

“Stalingrad is Hell”: Soviet Morale and the Battle of Stalingrad

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“Over a month has passed since the fighting at Stalingrad was first mentioned in the Soviet communique. Yet the Russians go on fighting in this hell filled with dense clouds of acrid smoke -- bombed, shelled, and machine gunned continuously, but still resisting and still counter attacking; sometimes single units have to repel ten tanks in a day. The nurses, after picking up the wounded, take them across the Volga in rowing-boats, for there is no building in Stalingrad large enough or safe enough to be used as a hospital. The wreckage of boats and ships, with dead soldiers and civilians, is floating down the Volga.”¹

September 26, 1942

“Our regiment is involved in constant heavy fighting.... You don’t see them at all, they have established themselves in houses and cellars and are firing on all sides, including from our rear -- barbarians, they use gangster methods...The Russians have stopped surrendering at all. If we take any prisoners it’s because they are hopelessly wounded, and can’t move themselves. Stalingrad is hell. Those who are merely wounded are lucky; they

¹Yasnaya Polyana, “Diary,” in *The Year of Stalingrad A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies*, ed. Alexander Werth (New York: Borzoi Books 1947), 258.

will doubtless be at home and celebrate victory with their families..."²

On September 25, 1942, Soviet civilian Yasnaya Polyana described the atmosphere that had been created around the battle of Stalingrad. She did not just reiterate the conditions of the battle, but made a point to say that the men continued to fight, even in the hellish conditions that existed during the Battle of Stalingrad. The following day, September 26, 1942, German soldier William Hoffman described some of the fighting styles that the Soviets used in an attempt to repel and contain the Germans. He remarked, "You don't see them (The Soviets) at all, they have established themselves in houses and cellars and are firing on all sides, including from our rear -- barbarians, they use gangster methods." On such a harsh battlefield and with no promise of survival the Soviets kept fighting to the last man, for the defense of their city. The Russians were willing to do whatever it took to defeat the Germans, even if that meant certain death.

Though Polyana and Hoffman painted a vivid picture of the hellish conditions that both Soviet and German soldiers endured during the Battle of Stalingrad, these two examples only scratch the surface of many different sources explaining the experience of fighting in a battle as gruesome as Stalingrad. As the fight for Stalingrad raged on over the next few months the fighting became ever more gruesome. This paper investigates how the different armies fought through seemingly impossible odds, arguing that

² William Hoffman, "Diary of a German Soldier," in Marvin Perry, ed., *Sources of Western History: Part Three: Western Civilization in Crisis* Ninth Edition (Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2014), 416.

morale gave the armies the strength to continue the fight each and every day.

Historians have investigated the Battle of Stalingrad in a staggering variety of ways, but room remains for an in-depth analysis of the mentality of Soviet and German soldiers. There are many different books that examine Stalingrad from *Enemy at the Gates* by William Craig who begins to talk about the conflict at Stalingrad with some basic understanding, to *Stalingrad the City that Defeated the Third Reich* by Jochen Hellbeck, the newest publication on Stalingrad that allocates for many different viewpoints.³ In *The Beginning of the Road*, Vasili I. Chuikov, (who served as a general during the Battle of Stalingrad) expounds upon Stalingrad from the perspective of an officer and his actions on a day to day basis.⁴ John Erickson also contributed to the conversation on the Battle of Stalingrad with *The Road to Stalingrad* (1975). Erickson studied Stalingrad from a military point of view, analyzing it strictly from a Soviet perspective and continuing to dive into a detailed description of the Battle of Stalingrad.⁵ Yet another addition to the conversation surrounding the Battle of Stalingrad came from Edwin P. Hoyt in *199 Days The Battle for Stalingrad* (1993). Hoyt carefully analyzes the Red Army's impact on the Battle of Stalingrad and argues that they had more to do with the outcome of the battle than was previously

³ Jochen Hellbeck, *Stalingrad: the City that Defeated the Third Reich* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2015).

⁴ Vasili I. Chuikov, *The Beginning of the Road*, trans. Harold Silver (Worcester, UK: Ebenezer Baylis and Son LTD, 1963).

