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Nationalist Propaganda in the Soviet Russian Press, 1939–1941

The nationalities policy in the Soviet Union under Stalin, and specifically during the period of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, was more complex than has been indicated by many American interpretations. In the Soviet press of that period, many newspapers and periodicals carried articles that dealt with nationality issues. I will consider here the possibility that publication of these articles was part of a propaganda program originated by state policy. American interpretations of Soviet nationalities policy have generally followed either totalitarian or historicist interpretive models. According to Adam Ulam,

The main factor in the decisions of 1939 was not nationalism in the proper sense of the word, though as a result the Soviet Union gathered most of the territories lost in the post-World War I settlement, absorbed for the first time in Russian history the Ukrainians of Galicia, and attempted less successfully to reclaim the tsarist heritage in Finland and to realize traditional Russian aspirations in the Straits. Nor can the decision be classified as a dramatic rejection of the ideological premises of Communism. . . . The aspirations of nationalism and the analytical framework of Communism become simply subsumed in the interest of the totalitarian regime.

The scholarly methods of historicist interpreters likewise tend to deemphasize the problems of nationalism. Since historicism emphasizes change and nationality, in the sense of group cohesiveness, can be construed as a way of resisting change, these interpretations give scant attention to the issue of national identification and the Soviet way of dealing with it. Alexander Dallin

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1. I use the word propaganda to mean actions whose goal is to influence the minds and behaviors of people, as suggested by Peter Kenez in The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). 5. Kenez points out that the difference between propaganda and information in the press is that in the first case, journalists do not search for knowledge but rather for the most effective ways to convey the fruits of ideological analysis to the masses.


Hannah Arendt was the first to apply the totalitarian model to the Soviet experience, whereas the historicist model has generally been used by Marxists and post-Hegelians. For a discussion of these two models, see John Armstrong, “Comments on Professor Dallin’s ‘Bias and Blunders in American Studies on the USSR,’” Slavic Review 32 (Fall 1973): 577–587. For objections to the blindness of researchers to the problems of nationalism in the Soviet Union, see Alexander J. Motyl, “‘Sovietology in One Country’ or Comparative Nationality Studies?” Slavic Review 48 (Spring 1989): 83–88.


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bypasses nationality altogether in “Soviet Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics: A Framework for Analysis,” as does Stephen Cohen in his recent study of forces that have operated in Soviet society since 1917. In an earlier work that combines both approaches, Merle Fainsod argues that under Stalin, notwithstanding the pressures of Russian chauvinism and the local nationalisms, the party tended to follow the policy expressed in Stalin’s dictum “nationalist in form and communist in content.” In practice, national cohesiveness was tolerated and even encouraged if it served as recreation and manifested itself in folk art, dancing, and music, but the divisive aspect of nationalism was discouraged regardless of its origin. Fainsod observes that “Stalin envisioned a multi-national state which remained in essence a Communist monolith.” Both interpretations have much merit, but neither has fully accommodated nationalism and the use of various nationalist ideologies in consolidating power over the territories acquired through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

The question can be asked whether the policies of 1939–1941 should be viewed as an extension of the policies of the 1930s or whether they reflected a reorientation of Soviet policy after the Munich agreement. The first view is prevalent, but I lean toward the second. I believe that the rise of nationalistic press propaganda was related to Stalin’s growing confidence that an accommodation with Germany could be reached and that the two countries’ policy objectives did not conflict.

The period of study and the subject of nationalism in Soviet politics were dictated by a perceived incongruity between the eventfulness of the 1939–1941 period and the relatively weak positioning of the period in Soviet studies. Never before that time, and never since, has the Soviet Union so successfully expanded and incorporated national groups. The annexations of that time resulted in five new republics: Moldavian, Karelo-Finnish, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian and in the enlargement of two existing republics: the Ukrainian and Belorussian. The seven affected republics contained people who spoke nine different languages. In a 1 August 1940 speech, Viacheslav M. Molotov said that the population of the Soviet Union increased by 23 million in a single year. While the annexed lands were lost to Germany for a while, they were reclaimed after World War II and, with minor readjustments, have remained part of the Soviet Union until the present (although Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have recently initiated independence processes). The Central Asian and Caucasian republics also changed significantly during this time: In 1940 the alphabets of the people in these republics were changed from Latin or


7. Moore in Terror and Progress argues that these policies were an extension of previous periods; see also Jonathan Haslam, The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933–39 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984). Haslam maintains, however, that in the 1930s the Soviets believed that Poland had more political clout than it in fact possessed, and that this belief was partly a result of historical perceptions (162). In contrast, Jan T. Gross (Revolution from Abroad, 8) maintains that after the Munich agreement, the Soviets began to “reorient their foreign policy to find accommodation with Nazi Germany.” Walter Laqueur points out in Russia and Germany, 254, that “the initiative for a rapprochement in spring 1939 almost certainly came from the Russians.”

8. Dowgraded in 1956 to an autonomous republic within the Russian republic.

9. The “legal” texts justifying these annexations can be found in “Zakony, priniatye Verkhovnym Sovetom SSSR,” Partinioe stroitel’stvo, no. 14 (July 1940): 39–41.

Arabic to Cyrillic.\textsuperscript{11} The events of 1939–1941 have been perceived as foreign and domestic policy successes by both friends and foes of the Soviets;\textsuperscript{12} yet scholars in the United States have given relatively little attention to them.

The secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on 23 August 1939 dealt with “spheres of interest” in Europe. The Soviets were to control the territory of the second Polish republic east of the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San; Romanian Bessarabia; and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland.\textsuperscript{13} The territories acquired by the Soviets in 1939–1940 were a postfeudal patchwork of ethnic communities who had lived in remarkable harmony by the standards of World War II warfare.\textsuperscript{14} After the Soviet takeover, these ethnically diverse people were “reeducated” in accordance with the Soviet pattern, but this process was complicated by the Soviet-Finnish War, by World War II, and by the ideological necessity of adding a Marxist veneer to a military victory over populations generally hostile to Marxism.\textsuperscript{15} These complications, and the variety of the national interests involved,\textsuperscript{16} made governing the conquered territories a difficult issue. After the force of annexation, and before and after the formations of the republics were officially announced, a new and “correct” perception of annexation and of the diverse policies toward the various annexed nations had to be fostered. As had happened after the revolution of 1917, the press played a major part in this propaganda campaign.\textsuperscript{17}

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the press became the primary means of propaganda in the Soviet Union. On 14 November 1938, the Central Committee of the party issued a directive that said:

In Marxist-Leninist propaganda, the decisive weapon is the press: magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets. Oral propaganda can only play a secondary role in this struggle. The press offers an opportunity to make this or that truth into an immediate possession of all people in society, and it is therefore stronger than oral propaganda.\textsuperscript{18}

In May 1940 the lead article in Partiinoe stroitel’stvo asserted that information about state policy should be conveyed through the press and not through memoranda written by various party sec-

\textsuperscript{11} Izvestiia, 11 January 1940, on changing the Kirghiz alphabet from Arabic to Cyrillic; Pravda, 29 March 1940, on changing the Tatar alphabet from Latin to Cyrillic.

