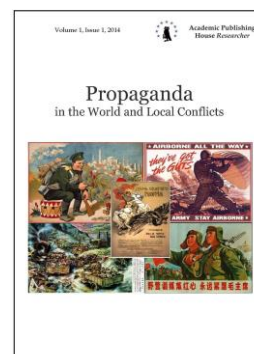


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## German Propaganda in Occupied Territories during World War II: The Case of the Town of Yeysk in Krasnodar Krai

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### Abstract

This paper explores the characteristics of German propaganda in occupied territories in the Soviet Union, more specifically in the town of Yeysk, Krasnodar Krai.

The research reported in this work was conducted using a small body of documents from the State Archive of Krasnodar Krai (Krasnodar, Russian Federation). More specifically, these materials were retrieved from the R-498 archive holding for the Yeysk Town Council.

The author's conclusion is that German propaganda materials directed at the civil population in the town of Yeysk may be divided into the following two categories: (1) prevention of infractions of law and (2) organization of civil administration in a new climate. In other words, the German leadership was focused not only on keeping up the repressive pressure on the population but also on creating a large social base among the population that would be loyal to the new order. With this in mind, the Germans were taking account of errors on the part of the Soviet authorities at local level.

**Keywords:** German propaganda, World War II, collaborationism, Yeysk Town Council.

### 1. Introduction

During World War II, propaganda was employed on a large scale by all sides in the conflict, both in the front lines and in rear areas. With that said, rear propaganda was given no less significance than front-line propaganda, as this was important in terms of mobilization and labor resources, as well as in terms of keeping the population calm in the occupied areas. This paper will examine one such occupied area. It will provide an insight into the characteristics of German wartime propaganda through the example of the town of Yeysk in Krasnodar Krai, Russia. This area was captured by German troops in the summer of 1942.

### 2. Materials and methods

The research reported in this work was conducted using a small body of documents from the State Archive of Krasnodar Krai (Krasnodar, Russian Federation). More specifically, these materials were retrieved from the R-498 archive holding for the Yeysk Town Council.

The work's methodology is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, and chronological consistency. The objectivity principle helped avoid stereotypical views and assessments, while the use of the chronological consistency principle helped gain a chronologically organized insight into the German occupation of the town of Yeysk.

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### 3. Discussion and results

The sample discovered in the State Archive of Krasnodar Krai numbers just a few large-circulation documents hung on noticeboards in the town of Yeysk during the occupation period. These documents may be divided into the following three groups: (1) orders (there are three orders available at this time – No. 2, 4, and 7); (2) documents regulating the new order in the area of land use; (3) documents regulating the organization of public order (instructions from the Mayor). The documents were produced between August 12 and December 23, 1942.

Some of the orders appear to be missing – out of at least seven documents of this type there are only three available at this time. It is known that the town of Yeysk was captured by the German army on August 9, 1942. It cannot be stated precisely when the first order for the population was published, but it is known that Order No. 2 was published on August 12 and Order No. 7 was published as early as August 13, which suggests that between August 12 and 13 at least six orders for the population were published.