⁵ John Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad Stalin's War with Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984).

thought.⁶ In 1998 Antony Beevor published *Stalingrad The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943*. Beevor was able to obtain both Russian and German documents that had been concealed by their respective governments.⁷ These books analyze the Battle of Stalingrad from a militaristic point of view and attempt to understand the greater impact that the Battle of Stalingrad had on the war.

Alexander Werth and Jochen Hellbeck, however, analyze Stalingrad in a new light in an attempt to explain the mentality of the Soviets during the Battle of Stalingrad. In *The Year of Stalingrad A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies*, Alexander Werth investigates the mentality of the Soviets during Stalingrad and the impact that it had on the battle rather than taking a traditional military approach to the battle. Werth uses a variety of primary sources from civilians to soldiers in the Red Army.⁸ The most recent addition to the examination of Stalingrad came in 2015 from Jochen Hellbeck with *Stalingrad The City that Defeated the Third Reich*. Hellbeck attempts to humanize the defenders of Stalingrad as he recounts diaries and other statements made by both citizens and soldiers at the Battle of Stalingrad.⁹ This paper will investigate the mentality of the Russian and German soldiers during the Battle of Stalingrad to gain a deeper understanding of how morale was central in the ultimate Soviet victory in such a brutal engagement.

⁶ Edwin P. Hoyt, *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad* (New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates, 1993).

⁷ Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943* (New York, NY: Viking, 1998).

⁸ Jochen Hellbeck, *Stalingrad the City that Defeated the Third Reich* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2015).

⁹ Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad: A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947).

The fight for Stalingrad was a grueling conflict that lasted from August 23, 1942 until February 2, 1943. Both the Soviet Union and Germany stopped at nothing in order to achieve victory. As a result, the casualties amounted to around 2.2 million, making it the bloodiest battle that had ever taken place. After the smoke cleared, the Soviets stood victorious over the Germans. There were many different factors that played into the Soviet triumph over the Germans, from logistical and environmental, to strategical. With all the death that occurred during this battle, however, one of the most important factors proved troop morale, which would ultimately determine the ability of each army to keep on fighting even in the midst of all the bloodshed. The leaders and soldiers of both the Soviet and German attempted to maintain morale in a variety of ways, including inciting fear in troops, appealing to soldiers' humanity, encouraging the soldiers, and lying to the soldiers about the reality of the situation to keep them fighting.

The Battle of Stalingrad is viewed as a significant battle because of the defeat of the Germans, and it is known as the bloodiest battle that ever took place. What is overlooked about Stalingrad, however, is the question of how the Soviets were able to stand and fight against the strongest army at that time. The fact that the Germans were able to continue fighting in the middle of the Russian winter with very limited supplies, and never having been exposed to the Russian winter is often overlooked. Both the Germans and the Soviets had to address the morale of their soldiers; but each army chose a different approach.

Soon after the Germans invaded, Joseph Stalin gave a speech on November 7, 1941 in an attempt to rally the people of the Soviet

Union against the Germans. The overall goal of this speech was to mobilize the people and the soldiers and give them hope as they continued pushing back against the Germans. At one point during his speech Stalin said, "Can there be any doubt that we can, and are bound to, defeat the German invaders?" Here, Stalin expressed his confidence and belief in the strength of the Red Army and their ability to successfully defeat the invading German force. Stalin was not only assured in the ability of the Red Army but in Soviet society as a whole. He showed this certainty again when he exclaimed, "Our country is now many times richer than it was twenty-three years ago as regards industry, food and raw materials."¹⁰ Stalin's goal when he gave this speech was to encourage both the civilians and the soldiers; he attempted to raise the morale and inspire the Soviet Union despite the dark times that they were facing. Stalin knew that unless the morale of the people of the Soviet Union remained stagnate, defeat was imminent.

