

CHAPTER 4

EARLY RUSSIAN RESISTANCE AND GERMAN COUNTERMEASURES

The initial German attack in June 1941 was hardly under way before the first signs of guerrilla-like opposition appeared. There was no question of a popular rising: the mass of the people had no part in it. It consisted in the main of the continued resistance of groups of bypassed Red Army personnel, some scattered demolitions by small groups of saboteurs parachuted or infiltrated into the German rear, and the activity of hastily formed units of Communist Party members and officials of the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) directed toward maintaining some sort of political control over the natives or completing the destruction initiated by the Red Army in its "scorched earth" policy.

The First Resistance

Bypassed Red Army Units

Of the groups offering the earliest opposition, the bypassed Red Army units posed the most immediate problem because for the most part they were still armed and in many cases retained some semblance of military organization. Tens of thousands of such personnel were scattered over the rear in troop units of all sizes,¹ and while huge numbers were taken prisoner the nature of the terrain was such, especially in the central and northern sectors and to some extent on the left flank of *Army Group South* that the final elimination of all of their many small centers of resistance proved well nigh impossible. The task, which would have been difficult for even the first-line infantry units in the face of difficult and relatively unmapped terrain and inadequate intelligence, became almost insurmountable for the security divisions and police battalions that took over the job as the fighting moved further to the east. The expanse of territory to be covered was too great an obstacle, and many enemy units remained—a sizeable reservoir of manpower to harass communications. Even as early as the first days of July their stubborn resistance to mopping up operations created many critical situations, and pockets continued to appear far to the rear as late

¹ *Teil 2, KTB I, H. Geb. Sued, 21.VI.-31.VIII.41. 16407/17.*

as the middle of the month.² The nuclei of these die-hard groups were Red Army officers and political commissars, who were often part or the entire staff of units that had been ordered to set up partisan organizations when cut off.³

As early as the third day of the campaign *Army Group Center* reported that Red Army "stragglers and guerrillas" were attacking supply routes and field hospitals and striking at elements of the security divisions.⁴ And before the first of July infantry units of *Army Group North* were harassed from all sides by bypassed Red elements. Numbers of Soviet troops were still roaming the swamps and forests, von Leeb reported to OKH, many in peasant clothes, and effective countermeasures were frustrated by the expanse and difficulty of the country and by manpower limitations.⁵ Even though this activity was sporadic and unorganized OKH became seriously concerned⁶ and OKW worried to the extent of ordering captured French tanks transferred to the security divisions in the east for use against the "bandits."⁷

Parachutists

Adding to the diversion caused by the Red Army groups were small units of parachutists dropped behind *Army Group South* on sabotage, espionage, and terrorist missions. (There were no reports of similar groups being parachuted in behind *Army Groups Center* or *North*.) Interrogation of prisoners indicated that they had been assigned tasks ranging from the collection of information on German and Romanian troop units and the reconnaissance of airfields and destruction of rail lines, bridges, highways, cable lines, and pipelines at strategic spots to terrorization designed to create panic in the rear and the marking of targets for bombing raids. The groups normally comprised six to eight men, almost all of whom were former natives of the districts into which they were dropped. They had been given short periods of training in schools at Odessa, Cuipaiov, Nikolayev, or Moscow, and had received rudimentary parachute schooling consisting of one jump from a training tower.⁸ On several occasions they succeeded in blasting sections of trackage, but the manner in which they executed the demolitions indi-

² "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 204, 208, 239, 246; *KTB*, 221 *Sich. Div.* 24.VI.41. 16748/9.

³ "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VI, p. 208; *Pugatslov Interrogation Meldung* 23, *Einsatzgruppe B*, 12.VII.41. 62/4.

⁴ *Anl. z. KTB* 403 *Sich. Div.*, 24.VI.41. 15701/3; *KTB* 221 *Sich. Div.*, 24.VI.41. 16728/9.

⁵ "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 181, 183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁷ *Auszugsweise Abschrift*, 5.VII.41. (signed by Keitel). OKW/1938.

⁸ "Paratroopers and Sabotage Agents, Terrorists, and Soviet Partisans and Their Activities," *Anl. z. KTB*, LIV Corps, 24.VII.41. (Canadian trans.). 15420/5.

cated little technical knowledge of such work.⁹ Most of them were scattered widely in their drops, and few were jumped anywhere near their objectives.¹⁰

Because of the short period of training, the carelessness of drops, the small numbers involved, and the variety of objectives, the entire action was regarded by the Germans as an experiment or wild idea conceived in the heat and confusion of the early days of the fighting and not as an attempt to foment unrest among the people and instigate a resistance movement.¹¹

Communist-Led Units

Other agents were infiltrated through the lines, especially in the northern sector. For the most part these were Communist Party functionaries of the middle and older age groups who had been given the task of organizing and directing partisan activity and political work in the overrun areas. Operating through local Communist Party cells and informal groups of pro-Soviet natives, they formed a number of loose-knit guerrilla organizations and set up a communications net of sorts. These partisan units comprised some 50 to 80 men, subdivided into 10-man groups. They were headed by local party leaders, members of the NKVD border guard, and managers of collective enterprises. Twenty-two such organizations were identified behind *Army Group North* prior to 13 July.¹² Their general mission was to foment rebellion in the German communications zone, but they also offered some direct resistance in form of sabotage and launched a minor reign of terror among the natives, thereby creating considerable unrest and a decided reluctance on the part of many to collaborate with the invader in any way.¹³

Annihilation Battalions

During this same period, armed units of another type began to appear, causing some disruption along the supply lines and considerable unrest among the natives. These were "Annihilation" or "Destruction" battalions, organized by the NKVD of Communist Party members, factory workers, overage members of the Red Army reserve, and volunteers. They averaged some 100 men and women to a unit, at least 90 percent

⁹ "Final Report on Combating Partisans and Parachutists Along the Slucz River, 213th Security Division," 31 Aug 41. (Trans.). 14424/2.

¹⁰ *Anal. z. KTB, LIV Corps*, 24.VII.41. 15420/5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² "Political Report of the Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front" (German translation from the Russian dated 15 July 41), in *Anal. z. KTB. I, H. Geb. Nord*, 21.III.-19.X.41. 14768/5.

¹³ *KTB, 281 Sich. Div.*, 31.VII.41. 15954/1; *Meldung 26, Einsatzgruppe A*, 18.VII.41. Footlocker 62, folder 4.

of whom had to be party members or former members of the Komsomols,¹⁴ and the remainder reliable in a political sense. Their primary mission was the maintenance of internal security in the Soviet rear, defense against German parachute attack, and the destruction of all installations not demolished by the Red Army in its retreat. In the event of the continued advance of the enemy, they were to allow themselves to be bypassed and then operate as partisan units in the German rear, carrying out sabotage missions and waging a campaign of terror among the natives to prevent political deviation.¹⁵

They were normally formed into regiments of 10 battalions, each having its own commissar and surgeon. In addition to the commissar, or perhaps to supplement him, in each battalion there was one group entrusted with the political security of the unit with police power over the remainder. The battalions were further subdivided into five groups of 20 to 25 men each, including at least one man considered especially safe politically. A majority of the personnel wore civilian clothes, none a complete uniform. Although they were armed with Red Army ordnance, they were not trained for formal combat and were not expected to be used in the line. Under normal circumstances they lived off the land. At the end of July the 285th *Security Division* reported it had identified 10 of these regiments in its area of responsibility alone.¹⁶

The Soviets Organize the Movement

By the first days of August a definite pattern of insurgent activity was beginning to take form. The appearance of the annihilation battalions, the parachute agent groups, and the local bands formed around Communist Party cells and led by party functionaries and NKVD personnel was the first evidence of any attempt on the part of the Soviet government to set up and sustain a centrally directed irregular movement.

On 3 July Stalin had made his first public statement to the Soviet people since the German attack. In this radio broadcast he stated:

In case of the forced retreat of Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated; the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railroad car, not a single pound of grain or a gallon of fuel. Collective farmers

¹⁴ The Communist youth organization.

¹⁵ *KTB*, 213 *Sich. Div.*, 14424/4; radio announcement found 3 Jul 41 in Lwow radio station, in *Meldung 23, Einsatzgruppe C*, 15.VII.41. 62/4; "Political Report of the Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front," in *Anl. z. KTB. 1, H. Geb. Nord*, 21. III-19.X.41. 14768/5; *Meldung 51, Einsatzgruppe A*, 13.VIII.41. 62/6; *Meldung 31, Einsatzgruppe B*, 23.VI.41. 62/5; rpt 2, 14 Aug 41 (doc. 2652), prosecution document book in *N.M.T.*, *op. cit.* (Case 9); *Meldung 95, Einsatzgruppe A*, 26.IX.41. Footlocker 62, folder 5.

