

# “Every Family Has Its Freak”: Perceptions of Collaboration in Occupied Soviet Russia, 1943–1948

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“Every family,” in the words of a Russian proverb, “has its freak.” During and after World War II the proverb used to refer to Soviet citizens who sided with or assisted Nazi occupying forces. German rule varied greatly from country to country in Europe—even from region to region within the same country—as did local reaction to it; but throughout the occupied areas, Nazi administration depended on local officials, police, and security units recruited from the native population to maintain order and quell resistance.<sup>1</sup> Thus, after liberation every formerly occupied country had to come to terms with acts of treason and collaboration among its populace. The ways in which societies dealt with this issue have been well studied for western Europe (especially Vichy France), and increasingly so for eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Historians of the Soviet Union, now with access to a broad range of sources, are also beginning to examine the issue of collaboration. Based on archival and other materials from Rostov-on-Don, a major industrial center in southern Russia, this article looks at the “freaks” in the Soviet “family,” highlighting subtle differences in the perception of “collaboration” in Soviet society through an analysis of the language in a variety of sources.

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1. For a discussion of Nazi occupation of the Soviet Union, see John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (New York, 1991), 113–16.

2. See, for example, Christopher Lloyd, *Collaboration and Resistance in Occupied France: Representing Treason and Sacrifice* (New York, 2003); István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, 2000), including the essay by Deák, “A Fatal Compromise? The Debate over Collaboration and Resistance in Hungary”; Rab Bennett, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: The Moral Dilemmas of Resistance and Collaboration in Hitler’s Europe* (New York, 1999); Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider and Winfried R. Garscha, eds., *Keine “Abrechnung”: NS-Verbrechen, Justiz und Gesellschaft in Europa nach 1945* (Leipzig-Vienna, 1998); Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945–50* (Ithaca, 1997); Gill Bennett, ed., *The End of the War in Europe, 1945* (London, 1996); Martin Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium: Leon Degrelle and the Rexist Movement, 1940–1944* (New Haven, 1993); Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh, eds., *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940–1944* (Oxford, 1989); Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation, 1940–45*, trans. Louise Willmot (Oxford, 1988); Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: Generalgouvernement, 1939–44* (Princeton, 1979); Peter Novick, *The Resistance versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France* (New York, 1968).

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It is impossible to determine how many Rostovians helped the Germans during occupation, held pro-Nazi views, or actively betrayed the USSR. It is also impossible to establish the extent to which those who did were punished after Soviet control was reestablished, or the degree to which people were wrongfully accused. My point is not to argue the “truth” of specific cases revealed in the archives but to focus on the attitudes expressed on collaboration by those in power as well as by the population at large. I divide my essay according to the type of source material at hand, utilizing four distinct source bases that overlap to a significant degree but deal with the complex issue of collaboration in nuanced ways, stressing different themes and asking different kinds of questions.<sup>3</sup> I begin by analyzing the party’s record of discussions behind closed doors, obtainable through city party organization reports and the minutes of meetings. This material provides invaluable insight into how local party leaders saw collaboration and gives specific examples of individual cases. Second, I examine the local organ of the Communist Party press, *Molot* (Hammer)—which reflects a conscious, constructed attempt to influence or shape popular opinion. Third, to examine popular views I draw on lists of questions and comments made by workers and others at meetings with party agitators. I also utilize interviews and memoir accounts to give a multifaceted reading of the varied representations of collaboration—official views and popular reactions to them.

Recent scholarship on occupied Europe emphasizes the ambiguity between the two extremes of ardent resistance and enthusiastic collaboration. Focusing on northern France, Lynne Taylor shows that many people under Nazi rule were apolitical and that their decisions concerning how to cope with the Germans were driven mainly by a desire to continue living.<sup>4</sup> Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida lament that a limited “binary vision”—resister/collaborator, good/bad—dominates traditional scholarship of Vichy France when the reality is far more nuanced and complex.<sup>5</sup> Comparing Vichy France with Europe at large, Yves Durand distinguishes between “collaboration”—working with or assisting the occupying power out of necessity and/or a will to survive—and “collaborationism”—enthusiastically aiding the Nazis due to an ideological affinity with their views.<sup>6</sup> Also looking at Europe as a whole, Rab Bennett calls the vast range of options between the extremes of resistance and

3. For an example of this approach, see Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917–1922* (Princeton, 2002).

4. Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940–1945* (New York, 2000).

5. Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida, eds., *Le régime de Vichy et les Français* (Paris, 1992), 67 (cited in Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, 2). See also Sarah Fishman, Laura Downs, Ioannis Sinanoglou, Leonard Smith, and Robert Zaretsky, eds., *France at War: Vichy and the Historians* (New York, 2000); and Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939–1948: Choices and Constraints* (New York, 1999).

6. Yves Durand, “Collaboration French-style: A European Perspective,” in Fishman, *France at War*, 61–76. See also Stanley Hoffmann, “Collaborationism in France during World War II,” *Journal of Modern History* 40, no. 3 (September 1968): 375–95.

collaboration a “moral gray zone,” with people forced to make difficult choices for the sake of survival.<sup>7</sup>

Among historians of the Soviet Union, Amir Weiner’s groundbreaking study of Ukraine and Hiroaki Kuromiya’s exhaustive study of the Donbas region examine collaboration during and after the war.<sup>8</sup> Both show that in the postwar years the line between heroes and villains in the Soviet Union remained unclear, with some unjustly repressed and several decorated heroes later revealed as betrayers of the Soviet cause. My case study adds to our knowledge of this issue by examining the different representations of “collaboration” apparent in Soviet society during and after the war. I analyze several different levels of discourse: inner-party deliberations and reports on the subject; depictions of collaborators and their actions in the local party press; questions and comments of workers and others at public meetings as recorded by party officials; and Cold War and post-Cold War era memoir accounts and interviews. These are very different kinds of sources, all of them *authentic* voices in their own way—representations and reflections of reality, but not reality itself. There are a lot of similarities in the views expressed in these sources, but I contend that they constitute qualitatively different “bodies of opinion” that should be dealt with separately.

The “Gateway to the Caucasus,” Rostov is located in formerly autonomous cossack territory, an area of support for the anti-Bolshevik White forces during the civil war.<sup>9</sup> In November 1941, the city fell to Nazi forces for ten days, and then again for about six-and-one-half months beginning 28 July 1942.<sup>10</sup> After the tide of the war turned with the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in early 1943, the front began moving west and the Red Army retook Rostov on 14 February. As of this date, which marks the beginning of my study, there were roughly 150,000 people in Rostov, down from around 550,000 on the eve of war.<sup>11</sup> Thousands of demobilized soldiers,

7. Bennett, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika*, chapter 3.

8. Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, 2001); and Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (New York, 1998). See also Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44* (New York, 2000); and Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945-1953* (Montreal, 1999).

9. See Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 114.

10. Nina Tumarkin points out that the second fall of Rostov marked the end of a year of spontaneous de-Stalinization, as the regime blamed Red Army troops and officers alike for fleeing in panic before the German onslaught. Iosif Stalin responded by reasserting a degree of terror and control, issuing the “not one step back” order (Order 227), which called for military police to shoot Soviet troops retreating without orders. Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York, 1994), 71. See also Elena Kozhina, *Through the Burning Steppe: A Memoir of Wartime Russia, 1942-1943* (New York, 2000), 39.

11. For the population figures see Tsentr Dokumentatsii Noveishei Istorii (TsDNI), f. 13, op. 4 (Rostov City Committee), d. 29 (City party conference, February 1943), l. 12.

evacuees, and others returned to or settled in the city after its liberation;<sup>12</sup> “reconstruction” officially ended in Rostov in 1948, the end point of my study, by which time the population climbed to about 450,000.<sup>13</sup> Obviously the end of the war in Europe in May 1945 is a crucial juncture in this five-year period. But I agree with Tony Judt, Jan Gross, and others that the end of the war is not the natural breaking point historians often make it out to be, because many of the issues dealt with in the postwar period (including collaboration) are rooted in the war years.<sup>14</sup> In the Soviet field a number of scholars see 1948 as a turning point.<sup>15</sup>

The Stalinist regime’s focus on the internal threat posed by collaborators dashed the population’s hopes for a postwar political liberalization.<sup>16</sup> Those in power saw the war as a test of one’s true feelings toward the Soviet regime and perceived collaboration as a significant problem, labeling the worst offenders “betrayers of the motherland” (*izmenniki rodiny*), the Russian equivalent of the “collaborationists.”<sup>17</sup> In addition, prisoners of

12. At war’s end an estimated five million Soviet citizens were outside the country’s borders, three million POWs, forced laborers, and defectors in the west (mostly Germany), and two million in the Soviet-occupied regions of eastern Europe. As of January 1946, 2,704 demobilized troops were in Rostov, and that number would increase steadily in subsequent months. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 17 (Central Committee), op. 122 (Orgburo), d. 146 (Demobilization in Rostov oblast), l. 27.

