turning point" in the war on the Russian front, the historian proceeds to argue that "great military battles should be political as well as military opportunities."⁸⁴ Even though the author admits that Stalingrad did not affect American policy dramatically, the fact that its outcome presented alternative choices to President Franklin Roosevelt for conducting relations with the Soviet Union demonstrates its inherent significance. The reasoning behind Kimball's argument seems faulty, as he apparently sets out to prove a strongly-held normative belief. Kimball's insistence that military engagements *should have* political weight appears presumptuous, yet his argument is nevertheless compelling. The author writes that "Stalingrad changed the entire complexion of the politics of war, for its outcome assured that the Soviet Union would survive without an Allied landing in northern France and the diversion of German forces away from the Russian front."⁸⁵ As such, the Anglo-American alliance was forced to decide whether to intervene in Western Europe or the Mediterranean, as well as which stance to take in its relations with the Soviets. As *The Battle of Russia* demonstrates, Roosevelt and the War Department chose to support the Russian cause in fighting the Germans on the Eastern Front. Capra's film played an important role in rallying support for the

⁸⁴ Kimball, Warren F. "Stalingrad: A Chance for Choices." *The Journal of Military History*. Vol. 60, No. 1. (Jan., 1996). Page 89.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

cause in the United States. Kimball's search for political consequences finds a telling result in the production of the propaganda film.

Representations of Stalingrad available in the English-speaking world at the time of the battle overwhelmingly distilled the conflict to one between Russian and German cultures. These works glorified Russian heroism, determination, and grit. At the same time, contemporary memories of the battle vilified the Germans and made them out to be evil, subhuman, and barbaric creatures incapable of sympathy, compassion, or mercy. Moreover, the superficial attention paid to Communism and Nazism and their roles in the battle allowed Anglo-Americans to sympathize with their Russian allies while conveniently avoiding the uneasy union of the Soviet system with Western democracy. In most cases, the Battle of Stalingrad was portrayed as a struggle unlike any the world had ever seen, and special effort was made to distinguish the proceedings from past military battles to emphasize this point. Tellingly, at the time of the battle and in its aftermath, Anglo-America was bombarded with glowing reports of Russian courage and defiance in the face of the German menace at Stalingrad. The attitude taken in the English-speaking world toward the battle paved the way for cooperation between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union until the conclusion of World War II.

CHAPTER ONE IMAGES

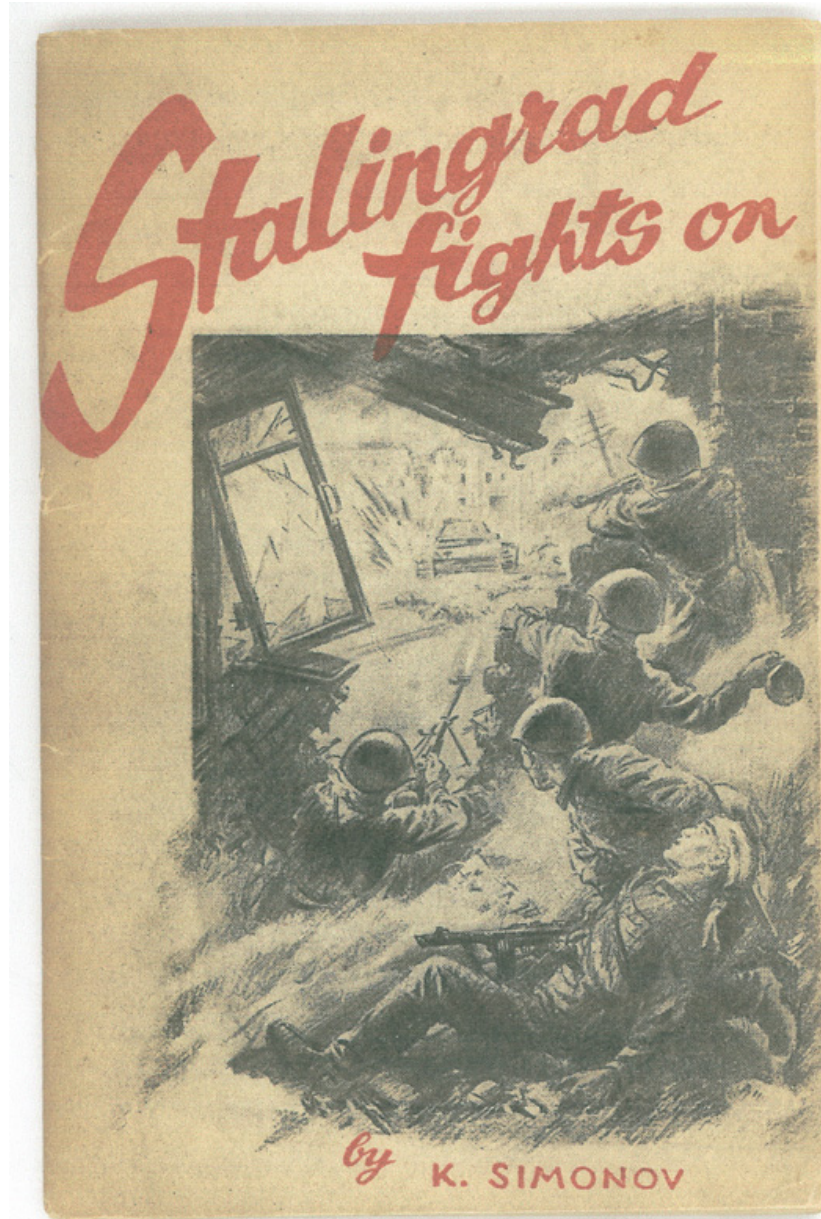


Figure 1.1: The cover of Konstantin Simonov's pamphlet, *Stalingrad Fights On*.

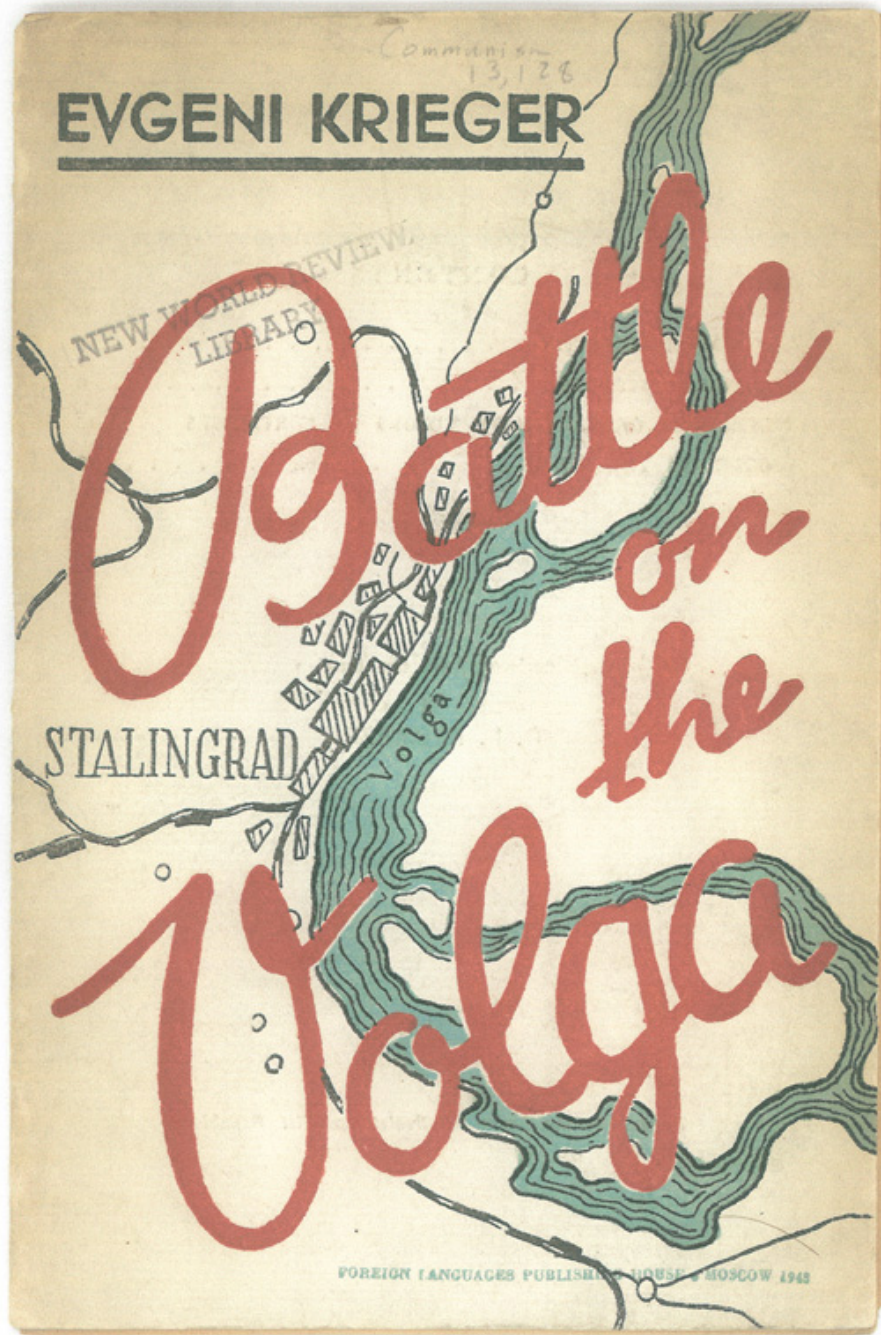


Figure 1.2: The cover of Evgeni Krieger's pamphlet, *Battle on the Volga*.

Chapter Two

COOLING DOWN

As World War II faded into memory and the Cold War era dawned, the United States and the Soviet Union, once allies, quickly found themselves in an epic stare-down of global proportions. But the arenas of international relations, military power, politics, and economics were not the only scenes of change. The world, and especially those parts of the world labeled “Capitalist” or “Communist,” began to view the past in a different light, as well. The Battle of Stalingrad was one such site of historical tension. While the English-speaking world unequivocally viewed the success of the Russians at Stalingrad as a heroic, commendable, and undeniably positive development in the course and immediate aftermath of the Second World War, representations of the battle took on a significantly more ambivalent tone during the Cold War. Chapter One examined how contemporary images of Stalingrad in the United States and Great Britain magnified the deeds of the valiant Red Army on the banks of the Volga. At the same time, the Anglo-American world was presented with images of Germans behaving like savages, often represented as creatures far less than human. Russians were made out to be sympathetic figures worthy of American friendship and cooperation. As time passed, however, representations of Stalingrad began to convey drastically shifted messages.

A wide selection of literature began to permeate Anglo-American consciousness viewing the battle from the German perspective, often portraying German soldiers as innocent and independent of the decision-making beast — Hitler

— and ideologies — Fascism and Nazism — that drove them to act as they did.¹ The Germans were now regularly presented as humans with a full range of normal emotions, identical in many ways to any American or Englishman. Similar humanizing of the Russians was far less common in English-language sources of the time. In fact, the Red Army troops were coupled with Soviet Communist ideology to an even greater degree than they were during the war itself. In this case, equating Russian national identity with Communism served to distance Anglo-Americans from the Soviets. Moreover, the Russian triumph at Stalingrad is sometimes minimized in Anglophonic Cold War-era literature. When its importance is not mitigated, Russian victory is cast in an ominous light, reflective of the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the nuclear age. In examining Stalingrad from both German and Russian perspectives, Cold War-era representations put a larger emphasis on the ideologies associated with each side. Nazism and Communism entered the discourse to a far greater extent than they had during the World War II period, when national identity and cultural oversimplification dominated Anglo-American sources. Interestingly, these ideologies function differently for each belligerent. English-language representations of the battle from the Cold War age tend to portray Russians in a Communist context, while simultaneously distancing German troops from the totalitarian regime championed by Hitler and many, but not all, of his direct subordinates.² Stalingrad representations also moved into the realm of military analysis. By this time,

¹ Some Cold War-era Stalingrad representations even absolved Hitler's troops by shifting the blame for the German defeat to Germany's militarily inferior allies. For an example of this type of literature, see Fenyo, Mario. "The Allied Axis Armies and Stalingrad." *Military Affairs*. Vol. 29, No. 2. (Summer, 1965). Pages 57-72.

² For a dramatic account that separates German troops from Nazi leadership and ideology, see Plivier, Theodor. *Stalingrad*. New York: Time, Inc., 1966.

historians had already undertaken the task of placing Stalingrad in a larger context. This meant evaluating the true importance of the proceedings and fitting them into a grand scheme of cause-and-effect. Artistic modes of expression also began to surface during the Cold War, a far cry from the propagandist literature dominating the World War II-era Stalingrad sources. Two other notable classes of literature emerged during the Cold War: biographical writing and travel literature. Memoirs and collections of correspondence focusing on key players such as Russian commander Georgi Zhukov and German general Friedrich Paulus bring an intensely personal aspect to the proceedings at Stalingrad, moving away from the remote language of struggle and conventional military might. Narratives of foreigners' travels to Stalingrad in the years following the battle also reveal how the fighting was remembered at its original site long after the last shots were fired. These accounts also presented individuals with the opportunity to discover Stalingrad and its import free from the persuasive arguments of military historians, government propagandists, and textbooks. Ultimately, the Cold War proved to be a time period during which an immensely diverse and rich collection of Stalingrad representations was produced. The results both demonstrate the dominant thinking of Cold War ideologies and permit the scholar to discover a wide range of fascinating means by which the legacy of Stalingrad has been handed down through the years.

Despite the altering perception of Stalingrad in the Anglo-American world, the dawn of the Cold War saw no change in the battle's meaning within Russia itself. Konstantin Simonov, the Soviet correspondent and propagandist discussed in Chapter One who composed pamphlets detailing the heroics of the Russian troops — including *Stalingrad Fights On* — authored *Days and Nights* (*Dni i Nochi* in Russian),

a book published in 1951. The Russian version of the book includes seven powerful illustrations — including four in full-color — indicating that the values associated with the defenders of Stalingrad still held strong years later. One illustration shows a Russian soldier, youthful and fresh-faced, staring confidently out over the snowy steppe. He holds a helmet full of water, apparently his drinking supply for the time being. This image of the resourceful, proud, and optimistic Russian was a holdover from the wartime period.³ Another image in *Dni i Nachi* shows a female medic or nurse standing on a river barge on the Volga. Her first-aid bag is slung over her shoulder as she stares out grimly at her surroundings. Despite an explosion in the background that sends up a geyser of water, she is resolute in her focus on the task at hand.⁴ The next image is a black-and-white composition showing two Russian soldiers, an officer and a medic, standing over a wounded comrade in a dark bunker. The caretakers show an admirable compassion that is easily understood by the reader. Despite the bunker's less-than-ideal conditions, it is clear from the illustration that the Russians are doing everything they can to help their comrade survive.⁵ The fourth image shows a female medic or nurse following an officer up a hillside, away from the Volga. The pair displays a calmness, confidence, and purpose in the face of violence and brutality. Explosions are visible in the background, but the officer and his attendant are committed to moving ahead. All the while, a rosy sky dominates much of the frame, serving as a reminder of Russia's natural beauty and perhaps as an impetus to remember Russian national pride.⁶ In the next visual

³ Simonov, Konstantin. *Dni i Nachi (Days and Nights)*. Russian language version. Moscow, 1951. Page 6. See Figure 2.1 on Page 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 89. See Figure 2.2 on Page 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 169. See Figure 2.3 on Page 81.

representation, a Russian soldier crouches behind debris at night, hiding from a wandering German soldier. The German's characteristic gray helmet and greatcoat make his identity plainly obvious, as does the menacing rifle he carries. The Russian, in the meantime, is clothed in a simple short leather jacket and no weapon is visible. This juxtaposition makes the Russian appear to be far less menacing and threatening compared to his German counterpart.⁷ The next illustration, which is composed in black-and-white, depicts Russian soldiers advancing over German lines with valor and vigor. The Russians fire their guns as they confidently attack their enemies' defenses and foxholes; meanwhile, the body of a fallen German soldier lays face-down in the mud. There is only one direction of movement in the picture, and it follows the advancing Red Army troops.⁸ The book's final illustration, also in black-and-white, shows Russians packed into a tiny wooden shelter. An officer speaks to his attentive men, who display confidence, focus, and joy. The picture conveys the message that the Russians have triumphed or are well on their way to success in the struggle to defend Stalingrad.⁹ While *Dni i Nochi* does little to explain the shifting Anglo-American attitudes toward Stalingrad, the book's illustrations prove that the battle continued to stand for similar ideas in the Soviet Union during the early Cold War years as it did at the time of the battle itself. Russian ingenuity, confidence, competence, and faith in ultimate victory are repeated themes.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, travel literature was written and published in English detailing travels throughout Russia. In two such works, *Russian Vistas* by Richard Edmonds (1958) and *Russian Panorama* by K.P.S. Menon (1962), the writers

⁷ Ibid., 201.

⁸ Ibid., 217. See Figure 2.4 on Page 81.

⁹ Ibid., 269.

visit Stalingrad and relate their experiences to the Anglo-American world. While it stands as no surprise that the battle was still held in high regard in the Soviet Union at the respective dates of publication, both Edmonds and Menon show particular fascination with the course of events in 1942-1943 and seem to acquire an even greater degree of respect for the Russians' accomplishments in fending off the Germans, probably due in large part to the rubbing off of local attitudes and customs surrounding Stalingrad's legend. Edmonds, an Englishman, traveled to Russia as a member of the:

... British Town Planning Delegation ... received in Moscow by Gostroy, the Ministry essentially concerned in planning matters in every region of the Soviet Union. It was a return visit following a tour by Russian planners, architects and engineers in Britain in 1957, when they spent an intensive month in London and the provinces.¹⁰

The author, who at no point shows evidence of leftist leanings, describes his narrative as a "personal and quite unofficial account,"¹¹ lending his prose credibility due to its lack of a specific professional or critical target audience or ideological agenda. Edmonds writes, "Stalingrad *is* different. It is a dedicated city, which went through the turmoil of an unrelenting siege in one of the most grievous wars in history. To-day [sic] the whole world remembers the heroism of Stalingrad's people who, long after Hitler had complimented his generals on their triumph, fought on amid the shambles."¹² Edmonds' underscoring of the fact that Stalingrad has been remembered as a global event highlights the still-powerful grip the battle held on the world during the early Cold War period. His words sound eerily similar to propaganda, so it comes as no surprise when the reader learns that he watched a

¹⁰ Edmonds, Richard. *Russian Vistas*. London: Phene Press, 1958. Page 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, 92-93.