\textsuperscript{12} “The story of Soviet foreign policy from 1917 through World War II is one of success unparalleled in the history of diplomacy,” Adam Ulam, New Face of Soviet Totalitarianism, 130.

\textsuperscript{13} Only a portion of Finland was incorporated into the Soviet Union following the Soviet-Finnish War.

\textsuperscript{14} Joseph Rothschild, East Central Europe between the Two World Wars (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 72, 369 ff.

\textsuperscript{15} This hostility is indicated by the smallness of the communist parties in eastern Central Europe between the two world wars, and the weak showing of communist sympathizers in the pre-World War II elections. See ibid., 63, 65, 174, 229.

\textsuperscript{16} The problem of distinguishing between the Russian and non-Russian components of the Soviet state is complicated, and many researchers, including Peter Kenez, do not sufficiently emphasize the fact that about one-third of the Soviet population did not speak Russian well enough to be influenced by Russian language publications. This segment of society was approached by newspapers in other languages that took their clues from the Russian-language press. See the discussion of Cserwony Sz tandar in Gross, Revolution from Abroad, xx, 66, 75, 85, 189, 191, 217. For a discussion of the nationality problem in the 1930s, see Adam Ulam, “Russian Nationalism,” in The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy, ed. Seweryn Bialer (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1981), 3–17.

\textsuperscript{17} Kenez, Birth of the Propaganda State, 224. The development of the system of local agitators is discussed on 51–69. Kenez also demonstrates the vital role of the press in the Bolsheviks’ rise to power; it is illuminating that the first issue of Pravda, which appeared on 5 March 1917 in a printing of 100,000, was distributed free (31). Jeffrey Brooks also gives statistics for the newspapers aimed at workers and peasants in the 1920s. Brooks, “Public and Private Values,” 18–19.

\textsuperscript{18} D. Smirnov, “Pechat’—moguchee orudie v bor’be za kommunistizm,” Partiinoe stroitel’stvo, no. 9 (May 1939): 39.
retaries. “The living word in a newspaper is incomparably stronger and more effective than any number of memoranda and directives on which secretaries of the regional committees often waste much time,” said that article, which also taught editors how to plan for desired results and how to present a point of view effectively. In 1940 articles about managing the press appeared virtually every month in Partiinoe stroitel’stvo, and reflected the party leaders’ seriousness about the issue of press interpretations of the rapidly changing political and military scene.19

During 1939–1941 Pravda, Izvestiia, Literaturnaia gazeta, and other major Russian dailies and weeklies articulated correct attitudes and opinions about nationalities. The press offered the vocabulary for describing members of the conquered nationalities, and interpretations of rumors about deportations to Siberia and Central Asia. Provincial Russian papers took their cues about wording and descriptions of events from these major publications. Following a pattern developed in 1917,20 what appeared in Pravda one day was likely to appear in Izvestiia on the same day or on the next day, and a day or so later in the regional and specialized newspapers and magazines. For instance, Leningradskaia pravda, and other local pravadas, published day-old articles from the Moscow Pravda. If over a four-week period many articles were written about the same issue, it was considered important and the point of view advocated was being given high priority. An isolated article on a particular issue indicated that the issue was not of the highest priority at a given time.

From January 1937 to September 1939 the Soviet Russian press devoted very little space to minority nationalities and virtually none to Poles, Finns, and Romanians. Virtually no articles indicated any awareness on the part of the editors of plans to absorb the territories. Even though ranking members of the party had occasionally discussed such plans21 and eastern Central Europe was viewed as distinct from the west by Soviet policy makers, no attempt was made to engineer a public perception of the necessity of annexations. In the late 1930s editors of the major Soviet periodicals viewed eastern Central Europe as part of the west, culturally speaking. Occasionally articles designated the region western. Czech and Polish newspapers were quoted in surveys of the western press; the literature of these countries was said to be “western.” On 5 May 1938, for example, N. Pozharskii’s “Soviet literature in the West” in Literaturnaia gazeta quoted translations of Soviet writers into Polish and Czech, as well as English, French, and German. Pozharskii stated that Germany led western European countries in translations of Soviet authors, Czechoslovakia and Poland tied for the second place, and France was third. Party publications did not anticipate the alliance with Hitler and published articles unfriendly to the Germans. In January 1939 Partiinoe stroitel’stvo featured a section entitled “Bor’ba protiv fashizma i voiny” about Germany and its role as a warmonger. In the international section of this biweekly, Ia. Viktorov complained that “Romania and Poland have been marked as the next victims of fascist aggression. . . . The fascists are getting ready to attack Romania, Poland and Lithuania.”22 On 20 June 1939, Literaturnaia gazeta and on 1 August 1939, Leningradskaia

19. “O rukovodstve partiinoi pechat’iu,” Partiinoe stroitel’stvo, no. 9 (May 1940): 7. “Glavnoe v propagande—ee kachestvo, ee ideiny uroven’,” Partiinoe stroitel’stvo, no. 21 (November 1940): 3–7; “Partiinaia informatsiia v gazete,” Partiinoe stroitel’stvo, no. 22 (November 1940): 77ff. Partiinoe stroitel’stvo was a biweekly of the Central Committee of the VKP(b). In the mid-1970s, I. V. Kurilov and V. V. Shinkarenko confirmed the long-lasting Soviet recognition of the press as an instrument of party policy in Plantirovanie informatiiv v presse (Moscow: Mysl’, 1976). To introduce an interpretation into public consciousness, say the authors, articles “deriving from the same major thought which eventually . . . begins to appear attractive, which attracts attention and is memorized” must be published over several weeks (48). Four-week periods are said to be the most effective (94). During such campaigns, the desired interpretation should appear in a variety of forms: as straightforward reporting, as testimonials, and as theoretical articles. A point of view is strengthened by examples: hence the importance of the testimonials of people who directly participated in an event. Also see R. V. Martamus, Nauchnoe rukovodstvo i upravlenie sotsialisticheskim obschestvom and V. G. Afanas’ev, Nauchnoe upravlenie obschestvom.