¹⁶ "Final Report on Combating Partisans and Parachutists Along the Slucz River, 213th Security Division," 31 Aug 41. 14424/2; *KTB*, 285 *Sich. Div.*, 31.VII.41. 14878/3; *Meldung 51, Einsatzgruppe A*, 13.VIII.41. 62/6.

must drive off their cattle, and turn over their grain to the safekeeping of the state authorities for transportation to the rear. All valuable property, including nonferrous metals, grain and fuel that cannot be withdrawn, must be destroyed without fail.

In areas occupied by the enemy, partisan units, mounted and on foot, must be formed; sabotage groups must be organized to combat the enemy units, to ferment partisan warfare everywhere, blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fires to forests, stores, and transport. In occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step, and all their measures frustrated.¹⁷

He also announced that "in order to ensure the rapid mobilization of all the strength of the peoples of the USSR" a State Committee of Defense had been set up.¹⁸ The concentration of defense powers in this new agency was necessitated by the obvious need to stiffen the resistance of the entire nation at all levels. At the top of the list was the immediate improvement of the morale and combat initiative of the Red Army. But hardly second in importance was the necessity for reasserting control over the natives of territory overrun by the Germans—and thus no longer under control of the party—where the chances of deviation from Soviet principles under German propaganda were great. And finally the need to tighten direction of the Communist Party and NKVD units in the enemy-occupied areas which had been caught as unprepared as the Red Army and had their liaison with Moscow destroyed was recognized. Such a reassertion of party domination behind the enemy lines with the clandestine reconstruction of an underground Soviet administrative and party organization there went hand in hand with the possibilities for developing an effective irregular movement under centralized control.

The effects of this tightening of control were felt almost immediately through the entire political structure of the Red Army. Reading into the continued defeats of the Army a lack of initiative on the part of the Army political commissar in matters of morale and leadership, General Mechlis, the head of the armed forces political system, on 15 July issued stringent orders that political agitation and propaganda be immediately intensified, that commissars and party members among the troops be placed in the front lines for morale and leadership purposes, and that units be made to understand that they were never to cease resisting and they had a definite mission of sabotage and terrorism behind the enemy lines should they be cut off.¹⁹ He further ordered all Army political officers to maintain an especially close relationship with local Communist

¹⁷ *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War*, trans. Arthur Rothstein (London), I, pp. 21-24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Order 81, 15 Jul 41 (signed by Mechlis) in *Anl. 11a, 29.VII.41. KTB, AOK 18. 13787/20.*

Party organizations in order to be able to expand the partisan movement in the occupied territories and incite the people there to greater heights in undermining the enemy effort.²⁰

Establishment of Partisan Combat Battalions and Diversionary Units

On 10 July the Partisan Movement was officially organized and placed under the control of the Tenth Department of the Political Administration of the Army, a portion of Mechlis' command as chief of the Main Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Red Army,²¹ which in turn was under the direct control of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Great emphasis was continually placed on the need to bring all the irregular units under the central control of Moscow at the earliest possible date.

Almost immediately the effect of this centralized control was perceptible. On 11 July²² Mechlis issued to the ranking political officers of all the army fronts and, apparently, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in all the Soviet Republics endangered by the Germans detailed orders to form partisan units.²³ These political leaders were directed to organize irregular groups in "the main zone of operations . . . where the principal units of the enemy troops [were] located." Depending on their commitment these groups were to be divided into partisan combat battalions²⁴ and diversionary units. The combat battalions were to be well armed and of sufficient strength for offensive action. Comprising from 75 to 150 men, they were to be

²⁰ Directive of the People's Commisar for Army Matters, 20 Jul 41 (signed by Stalin and Mechlis), in Wehrmacht propaganda files. *Ausland Abwehr*, Nr. 03443/41 geh. 23.IX.41. OKW 688.

²¹ Shigunov Interrogation, 14 Apr 42. EAP 3-a-11/2(C), p. 175842. Shigunov was an NKVD agent captured by the Germans. "Political Report of the Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front," in *Anl. z. KTB. I, H. Geb. Nord, 21. III-19.X.41.* 14768/5.

²² This date is rather arbitrarily taken. On 10 Jul the partisan movement came under Mechlis' control; on 15 Jul the chief of the Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front, Brigade-Commissar Rjabtschi, reported to Moscow that he had put such an order into effect on 13 Jul. See: "Political Report of the Administration of the Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front," in *Anl. z. KTB. I, H. Geb. Nord, 21. III-19.X.41.* 14768/5. Rjabtschi passed this order on to his command on 20 Jul. See: "Instructions for the Organization and Activity of the Partisan Units and Diversionary Groups," 20 Jul 41 (signed by Rjabtschi) in *OKH GenStdH, O.Q. IV-Abt. Fde.H. (II) Nr. 1600.41, 31.VIII.41*, to *H. Gr. Sued*, and annex *Merkblatt ueber Organisation und Taetigkeit der Partisanen-Abteilungen und Diversiongruppen, Uebersetzung aus dem Russischen*, in *Heeres Gruppe Sued, Ic, Russland 20. VIII.-9.XI.41.* 15417/6.

²³ See leaflet distributed to partisans by the People's Commissars, White Russia, and the Central Committee X of the Communist Party in White Russia in *Anl. z. KTB 2, 1.IX.-7.XI.41.* Korueck 553. 20383/8. This leaflet is undated, but its content indicates that it was distributed soon after Stalin's radio proclamation.

²⁴ The German translation of the Russian phrase is *Kampfabteilung*, literally "combat battalion."

divided into 2 to 3 companies and the companies into 2 to 3 platoons. The normal combat unit was to be the company or the platoon. Generally they were to operate only at night and from ambush. Their mission was to attack troop columns and assemblies, motorized infantry, camps, transports of fuel and ammunition, headquarters, air bases, and railroad trains previously halted by rail demolitions. They were to operate in regions where the terrain was broken enough or the cover was heavy enough to afford concealment for their movements and bases. They were to act only along the principal communication axes of the enemy. It was considered desirable that there be at least one combat unit per *rayon*.²⁵

In addition to the combat battalions, diversionary units of from 30 to 50 men each were to be organized in each *rayon*. These units were to consist of from 5 to 8 groups of 3 to 10 men each. They were to be so organized that the individuals comprising one group would not be acquainted with those of another. The small units were to be concentrated into a larger organization only to control their activity and to facilitate the formation of new groups in the *rayon*. Their fundamental mission was sabotage, cutting telephone lines, firing fuel and ammunition dumps, railroad demolition, and attacks on individual or small groups of enemy vehicles.²⁶

In all areas still occupied by the Red Army, the local headquarters of the NKVD and NKGB (People's Commissariat for State Security) were directed to organize annihilation battalions to combat enemy air landings. In the case of a withdrawal by the Red Army, these annihilation battalions were to allow the German attack to pass over them and then operate as partisan units in the enemy rear.²⁷

Local Partisan Units

A similar order was passed down through the People's Commissars and the Central Committees of the Communist Party in the Soviet Republics that lay in the path of the German attack to all local administrative headquarters, both urban and rural. Partisan units were ordered formed in all industrial plants, in the transportation system, and in the state and collective farms. These were to be volunteer units, formed of men, women, and youths physically capable of serving. Organizationalwise, they were to be set up along the same lines as the Soviet local

²⁵ *Rayon*—a Soviet political and administrative subdivision similar to the American county.

²⁶ "Instructions for the Organization and Activity of the Partisan Units and Diversionary Groups," 20 Jul 41 (signed by Rjabtschi) in *OKH Gen.St.d.H., O.Q. IV—Abt. Fde.H. (II) Nr. 1600.41, 31.VIII.41*, to *H. Gr. Sued, and annex Merkblatt ueber Organisation und Taetigkeit der Partisanen-Abteilungen und Diversionsgruppen, Uebersetzung aus dem Russischen*, in *Heeres Gruppe Sued, Ic, Russland 20.VIII.-9.XI.41.* 15417/6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

government. The basic unit was to be the battalion, with the battalion commanders chosen by the local party councils from among the officer reserve of the Red Army, local leaders with previous military service, and commissars of proven political reliability. Staffs for the battalion commanders were to be formed in the Jurisdictional Committees and the local Labor Councils. These battalions, further broken down into companies and platoons, were given the various missions of securing industrial plants and state and collective farms, resisting river crossings by the enemy, destroying bridges and rail lines, and maintaining liaison between partisan groups and between the partisans and the Red Army. They were to live off the country and supply themselves with arms, clothing, and signal equipment.²⁸

Early Partisan Operations

Thus as the German advance continued, the partisan groups fell into four more or less distinct categories, each at least originally independent of the others: the annihilation battalions, the groups formed by the local Soviet administrations which approximated a loosely thrown together "home guard," the battalions formed by the commissars under Mechlis' order, and a miscellany of groups of bypassed Red Army personnel. After the first weeks of the war, no effective groups of parachutists appeared for some months. By 26 August the Germans were aware that some of the partisans were in more than casual communication with the Russian rear and had established a radio net of sorts.²⁹

At best these early organizational efforts of the Soviets, made in the midst of the wild confusion following the German attack, produced only meager results. There had been no prewar planning for guerrilla warfare on a national scale and only some scattered preparation locally.³⁰

In the annihilation battalions morale was not of the best, for recruitment was often forced, even within the ranks of the politically reliable, and training was carried on after the long Soviet work day. The farther the Germans penetrated the country the greater the signs of panic and the larger the number of desertions. When leaders fled or were killed, the battalions fell apart.³¹ And the "home guard" units, which were poorly armed and trained, were never a factor. The largest unit identified as such was soon dispersed when its leaders fled.³²

²⁸ Leaflet distributed to partisans by the People's Commissars, White Russia, and the Central Committee X of the Communist Party in White Russia in *Anl. z. KTB 2, 1.IX.-7.XI.41., Korueck 553.* 20383/8. This leaflet is undated, but its content indicates that it was distributed soon after Stalin's radio proclamation.