Russian-produced film during his visit: "The film record of the battle truly reveals the city's ordeal, the tragic degree of devastation, and, although the propaganda element is marked, this is a fine film. . . . The film is very dramatic, and often deeply moving."¹³ Edmonds makes special note of the splendor of Mamaev Kurgan (Mamaev Hill), the elevated mound in the center of the city which currently serves as the site of one of Russia's most famous monuments, the "Mother Motherland" statue erected nine years after the book's publication, in 1967.¹⁴ Edmonds also visits a museum dedicated to remembering the battle, where he notes, "The museum is well arranged, and the final display before the visitor leaves the building is one of the magnificent gifts which the world showered on Stalingrad after throwing back the German Armies. Among them is the Sword of Honour [sic] presented by King George VI on behalf of the British people."¹⁵ Edmonds' account clearly demonstrates that he is taken by the splendor and glory of the Russians' victory at Stalingrad. His account allows the reader to sympathize with Russian sentiment despite the erection of Cold War barriers hindering communication and mutual understanding between East and West.

Menon, who served as the Indian ambassador at Moscow from 1952-1961, also became engrossed in Stalingrad's bloody history when he made two successive visits to the city during his term in office. In his *Russian Panorama*, the author notices on his first trip — in the early 1950s — that when his train pulls into the station in Stalingrad, he hears "loud-speakers noisily playing the heroic tunes composed during Stalingrad's finest hour, its defence [sic] against the German onslaught in the winter

¹³ Ibid., 94-95.

¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹⁵ Ibid., 106.

of 1942.”¹⁶ Furthermore, when he discovers he will soon be blessed with his tenth grandchild, his friends make a toast hoping that she will “be as noted for her beauty as Stalingrad is for heroism!”¹⁷ Menon relates that his entourage’s tour guide recites the history of the battle as though it comes from a textbook, indicating the attention to detail that Stalingrad demands from historians, visitors, and all Russians as a piece of national and, indeed, world history.¹⁸ The guide tells Menon heroic tales, the most memorable of which centered on an individual named Pavlov, who:

... defended his outpost against the numerically superior Germans for 58 days. His house, only 300 yards from the Volga, marked the farthest point to which the Germans advanced. We saw it, a grimacing ruin amidst the many new buildings springing up all around it. On its walls we saw the words, written in blood by Pavlov’s men: ‘We will hold on unto death.’ While our guide was relating these incidents, we picked up empty cartridge cases and bits of shrapnel which still covered the hill of Mamai [sic].¹⁹

Menon’s plain fascination with Pavlov’s story and subsequent collecting of artifacts from the site testify to the battle’s importance even to foreign observers. Stalingrad clearly has not been minimized in importance to travelers like Menon and Edmonds. Menon describes with stunning accuracy the many monuments on and around Mamaev Kurgan. He notices “a woman in black, with a handkerchief to her eyes, looking intently at the monument and moving quietly away as we approached it.”²⁰ Among the more historically interesting aspects of Menon’s visit to Stalingrad are his thoughts on a film he views there. Menon writes:

We also saw a film on the defence [sic] of Stalingrad. It was very different from the film on the same subject which was shown in Delhi at the Soviet Embassy in 1949. There, Stalin was shown as the prime organizer of victory.

¹⁶ Menon, Kumara Padmanabha Sivasankara. *Russian Panorama*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. Page 90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

Here, Stalin does not appear at all. Full credit is given to the brilliance of the General Staff and the heroism of the common man. . . . The film on the defence [sic] of Stalingrad showed not merely the grandeur of the battle but its ghastliness and the pity of it all. Our ancient epic poets, bewildered at the phenomenon of recurring wars among men, sought to explain it by saying that from time to time the long-suffering Earth would go to Brahma, the creator, and complain of the heavy load of humanity she had to carry. Then Brahma, taking pity on her, would send someone, a benefactor or a malefactor, to ease her burden. Hitler was one such, but he lacked even the grandeur of an epic wrong-doer like Ravana or Kamsa.²¹

In his own unique way, Menon ties the tragic fate of so many men at Stalingrad to his own native Indian traditions and relates that comparison to an Anglo-American audience. The reader is thus made aware of how Stalingrad can be related to events and ideologies on a universal scale, further emphasizing its importance in history. At the same time, the ambassador notes a shift in propaganda that emerged in the years following Stalin's death; that is, the deemphasizing of Stalin as the supreme actor and arbiter of the Soviet Union's foreign and domestic policies, military and otherwise. All in all, Edmonds and Menon's travel literature about Stalingrad maintains links to previous English-language representations by extolling the virtues of Stalingrad's defenders while still managing to distance the English-speaking world from the proceedings through the very medium of travel writing. Russia is made to seem like a faraway place, unlike anywhere in the United States or Great Britain. This is a radically different approach from the one taken by Frank Capra's propaganda film, *The Battle of Russia* (discussed in Chapter One), which sought to create ties of mutual understanding and cultural similarity between Russians and Americans. These travel narratives are not representative, however, of the bulk of Anglophonic Stalingrad representations from the Cold War period. After all, it required traveling to Russia and being exposed to the Russian memories of Stalingrad for Edmonds and Menon

²¹ Ibid., 99-100.

to articulate positive associations with the Russian aspect of the battle in the English language.

Indeed, not all Cold War-era representations of Stalingrad held true to the Russo-centric "heroism model." In 1962, *Last Letters from Stalingrad* was published. The work, a collection of anonymous German letters confiscated during the final days of action before the German surrender in February 1943 and subsequently translated by Franz Schneider and Charles Gullans, paints a series of vivid portraits of the German soldiers in their final desperate hours. The letters, perhaps more effective since the senders' names are omitted (thus lending a more universal appeal and forgoing the inherent "otherness" in seeing a German name at the end), expose the reader to a full range of emotions exhibited by the soon-to-be-killed-or-captured troops. Joy, despair, humor, morbidity, honesty, anxiety, and anticipation are but a few of the unbelievably diverse and eloquent sentiments aroused by the collection of correspondence. S.L.A. Marshall, an American Brigadier General and the author of the book's introduction, notes, "There arises from these Stalingrad letters a dirge of melancholy unique in literature and unlike any other chorus out of battle. It is the song of the doomed, the wail of a soldiery defeated and self-marked for death. The proverbial hope which supposedly springs eternal was already fled. They knew they had been failed and fooled finally."²² Marshall even speculates as to the reason for the Germans' defeat, claiming, "It was not so much contempt for the enemy as the effect of that hypnosis which besets an army when its own field power is fully arrayed, clear to be seen, with nothing to challenge it on the horizon. Euphoria soon

²² Schneider, Franz and Charles Gullans (translation). *Last Letters from Stalingrad*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962. Page 7.

takes over and normal caution is drugged.”²³ Marshall comments further on the importance of the German troops’ last words: “Rare revelation, these letters bare for us the soul of the combat soldier in his worst hour. Amid the encompassing blackness, there is also a tenderness hardly less than sublime. The writers were Germans, in that hour our enemies. But who may read and not weep for them?”²⁴ Before the letters themselves, a note explains how the correspondences were ultimately rounded up and procured for publication. Initially, the Nazi Party collected the letters and surveyed them to ascertain their general attitude toward Party leadership; in all, over 90% of the authors felt either indifferent or negative.²⁵ This distancing of the soldiers from Hitler and the Nazi Party effectively separates the letter-writers from the evil scourge of Nazi power, partly absolving them from blame and making it easier for the reader to sympathize with their plight and emotions revealed in the letters. Such compassion would have been unimaginable in the days of the war, considering the fact that the German army was the United States military’s chief enemy and was portrayed as villainous and without even a semblance of morals or ethics at the time of the fighting.

The letters themselves are eye-opening in their display of humanity, warmth, and expressiveness. One letter-writer, sending words to the unwitting object of his love, seems completely uninterested in the war, preferring to watch the stars at night and measure humidity, temperatures, cloud ceilings, and visibility from the weather station each day:

Monica, what is our life compared to the many million years of the starry sky!
... My peace and contentment I owe to the stars, of which you are the most

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Ibid., 13.

²⁵ Ibid., 16.

beautiful to me. The stars are eternal, but the life of man is like a speck of dust in the Universe. . . . I should have liked to count stars for another few decades, but nothing will ever come of it now, I suppose.²⁶

The man's hopelessness and despair at being separated from the activity he loves is heart-rending and difficult to stomach. Another writer displays his defiant attitude toward the leadership, stating, "But there are only a few here who believe that this meaningless sacrifice could be of use to our country."²⁷ Yet another soldier reveals to his wife that he will no longer be able to please her by playing the piano, since his hands were destroyed by battle wounds and the murderous cold. In a pitiful message, he writes:

My hands are ruined and have been since the beginning of December. I lost the little finger on my left hand, but worse still is the loss of the three middle fingers of my right hand through frostbite. I can hold my drinking cup only with my thumb and little finger. I am quite helpless; only when one has lost his fingers does one notice how much they are needed for the simplest tasks.²⁸

The author also refers to a friend of his who played a piano in the middle of the street to entertain his fellow German troops. The reader can almost hear the sound of Beethoven's "Appassionata" echoing through the ruined streets of Stalingrad by reading this soldier's cryptic words. Other troops are surprised at the predicament they find themselves in. One German writes, "I was shocked when I saw the map. We are entirely alone, without help from outside. Hitler has left us in the lurch."²⁹ Even the German officers feel heavy guilt for getting their men into this unfavorable situation. One senior soldier writes to his wife, "I cannot deny my share of personal guilt in all this. . . . I tell myself that, by giving my life, I have paid my debt. One

²⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

²⁷ Ibid., 21-22.

²⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

²⁹ Ibid., 32.

cannot argue about questions of honor. . . . Don't forget me too quickly."³⁰ Even simple things, like missing a grandmother's seventy-fourth birthday, are mentioned in the letters. A soldier expresses his sorrow over not being able to eat a piece of cake with his family.³¹ Another soldier, an actor, writes home upon realizing that performing death scenes onstage does not compare to the actual event:

It is terrible to realize how little the acting had to do with real death. . . . Here they croak, starve to death, freeze to death — it's nothing but a biological fact like eating and drinking. They drop like flies; nobody cares and nobody buries them. Without arms or legs and without eyes, with bellies torn open, they lie around everywhere. One should make a movie of it; it would make 'the most beautiful death in the world' impossible once and for all. It is a death fit for beasts; later they will ennoble it on granite friezes showing 'dying warriors' with their heads or arms in bandages. Poems, novels, and hymns will be written and sung. And in the churches they will say masses. I'll have no part of it, because I have no desire to rot in a mass grave.³²

Yet another German soldier reveals that troops rarely die praising Germany or Hitler in their final moments; rather, they cry for their mother or beg for help.³³ This concrete rejection of Nazi principles by the German troops demonstrates how individuals, especially on the German side, came to be separated from larger national or ideological frameworks in Cold War-era Anglo-American Stalingrad representations. One man saying farewell to his family sends a final message to his young children: "Severe simplicity of thought and action! No squandering of energies!"³⁴ Some previously-religious individuals renounce the existence of God,³⁵ while others say goodbye to a wife,³⁶ yearn for the food back home,³⁷ ask for a

³⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

³¹ Ibid., 39.

³² Ibid., 46-47.

³³ Ibid., 50-51.

³⁴ Ibid., 58.

³⁵ Ibid., 65-66.

³⁶ Ibid., 73-74.

³⁷ Ibid., 78-79.

divorce,³⁸ or express guilt over killing Russian soldiers.³⁹ After reading the selection of excerpts, the reader is able to view the German soldiers as human beings rather than violent enemies. The emotions the troops express in their writing are common to all people, and it becomes apparent that they are not monomaniacal in their bloodlust, as was once previously portrayed in English-language representations of the German soldiers at Stalingrad.

Szegedi Szuts' illustrations interspersed throughout the text in *Last Letters from Stalingrad* also serve an important purpose. The semi-abstract, vague, and nebulous images bring the reader to an even deeper level of understanding than can be acquired through words alone. Images of soldiers hunkering down in trenches and watching explosions on the plains;⁴⁰ churches and houses seen through branches of fruit trees;⁴¹ views of a domestic setting with an elderly couple drinking tea outside their home;⁴² people sitting around a campfire;⁴³ a priest holding up a cross and leading a Christian prayer;⁴⁴ horses grazing on the grass with a man seated nearby, on the property of a nice country home;⁴⁵ a couple walking between rows of trees;⁴⁶ these are the images that one does not usually consider when imagining the thoughts of a German soldier in World War II. By further reminding the reader that these men do indeed have families, pleasures, and peaceful lives awaiting them at home, the point is made more effectively that many troops fighting the Russians at

³⁸ Ibid., 82.

³⁹ Ibid., 111-115.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁴¹ Ibid., 23.

⁴² Ibid., 35. See Figure 2.5 on Page 82.

⁴³ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 63. See Figure 2.6 on Page 83.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 123.

Stalingrad were just like anybody else, instead of the wild beasts they were often made out to be.

The Stalingrad Elegies can be read as a companion piece to *Last Letters from Stalingrad*. Written by James Schevill and published in 1964, *The Stalingrad Elegies* takes several letters from the earlier book and converts them into poetry. The resulting artistic expression is illuminating in that it attempts to present the material in a more creative and less conventional way. Most of the poems are in free verse to maintain the rhythm and effectiveness of an actual letter, but others take different forms. Occasional passages of dialogue between Hitler and Paulus make the former out to be deranged in his military decision-making, while the latter is painted with a compassionate brush when he remarks, "Army requests immediate permission to surrender in order to save lives of remaining troops."⁴⁷ The German predicament is made clearer by explaining the irony of the army's poor supply status:

Our warehouses encircling the city are heaped with greatcoats, padded jackets, thick stockings, balaclavas, mittens, felt shoes; our warehouses have superintendents, deputy-superintendents, bookkeepers with proper forms and proper copies for higher authorities, storemen, clerks, guards. But the winter clothes cannot be issued without proper signatures. The clothes are for proper units which no longer exist or cannot be found. Distribution is not for the nameless.⁴⁸

The sad truth is that the Germans have fallen victim to their own famed efficiency, and as such must suffer untold horrors and, ultimately, destruction.

The poems contained in *The Stalingrad Elegies* work in different ways. Some very closely resemble the original letters that inspired them. Others make references to the letters and expand on minor themes in the initial passages. The poetic devices used to emphasize certain messages are especially poignant. In "He is not here in

⁴⁷ Schevill, James. *The Stalingrad Elegies*. Denver: Alan Swallow, 1964. Page 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

Stalingrad," a poem about God's absence in the forsaken wasteland near the Volga, each of the four verses ends with the titular line, "He is not here in Stalingrad."⁴⁹ This repetition reinforces the notion that faith and righteousness have no place in a hellhole as severe as Stalingrad. "Dream of a Jew," which was not inspired by text in *Last Letters from Stalingrad*, grapples with Nazism's anti-Semitic teachings in German school curricula and how the Jewish stereotypes do not always hold up, providing a commentary on the inner conflict created when such hateful beliefs are proliferated. Schevill writes: "*Underneath his well-dressed look,/His nose as straight as mine,/Not like those hooks they lectured us about/When they showed us pictures of Semitic types . . .* Probably he was rich, my friends said./It was a chain store, they controlled everything;/They ran the banks, law courts, hospitals."⁵⁰ In "The Two Women," a soldier says a final goodbye to his wife and puts her in the awkward position of having to say farewell to her husband's mistress for him. Appropriately, the poem's form reflects the soldier's sense of anxiety and his rushed, panicked message with sharp, rhyming, staccato lines.⁵¹ "The Wife of Death" is a short poem, reflecting the brief two-month span the soldier enjoyed together with his new wife after their wedding. The length of the poem conveys the duration of the relationship in fleeting and painful terms.⁵² The monotony and torture of waiting in the Stalingrad pocket is conveyed through "The Snow Woman," which uses short, repetitive lines to end each verse.⁵³ Schevill brings out the anonymous nature and shared emotions of humanity in "A Convert to the Underground," which tells the tale of a soldier-turned-scavenger in the city's ruins:

⁴⁹ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 18-19.

⁵¹ Ibid., 21.

⁵² Ibid., 34.

⁵³ Ibid., 37.

“... Property belongs to anyone,/No owners left, no names, no rank, no life, no time./What does a corpse care if we steal his whisky?/What does the whisky care who drinks it?”⁵⁴ Perhaps the most haunting of the poems is “The Field Marshal’s Farewell,” in which words are attributed to Friedrich Paulus, commander of the German Sixth Army, expressing his confused feelings over the events that have transpired:

*Sixth Army will hold their positions
To the last man. That butcher. I am his last man.
It is my responsibility. If I had refused
This death-bed promotion to Field Marshall ...
The temptation was too great. Lesser man than I are
Field Marshals licking his boots. The reward was mine.
[...]
Before my men shrank
to skeletons,
We might have fought our way free to the west,
Into court-martial, disgrace perhaps for me.
Better to die, I thought, in honor
At obeying orders and show the orders wrong,
Expose that insane will, that Bohemian arrogance.
He wants me to kill myself ... It is a temptation ...
Death is an easy goal with this vial of poison;
Suicide and the legends will begin, statues of
The Defender of Stalingrad, official eulogies
For my noble sacrifice, a sacred place in history.
What if some historian here escapes the slaughter?
How does it look then? I held them in a useless trap
And murdered many thousand men for vanity.⁵⁵*

The inner dialogue perceptible in these lines haunts the reader, giving what may be a glimpse into Paulus’ tortured soul. Schevill even gives voice to long-perished soldiers in “The German Voices.” The lines comment on the deceased troops’ disappearance without credit being given for their sacrifices:

The river of time changes the new city to its name
Stalingrad is memory Volgograd creates the future.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 43-44.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 46-48.

[...]
We are not named on the marble slab
of the Univermag Department Store:

*"In this building on the 31st of January, 1943,
the commanders of the fascist invaders
surrendered to the heroes of the Red Army."*

Already history is speaking
The streets of Volgograd are alive with names
Names walk to the factories
Rent the new apartment houses
Make love in the beds, in the parks
Drink in restaurants, cafes, gardens
Quarrel and laugh along the streets
Issue orders and judgments.⁵⁶

The ghosts' apparent frustration with their legacy is conveyed to the reader, as is their fear of being misrepresented. The ultimate message one receives from the poem is the utter waste of life at Stalingrad, where so many promising young men met their fate.