20. Kenez, Birth of the Propaganda State, 32.


pravda spoke critically of Germany and only days before the signing of the pact, Pravda still wrote of “the persecutions of Poles in Germany,” an “anti-Polish demonstration in Gdansk,” “fascist-occupied” Czechoslovakia (20 August), and of “continuation of the anti-Polish campaign in Germany” (21 August). Anti-Polish, anti-Finnish, or anti-Romanian sentiments were not encouraged among Russians. Either party discipline was very tight and those familiar with policy options did not leak that information to the press or the pact was signed without much planning. While the second interpretation has been overwhelmingly accepted, I would not entirely discount the first. 23

The signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact reversed the tone spectacularly. The word fascist was eliminated and virtually overnight the press adopted a pro-Nazi point of view regarding Europe. Second, an anti-Polish, anti-Finnish, and anti-Romanian propaganda campaign followed.

From 24 August events on the Polish-German border were reported from the official Nazi point of view. References to the Polish press disappeared, and the Völkischer Beobachter was frequently quoted. On 27 August, Pravda said that German newspapers spoke of “the growing danger of German-Polish military conflict”; the message implied that both parties had contributed to the rise of the hostilities and, thus, signaled an anti-Polish shift.

On 31 August five lines on the last page of Pravda said that general mobilization had been announced in Poland and all railway traffic between Poland and Germany had ceased. Several days later, the Nazi invasion of Poland was reported as “military action between Germany and Poland.” The war-caused sufferings and inconveniences of the Berliners were described in the 5 September Pravda. On the same day, Pravda said that the Polish authorities had arrested two German diplomats and implied that the Germans had to take the appropriate steps in response. The next day Pravda reported that two Polish diplomats had been arrested in Berlin in retaliation for the Polish action. According to Pravda, Poles had also trespassed against the Soviet border: Four days before the Soviet invasion of Poland, Polish war planes crossed into the USSR without permission, said the newspaper on 14 September and Finanssovaia gazeta echoed this line on 15 September. On 13 September Pravda announced an alleged anti-Polish uprising in “eastern Galicia,” which the Soviets invaded four days later.

Attempts were also made to present United States government and business leaders as sympathetic to the Nazis and, by implication, hostile to Poland. On 8 September 1939 Pravda reported that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had praised Germany for observing international law forbidding submarine attacks on commercial ships. On 31 August and 23 September 1939 Pravda reported that the New York stock market went up; on 17 September, the day of the Soviet invasion of Poland, the stock market in Japan also rose, according to Pravda. Previously information about stock market fluctuations had virtually never appeared in Pravda. On 19 September 1939, the paper reported that the Völkischer Beobachter had spoken favorably of the Soviet invasion of Poland. The article to which Pravda referred appeared on the same day in the Berlin edition of the Nazi paper; thus the editors of Pravda must have had access to it before it went to press. 24 On 30 September, Pravda featured a TASS interview with Joachim von Ribbentrop. The paper editorialized that “the German-Soviet friendship is now established forever. . . . Both parties hope that England and France will stop their absolutely pointless war against Germany. . . . Should England and France fail to do so, Germany and the Soviet Union will take the appropriate steps.”

Hitler’s speeches were extensively quoted in the Soviet press in 1939–1940, and the commentaries were favorable. On 2 September Pravda featured Hitler’s Reichstag speech that held that Poles rather than Germans had started the war. On 21 September Pravda reprinted portions of Hitler’s 19 September Gdansk speech in which he lectured the Poles on democracy and on

23. Over the centuries, Russians have allied with Germany at the expense of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. The possibility of another such alliance could hardly have been ruled out in Soviet long-term planning.

7 October the paper quoted another Reichstag speech in which Hitler said that the Polish state had no right to exist and was built “on the bones and blood of Germans and Russians.” On 10 November 1939, Leningradskaiia pravda featured Hitler’s speech in Munich, and on 1 February 1940, Izvestiia reprinted portions of Hitler’s speech on the Nazi rise to power.

Molotov’s speech on Soviet foreign policy, featured prominently in Pravda on 1 November 1939, defended Hitler and condemned the western democracies. Molotov described England and France as aggressors and replaced the word fascism with Hitlerism. He said that “Hitler’s ideology can be accepted or rejected, this is a matter of political views. But . . . one cannot destroy an ideology by force. . . . It is pointless and criminal to conduct a war to ‘destroy Hitlerism’ under the false slogan of a ‘fight for democracy.’” Molotov blamed the war on the desire of England and France to retain their colonial empires and said that when the Polish state fell apart the Soviet government “extended a helping hand to our brothers the Ukrainians and our brothers the Belorussians.”

The Soviet invasion of Poland was not mentioned. On 29 September 1939, Pravda featured an article on Nazi-Soviet friendship that spoke of “the German-Soviet agreement about friendship and the border between the USSR and Germany . . . after disintegration of the former Polish state.” On 3 March 1940 in Pravda Ia. Viktorov said that the war “was concocted by the English and French imperialists who want to maintain their status in Europe.”

In the areas conquered by the Soviets in 1939–1941, the press encouraged nationalistic rancors between various ethnic groups by means of articles, poems, reports, testimonials, and slogans. As Jan T. Gross pointed out, in those uncertain times a printed encouragement to be