The citizens of the Soviet Union responded to Stalin's charge and wanted to take up arms against the Germans. They understood that the duty to defend the city of Stalingrad did not simply fall to the soldiers, but to the civilians as well. Some of the citizens who remained in the city during the attack were gathered together and placed into worker battalions. These battalions were armed and sent to the front lines to help the Red Army defend against the German invasion. The worker battalions were quickly sent to the front lines. As Ivan Fyodorovich Zimenkov, (Chairmen of Stalingrad Regional

¹⁰ Joseph Stalin, "Speech at the Red Army Parade" (speech given on the Red Square, Moscow, November 7, 1941), accessed February 5, 2016, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1941/11/07.htm>.

Soviet of Workers Deputies) explained in August 1942, "It was during this brutal bombardment that the people came together, took their weapons, and were immediately sent to the front line. We delivered these workers battalions to Front HQ."¹¹ When these workers came to the front lines where they joined the Red Army their mission was the same: repel the invading Germans and defend their homeland. These worker battalions were willing to do whatever necessary to protect their home, but were no match for the superior fire power of the Germans. As a result of the lack of supplies and support, the worker battalions endured great losses. Semyon Yefimovich Kashintsev commented on the great losses experienced by these men, saying, "The 1st Destruction Battalion returned from the front at the end of August with only twenty-two men.....Commissar Sazkov, explained it like this: In those early days it was only our unit and the guys from the Tractor factory bearing the brunt of the main strike, before the regular units arrived, and the destruction units were poorly equipped. The only weapons they had were rifles."¹²

Commissar Sazkov was not the only one who expressed his distaste for the lack of equipment that was given to the worker's battalions, Vladimir Kharitonovich Demchenko, a Major Commandant during the Battle of Stalingrad also commented, "At that time there was a great shortage of weapons. We didn't even have rifles. I went all over the place to get rifles for these

¹¹ Ivan Fyodorovich Zimenkov, "Interview", quoted in Jochen Hellbeck, *Stalingrad the City that Defeated the Third Reich* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2015), 107.

¹² Semyon Yefimovich, "Interview", quoted in Jochen Hellbeck, *Stalingrad the City that Defeated the Third Reich* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2015), 107.

men...Wherever we came across captured enemy weapons, we used those to arm our detachments.”¹³ For the men who were among these battalions the equipment was better than nothing, while at the same time it was gathered from the enemy; this action both helped and hindered the creation of morale throughout the Red Army. Though these new weapons helped Soviet morale because they were using weapons that were taken from the Germans, it also obstructed morale because their own government was unable to arm them.

In an attempt to keep the morale of the people high during the invasion The Soviet Union ensured that the Russian Ballet continued operating. In 1941, *New York Times* journalist Ralph Parker was stationed in Moscow. He noted, “When the German Panzers were thundering past Mozhaisk and the Wehrmacht [German Army] and the Red Army were locked in momentous battle about thirty miles distant the ballet like the annual chess tournament went on.” For the citizens being able to go to the Russian Ballet during the midst of an intense battle was another attempt to help increase the morale of the soldiers and the citizens themselves. The ballet was very important to the people of The Soviet Union. In Parker’s words, “The ballet is near to the spirit of men and writers of ballet naturally look for themes in works of famous and beloved writers or in tales all can understand.” The ballet was more than just a way for the ordinary citizen to be entertained for an hour or so; it was a way for them to escape the reality in which they were living. If for any reason the ballet was unable to be performed, it was seen as a “direct loss to the

¹³ Vladimir Kharitonovich Demchenko, “Interview”, quoted in Jochen Hellbeck *Stalingrad the City that Defeated the Third Reich* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2015), 107.