Much like Szegedi Szuts' artwork in *Last Letters from Stalingrad*, Leonard Breger's drawings bring another dimension to *The Stalingrad Elegies* and help to paint a more vivid picture. Some of Breger's pieces are printed on translucent paper, symbolizing the fleeting nature of life during war in general and at Stalingrad in particular. The paper itself makes the images seem transient and elusive to the viewer. The drawings are deeply troubling and ragged. One picture shows what appears to be a bandaged foot connected to a severed leg with tattered flesh at the end.⁵⁷ Dark colors fade to red within many of the images. A huddled soldier with a German helmet and a heavy winter coat and scarf is impossible to identify, since his face is shrouded in complete darkness. The individual essentially appears dead and

⁵⁶ Ibid., 49-51.

⁵⁷ See Figure 2.7 on Page 84.

unrecognizable. Images of ruined buildings and rubble in the streets are also common, while tortured silhouettes of bodies in unnatural poses further haunt the viewer.⁵⁸ On one page, a German soldier with bandaged rags on both feet stands with his arms over his head, appearing to surrender or give up hope. His face is hidden in shadow. In another image, silhouetted figures march off into the snow to face their ultimate demise.⁵⁹ On the facing page, the mangled body of a German soldier is all that remains of an individual who has died or is subject to tremendous pain.⁶⁰ Breger's images convey a more extreme statement of the misery, hardship, and mental and physical anguish the Germans were forced to endure in their final days at Stalingrad. Both the poems and drawings in *The Stalingrad Elegies* serve to relate the plight of the encircled German troops to the reader through creative artistic expression. A sense of compassion and pity is aroused and directed toward the long-dead German casualties, emphasizing the universal horror of war for all parties involved. During the Cold War, such representations of Stalingrad favorable to the German side were not unique in the English-speaking world. With the growing rift between the United States and the Soviet Union, Germany, now allied with and friendly toward democracy in an effort to rebuild its shattered nation and people — at least in the country's western half — had emerged as the site from which analysis of the pivotal battle of World War II had become most popular.

Another example of the German-centric view of Stalingrad can be witnessed in *The Onslaught: The German Drive to Stalingrad*, a collection of over 150 full-color photographs documenting the Germans' advance on the city. In the foreword, Max

⁵⁸ See Figure 2.8 on Page 85.

⁵⁹ See Figure 2.9 on Page 85.

⁶⁰ See Figure 2.9 on Page 85.

Hastings brushes aside the popular Western notion that the Western Allies ultimately defeated the Nazis. Hastings writes:

Over the past twenty years, we have slowly been reassessing the evidence, and learning to look at the war in a global historical perspective. The fundamental reality is that the Eastern Front was the decisive theatre. The fighting power of the Red Army and the industrial might of the United States were the chief instruments of German defeat. From the earliest days of Nazism, Hitler's ambitions lay in the East. Although he was determined to tolerate no opposition to his will from France or Britain, he considered the two Western powers enemies of Germany only insofar as they threatened his other designs.⁶¹

In the historical essay preceding the photographs, Heinrich Graf von Einsiedel admits German guilt in the horrendous atrocities that were carried out against Russian civilians through "the foul deeds of the murder squads."⁶² He then proceeds to question whether or not mutual disarmament might occur naturally, as a converse to the ominous crisis enveloping the world during the Cold War, during which *The Onslaught* was published. Stunning color photographs follow the introductory text. These photographs primarily show the German Sixth Army immediately before and during their engagement in Stalingrad. The Germans are depicted as religious and God-fearing as they kneel in an open field before setting out on their journey. A priest stands before the masses, flanked by two kneeling soldiers.⁶³ The image makes the Germans out to be pious, and their impending quest becomes readable as something akin to a holy Crusade rather than the barbaric Russian campaign that it was. In another shot, German soldiers are shown riding down a street in two neat columns on bicycles, rifles slung behind their backs. This image of the troops in a residential, serene context almost makes them appear to be less threatening and more

⁶¹ *The Onslaught: The German Drive to Stalingrad*. London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984. Page 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 39.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Photo 2.

approachable.⁶⁴ Other photographs show the German invaders interacting peacefully with Slavic natives. Ukrainians are depicted as being grateful for Nazi protection from Soviet cruelty,⁶⁵ while friendly German soldiers ask peasants for directions when road signs are lacking.⁶⁶ In a caption accompanying one of the photographs featuring harmless soldier-peasant interaction, it is noted that “[the German soldiers] very quickly became oppressive” by such means as forced labor, abduction, and murder.⁶⁷ By casually mentioning this darker reality in the caption, *The Onslaught* fails to present an evenhanded picture of things “as they were,” choosing instead to portray the German troops in a favorable light so outside observers can relate to them as human beings without being confronted by the many terrible crimes they committed against the Russians and other Slavic civilians. By showing German soldiers reading, playing the accordion, and banging away at typewriters in their free time,⁶⁸ a favorable, biased image begins to emerge concerning the German troops. Another pair of images — the first showing four German soldiers relaxing in the middle of an advance, the second displaying the soldiers after they are killed by Russian gunfire moments later — seems to paint the Russians as aggressors guilty of mowing down the innocent Germans. In reality, the Germans were the ones advancing into Russian territory with the goal of destroying and conquering the Russian people. The photographs, in this case, do not tell the whole story.⁶⁹ One extremely poignant image shows German soldiers’ graves in Stalingrad, just behind a sculpture of children dancing in a circle. The children

⁶⁴ Ibid., Photo 3. See Figure 2.10 on Page 86.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Photo 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Photos 37-39. See Figure 2.11 on Page 86.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Photos 70-73.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Photos 29-31. See Figure 2.12 on Page 87.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Photos 51-53.

almost appear to be dancing *on* the German graves, mocking Hitler's attack on the beleaguered city.⁷⁰ Other shots demonstrate the improbable Russian victory by showing peasant women from the city living in hollowed-out caves in ravines and gullies outside the city. Meanwhile, elderly women cook food in fireplaces from what was left of destroyed houses, their chimneys still standing and viable.⁷¹ The final few pictures in the book are black-and-white, showing the Russian counteroffensive and ultimate victory. The fact that these photos are not in full-color emphasizes the feeling that the German cause has become a lifeless corpse, devoid of its early promise. The color photographs used in *The Onslaught* are effective insofar as they convey a vividness about the Germans' experiences during the Stalingrad offensive. Since color film was still rare, viewing images from the campaign in color allows the reader to better relate to the events by feeling a more immediate connection with their realistic scenery. This book provides yet another Cold War-era Stalingrad representation seen predominantly through German eyes — this time, literally.

If the Germans had become more popular to write about and remember fondly in the English-speaking world during the Cold War, the Russians certainly bore the brunt of increased criticism, hostility, and suspicion in Anglo-American representations of the battle. In *Last Letters from Stalingrad*, a German soldier relates his fear that "the Russians would break through and demolish everything. They are very violent and many millions strong. They are not bothered by the cold. But we are terribly cold."⁷² The Russians are depicted as another species, one that lusts after

⁷⁰ Ibid., Photo 132.

⁷¹ Ibid., Photos 139-142.

⁷² Schneider and Gullans, 90.

violence and death and feels no discomfort in the cold. *The Stalingrad Elegies* contains a passage telling of a ploy the Russians used on the Germans trapped at Stalingrad:

The muttering voice of Moscow radio warns mechanically, incessantly: *Every seven seconds a German soldier dies in Russia. Stalingrad — Mass Grave.* After the threat, the voice counts off the seconds to death: 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 ... Muttering voice of an absurd horror film ...⁷³

The Russians are made out to be brutal, sadistic, and evil in their own way. To see this inhumanity from the German perspective is an inversion of the traditional attitudes presented in Anglo-American Stalingrad representations during World War II. Schevill even manages to insult the quality of Russian music in *The Stalingrad Elegies*. In the poem "A Convert to the Underground," it is mentioned that, "We used/To sit in darkness and listen to Russian music,/Melancholy as hell, in love with death./And, of course, they played plenty of German masters/'For the entertainment of the surrounded/German troops.'"⁷⁴ Through these examples, the Russians are made to appear untrustworthy, morbid, dangerous, and foreign. These qualities are not present in images of "The Russian" spread during the Second World War; rather, they are traits associated with Russians since the dawn of the Cold War and the ensuing open hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Even in the war memoirs of Zhukov, perhaps Russia's greatest general, Harrison E. Salisbury qualifies the character of the commander and his Communist peers in the introduction:

Not that Zhukov is without his critics, particularly in his own country. The passions, ambitions and rivalries born in the titanic battles of Russia have left deep marks. The struggle of the Soviet armies against the German forces was succeeded by the struggle of the Soviet marshals against each other.

⁷³ Schevill, 7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

These men, powerful, egocentric, domineering, central figures in battles in which they commanded as many men as are to be found in a great metropolitan city, superfigures who held hundreds of thousands of lives at their disposal, seldom see the events of World War II in an even light. You will look in vain in their memoirs for objective or dispassionate accounts of what happened. They are combative, argumentative men carrying on polemics not only with those German generals who have written of the war but against each other, against Stalin, against Stalin's associates and Stalin's successors. They are quick to blame, slow to acknowledge error. ... There was nothing nice, nothing gentle, nothing refined about Zhukov's tactics. There are no warm passages in the memoirs of Russian military figures about kind deeds, thoughtful encouragement, friendly comfort given by Zhukov. But there is story after story of his terrible threats: Fulfill the order or face the firing squad! Obey or die! Zhukov's style was simple. No one who had to deal with him was ever in doubt of the consequences of failure.⁷⁵

Salisbury even makes Zhukov's appointment as Stalin's Chief of Staff out to be whimsical, a result of Stalin's impatient and dangerously fickle nature.⁷⁶ When Nikita Khrushchev came to power after Stalin's death, he made sure to "take care of" Zhukov rather than entertain the possibility of being overthrown due to Zhukov's immense popularity, despite the new leader's prior affection for Zhukov:

If [Khrushchev] had kept his job only through Zhukov's aid, then the day might come when Zhukov would decide to oust *him* — and Zhukov had the power to do it. Khrushchev got the message. ... When Zhukov landed at Moscow airport on his return, he was put under guard. A few hours later he was out of a job.⁷⁷

Only after Khrushchev left office was Zhukov allowed to fully emerge and publish his memoirs, righting the wrongs done to him by omission of his role as a major leader in many key battles in the ever-changing Russian history books. Thus, not only was a cloud cast over Zhukov's personal traits, but also over the political and military decision-making apparatuses surrounding him. This paranoia and mistrust

⁷⁵ Zhukov, Georgi K. *Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. Pages 4-13.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

of all things Russian is a consistent theme throughout Cold War-era representations of Stalingrad and, in general, the Soviet Union.

Geoffrey Jukes, in his *Stalingrad: The Turning Point* (1968), indicates:

That official history [the six-volume History of the *Great Patriotic War of the USSR*] provided much more factual evidence than the purely propagandist accounts published in the wartime and early post-war years. It corrected the absurdly exaggerated picture of Stalin's dominant influence on the struggle previously prevailing. But it should be borne in mind that the revised account was produced in Khrushchev's [sic] period and with his backing — so that it tended to emphasise, and over-emphasise, [sic] his influence on the Stalingrad struggle while belittling that of Stalin. Moreover the influence of Marshal Zhukov, which had been relegated to the background in Stalin's time but was becoming mentioned afresh after Stalin's death, was again being put in the shade by Khrushchev [sic] and his sychophants. . . . Moreover Zhukov himself was allowed, or even encouraged, to produce his own memoirs, and these, significantly, contradict a number of assertions in Marshal Chuikov's earlier account of the Battle of Stalingrad. The long process of tampering with history, and perverting it for propagandist aims, should be borne in mind when studying narratives and statements from Russian sources. It also compels caution in regard to any figures of strength or casualties given in them, even though they may appear more factual than the broader figures published earlier.⁷⁸

In combination with the rarity of Anglo-American Cold War-era Stalingrad representations viewing the battle from the Russian soldiers' point of view and emphasizing their humanity and separateness from the Soviet system and the Communist ideology, the frequent critiques of the Soviet hierarchy and the focus on leaders such as Zhukov and Stalin preserved the link between individual Russian soldiers and the alien, troublesome, and vilified Soviet Communist system. While German troops were largely dissociated from Nazism and Fascist ideology in English-language sources from the time period, similar treatment of the Russians was seldom undertaken.

⁷⁸ Jukes, Geoffrey. *Stalingrad: The Turning Point*. New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1968. Page 7.

Anti-Russian rhetoric was frequently emotionally-charged, but perhaps the most extreme example relating to Stalingrad can be found in Walter Kerr's 1978 book, *The Secret of Stalingrad*. Kerr, who served as a correspondent in Moscow for *The New York Herald Tribune* during the war, explains that "the war ended in political controversy fanned by the same mistrust and concern that characterize East-West relations to this day."⁷⁹ Kerr even goes so far as to accuse Russia of hiding information concerning the causes of victory at Stalingrad:

How had the Russians won at Stalingrad? They answered by extolling their system and calling attention to incidents of battle. Why did the Germans lose? The generals said because Hitler refused to heed their advice, which he often or sometimes did, not always at the right time and perhaps not frequently enough. In short, something — something vital — was missing from both accounts — missing evidently because it suited the Russians who survived the war at a terrible price, some 20 million military and civilian dead, and the Germans who disintegrated for reasons they could not bring themselves to discuss. But what was it? ... There were answers, and they told a story that is, I think, of more than historical interest both for what it says about the Russians in our time and for what it says about us. It is a story of a secretive Kremlin in secretive action and of intelligence failure everywhere in an uncertain world.⁸⁰

By casting doubt on the legitimacy of the Russian victory at Stalingrad and pointing the finger at "secretive" leadership in Russia, Kerr attempts to discredit the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and apply Cold War suspicions and paranoia to the past event as evidence of fear and hostility between the two superpowers during the conflict. Kerr goes on to call Moscow during World War II:

... a secretive city in a secretive state waging a secretive war. It is still secretive in an odd Russian way and has been perhaps since the beginning of Russian time, which was long, long ago. A stranger soon understands. A man with a loaf of bread or a few onions in a brief case carries it as if it contained the most sensitive papers of state. A woman at a cashier's desk refuses innocent questions as if to respond may compromise her. Nobody explains anything. A visitor is on his own, cut off from those about him by

⁷⁹ Kerr, Walter. *The Secret of Stalingrad*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1978. Page ix.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, ix-x.

what appears to be an indisposition in the town to familiar intercourse. It closes in on him like the mist in Red Square on a winter morning. In the late spring of 1942, however, Moscow secretiveness was of a different order. It was blinding, almost tangible, like the fog that blankets the sea off the Siberian coast, and one can understand why. There were about 6 million German and satellite troops on Russian soil, and an enemy offensive was expected any day.⁸¹

Kerr arouses further suspicion simply by mentioning the (unsubstantiated) rumor that Lenin's body is in fact not in his tomb, as popularly thought. His stating this as reality is a grossly irresponsible action, one calculated to significantly increase a sense of skepticism toward the Russians. Kerr even mentions that, "After Stalingrad the uneasy relationship between East and West took a sharp turn for the worse from which it never fully recovered."⁸² By ascribing Cold War realities to nebulous causes dating back to Stalingrad, Kerr attempts to explain the present situation by using questionable evidence from the past. This type of thinking bowed to the popular practice of Cold War politics. Kerr paints a picture of Stalin as deceitful and misleading to his fellow Allied leaders in World War II, as well as presenting an image of the Soviet Union as an otherworldly, enigmatic environment hostile toward Americans. While there is some truth to Kerr's statements, the author's tone carries emotional weight that exacerbates fears and attitudes that were prevalent in the West during the Cold War era. Furthermore, by increasingly associating the Russian nation with its Soviet system, Kerr alienates the Red Army soldiers who fought at Stalingrad from the English-speaking audience reading his book during the Cold War.

Biographies and memoirs also facilitated the Anglo-American understanding of Stalingrad during the Cold War. Volumes were written by or about both Paulus

⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

⁸² Ibid., 245.

and Zhukov. In 1963, Walter Goerlitz wrote *Paulus and Stalingrad*, a book complete with “notes, correspondence and documents from his papers.” Paulus’ own son, Ernst Alexander Paulus, wrote the preface. The younger Paulus explains:

Each and every reader must pass his own judgment on the personalities primarily involved. Apologia serve no purpose whatsoever, and nothing was further from my father’s mind than to indulge in them. The endeavour [sic] to establish the historical truth is of far higher importance and was, indeed, regarded by my father as a solemn duty. So, in all reverence, I dedicate this book to the memory of the Sixth Army.⁸³

While maintaining a certain level of respect for the Russians, Ernst Alexander Paulus is mainly concerned with paying tribute to his father and those who served under him. This German perspective adds to the voluminous cache of readily-available German-based Anglophonic literature on Stalingrad published during the Cold War. By providing an in-depth look at Paulus’ life, including his family background and details of his entire military career, the book serves to present the English-speaking audience with a treatise on the German commander that might arouse sympathy or understanding of his role and actions at Stalingrad. Perhaps most importantly, *Paulus and Stalingrad* serves to separate even those Germans at the higher levels of decision-making from the stigma of Hitler’s Nazism and the one-dimensionally negative portrayals of the German army so common in the World War II era.

On the other side of the battle lines, *Marshal Zhukov’s Greatest Battles*, a selection of Georgi Zhukov’s memoirs published in English in 1969, centers on four highlights in the general’s illustrious career. The book focuses on the Battle of Moscow, the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of Kursk, and the Drive Toward Berlin as the seminal achievements of this highly-decorated soldier. The import of Stalingrad is clear:

⁸³ Goerlitz, Walter. *Paulus and Stalingrad*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963. Page xiii.

