

## **Abstract**

The thesis argues that both Germany and the Soviet Union entered the Second World War with fundamentally counterproductive relationships between political and military authorities. The German Army sought to operate without regard to the political goals of Nazi leadership and thereby maintaining the army's traditional independence. By contrast, the Red Army, decimated by Stalin's purges, was a shell of its former self, subjected to political officers and a regime of terror that stifled tactical and operational initiative and military thought. Throughout the German-Soviet War, Nazi leadership sought to reduce the independence of the German Army through hyper-politicization and in so-doing destroyed its technical abilities, just as Soviet leadership developed greater confidence in the Red Army and allowed its officers greater freedom to prosecute the war successfully. Ultimately, it is concluded that armies must be brought to adhere to political objectives without destroying their ability to conduct operations.