13. By the middle of 1947 there were an estimated 406,700 people in Rostov, and from that point the city’s population grew gradually but steadily, reaching 552,000 in 1956. See V. K. Morkovin, “Rabochie Dona v poslevoennyi period (1946–1950)” (kandidat diss., Rostov State University, 1972), 50. See also Statisticheskoe upravlenie Rostovskoi oblasti, *Rostovskaya oblast’ za 50 let: statisticheskii sbornik* (Rostov-on-Don, 1967), 21.

14. Tony Judt, “Preface,” and Jan T. Gross, “Themes for a Social History of War Experience and Collaboration,” in Deák, Gross, and Judt, eds., *Politics of Retribution in Europe*, vii–xii and 15–35. Hanna Diamond’s study of women in Vichy France likewise emphasizes strong currents of continuity to 1948, the first year after the war with marked improvements in living standards. Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France*.

15. See, for example, Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953* (Princeton, 2004); Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge, Eng., 2002); William O. McCagg, Jr., *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit, 1978); and Karl Qualls, “Localism during National Reconstruction: A Case Study of Post-War Sevastopol, 1944–1953” (paper, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, St. Louis, Missouri, November 1999).

16. On the population’s hopes for a postwar liberalization see Elena Zubkova, *Obshchestvo i reformy, 1945–1964* (Moscow, 1993); or, in English, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945–1957*, trans. Hugh Ragsdale (New York, 1998); Vera Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham, 1990); Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Postwar Soviet Society: The ‘Return to Normalcy,’ 1945–1953,” in Susan J. Linz, ed., *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union* (Totowa, N.J., 1985); and K. S. Karol, *Solih: Life in the Soviet Union, 1939–1946* (London, 1986).

17. Another term encountered more often is *predatel’*, the literal translation of which is “traitor,” but in a very broad sense. It included those who worked for, assisted, and/or gave information to the Germans, its meaning falling somewhere between “traitor” and “collaborator.” On the war as a litmus test for the loyalty of Soviet citizens see Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, chapter 2. Numerous historians note the prevalence of collaboration and the strong anti-Soviet sentiments that rose to the fore during Nazi occupation. Kuromiya, for example, maintains that there were widespread anti-Soviet sentiments among the cosack population of Ukraine and the lower Don region, and that many of them served as

war were considered disloyal based on Military Order No. 270, which equated being taken prisoner with treason, stipulating that the families of prisoners would suffer dire consequences. Repatriated Soviet citizens—mostly youth—returning from work in Germany also fell under suspicion.<sup>18</sup> In the eyes of the regime, exposure to German propaganda and life abroad cast doubt on their faithfulness to Soviet power, even though a majority was forcibly conscripted and wanted to return home.<sup>19</sup> The loyalties of anyone who “stayed in occupied territory” were suspect because of contact with the Germans and exposure to enemy propaganda.<sup>20</sup> Some worked during occupation, housed German troops, or otherwise “assisted” them, although not necessarily voluntarily.<sup>21</sup> Some fought against

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policemen for the Germans. Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 283. Martin Dean likewise shows that there were plenty of volunteers for the German occupying police force in western Belarus and Ukraine. Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust*, 27. Kees Boterbloem points out that “collaboration with the Nazis was common in many parts of Eastern Europe, including Russia,” and also notes an “anti-Soviet mood” in Kalinin oblast. Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin*, 48, 58. Vera Tolz argues that so many Ukrainians and Russians collaborated with the Germans it was impossible to deport large numbers of them due to what the regime called “technical difficulties.” Vera Tolz, “New Information about the Deportation of Ethnic Groups in the USSR during World War 2,” in John Garrard and Carol Garrard, eds., *World War 2 and the Soviet People: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, 1990* (London, 1993), 164. See also Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941–1945* (New York, 1957), and Barber and Harrison, *Soviet Home Front*.

18. One source cites 3,738 in the city by September 1945. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 148 (Repatriation), l. 161. Another source, however, cites a total of 3,086 repatriated citizens in Rostov-on-Don as of the same date. This source added that for Rostov oblast as a whole, 37,185 people were forcibly taken to Germany, 6,680 of whom had returned as of the end of July 1945, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rostovskoi oblasti (GARO), f. 3737, op. 6 (Rostov City Soviet), d. 40 (Repatriation of Soviet citizens forcibly taken to Germany), ll. 3, 4. Those with relatives living outside the country were also suspect.

19. Both Kuromiya and Brown show that the Germans portrayed their campaign to raise workers for Germany as a great opportunity, and consequently the first wave of young Russians who went to work there often did so voluntarily. But word quickly spread that working and living conditions for the conscripts in Germany were horrible, and thereafter the Germans forcibly conscripted young people. See Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 272–73 and 299–300; and Brown, *Biography of No Place*, 217.

20. The Soviet regime confiscated personally owned radios because it did not want people listening to German propaganda. See K. S. Karol, *Solik*, 75. Also, as Boterbloem notes regarding Kalinin oblast, “It is impossible to establish how many people deliberately stayed behind to welcome the Germans instead of attempting to flee.” Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin*, 55. Many communists were caught behind the lines because of the poor organization of evacuation or were left behind by the NKVD to organize partisan activity. Mariia Zhak, who was born in 1901 and lived in Rostov most of her life, remembered in an interview that after the return of Soviet power “people blamed [First Obkom Secretary Boris Dvinskii] for the poor organization of evacuation.” She said he told party members not to panic, assuring them that the Germans would not take Rostov, and as a result many wound up in occupied territory while many others were caught trying to escape at the last minute. Meanwhile, she noted with a sense of irony, Dvinskii himself had no trouble getting away. Mariia S. Zhak, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 3 June 1995. On the NKVD keeping party members in occupied territory to organize partisan activities, see Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 52 and Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin*, 47.

21. As Kuromiya notes, occupation policies obliged residents to turn in Jews, partisans, and communists or risk death themselves, but by no means did everyone who stayed

the Germans but, as Weiner points out, even they had to account for their actions after the return of Soviet power.<sup>22</sup> This article shows the differences in perception on collaboration that pervade a variety of sources.

### Behind Closed Doors

As throughout the Soviet Union, the party dominated Rostov's local power structure. An exclusive club, it never represented more than a small percentage of the population.<sup>23</sup> Party leaders worried about assuring the "purity" of members—the sincerity and strength of their "call" to the communist cause.<sup>24</sup> Obviously, what leaders in Rostov's local power structure said to each other about collaboration differed from what they said publicly to those outside the exclusive group.<sup>25</sup> The party had ordered all members to evacuate, so those who left accused those who stayed behind of disobeying orders. Complicating matters further, many members in occupied territory burned their party cards because the Nazis reportedly executed communists.<sup>26</sup> Others showed up to "register" with the Germans and/or turned over their party cards to the Gestapo, which cast even more doubt on their faithfulness to the Soviet cause. After the return of Soviet power in February 1943, the city's party organization began the daunting task of sorting the loyal from the disloyal in its ranks. Party leaders at the *raikom* level representing urban and rural districts were required to reconfirm members of the *nomenklatura* for their positions,<sup>27</sup> and all members who stayed had to reregister and explain why to their district branch, which heard each case and decided the person's fate. The file was then passed to the city party committee (*gorkom*), which upheld or overturned the decision, and then to the oblast party committee (*obkom*) for a final decision.<sup>28</sup>

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in occupied territory assist or work for the Germans. Also, he points out that many Soviet citizens in occupied territory worked out of necessity in order to survive, not out of any particular affinity for the occupying power. Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 263 and 275. See also Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 7–8; and, with regard to being forced to work to survive in Vichy France, see Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*.

22. Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 90. Weiner also notes that applications for jobs, universities, party membership, and so on included questions about the whereabouts and actions of one and one's family during the war.

23. See T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the U.S.S.R., 1917–1967* (Princeton, 1968).

24. See Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, chapter 2.

25. Of course, the discussions of local party leaders behind closed doors were shaped by a number of factors, including who was talking to whom within a strictly hierarchical structure, as well as the prevailing political winds nationally and the omnipresent local political cliques and conflicts.