Once again, in an hour of deadly danger Stalin turned to Zhukov. Stalingrad hung in the balance. Its fate and quite probably the fate of Russia were placed in Zhukov's hands. . . . Stalingrad demonstrated his towering domination of the Soviet military apparatus. Every Russian commander of consequence participated in some way in the Stalingrad fighting. . . . But it was Zhukov who bore responsibility for all the armies, all the generals, for the defense of the city and, most important of all, for the concept, organization and carrying out of the grandiose counteroffensive which finally shattered the myth of Nazi military invincibility beyond repair.⁸⁴

If anything, Zhukov overemphasizes the importance of Stalingrad in his memoirs, since he played such a large role in the proceedings. Zhukov mentions that "the entire world followed developments with bated breath. The success of the Soviet forces and their courageous struggle against the enemy inspired all mankind and instilled confidence in ultimate victory over Fascism."⁸⁵ Even in the English translation, Zhukov is quoted as writing that:

the mass heroism of Soviet soldiers and the courage of their commanders, reared by our Party, were demonstrated with particular force during the fierce fighting of that period. A positive role was played by the personal example of Party members and Young Communists who, when necessary, sacrificed themselves for the sake of victory.⁸⁶

While attributing Russian victory to the success of the powerful Communist Party would not have been palatable for a Western writer to pen, Zhukov's memoirs are an appropriate place for such statements, especially given the fact that Zhukov has already been presented to the reader as hardheaded and even cruel at times. This slight undermining of Zhukov's character allows Western publishers, writers, and historians to stomach his words extolling the virtues of Communism. At the same time, the scarcity of English-language Stalingrad representations identifying Russian soldiers as human beings independent from Communism effectively lends Zhukov's

⁸⁴ Zhukov, 111.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 152.

work even greater weight in ascribing political gravity to the Russian victory at Stalingrad. Biographies and memoirs such as those concerned with Paulus and Zhukov are examples of focusing on individual accomplishments rather than group efforts. But while studying Paulus allowed Anglo-Americans to distance Germans from Nazism, English-language examinations of Zhukov in the absence of testaments to Russian humanity functioned as a synthesizing force that further lumped Russians together with Communism.

Another critical development in Anglophonic Stalingrad literature during the Cold War was the emergence of general surveys of the battle. These surveys attempted to contain as much general information about the conflict as possible, analyzing tactical and strategic moves from a distance and evaluating each successive step in the progress of events. Only after time passed was this type of coherent, big-picture construction possible, due to the research and analytical frameworks and preexisting literature necessary for such an undertaking, not to mention the time lapse required for longer-term consequences to become manifest. Thus, the Cold War was the time period during which such literature began to emerge. Alexander Kluge's *The Battle* (1967), Jukes' *Stalingrad: The Turning Point* (1968), Thomas Carmichael's *The Ninety Days* (1971), William Craig's *Enemy at the Gates* (1973), and John Erickson's *The Road to Stalingrad* (1975) are all examples of such representations.⁸⁷ Kluge's *The Battle* is comprised of day-by-day official accounts of the fighting and a blow-by-blow pattern of German media attention surrounding the battle at home, including rules prohibiting and requiring newspapers to print certain

⁸⁷ For a documentary survey of Stalingrad, see *The World at War*. Volume Three. DVD, 210 min. New York: A&E Home Video, 2004. The documentary originally aired in 1974.

words, phrases, or pieces of information.⁸⁸ Kluge's inclusion of several question-and-answer sections with medical and military personnel broadens the reader's general understanding of the conflict from the German perspective.⁸⁹ Still, though Kluge refrains from making any controversial arguments, he notes in the foreword, "This book describes the organizational build-up of a disaster. The subject is the disaster of Stalingrad. The causes date back thirty days or three hundred years."

Jukes' *Stalingrad: The Turning Point* falls more precisely into the realm of popular history, being as it is "Battle Book No. 3" in "Ballantine's Illustrated History of the Violent Century." The widespread use of maps and photographs makes the content easier for the casual reader to enjoy and understand. Jukes gives a more-or-less objective, step-by-step account of the battle, paying special attention to the changes and attitudes among the German and Russian leaderships. In the introduction, Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart summarizes a chief reason Stalingrad became so important to Hitler: "This was by name, 'the city of Stalin' so Hitler could not bear to be defied by it — and became obsessed by it. He wore down his forces in the prolonged effort to achieve its capture, losing sight of his initial prime aim, the vital oil supplies of the Caucasus."⁹⁰ Such hypotheses became commonplace during the Cold War, as there had not been sufficient time in the immediate aftermath of the fighting to formulate and proliferate such ideas. The visual images in Jukes' work are helpful, as illustrations of planes, tanks, anti-tank artillery, rocket launchers, and other weapons and vehicles straightforwardly inform the reader. Especially notable in the book's photographs is the balance between German and Russian forces to

⁸⁸ Kluge, Alexander. *The Battle*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967. Pages 1-35.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 63-108.

⁹⁰ Jukes, 6.

mirror the attritive nature of the fighting. Facing images of Germans and Russians with respective captions such as "The Attacker" (a German soldier dressed in his full battle gear) and "The Defender" (a Russian soldier waving his hat and yelling for his comrades),⁹¹ or "German infantry attack" and "The Red Army holds,"⁹² act as examples of such a practice.

Carmichael's *The Ninety Days* boils World War II down to three months of pivotal fighting during which conflicts took place at five sites: Guadalcanal, El Alamein, Morocco and Algeria (Operation Torch), Stalingrad, and the Barents Sea. Carmichael states, "On January 1, 1943, the decisive ninety days of World War II were over. Gone were the dreams of conquest of the Germans and the Japanese. The great victories which they had so confidently foreseen for the end of 1942 had eluded them. Instead they were now faced with retreat and final catastrophe."⁹³ Representations such as Carmichael's attempt to ascribe meaning to certain battles or parts of them in an effort to determine "turning points" or "critical junctures." This was a phenomenon increasingly applied to Stalingrad during the Cold War, since enough time had passed to objectively examine the events surrounding the conflict and select the vital moments. For example, even in *Last Letters from Stalingrad*, S.L.A. Marshall writes in the introduction, "There is a small river, tributary to the Don, named the Askay, though history has paid it little heed. Along its banks, the last and decisive battle for Stalingrad was fought."⁹⁴ Whether or not Marshall is correct in his assertion is not important; the fact is that historians were attempting to highlight moments when the battle and the entire war hung in the balance, and where a

⁹¹ Ibid., 100-101.

⁹² Ibid., 110-113.

⁹³ Carmichael, Thomas N. *The Ninety Days*. New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1971. Page 314.

⁹⁴ Schneider and Gullans, 12.

different outcome at a particular juncture might have led to a variety of potential effects on a larger scale.

Erickson's *The Road to Stalingrad* and Craig's *Enemy at the Gates* are more conventional battle surveys.⁹⁵ *Enemy at the Gates* provides an account of the Battle of Stalingrad on multiple fronts. From the upper-level decision-making of Hitler and Stalin, to correspondence among field generals, to the thought processes of foot soldiers on both the Soviet and German sides, Craig illustrates the six-month-long conflict in a deep, vivid manner. Craig's thesis holds that the fighting at Stalingrad — which marked the furthest point of Germany's assault on the East — and the subsequent Russian victory over the German Sixth Army irreversibly shifted the momentum toward the Allied powers and deflated the Axis' morale. Germany's support for Hitler eroded, and his troops, as well as civilians on the home front, sank into despair. While the Germans, who were previously thought to be invincible, emerged from the battle in the midst of a "mind-paralyzing calamity,"⁹⁶ the Russians were "psychologically buoyed by this magnificent triumph against the 'Nazi supermen.'"⁹⁷ Craig holds that Stalingrad's effects went far beyond the outcome of the fighting or even the ultimate Allied victory in the war. The author views the Russian victory at Stalingrad as one of the initial developments that paved the way for the Soviet Union's continuing rise to superpower status. Most importantly, though, Craig presents Stalingrad as the single most meaningful turning point in the Second World War's European theater. Craig crafts his narrative in an extremely convincing way. By consulting an immensely far-reaching source base, the author

⁹⁵ Erickson, John. *The Road to Stalingrad*. London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 1975.

⁹⁶ Craig, William. *Enemy at the Gates*. New York: Penguin Books, 1973. Page xii.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

demonstrates how the battle was planned and fought, as well as how it affected the belligerents and the men who constituted their forces. At the outset, Craig describes Paulus as “rejoicing quietly”⁹⁸ while pondering the advantageous position of the German army and Hitler’s military genius. This supremely confident field leader is transformed, over the course of Craig’s work, into a man “dazed by the calamity that had overtaken him . . . wilted under the enormity of the disaster.”⁹⁹ This shocking juxtaposition illuminates the drastic change in momentum that occurred during the Battle of Stalingrad. Craig traveled over 50,000 miles and journeyed to three continents over a five-year period. He interviewed “hundreds” of individuals who had fought in, lived through, or been affected by the events at Stalingrad. The book’s epilogue brings the reader up-to-date regarding what happened to each and every major participant, as well as the more obscure characters whose stories Craig tells. The author consulted libraries around the world where he found a tremendous amount of primary- and secondary-source material. An eight-page summary at the conclusion of the book provides the reader with a list of primary documents Craig culled from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., along with an inventory of diaries, interviews, and other sources consulted for each of the book’s thirty chapters. Such comprehensive research is the defining characteristic of general surveys.

During the early Cold War period, English-language surveys of the entire Second World War paid precious little attention to Stalingrad and the Russian war effort. In *Victory at Stalingrad*, published in 2002, Geoffrey Roberts comments on

⁹⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 366.

Winston Churchill's well-known history of World War II, published from the late 1940s to the early 1950s, which angered Russian commander Vassili Chuikov, since:

... 'in the 4700 pages of his six-volume memoirs ... he devotes less than a hundred pages to the Soviet-German front, and he distorts the events that took place there.' ... Stalingrad itself merits barely half a dozen pages, although Churchill does acknowledge 'the magnificent struggle and decisive victory of the Russian armies' which was a 'crushing disaster ... end[ing] Hitler's prodigious effort to conquer Russia by force of arms and destroy Communism by an equally odious form of totalitarian tyranny.' ... Churchill's minimalist treatment of the Eastern Front was replicated in many other textbooks and general histories of the Second World War from the 1950s onwards.¹⁰⁰

Thus, Churchill set the tone for Anglophonic histories of World War II during the Cold War era by minimizing Russia's importance in the greater scheme of the war, showing disregard for accurate representation, and pointing out the dual evils of Nazism and Communism.

By the end of the Cold War, yet another style of Stalingrad representation had emerged in the English-speaking world. Geoffrey Jukes' *Hitler's Stalingrad Decisions* (1985) combines historical analysis of Stalingrad with political science to create a case study of an "Intra-war Crisis" (IWC) in the fifth installment of editor Michael Brecher's "International Crisis Behavior Series." In the book's foreword, Brecher notes that Jukes adheres to a typical political science framework, mentioning that "the present work is 'a study not of German military history but of Hitler's decision-making in a "crisis within a crisis.'" The author justifies this focus by noting the centralization of decision-making in Nazi Germany in Hitler's own person, acting through military, party, and governmental agencies under his direct control."¹⁰¹ Jukes divides Stalingrad into three segments:

¹⁰⁰ Roberts, Geoffrey. *Victory at Stalingrad*. London: Longman, 2002. Pages 177-178.

¹⁰¹ Jukes, Geoffrey. *Hitler's Stalingrad Decisions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Page viii.

... *Pre-crisis*, a growth of perceived threat from soon after the launching of the German offensive on 28 June 1942 — the realization that Soviet forces were withdrawing rather than being destroyed — to the third week of November 1942, a threat perception accentuated by Rommel's defeat at El Alamein and the Allied invasion of North Africa on 7-8 November; *crisis*, a sharp rise in perceived threat, along with an awareness of time pressure and of an adverse change in the military balance, from 19-22 November — when the besiegers at Stalingrad suddenly became the besieged — until 24 January 1943; and *post-crisis*, from 24 January, when Army Group A was successfully evacuated from the Caucasus, to the last week of March.¹⁰²

The rigid division of the battle into the three segments is indicative of the quantitative-based political science study. Ultimately, Jukes' research discovers that:

1. The evidence points strongly to increased conceptual rigidity by Hitler under the stress of the peak crisis period.
2. There is no evidence that Hitler's cognitive performance was impaired by fatigue.
3. His receptivity to new information declined as the crisis progressed.
4. The evidence concerning the effects of stress on the search for and evaluation of alternatives is mixed.
5. Increasing stress did lead to a higher value being placed on immediate goals and less attention being paid to the distant future.
6. Most significantly, perhaps, the range of perceived alternatives did not narrow under the impact of greater stress, contrary to the findings from other international crises; the four alternatives open to the besieged German force at Stalingrad were all considered.¹⁰³

By evaluating everything from "coping mechanisms"¹⁰⁴ (information processing, consultation with people and groups, decisional forums, identifying alternatives, etc.) to "crisis components"¹⁰⁵ (environmental changes, threats to basic values, probabilities of adverse shifts in the military balance, the pressure of time, etc.), Jukes accounts for as many variables as possible in the Nazi decision-making process in order to analyze how certain factors contributed to the final outcome. Ultimately, Jukes' Hitler-focused approach to the developments at Stalingrad makes the

¹⁰² Ibid., viii.

¹⁰³ Ibid., ix.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 143-147.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 141-142.

subordinate German troops appear detached from the battle, its consequences, and a larger Nazi context, allowing for the possibility of a more sympathetic analysis of the soldiers themselves.

The Cold War period proved fruitful in bearing a wide variety of Stalingrad representations in the English-speaking world. The German perspective — emphasizing the humanity and corporeal emotions felt by German soldiers — flourished in Anglo-American literature, distancing the individual troops from Hitler's brutal Nazi regime while acknowledging the evils of Fascism. Meanwhile, the Russian-based approach shrank and was mitigated by qualifying statements arousing suspicion, mistrust, and dislike for the Soviet Union and her people, reflecting the dominant political and social thinking of the age. Works examining the Russian side also often combined national and ideological concepts, presenting Russians as inextricably linked to the Communist system. Creative artistic expressions provided unorthodox and thought-provoking ways in which Stalingrad could remain in the global, and especially Western, consciousness. General survey histories narrating the events of the battle sought to make generalizations and ascribe meaning to the mass of information. Despite the passage of time, Stalingrad remained deeply ingrained in both Western and Eastern memory, and its representations adapted to mold to the changing global climate during the Cold War.

CHAPTER TWO IMAGES

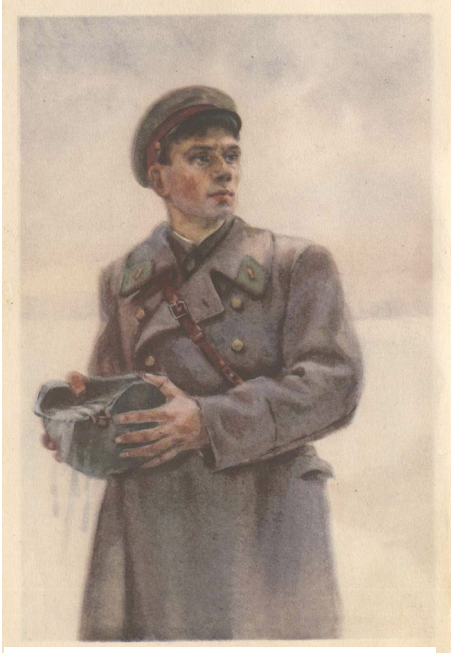


Figure 2.1: Portrait of a Red Army soldier in Simonov's *Dni i Nochi*.

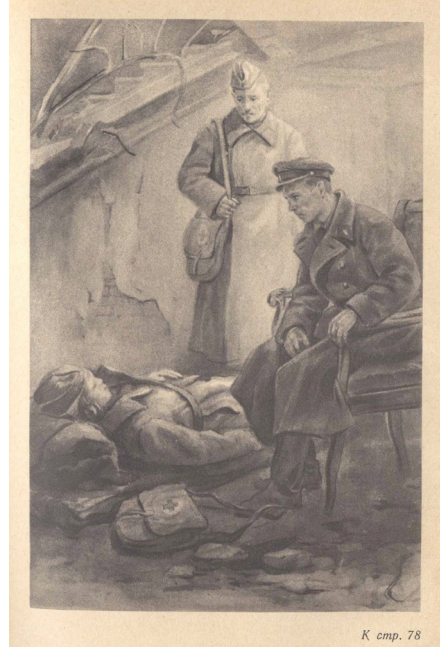


Figure 2.2: A wounded Russian soldier in Simonov's *Dni i Nochi*.



Figure 2.3: Resolute Russian personnel in Simonov's *Dni i Nochi*.



Figure 2.4: A Russian attack in Simonov's *Dni i Nochi*.

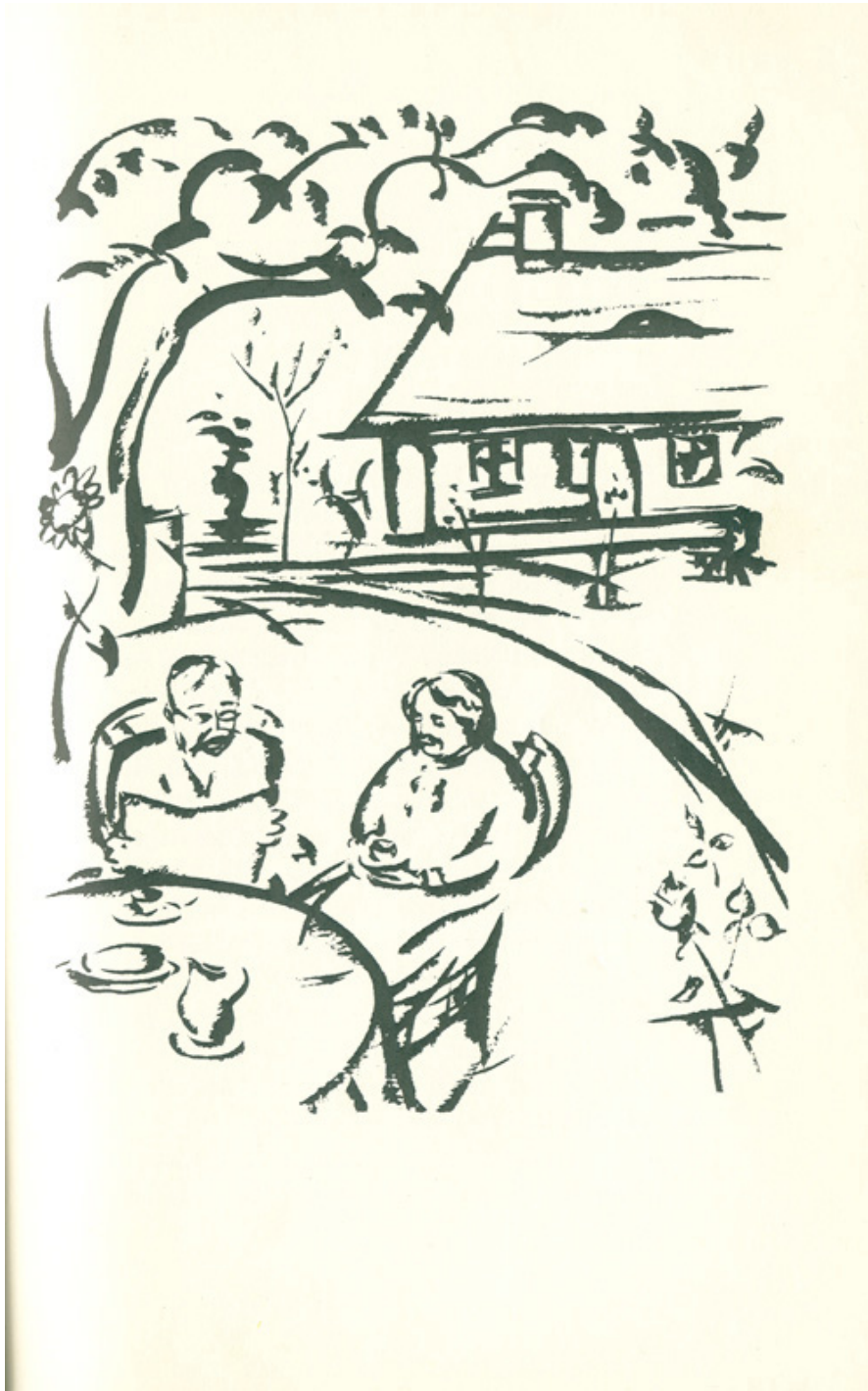


Figure 2.5: Szegedi Szuts' illustration of German pastoral life in *Last Letters from Stalingrad*.