²⁹ *KTB, 281 Sich. Div., 26.VIII.41.* 15954/6.

³⁰ See: Interrogation of Capt M. Pugatslov in *Meldung 23, Chef der Sicherheits Polizei und SD, 15.VII.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 4; supplement to Eugenev Koslov interrogation in *KTB H. Geb. Nord.* 14768/5; Shigunov interrogation, 14 Apr 42. EAP 3-a-11/2(C).

³¹ *Meldung 80, Einsatzgruppe C, 11.IX.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 10.

³² *Ibid.*

Thus the first irregular units actually were few in number; they were not overly aggressive and seldom appeared in the more populous areas or near German troop concentrations, confining their activities to forest and swamp areas where heavy natural cover provided maximum protection and where opposition was lightest. Their attacks were scattered and appeared to conform to no set pattern, the majority being aimed at the more lightly guarded secondary supply links. They made a few raids on individual German vehicles and small convoys,³³ and in several regions in the central sector were reported sabotaging installations left intact by the Red Army and terrorizing the natives.³⁴ The Soviet high command early realized that the few serviceable supply routes through the vast Russian land mass were of paramount importance to any invader and that in view of the great distances involved and the poor general state of Russian highways the greatest burden of German supply and troop movements would necessarily fall on the rail lines. Stalin, in his 3 July broadcast speech to the Russian people, could only have been echoing a basic strategic concept when he said: "In case of a forced retreat of Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated, the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railway truck. . . ."³⁵

Certainly the Soviets' reactions in this sphere indicate that they clearly saw this weakest link in the Wehrmacht chain—the utter German dependence on long and therefore vulnerable communication lines over an inadequate rail and road system—and they struck at it even in the first confused months. Between 22 June and 16 September, 447 rail culverts and bridges were damaged or destroyed by the Russians either in front of or behind the German armies and rails were broken at some 250 places. The aggregate length of blasted bridges alone was more than several thousand yards.³⁶

Just what percentage of this sabotage was due to partisan action and what to systematic devastation by the Red Army is impossible to determine. Destruction of communication facilities is normal practice for any well-trained army in retreat, and considering the generally poor state of organization and discipline within the partisan units during the first months of the war and the lack of reliable communications with the Soviet rear, it is highly probable that a large percentage of these demolitions were carried out by the Red Army in execution of a "scorched earth" policy.

In the sector of *Army Group North* more than 70 percent of all bridges destroyed were in the area before Leningrad between Lake Ilmen and

³³ *Meldung 71, Einsatzgruppe B, 2.IX.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 6.

³⁴ *Meldung 34, Einsatzgruppe B, 26.VII.41; Meldung 43, Einsatzgruppe B, 5.VIII.41.* Both in footlocker 62, folder 5.

³⁵ *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War, op. cit., I, pp. 21-24.*

³⁶ *Streckenzustandskarte, Stand vom 22.VI.-16.IX.41.* H 14/570.

Lake Peipus where the Red defenders had resisted stiffly and virtually immobilized Hoeppner's panzers for some weeks. Here probably few of the demolitions can be credited to the irregulars. Still the fact that the annihilation battalions were sent out from Leningrad in such numbers—and apparently with considerable effectiveness since as early as 3 August they controlled almost the entire area behind the *Fourth Panzer Group*—with the primary mission of destroying all important installations which the Red Army had been forced to bypass indicates that at least a portion of the demolition work fell to them.³⁷ After the middle of September, when the Russian operational units had been driven within the Leningrad perimeter, all sabotage in the northern sector must be considered to have been carried out by the partisans.

In *Army Group Center*, however, where Von Bock struck with great speed and overpowering weight of armor, the Red Army was apparently far too disorganized to carry out any planned destruction of rail facilities. Of a total of 117 bridges and culverts destroyed or heavily damaged, only 22 lay in the strategically vital entrance to the "dry route" to Moscow, the triangle Vitebsk-Orsha-Smolensk, and none were so badly damaged as not to be in use again before 15 September. Along the main supply route, the double-track rail line Brest-Litovsk-Minsk-Orsha-Smolensk, there were no bridges blown or tracks broken west of the entrance to the "dry route" triangle. The bulk of the demolitions occurred in areas exposed to partisan pressure, in the Pripyat Marshes and in the marshy forests to the south of Lake Ilmen and the Valdai Hills.³⁸

In Von Rundstedt's sector, where the German advance was relatively slow, it is evident from the area in which the demolitions were concentrated that Budenny was able to carry out considerable sabotage on the rail net. Of the 141 rail bridges destroyed, a number of them were on major connections directly to the west of the Kiev bastion and in the Dnepr bend industrial area west and northwest of Dnepropetrovsk. These must be attributed directly to Red Army action. But in the lower edges of the Pripyat along the Korosten-Mozyr line and in the Sarny-Rovno-Kovel area, where the irregulars exerted considerable pressure on the security units, there were a large number of bridges blown and long sections of trackage destroyed. The same was true in the eastern foothills of the Carpathian range and in the marshes along the upper courses of the Bug River. It is probable that these latter were due directly to irregular action. As inconclusive as these figures and the surmises made upon them appear, especially in light of the low level of efficiency of the partisans during the first months of the campaign and

³⁷ *Ibid; Lage Ost*, 3 Aug. 41.

³⁸ *Streckenzustandskarte, Stand vom 22.VI.-16.IX.41.*, H 14/570.

the fact that often the demolitions were very crudely executed,³⁹ it is evident that Moscow had ordered the bands to pay major attention to enemy communications and that a continuation of such attention was to be expected.

German Counteractions

The Security Commands

The rear area commands had been specifically charged with maintaining the supply of the field armies and guaranteeing the exploitation of the land for the immediate use of the military. Thus the task of crushing the embryonic partisan bands in so far as they threatened the lines of communication and the supply points and depots of the rear in general fell to them. Nine security divisions were available for this mission, each one comprising an infantry "alert" regiment of three battalions and a *Landesschuetzen* regiment of from three to four *Landesschuetzen* battalions and a guard battalion. Seven of the nine had an integral motorized police battalion. *Army Group North Rear Area* and *Army Group Center Rear Area* each had a security regiment of bicycle troops in general reserve while the former had an additional police regiment. *Army Group South Rear Area* also had several satellite security brigades for commitment in the deep rear and the Carpathian Mountains.⁴⁰

Basically the employment of the security divisions was the same in the three army group sectors. Generally one division closely followed the main effort of the army group, keeping the major communication axis clear of interference, occupying the key population centers along the line of advance, and furnishing local protection for the operational headquarters. The others fanned out on either side, occupying the larger towns and cities and covering the roads and railroads feeding the flank armies and the more important lateral links between units. The majority of this work fell to the *Landesschuetzen* units, patrolling the roads and rail lines and guarding important bridges, supply dumps, and the like, while the "alert regiments" either aided in clearing up the encircled pockets of Red Army personnel or were held as a mobile reserve for any serious insurgent outbreak. The police units concerned themselves with the general maintenance of order and handled traffic on the highways.

As the armies pushed farther and farther into the Russian interior and the rear grew larger and larger, and as the "alert" regiments were pulled out of the rear for front-line duty, two newly activated infantry

³⁹ *Meldung 95, Einsatzgruppe A, 26.IX.41.*, Footlocker 62, folder 5.