25. For nearly half a century, Soviet historians spoke of Soviet aggression against Poland as “the freeing of western Ukraine and western Belorussia from the Polish yoke”; see F. G. Zuev et al., Istoriia Pol’shi (Moscow: Akademiia nauk, 1958), 456–457. The war with Finland was said to have been caused by the Finnish “provocateurs” and the annexations of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina were described as the “return” of these territories to the Soviet Union. M. P. Kim, ed., Istoriia SSSR: Epokha sovetskoi sotsializma (Moscow, 1958), 534–542. Major General Petr Grigorenko’s Memoirs show that such views have been unquestioningly accepted even by critics of the Soviet system. Grigorenko devotes one page of his five hundred–page volume to the Soviet-Finland War and the annexation of Finnish territory and says nothing of Soviet aggression against the Baltic countries and Romania. See Memoirs, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (New York: Norton, 1982), esp. 92. Some popular English-language histories of Russia reflect a similar point of view. George Vernadsky’s A History of Russia (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961) describes Soviet aggression against Poland as “rectification of the western frontier.” According to Vernadsky, the annexation of the Baltic republics was a result of “dipomatic moves.” He described the aggression against Romania in the following way: “an ultimatum was delivered to the Romanian Government, and upon its expiration Soviet troops occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina” (420 and 423). Similarly, Nicholas V. Riasanovsky’s A History of Russia, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 516–517, asserts that the Ribentrop-Molotov Pact was one of “strict neutrality” and tries to defend the Bolsheviks by saying that they “hated” the Nazis and had “no illusions” as to the merits of the agreement. Yet the Soviet press of the period showed no foresight as to the eventual realignment of alliances in World War II. Riasanovsky says that Hitler “attacked Poland” whereas the Red Army merely “occupied eastern Poland.” Likewise, he says that the Soviet Union “utilized its agreement with Germany to obtain from Rumania, by means of an ultimatum, the disputed region of Bessarabia as well as northern Bukovina” (emphasis added). Similar opinions are expressed in Edward Acton’s Russia (London: Longman, 1986), 245–247, a book based almost entirely on secondary sources. In St. Petersburg and Moscow: Tsarist and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1814–1974 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 351–352, Barbara Jelavich devotes one paragraph to the secret agreements of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Jelavich’s book displays a typical lack of recognition of the role of nationalities in Eastern Europe under Soviet domination. A lengthy search (unaided by the appropriately lengthy index) in the 700–page–long Russia and the Soviet Union: A Modern History by W. B. Walsh (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), 505–506, yielded two pages about the pact and no mention of the nationalities involved. Among other popular histories of Russia, James Billington’s The Icon and the Axe (New York: Knopf, 1966) concentrates on cultural matters and has not corrected these omissions. William L. Shirer’s The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 513–544), devotes more attention to the pact and to the ways it affected the nationalities in the Soviet Union than any history of Russia that I know.
violent and abusive amounted to a hunting license for the criminal segment of society. Thus Ukrainians and Belorussians were pitted against Poles in western Ukraine and western Belarus. During the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939–1940, the press tried to generate hatred against Beleofinity. An attempt to pit the Karelians against the Finns, by declaring Finnish rather than Karelian to be the language of the newly created Karelo-Finnish Republic, was part of this campaign. A hate campaign was launched against the Romanians in Bukovina and Bessarabia when these territories were annexed, and “Ukrainian nationalists” were also attacked. After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, German culture and the Germans received their share of contempt and vilification too. The only national group never vilified was the Russian, but the most protracted campaigns were against the Poles.

For about a month after the Soviet invasion of Poland, virtually every issue of each major Soviet Russian newspaper contained at least one hostile article about Poland and Poles, with a height of thirty-nine such articles and poems in Pravda on 19 September 1939, two days after the Soviet invasion. Poland was presented as a country of inept, brutal people who somehow managed to survive between two highly civilized nations. The press encouraged hatred of “gentlemen’s Poland,” “Polish gentry,” “the gentlemen,” or simply “Poles,” while ignoring the fact that the government of the second republic had abolished all titles of nobility. The connotations of the word pan in Russian indicate that the press was referring not only to social class but also, and primarily, to nationality and to Polish social manners traditionally perceived by Russians as pretentious and excessively rooted in the behavior of the upper classes. In regard to this assortment of Polish targets, an abusive vocabulary was used in articles, poems, and stories written by Russians of otherwise spotless reputations. Things Polish were vilified in ways that may seem ineffective and naïve to an American but that stirred up emotions in conditions of war and poverty. Poland was presented as a place where a small group of Polish nobles brutalized millions of Belorussians, Ukrainians, and Jews. Gentlemen’s Poland became a term of abuse and a synonym for all that was wrong with the conquered territories. An impression was being created among the readers of Pravda and other newspapers that Poland was inhabited mainly by non-Poles who welcomed their liberation. Witnesses of the horrors of Polish rule wrote their testimonials for newspapers, and Hitler’s allegations about Poland were approvingly quoted.

On 18 September Pravda published Molotov’s radio speech in which the foreign minister declared that “events have shown that the Polish state is unable to maintain itself.” The newspaper then quoted the note sent by the Soviet government to the Polish ambassador in Moscow, which said the Soviet Union had decided “to take under its wing western Ukraine and western Belarus.” In his speech on foreign policy before the Supreme Soviet, reprinted in full by Sovietske gosudarstvo i pravo, Molotov claimed that the population of the conquered territories warmly greeted the Red Army and that it was ready to throw away “the yoke of the pans.”

On 19 September in Pravda, Em. Iaroslavskii denounced the Polish government as brutal and oppressive. On the same day Pravda also featured articles under the following titles: “Cele-


27. Recently, Russian nationalists in the Soviet Union and abroad have raised the issue of damages to Russian culture caused by the Soviets. Some of these complaints deserve attention, but all should be viewed within the context of events presented in this paper. For a classic example of such complaints, see Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Mortal Danger: How Misconceptions about Russia Imperil America (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) and Valentin Raspustin’s recent complaints about “Russophobia” in, for instance, an interview in Svět v Obrázce [Prague] 45, no. 32 (1989): 15. As the humiliated signatories of the 1920 Treaty of Riga, the Soviets had good reasons to change into eager partners of the Nazis in this fourth partition of Poland.

28. Compare the use of pan in Fedor Dostoevskii’s Brat’ia Karamazov; also see Michal Heller, “Polish pany,” Kultura, no. 421 (October 1982). In Revolution from Abroad Gross says that pan stands between master and mister (24).


brations in the villages of Western Belorussia,” “Our brothers will now live in one big family with us,” “Red Army is our truest defender” [referring to the “defense” of Belorussians and Ukrainians in Poland], “The Soviet people and their glorious Red Army fulfilled their sacred duty.” On 25 September 1939 Pravda said that Ukrainians, Belorussians, and even Poles in the United States had rejoiced when they were told about the Red Army’s successes in eastern Poland. The source of this information, said Pravda, was the Daily Worker. On 26 September Literaturnaiia gazeta spoke of a “holy hatred” of Poles and on 15 October in Pravda, in “Agriculture in Western Ukraine,” A. Kozlov claimed that “the arrival of the Red Army brought an end to nationalistic oppression and police violence; it offered the beginning of a new life in which there will be land, freedom, material welfare and the flowering of culture.” On 26 September, Boris Ponomarev spoke in Pravda of “the bloody terror practiced by the Polish gentry.” On 10 October in the same paper Captain A. Rezyvkh described how he and his comrades shot down a Polish airplane and succeeded in defeating “the remnants of the Polish army.”