State.” A significant part of maintaining the homoeostasis of Soviet life was to keep the ballet going, no matter what.¹⁴

The Soviet government did everything they could to ensure that their soldiers were committed and willing to give up everything to drive the Germans back. A Soviet soldier had to understand that his duty was to his country, his hometown, and his family. In the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*, Lidin addressed this mindset further in his article, “They know at home how you are fighting” saying,

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

The soldiers on the front lines were fearful of a meaningless death, so they would have made sure that they fought to earn a heroic death to be honored by their children and grandchildren. The mindset of the Soviet soldier was further twisted with the thought that, “If you let

¹⁴ Ralph Parker, “Despite All, Russia’s Ballet Goes On: War has not changed an institution that deeply marks Russian life. State schools constantly train new artists for the Ballet.” *New York Times*, January 24, 1943.

the German pass, your own mother will curse you.” The thought that if the Soviet soldier could not keep the Germans from taking Stalingrad, that their own mother would curse them would cause the soldiers to ensure that not a single German made it through. In a sense, this was a scare tactic as much as it was an attempt to raise the morale of the soldiers, with the hope that each soldier could be considered a hero gave them courage and as a result, raised the morale of the Red Army.¹⁵

While The Soviet Union had to build morale, German morale was high from beginning of the invasion and throughout their continued victories. An example of this high morale can be seen in a diary entry from a German soldier named William Hoffman. On September 28, 1942 he wrote, “Our regiment, and the whole division, are today celebrating victory. Together with our tank crews we have taken the southern part of the city and reached the Volga. We paid dearly for our victory. In three weeks we have occupied about five and a half square miles. The commander has congratulated us on our victory...” Hoffman admitted that the German Army suffered significant losses during their attack but they were still able to celebrate a victory nonetheless. As a result of the continued victories, the German morale was peaking and that allowed them to fight harder and longer.¹⁶ One of the most effective ways to keep morale high is through victories on the battlefield. For most of the

¹⁵ Lidin, “They Know at Home How You Are Fighting” *Pravda* (September 1942): quoted in Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad: A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 225.

¹⁶ Hoffman, “Diary,” 416.

Battle of Stalingrad, the Germans had a monopoly on that source of army morale.

While the Germans were celebrating the victory that they had achieved, the Soviets viewed the same day a little differently. On September 28, 1942 a Soviet wrote, "Stalingrad is still holding out, and the impression is gaining ground that it may well hold. The Germans, it seems, are no longer even trying to capture it at one swoop, but simply trying to slice it up like a sausage -- and that will take some doing. A lot of people in Moscow think that if Stalingrad holds for another six weeks, the Germans may have to pull out of the Caucasus."¹⁷ The Soviets began to believe that they had a chance to hold off the Germans and possibly win the Battle for Stalingrad. With this mindset circulating, Soviet morale continued to rise as the Red Army did everything possible to hold the Germans back as the invasion continued. Just a few days later, on the first of October, Hitler made an attempt to bring the morale of the Soviet people down.

October brought a lot of anxiety with it, as both the Soviets and Germany were looking to the end of the battle and what that would mean for them. In the words of one Soviet citizen, "October! What will it bring? Hitler yesterday announced that Stalingrad would fall in a few days."¹⁸ Hitler had every intention of taking Stalingrad very quickly at the beginning of the battle, but the Red Army continued to hold strong and deter the Germans at every turn.

¹⁷ Colonel XX, "More about Olga" (September 1942), quoted in Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad*: (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 265.

¹⁸ Colonel XX, "More about Olga," 267.

One German soldier lamented, "Our battalion has gone into the attack four times, and got stopped each time. Russian snipers hit anyone who shows himself carelessly from behind shelter."¹⁹ Hitler had made it clear that Stalingrad would fall to the Germans in a few days. In reality the Red Army was beginning to hold the Germans at bay, deterring them every time the Germans attempted to make an advancement on the Soviet position. October quickly became the crucial point of the battle, and this was felt all around, "The enemy [Germans] has brought more reinforcements to Stalingrad, and his pressure is increasing daily. The most decisive stage in the Battle of Stalingrad has been reached. But our men must hold out till the end; for there is nowhere left to retreat."²⁰ Whoever won October, ends up winning the Battle for Stalingrad.