⁴⁰ *Anlagen z. OKH 1600, Kriegsgliederung des Feldheeres.* H 1/93b; *Anl. z. KTB, H. Geb. Mitte.* 14684/3; *Anl. z. KTB, H. Geb. Nord, 22.VI.-7.VIII.41.* 14768/2; *KTB, H. Geb. Sued.* 16407/11.

divisions⁴¹ and several SS brigades were assigned to the security commands. To furnish special protection in critical areas or to curb especially troublesome resistance, security and police units were sometimes formed into group (*Gruppe*) commands.⁴²

To further supplement these security troops, especially in difficult and unmapped terrain, units of native volunteers were recruited. The first of these were Ukrainian security units formed by the *Army Group South Rear Area* when several partisan groups early in August began disrupting communications in the southern edge of the Pripyat Marshes. Because of their knowledge of the almost trackless terrain, these local Ukrainians gave considerable assistance in rooting out the sources of trouble.⁴³ During the same period the rear area command in the northern sector organized a number of Estonian police units (*Schutzmannschaft Abteilung*) for security and antipartisan work in Estonia. They were formed into battalions of 330 men each with one German officer and several German NCO's per unit.⁴⁴

On 25 July, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the extreme western portion of White Russia were detached from army jurisdiction and incorporated into the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, and the *Army Group North Rear Area* and *Army Group Center Rear Area* were ordered to assign one security division each to the *Reichskommissar*.⁴⁵ Similarly, on 1 September the *Reichskommissar Ukraine* assumed jurisdiction of that portion of the Ukraine west of the line Slucz River, with the Romanian, Hungarian, and Slovak security units there being transferred to the command of the *Wehrmachtbefehlshaber*. On 20 October the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* was further extended eastward to the course of the middle and lower Dnepr.⁴⁶

As to the security divisions themselves, the first two months of operations indicated a number of organizational deficiencies within them which foreshadowed a decline in their effectiveness just at the time the partisans were growing in numbers and experience. Operations indicated they were not equipped for the mobile, hard-hitting type of action

⁴¹ These were the 707th and 339th *Infantry Divisions*. Both had been activated only in 1941 and had but two infantry regiments each. See: "Order of Battle of the German Army," *op. cit.*

⁴² For dispositions and movements of the security units, see the *Lagen Ost* for the period.

⁴³ "Final Report on Combating Partisans and Parachutists Along the Slucz River, 213th Security Division," 31 Aug 41. 14424/2.

⁴⁴ *KTB, Ia, 281st Sich. Div., 8.IX.41.* 15954/2.

⁴⁵ *Bhf. H.Geb. Nord, Nr. 749/41 geh., 21.VII.41.* in *KTB, 281 Sich. Div.* 15954/2. Actually Estonia continued under the jurisdiction of the Army for purposes of local requisitioning of food supplies and the security of supply lines, while the political authorities administered the country in a purely civil sense. See overprint on *Lage Ost* for 6 Dec 41.

⁴⁶ *OKW/WFSt/Abt. L. (IV), Nr. 684/41. 11.X.41., Anl. 5 z. KTB 1, H. Geb. Sued, Ia, 5.X.-26.X.41.* 16407/7.

required for success against an irregular foe. They were woefully short of motor vehicles, and those available to them were in a poor state of repair;⁴⁷ they rarely had enough gasoline or other types of supplies;⁴⁸ the personnel, being for the most part from the *Landwehr* classifications (35 to 45 years old), were proving poorly equipped physically for anti-partisan work.⁴⁹

From an operational standpoint the level of efficiency of the security divisions left a great deal to be desired. Due to the failure of OKH to prepare for an irregular rising, they were badly handicapped from the start by a lack of understanding of partisan resistance and training in methods of combating it. The operational directives issued them prior to the campaign had been drawn up without any clear conception of the type of warfare they were to face and were too generalized for poorly staffed, relatively untrained units. General missions and responsibilities had been outlined in these directives, but methodology was left completely to the discretion and initiative of the individual commanders. Initially, this lack of direction resulted at times in a "wild state of anarchy" in antipartisan operations and the unnecessary killing of numbers of innocent civilians. Coordination of effort was lacking and there was little or no interchange or pooling of information even among units of the same parent organization. Operations varied sharply according to the character of the commanders of the individual units and the qualities of the troops.⁵⁰

At best their tactical employment was desultory. Because of the expanse of country which had to be covered, they took positive measures against the partisans only when the supply lines and installations were openly threatened. Even then they stuck closely to the roads and rail lines and the urban areas, and avoided the more difficult terrain and back-country regions. Seeing little of the growing opposition, unaware of or indifferent to the possibility of a developing pattern of hostility in the rear, and victorious in a few insignificant incidents over small insurgent groups, the security units gained in confidence and foresaw an early advent of complete peace and quiet there. They felt they were winning their war and that their areas of responsibility would be completely under control in a matter of weeks or days.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *KTB*, 213 *Sich. Div.*, 31.VIII.41. 14424/2.

⁴⁸ *KTB*, 281 *Sich. Div.*, 14.VII.41. 15954/6; *Anl.* 77 *z.* *KTB* 221 *Sich. Div.*, 15.VIII.41. 16748/24.

⁴⁹ "Final Report on Combating Partisans and Parachutists Along the Slucz River, 213th Security Division," 31 Aug 41. 14424/2.

⁵⁰ *Bericht, Korueck* 582, 27.IX.41. 17262/11; *I.M.T.*, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 479-80.

⁵¹ *Anl. z. KTB, AOK 16*, 19.VII.41. 35615/2; rpt, Economic Office at Smolensk, 3-16 Sep 41. Wi/ID 2.319.

Laxity in the Rear

The lack of general security consciousness in all the German units heavily accentuated the shortcomings of the security units and made their work increasingly more difficult. The *XXXIII Panzer Corps* admitted that its troops were "too softhearted and trusting" toward the indigenous population and that as far as 13-14 miles behind the front lines suspicious individuals continually roamed the highways without check.⁵² Officers often demonstrated extreme carelessness regarding the protection of troop installations.⁵³

Passes and identification papers were continually counterfeited and successfully used.⁵⁴ A number of captured partisans obtained safe conduct passes from local administrative commanders merely by stating that they were liberated Soviet political prisoners.⁵⁵ The political commissar of the 1st Partisan Regiment reported to Moscow: "Several of our partisans, when captured by the Germans, identified themselves as escapees from the Russian regime or prisons. After obtaining identification papers from the German headquarters in Yemilchino in this manner, they reconnoitered the area and returned to the Russian lines."⁵⁶ Legal identification papers were issued civilians without termination dates which made it easy for irregulars to use them in carrying on their activities for long periods of time without hindrance; partisan reconnaissance missions became more uniformly successful and messenger service improved when it was discovered that Nazi troops would not stop or harm elderly, well-dressed people.⁵⁷ Even after considerable casualties, single vehicles continued on the road and German soldiers still roamed the countryside alone or in groups of only two or three, a condition not ordered corrected until late in September. Even then, convoys continued to travel at night when they were more vulnerable to partisan action.⁵⁸ Considerable trust was placed in village elders and mayors who were often informed of impending antipartisan operations and as often passed the information along to irregular groups. The elders were entrusted with the task of collecting all firearms from the people under their jurisdiction and only after some time was it discovered that while

⁵² *Bericht, XXXIII Pz Corps, Ic, 29.IX.41., Anl. z. KTB, 112 Inf. Div. 19643/24.*

⁵³ *Gen.St.d.H./Ausb. Abt., Nr. 2200/41 geh., 22.IX.41., Anl. z. KTB, H. Geb. Nord. 14768/3.*

⁵⁴ *H. Geb. Nord. Nr. 153/41, 8.VIII.41. 14768/5; AOK 18, OQu KTB, 3.VI.-8.X.41., Anl. 11a, quoting AOK 18, Ic, Nr. 1047/41, 31.VIII.41. 13787/20; H. Geb. Mitte Nr. 51/41, 11.IX.41., in Tgb., Ic, H. Geb. Sued, KTB 1, 1.IX.-31.XII.41., Teil 3. 16407/18.*

⁵⁵ *Anl. z. KTB, Wi Stab Ost, 16.IX.-30.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.345.*

⁵⁶ *Tgb., Ic, XXX Corps, 7.X.41. Himmler collection, footlocker 57, folder 15.*

⁵⁷ *KTB, 281 Sich. Div., 24.XI.41. 15954/2; Tgb., Ic, H. Geb. Sued, Okt 41, Teil 3 z. KTB 1, H. Geb. Sued, 1.IX.-31.XII.41. 16407/18.*

⁵⁸ *KTB, 281 Sich. Div., 19.IX.41. 15954/2.*

the weapons were being collected in many cases they were being handed over to the partisans rather than to the German authorities.⁵⁹

Security units were too often committed on the basis of old or unchecked information and mere rumors which led to fruitless dispersion of strength. It was found that the natives often reported the presence of partisans in order to obtain arms.⁶⁰ Too often the security troops when occupying a town failed to take a census of the civilian population which made it possible for nonresidents to move freely and enabled Red Army personnel to commit sabotage in civilian clothes. In one instance the failure to check civilians enabled a Russian officer in mufti to penetrate near a high German command post and gain valuable information. The Soviets found that the security units occupied only villages and towns located along the main highways, leaving untouched the more remote villages, and ordered these used as partisan strongpoints.⁶¹