In September and October 1939, Pravda and other newspapers carried numerous reports about alleged worker rallies in the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics asking for “liberation of our brothers from the oppression of the Polish overlords” and declaring support for “the wise decision of the Soviet government” to invade Poland. “There is great rejoicing in the cities and villages of the liberated territories,” said Pravda on 18 September. On 30 September Finansovia gazeta reported that during such festivities in the city of Białystok, “a 20-year-old house painter Goldkor who had served time in the concentration camps of the Polish pans . . . proposed that a telegram with thanks be sent to Comrade Stalin.” On 20 September Pravda described “a meeting of the intelligentsia” in the town of Słoń in western Belorussia. In this town of under 20,000, 750 members of the local intelligentsia were said to have attended this meeting, among them “Drs. Weiss and Kowsarzki” who gave anti-Polish speeches. On 13 October in Pravda, G. Ryklin ridiculed Tomasz Kapitułko, former head of a labor union in Białystok, only because Kapitułko was Polish. On 20 October in Pravda A. Erlikh spoke of “western Belorussia that had been tortured by Poles.” On 29 September 1939 Pravda published a testimonial by a Mr. Prager about his stay in a “Polish concentration camp.” On 10 March 1940 Pravda published an article entitled “Letters from western parts of Ukraine and Belorussia,” which stated that an American Jewish daily published in New York in Yiddish had issued a special supplement containing letters from persons in Soviet-occupied Poland. An inhabitant of Grodno is said to have written the following to his brother in the United States: “Dear brother: Now we are free. We have jobs and try to forget the terrible life in Poland in the past.” Another man, who apparently had crossed over from Nazi-occupied Poland, said, “Dear Jenny: You cannot imagine the goodness of the Soviet people. We came in rags, hungry, tired, and unhappy. They fed us and gave us water. The Soviet Union is truly the homeland of all the oppressed.” The prominence given by Soviet papers to Jewish names in the descriptions of such meetings could hardly be accidental, and it could not have escaped the editors’ attention that, in due time and magnified by word-of-mouth inaccuracies, it would foster anti-Semitism among Poles.31

Nationalistic hatreds were also promoted by selective history. In October and November 1939, Soviet periodicals featured reviews of Minin i Pozharskii, a film dealing with the Polish occupation of Moscow in 1610. On 26 October 1939, Literaturnaiia gazeta reviewer Georgii Shtorm described the Polish expedition to Moscow: “The Poles take away cattle, they slaughter the peasants, burn villages and towns . . . bees live in human skulls.” On the same day and in the same paper, P. Pavlenko denounced “Polish censorship” in Lvov. On 18 December 1939 in Pravda A. Solodovnikov charged that minority artists were suppressed in gentlemen’s Poland. On 3 November a Belorussian deputy to the Supreme Soviet, A. C. Malevich, denounced Poles in Belorussia in words clearly calculated to stir up emotions: “Like black ravens, the Polish pans dug their sharp claws into our hearts.” On 13 November when eastern Poland was already in Soviet hands, Pravda still spoke of “the yoke of gentlemen’s Poland.”

31. For corroboration of this conclusion, see Gross, Revolution from Abroad, 29, 32–33.
Soviet periodicals of the time abound in descriptions of Polish pans as degenerate and immoral. Reports from the various “liberated” towns described the alleged luxury in which these pans lived and held that ordinary people had moved into the apartments of the pans. In October 1940 Pravda reported that in Lvov alone, more than two thousand poor families had been resettled into these luxurious apartments and houses. The fates of the former inhabitants of these houses can be gleaned from other sources.  

The anti-Polish campaign was accompanied by pro-Ukrainian and pro-Belorussian propaganda. The latter campaigns, however, were shorter than the first and seem to have been the means of advancing anti-Polish feelings in western Belorussia and western Ukraine, rather than to have resulted from a positive policy toward Ukrainians and Belorussians. The two campaigns began shortly after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed.

In late August 1939 Literaturnaia gazeta featured articles that promoted Ukrainian resentment against Poles and Ukrainian national pride. Some commemorated the Ukrainian Red Army commander, Nikolai A. Shchors, who had fought against Semen Petlura, an ally of Pilsudski and reported that a Shchors museum would open in Kiev and an opera about him was being composed. On 19 September Pravda reported that three hundred employees of the Kiev state theater had welcomed “the freeing of their brothers from the oppression of Polish gentlemen.” On 27 October Pravda featured an article about “the Ukrainian war of liberation against Poles in 1648–53.” On 15 January 1940 Literaturnaia gazeta devoted a special article to theatrical plays featuring Bohdan Khmel’nitsky, the leader of the Ukrainian rising. In September and October 1939 Pravda and other newspapers repeatedly published maps of partitioned Poland in which territories all the way to the Vistula River were labeled “western Ukraine” and “western Belorussia.”

Poems and stories in Ukrainian and Belorussian were featured in Pravda in September, October, and November 1939. These were the only exceptions I know of to the rule that all articles in Pravda must in Russian. An alliance between the east Slavic nations of Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia must have been eagerly sought. On 15 November in Literaturnaia gazeta a Belorussian poem by Piatrus Brovko spoke of “the pan’s whip” and “the pan’s yoke” that no longer threatened Belorussians. The author declared that his people wanted to join “Red Moscow.” “Let the Polish pan perish!” was the conclusion of the poem. “A Decade of Belorussian Art” opened in Moscow in September 1939. On 17 September 1940 Komsomol’skaia pravda published Iakov Khlemenskii’s poem, “V Sentiabre” about a Belorussian orphan who was able to study in a Belorussian school after the Soviet takeover. Pravda and other Soviet papers featured articles about the Ukrainian poet Kotsiubinsky, “a friend of Gor’kii,” and the Ukrainian novelists Stefanuk and Martovich.

Within days of the invasion, twenty-eight editorial boards were sent from the Soviet Union to western Belorussia to take over the offices of the local newspapers and journals. These teams of Russian-speaking individuals could translate Russian press propaganda into local languages. At the same time seven million new textbooks were printed for schools in western Ukraine. In Lvov alone 12,000 party activists were sent to the Russian-language schools. On 26 October Literaturnaia gazeta reported that Polish censorship in Lvov had made it impossible for honest

32. The Hoover Institution Archives contain depositions of about 30,000 Poles who lived to tell about these deportations. The deported, many of them children, describe their travel in cattle wagons, often without food or drink for days and then, at the centers of forced labor, starvation that killed a large number within months.

33. Pravda, 17 September and 4 October 1939.

34. Pravda, 2 October 1939. In western Belorussia and western Ukraine, Poles lived primarily in cities, whereas the Belorussian and Ukrainian majorities lived in the countryside. In Lvov, Tarnów, Białystok, Novgorod, and Vilnius provinces Poles were the majority and Ukrainians and Belorussians made up from 20 percent to 45 percent of the population. In Stanisław, Volhynia, and Polesie provinces, Poles were a minority, with Ukrainians and Belorussians making up to 55 percent to 65 percent of the population. Aleksander Gieysztor et al. History of Poland (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1968), 685, 714–716.