Both the Soviets and the Germans felt the importance of winning the Battle of Stalingrad and as a result the intensity of the battle escalated exponentially. As the fight for Stalingrad raged on the defense of the city was crucial, one Soviet journalist wrote, "Every day Rodimtsev's men take it upon themselves to repel twelve to fifteen enemy attacks of tanks and infantry, supported by artillery and aircraft...Not only with their brain, but with their heart, do these guardsmen know that no further retreat is possible."²¹ The Soviets had their backs against the wall, and had to hold their ground at all cost, and that resulted in them repelling twelve to fifteen German

¹⁹ Hoffman, "Diary," 416.

²⁰ "The Heroes of Stalingrad" *Red Star* (October 1, 1942): quoted in Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad: A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 275.

²¹ "The Heroes of Stalingrad," 275.

attacks in one day. With no place to go but forward, the Soviets began pushing against the Germans, gaining some of the ground back that they had a lost. Hoffman notes, "The Russians are so close to us that our planes cannot bomb them..."²² The push that the Soviets made disrupted the plans of the Germans, and their use of air force to provide support for the troops on the ground. As the Soviets began to gain some of the ground they had previously lost to the Germans, a give and take in morale can be noted. As the Soviets obtained lost ground their morale increased, while at the same time the German morale decreased as they gave up ground to the Soviets and at the same time a new idea was introduced to the German mindset, one of defeat and that also played a role in the receding morale from the German army.

As October was coming to an end, there was a distinct shift in the mentality and morale for the Germans and the Soviets. At the beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad the Germans were certain that they would take Stalingrad in a few weeks, as a result of the resolve of the Red Army, the plans of the Germans changed. Hoffman lamented, "We have lost many men; every time you move you have to jump over bodies. You can scarcely breathe in the daytime: there is nowhere and no one to remove the bodies, so they are left there to rot. Who would have thought three months ago that instead of the joy of victory we would have to endure such sacrifice and torture, the end of which is nowhere in sight?...The soldiers are calling Stalingrad the mass grave of the Wehrmacht [German army]." It is at this point where there is a distinct exchange of morale from the

²² Hoffman, "Diary," October 10, 1942, pdf, 416.

Germans to the Soviets. In the early part of October, the Soviets began to feel as though they were really going to defend against the Germans. At the end of October, the overall feeling of the German Army was “the end of which is nowhere in sight? . . .” The once proud, confident Germans were now waiting for the end of the battle to come quickly so that they might escape their impending defeat.²³

It was not long after the beginning of November that the Soviets began to realize that they were able to defend against the Germans, and they were in a position to win the battle. This idea came across when the realization that the Germans were having to reallocate their troops in order for continued attack, as a result many of the other positions that the Germans had transformed from the offensive to the defensive due to lack of reinforcements. L. Gatovsky, a reporter for the *Red Star* wrote about the reallocation of German troops. He said,

“Their losses are great: dozens of their picked divisions have perished in the Stalingrad meat-chopper. One notices a difference already: after every series of big attacks the Germans need a long breathing-space, and since they have no reinforcements from elsewhere, one sector after another of their front has to go over to the defensive.”

With the continued rearrangement of troops for the Germans and more sections were exchanged for offensive to defensive purposes the Soviets grasped that the tides had turned in their favor, which resulted in the continued increase of Soviet morale. Although the Germans were quickly coming to the face of defeat, they were not

²³ Hoffman, “Diary”, 416.

ready to surrender, and were willing to do everything to gain victory at Stalingrad, at whatever cost. Gatovsky added, "The Germans, like desperate gamblers, are throwing in more and more of their troops to get it, and are ready to pay any price for every single house in Stalingrad."²⁴ Hitler understood the necessity of capturing Stalingrad and pulled reinforcements from the surrounding areas in an attempt to be victorious at the Battle of Stalingrad. At the end of November, the morale scale had been completely tilted in favor of the Soviets. In response to the German attacks the Soviets went on the counteroffensive in an attempt to be victorious at Stalingrad. The Soviet counterattack was successful and the Red Army was able to completely surround the Wehrmacht, which left the German soldiers in utter despair.