Figure 2.6: Szegedi Szuts' illustration of German soldiers praying in *Last Letters from Stalingrad*.

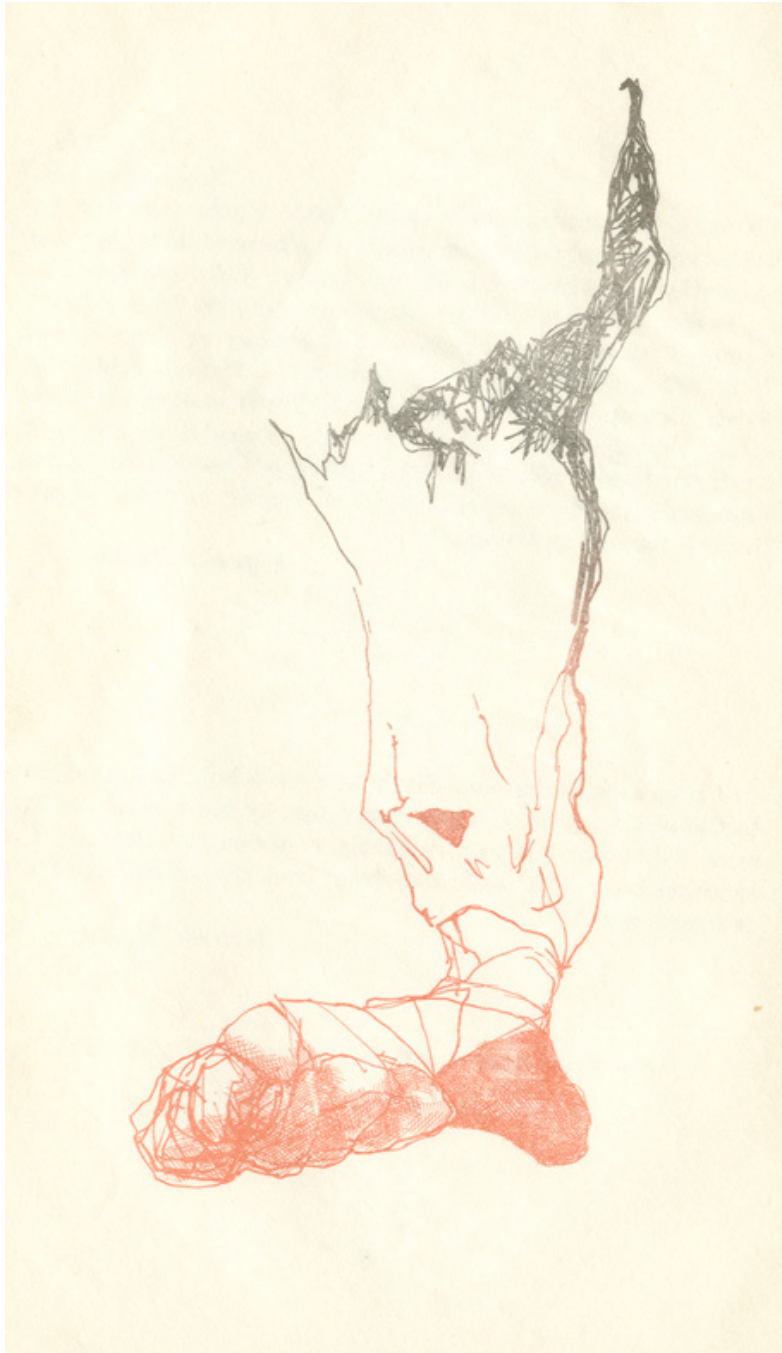


Figure 2.7: Leonard Breger's illustration of a mangled German limb in *The Stalingrad Elegies*.

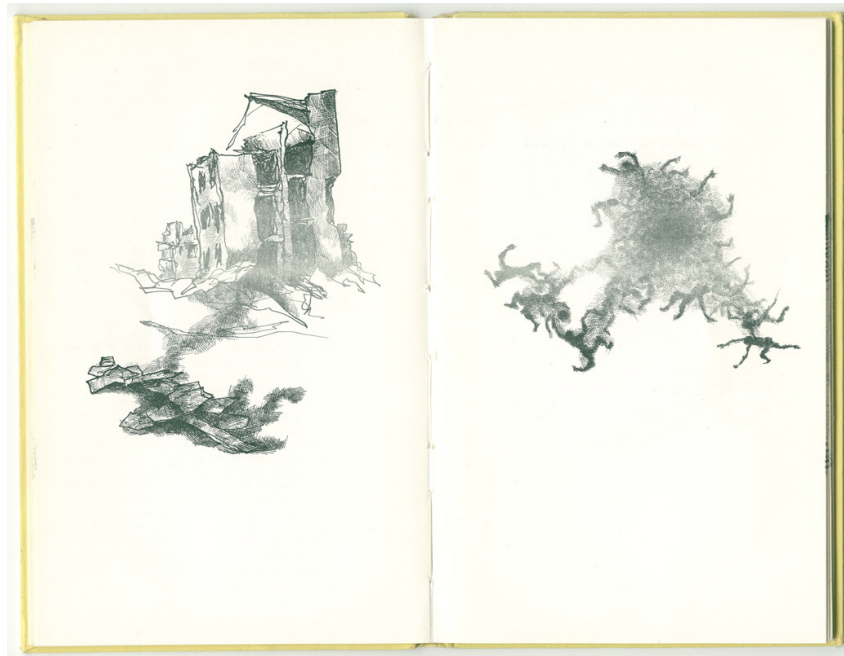


Figure 2.8: Leonard Breger's illustrations of Stalingrad in ruins (left) and mangled silhouettes (right) in *The Stalingrad Elegies*.

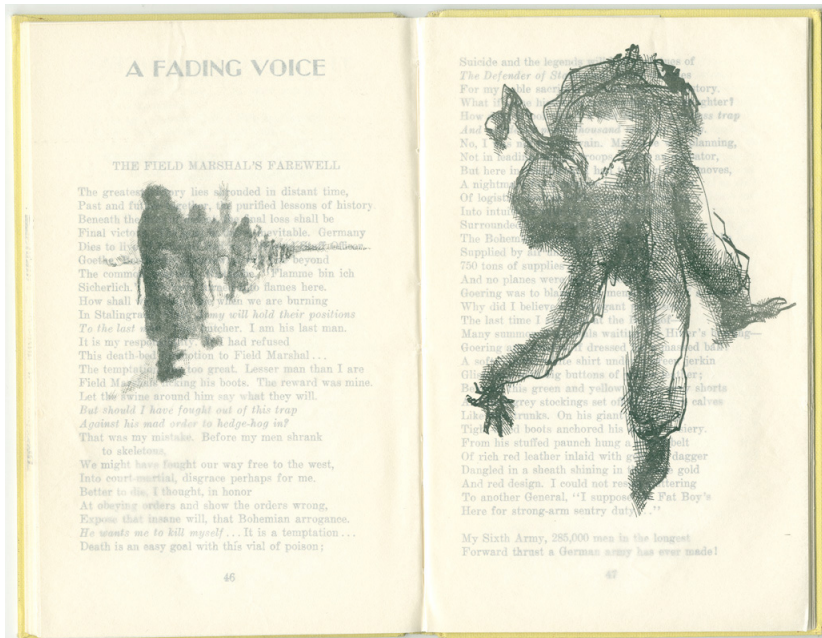


Figure 2.9: Leonard Breger's illustrations of German prisoners (left) and a German casualty (right) printed on translucent paper in *The Stalingrad Elegies*.



Figure 2.10: A color photograph of German soldiers riding bicycles in *The Onslaught*.



Figure 2.11: A color photograph of a German soldier peacefully interacting with Russian peasants in *The Onslaught*.



Figure 2.12: Color photographs of German soldiers during leisure time in *The Onslaught*.

Chapter Three

THROUGH THE LENS OF HISTORY

The fall of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought about sweeping changes in international policy and diplomatic relations around the world. No longer seen as the enemy, Russia grew closer to the Western world. Economic, political, and social ties strengthened between once-confrontational peoples. Interestingly, the realm of history was also affected. Deeply-ingrained, prejudiced notions and misconceptions held by both the East and the West were largely discarded upon the dawn of this newly-cooperative era. Historical trends and events were reevaluated, either consciously or subconsciously, to reflect new realities. Representations of Stalingrad produced and disseminated after the Cold War's conclusion reflect these shifting social, cultural, and political norms. Chapter Two analyzed how the Russians and their accomplishments at Stalingrad were openly questioned, minimized, and even ignored in the English-speaking world during the Cold War, while the Germans were often viewed as sympathetic and exceedingly human individuals by Anglo-Americans. Works produced after the end of Cold War hostilities, and examined in this chapter, have restored a sense of equilibrium to the volume and perception of Russians and Germans in the Stalingrad context. It has become common practice to find faults and flaws in both belligerent powers. At the same time, Russian and German troops have received recognition for their humanity and endearing imperfections. Compared to earlier time periods, troops from both sides have become portrayed as even further removed from the over-generalized national and ideological identities ascribed to them during the Second World War

and the Cold War, respectively. Instead of a clash between cultures, as English-language sources from World War II were wont to convey, or a battle of ideologies, the post-Cold War era has stressed Stalingrad as a site of conflict between two groups of human beings, both of whom fought and suffered under equally-horrible regimes that cared little for the preservation of life or morals. The amount of scholarship focusing on the Russian side has also increased since the Cold War period, during which the Red Army was noticeably underrepresented in Anglophonic works. The post-Cold War era has seen the explosion of a corpus of Stalingrad-themed popular history, as well. From major motion pictures — such as Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Enemy at the Gates* and Joseph Vilsmaier's *Stalingrad* — to easily-comprehensible history books for the lay reader, Stalingrad has become exceedingly available to average consumers. Furthermore, a wide range of creative approaches to representing and remembering Stalingrad have appeared. Scholars are beginning to investigate Stalingrad-related topics previously disregarded by past historians. As Stalingrad representations continue to flood Anglo-American culture, it is instrumental to examine how modern portrayals of the battle have adapted to the altered historical landscape in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Perhaps the most visible post-Cold War representation of Stalingrad is *Enemy at the Gates*, a Paramount major motion picture released in 2001 and directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. The film, with an estimated production budget of nearly \$70 million, grossed over \$51 million and was shown on 1,509 screens in the U.S. during its opening weekend in March 2001.¹ *Enemy at the Gates* grossed an additional \$45

¹ "Business Data for Enemy at the Gates." 2001. IMDb.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0215750/business> (Accessed March 14, 2006).

million abroad, with Great Britain representing the largest overseas share.² The film revolves around three subplots: the duel between Russian sniper Vassili Zaitsev (Jude Law) and Major Koenig (Ed Harris), a German sharpshooter; the love story involving Vassili and fellow Russian soldier Tania Chernova (Rachel Weisz); and the dynamic relationship between Vassili and Commissar Danilov (Joseph Fiennes), a Soviet political officer in charge of propaganda who also happens to fall in love with Tania.³ These storylines convey a strong Hollywood element in the film's narrative structure and devices. The love and hero themes dominate the film, to the point where the outcomes of the battle and, ultimately, the war fall on the shoulders of Vassili himself. This assertion, when placed in a historical context, seems absurd. The notion that the success or failure of an individual in a snipers' duel could possibly determine the end result of a six-month-long conflict in which millions of soldiers were involved is ludicrous, but it serves to create drama and keep the audience interested. Danilov publicizes Vassili's accomplishments continuously as the latter kills a series of Germans and accumulates ever-growing fame.⁴ The heaps of fan mail Vassili receives are a testament to his rising status as a Soviet hero. Vassili eventually meets then-political commissar Nikita Khrushchev (Bob Hoskins), who instructs the sniper to admire a gigantic portrait of Stalin while explaining, "Look at him with pride, because he's looking at you. The whole country is looking at you."⁵ Hordes of journalists and photographers surround Vassili, asking him questions while flashbulbs pop and triumphant Soviet-themed music blares in the

² "Enemy at the Gates." 2006. Box Office Mojo.

<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=enemyatthegates.htm> (Accessed March 20, 2006).

³ *Enemy at the Gates*. DVD, 131 min. Produced by Jean-Jacques Annaud and John D. Schofield. Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. Hollywood, California: Paramount Pictures, 2001.

⁴ For more on Soviet propaganda and hero-making, see Axell, Albert. *Russia's Heroes*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 2001.

⁵ Annaud, *Enemy at the Gates*.

background. Khrushchev even advises Vassili to “put your cap back on, you’ll look more heroic.”⁶ Just before the closing credits, the text on the screen reads, “Several times decorated with the Order of Lenin, Vassili Zaitsev was later elevated to the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union. . . . His rifle can still be seen today at the Stalingrad History Museum, among the great symbols of the victory over Nazi Germany.”⁷ In the DVD version’s special feature entitled “Through the Crosshairs,” the narrator states, “In the greatest battle of the last great war, the future would be decided by a young soldier and the man sent to kill him.”⁸ While Vassili did actually exist and was considered a Soviet hero, Annaud’s decision to cast the sniper as the deciding factor in Stalingrad’s outcome is extreme and inaccurate. Ultimately, this Stalingrad representation is wildly distorted due to the use of conventional Hollywood narrative devices. Interestingly, Annaud became aware of Stalingrad when he read William Craig’s *Enemy at the Gates*, discussed in the last chapter. The book, however, devotes just three pages to Zaitsev’s duel with the German officer; though Annaud’s film borrows Craig’s title, that tiny excerpt from the original text becomes the major focus on the silver screen.⁹

The love story in *Enemy at the Gates* is further evidence of the battle’s mass-marketing in the post-Cold War environment. Vassili and Tania show mutual interest from the moment they meet, and the tension surrounding their relationship culminates in a sex scene amidst sleeping and injured Russian soldiers in a Red Army shelter.¹⁰ At other points in the film, Vassili and Tania engage in romantic

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Craig, William. *Enemy at the Gates*. New York: Penguin Books, 1973. Pages 127-130.

¹⁰ Annaud, *Enemy at the Gates*.

conversations. This love story, complicated by Danilov's interest in Tania, is one significant example of the frequent display of human emotion from Russian characters in *Enemy at the Gates*. The film views events sympathetically from the Russian perspective. Red Army soldiers are shown to be young, fearful, and innocent when they arrive in Stalingrad. Their terror is evident as they are thrown into the chaotic fighting, quickly scurrying up and stumbling down hillsides without any sense of direction or purpose. The viewer is made to feel pity for a Russian officer who is shamed for having lost his men to the Germans. The officer cries while facing Khrushchev in an attempt to explain his plight. The simultaneous promotions of Danilov to General Staff and Vassili to Sniper Division spark a wild celebration between the two, who shout, "We're famous!"¹¹ Danilov often comes across as an envious, spurned lover. Vassili's frustration over his inability to anticipate Koenig's strategy provides yet another example of Annaud humanizing the Russians. The Germans receive no such similar treatment in the film. The viewer is not privy to the goings-on behind German lines, except in the context of Koenig's meetings with Sacha — a young boy who serves as an informant — and the sniper's infrequent consultations with Paulus. In a rare display of German suffering, Tania stumbles upon a temporary enemy field hospital and gets a glimpse of the misery on the other side; however, this proves to be the exception rather than the rule. The film's Russian bias is also evident in the spoken language of *Enemy at the Gates*. While all the Russians speak English during the movie, many Germans speak without the benefit of translation. Koenig and Paulus are the only Germans in the film who regularly speak in English, and Paulus even maintains a German accent. This

¹¹ Ibid.

dichotomy serves to further distance the viewer from the German perspective and aligns the audience with Vassili, Danilov, Tania, and the Russian faction. In these ways, Annaud favors the Russian side in his film.