26. On members burning their cards see Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 265.

27. The city party's *nomenklatura* consisted of all district (*raikom*) secretaries, heads of raikom departments such as *agitprop* (agitation and propaganda) departments, Komso-mol (Communist Youth Organization) secretaries, newspaper editors and prosecutors. All members who stayed had to prove they had a good reason, and the poor organization of evacuation was *not* a suitable excuse for winding up in occupied territory.

28. Weiner shows how existing networks of political alliances or cliques skewed this process from the outset—there was no such thing as an "objective" review procedure. Weiner, *Making Sense of War*.

Rostov's local party leaders talked tough about collaborators, including those within the party. As we will see, however, for various reasons the party did not always live up to the harsh image that it projected. In local leaders' representation of this issue, there was no "moral gray zone" between the two extremes of collaboration and resistance—either one defended the motherland, ready to die doing so if necessary, or one collaborated with the enemy, even if just by staying in occupied territory, which automatically cast doubt on one's loyalty. A speaker at a meeting in 1944 recommended firing former prisoners of war from positions of authority or leadership because "during the struggle for the fate of our motherland they wound up on the wrong side of the lines."<sup>29</sup> A 1945 report cited M. A. Zakharov, who retained his post as director of the cigarette factory during occupation, as an example of a highly placed collaborator. The factory was destroyed during the battle for Rostov in 1942, so the Nazis set up production elsewhere with the help of Zakharov and other plant leaders.<sup>30</sup> In countless reports and meetings, local leaders demonized collaborators like Zakharov by contrasting them with "patriotic," "loyal" Soviet citizens. One report suggested replacing those who worked for the Germans with those who "exhibited loyalty to the motherland during the war."<sup>31</sup>

At a conference two weeks after liberation, Comrade Pastushenko, second-in-command of the obkom, urged delegates to be vigilant in the investigation of party members who stayed behind. "Of course," he warned, "many will not admit that they showed up to register [with the Germans]."<sup>32</sup> Initial concerns in Rostov focused on those in control of the city's housing, many of whom had assisted Nazi forces, including informing them where Jews and communists resided.<sup>33</sup> A representative at the conference described how, at a meeting after liberation, housing administrators "sat there like wet chickens, feeling very bad because they handed over [to the Nazis] lists of communists and Jews." He noted that they "removed" (*ubrali*) ten staffers but that at least twenty more housing administrators had worked for the Germans.<sup>34</sup> Several reports point to alleged collaboration in housing organs. One from April 1943 states that when they controlled the city, the Germans gave out the best apartments to people who assisted them, and thus district party secretaries needed to check internal passports to confirm the lawful residency of all citizens.<sup>35</sup> A

29. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 214 (Minutes of raikom meeting), ll. 24–25.

30. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 56 (Report on collaborators in positions of responsibility), ll. 10–11. See also TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 47 (Report on collaborators in positions of responsibility), l. 3. Another highly placed collaborator, the former director of the zoo, was accused of trying "to protect his circle of friends who actively worked for the Germans." In late 1944 his replacement purged the staff of those "who do not inspire political trust." TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 102 (Report on collaborators in positions of responsibility), l. 91.

31. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 102, l. 90.

32. *Ibid.*, d. 29, ll. 22–23.

33. This was a common form of collaboration in Belarus and Ukraine also. See Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust*.

34. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 29, l. 12. There is no indication as to the fate of the ten who were "removed."

35. GARO, f. 3737, op. 8, d. 34<sup>a</sup> (City housing administration), l. 29.

follow-up investigation in September claimed that 2,954 people still inhabited apartments with orders issued by the Germans.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to housing, party reports focused on education as a field tainted by collaboration. A 1945 investigation concluded that sixty of sixty-seven (89.5 percent) of Rostov's top education administrators stayed in occupied territory and forty-five (75 percent) worked for the Nazis, which for the Soviet regime was an act of collaboration regardless of the circumstances.<sup>37</sup> The report cites several specific examples of collaborationists, including the regional inspector of schools, who hung portraits of Adolf Hitler in his office during occupation and distributed fascist literature. A historian at the pedagogical institute allegedly "destroyed Soviet literature, worked on religious questions for the Germans, and published disgusting articles in the vulgar German newspaper 'Voice of Rostov.'"<sup>38</sup> Treason among educators remained a prominent issue three years later when the gorkom released another report on the matter, finding that out of the 2,087 teachers currently working in Rostov, 953 (46 percent) of them stayed in occupied territory, 237 of them (25 percent) worked for the Germans, and 68 of those (29 percent) occupied leadership positions. The report listed several examples of "untrustworthy" teachers still on the job, bemoaning that, despite all this, since 1943 only twelve teachers had been replaced.<sup>39</sup> These accounts show the extent of the investigations against people under suspicion while revealing a fetish with categorizing and quantifying "collaboration," acknowledging an implicit distinction between collaboration and collaborationism.

Reports on collaboration among the city's finance and trade organizations also exhibit a penchant for reducing this problem to decipherable categories and numbers. A gorkom protocol in July 1943 lamented that of 144 administrators in the city's departments of finance, 136 (94 percent) stayed under German rule, while 26 (19 percent) of them worked for the Germans. After liberation, furthermore, the leader of the city financial department failed to "clean out" his administrative apparatus of individuals "who do not inspire political trust."<sup>40</sup> Checkups on several food plants

36. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 23 (Report on illegal residency in Rostov's housing sector), l. 49. For more reports on the problem of collaboration in housing see also TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 29, l. 39 and d. 184 (Report on illegal residency in Rostov's housing sector), ll. 18–19.

37. *Ibid.*, d. 16 (Report on collaboration in Rostov's education system), l. 27. Six of them (1 percent) occupied leading roles in the department of fascist propaganda.

38. *Ibid.*, d. 44 (Report on collaboration in Rostov's education system), l. 2. See also d. 16, l. 27.

39. *Ibid.*, d. 430 (Report on collaboration in Rostov's education system), l. 15. It does point out, though, that sixty-four of the "suspect" school administrators had already been replaced. The report also notes that one teacher admitted to covering posters of Iosif Stalin and Vladimir Lenin in her classroom with pictures of fascist leaders. Yet another teacher wandered the streets of Rostov in rags during occupation "begging bread from the Germans like a hopeless tramp" and shouting in German, "look at me—I am a Soviet teacher." After liberation he went from door to door begging for bread from his students, and his "unclean outward appearance makes people sick and is a mockery of our education system." *Ibid.*, ll. 8–9.

40. *Ibid.*, d. 44, l. 8.

and trade organizations exposed people in positions of leadership who worked under German rule.<sup>41</sup> In five organizations an average of 42 percent of the employees remained in Rostov during occupation, although in these cases few actually worked for the Germans.<sup>42</sup> One report lamented that the gorkom had previously “recommended the expulsion of such people but they are still working there.”<sup>43</sup> Several documents spelled out one reason it was so difficult to replace alleged collaborators: there was a lack of qualified personnel to take their positions.<sup>44</sup> Thus, a recurring theme in many party reports is frustration with not being able to replace people perceived as collaborators.

Another reason for the slow replacement of “untrustworthy” figures was protectionism. Echoing the report from three years earlier, an investigation in early 1946 found that “the staffs of trade organizations are still far from cleaned of people who do not inspire political trust.”<sup>45</sup> Another report noted that, despite this situation, the city’s stores and trade organizations removed nine communists, twelve demobilized soldiers, and two wounded war veterans from their positions. Those in charge made decisions about who to keep and who to let go “not according to political qualities, but according to acquaintance and nepotism.”<sup>46</sup> The director of the city’s main trade organization was fired and excluded from the party because he held up the replacement of “untrustworthy” workers. A separate verification of one factory showed that more than twenty employees worked during German rule, but that the plant leadership had not removed a single person, adding “the situation is the same in the remaining enterprises in the district.”<sup>47</sup> At a plenum in May 1946, obkom First Secretary Aleksandriuk explained that many leaders did not want to replace “untrustworthy” staff because, he said, “it’s easier to work with them, they are afraid and are thus very agreeable, quiet, and always trying to please their boss.”<sup>48</sup>

This material is filled with tough talk regarding collaboration; in the rhetoric of local leaders, one either defended the interests of the motherland or one did not—working for the Germans for the sake of survival or falling prisoner to them in the war were not justifiable excuses. Add to that

41. *Ibid.*, d. 23, l. 45. For other examples see also d. 45, ll. 60, 78; d. 47, l. 4; and d. 101, l. 7.