It was only after captured Soviet documents indicated that the Russians had perceived and were exploiting this laxity that measures were taken at high level to correct these deficiencies. Late in September OKH issued a directive calling for stringent measures to be taken by all officers to improve security discipline.⁶²

Passive Measures by the Army

In addition to the uncoordinated and none too aggressive active measures taken by the Germans in the first few weeks of the campaign, a number of more passive attempts were made to check the growth of the partisan movement. In the latter part of July rewards as high as 3,000 rubles (\$1,500) were offered to the native population for information leading to the arrest of Soviet insurgents.⁶³ Apparently the offers brought only meager results, for within two weeks the proffered bribes were changed to threats. On 9 August it was proclaimed in one sector that any person belonging to a partisan formation, any person furnishing aid or comfort, directly or indirectly, to such partisans, or any person withholding information of partisans would be shot. As an afterthought was added the note that anyone furnishing useful intelligence on irregulars would be rewarded with cash and rations.⁶⁴ All weapons were ordered turned in and local Russian officials were made responsible for the compliance of the people. After a given deadline, all persons found

⁵⁹ Bericht, 4/260 Ls. Bn., 30.IX.41., Anl. z. KTB 281 Sich. Div. 15954/2; KTB, 286, Sich. Div., 13.X.41. 16182/3; Anl. 79 z. KTB, 286 Sich. Div., 12.IX.41. 16182/3.

⁶⁰ KTB 1, H. Geb. Sued, 24.VIII.41. 16407/17.

⁶¹ Tgb., Ic, H. Geb. Sued, Okt 41, Teil 3 z. KTB 1, H. Geb. Sued, 1.IX-31.XII.41. 16407/18.

⁶² Gen.St.d.H./Ausb, Abt., Nr. 2200/41 geh., 22.IX.41., Anl. z. KTB, H. Geb. Nord. 14768/3.

⁶³ KTB, H. Geb. Nord. 25.VII.41. 14768/2.

⁶⁴ Heeresfilmstelle, 9.VIII.41., Struge-Krasnyje. (No file number.)

in possession of firearms were to be shot as partisans. If a conspiracy was proven, entire villages were to be burned down.⁶⁵ In the Ukraine all radios, both receivers and transmitters, were confiscated, despite the absence of partisan opposition there and without regard for the loss of a valuable propaganda medium.⁶⁶ Late in August a further step was taken: in the northern sector the native male population of several critical areas was evacuated and placed in detention camps in an effort to curb unrest.⁶⁷

Prisoner of War Status of the Partisans

OKH Directives

Even OKH, weighed down as it was with directing the campaign, found itself pulled into the partisan picture by the problem of control of the huge number of prisoners taken in the successive encirclements. Due to the speed of the advance and the shortage of manpower, thousands of surrendered Red Army soldiers roamed unrestricted through the rear areas in search of food, pillaging and marauding, and often allied themselves with the partisans. The problem grew to such an extent that the rear area commands found it increasingly difficult to differentiate between prisoners and partisans, and to control the one and combat the other.

In an attempt to clarify the situation and establish a basis for separating the legal from the illegal, OKH on the advice of the Chief of the Army Legal System (*Der Chef des Heeres Justizwesens*), issued a series of directives defining the prisoner of war status of combatants and non-combatants under varying situations of belligerency. On 3 July it directed that: "Soldiers in uniform, with or without arms, are considered lawful belligerents. Those in civilian clothes, with or without arms, according to age and looks considered draftable, are to be accorded rights as prisoners of war. Civilians in mufti or half uniform found with arms are to be considered guerrillas."⁶⁸ On 18 July this was supplemented to the extent that members of partisan units, in front of or behind the German lines, when not wearing a uniform or insignia recognizable by the opposing forces, were to be considered as guerrillas and treated as such. Inhabitants of cities and villages who aided such persons were to be treated according to the same rules.⁶⁹ And further, on 25 July, individual soldiers roaming the rear areas in uniform or

⁶⁵ KTB, H. Geb. Sued, 23.VIII.41. 16407/17.

⁶⁶ KTB, H. Geb. Sued, 25.VII.41. 16407/17.

⁶⁷ KTB, WiKdo., z. b. V., "Goerlitz," 21.VIII.41. WI/ID 2.357.

⁶⁸ AOK 9, Ic, Nr. 2058/41, 3.VII.41., Anl. z. KTB, Ic, Korueck 582. 17326/15.

⁶⁹ OKH/Gen. z. b. V./Jag., Nr. 1260/41, g.Kdos. Chefs., 18.VII.41., appears as AOK 2, Ic, Nr. 1560/41, 30.VII.41., Anl. z. KTB, 112 Inf. Div. 19643/24.

civilian clothes were to be advised by means of public address systems, radio, or posters that they should give themselves up to the nearest German organization. Should they fail to do this by a certain date, to be determined by the rear area commander, they were to be considered as guerrillas and treated as such.⁷⁰ These directives were all legally well within the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war (PW's)⁷¹ and stood in sharp contrast to Rosenberg's flat declaration that the Hague Rules of Land Warfare were not applicable to BARBAROSSA since the Reich considered the USSR dissolved as a sovereign power.⁷²

Following the leads at OKH, *Army Group Center Rear Area* ordered its units to issue a proclamation stating that all Russian soldiers found west of the Berezina River after 15 August would be considered as guerrillas (*Freischaefer*) and treated as such.⁷³ When large numbers of stragglers surrendered as a result of this policy, the time limit was extended to 31 August.⁷⁴ The *Ninth Army* issued declarations to the effect that former Red Army personnel who had been forced to join partisan groups would be accorded PW status if they surrendered prior to 5 September.⁷⁵ Even parachutists, who in the first weeks of the war were all considered saboteurs and treated as such, were ordered accorded rights as PW's when captured in uniform. Civilians found with weapons or captured in or after skirmishes were still to be considered partisans and shot or hanged.⁷⁶

The same general attitude existed in the southern sector where notices were posted stating that all Red Army stragglers were to give themselves up by 18 August or be treated as partisans.⁷⁷

In September the armies received from Hitler what apparently was intended as the last word relative to the prisoner of war status of combatants in the rear areas. Russian combat troops under the command of an officer who got behind the German lines on a definite mission were when captured to be treated as prisoners of war so long as they were not a part of units which had previously surrendered. Any soldiers

⁷⁰ *OKH/Gen.z.b.V./Jag., Nr. 1332/41 g.Kdos. Chefs., 25.VII.41., Anl. z. KTB, Ic, Korueck 582.* 17326/15.

⁷¹ See: FM 27-10, "Rules of Land Warfare," pars. 9, 12, 350, 353-54.

⁷² *Erster Abschnitt: Die Organisation der Verwaltung in den besetzten Ostgebieten.* Undated unsigned paper found in the Rosenberg files outlining the organization and administration of the occupied eastern territories. *I.M.T., op. cit., XXVI*, pp. 592-609.

⁷³ *Anl. 492 z. KTB 2, 221 Sich. Div., 12.VIII.41.* 16748/10.

⁷⁴ *Bjh. H. Geb. Mitte, Nr. 40/41., Anl. 521 z. KTB 2, 221 Div.* 16748/10.

⁷⁵ *AOK 9, Ia, Ic/AO, Nr. 3600/41 geh., 18.VIII.41., Anl. z. KTB, Ic Korueck 582.* 17326/15.

⁷⁶ *AOK 9, Ia, Ic, Nr. 254/41 geh., 10.IX.41, Anl. z. KTB, Ic, Korueck 582.* 17326/15.

⁷⁷ *Tgb., Ic, H. Geb. Sued, 1.VIII.-31.VIII.41., Teil 2 z. KTB 1, 21.VI.-H. Geb. Sued, 31.VIII.41.* 16407/17.

who came out of hiding after actual combat was over and renewed the fight in the rear were to be treated as guerrillas. All soldiers who were involved in actions with a "people's war" tinge—sabotage, attacks on single vehicles, and the like—were to be considered guerrillas. Troop commanders were to draw the distinction on their own initiative.⁷⁸

The OKW Approach

The reaction of OKW to these beginnings of resistance was but an elaboration of the policies regarding the treatment to be accorded the Russian people laid down in the political and economic planning. The whole of the occupied territories had to be pacified as quickly as possible. The resistance there had to be crushed. The best method was a strict reign of terror.⁷⁹

When the security commands encountered increasing difficulty in keeping the lines of communication clear and began to request more units for security duties, the OKW reply was typical:

The troops available for securing the conquered eastern areas will, considering the vast expanse of these stretches, suffice only if the occupying power meets all resistance, not by legally punishing the guilty, but rather by spreading that type of terror which is the only means of taking from the population every desire for opposition.