35. Pravda, 11 October and 4 December 1939.
social science textbooks to be sold in bookstores but the Soviets had eliminated this obstacle and now such books were generally available. The same article also reported that a Russian bookstore with books for children had opened in that city. On 8 August 1940 Pravda reported that when Białystok was under Polish administration, the public library had 22,000 Polish books. Now there were 60,000 books in “Russian, Polish, Belorussian, Jewish and other languages.”

On 6 February 1940 in Pravda, A. Avdeenko and S. Shukhmim wrote about some Polish workers who had been elected to a factory soviet in Belorussia, and then had refused to hire new workers because they did not want to hire Belorussians. The conclusion was that the Poles are nasty and nationalistic. On 19 February the same authors published an article denouncing “thousands of shopkeepers, the scum of old Lvov, who now became feverish black marketers . . . but not for long.” On 24 March Pravda announced that “the liberated Belorussian nation celebrates its victory.” On 27 March “the feast day of the liberated nations” was celebrated in Lvov.

“For 600 years,” said Pravda on 28 October 1939 “western Ukrainia was moaning under the yoke of Polish nobles . . . and executioners,” implying that the time had come to settle accounts and place the united Belorussia and Ukraine under Soviet leadership. Gross has demonstrated that encouraging violence was a vital part of Soviet policy in the occupied territories and helped the Soviets to consolidate power in the region.

The Soviet press capitalized on the small number of Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Belorussian government-sponsored schools in Poland. The Soviets opened such schools shortly after they moved in but, as the Ukrainian and Belorussian nationalists soon found out, the schools were not part of a genuine attempt at Ukrainization. As soon as Polish rule was definitely abolished and the Soviets began to feel secure, the emphasis changed to Russian nationalism. In September, October, and November 1939 the Soviet Russian-language press encouraged Ukrainian and Belorussian assertiveness but also reported an increase in the publication and distribution of books and textbooks in Russian. Since virtually no Russians lived in the area, these books were obviously meant to increase the use of Russian among the non-Russian population. Furthermore, the Soviet Russian press repeatedly confused Russian with Ukrainian and Belorussian and sometimes suggested that the latter were two dialects of Russian. In Pravda on 19 October 1939, P. Lidov complained that in gentlemen’s Poland,” the county of Bielsk Podlaski in the Białystok province (predominantly Polish both then and now and part of Poland before and after World War II) did not have a single Russian or Belorussian school. This complaint was legitimate regarding Belorussians, but hardly any Russians lived in the area. Pravda frequently mentioned a “blood brotherhood” between Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians but did not include the equally Slavic Poles. Both the tsarist government and gentlemen’s Poland were held to have tried to separate the Russians from the Belorussians. On 16 November Pravda called for the “elimination of nationalistic contradictions purposely created by the policy of Polish gentlemen.” In fact, both the tsarist and Polish governments had discouraged Ukrainian and Belorussian nationalism.

The 1939 propaganda promoting the Russification of western Ukraine and western Belorussia was still relatively mild, presumably because Ukrainian nationalism was not yet totally suppressed and the Polish minority in Ukraine and Belorussia was still relatively well established. (It was soon to be weakened by local persecution and the deportations of 1940–1941.) When V. Subbotin discussed the restructuring of the judiciary in western Ukraine and western Belorussia, he admitted that, while the court proceedings were conducted in Belorussian or Rus-

36. Under the second Polish republic, the Białystok province was inhabited by 1,004,370 Polish gentiles, 162,912 Polish Jews, and 119,392 Belorussians. The city of Białystok was inhabited by 39,602 Jews, 35,832 Polish gentiles, and 1,358 people of other backgrounds. See Teresa Toranska, Them: Stalin’s Polish Puppets (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 209.


sian, in the cities Polish translators had to be found. On 26 October in Literaturnaia gazeta P. Pavlenko announced that a Russian bookstore, particularly well supplied with children’s books, was opening in Lvov. On 8 August 1940 in Pravda S. Tregub spoke of the “imperialistic Polish boot treading down Belorussians, Jews, and Russians” and in the 16 April issue of Pravda P. Lidov spoke of “the Polish occupation of Grodno” while on 17 September 1940 (the anniversary of the Soviet invasion) he called Grodno “an ancient Russian city”—another deliberate confusion of Belorussian with Russian. L. Tolkunov expressed similar opinions in his article on the liberation of Grodno, published in Pravda on 17 July 1944. On 28 November 1940, Mikhail Tardov published a Pravda article about the Russian Dramatic Theater in Kiev.

Articles cautioning against Ukrainian and Belorussian cultural separateness began to appear in late 1939. On 1 December 1939 Stepan Tudor denounced Ukrainian independence in Pravda. He said that Ukrainians used “physical and moral terrorism,” including assassination, job chicanery, and social boycott, to advance their goals. They had collaborated with Polish police and persecuted the children of leftist leaders and removed books of proletarian writers from schools and libraries. The center of these nationalistic activities was said to have been the publication Vestnik (note the Russian spelling), its young reader supplement Nakamune, its Warsaw organ My, and its Catholic branch Zvony. A number of Ukrainian authors were said to have displayed nationalistic tendencies: Evgen Molaniuk, O. Olzich, B. Kravstov, Iu. Lipov, Ju. Klen, L. Mosendz, B. Gomzin, I. Samchuk, Iu. Kosach, and P. Kedro.

Soviet newspapers gave a clear signal to the local Russian-speaking authorities to condone or encourage violence against Poles. This official sanctioning of violence, combined with the grievances of Ukrainians and Belorussians against the Polish republic, made Poles into scapegoats. Recent research on Russian attitudes toward Poles shows that such articles and statements helped to gain considerable Russian support for the Soviet invasion and occupation of Poland.

Another propaganda campaign was conducted against the Finns before, during, and after the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939–1940. Even before World War II, the Soviets might have considered a war against Finland as a policy option. In that regard Molotov’s remark that no government but the Soviet Union would tolerate an independent Finland so near to Leningrad is revealing. The popular press, however, was silent on the Finnish issue until hostilities broke out. Then a campaign of vilification was unleashed.