42. *Ibid.*, d. 22, l. 77; d. 23, l. 45; d. 44, l. 8; d. 221, l. 20.

43. *Ibid.*, d. 46, l. 13.

44. For reports on this problem, see *ibid.*, d. 102, ll. 27–28; d. 45, l. 60; d. 46, l. 14; d. 47, l. 4; d. 55, ll. 69–70; d. 64, ll. 32, 58–59; d. 75, l. 38; d. 102, l. 14, 27–28; d. 171, ll. 3, 6; d. 176, ll. 2–3; and d. 330, l. 137.

45. *Ibid.*, d. 309, ll. 17–18.

46. *Ibid.*, d. 291, ll. 145–46.

47. *Ibid.*, d. 251, ll. 1–2.

48. *Ibid.*, d. 214, l. 83. See also d. 251, l. 2. That report noted that “in the party raikom there is an apprehension about replacing people.” A year later the replacement of collaborators was still proceeding slowly, a city party committee protocol noted, “especially in several specific organizations.” *Ibid.*, d. 230, l. 108. For more reports on party leaders protecting those below them who stayed in occupied territory, see also *ibid.*, d. 221, ll. 222–23; and d. 291, ll. 187–88.

the fact that *everyone* who stayed in occupied territory was suspect—including party members because they disobeyed orders to evacuate—and the result was discord in the local party apparatus between communists returning from evacuation or the front and those who remained behind. The former were in charge of Rostov's post-liberation party apparatus while the latter found themselves under investigation. In the official inquiries, most party members who were in occupied territory were cleared and only a few labeled "traitors," which shows again an acknowledgement of the distinction between collaboration and collaborationism. Yet some deemed by the regime to be collaborators who "did not inspire political trust"—a phrase peppered throughout these documents—remained in their positions as late as three years after victory, suggesting a degree of tolerance toward them in practice. This was due in part to the lack of qualified personnel, but also to protectionism or, as Aleksandriuk's comment suggests, the politics of *kompromat* ("compromising material")—wielding political power over someone through the control of negative information about them. Also, the party may have shown a degree of leniency because it did not want to look bad in the public's eye by exposing a high degree of collaboration among its ranks, and/or because local party leaders sympathized with the complexities of life under German occupation—they recognized the "moral gray zone" in some people's decisions and actions under very trying circumstances. Those who worked for the Germans and/or turned over their party cards were dealt with more harshly, but even they fared relatively well, especially compared to the repression of the late 1930s.<sup>49</sup>

Party leaders seemed obsessed with quantifying collaboration, keeping count of those in occupied territory who destroyed their party cards, registered with the Gestapo, or committed treason. At the February 1943 conference one speaker observed that the majority of the eighty-six registered communists in his district had destroyed their party cards.<sup>50</sup> One district party bureau claimed to have registered 174 members who stayed in occupied territory by October 1943, keeping 118 of them (68 percent) in the party without penalty, censuring 42 (24 percent), and expelling 14 (8 percent). For the city as a whole in 1943, district bureaus reportedly expelled 356 of the 2,049 cases they heard (17 percent), with treason as the main reason for expulsion from the party.<sup>51</sup> A report sent to Moscow

49. Kuromiya and Boterbloem show that while repression remained a prominent feature of Soviet political life in the postwar years, there was no return to the scale of repression witnessed in the late 1930s. See Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 299–300; and Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin*, 153.

50. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 29, l. 13. See also l. 12.

51. Of the 2,200 who stayed in occupied territory, 233 (11 percent) registered with the Gestapo, 50 (2 percent) worked in various leading positions, 351 (16 percent) worked in nonleading roles, 23 (1 percent) were "unmasked" as fascists, and 16 voluntarily left with the Germans. Finally, 667 (30 percent) destroyed their party cards, 6 turned theirs in to the Gestapo, and, the report noted, none of these communists took part in underground partisan activity. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 96, l. 68. Also, cases heard later resulted in a higher percentage of expulsion because they involved members who did not register with their party bureaus or who left with the Germans. For example, in October 1944, the city party committee heard the cases of seventeen party members from one district who

noted that between May 1943 and September 1945, the Rostov obkom heard the cases of 11,429 party members who remained in occupied territory. Of those, the obkom expelled 7,124 (62 percent), kept 2,758 (24 percent) in the party without penalty, and censured 1,500 (13 percent).<sup>52</sup> Thirty-seven percent (2,652) of the expulsions were for “betrayal of the motherland, active work on behalf of the Germans, improper behavior during occupation, etc.,” 31 percent (2,224) for registering with the Gestapo, 20 percent (1,396) for failing to take measures to evacuate, and 12 percent (852) for “passiveness in the struggle against the enemy.”<sup>53</sup>

These sources further reveal that election campaigns to national and local soviets in 1946 and 1947 raised serious worries among local leaders over the loyalty of repatriated citizens and others. At a closed meeting in 1946 an obkom member underscored the threat posed by “enemy elements” during the elections.<sup>54</sup> Agitation and propaganda, he mused, had not done enough “to reveal demagogues, put an end to unhealthy attitudes, and carry out a decisive struggle against pernicious rumors” spread by repatriated citizens. The speaker noted the negative influence some had on “backward workers” with their tales of wealth in Germany. He called on propagandists to unmask enemies “who are likely to become more active during the campaign by attempting to discredit the candidates and instill distrust in the electorate.”<sup>55</sup> At another closed gathering the head of Rostov’s agitprop department stated that “many repatriated citizens returned to our country with enemy attitudes and we will have to work closely with them.”<sup>56</sup> Party representatives, in other words, saw the realm of public opinion as contentious and themselves as the defenders of workers’ “true” interests. Their concern that “backward workers” (read: any worker that questioned party policies) might be more persuaded by repatriated citizens than official propaganda illustrates that those in power perceived a gap between themselves and their subjects. “Backward” workers are seen as gullible and untrustworthy—they must be “instructed” as to how to think properly or they might be won over by “pernicious rumors” spread by “enemy elements.”

Finally, this material shows that behind closed doors some questions were raised among party leaders regarding cossack loyalty, which is not surprising given the history of opposition to Soviet rule among Don cos-

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“voluntarily left with the Germans” and thus were not present at the hearings; all of them were excluded. *Ibid.*, ll. 134–35.

52. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 98, l. 90. The figures do not add up, with forty-seven cases unaccounted for.

53. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 251, ll. 1–2. See also d. 147, ll. 1, 16, 145; d. 214, ll. 24–25; d. 221, l. 20; and d. 44, ll. 82–83.

54. On the “us” and “them” mentality of Soviet leaders and society alike for the 1930s see Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997); and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times; Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1999). For the 1940s, see Zubkova, *Russia after the War*.

55. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 187, ll. 45 and 49. For similar expressions of worry by party leaders about the negative influence of repatriated citizens on voters, see *ibid.*, d. 144, l. 197.

56. *Ibid.*, d. 252, l. 8. See also RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 198, l. 184.

sacks. During the war the Germans formed a “Cossack Hundreds Brigade” in the lower Don region for Soviet citizens with pro-Nazi sentiments.<sup>57</sup> At the conference in February 1943, someone asked the representative of a rural district adjacent to Rostov: “were there any cossacks in your district that served in the German Army?” “There were, and right now the appropriate organs are dealing with that.”<sup>58</sup> In the concluding speech at the conference, Pastushenko said that after liberation he was in a cossack village near Rostov where he found several party cards among captured German documents. He summoned the party members to whom they belonged and “every single one of them lied, claiming they had destroyed their party cards.”<sup>59</sup> Pastushenko’s experience underlined party leaders’ suspicion of cossacks, who could not be trusted (or were even less trustworthy than the rest of the population). Examples of treasonous behavior, moreover, were reportedly prominent in Novocherkassk, the former cossack capital located thirty-six kilometers northeast of Rostov, where, according to one account, more party cards were found in Gestapo files than in Rostov and elsewhere.<sup>60</sup>

Party reports and the minutes of closed party gatherings indicate a fetish to quantify collaboration, show that the party’s investigations of collaboration centered on specific fields, and raise questions about cossack loyalty. While the problem was certainly not limited to housing, trade and finance, and education, there is clearly disproportionate weight given to these areas in internal investigations. The reports do not explicitly state any reasons for this, but we can surmise a few. Housing, trade, and finance were beneficial positions to be in because of the control granted over money and items in scarce supply and high demand. People in these fields may have thought they would be in an advantageous situation to assure survival—even prosperity—under German rule.<sup>61</sup> The motivations for those in education who stayed and worked for the Germans are more difficult to ascertain. Perhaps some did so out of love for pedagogy, determined to teach no matter who was in power. Some probably taught or continued in their administrative capacity for the money and the increased chances for survival under trying circumstances, although

57. See Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 283. The Germans organized Soviet prisoners into battalion-sized combat units to fight against Stalin’s forces, with as many as a million troops by 1943. Captured Soviet General Andrei Vlasov led the most famous battalion.

58. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 29, l. 36.

59. *Ibid.*, l. 22.

60. *Ibid.*, d. 44, l. 301. See also l. 300.

61. Other research indicates that housing was subject to corruption even after the return of Soviet rule, while those in trade and finance with access to goods were often involved in illegal trade before, during, and after the war. On corruption in housing see Jeffrey W. Jones, “‘In My Opinion This Is All a Fraud’: Concrete, Culture, and Class in the Reconstruction of Rostov-on-the-Don, 1943–1948” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2000). On people vying for positions in trade and food organizations for the purpose of engaging in illegal trade, see Hessler, *Social History of Soviet Trade*; Jeffrey W. Jones, “‘People without a Definite Occupation’: The Illegal Economy and ‘Speculators’ in Rostov-on-the-Don, 1943–1948,” in Donald J. Raleigh, ed., *Provincial Landscapes: The Local Dimensions of Soviet Power 1917–1953* (Pittsburgh, 2001), 236–54; and Karol, *Solih*.

the pay for teaching during occupation was probably not very high. No doubt some taught during occupation because they supported the Nazis' anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic views—"collaborationists" (as distinct from "collaborators")—though we cannot establish how widespread such sentiments were among Soviet educators.<sup>62</sup> These sources, furthermore, hint at a tendency among party leaders to question the loyalty of cossacks, their suspicions based on a history of anti-Soviet sentiments in the lower Don region.

### For Public Consumption

The dicta of the central Soviet press, which were echoed at the local level, set the tone and boundaries for public discussion of significant issues, including collaboration. The Soviet press was the voice of hegemony, formulating and propagating official views or, more precisely, constructing a legitimization myth to mask a fundamentally flawed political and economic system ridden with inequalities and contradictions. Its role was explicitly propagandistic—to shape society's interpretation of events and developments by "manufacturing consent" for the regime and its policies.<sup>63</sup> The local press took its cues from the center and sometimes published material identical to that in *Pravda*, the party's main newspaper, though none of the articles examined here appeared in *Pravda*. Like the classified party material examined above, the local press draws a sharp contrast between collaborators and "patriotic, loyal communists," while other aspects of their representations of collaboration overlap as well. The themes raised in these sources, however, differ from those discussed in classified party material, and there were no open admissions that party members betrayed the country.<sup>64</sup> The local press, moreover, promoted its own understanding of treasonous behavior and the cossacks, as well as of the "faithfulness" of women.

Less than a month after the city's liberation, talk of treason already found its way into *Molot*, which wavered in its treatment of the issue at first but then penned a harsh stance and a broad portrayal of "collaborators." The first story with an underlying theme of collaboration, "Translator," appeared three weeks after liberation.<sup>65</sup> A party agitator described how he

62. Brown shows that in Ukraine members of the urban and rural intelligentsia were more likely than peasants to support the main Ukrainian nationalist organization (OUN) because, she suggests, "they had been trained to think in taxonomies, especially in the national taxonomies of both Soviet progressive reform and repression." As a result, she continues, members of the intelligentsia had been taught "to believe in the power of origins, to think that one's national affiliation mattered above all else." One might suggest a similar explanation for the apparently strong tendency toward collaboration among educators in Soviet Russia, although clearly the overtly anti-Semitic aspects of Nazi propaganda represent a complete rejection of the more progressive aspects of Soviet nationality rhetoric and policy from the prewar period. See Brown, *Biography of No Place*, 215.

63. See Noam Chomsky and Edward Hermann, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York, 1988).

64. Weiner notes as well that there was no public discussion of the party's verification process on members who stayed in occupied territory. Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 87.

65. *Molot*, 7 March 1943, 1.

chatted with a group of people recounting their heroic acts of resistance during occupation. He noticed that one young woman sat silent and asked what she had done. "Nothing special," she responded, someone else "nas-tily" (*so zloboi*) commenting, "she was a translator for the fascists." Then a pilot in the group told how once, after being shot down, he and a copilot hid among Soviet civilians. They were eventually saved, he explained, by obtaining documents with the German commandant's signature smuggled out by a Russian accomplice in his office. "When the woman was asked to save two Soviet pilots," he said, "she gladly agreed and risked her own life to secure the necessary documents." He had not met her and asked anyone who knew L. G. Kugusheva to "please pass a sincere, heartfelt thanks to her from me!" The silent young woman who had worked as a translator was, of course, L. G. Kugusheva. The pilot added that she had saved fourteen other Soviet aviators in the same manner.

This article set a tone of tolerance, acknowledging the "gray zone" between the extremes of resistance and collaboration. The piece clearly insinuates that not everyone who stayed behind or even worked for the Germans was in the wrong, since the group was discussing acts of resistance and a woman who worked for the commandant turned out to be a heroine. The commentary suggests that people should not be unfairly judged nor suspicion cast too widely. One could just as easily have secretly carried out an act of heroism as an act of treason. The translator was loyal to the Soviet cause, which implied that her service to the enemy was forced upon her. Nonetheless, evidence was required to confirm the translator's acts of bravery; those at the meeting who knew her assumed that she had betrayed the country. Kugusheva sat silent through most of the meeting; the pilot, a man, spoke for her, and it took his testimony to clear her name. She "risked her life" just like the pilots themselves. The story also shows tolerance toward the pilot, who, after all, had been in occupied territory and used documents signed by the German commandant to escape. Not only is he free from suspicion, but his words cleared someone else who had fallen under unjust suspicion.

Subsequent pieces in the local press assumed a much harsher tone. Two days after "Translator," a front-page editorial urged "greater Bolshevik vigilance" against traitors. "Hitler's bandits," it began, succeeded in attracting "anti-Soviet riff-raff" to their service. "Every family has its freak. There were some among us who betrayed the fatherland and helped the Germans." The editorial described the "unmasking" of an "elder" (*starosta*) in the cossack village (*khutor*) Alekseevo near Rostov. He had given the Germans a list of pro-Soviet peasants, all nineteen of whom were shot. "There were also more than a few cases of treachery in Rostov," it continued, "and our mission is to unmask enemy agents, fishing them out to the last one."<sup>66</sup> In a dire warning, the piece concluded that it would be foolish to assume the Germans did not leave behind spies in Rostov. In May 1943, *Molot* published "The Strengthening of Vigilance—A Military Law," which recounted how two young women were arrested in Stalingrad

66. *Molot*, 9 March 1943, 1.

oblast after liberation. They had “befriended” (*sblizilis'*) Nazi soldiers, and when the latter were forced to retreat, the women allegedly agreed to spy for them. “Their intense curiosity after the arrival of the Red Army,” the article assured, “did not go unnoticed.” It called on workers to “diligently pay attention to others [and] piously guard the interests of the Fatherland by unmasking enemy agents. Spies,” it warned on a strong cautionary note, “are sometimes sent out disguised as civilians running from the Germans or as Red Army soldiers escaping German capture.”<sup>67</sup>

In early August 1943, German troops were ousted from Novochevchinsk, the former cossack capital, and afterward a revealing story appeared in *Molot*. Entitled “Traitors” (*Predатели*), it began with the testimony of Sukhoruchenko, who claimed that his arrest as a German agent was a mistake. “How am I traitor,” he asked, “when I myself suffered in the jails of the Gestapo?” He tried to evacuate but did not get far and was forced to return, thereby “accidentally” winding up in occupied territory. “The whole time I actively fought against the Germans,” the speaker assured his accusers. But his “cowardly eyes darting from person to person” gave him away as he tried to see what was written in the file on the table, and the “scoundrel” (*merzavets*) could not “hide from the truth.” He and an accomplice “knew quite a few communists and Soviet patriots,” and the file on the table reportedly held the names of twenty people he had turned in to the Gestapo. All were shot and were now “on the conscience of this person.” But is he really “a person,” the author wondered, resoundingly answering in the negative and describing him instead as “vile filth.” According to the article, in a desperate attempt to cover his tracks, Sukhoruchenko pasted bills calling on people to support the Red Army when it was about to retake the city. His effort to “paint himself as a patriot,” however, was unsuccessful, and he confessed to “betraying the motherland by voluntarily and consciously serving the cause of the enemy.”<sup>68</sup>

While focusing on a few specific examples, these accounts define collaboration broadly and promote a harsh stance on this issue. The piece on Stalingrad warned of “intensely curious” characters in liberated areas and ended by casting suspicion on anyone escaping from the Germans. The article “Traitors” portrays “anti-heroes” and subhuman “scoundrels,” indicating that collaborators hid among the people, tried to disguise their acts, and even tried to present themselves as patriots. Thus one’s portrayal of one’s actions during occupation was largely constructed. It required corroborating evidence, which automatically cast doubt on those whose activities no one could account for (and there were many such people due to the displacement of the war). Suspicion was reinforced by a call to spy on others. In addition, while not openly saying so, the article strongly implies that there were traitors in the party’s ranks, as we know from classified material was in fact the case. Sukhoruchenko knew “quite a few communists and Soviet patriots,” all of whom were killed by his actions. The implication is that “good” communists were martyred for the cause while “bad” communists—those who betrayed them—survived.