These documents were produced by a man named Vorozhbeev, whom the Germans had appointed Governor of Yeysk District and President of the Town Council. It is worth understanding that, whenever control of a populated locality changes hands, there may ensue in that area a lack of governance, a time characterized by violence, plunder, and rioting. Yeysk was no exception, either. On August 12, 1942, they published Order No. 2, which bore Vorozhbeev's signature and contained a set of instructions on the organization of oversight of the population and the transition to a peaceful life. Specifically, the document stated the following: “§ 1. For the purposes of protecting the assets of both the State and private individuals, the Yeysk District Council is admonishing all citizens that any theft of property, no matter whose property it may be, much less plunder and rioting, will be considered a crime. Persons guilty of any kind of theft, plunder, or rioting will be arrested immediately and then subjected to harsh punishment. § 2. This is to advise all residents of the town of Yeysk and the District that a) no resident is allowed to move from their apartment to another apartment in order to spend a night or several nights there; a person, whether an owner or not, who lives temporarily in somebody else's apartment in violation of law will be arrested and brought to justice; b) any person entering the town of Yeysk for residency purposes is to receive a permit from the District Police Office. § 3. I am ordering the Mayor of the town of Yeysk to do the following: appoint in each quarter a quarter officer from among males; appoint in each house a person who will be responsible for enforcing compliance with relevant housing, sanitary, and fire safety ordinances; make it clear to each quarter officer that they will bear responsibility for the movement and relocation of residents of the quarter under their charge. § 4. The police chief is to instruct each quarter officer as to the procedure for checking on and enforcing housing rules in both communal and private houses, and then check on how the order is carried out. § 5. I am ordering all public service establishments and former industrial cooperatives, such as shoe-repair shops, tailor shops, barbershops, watch-repair shops, and sewage disposal services to start work on August 12, 1942. If a business does not have a person in charge at present, a workmaster, or a compeer, from it is to apply for a special certificate in order to assume management responsibilities at the facility. § 6. Retail at the town's marketplace is allowed to operate from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m.” (GAKK. F. R-498. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 2).

That same day, they published Order No. 4, which may briefly be called ‘On the Arms Handover’. It is worth understanding that following the retreat of the Soviet army there could be left in the town a large amount of weaponry, both in weapons caches and with former NKVD staff. It is for this reason that via Order No. 4 the Mayor demanded as an ultimatum that all weapons be turned over. The document stated the following: “§ 1. I am ordering all residents of the town of Yeysk and the District to turn over within a three-day period, i.e. between August 13 and 16, 1942, any arms, ammunition, and military accoutrements that they have in their possession. One is to turn over all firearms (rifled guns, hunting shotguns, Berdan rifles, revolvers, and pistols of any type), grenades, bullets, shells, cartridge cases, clips, and any explosives, as well as sabers, daggers, and sheath knives. § 2. All afore-mentioned items are to be turned over to the Yeysk Town Police Station (the building formerly occupied by the Military Commissariat). § 3. Failure to comply with this order, including through refusing to turn over the arms in one's possession on time or attempting to conceal any, is punishable by death” (GAKK. F. R-498. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 4).

Order No. 7 of August 13 takes the reader back to issues related to plunder and rioting in Yeysk in the transitional period. Specifically, the Mayor stated the following in the document:

“§ 1. I am ordering all residents of the town of Yeysk and the District who during the flight of the Reds appropriated willfully to themselves or received from the region’s former Soviet authorities for storage or use various types of assets from military, civil, cooperative, collective-farm, and other facilities, such as cattle, furniture, uniform clothing, office and shop equipment, plant and factory tools, and other inventory, to turn such assets over within 24 hours of this order being made public. § 2. 1. If such assets were taken from facilities that have resumed operation, they are to be returned to those specific facilities. 2. Otherwise, such assets are to be turned over to a representative of the District Council in the courtyard of the former First Five-Year Plan collective farm (on the corner where Efremov Street and Pushkinskaya Street intersect), while in rural populated localities they are to be turned over to the village chief. § 3. Anybody who knows the whereabouts of stolen and unsupervised assets, including machinery parts, is to inform the police about it so that these assets can be put to use with benefit. § 4. Those found guilty of concealing misappropriated assets will be punished by death (GAKK. F. R-498. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 7).

During the complex period of establishment of the occupation authority, the newly established civil Administration in Yeysk threatened the population with capital punishment for failure to comply with its ordinances. After a while, the situation in the occupied territory of the Kuban region stabilized. In October of 1942, the Commandant's Office of the city of Novorossiysk worked out and published a set of instructions for the mayors on keeping track of the population. Pursuant to the document, each Mayor was to keep track of the population and, if need be, provide the records to the German Administration. The list had to be of the following three types: (1) a list of residents who lived in the area prior to June 22, 1941, except for Jews, foreigners, former Workers' and Peasants' Red Army service-people, partisans, members of the Communist Party, and criminals; (2) a list of individuals who settled in the area after June 22, 1941; (3) a special list, which included individuals excluded from the first list (GAKK. F. R-493. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 3, 3ob.).