After the Soviets had surrounded the Germans, a German defeat was eminent. This was not only known by both the German and Soviet Armies, but it was also felt, as expressed by Hoffman, "We shall obviously be seeing them [their families] next in the other world."²⁵ The morale of the German soldiers had fallen drastically from where it was on the outset of the Battle of Stalingrad. The final push of the Soviets to counter act what the Germans had acquired left the German Army feeling defeated and hopeless, as the Soviets were closing in around them. While the German morale was plummeting, the Soviet morale was beginning to peak. A diary entry from Misha expressed this peaking morale when he wrote, "The tremendous news came to-night of a great victory at Stalingrad!

²⁴ L. Gatovsky *Red Star* (November 3, 1942): quoted in Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad: A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 288.

²⁵ Hoffman, "Diary," 417.

All Moscow is excited. For the first time to-night I was able to use a blue pencil to mark on the map the German *retreat!*"²⁶ The Soviet counterattack being successful and forcing the Germans back had an extremely positive impact on the morale of the troops and the people of Stalingrad.

The Battle of Stalingrad was quickly coming to a close, with the encirclement of the German forces in Stalingrad, which cut them off from all of their supply lines, the remaining time of Stalingrad was a waiting game to see how long the Germans could hold out. In the early half of December, the enclosure had its negative effects on the morale of the German soldiers. Hoffman wrote,

"Three questions are obsessing every soldier and officer: When will the Russians stop firing and let us sleep in peace, if only for one night? How and with what are we going to fill our empty stomachs, which, apart from 3%-7 ozs of bread, receive virtually nothing at all? And when will Hitler take any decisive steps to free our armies from encirclement?"

The Soviets surrounding the German soldiers in an attempt to win Stalingrad was an endeavor to break the determination of Hitler to win, and dismantle the will of the German soldiers to fight, which took place early in December. The Soviets goal was to be victorious at Stalingrad, and they were willing to do whatever was considered

²⁶ Misha, "Diary", November 22, 1942): quoted in Alexander Werth, *The Year of Stalingrad: A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods, and Policies* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 329.

necessary to achieve that victory. At the expense of starving the German soldiers out.²⁷

As Stalingrad was coming to an end, the scale of morale had fallen in complete favor of the Soviets. The counteroffensive and a little over a month and a half of starvation left the German Army desperate, starving, hopeless, and defeated. The only hope for many of the soldiers was to become a prisoner of war because Hitler had ordered the soldiers to fight to the death, but many of the soldiers were malnourished and lacked the strength to take cover from Soviet shells. In Hoffman's last entry he wrote,

"The horses have already been eaten. I would eat a cat; they say its meat is also tasty. The soldiers look like corpses or lunatics, looking for something to put in their mouths. They no longer take cover from Russian shells; they haven't the strength to walk, run away and hide. A curse on this war!"

Hoffman cried out about the conditions that they had to experience during the Battle of Stalingrad. Not only were many of the soldiers already killed in action, but many more were also dying from starvation and malnutrition. By this time the Wehrmacht was defeated, just not officially. Since Hitler ordered for them to fight to the last man, it was not until the Red Army captured what was left of the German Army that brought the official end to the Battle of Stalingrad. The Soviets had left the Wehrmacht in shambles; one of the ways that took place was through the redaction of morale and at

²⁷ Hoffman, "Diary," 417.

the same time increasing the Soviet morale so that they might be able to successfully defeat the Germans at the Battle of Stalingrad.²⁸

On the outset of the Battle of Stalingrad the Wehrmacht expressed overconfidence and arrogance, with the feeling that they would take Stalingrad in a matter of weeks. Unfortunately for the Germans, that was not the case. The Red Army mounted heavy resistance and did not fall as easily as anticipated. As the battle raged on the Germans quickly began losing the confidence they once held while the confidence was transported to the Soviets. The Germans did not just lose their confidence but also their morale with each defeat suffered at the hand of the Red Army. These defeats for the Germans continued to feed the morale of the Soviets and give them the impression that they had a chance to hold out against the strongest army at that time. The increase of morale that the Soviets experienced in a variety of different ways gave them the strength to defeat the Germans at the Battle of Stalingrad.

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²⁸ Hoffman, "Diary," 417.

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