67. *Molot*, 16 May 1943, 2.

68. *Molot*, 8 August 1943, 1.

The article on Novocherkassk, furthermore, was significant because of that city's history as the cossack capital and center of White opposition during the civil war. This piece did not specifically mention cossacks, but most people in the lower Don region would have made such an association, just as the references to "starosta" and "khutor" in the previous article would have provoked a similar association. While such articles hinted at cossack disloyalty, other public pronouncements loudly proclaimed cossack loyalty. A *Molot* report on a bond drive in 1943, for example, relayed the success of cossacks gathering funds for a tank column bearing their name. "Don cossacks have a score to settle with the Hitlerites," the correspondent wrote. "The fascist scoundrels threatened the most sacred of all things for cossacks—their motherland and their freedom. They tried to poison the consciousness of cossacks with their pernicious propaganda while turning them into slaves. It did not work!"<sup>69</sup> Even such emphatic proclamations of loyalty, however, implied the opposite. This piece implicitly associated the "sacred freedom" of cossacks with Soviet (as opposed to German) rule, which did not correspond to the history of opposition in the region. It also acknowledged German propaganda aimed specifically at the cossacks in an effort to "poison their consciousness." But, alas, cossacks remained "loyal" to "their" [read: Soviet] "motherland," presumably all of them since they were dealt with as a whole. This was highly significant given that at the time entire nationalities were being deported because of their alleged traitorous behavior during the war.<sup>70</sup> *Molot* articles celebrating cossack loyalty contrast with conversations by party leaders behind closed doors that cast doubt on the cossacks' support for the Soviet cause.

The press did openly question the loyalties of some women citizens, associating sexual promiscuity with traitorous behavior. The party press portrays collaborators, the regime's primary internal other during the war and immediately after, in gendered terms. The article about the women in Stalingrad oblast portrays them as disloyal for "befriending" (read: sleeping with) the enemy. They "betrayed" the motherland with their bodies, as women were held to a different standard of "faithfulness." In August 1943, *Molot* published an article entitled "Wives" by a party agitator at the front, P. Nikitin, whose duty included "honest, open discussions" with troops. Often, he noted, the topic of discussion is "our wives." Soldiers at the front were proud of their wives for their "help to the Red Army, their stoicism in the face of sacrifice, and their faithfulness." But sometimes the author heard about "other women, weak souls" who were disloyal "to their motherland" for a "minute of happiness" and who "think only about themselves." The author compared a good wife to a bad one to

69. *Molot*, 8 June 1943, 1.

70. On the deportations see Tolz, "New Information about the Deportation of Ethnic Groups"; Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (December 1998): 831–61; Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York, 1989); N. F. Bugai, ed., *Iosif Stalin – Laverentiiu Berii: "Ikh nado deportirovat'"; Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii* (Moscow, 1992); and N. F. Bugai, "K vo-prosu o deportatsii narodov SSSR v 30–40-kh godakh," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1989, no. 6: 135–44.

illustrate his point. The wife of a wounded soldier wrote a letter from the “pure heart of a Russian woman who recognizes that a wife’s honor to a soldier at the front is like the honor of a patriot to the motherland. ‘Don’t worry about me,’” she wrote, “‘I’ll guard my love for you. I will not defile it.’” Such letters, Nikitin maintained, filled the hearts of their readers with pride.

“However,” he continued, “there were also women who lived only for themselves, who could not wait.” These women, who were “like weeds growing among the collective, no longer have the right to be called the wives of soldiers at the front.” As an example the author reproduced, with his permission, a letter by one soldier to his wife Taisia in Rostov. “The Germans destroyed our beloved city,” the soldier wrote, “but we will rebuild.” However, “what you’ve destroyed can never be restored. You stole the childhood of my son, throwing him to the mercy of fate to live with another man.” Nikitin described Taisia as “unfit to be a wife or mother.” Soon, he concluded, the battlefields will stand silent, people will place flowers before the graves of the fallen and say, “Sleep, heroes, we avenged your death, we served the motherland with honor,” which wives who helped the Red Army with their selfless labor will have the full right to say. “And,” the author asked, “what will the former wife of [this soldier] say? She will not be with us.”<sup>71</sup>

This portrayal of “wives” links loyalty to one’s husband with loyalty to the country. It is a question of “honor,” which has strong gendered connotations since a woman’s honor has historically been associated with her virginity before marriage and her faithfulness during wedlock. Nikitin juxtaposes the weakness, selfishness, and individualism of his antiheroine with the strength, selflessness, and sacrifice of “pure” women who suffered along with the collective, leaving little room between those extremes. He does not question whether men were loyal to their wives, whether or not they “waited,” nor does he identify his positive example by name—she was defined through her husband. This woman was synonymous with the nameless, faceless crowd, the overwhelming majority of Soviet women who worked hard and endured endless sacrifices without asking for recognition. We do, however, learn the name of the bad example, Taisia (a rare name), which personalizes and individualizes her while at the same time demonizing her. The fact that she should not “be considered a wife and mother” had economic implications, since it meant she would not be eligible for government assistance. Finally, the haunting conclusion that “she will not be with us” after victory suggested, at the very least, that, because of her dubious actions, she would not have the right to celebrate the victory secured in part by “faithful” Soviet women.

That long-awaited victory occurred in May 1945, and less than three months later *Molot* published an article by L. Savel’ev entitled “Vigilance—the holy obligation of the Soviet People,” which set a very harsh tone for the postwar period.<sup>72</sup> The author reminded readers of Sta-

71. *Molot*, 11 August 1943, 4.

72. *Molot*, 27 July 1945, 1.

lin's claim that "successes, like everything else in the world, have their dark side," leading to extreme self-confidence and an undue degree of relaxation. Now that the country was nursing its wounds from the war the "Soviet people should be especially vigilant." The Germans, Savel'ev continued, created "spy networks to prepare for and instigate a third world war." They left behind well-trained agents like Nina K., one of the most energetic "activists" in a recently liberated town who turned out to be a spy. Enemy agents, Savel'ev warned, are potentially everywhere. He noted that they were planted among those returning from German capture, casting strong aspersions on POWs and repatriates, two groups explicitly identified in classified material as well. "Examples and facts of enemy activities," he concluded, "obligate Soviet people to constantly be vigilant." This editorial in the months after the war indicated that there would *not* be a post-war relaxation in Soviet society and that an atmosphere of crisis would be maintained.

The first article about collaboration in the local press after liberation acknowledged some of the nuances and complexities involved with this issue, but subsequent pieces dealt with it from a straightforward resister/collaborator, good/bad point of view, casting a wide net of suspicion over society. Yet the warnings in these texts that enemy agents could be lurking anywhere contradicted the concentration on collaborators as an "isolated few" or "specific individuals." This reflected the dilemma of presenting collaborators as the main internal enemy at a time when many people—including party members—were potentially collaborators. Words alone could not free one from suspicion because people constructed stories about their actions—there was an assumption of guilt that had to be negated with evidence. Furthermore, the gender-coded language used to discuss collaboration cast traitorous women as "weaklings" who betrayed the country with their bodies, putting their "selfish [read: sexual] desire" for a "moment of happiness" above all else. The feminization of collaborators in the press may reflect the carefully constructed nature of this source, as opposed to the more spontaneous closed party sources, where gendered distinctions on this issue were less apparent. The material examined here held women to a double standard of loyalty; "bad" wives did not "wait," did not remain loyal to their husbands at the front, while good wives were "faithful" and "honorable," quiet, selfless in the face of sacrifice ("don't worry about me"). They worked endlessly to support the Red Army or, like the men at the front, "risked their lives" to help the cause.