The respective commanders are to be held responsible, together with the troops at their disposal, for quiet in their areas. The commanders must find the means to keep their districts in order by employing suitable draconian measures, not by requesting more security forces.⁸⁰

The approach to pacification was to be heavyhanded. There was to be no other. Resistance was to be crushed in a ruthless manner, not turned into more harmless channels.

As the weeks passed the evidences of revolt did not lessen, and in mid-September OKW took an even more repressive approach:

* * *

The measures taken up to now to deal with this general insurrection movement have proved inadequate. The Fuehrer has now given orders that we take action everywhere with the most drastic means in order to crush the movement in the shortest possible time.

* * *

Action taken in this matter should be in accordance with the following general directions:

⁷⁸ *AOK 9, Ic, Nr. 271/41 geh., 20.IX.41., Anl. z. KTB, Ic, Korueck 582. 17326/15.* This is not the Hitler directive, but a digest of it by the Ninth Army for distribution to lower echelons.

⁷⁹ *Aktenvermerk, Fuehrerhauptquartier, 16.VII.41., in I.M.T., op. cit., XXXVIII,* pp. 86-94.

⁸⁰ Supplement to Dir 33, 23 Jul 41, *OKW/WFSt/Abt. L (I Op.). Nr. 442254/41 g. K. Chefs. in "Fuehrer Directives," op. cit.*

a. It should be inferred, in every case of resistance to the German occupying forces, no matter what the individual circumstances, that it is of Communist origin.

b. In order to nip these machinations in the bud, the most drastic measures should be taken immediately on the first indication, so that the authority of the occupying forces may be maintained, and further spreading prevented. In this connection it should be remembered that a human life in unsettled countries frequently counts for nothing and a deterrent effect can be attained only by unusual severity. The death penalty for 50-100 Communists should generally be regarded in these cases as suitable atonement for one German soldier's life. The way in which sentence is carried out should still further increase the deterrent effect. The reverse course of action, that of imposing relatively lenient penalties, and of being content, for purposes of deterrence, with the threat of more severe measures, does not accord with these principles and should therefore not be followed.⁸¹

* * *

There is little evidence that these directives were carried out by the line armies. The indications are that, with but few exceptions,⁸² they were ignored and the OKH policy was generally followed in the zone of operations.

There was no attempt to soften the effect of such tactics by a change in the psychological approach. Propaganda remained negative, and even verged on the hypocritical. It was designed primarily to keep the population from joining or supporting the partisans. They were to be promised nothing. Beyond threats, warnings, and prohibitions, the emphasis was to remain on the role of the Germans as "liberators" come to create "a new system of social justice." The people in the individual Soviet republics were to be given no expectation of the restoration of their national sovereignty and no encouragement toward the development of a national consciousness. There were to be told merely that their political future would be worked out after the war. The peasantry was to be cautiously told that for the time being the collective farms were not to be broken up, that such would lead to too much economic dislocation. The one concession granted was in the matter of religion. The religious question was to be viewed as the business of the individual, to be tolerated but not encouraged.⁸³

⁸¹ *Kommunistische Aufstandsbewegung in den besetzten Gebieten, Der Chef des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht, WFSt/Abt. 1 (IV/Qu), Nr. 002060/41. g. Kdos., 16.IX.41.* in *I.M.T.*, *op. cit.*, XXXIV, pp. 501-04; *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 961-63.

⁸² See: *Verhalten der Truppe im Ostrum, Armeeoberkommando 6, Abt. Ia-Az., 7, A. H. Qu., den 10.X.41.* in *I.M.T.*, *op. cit.*, XXXV, pp. 84-86.

⁸³ *OKW/WFSt/WPr (1a) Nr. 486/41 g. K., 21.VIII.41.* OKW/1939.

CHAPTER 5

GERMAN OCCUPATION POLICIES IN OPERATION

Russian Reaction

General Conditions

In the central and northern sectors as the front passed further to the east it left the Polish and Lithuanian border areas, where anti-Soviet feelings ran high, and entered the western fringes of old Russia. As had been the case with Napoleon's army in 1812, the farther the Germans pressed their advance the more rapidly the first heat of excitement over the "liberation" cooled and the less friendly the people became.

Their mood took on a progressively negative tinge as the full import of the war began to come home to them. Those who had openly welcomed the invasion appeared to be watchfully waiting for signs of improvement in the general standard of living under their new rulers. The shortage of food and uncertainty as to future developments cast a pall on the effects of their release from the Soviet system. Many villages and cities had been almost completely destroyed, and some areas showed a "deplorable state of chaos." In the war-devastated urban areas many natives were "half-starved." Looting and stealing were rife, and few people evidenced interest in anything beyond securing enough to eat. In some regions food stocks were nearing exhaustion.¹ Beyond the Russo-Baltic States border and east of Minsk, where the people for the most part were Great Russians, a definite change was visible, and in places there were signs of genuine hostility.²

In the rural areas of the Ukraine, on the other hand, the attitude of the natives remained at least neutral as late as December even in the face of a deteriorating economic situation and despite the fact that the Germans had openly snubbed the Ukrainian Nationalist groups.³ Outside the cities there was food enough for local consumption, but in the

¹ *Meldung 40, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 1.VIII.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 5; rpt, CO, 284th Inf Regt, 96th Inf Div, 29 Oct 41. Wi/ID 2.1355. Files of the Economic Office; *Meldung 34, 26.VII.41., Meldung 43, 5.VIII.41., Meldung 71, 2.IX.41., Einsatzgruppe B.* Footlocker 62, folders 5, 6.

² *Meldung 34, 26.VII.41., Meldung 43, 5.VIII.41., Meldung 71, 2.IX.41., Einsatzgruppe B.* Footlocker 62, folders 5, 6; rpt 34, 26 Jul 41 (doc. 2924), prosecution document book in *N.M.T., op. cit.* (Case 9).

³ *Rue In Ukraine, Inspekteur an den Chef der Wi Rue Amtes, 2.XII.41.* in *I.M.T., op. cit., XXXII*, pp. 71-75.

industrial areas there was some suffering and morale was low. Although the crops were generally good and sufficient manpower was available for the harvest, the farm machinery so necessary for harvesting on other than a small scale had either been removed or demolished by the Reds and the draft animals driven off. Cattle were not to be found.⁴ This situation was accentuated by a complete lack of initiative on the part of the peasants. Unless closely supervised they would do no work beyond that necessary to fill personal needs and once they had harvested enough to carry their families through the winter they had to be driven to work further.⁵ Only rarely had they complied with Stalin's order to destroy all crops rather than allow them to fall into German hands, but groups of the younger generation in several areas instituted a minor reign of terror on their own, burning a number of farm installations and openly declaring that all barns and silos in the occupied areas would be destroyed after the crops had been gathered.⁶ Such action did nothing to improve the morale and will-to-work of the peasants, and the Germans found it difficult to combat.

In White Russia in many cases the collective farms had resumed operation but since the Germans had requisitioned all available trucks there was never enough transport to carry food supplies to the cities where the people were in need.⁷

In the northern sector matters were even more critical. Many crops were not or could not be harvested, and farmers began to fear they would be unable to feed what stock they had left during the winter. As late as November, 35 percent of the potatoes and other bulbar roots were still in the ground, destroyed by the frost.⁸ The general food situation was considerably worsened by the plundering of German troops.⁹ Despair and suffering appeared even in the undevastated urban areas, and the spectre of unemployment hung over the land. Large numbers of people in Pskov and the Leningrad region were without work.¹⁰ The "white collar" groups, which had been relatively privileged under the Soviet regime, walked the streets in most places.¹¹ The people complained that they had been misled by German propaganda. The occupation authorities countered, rather ineffectively, that the cause of short rations was to be found among the Russians themselves, in the

⁴ *Meldung 40, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD.* Footlocker 62, folder 5.

⁵ Rpt of agricultural staff with *Army Group South*, 16 Oct 41, in *Wi Stab Ost.* Wi/ID 2.1355; *Bericht, Wi Stab Ost, 26.I.42.* Wi/ID 2.317b.

⁶ *KTB, H. Geb. Sued, 27.VIII.41.* 16407/17.

⁷ *Meldung 43, Einsatzgruppe B, 5.VIII.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 5.

⁸ *Meldung 131, Einsatzgruppe A, 10.XI.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 11.

⁹ *Anl 12 z. Bericht Wi Stab, Krasnowardeisk, Okt 41.* Wi/ID 2.189; *Meldung 43, 5.VIII.41., Einsatzgruppe B.* Footlocker 62, folder 5.

¹⁰ *Bericht, Wi Stab Ost. 16.IX.-30.IX.41.* Wi/ID 2.345.