On 28 November 1939, two days after the Soviets accused the Finnish government of shell-

39. Sovetskiaia istoriia 7 (1940), 23. Subbotin assumed that Russian and Belorussian were interchangeable.

40. Gross refers to hundreds of testimonials about violence against Poles. In the Hoover Institution Archives, I have seen several hundred documents and testimonials of survivors indicating that the press propaganda against Poles had the desired effect. A few of the documents from the Władysław Anders Collection and Poland Ambasada (USSR) Collection appeared in English translation in the Sarmatian Review 9, no. 1. One letter from a seventeen-year-old boy, Marian Kundricz, who had been deported to the Udmurt Autonomos Republic and forced to work at a job destructive to health, said “some of the Russian boys were assigned to work as locksmiths and lathe operators, but they did not want to take me because I am a Pole. I work twelve hours a day in the water.” Another document published in that issue is a collective testimonial that says “the Soviet authorities . . . considered everything Polish as hostile.”


ing across the border, Pravda featured a cartoon showing a Finnish dog barking at the Soviet Union with the Polish president Ignacy Mościcki and foreign minister Józef Beck, observing the scene from the nether world. The caption read “the war was started by the warmongering rulers of Finland who lost their heads. Let them remember that their fate will be as bitter as the fate of the miserable rulers of Poland [from the comments made at the Moscow workers’ rallies].” Elsewhere in that issue, Pravda threatened that “the Finnish adventure-seekers . . . will be destroyed and squashed like so many insects.” Pravda also reported that “anger and hatred for the vile warmongers” filled the hearts of chocolate factory workers in Lvov and the Kirov meat factory workers in Leningrad demanded that “the Finnish brawlers be wiped off the surface of the earth.” On 28 November Leningradskaya pravda featured twenty anti-Finnish articles. The titles of the articles illustrate the emotional tone of the campaign: “The Criminal Plotters,” “There Will Be No Mercy,” “We Shall Answer with a Crushing Blow,” “The Warmongers Will Pay,” “Restrain the Provocateurs,” “We Shall Destroy the Enemy If He Does Not Come to His Senses,” and “Those Who Sow Wind Will Gather Storm.”

On 30 November Finansovaisya gazeta reported that two days earlier the Soviets had protested to the Finns the alleged designs against Leningrad and demanded that they withdraw their army 20 to 25 kilometers from the border. When the Finns refused, they were attacked by the press. On 1 December Pravda accused them of planning to attack Leningrad. Among the epithets used to describe the Finns in Literaturnaya gazeta alone were reptiles, bandits, and warmongers. “The fate of the Polish gentlemen should have taught them a lesson,” said Literaturnaya gazeta on 1 December 1939. “The Finnish pigs will not dare to stick their snouts into the Soviet garden,” declared Pravda on 30 November 1939. On 3 December, however, the paper announced “an inviolable friendship between the Soviet and Finnish nations” when Molotov and the Finnish Communist Otto Kuusinen agreed to form a Finnish People’s Republic. This agreement did not last and White Finland was again vilified. On 26 December 1939 Finansovaisya gazeta spoke of the “barbarism of the Mannerheim gang” who forced farmers to relocate and acted as “an executioner of the working people.” (Mannerheim was a Finnish general and commander-in-chief.) On 30 January 1940 Izvestiya reported that in Finland “mass arrests and executions of peaceful citizens” were taking place. “Thousands of workers have been arrested, and hundreds were shot . . . Mannerheim’s bandits burn homes, kill workers and terrorize the population in an incredible way,” claimed Izvestiya. On 23 February Pravda said that “ordinary Finns surely remember the Finnish jails filled to capacity, the terror and the ferocious prison sentences under which all of Finland was moaning.”

In the anti-Finnish campaign, name-calling was remarkably vigorous and might have been caused by the fact that the Soviets could find no transgressions to pin on the Finns. The allegations that the Finns were preparing to attack Leningrad had little credibility.

As had happened in the anti-Polish campaign, the Soviet press went far beyond Marxist terminology to promote resentment against the Finns. Finns were not called landowners and capitalists but warmongers, pigs, bandits, and criminals. They were presented as chauvinists and haters of everything Russian.43

After hostilities ceased, the Russian-language press again crafted a perception that the Soviet cause was just. The November 1940 Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo presented the alleged legal causes for the war: The Finns had attacked the Soviets in November 1939 but, after finding nothing but grief in their militaristic venture, they signed a peace treaty on 12 March 1940 and ceded to the Soviet Union parts of Finland adjacent to the Murmansk railway and to the outskirts of Leningrad.44 On 21 May 1940 Komsomol’skaia pravda praised Toivo Antikainen, a candidate for the Supreme Soviet, who had participated in the “defeat of the White Finnish bandits in 1920.” Having served time in the “torture chambers” of “bourgeois Finland,” Antikainen was now ready “to tell his electorate about the [Finnish] world of shortages and want.” On 22 May

43. Pravda, 16 June 1940; Izvestia, 2 July 1940.
44. Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, November 1940, 59ff.; Hjalmar J. Procope, Finland Reveals.
1940 Komsomol'skiaia pravda described a Valentin Purgin, a Hero of the Soviet Union, who fought against the Finns in 1939–1940. Purgin and his two companions had faced nine Finns, one of whom threw a grenade at them, killing six Finns and two Russians. Purgin survived and shared his food and vodka with the wounded Finns. He tore clothes off the dead Finns to cover the wounds of the living, but he was afraid to fall asleep amidst the Finns who were, after all, common bandits. Finally, he made a fire using vodka as a starter and was spotted by a Soviet airplane that picked him up and also took care of the two wounded Finns.

On 3 June 1940, Izvestiiia denounced Finnish statistics concerning war losses. The Finns claimed they had lost 19,576 men; in fact, according to Izvestiiia, they lost 70,000, and 15,000 had died from wounds; nearly half the Finnish army, 250,000, had been wounded, the paper claimed. The Finnish government was manufacturing “laughable lies.” The Izvestiiia figures differ from those given by Molotov, who said that 60,000 Finns had been killed. On 16 June Pravda said that Finnish culture did not exist before the nineteenth century and blamed the Finnish bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia for cultivating Finnish chauvinism and aversion to things Russian. This chauvinism encouraged the Finns to wage a war they lost. As late as 18 September 1941, an Izvestiiia author disputed an émigré Finnish author who had said that the Soviets bombed Finland gratuitously twenty-four hours after the German attack on the USSR. G. Kupriianov, in Partiinoe stroitel'stvo, tried to divide the Finnish nation in Finland from the inhabitants of the Finnish territories annexed by the Soviet Union. He spoke of the “Karelo-Finnish nation” as opposed to the “White Finns” who inhabited Finland and he recommended that both Finnish and Russian be taught in the Karelo-Finnish schools.