Furthermore, *Molot* trumpeted the loyalty of the cossacks while casting doubt on POWs, repatriated citizens, and those who stayed in occupied territory. It dehumanized "traitors," and hinted (but did *not* explicitly state) that communist party members (like the "activist" Nina K.) were among their number. Significantly, the issue of collaboration is barely mentioned in the local press after 1945, and especially after August 1946 when Andrei Zhdanov, one of Stalin's top aides, launched his campaign to cleanse the Soviet arts and sciences of those who "kowtowed to Western culture." We know, in contrast, that the problem of collaboration was discussed by party leaders behind closed doors as late as 1948. It seems plau-

sible that the regime considered publicly airing its “dirty laundry” on such sensitive matters to be unwise in the context of the developing Cold War and amid the armed uprisings underway after the war in the Baltic states and Ukraine. Also, as we know from classified reports, the regime was having difficulty replacing even the people it deemed “untrustworthy,” another reason it probably did not want to dwell on this problem publicly (such concerns may likewise explain why there was no explicit mention of treasonous party members in the local press). Thus, while collaboration remained a topic of conversation for party leaders, there was minimal discussion of it in the press after 1945.

### The People Speak

It is often difficult to get at popular views in the study of history, and the Soviet case is no exception. But historians now have access to materials they could never have dreamed of earlier, allowing a qualified representation of popular opinion. Lists of questions raised and comments made by workers and others at meetings with party agitators—an example of what James Scott calls “the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate”—convey the opinions of the popular classes.<sup>73</sup> Of course, party officials constructed these documents based on notes taken during the meetings and thus filtered popular views through their own ideological assumptions. Often, however, the same views appear in multiple reports.<sup>74</sup> Interviews and memoir accounts differ significantly from archival evidence, of course, but are also useful in looking at popular opinion on this issue. There is considerable overlap between the views expressed in these sources and the material we have already examined. People who sacrificed a great deal during the war were sympathetic to the regime’s negative portrayals of collaborators. But there are also subtle differences between the views found here and those in the previous sources. Taken together, this material reveals the ways workers and others in Soviet society perceived collaboration and the party’s handling of it.

People in society at large realized that there were collaborators in positions of power and felt they were being dealt with too leniently, while at the same time many believed that the regime treated those who had been in occupied territory too harshly. They recognized, in other words, the “gray area” between the extremes, the nuances and complexities involved in explaining people’s behavior (in some cases their own) under extremely difficult circumstances. In May 1945 a worker complained that several people who actively worked for the Germans currently held leadership positions in his factory. “Why haven’t some measures been taken

73. James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), 2.

74. On economic and other issues the questions raised at these gatherings are very similar to those of the 1930s as reported by Davies in *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia* and Fitzpatrick in *Everyday Stalinism*. But the issue of collaboration is, of course, unique to the war and postwar periods.

against them?” he asked.<sup>75</sup> “Several citizens who voluntarily left with the Germans are now returning,” someone said at a separate meeting over a year later. “Will they stand trial as betrayers of the motherland?”<sup>76</sup> These queries show support for a harsh stance against collaborators, but question whether such policies are in fact being carried out, which mirrors the party’s discussions behind closed doors. At the same time some expressed concern over the party’s heavy-handed treatment of repatriated citizens. At a meeting in February 1946 someone queried, “Why does the government treat repatriated citizens so poorly?”<sup>77</sup> Later that year someone wanted to know, “why don’t they accept repatriated citizens at institutes?”<sup>78</sup> These questions implicitly criticize the government’s policies. People supported a harsh stance against perceived collaborators but also recognized the prominence of the problem among party members and did not wholly agree with the regime’s broad definition of “collaboration.”

Classified party material, as we have seen, exposed concern over voter attitudes during the election campaigns; this material helps us understand the perspective of allegedly “backward” citizens. For example, people saw that party candidates also constructed their own (presumably false) identities. According to one report, a voter claimed she knew of a Supreme Soviet deputy who surrendered to the Nazis during the war, stating “and they also told us that he was a good man.” Another voter said she heard that during evacuation, candidate Kucherenko stole state money and ran off, as had former deputy Pozhkova. “Who,” she meaningfully asked, “nominates such parasites as candidates?”<sup>79</sup> The answer, of course, was the Communist Party, the rhetorical question implicitly casting doubt on its rule and the legitimacy of the elections.<sup>80</sup> At a campaign meeting in early February 1946, L. G. Aralova ironically, and with “a considerable negative effect” on those present, remarked, “Haven’t the candidates already been chosen a long time ago, so why carry out this comedy?”<sup>81</sup> The agitator leading the meeting, the author assured, “very thoroughly and correctly responded” to her criticisms. He explained that Aralova spied for the Germans during occupation and that she led a “wild” lifestyle, casting doubt on her character by associating her with alleged traitorous behavior and sexual promiscuity, as in the portrayal of “weak” (read: trea-

75. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 88, d. 426, l. 98.

76. *Ibid.*, l. 149. Elsewhere in the city a worker asked, “Why are betrayers of the motherland returning [from Germany] and why are they free, instead of in Siberia?” *Ibid.*

77. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 259, l. 124.

78. *Ibid.*, d. 313, l. 18. Someone at a workers’ club before a showing of “An Education of Feelings” (*Vospitanie chuvstv*), a war film among Stalin’s favorites, said: “It would be more interesting to see how my comrades who stayed in occupied territory and were shipped off [to Siberia] are being treated there.” The party representative writing this report noted that because the lights were out he was unable to identify the person making this statement. *Ibid.*, d. 393, l. 110.

79. *Ibid.*, d. 259, l. 25.

80. Mariia S. Zhak remembered a joke about the lack of candidates during the elections; it compared the elections to God appearing before Eve and telling her, “Choose yourself a husband,” when, of course, Adam was the only choice. Mariia S. Zhak, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 3 June 1995.

81. TsDNI, f. 13, op. 4, d. 259, l. 124.

sonous) women in the local party press.<sup>82</sup> As party leaders had feared, the elections led to strong expressions of doubt about the Soviet system by some citizens.

Like other sources, memoirs and interviews are flawed and limited in terms of what they can tell us. People view the past through the filter of the present (and the intervening years), and their recollections may be clouded by contemporary political issues (for example, the Cold War) or current popular attitudes. Yet personal recollections complement the picture of popular discourse drawn in the documents very well—they convey the thoughts and feelings of people who lived in this era, which makes them valuable as sources. K. S. Karol's 1983 memoir, for example, describes his life in Rostov between 1939 and 1946.<sup>83</sup> Karol, who is part Jewish, recalls anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic sentiments among the native population. A loyal supporter of communism, he served in the Red Army during the war. Separated from his battalion along with a couple of his friends amid the German onslaught of Rostov in the summer of 1942, Karol caught a ride with a truck driver who asked the soldiers, "Why do you want to get yourselves killed for the Bolsheviks and the Jews who have been sucking our Christian blood since their damned revolution? Another, different Russia is soon going to be reborn," the truck driver further remarked, "and it will need you. Come with me; I'll hide you. I shall obtain civilian clothes for you. You will want for nothing. Trust me."<sup>84</sup> Karol and his friends were repulsed by the offer and returned to their Red Army unit. He points out that Cossacks tended to be especially anti-Semitic, which explains in part why some were sympathetic to the Nazis. His wife, Klava, herself a Don Cossack, told him that Cossacks "drink of this poison [anti-Semitism] along with their mother's milk." Karol's father-in-law did not know of Karol's Jewish ancestry and often made anti-Semitic remarks. After listening to a favorite song, his Cossack father-in-law said, "Stupid Hitler, why does he kill the gypsies, who sing so well? He would have done better to slit the throats of a few more Yids." Karol's father-in-law, it should be noted, supported the Soviet side in the war, but was clearly sympathetic to the Nazis' anti-Semitic propaganda.<sup>85</sup>

82. Ibid. The report notes that "soldiers often spend the night at her place," which sounds like a brothel. It does not explain why, if she worked for the German police, she was not already in jail or in exile. Another account stated that a "certain Pletnikov, who stayed in occupied territory and worked actively for the Germans," tore down an election banner on the street and stated his discontent with Soviet rule, for which he was arrested. Ibid., 1. 25.