¹¹ *Meldung 106, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 7.X.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 7.

looting and destruction of food stocks by the Communists.¹² The change of popular temper became so obvious and food so short that *Army Group North*, realizing that such conditions created fertile ground for the spread of the partisan movement, early in November ordered large-scale evacuations from the worst affected areas in order to avoid possible riots and epidemics.¹³

The Communists and partisan bands did much to lower public morale even further and add to the general feeling of insecurity. With party functionaries and NKVD personnel concentrating on the cities, the partisans launched a number of deliberately designed terror attacks on small rural communities. Appearing in sizeable groups, they struck at state and collective farms, machine tractor stations, and villages, forcibly requisitioning livestock and food supplies or wantonly destroying agricultural stockpiles, demolishing machinery, and butchering cattle.¹⁴ These attacks were designed both to remove a possible source of provender for the Germans and supply the needs of the bands, and at the same time pose a constant reminder on the people that the Soviet arm was long and the hand of the party ever present. The pressure readily showed and in several districts all agricultural pursuits came to a complete standstill, so greatly did the peasants fear these raids.¹⁵

Under such compulsion the reluctance of the people to work closely with or even to approach the occupation authorities spread, and a number of partisan reprisal murders of German-appointed mayors and elders made it difficult to find individuals willing to serve in such capacities. Thus the establishment of a workable administration was definitely hampered.¹⁶ In some areas the native volunteer units were similarly affected.¹⁷ The fear of an eventual Soviet return was especially prevalent among the urban population, which had seen the NKVD at work at closer hand than had the peasants; and in areas where the German advance slowed down or the front became stabilized there were instances of passive resistance.¹⁸

Russian Propaganda

In conjunction with the terror attacks, the Soviets launched a virulent propaganda campaign. Although some of this propaganda was put

¹² *Befehl 44, Wi Stab Ost. anl. z. OKH/GenStdH/GenQu, Nr. 7732/41 geh., 4.XI.41., KTB H. Gp. Nord. 75133/32.*

¹³ *KTB, Ia, 281 Sich. Div., 3.XI.41. 15954/2.*

¹⁴ *KTB, 281 Sich. Div., 22.IX.41. 15954/2; KTB, Wi. Kdo. z.b.V. 'Goerlitz' 9.VI.-30.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.357; Anl. 58 z. Bericht Wi Stab Ost, 16.IX.-30.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.345.*

¹⁵ *Bericht, Wi Stab Sued. 3.IX.-16.X.41. Wi/ID 2.1355; rpt, econ officer with Fourth Army, 16 Oct 41, in Wi Stab Ost. Wi/ID 2.319.*

¹⁶ *KTB, 285 Sich. Div., 23.IX.41. 14878/10.*

¹⁷ *Meldung 106, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 7.X.41. Footlocker 62, folder 5; Bericht Wi Stab Ost, 16.IX.-30.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.345.*

¹⁸ *Meldung 38, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 30.VII.41. Footlocker 62, folder 5; Bericht Wi Stab Ost, 16.IX.-30.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.345.*

out by the partisan groups, the majority of it, in the form of printed material dropped from aircraft, originated with the Soviet high command. There was a leaflet "News of the Soviet Fatherland," and a newspaper published in Moscow.¹⁹ The partisans turned out smaller sheets on hand presses in the field.²⁰ During September when the offensive in the central sector came to a temporary halt, the Soviets gave heavy play to the news that the German advance was stalemated and that the tide would soon turn with the resultant return of the NKVD. All who collaborated with the invaders were threatened with assassination or trial and death after the war. No one could remain neutral; every citizen was to support the Soviet defense effort in every possible way or face the consequences. That the Red Army and the party would return was iterated and reiterated. This was not lost on the people.²¹ Wide play was given the criminal acts of the German SS and police units, and the satellite troops.²²

The people were continually urged to strike at the enemy: ". . . if the Germans wish a war of annihilation, they shall get it . . . Destroy to the last man all Germans . . . No quarter to the German Occupation Forces!"²³ And again: "Love of the Soviet fatherland and hatred of the foe are your strongest weapons. Scorn of death, your duty . . . Forge all powers of the people together for the war of annihilation against the German intruders!"²⁴

Propaganda aimed particularly at the partisans stressed the need for aggressiveness: ". . . Think of one thing; the fundamental law of partisans is attack, attack, and attack again. If you act half-heartedly and stick to your place, you will waste your strength to no purpose and deliver yourself to the enemy. Resolve on offensive activity. These are the pledges of success in the partisan war."²⁵ And such general exhortations as: "The enemy who has trodden on our soil shall perish on it! . . . May [he] find out how our soil can burn under his feet."²⁶

The people grew progressively uneasy under such psychological attacks and began to wonder at the true nature of these self-styled "liberators" with their inept policies and conflicting jurisdictions. The

¹⁹ *Meldung 90, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 21.IX.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 6; *Bericht, Korueck 559, 19.IX.-29.XI.41.* 13512/3.

²⁰ *KTB, Wi. Kdo, Pskov, 27.IX.41.* Wi/ID 2.357.

²¹ *Meldung 90, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 21.IX.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 6; *Bericht, Korueck, 559, 19.IX.-29.XI.41.* 13512/3.

²² *Meldung 80, Einsatzgruppe C, 11.IX.41.* Footlocker 62, folder 11.

²³ From Stalin's speech of 6 Nov 41 in *Banden Bekämpfung, RFSS und Chef d. deutschen Polizei, IX.42.* EAP 170-a-10/7.

²⁴ From Stalin's speech of 7 Nov 41 in *ibid.*

²⁵ Excerpt from the brochure *Soviet Partisans* ("Young Guard" Publishing House; Moscow, 1941) in *Banden Bekämpfung, RFSS and Chef d. deutschen Polizei, IX.42.* EAP 170-a-10/7.

²⁶ Russian propaganda leaflet, "Directive for Partisans in the German Zone of Communications," found 19 Jul 41 by 293 Div. OKW 1263.

German soldier, under good discipline and acting in a reasonably circumspect manner, had left a favorable impression. In his wake, however, had come the field administrative units with no well-integrated plan who were unable to either control the indiscriminate killing and looting of the police forces and the *Einsatzgruppen* or provide an adequate food supply. They wondered further at the rude treatment accorded Red Army prisoners, numbers of whom they had seen drop dead from starvation.²⁷ They were used to having every detail of their lives regulated and to being told what they might do and when they might do it. Without this close control they became restless and wondered further.²⁸ Since the radios in many areas had been confiscated, the official Wehrmacht broadcasts often went unheard and the people were uninformed of German plans for their welfare, of the German orders they were expected to obey, and of German desires and occupational intentions. There were few public-address systems in use outside the large population centers.²⁹

Such a dearth of information provided a fertile breeding ground for rumors of all kinds and played directly into the hands of the Soviet propagandists. News that the Poles in eastern Galicia and the Volhynian border areas were treated with more consideration than the Ukrainians farther to the east did little to improve matters.³⁰ Still, despite all these indications of lowering morale, the people did not go over to the partisans in any numbers and, other than Communist Party members, few showed any open antagonism.

The Partisan Movement Becomes Independent

In the early fall, apparently some time in September, the control and direction of the partisans was taken from Mechlis' command and placed under the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement. This was a new department which was to operate independently of both the Red Army and the NKVD under the direct control of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Red Army Marshal Voroshilov was its first head.³¹

²⁷ Bericht, Wi. Stab Ost, 16.IX.41. Wi/ID 2.345.

²⁸ Bericht, Wi. Stab Sued, 16.X.41. Wi/ID 2.1355.

²⁹ Meldung 38, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 30.VII.41. KTB, H. Geb. Sued, 25.VII.41. 16407/17. Footlocker 62, folder 5.

³⁰ KTB, H. Geb. Sued, 25.VII.41. 16407/17; Meldung 100, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, 1.X.41. Footlocker 62, folder 5; Bericht, Wi Stab Ost, 16.X.41. Wi/ID 2.1355.

³¹ Little factual material on the first set-up is available. See: ID, "Survey of Soviet Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence," (S) ARM-A G-2 1 SIC. OCMH, Gen Ref Br; "Organization and Mission of the Soviet Secret Service," (TS) (hereafter cited as NKVD Document). SD-9129, ID Library. This is a translation of a German appreciation of the Soviet Secret Service, made in 1944 on the basis of three years of war with the Soviet Union. The translation was made by the 258th Interrogation team and is undocumented.