In annexed parts of Finland a Russian-Finnish alliance at the expense of the economically weaker inhabitants of Karelia was attempted. Partiinoe stroitel'stvo first enjoined its readers to introduce Finnish and Russian into the schools and forget about the Karelians but then a Karelo-Finnish republic was created, to be absorbed by the Russian republic in less than two decades. These divide and conquer policies were similar to those initiated in western Ukraine and western Belorus sia in 1939.

The three remaining Baltic states were incorporated into the Soviet Union. Before the parliaments of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia had expressed their desire to join the Soviet Union, a familiar spate of articles invoking ties with Russia appeared in the Soviet press. In his 2 October 1940 speech, “On Communist Education,” Mikhail I. Kalinin, head of the Supreme Soviet, claimed that the nations of tsarist Russia had been attracted to the Russians and had formed “organic ties” with them. Such claims continued to be made after World War II. The Baltic nations were not subjected to the same kind of press propaganda as were the Slavic nations. Instead, significant percentages of indigenous populations of these states were deported and Russians moved in. The Soviets made sure, however, that when the Germans retreated, perceptions of the permanence of the Baltic annexations were reinforced in the press. In July 1944 articles stressed that the Red Army was about to liberate Soviet Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

When Bessarabia and northern Bukovina were annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940, Romanians were denounced in the Soviet press as suppressors of Ukrainians and Moldavians, and hostilities between the three groups were encouraged. Russians were said to have been an op-

45. Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, no. 3 (1940), 11.
47. Pravda, 14 January 1940; Izvestiiia, 2 July 1940.
pressed minority in Bessarabia. The expression *Romanian boyars* became a pejorative term like *Polish gentlemen.* The Moldavians, however, presented a more difficult task because they did not aspire to independence as did the Ukrainians in Poland.

On 1 July 1940 a *Pravda* article said that the populations of Bessarabia and Bukovina spoke Russian and Ukrainian and hated Romanians. On 4 July 1940 *Pravda* published the testimonial of a soldier who met a Russian inhabitant of Bukovina. The peasant said that the landowner had fled to Romania, leaving people such as himself behind. The article thus suggested that the population of Bukovina was largely Russian or Ukrainian and that Romanian boyars were alien to the region. On 29 June *Izvestiia* published an article saying that Bessarabia is “an indigenous province of Russia, an old Russian guberniia” that had fallen under Romanian occupation.

On 29 June 1940, Soviet papers reported that, following a Soviet demand to which the Romanian government had consented, the Red Army had entered Kishinev, Chernovtsy, and Akkerman. The Romanian army fled and the Romanian boyars and capitalists with it. In the weeks ahead reports from the “liberated” cities followed. The newspapers said that Ukrainians and Moldavians rejoiced over the arrival of the Red Army while Romanians ran away. Articles described the cruelties and brutalities of the Romanian boyars. An 11 July *Izvestiia* editorial described the Moldavian nation as suffering under the boot of “Romanian boyars and zhandarmes” who viewed the Moldavian population as “despised slaves.” On the same day, *Pravda* bemoaned “the barbarous governing methods of the Romanian occupiers.” Romanians were also subjected to invective and verbal abuse. *Izvestiia* ridiculed the fact that at the University of Kishinev the departments of theology and agronomy were located in the same building, both of them had chapels, and the department of theology was bigger than the department of agronomy. On 13 August *Pravda* discussed Romania’s obligation to “return” southern Dobrudza to Bulgaria. Six days later the paper informed its readers that a trade commissar had been sent to Bessarabia from Moscow, a sign that economic integration was about to begin.

The anti-Romanian campaign tapered off at the end of July 1940. Afterwards, every few weeks or so an article would appear denouncing Romanian boyars and their exploitation of Moldavian peasants. When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, attempts were made to separate the leaders from the people: “A thieving gang of Romanian niggers gave the country away to Hitler,” said *Izvestiia* on 15 August 1941.

The hour of Moldavian nationalism was as remarkably short as the Ukrainian and Belorussian had been, and was replaced by Russification. Even while the existence of the Moldavian nation was being proclaimed, the newspapers carried stories alleging that many Russians lived in Bessarabia. An *Izvestiia* article on 29 June 1940, said that “Bessarabia is an age-old Russian territory under Romanian occupation . . . . It used to be a province of tsarist Russia. . . . It was tied economically to the rest of Russia.” The article claimed that the 1897 census showed 76 percent of the region’s population to be Ukrainian, Moldavian, or Russian. The exclusion of Romanians seems to have been the goal of these confused statistics. Another article said that the population spoke Russian or could easily communicate in Russian. On 6 July *Izvestiia* announced that the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had organized a series of lectures about the history of the annexed region, another suggestion that east Slavs rather than Romanians should claim the region. In a 1941 *Sovetskoie gosudarstvo i pravo*, P. Tolstoi alleged that the Romanian boyars had attempted a “Romanization” of Bessarabian peasants in much the same fashion Polish gentlemen had attempted to Polonize Belorussian and Ukrainian peasants. Tolstoi angrily used three words: *romanizirovat’, polonizirovat’,* and *opoliachit’.* Apparently, in his view, neither Romanians nor Poles were entitled to disseminate views advantageous to their national interests.

50. *Izvestiia*, 29 June 1940; *Pravda*, 1 September 1940.
51. The point of view in these articles is strikingly similar to that voiced in Riasanovsky’s book in regard to Soviet acquisitions of Romanian territory. See fn. 25.
52. *Izvestiia*, 25 July 1940.
The anti-Romanian campaign ceased entirely before the war was over. On 14 September 1944 Pravda announced that two days earlier the Soviet Union, United States, and Romania had signed a truce and Romania had agreed to pay war reparations of $300,000 to the Soviet Union. This “bitter lesson” should help the Romanians draw the appropriate conclusions about fighting against the Soviet Union, the paper said. Shortly afterwards, the Romanians changed sides in the war and Romanian boyars were no longer mentioned. In fact, the redrawing of borders after World War II favored the Romanians against the Hungarians in Transylvania. Bessarabia remained with the Soviets.

This survey shows that from 1939 to 1941 press propaganda about various nationalities played a large role in Soviet policy. Soviet policy makers appealed to, and thus perpetuated, centuries-old nationalistic hatreds. The propaganda clearly favored Russians at the expense of non-Russians and tried to sow nationalistic discord in the societies under Soviet control. Virtually every non-Russian national group within the post-World War II Soviet sphere of influence was denigrated by press propaganda at some point. Russian nationalism appears to have played a considerable role in legitimizing Soviet conquests and creating a perception of unity in the societies that came under Soviet control during the years of the pact. Despite the vision of the Soviet Communist monolith, at least some party leaders were conscious of a strong undercurrent of nationalistic awareness that could be brought to bear during the integration of the new territorial acquisitions.