83. The French edition, entitled *Solik*, appeared in 1983 and the English edition three years later. Karol's father was a successful Jewish businessman in Rostov before the 1917 Revolution. His family left for Poland after the revolution (Karol's mother was Polish). The younger Karol, who was sympathetic with the cause of socialism, returned as a teen to his father's hometown of Rostov when Nazi forces invaded western Poland in 1939. He returned to Poland in 1946 but shortly thereafter left for Paris.

84. Karol, *Solik*, 157.

85. Karol, *Solik*, 108, 157, 168, 282, 308–9, 312, 315. According to Karol, there was a rumor "once widely current among Cossacks" that Stalin's real surname, Dzhugashvili, meant "son of a Jew" in Georgian.

Mary Leder's account of life in Stalinist Russia includes similar recollections of the rabid anti-Semitism and anti-Soviet attitudes of people in Rostov during the war, especially cossacks.<sup>86</sup> Leder's family moved to the Soviet Union in the early 1930s. In 1939 at the age of twenty-four she married Abram Leder, a Russian Jew from Rostov. Soon after the war began in June 1941, Abram left for the front and Mary decided to move to Rostov with her infant daughter to be with her in-laws, thinking it would be safer there than in Moscow. She left for Rostov the second week in August, receiving a letter from her husband advising her *not* to go only after she had already arrived. Abram's letter "recommended that I stay away from Rostov because of the Don cossacks' well-known anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic sentiments. As he put it, 'I don't much like the population there.'" Mary's own experiences in the city confirmed her husband's concerns. She recalls walking along Engels Street, the city's main thoroughfare, and striking up a conversation with a young cossack woman. They discussed mundane problems like the difficulty of obtaining food, the frequent air raids, and so forth. Then the young cossack woman said, "It will be over soon. The Germans will be here before long. They'll take care of the Communists and the Jews." Leder reasons that either the young woman did not realize that she was Jewish or ("more likely") that she did not care. "From the day I arrived in Rostov," she writes, "I sensed the antagonism of the population and knew that if the Germans captured the city, we'd [Jews] be in great trouble."<sup>87</sup>

In interviews conducted in 1995, Rostovians, many of whom had been in occupied territory, spoke negatively about collaborators but exhibited a great deal of tolerance toward those who involuntarily wound up under German rule. Several interviewees looked more favorably on the Germans than on Soviet citizens who helped them. Genadii Ermolenko, who participated in Rostov's partisan movement at the age of thirteen, said "the Germans did not touch us, . . . [but] *politsai* [Soviet citizens who worked for the German police] harassed us constantly and we hated them."<sup>88</sup> Ekaterina G. Karotskova, whose family was also in occupied territory, grew up in a cossack village (*stanitsa*). Ten years old in 1941, she said that several cossacks in the village "became loyal *politsai* working for the Nazis. These people," she opined, "were worse than the Germans themselves."<sup>89</sup> While condemning obvious collaborators, interviewees often portrayed relatives and friends as the victims of unjust treatment by the Soviet government. Svetlana Semenova's aunt, for example, was taken to Germany for slave labor during the war, and after being repatriated she had "prob-

86. Mary M. Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia: An American Woman Looks Back* (Bloomington, 2001).

87. Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia*, 192–94. After the incident in the street with the cossack woman, Leder left Rostov and returned to Moscow. Her in-laws stayed behind, however, and both perished during the Germans' occupation of the city. For an excellent account of the war years in a cossack village near Rostov, see Kozhina, *Through the Burning Steppe*.

88. Genadii Ermolenko, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 16 April 1995.

89. Ekaterina G. Karotskova, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 13 May 1995.

lems” getting into Rostov State University, which Semenova considered unfair.<sup>90</sup> According to Oleg Pianiatshev, “Many paths were closed to those returning from German capture.” His uncle was a POW, freed with the return of the Red Army to the lower Volga region but then arrested by the Soviet military and sent to serve in a penal battalion.<sup>91</sup>

These sources reveal something about popular representations of collaboration during and after the war, including the nuanced and complex aspects of this issue emphasized by scholars. There was not always a clear line between “collaboration” and “loyalty” in people’s actions, and sometimes the same person could display elements of both. People in society at large, moreover, acknowledged the “gray zone” of behavior during occupation more readily than did the regime. Popular attitudes toward collaboration also differed in other important ways from the party press and its closed discussions of the issue. While, as we have seen, the party carried out a thorough check of members who stayed in occupied territory, it did not air this dirty laundry publicly. But workers and others were nonetheless keenly aware that many in the nomenklatura and party leadership collaborated with the Germans, and that—like everyone else (perhaps even more so)—party leaders constructed stories about their actions during the war. They perceived the problem of collaboration but associated it with the party itself, turning a critical eye back upon the leadership. Thus Rostovians internalized the party’s public pronouncements on collaboration but found fault primarily with those in charge whom they saw as tainted by the problem. The interviewees reinforce this view by constructing a good vs. bad scenario, much like the party’s public rhetoric, only in their versions the dichotomy is inverted, with the Soviet government in the wrong and unjustly suspected Soviet citizens in the role of victim.

Finally, the memoir accounts are particularly telling with regard to attitudes among cossacks of the lower Don region during the war. Not all cossacks hated Jews or supported the Germans in the war. Karol’s wife, for instance, was not anti-Semitic and married someone who was part Jewish. Her father, although rabidly anti-Semitic, supported the Soviet side in the war. Yet the general picture of cossack sentiments clearly contradicts the loyal image of them projected by the local press. The Stalinist regime engaged in a propaganda struggle for the “hearts and minds” of the Don cossacks—naming tank columns after them, for example—but this material suggests that many cossacks remained hostile to Soviet power. On the other hand, the Germans reneged on their promise to abolish the collective farms, and thus no doubt undermined their legitimacy among the

90. Svetlana Semenova, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 16 April 1995. Semenova also told about another aunt who purposely scraped her legs with salt and garlic to avoid being mobilized for work in Germany.

91. Oleg Pianiatshev, interview, Rostov-on-Don, 17 April 1995. Penal battalions had the toughest assignments at the front and, of course, a very high casualty rate. “It is a miracle he survived,” Pianiatshev added. Boterbloem cites the similar case of I. G. Tsvetkov, noting that in Kalinin oblast treatment of “alleged” collaborators was perceived as way too harsh. Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin*, 56–57.

cossacks as well.<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, the evidence presented here certainly supports Kuromiya's contention that there were strong anti-Soviet sentiments among the Don cossacks.<sup>93</sup> In light of this material, in fact, it seems likely that an unspoken assumption of cossack *disloyalty*, which was "well known" according to Leder, underscores the discussions of party leaders behind closed doors in which they raised questions about the cossacks. Party leaders shared a great deal of skepticism with society at large regarding the cossacks' role during the war, while the local press inaccurately portrayed the cossacks as a whole as "loyal, patriotic" Soviet citizens, presumably because they were not targeted for exile or repression and because the regime wanted to secure their support for the war and reconstruction efforts.

An examination of several distinct source bases on the local level reveals a great deal about official and popular perceptions of collaboration in Stalinist Russia between 1943 and 1948. The regime emphasized the threat posed by collaborators, publicly constructing internal others, archetypal "antiheroes," people unwilling or too cowardly to risk their life for the country, thereby creating an atmosphere of suspicion that necessitated strong governmental measures and negated any hopes for an immediate postwar liberalization. The local press metaphorically depicted collaboration in gendered terms by associating it with feminine qualities and contrasting it with masculine heroism. Workers and others largely agreed with the negative portrayal of collaborators, but the evidence reveals a subtle divide in the perception and representation of this issue between party leaders and the population at large. Among themselves, local party leaders displayed an "us" and "them" mentality toward the population and acknowledged contenders in influence for popular opinion. Confirming their concerns, some people in Rostov were critical. Also, while the party's tough public stance against collaborators appealed to many, popular perceptions of who should be handled harshly were based on the realization—supported by closed party documents—that some party members collaborated with the Germans. Thus the local party apparatus came under dual assault: people criticized it because "true" traitors, sometimes within the party leadership itself, were dealt with too softly while those perceived as innocent victims of Nazism were treated too severely. Based on the evidence presented here, there would have been popular support for the relaxation by Nikita Khrushchev in the mid-1950s of policies punishing repatriated citizens, POWs, and others unjustly repressed as collaborators. Also, the party's public assurances of the cossacks' unquestioned loyalty contrasted with a widely shared assumption of cossack *disloyalty*, a discrepancy that reflected a history of anti-Bolshevism in the lower Don region.

92. On the Germans reneging on this promise, see Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*.

93. Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 283.