Still, the Russian side is not completely free from blame in *Enemy at the Gates*. The Soviet system, rather than the Russian soldiers and civilians who lived under it, is the subject of repeated attacks. Annaud makes a point of highlighting several abominable practices and customs carried out per Stalin's orders. In the opening battle scene, Russian officers are shown shooting their own terrified troops to prevent them from deserting. Fresh recruits jump into the Volga and swim away from the fighting while their commanders yell, "You will not fall back! ... There will be no mercy for cowards and traitors!"¹² The Germans seek to exploit this practice; Panzer tanks roll through the city, their mounted speakers exhorting Russian troops to give up: "Surrender. You will see your home again. Join your German comrades. They understand your suffering, and will care more for you than your own officers. ... The enemy is bloodthirsty Stalin ..."¹³ At other points in the film, Soviet officials are shown preventing innocent civilians from leaving the city, since it was believed the Red Army troops would fight with more desperation if they knew they were defending Russian civilians' lives. When Khrushchev meets with the aforementioned Russian officer who lost his men, he essentially forces the soldier to commit suicide when he says, "I have to report to the boss. Perhaps you'd prefer to avoid the red tape."¹⁴ Predictably, the officer shoots himself to circumvent Stalin's wrath. Annaud also includes numerous examples of conspicuous criticism directed at the Soviet

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

government and infrastructure. A Russian sniper named Koulikov tells Vassili about the torture he was subjected to upon returning from a German sniper school, despite the fact that he was originally sent there on Stalin's orders. He cautions, "That's right, boy, have no illusions. That's the land of Socialism and universal bliss for you."¹⁵ Later, Koulikov insults the Germans by explaining, "They don't give a shit about [their low-ranking soldiers]. I mean, it's like us with the Ukrainians."¹⁶ Danilov also reveals the potentially damaging powers of the Soviet propaganda machine. When he becomes envious of Vassili's relationship with Tania, he dictates a press release explaining a fabricated account of Vassili's defeatist comments, attempts at desertion, and "lack of belief in Communist ideals."¹⁷ Perhaps the most stinging indictment of the Soviet system comes near the end of the film. A depressed and dejected Danilov admits:

I've been such a fool, Vassili. Man will always be man. There is no new man. We tried so hard to create a society that was equal, where there would be nothing to envy your neighbor. But there's always something to envy. A smile, a friendship, something you don't have and want to appropriate. In this world, even a Soviet one, there will always be rich and poor. Rich in gifts, poor in gifts. Rich in love, poor in love.¹⁸

Immediately after uttering these words, Danilov intentionally moves into Koenig's line of fire, sacrificing himself to reveal the German's position to Vassili. Fiennes explains his character's actions in the DVD's "Inside *Enemy at the Gates*" feature by saying, "In terms of fabricating a hero through Vassili Zaitsev, [Danilov] learns that what he is doing for the [Communist] Party and what the Party is doing for him is

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

just as abhorrent as the evil which they are fighting.”¹⁹ The Russians are further criticized in the DVD’s collection of deleted scenes. In one segment, Khrushchev calls Stalin as “superstitious as an old woman!”²⁰ In another, Vassili tells Danilov how his grandfather was arrested for carrying a gun to hunt wolves in Siberia. Perhaps these scenes were cut from the final film due to the already-numerous criticisms targeting the Soviet system. They might have also been excluded to avoid mitigating Vassili’s heroic actions. Nevertheless, Annaud makes specific references to abhorrent Soviet policies and practices at numerous junctures throughout the film.

The Germans are also targeted for harsh criticism in *Enemy at the Gates*. Koenig serves as a paradigm of the German values that characterize his fellow soldiers. Koenig and the rest of the German troops are depicted as cold, calculating, and ruthless. Koenig manipulates the young Sacha, and his execution of the fickle boy is a jarring yet characteristic example of the way Annaud portrays German brutality. Koenig toys with Sacha’s emotions. When the sniper realizes his informant is upset upon hearing unfounded rumors of Vassili’s death, Koenig temporarily reassures Sacha: “Don’t listen to them. It’s just propaganda. He isn’t dead. And do you know why? Because I haven’t killed him yet.”²¹ German anti-Semitism also surfaces in *Enemy at the Gates*. Tania, who is revealed to be Jewish, learns that her parents were brutally murdered after being deported on a German train with other Jews from Stalingrad. Such despicable actions are likely to outrage the film’s audience. Thus, while *Enemy at the Gates* takes a distinctly Russian perspective, director Jean-Jacques Annaud succeeds in finding fault with both the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Soviet system and German cruelty. While the battle itself is often marginalized to accommodate Hollywood narrative devices — such as the love story and the celebration of the individual hero — the film brings Stalingrad and its legacy squarely into the arenas of popular history and popular culture, exposing the crucial battle to a huge number of people.

Criticism of *Enemy at the Gates* in the mainstream American media demonstrates its impact on and reception by audiences in the United States. Movie critic Roger Ebert laments the inclusion of the Vassili-Tania-Danilov love triangle in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, claiming it detracts from the drama between Vassili and Koenig: "This triangle seems like a plot device to separate the scenes that really interest us."²² Thus, Ebert's dislike of the film's romantic element does not prove his rejection of all Hollywood narrative devices. He simply prefers the snipers' duel, which is rife with overdramatic characteristics of its own. Ebert elaborates on his fascination with the stakes of the one-on-one battle when he writes, "It's remarkable, a war story told as a chess game where the loser not only dies, but goes by necessity to an unmarked grave."²³ *USA Today's* Mike Clark makes specific mention of Ed Harris' successful portrayal of Koenig despite his accent-free English. Clark is impressed by the film's universal appeal across national lines, noting that "*Gates*, in fact, recalls those international co-productions of the '60s in which actors of all nationalities played World War II combatants of all nationalities."²⁴ Clark's observation serves to further highlight the film's vindication of the troops' common

²² Ebert, Roger. "Enemy at the Gates." *Chicago Sun-Times*. March 16, 2001. <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20010316/REVIEWS/103160301/1023> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Clark, Mike. "Epic showdown 'Gates' is its own worst enemy." *USA Today*. March 16, 2001. <http://www.usatoday.com/life/movies/2001-03-16-enemy-at-the-gates.htm> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

humanity. Kenneth Turan's review of *Enemy at the Gates* in the *Los Angeles Times* situates the film firmly in the realm of popular culture. Turan's piece compares Annaud's epic battle scenes to those in the blockbusters *Gladiator* and *Saving Private Ryan*. The author makes repeated references to consumer culture in his critique. In describing one of Khrushchev's speeches to his subordinate political officers, Turan quotes the leader: "'This city bears the name of the Boss,' he reminds everyone, and he doesn't mean Bruce Springsteen. Should Stalingrad fall, the entire Soviet Union will fall into a depression so deep no amount of Prozac will get it out."²⁵ Turan even tabs Koenig as "kind of the Michael Jordan of snipers."²⁶ A.O. Scott of *The New York Times* takes a similar approach, drawing another comparison between Annaud's film and *Saving Private Ryan* before anointing Vassili "the Lou Gehrig of Stalingrad: a wholesome young man thrust half-unwittingly into the big time."²⁷ Yet while paying tribute to the film's hero-centric theme, Scott also comments on more politically-charged issues. The author acknowledges Annaud's "tricky moral balance ... in a fight between two dictatorships. ... *Enemy at the Gates* does not minimize the heroism or the sacrifice of the Soviet people, but it harbors no illusions about the terrible cruelty of their rulers."²⁸ By moving into the realm of political history, Scott effectively extends beyond mere artistic criticism and into a more intellectual arena. Thus, industry criticism of *Enemy at the Gates* focuses on both the film's Hollywood

²⁵ Turan, Kenneth. "Enemy at the Gates." *Los Angeles Times*. March 15, 2001. <http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie010315-2,0,5289829.story> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Scott, A.O. "Saving Comrade Ryanovich: Same War From a Different Perspective." *The New York Times*. March 16, 2001. http://movies2.nytimes.com/mem/movies/review.html?_r=1&title1=&title2=Enemy%20at%20the%20Gates%20%28Movie%29%20%20&reviewer=A.%20O.%20Scott&v_id=237768&partner=Rotte n%20Tomatoes&oref=slogin (Accessed March 24, 2006).

²⁸ Ibid.

characteristics and its political tightrope-walking. Most importantly, these reviews succeed in demonstrating the film's heightened popular appeal and prominence in the Anglo-American world.²⁹

The German-produced 1993 film *Stalingrad* provides a counterweight to the Russo-centric and glorifying *Enemy at the Gates*. *Stalingrad*, produced and directed by Joseph Vilsmaier a half-century after the conclusion of the fighting and released in the United States with English subtitles, takes a uniquely German view of Stalingrad. *Stalingrad* worked with a \$20 million budget,³⁰ and though it grossed just over \$150,000 in the United States,³¹ the film received critical acclaim from Anglo-American critics in addition to its broader-based European appeal.³² While the film conveys an overwhelmingly antiwar message, Vilsmaier portrays the Germans as humane and likable, comparable to the Russians' treatment in Annaud's *Enemy at the Gates*. The movie opens in Porto Cervo, Italy, where the Germans relax before beginning their drive to Stalingrad. German troops are shown reading books, playing cards, sunbathing, joking around, drinking, befriending local women, and otherwise enjoying their leisure time.³³ These images serve to arouse a sense of empathy and understanding from the audience. When the troops are called to assembly, a panning camera captures fresh, young, and nervous faces fearful of the

²⁹ For an industry review of *Enemy at the Gates*, see Elley, Derek. "Enemy at the Gates." *Variety*. February 7, 2001. <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117797251?categoryid=31&cs=1> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

³⁰ Stack, Peter. "German Film Takes Harsh View of War." *San Francisco Chronicle*. October 27, 1995. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/1995/10/27/DD12100.DTL> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

³¹ "Stalingrad." 2006. Box Office Mojo. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=stalingrad.htm> (Accessed March 24, 2006).

³² "Business Data for Stalingrad." 1996. IMDb. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108211/business> (Accessed March 14, 2006).

³³ *Stalingrad*. DVD, 150 min. Produced and directed by Joseph Vilsmaier. New York: Fox Lorber Home Video, 1998.

fighting to come. The Germans' faces display a range of emotions familiar to any individual, regardless of nationality or political alliance. This fact allows an English-speaking audience to more easily identify and connect with the German troops. When the featured battalion sets off for Russia, newly-appointed Lieutenant Hans von Witzland writes a letter to his wife, Clara, asking her to "forgive me and try to understand my happiness. The uncertainty of the last few months has vanished. All of a sudden, my life has meaning, a goal. ... My men. I love them, because I know that only through hard work will I earn their respect. But if you saw them, their smell might make you faint."³⁴ Witzland's explicit affection and honesty are stirring, further demonstrating the fact that the Germans at Stalingrad were capable of experiencing an entire range of emotions. The Germans are even shown to have a sense of humor on the Russian steppe, as one soldier exclaims, "If I didn't know better, I'd swear we passed this same spot ten hours ago. ... After the war, everybody will get what he wants. I've already ordered 200 acres and 10 women."³⁵ The Germans in *Stalingrad* also have flaws. When a soldier named Feldmann jumps into a trench, his rifle accidentally discharges and reveals his battalion's location. This action displays German failings and makes the individual troops more believable and endearing. Similarly, when another German soldier's friend is killed, he weeps until a superior tells him, "Chin up. Kill yourself some Russians with it."³⁶ The German soldiers exhibit heroic tendencies, as well. To compensate for his earlier mistake, Feldmann volunteers to run ahead of his fellow troops and throw a grenade into the window of a building in which Russians are hiding. Feldmann

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

accomplishes his mission, but he is shot and killed in the process. At another point in the fighting, an embarrassed German admits, "I shit in my pants." Surprisingly, a fellow soldier comforts him by saying, "You're not the only one."³⁷ The Germans are also concerned about their families, homes, and property. One soldier prays for the good health of his cow.³⁸ Another informs his fellow troops of his favorite soccer team's game results. In subtle ways, Vilsmaier portrays the German soldiers as human beings with a broad range of emotions, a far cry from the cold and unflinching Germans in *Enemy at the Gates*.

Vilsmaier also refrains from casting the Russians as evil. Instead, Red Army soldiers and Russian civilians are presented as friendly and virtuous. When a soldier lies dying from wounds inflicted by a German attacker, he moans, "Mom, I'm sorry to leave you. Mom, stay here. What should I do so we can stay together? Mother, wait ..."³⁹ The Russians also accept Witzland's demand for a ceasefire so both sides can collect their dead. In a particularly touching scene, Germans and Russians exchange bread while sorting through the corpses. When the Germans find themselves the custodians of a Russian boy separated from his elders in a shootout, the youth offers to repair his guardians' shoes, since the soles are ruined and the Russian winter draws near. Though the Russians are the Germans' enemies in battle, Vilsmaier's sympathetic portrayal of both groups and their penchant for cooperation in the midst of horrific fighting serve to indicate the war itself as the root of the problem.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

One target of extreme censure in *Stalingrad* is the German leadership. Officers casually look the other way while their troops savagely beat Russian prisoners without cause. Witzland repeatedly finds himself alienated from higher-ups for caring about his men and reporting wrongdoings. In a particularly striking scene, German troops gather around a radio immediately following a particularly gruesome skirmish to listen to Hitler's speech on November 8, 1942. Hitler says:

[Stalingrad] is a very important point. From there we cut off 30 million tons of commerce. Including nine million tons of oil. This is where wheat is shipped north from Ukraine and the Kuban region. Manganese ore was mined there. It was an enormous shipping center. I wanted to take it. As you know, we are modest. Now we have it. Only small pockets of resistance remain. [The soldiers laugh at this, since the speech immediately follows a ferocious battle.] Some ask: Why not push ahead? Because I don't want a second Verdun. I'd rather fight with small combat patrols. Time is not a factor. We have cut off the Volga. That's the important thing.⁴⁰

Afterward, the soldiers in the room sit in silence, clearly more concerned with survival than the vague tasks of cutting off commerce or seizing wheat.⁴¹ Hitler's speech also functions to separate the German soldiers from the Nazism more common among the nation's leaders and decision-makers. The German commanders appear to be shortsighted and out of touch with their own army. The German authority structure comes under further attack when a storehouse stocked with essential food and equipment is discovered in the dead of winter. The thought that such resources could sit unused while tens of thousands of troops suffer, starve, and freeze to death in the immediate vicinity arouses anger and frustration in the audience. The German infrastructure's startling inefficiency and the abject misery of many troops are shown to be direct results of failed leadership.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For more information on Hitler's strategic aims, see Hayward, Joel. "Too Little, Too Late: An Analysis of Hitler's Failure in August 1942 to Damage Soviet Oil Production." *The Journal of Military History*. Vol. 64, No. 3. (Jul., 2000). Pages 769-794.

The single most powerful message Vilsmaier conveys in *Stalingrad*, however, is the appalling senselessness of war. The narrator in the theatrical trailer included on the DVD states, "They thought they were the best soldiers in the world. They marched through the whole of Europe. Then came the battle that changed everything. It was the beginning of the end. They lost everything. The friendship, the trust, the will to live. 'Til there was nothing left but blind despair."⁴² Every main character in *Stalingrad* dies during the film. The circumstances vary, but their deaths make a bold collective statement about the vicious nature of Stalingrad in particular and war in general. In his film, Joseph Vilsmaier frames the Russian and German troops as relatively compassionate human beings, while displaying a strong contempt for the hypocrisy of German, and especially Nazi, leaders and the devastating nature of warfare. In Peter Stack's *San Francisco Chronicle* film review, *Stalingrad's* antiwar theme is singled out as the unifying characteristic of "all great war films."⁴³ Stack proceeds to call the "stunning and depressing" film "... as grim a depiction of war as we're likely to find in the movies."⁴⁴ The critic pays special attention to the rift that develops between the German soldiers and their more ideologically-motivated officers who demand a "fervent devotion to Nazi philosophy."⁴⁵ Meanwhile, movie critic Stephen Holden explicitly states in *The New York Times* that the featured soldiers "go through the motions of allegiance to the German cause, [yet] none are rabid Nazis. They are shown to be helpless pawns of egotistical monsters who feast

⁴² Vilsmaier, *Stalingrad*.

⁴³ Stack.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

on elegant cuisine and fine wine while their troops nearly starve.”⁴⁶ In fact, Holden believes the film’s pacifist message is so strong that it prevents further necessary character development. He also notes that “these characters represent a familiar cross-section of types found in a Hollywood war film.”⁴⁷ Thus, even the German troops in *Stalingrad* can be understood by and related to Anglo-American audiences due to their universal humanity. Ultimately, the extremely antiwar *Stalingrad* presents English-speaking audiences with a post-Cold War Stalingrad representation denigrating the nature of conflict itself and further removing German troops from a darker Nazi context.

In addition to *Stalingrad*’s entrance into the realm of major motion pictures, the post-Cold War period has witnessed the rise of multiple creative approaches to representing and investigating the battle. One genre in which *Stalingrad* has appeared during this time is the short story. The battle itself does not play a key role in Scott Ely’s 2003 tale entitled “*Stalingrad*,” but it does help to describe an environment in which the author relives a childhood memory. Ely’s friend, Wolfram, lost his father at Stalingrad, and the writer’s own father was killed at Normandy and buried in France. Ely often returns to a discussion of the boys’ fathers, understanding that *Stalingrad*’s magnitude and mystery have completely shrouded the memory of Wolfram’s father, who:

... had disappeared off the face of the earth during the battle of Stalingrad. He had not returned when the handful of Germans who had survived capture by the Soviets had been repatriated to Germany. He may have died

⁴⁶ Holden, Stephen. “In War’s Horrors, Chaos May Rank With Carnage.” *The New York Times*. May 24, 1995.

http://movies2.nytimes.com/mem/movies/review.html?title1=&title2=STALINGRAD%20%28MOVIE%29&reviewer=STEPHEN%20HOLDEN&v_id=149022&partner=Rotten%20Tomatoes (Accessed March 24, 2006).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

in some labor camp in Siberia, or I suppose his bones may still lie there outside the city where the German 6th Army was encircled and destroyed.⁴⁸

In the story, the boys get lost in the forests and swamps near their town. The transient, uncertain nature of Wolfram's father's final resting place parallels the boys' location, which becomes quite unfamiliar. As part of Ely's collection titled *Pulpwood*, "Stalingrad" depicts the battle as an artistic and dramatic equivalent to other themes in the creative writing piece.

Viktor Nekrasov also uses Stalingrad in a short story, albeit in a far more central role. His selection "Incident at Stalingrad" was originally written in the 1960s, but it was not published in English until 1991. This delay makes perfect sense, since the number of English-language Russian-based sources on the battle declined considerably during the Cold War and increased after its conclusion. In the story, the author, a former Russian soldier who fought at Stalingrad, returns to the city to find a completely alien scene awaiting him. Upon entering an old building where he once worked, Nekrasov has a flashback to his fighting days. Interestingly, "Incident at Stalingrad" bears no derogatory references to Germans. Nekrasov almost seems to pardon them in his recollection of the battle. In his introduction, Michael Falchikov writes, "... by now a new theme is entering [Nekrasov's] work, intertwining with memories of Stalingrad. ... Are we still the same people, no matter what? Can we rewrite our own bit of history to make it more comfortable to live with?"⁴⁹ Nekrasov involves himself with the concept of remembering, memorializing, and contextualizing the past, first recalling a trip he took to Stalingrad in 1950:

⁴⁸ Ely, Scott. *Pulpwood*. Livingston, Alabama: Livingston Press, 2003. Page 109.

⁴⁹ Nekrasov, Viktor. *Postscripts*. London: Quartet Books, 1991. Page xii.