An issue of great significance for the population of Krasnodar Krai was the introduction of new rules on land use. On December 23, 1942, the Reichminister of the Eastern occupied territories, Alfred Rosenberg, passed a law regulating land use in the area. It was stated in the cover note accompanying the law that the text of the document was to be communicated to all stanitsa council chiefs, collective farm chiefs, and collective farm members (GAKK. R-1324. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 189).

Here is what the document stated: “New rules on land use. A. Elimination of collective farms. 1. All laws, decrees, and resolutions adopted by the Soviet Government that are related to the creation, management, and running of collecting farms will be eliminated. 2. The Charter of the Agricultural Artel will be declared void. 3. All collective farms will be transformed into community farms. B. Community farms. 1. Community farming is a transitional form from collective farming to sole land use. Community farming will be performed as per directives from the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. 2. Special regulations will be introduced regarding the organization, administration, and management of community farms. 3. The land of community farms will be cultivated in a joint manner. 4. All employable members of community farms must take part in joint work. 5. Livestock farming by members of a community farm will not be subject to restrictions. 6. Subsidiary plots that are in use by members of a community farm will be declared their private property and exempt from taxes. 7. Each subsidiary plot must be used as thoroughly as possible, and mainly for growing vegetables, fruits, root crops, and forage plants and particularly for the development of livestock farming. 8. Starting in 1942, there may be an increase in the size of subsidiary plots, which is possible as long as that does not affect the operation of the community farm. Applications regarding an increase in the size of subsidiary plots are to be filed with the Office of Community Farms, which will examine the applications and work out a special plan on subsidiary plot allotment. This plan must be approved by the District’s Agricultural Department. 9. In terms of increasing the area of subsidiary plots, the priority must be with a village’s long-standing inhabitants who have shown themselves as being good workers and possess what it takes to work an enlarged subsidiary plot. Peasants banished under Soviet power will be equated in this context with a village’s long-standing inhabitants. 10. The person in charge of a community farm will be accountable for the generation and provision of the necessary amount of produce. C. Soviet farms and machine-tractor stations. 1. Soviet farms and machine-tractor stations that used to be state property will pass under the control of the German Administration. Soviet farms will be renamed state farms (zemstvo farms). 2. Machine-tractor stations that meet relevant requirements will be transformed into agricultural facilities, which will serve the purpose of facilitating