The trenches had fallen in, become more shallow and overgrown with grass, but they were still there, along with the rusty cartridges, shell-cases, helmets, mess tins, bayonets, bolts, machine-gun belts, rotten footcloths made of Turkish toweling ... And bones ... Here and there in the grass were the white shapes of skulls — you could not tell now which were Russian and which were German.⁵⁰

The fact that the skulls cannot be identified by nationality is instrumental to Nekrasov's attitude in this text. The veteran has moved beyond the boundaries of state to the boundaries of memory. When he revisits the city for the second time, he no longer recognizes it. Instead, Nekrasov wanders to a meatpacking plant where he spent time during the battle, and uses his newly-familiar surroundings as a gateway to travel back in time. Nekrasov writes:

At the very moment that I shoved at the door there was a heavy crump above my head and some plaster showered down from the ceiling. It was as if somewhere up above something like a hundred-and-fifty-two-millimetre [sic] shell had exploded. I was no longer used to this and I must have jumped or started back, because I heard: 'Hey, captain, it looks as though your nerves are all to pieces ...'⁵¹

Nekrasov uses the concept of time to explore the legacy Stalingrad has left and will leave in the future. Nekrasov's "Incident at Stalingrad" is thus an ideal way to convey Stalingrad's legacy, since it became available to the English-speaking West immediately following the collapse of Communism. As such, the story is both a product of global forces and a challenge to pursue a potential path of research. After all, an understanding of Stalingrad using a less-concrete, more fragmented concept of time and memory might present historians with a radically new, postmodern

⁵⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁵¹ Ibid., 12.

perspective on the battle and World War II that could help to eliminate historiographic conventions dominant in any individual time period.⁵²

A slew of Stalingrad-related books were published in 1992 and 1993 to celebrate the battle's fiftieth anniversary. Among these works are a number of general surveys, including Peter G. Tsouras' *The Great Patriotic War*, V.E. Tarrant's *Stalingrad: Anatomy of an Agony*, and Edwin P. Hoyt's *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad*.⁵³ Tsouras' work confronts the entirety of Russia's participation in World War II, but it includes a chapter devoted to Stalingrad and its importance.⁵⁴ The book's large pages are dominated by black-and-white photographs, lending the work significant popular appeal by diverting attention away from potentially uninviting text and focusing on fascinating and easily understandable images. Tsouras includes passages describing the war's events, but the author overwhelmingly tells the story of the battle visually. Tarrant's book is more traditional in form, a text-based tome featuring an objective description of the battle's events.⁵⁵ Hoyt's work, on the other hand, is slightly more unorthodox. The book's introduction, written by Vladimir Belyakov, includes comments regarding the memory of Stalingrad and its distorted legacy. Belyakov writes, "Stalingrad is even today an area of misunderstanding, cold war prejudices, stereotypes ('General Winter' defeated the Nazis, to name one), and plain ignorance."⁵⁶ Belyakov proceeds to support Hoyt's claim that Stalingrad was a pivotal moment in the war: "The entire edifice of the German strategy crumbled on

⁵² For an earlier Nekrasov work, see Nekrasov, Viktor. *Front-line Stalingrad*. London: Harvill Press, 1962.

⁵³ For an additional fiftieth anniversary survey, see Carell, Paul. *Stalingrad*. Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Military History, 1992.

⁵⁴ Tsouras, Peter G. *The Great Patriotic War*. London: Greenhill Books, 1992. Pages 79-94.

⁵⁵ Tarrant, V.E. *Stalingrad: Anatomy of an Agony*. London: Leo Cooper, 1992.

⁵⁶ Hoyt, Edwin P. *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, Inc., 1993. Page 9.

November 19, 1942, under the heavy blows of the Red Army's amazing counteroffensive. . . . Hoyt is correct in showing that the battle served as a turning point in the war, that for the first time the Nazi leaders faced the prospect of a final defeat."⁵⁷ Thus, Hoyt views Stalingrad as a highly significant event rife with heroism, somewhat of a departure from many of the Cold War-era representations of the battle Belyakov refers to that minimized Russian valor and accomplishments. Predictably, *199 Days* follows its introduction by viewing events primarily from the Russian perspective. Informational boxes are included throughout the text, dealing almost exclusively with Red Army-themed topics. Hoyt inserts a Russian song written by war correspondent Alexei Surkov during the Battle of Moscow,⁵⁸ holds forth on the "Russian contempt for death,"⁵⁹ and even incorporates memoirs from Russian soldiers, both male and female, who fought at Stalingrad.⁶⁰ These interludes from the body text function as interesting side-notes that attract the reader's attention. By including insight into the Russian mindset and proud Soviet traditions, as well as making reference to the prevalence of female troops in the Red Army, Hoyt makes a bold statement supporting the Russian side. In the thawing environment of post-Cold War relations, *199 Days* holds true to form by reflecting the overarching cultural, social, and political themes of the early 1990s.

Other Stalingrad-related books published in the post-Cold War period deal with themes and issues previously ignored or overlooked by historians in earlier years. By investigating Stalingrad from new and unique perspectives, historians have effectively acknowledged the need for more varied thematic approaches and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 152.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 146.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 125, 140.

alternative research lines regarding the battle. Four books that fall into this category are Joel Hayward's *Stopped at Stalingrad* (1998), Patrick Lloyd Hatcher's *North Atlantic Civilization at War* (1998), Evan Burr Bukey's *Hitler's Austria* (2000), and Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann's *War of Extermination* (2000). Hayward's work surveys Stalingrad from a bird's-eye view, focusing on the air war carried out by the German Luftwaffe. In the book's preface, Hayward explicitly recognizes the dearth of air-based studies of Stalingrad. The author writes:

The main focus of Stalingrad historiography . . . has been the fighting, encirclement, suffering, and destruction of Paulus's Sixth Army. Few books and articles have devoted adequate attention to the activities of the Luftwaffe, although it made substantial contributions to all battles throughout the 1942 summer campaign — of which Stalingrad was the climax — and was alone responsible for the maintenance of the Sixth Army after Zhukov's forces severed it from all but radio contact with other German army formations.⁶¹

Hayward also comments on the superior number of Stalingrad-related books published in Germany and Russia compared to those in the United States and Great Britain. This discrepancy is easily explained, considering the fact that people in the English-speaking world "can number none of their own among [Stalingrad's] many heroes, martyrs, prisoners, and victims. Moreover, although the German defeat at Stalingrad was immediately seen in the West as a turning point, its effects were not directly felt by the Anglo-American nations."⁶² Consequently, Hayward examines Hitler's Eastern campaign through the lens of Germany's flying forces. The author heaps praise upon Wolfram von Richthofen, commander of the Luftwaffe. Hayward explains that Richthofen:

⁶¹ Hayward, Joel. *Stopped at Stalingrad*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998. Pages xv-xvi.

⁶² *Ibid.*, xvi.

displayed generalship of the highest order as he implemented effective army support. . . . He was a superb tactical air commander, possibly the best of the Second World War. . . . First as an air corps commander and then as head of the entire air fleet, he proved himself a courageous, resolute leader and a stern, rigid disciplinarian and administrator. He earned the respect and, in most cases, affection of his men. In spite of his arrogant, brusque manner, he was an excellent leader and, no less important, an energetic and reliable subordinate. At all times he skillfully exploited his forces' limited capabilities to the fullest, producing satisfactory results under the worst of circumstances and superb results under the best.⁶³

Thus, Hayward shows high regard for the German general while taking a German-based approach to the Battle of Stalingrad. Hayward even goes further, pointing out that:

. . . people who wage war . . . do not lose their humanity when they pull on their boots and fasten the buttons of their tunics each day. Even the most senior commanders, well versed in the science of warfare, remain motivated by subjective factors of great complexity and are prone, like us all, to ambition, jealousy, anger, fear, and depression.⁶⁴

By expressing these sentiments, Hayward imbues the German soldiers with a touch of humanity that has become all-the-more common as Stalingrad and the dual specters of Nazism and Stalinism have faded further into the past.⁶⁵ The author's inclusion of the personal diaries and correspondence of German leaders and their troops serves to bring this humanity to the surface in an immediate sense. *Stopped at Stalingrad* presents the battle from a refreshing perspective while maintaining the post-Cold War era's emphasis of stressing the humanity of Stalingrad's participants in Anglo-America.

Hatcher's *North Atlantic Civilization at War* takes a similarly novel approach, in this case examining crucial battles of World War II using geography and climate as a

⁶³ Ibid., xviii.

⁶⁴ Ibid., xviii.

⁶⁵ For more on Stalinism, see Siegelbaum, Lewis, and Andrei Sokolov. *Stalinism as a Way of Life*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000.

framework. Five conflicts dominate Hatcher's book: the Battle of Britain, the Battle of El Alamein, the Battle of Stalingrad, the "logistical battle" of the North Atlantic, and the "invasion battle for the Norman shore of France."⁶⁶ Together, these theaters of war cover the natural realms of sky, sand, snow, sea, and shore, respectively.⁶⁷ Hatcher writes, "When [the North Atlantic] basin erupted into war, combatants faced the constraints of their geography and climate, especially when they fought at the periphery of their core. Never was this more the case than in World War II, in which the geography and climate of five military thrusts heavily influenced the outcome."⁶⁸ Hatcher feels the need to justify his research because its focus is so far removed from the traditional methods of military history. The author's unorthodox perspective shies away from analyzing the battle from the actors' perspectives, choosing instead to focus on the realm of independent and immutable variables. Hatcher's discussion of Stalingrad invariably incorporates numerous references to the famed harshness of the Russian winter. The author writes:

At the peak of fighting in Stalingrad, it turned into a snowy apocalypse. . . . The thick fog and swirling snow made artillery corrections impossible for Soviet gunners; instead, they aimed and fired their guns by quadrants. The freezing wounded howled their way to death, the outside temperature at minus 30 degrees Centigrade.⁶⁹

Hatcher demonstrates a fascination with temperature and its effects on the fighting. In a passage describing the physical state of the Volga, a Russian officer "watched the river with amazement: 'it takes weeks, months, to ice over.' Even when the

⁶⁶ Hatcher, Patrick Lloyd. *North Atlantic Civilization at War*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998. Page 9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

temperature fell to -10 degrees Centigrade, the Volga remained free of ice, steam rising from it. At -12 degrees things changed, jagged ice slabs appeared.”⁷⁰

Hatcher’s frequent references to coldness even spill into his description of individual troops: “Soviet soldiers slaving in this satanic ice furnace had to singe the enemy to their front. At their rear the Red Army defenders had a deep, cold river, one mile wide. . . . Soviet troops also had a commander, General Vassili I. Chuikov, through whose veins ice crystals coursed.”⁷¹ In *North Atlantic Civilization at War*, Patrick Lloyd Hatcher crafts an atypical examination of Stalingrad and other key battles of the Second World War. In fact, if Hatcher had written this book closer to the events themselves — and before the influx of conventional approaches to the battle — his work might have seemed almost inappropriate. Instead, Hatcher has crafted an exceptionally imaginative point of view from which to study Stalingrad.

Evan Burr Bukey adds yet another innovative dimension to the Anglo-American discussion of Stalingrad. In his book, *Hitler’s Austria*, Bukey considers the effect of the battle on the attitudes of civilians in Nazi-controlled Austria. The author devotes a significant portion of one of his chapters to evaluating the assertion that “the shock of Hitler’s defeat at Stalingrad broke his spell over the Austrian people.”⁷² Ultimately, Bukey concludes that “the Stalingrad debacle severely depressed morale in the Ostmark and provoked an upsurge of separatist sentiment. Whether Hitler’s disaster on the Volga ‘awakened’ widespread Austrian patriotic feeling or kindled a distinctive resistance movement is less clear and rather

⁷⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁷¹ Ibid., 76.

⁷² Bukey, Evan Burr. *Hitler’s Austria*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Page 186.

problematic.”⁷³ Bukey’s contribution to the field is significant in that it focuses on an oft-neglected issue; most Stalingrad historians, after all, have tended to focus their investigations strictly on Russia and Germany. By bringing another nation into the debate, the author diversifies the nature of Stalingrad-related literature and scholarship in the English-speaking world.

The German Sixth Army is assaulted in *War of Extermination*, edited by Heer and Naumann. The book confronts the perception that soldiers in the Sixth Army have almost universally been portrayed as “victims” in previous Stalingrad representations:

Scholarly as well as biographical, literary, journalistic, and film treatments deal almost exclusively with the death of the 6th Army on the Volga. Exhibiting varying degrees of interest in the facts and shifting propagandistic intent, they describe an army’s ‘self-sacrifice.’ . . . But closer examination reveals that tightly focusing on the topos of ‘victim,’ which has characterized discourse concerning Stalingrad until today, historically perpetuates National Socialist mythologizing.⁷⁴

Heer and Naumann track the Sixth Army before it meets its fate at Stalingrad, pointing out the fact that its troops routinely carried out brutal, and even genocidal, actions against civilian populations. The editors explain the Sixth Army’s involvement in the murder of innocent Jews, among others.⁷⁵ Heer and Naumann depict the troops as exceedingly bloodthirsty, explaining:

For one and one-half years, [the Sixth Army] had marched east through the Soviet Union as the executor of the National Socialist regime’s policy of conquest and annihilation, actively participating in genocide — and not only on orders from above. It was neither accident or unfortunate exception in January 1942 when the 75th Infantry Division (ID), then attached to the 6th

⁷³ Ibid., 186.

⁷⁴ Heer, Hannes, and Klaus Naumann, eds. *War of Extermination*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000. Page 237.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 245-256.

Army, ordered that henceforth, in reprisal for 'atrocities committed against our soldiers,' all Asians, whether military or civilian, were to be shot.⁷⁶

By examining the history of the Sixth Army before Stalingrad, Heer and Naumann probe an area of the past rarely visited by historians. Their account of German cruelty practiced by the Sixth Army sheds new light on the actors that played such a key role in the Battle of Stalingrad. Nevertheless, Heer and Naumann fail to recognize a wide range of sources, many of which are discussed in this thesis, that portray Sixth Army troops as bloodthirsty and brutal in the extreme. The propaganda pamphlets and Capra's *The Battle of Russia* film discussed in Chapter One exclusively paint the Germans as violent and evil creatures. Even recent representations, such as Annaud's *Enemy at the Gates*, acknowledge widespread German cruelty. While many Cold War and post-Cold War works relating to Stalingrad have tended to stress the humanity and suffering of the troops, Heer and Naumann's allegation that representations of the battle have "almost exclusively" conveyed the Sixth Army's "self-sacrifice" is misleading and inaccurate. Moreover, Heer and Naumann's assertion that this victimization of the German troops "perpetuates National Socialist mythologizing" is too extreme. Studies emphasizing German hardship and civility have served to separate a previously one-dimensional and oversimplified connection between German soldiers and Nazi doctrine, moving the discourse toward acknowledging the common situation facing all individuals in wartime.

Another trend in post-Cold War English-language Stalingrad representations has been the tendency toward more popular history. Three particularly instructive examples of this phenomenon are Antony Beevor's *Stalingrad* (1998), Geoffrey

⁷⁶ Ibid., 240.

Roberts' *Victory at Stalingrad* (2002), and Will Fowler's *Stalingrad: The Vital 7 Days* (2005).⁷⁷ While Beevor's work is a relatively objective, straightforward, and comprehensive battle survey, it nonetheless became an international bestseller. In fact, the first three pages inside the front cover are filled with critical acclaim from around the world. From *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* to *Foreign Affairs*, *The Australian*, and the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, glowing praise heralds the merits and successes of Beevor's work.⁷⁸ Moreover, the mountainous heap of compliments points to the fact that the work has been widely read, appreciated, and deemed worthy of attention in the mass market.

In a similar vein, Roberts' work is presented in a compact and easy-to-read format. With wide margins, short paragraphs, eye-catching fonts, and sections geared toward amateur "war buffs," *Victory at Stalingrad* departs from many of its footnote-peppered predecessors. Roberts chooses instead to restrict his citations to a five-page bibliography at the end of his writing. A section entitled "Guide to Further Reading" also acts as an instructive resource for those without prior knowledge or interest in the battle.⁷⁹ Roberts even comments on Stalingrad's growing popularity:

Fifty years after its conclusion the great battle has lost none of its allure. In the late 1990s Antony Beevor's *Stalingrad* sold half a million copies worldwide, while the battle bestseller of an earlier generation, William Craig's *Enemy at the Gates*, inspired a major motion picture about the contest between German and Soviet snipers in the city.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ For a Stalingrad-themed novel, see Gerlach, Heinrich. *The Forsaken Army*. London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 2002. Gerlach's choice of genre carries popular appeal, since novels are more readily marketable than dense, heavily-annotated texts.

⁷⁸ Beevor, Antony. *Stalingrad*. New York: Penguin Books, 1998. Pages i-iii.

⁷⁹ Roberts, Geoffrey. *Victory at Stalingrad*. London: Longman, 2002. Pages 220-238.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

Roberts' greatest contribution to the corpus of Stalingrad literature may be his examination of Stalingrad representations across time and space. In this respect, *Victory at Stalingrad* can be viewed, along with Heer and Naumann's *War of Extermination*, as one of the first secondary sources available pertaining to this thesis. The extended time lapse necessary to frame such a subject had finally occurred by the end of the Cold War. Roberts engages existing scholarship in fascinating ways. The author recognizes how various groups tended to characterize the battle. Roberts writes:

The Germans blamed their defeat at Stalingrad on the vagaries of the weather, on the logistical difficulties of operating in the vast expanses of Russia, and, above all, on the seemingly inexhaustible Soviet manpower reserves. After the war, but not at the time, the favourite [sic] sport of retired German generals was attacking Hitler for his meddling in military affairs and his tactical and strategic errors in relation to Stalingrad and other campaigns. . . . Soviet propagandists, on the other hand, depicted Stalingrad as a triumph for the Soviet socialist system. The Soviet Union, they argued, had out-produced, out-fought and out-lasting Nazi Germany. Underlying that victory, they argued, was a superior socialist economic system, a dynamic political and military leadership and, above all, a people united in their determination to resist Nazi invasion, conquest and occupation. . . . Curiously, an inverse theme may be found in the writings of many anti-communist critics of the Soviet system. Their argument is that the Soviet system did indeed triumph at Stalingrad but only because it was authoritarian, brutal and ruthless, more so even than the Nazi regime. There is some truth in this, but it stretches credibility to believe that such a victory could have been achieved solely on the back of fear, discipline and regimentation. The Soviet regime dispensed plenty of that during the battle of Stalingrad, but it also inspired and organised [sic] an unparalleled heroic defence [sic]. . . . For all its ideological and political rigidities, the Soviet system was also able to foster a professional military leadership and officer corps that matched and then surpassed that of the *Wehrmacht*, the conqueror of continental Europe, most of North Africa and, in 1941-2, a good deal of Russia.⁸¹

Roberts presents Stalin as a "team player, a leader with unchallengeable power, but one whose leadership fell far short of the over-powering domination and

⁸¹ Ibid., 9-11.

idiosyncrasy of Hitler.”⁸² Still, the author does forgive the Soviet dictator for his actions, reminding his audience that Stalin was also “brutal, ruthless and authoritarian as the system he presided over. He had no compunction about sacrificing huge numbers of lives in order to achieve his goals.”⁸³ Roberts’ seventh chapter is called “The Stalingrad Story: The Battle that History Changed, 1945-2000.”⁸⁴ In the section, the author systematically analyzes the progression of Stalingrad representations, taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding their creation and their place in the general scholarship. Roberts writes, “Like all great battles, Stalingrad was destined to be re-fought time and again — in works of history, in memoirs, in fiction and on film.”⁸⁵ The author mentions German generals who “excused their own mistakes in explaining how they would have won the war” in the immediate post-war years,⁸⁶ subsequent representations highlighting the “brutality, destructiveness and pathos of war,”⁸⁷ and the Soviet “victor’s story, a narrative not of victimhood and tragedy, but of heroism and of triumph over adversity.”⁸⁸ Stalin’s role in the distortion of Stalingrad is examined, along with acknowledgement of Soviet brutality and miscalculations during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.⁸⁹ Most of Roberts’ sources, however, were only widely available in Russia and Germany. Only at the end of the chapter does the author deal with English-language representations of Stalingrad, in which Roberts acknowledges the minimization of the battle during the Cold War and its revival in

⁸² Ibid., 11-12.

⁸³ Ibid., 11-12.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 163-179.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 165.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 165.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 166.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 168.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 169-173.

the 1990s.⁹⁰ Roberts fails to consider World War II-era Anglo-American Stalingrad representations and glosses over subsequent Western sources. Still, Roberts makes an invaluable contribution to the field by becoming one of the first scholars to formally investigate the nature of wide-ranging Stalingrad representations over time and space. In his conclusion, Roberts even takes it upon himself to validate Stalingrad's importance by undermining the battle's critics. Roberts writes:

There are those who argue for assigning greater importance to other great battles on the Eastern Front, especially Moscow and Kursk. The argument in favour [sic] of Moscow is that if the Germans had captured the Soviet capital in 1941 the Stalin regime would have crumbled. ... Moscow, however, was a defensive victory for the Soviets which enabled them to live and fight another day. It averted defeat but did not, and could not, guarantee victory. ... The argument in favour [sic] of Kursk is that, while Stalingrad signified that the Germans could never win the war, the Kursk victory guaranteed that the Soviets would win the war, sooner or later. ... However, Kursk was primarily a defensive battle for both sides. It is difficult to see that it would have made any fundamental difference to the overall strategic position had the Germans won. No doubt success at Kursk would have been a great boost to the *Wehrmacht* and a bitter blow to the Red Army, but the Soviets had already suffered and survived greater defeats in the war and they would have undoubtedly recovered from this one. Soviet survival following a defeat at Stalingrad is not such a self-evident proposition. ... As great and important a battle as it was, it came after and on the back of the victory at Stalingrad. No Stalingrad, no Kursk; it's as simple as that.⁹¹

Roberts also acknowledges those who claim that the war would have concluded similarly had the Germans won, citing the fact that Hitler's troops would have sustained such heavy losses in a victorious campaign that the German forces still would have been crushed beyond repair. The author deflects the issue, claiming, "It is an interesting question for war games experts, but highly speculative, and

⁹⁰ Ibid., 175-179.

⁹¹ Ibid., 187-188.

ultimately unanswerable."⁹² In the end, Roberts affirms Stalingrad's pivotal role in deciding World War II and permanently altering military historiography:

Battles do change the course of history. They determine the outcome of wars, the shape and character of victory and the peace that follows. They also change how the history of a war is viewed. In both these respects no battle changed history more than Stalingrad. ... The greatest battle of the last great war of the pre-atomic age was an epic struggle that will never be surpassed.⁹³

Geoffrey Roberts' *Victory at Stalingrad*, while part of a growing trend toward Anglo-American popular history in the post-Cold War atmosphere and despite the fact that it ignores a significant body of English-language work relating to the battle, was instrumental in initiating a debate over the nature and nuances of Stalingrad representations from contemporary sources to those in the present day.

Fowler's *Stalingrad: The Vital 7 Days* provides yet another example of the popularizing of Stalingrad historiography. Fowler's general battle survey is characterized by large print, scores of oversized photographs and illustrations — both in color and black-and-white — and informational boxes to interest even the most casual reader. The informational boxes are particularly important to the structure of Fowler's text. Included in these gray-shaded sections are biographies on Zhukov,⁹⁴ Paulus,⁹⁵ and Richthofen.⁹⁶ The famed "Battle for the Grain Elevator,"⁹⁷ an explanation of flame-throwers,⁹⁸ the Molotov Cocktail,⁹⁹ and even a full-text version of Stalin's notorious Order 227¹⁰⁰ — intended to eliminate cowardice and

⁹² Ibid., 189.

⁹³ Ibid., 193-194.

⁹⁴ Fowler, Will. *Stalingrad: The Vital 7 Days*. Staplehurst, England: Spellmount, 2005. Page 13.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

desertion — all receive their own space. Maps, propaganda posters, and political cartoons are also included in *Stalingrad: The Vital 7 Days*. Fowler even devotes a full four-page foldout spread to a map detailing the front lines on October 10, 1942.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Fowler spends nearly an entire page discussing “sniperism.” Vassili Zaitsev, the heroic soldier and protagonist in Annaud’s *Enemy at the Gates*, receives special attention in the section. Fowler uses public awareness of the major motion picture as inspiration for including this information, and the author even seems to get caught up in Vassili’s legend while describing the Russian hero:

The most famous sniper of them all, although not the highest scorer, was Vassili Zaitsev in Batyuk’s division, who, during the October Revolution celebrations, raised his tally of kills to 149 Germans. . . . For the Sixty-Second Army, the taciturn Zaitsev, a shepherd from the foothills of the Urals, represented much more than any sporting hero. News of further additions to his score passed from mouth to mouth along the front. Zaitsev, whose name means ‘hare’ in Russian, was subsequently put in charge of training young snipers, and his pupils became known as *zaichata*, or ‘leverets.’ This was the start of the ‘sniper movement’ in the Sixty-Second Army.¹⁰²

Fowler does, however, acknowledge that the duel between Vassili and Koenig in *Enemy at the Gates* “was probably a Soviet propaganda invention. Zaitsev, played by Jude Law, existed, but the sinister Koenig, played by Ed Harris, was almost certainly fictional.”¹⁰³ By confronting popular misconceptions surrounding the battle and structuring his book around a user-friendly interface, Will Fowler makes the Battle of Stalingrad accessible to casual historians.

Many post-Cold War Anglophonic Stalingrad representations have criticized and illuminated the shortcomings of the leaders on both sides of the conflict.

Scholarship in this vein is represented by Joachim Wieder’s *Stalingrad: Memories and*

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 99-102.

¹⁰² Ibid., 104.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 104.

Reassessments (1995), Helmut Heiber and David M. Glantz's *Hitler and His Generals* (2003), and Edwin P. Hoyt's *Stalin's War* (2003). These volumes are consistent with other post-Cold War works emphasizing the soldiers' humanity, since they place blame squarely on the shoulders of the authority figures in Hitler and Stalin's regimes. Wieder's book includes a section called "Memories of a Survivor," an overview of the battle from the German perspective.¹⁰⁴ Wieder fought at Stalingrad, so this segment may be viewed as a memoir-style survey. The book's second half is more unique. Entitled "Critical Assessments After Fifty Years," the section examines the decisions of Field Marshals Manstein and Paulus and General Seydlitz.¹⁰⁵ Wieder does more than simply recount the critical decisions and strategies pursued by the trio; he questions and challenges courses of action taken by each German officer. Wieder has essentially produced revisionist history, second-guessing his former leaders and wondering about potential outcomes of different scenarios. By confronting "deep human and ethical problems that plunged so many of us at Stalingrad into despair,"¹⁰⁶ Wieder places Stalingrad into a previously unexplored context; rather than being satisfied with knowing what happened, Wieder calls German strategic decisions into question.¹⁰⁷

Helmut Heiber and David M. Glantz criticize Hitler and his often unreasonable decisions in their book, *Hitler and His Generals*. Rather than expressing outright condemnation of Hitler's actions, the two scholars present raw and unfiltered information to their audience in an attempt to lead readers toward an anti-

¹⁰⁴ Wieder, Joachim. *Stalingrad: Memories and Reassessments*. London: Arms and Armour, 1995. Pages 29-132.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 133-245.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁰⁷ For another German-focused study of decision-making at Stalingrad, see Alexander, Bevin. *How Hitler Could Have Won World War II*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000.

Hitler conclusion. Heiber and Glantz's intimidating 1,159-page collection of English-translated German military conference transcripts between 1942 and 1945 begins on December 1, 1942, when the German Sixth Army was entrenched at Stalingrad. The book is hailed as the "first complete stenographic record of the military situation conferences." In Gerhard L. Weinberg's introduction, it is revealed that:

Hitler blew up. He temporarily took over command of Army Group A in the Caucasus himself; he replaced the chief of staff of the German army; and he considered replacing his immediate assistants in the High Command of the Armed Forces. . . . It was under these circumstances that Hitler, unwilling to recognize that, at his insistence, Germany had taken on a project far beyond its strength, preferred to shift the blame for the looming disaster to his military advisors. If he was infallible — as he was quite certain he was — failure must be the fault of those who had not carried out his brilliant plans in the way he dictated. So that he could make sure in the future that he was obeyed in all respects and that none could claim to have received other directives, Hitler instructed stenographers to record the military situation conferences, at which the detailed orders for future operations were issued.¹⁰⁸

Weinberg explains the importance of such records in identifying key players in the German decision-making apparatus and learning how strategies were pursued.¹⁰⁹

One particularly informative Stalingrad-related passage comes from a discussion that took place on February 1, 1943, at the moment of German defeat on the Volga. In discussing Paulus' decision to surrender instead of dying in battle or committing suicide, Hitler comes across as unreasonable and exceptionally hardheaded:

The Fuhrer: . . . I don't understand a man like (Paulus), who doesn't prefer death. The heroism of so many tens of thousands of men, officers and generals is wiped out (by a man like that,) who, when the moment comes, doesn't possess the character to do what a weak woman has done. . . . They're now taken into the Lubyanka, and there rats will eat them. How can somebody be (so cowardly)? I don't understand it. . . . I also don't believe anymore in the wounds that (Paulus supposedly received). . . . Personally, it

¹⁰⁸ Heiber, Helmut, and David M. Glantz. *Hitler and His Generals*. New York: Enigma Books, 2003. Page iv.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, v-vi.

hurts me the most that I still did that — promoted him to field marshal. I wanted to give him the last (happiness). That's the last field marshal I will (make) during (this war). . . . So many men have to die, and then a man like that goes out and besmirches the heroism of so many others at the last minute. (He could have) delivered (himself from every misery) and reached eternity and entered into the national immortality — but he preferred going to Moscow. How can (there even be a choice)? It's just crazy.¹¹⁰

The bulk of the remaining material relating to Stalingrad relates to strategy, tactics, and weaponry. In a discussion dated December 12, 1942, Hitler confers with a long list of German officials, including Zeitzler, Heusinger, Jodl, Schmundt, Krancke, Christian, Bodenschatz, Hewel, and Buhle.¹¹¹ By conveying information to the reader in a raw and unadulterated form, Heiber and Glantz present their audience with especially striking insight into the sinister nature of Hitler's perspective on the events at Stalingrad.¹¹²

Stalin has come under fire from post-Cold War Anglo-American historians, as well. In Edwin P. Hoyt's *Stalin's War*, the Soviet leader is painted as a ruthless dictator bent on perpetuating horrific violence and hardship among his own people in addition to his enemies. The book's preface sets Stalin's legacy in concrete terms:

One man, above all others, dominated Russia for thirty years, murdered millions of his fellow citizens, and made his country into a giant flytrap from which very few managed to escape. His arms were long. He murdered Leon Trotsky in Mexico without ever leaving the Kremlin. He was shrewd rather than intelligent, conspiratorial, secretive, given to secret bouts of fear and trembling. He was a monster in human form and when he died in his sleep in 1953 half the world cheered, and no one cried. He had no friends, only subordinates, whom he bullied unmercifully. He was Josef Vissiaronovich Djugashvili — Stalin — the man of steel who ruled Russia as absolute dictator from the 1920s until his death.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 66.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 22-23, 25-35.

¹¹² For a slightly earlier work on Hitler and the German decision-making process, see Barnett, Correlli, ed. *Hitler's Generals*. New York: Grove Press, 1989.

¹¹³ Hoyt, Edwin P. *Stalin's War*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2003. Page vii.

Hoyt presents the reader with philosophy professor Ernst Topitsch's claim that Stalin planned to attack Germany before Hitler invaded Russia.¹¹⁴ This argument serves to shatter the image of Stalin as a victim of Hitler's aggressive quest for world domination, instead painting both leaders as power-hungry and greedy. The author writes, "The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 was the result of the unbridled cupidity of two men bent each on fooling the other. When the pact was signed, Hitler showed his joy, 'Now I have the world in my pocket,' he said. Stalin was equally satisfied with the secret division of the eastern border states . . ." ¹¹⁵ Hoyt does not spare Stalin's older associates, claiming, "They were his creatures and they had no higher aspirations. Their loyalty was absolute, although it was mixed with a good deal of fear. They had no dignity or self-respect. If Stalin kicked them, they would lick his boots."¹¹⁶ The author also analyzes Order 227, with special attention paid to Stalin's punishments reserved for those who deserted the front or demonstrated cowardice.

Hoyt writes:

In each front area one to three punishment battalions of 500 men would be created. Into them would go the soldiers, including senior commanders and political officers, who had shown cowardice or failure. They would be committed in especially dangerous situations so that they might expiate their crimes against the homeland with their blood. In each army area, special blocking detachments would be stationed directly behind unreliable divisions. It would be their duty to shoot spreaders of panic or cowards on the spot.¹¹⁷

Hoyt mentions that Stalin fired his son,¹¹⁸ insulted his generals behind their backs,¹¹⁹ and generally acted to protect his own reputation while setting others up as

¹¹⁴ Ibid., vii

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 124.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 126-127.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 130.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 143.

scapegoats.¹²⁰ It is interesting to compare Hoyt's stance in *Stalin's War* with his position in the previously-discussed *199 Days*, which was written ten years earlier. While Hoyt focuses on the Russian side of the Stalingrad conflict in both instances, he takes a sympathetic view of Russian soldiers in *199 Days*, while his portrayal of the Soviet leader in *Stalin's War* is quite negative. Ultimately, the post-Cold War fascination with studying and criticizing Hitler, Stalin, and their immediate subordinates in English-language Stalingrad representations can be seen as an attempt by historians to condemn evils in both the Nazi and Communist regimes. In a very real sense, both totalitarian systems were oppressive, brutal, and inhumane dictatorships. This contrast between harmful ideologies and the human beings who lived under them is a more recent feature of Stalingrad historiography.

The post-Cold War period has seen English-language representations of Stalingrad change in several important ways. The Russian minimization of the Cold War period has ended, resulting in a more favorable attitude toward the Red Army's accomplishments compared to the previous few decades. Stalingrad has also been thrust into the world of popular culture and history, the subject of motion pictures and books marketed to mass-consumer audiences. While German and Russian authorities have been vilified, the depictions of troops on both sides have largely been rehabilitated to reflect their humanity and emotional struggles. The post-Cold War era has also witnessed the rise of a wide range of creative outlets for Stalingrad representations in Anglo-America. By investigating areas of the battle that were previously ignored or avoided, historians have created a far richer and more complete body of material relating to the battle in the Anglophonic world.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 146.

Ultimately, the Battle of Stalingrad has come to be recognized as one of the great, world-altering events of the modern era. Its legacy, despite its dynamic and ever-changing nature, is guaranteed to endure.

Conclusion

From World War II to the present, representations of the Battle of Stalingrad in the English-speaking world have undergone a dramatic metamorphosis. Works concerning the conflict were largely sympathetic to the United States' wartime ally, the Soviet Union, during and immediately after the fighting. Russian troops were portrayed in Anglo-America as heroic, honorable, and admirable, while the Germans were painted as ruthless, demonic, and immoral. Moreover, representations from the Second World War inherently linked cultural identity and national ideology in the personages of the troops themselves. It was impossible to separate the individuals fighting at Stalingrad from their Soviet Russian or Nazi German contexts in these largely propagandist works.

The Anglo-American perception of the Stalingrad landscape changed during the Cold War, when tensions with the Soviets were at an all-time high and Germany no longer posed a military threat. Representations of the battle in this era tended to reflect the contemporary political climate. Works sympathetic to German soldiers — which made sure to separate the individuals from the Nazi Party, leadership, and ideology — became widespread, while works examining the battle from the Russian side diminished in relative proportion. The Russian soldiers remained tied, in many instances, to the Soviet system they lived under in Anglophonic examinations of Stalingrad. Moreover, the Russian triumph on the Volga was often minimized or mitigated as English-language Stalingrad references assumed dubious or suspicious tones. The Cold War also saw an increase in artistic and creative approaches toward the battle.

Since the Cold War's end, the Anglo-American treatment of Stalingrad has undergone yet another transformation that has further distanced representations of the battle from the fusion of individual, nation, and ideology of the World War II era and moved them closer to a more modern, humanity-based approach. Once again, Anglophonic Stalingrad-related works have adapted to the post-bipolar global landscape by separating the Russian soldiers from their Soviet and Stalinist contexts. Furthermore, both Stalin and Hitler, along with their subordinates in the respective Soviet and Nazi leadership hierarchies, have come to be nearly universally criticized by historians as oppressive, irrational, brutal, and immoral for their conduct during the battle. The soldiers fighting on both sides have come to be portrayed as human beings free of much of the political and ideological baggage of their repressive leaders.

In examining representations of the Battle of Stalingrad in Anglo-American sources from the Second World War to the present, a general trend becomes apparent. The World War II-era theme of associating nationalist and ideological concepts with individual troops began to crumble as the Cold War began. The evolution, however, proceeded unevenly, as German troops came to be seen for their humanity while the Russians were still subjected to Western anti-Soviet prejudices common at the time. After the Cold War ended, the Russian soldiers were finally extricated, in Western eyes, from their ideological shackles. This change in perception among English-language representations of Stalingrad reflects a larger tendency in Anglo-American culture. Generalized conceptions of individuals locked into socio-cultural contexts have been abandoned and replaced by a conscious emphasis on the condition of humanity in every individual.

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