improvements in the level of the rural economy in the area and creating the proper conditions and infrastructure for the purpose, including in terms of the cleaning and replacement of stock seeds, development of demonstration fields, use of large agricultural machinery, keeping of breeding males for the purpose of improving livestock farming, pest control, etc. D. Shift to sole land use. 1. On community farms that meet relevant economic and technical requirements, land may be divided among peasants for sole cultivation and use. 2. To shift to sole land use, a special permit will need to be obtained from the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. 3. Such permits will be granted only to community farms that have fulfilled their obligations before the German Administration, specifically those on output. 4. No unauthorized division of land will be allowed. The procedure for the use of land that was divided in an unauthorized manner after the arrival of German troops will be established by the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. Peasants found guilty of misappropriating land after the adoption of this ordinance will be brought to justice, and will be granted no land in the future. 5. A common form of land allotment will be division into strips in each field in the rotation in a community farm (Chapter E). The division of land into holdings and formation of farmsteads (Chapter F) will be permitted only if a set of special conditions have been met. Issues relating to the form of and timeframe for shifting to sole land use will be handled by the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. 6. Members of a community farm who have failed to fulfill their obligations before the German Administration or in respect of the community farm, those who have violated the ordinances, as well as those found to be politically untrustworthy or those incapable of running a sole holding, will be granted no land. All other peasants will be granted land for sole use. 7. If a community farm is allowed to divide land into strips, each peasant household entitled to land will receive in each field of the community farm's rotation a plot of land for permanent cultivation and sole use. When dividing land, it is advisable to take into account the quality of the plot's soil and the distance from the plot to the peasant's house. 8. Peasant households that are entitled to land and have at least two employable family members in them will receive plots of the same size regardless of how the family's size will change in the future. The number of family members or employable family members will be taken into consideration only where necessary for economic and food-related reasons. 9. The Land Surveying Department of the German Administration will be in charge of all land surveying work required to divide the land. E. Sole holdings based on farming partnerships. 1. Peasants receiving land for sole use in strips will form a farming partnership. A new ordinance will be issued regarding the organization, administration, and management of farming partnerships. 2. Seeding plans for fields in the rotation will be established by farming partnerships based on directives from the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. Compliance with a seeding plan across the sole use strips is mandatory. 3. Production and draft cattle, agricultural cattle for drawing equipment, and agricultural implements belonging to community farms will be divided upon their transformation into farming partnerships among groups of peasants or individual peasants as needed economically. Large agricultural machinery, tractor-drawn implements, and complex threshers will remain the property of a machine-tractor station or a farming partnership. 4. Plowing and seeding will, normally, be performed in a joint manner, with peasants entering into an agreement with the machine-tractor station or using the machinery, inventory, and draft cattle of the partnership, which they will be provided with for group or sole use from among former collective-farm assets. 5. Peasants are to make complete use of the draft cattle and inventory at their disposal that they will be using for the joint working of the land. Otherwise, the cattle and inventory will be taken away from them. 6. Sole plowing and seeding may be permitted if a peasant household have enough inventory and draft cattle to ensure the proper working of the land. 7. Following a joint seeding session, all field boundaries will be restored and each peasant will individually work the strips designated for them and will gather the crops from them, to which end the partnership's machinery could also be used. 8. Peasants are to work their strips in a proper manner. Those found to have failed to fulfill this obligation will be deprived of the plot of land granted to them for sole use in favor of others' welfare. 9. Livestock farming in farming partnerships will be conducted on a sole basis exclusively and will not be subject to any restrictions. 10. On land plots granted for sole use, an in-kind tax will be levied. This tax will be levied on each farming partnership. It will be the responsibility of each farming partnership to collect the parts of this tax from its members and then submit the produce on time. Members found to have failed to

fulfill their tax obligations will be deprived of their land plot in favor of other members' welfare. 11. The in-kind tax may be levied in such a manner that a portion of the crops subject to submission will be gathered right in the field, i.e. standing, by personnel of the machine-tractor station. F. Independent sole farms in the form of farmsteads and holdings. 1. Land may be divided into holdings and farmsteads may be created only if there are enough inventory and draft cattle to run an independent peasant farm. 2. Holdings and farmsteads will be granted only to hardworking and efficient peasants, individuals who have shown themselves as being thrifty and capable of running an independent farm in a proper manner. 3. Independent farmers will be expected to work their land in a consistent and comprehensive manner and in a manner compliant with the seeding plans and rules for agricultural practices prescribed by the Agricultural Department of the German Administration. Farmers in this category will be expected to pay the in-kind tax on time. Peasants doing a poor job of working the land granted to them or found to have failed to fulfill their tax obligations will be deprived of their land in favor of other peasants' welfare" (GAKK. R-1324. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 189ob, 190, 190ob.).

Without question, this document was introduced for propaganda purposes as well, as to a significant portion of the Soviet population the issue of elimination of the collective farms system remained highly relevant. However, in early 1943, in light of a complex situation around Stalingrad, the Germans began to retreat from the Caucasus, and on February 5, 1943, the last German units left the town of Yeysk.

#### **4. Conclusion**

German propaganda materials directed at the civil population in the town of Yeysk may be divided into the following two categories: (1) prevention of infractions of law and (2) organization of civil administration in a new climate. In other words, the German leadership was focused not only on keeping up the repressive pressure on the population but also on creating a large social base among the population that would be loyal to the new order. With this in mind, the Germans were taking account of errors on the part of the Soviet authorities at local level.

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