Possibly as a result of this move, or at least coincident with it, the bands began to increase their activity. Although they were still far from being tight-knit military units and their liaison with Moscow and with each other was exceedingly tenuous when it existed at all, their operations started showing some semblance of order and purpose. In some cases their discipline was much improved and in portions of the central sector they followed Moscow-issued directives in both training and operations.³² Some with radios had some limited success in establishing liaison with the Red Army units opposite the German divisions in whose rear they were working.³³ A few received leaders who had been trained at special partisan schools in the Soviet rear.³⁴

Change in German Tactics

Having found that they could not operate successfully except in terrain which protected their movements and bases and made German counteraction difficult, and not being particularly aggressive in any case, the partisan bands that were not broken up by the Germans or did not melt away from their own lack of organization and discipline began concentrating in the heavy forests and swamp areas, the Pripyat Marshes, the wooded regions of White Russia, and the almost trackless area south of Lake Ilmen behind the *Sixteenth Army*. This made the organization tasks of the Central Staff much easier and at the same time presaged grouping into larger units and future operations on more than a hit-and-run scale. Even during October the demolitions in these areas were increasing, and behind the right wing of *Army Group North* the number of bands visibly multiplied to such an extent that the army commander there was forced to assign areas for partisan control to his combat divisions.³⁵

The tactics of the bands appeared to keep pace with these forward steps in organization and discipline. They seldom launched a raid without previous reconnaissance, often carried out by civilians pressured into the job, and generally struck or failed to strike in relation to the number of German troops in the area. They never remained in a district in the face of strong opposition and made every effort to avoid a standup fight. Forced from a particular sector by aggressive German action, they subsequently began raiding in another less well protected. In general

³² *Meldung 71, Einsatzgruppe A, 2.IX.41.* 62/6.

³³ *Ibid.; Meldung 97, Einsatzgruppe B, 28.IX.41.* 62/5.

³⁴ *Wi. Inspektion AOK 6, 2.XI.41.* Wi/ID 2.294; *Bericht, BfH. H. Geb. Sued.* 29.IX.-30.IX.41.; 5.XI.41. 16407/18.

³⁵ *Bericht, Ia, H. Geb. Nord. Nr. 1424/41, 2.XI.41.* 14768/4; "Protection of Troops Against Partisans and Sabotage," *12 Inf. Div.*, Nr. 604/41, 17 Nov 41 in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, *op. cit.* VII, pp. 49-51; Gen. d. Inf. Walther von Unruh, CG, Fourth Army Rear Area, "War Experiences in Russia." MS D-056. OCMH, Foreign Studies Br.

they operated in areas with which they were well acquainted and set up their bases on swamp islands and in deep forests difficult of access. They made their marches only by night and over prearranged routes. They were armed with Russian or captured German ordnance, their ammunition coming from bypassed Soviet depots or raids on German convoys and installations. Occasionally they received arms, generally automatic, and ammunition by air drop. They lived off the country, forcibly requisitioning what they needed from the natives. They deliberately attempted to demoralize the local civilians with sudden raids, rumor-mongering, and general heavy-handed terror tactics.³⁶ There is some evidence that they attempted to gather and transmit information on German troop dispositions and the locations of German supply installations, and in several instances the Germans were given reason to believe that Red Army countermoves were made on the basis of partisan-supplied information.³⁷

This improvement in the organization and operational capabilities of the bands did not go unobserved by the Germans. As early as the middle of September the security commands were aware that the resistance they faced was not of a passing nature but the opposition of irregular groups under some sort of a centralized control. They saw the fallacy in their earlier overconfidence and realized that the antipartisan tactics they were then using were faulty and that a change of method was called for.³⁸ Through observation, PW interrogation, and collation of captured documents they had been able to pinpoint the types of groups they had to contend with: the annihilation battalions, units of Red Army soldiers led by Army commissars, local groups comprising predominantly young Communists who worked on the collective farms during the day and gathered into previously established units at night to operate against German communications, and Communist Party members and NKVD personnel infiltrated or parachuted into the occupied areas on special sabotage missions or with the task of fomenting rebellion among the natives.³⁹ Of these the annihilation units appeared to be the backbone of the movement, furnishing most of the opposition. As the Red Army per-

³⁶ *Bhf. H. Geb. Mitte, Nr. 1001/41 geh., 12.X.41., Anl. Bd. II. KTB 1, H. Geb. Mitte, 1.IX.-31.XII.41.* 14684/3; *H. Geb. Nord, Ia, Ic/AO, Nr. 1198/41 geh., 14.IX.41., Nr. 1236/41 geh., 20.IX.41., Nr. 1328/41 geh., 7.X.41., KTB, H. Geb. Nord, 14768/4; Lagebericht, Wi Stab Ost, 16.IX.-30.IX.41., Anl. 58 z. KTB, Wi Stab Ost. Wi/ID 2.345.*

³⁷ *Meldung 71, Einsatzgruppe A, 2.IX.41.* 62/6; *Meldung 97, Einsatzgruppe B, 28.IX.41.* 62/5.

³⁸ *Korpsbefehl Nr. 52, H. Geb. Mitte, Ia, 14.IX.41., Anl. 125, Anlagenband II. KTB 1. H. Geb. Mitte, 1.IX.-31.XII.41.* 14684/3.

³⁹ *Anl. 1 z. AOK 16, Ic/AO, Nr. 52/41. 13.VIII.41., KTB, Korueck 584.* 35615/2; *H. Geb. Nord. Ia, Ic, Nr. 1198/41 geh., 14.IX.41., KTB, 281 Sich. Div.* 15954/2; *ltr, Bfh. Sicherheitspolizei und SD to Bfh. H. Geb. Nord., 14 Aug 41, in KTB, H. Geb. Nord.* 14768/5.

sonnel took active command, leaving the party members only political functions, these units took on something of a military tinge, becoming more active and their operations more uniformly successful.⁴⁰

To combat the partisans the security commands evolved an antipartisan blueprint founded on the basic assumption that to be successful in a rear area war they had to be as mobile and as tricky as the partisans themselves, so much so that it would be the Germans who were feared, not the partisans. Highest priority was given to obtaining accurate and up-to-date information of the bands as to location, strength, composition, armament, mission, etc., in order to obviate faulty or scattered commitment of security forces. The establishment of a reliable net of informers from the civil population—*Vertrauensleute* or V men—in each area was considered an absolute must. All information brought in by these V men was to be immediately evaluated and checked for accuracy, and all false or overexaggerated reports punished severely. High emphasis was placed on aggressiveness and general alertness.

Frontal assaults in difficult country had proved abortive, too often splitting the enemy units into groups small enough to slip through the lines of the attacking force. Mobility and surprise rather than superiority of force were believed to be the best guarantee of success, since the majority of the bands were still small. The alert regiments and SS brigades therefore were to be re-formed into highly mobile task forces of several companies each and held in constant readiness at strategic points. Roads and rail line right of ways were to be patrolled continuously in order to maintain pressure on the bands and keep them off balance. Surprise offensive operations of ample strength were to be executed in such a way that they would be unable to escape annihilation. Where a composite force of German military and paramilitary units was to be committed, a clear chain of command and responsibility was to be established prior to the action. The troops of the *Landesschuetzen* battalions and any spare police forces were to be dispersed down to platoon size over as many villages as possible so as to give support to the inhabitants against the terror raids, deny the partisans bases and food, and prevent the natives from aiding them. Once an area was considered pacified, it was still to be patrolled and important localities and installations guarded. Native volunteer units, wherever recruited, were to be used for reconnaissance and static guard duty only, and never committed in an offensive operation except as a last resort, and then under close and immediate German command. The areas surrounding important depots and rail junctions were to be evacuated of all natives, although it was realized that such a move would not necessarily allow for a reduction of the security garrison there; admittedly rail lines and highways, even when guarded and patrolled, would still be vulnerable to attack.

⁴⁰ *Meldung 97, Einsatzgruppe B, 28.IX.41.* 62/5.

A better clearing house for the assembly and collation of information on the partisans was to be set up; complete reports of all partisan actions and countermeasures taken were to be submitted and detailed interrogations of all prisoners forwarded to higher headquarters in order that experience gained might be used in future operations.⁴¹

The New Tactics in Operation

The application of these new approaches to the partisan question was fairly universal throughout the three army group sectors. Additional measures were taken by individual units. The *Army Group Center Rear Area* revamped its procedure for guarding rail lines: a battalion of security troops was assigned to every 60 miles of track, two men to each half-mile. The remainder of the battalion was to be used on patrol duty or held as a reserve. All bridges were to have a sentry at both ends with an additional guard underneath at night. Patrols were to constantly check rail connections and the inside of tracks for mines. A similar procedure was ordered for the express highways.⁴²

The armies themselves experienced no opposition from the partisans in the immediate combat zone other than scattered attacks on single vehicles,⁴³ yet they seemed fully aware of the possible effect of such action on their supply and took steps accordingly. The *Ninth Army* was particularly specific. In the combat area each corps was made responsible for security and control of the population in its sector. Patrols were ordered out to round up all village leaders and males not originally from the area. Mayors appointed by the corps were to be made responsible for registering all strangers. Passes and identification cards issued by any agency outside the jurisdiction of the army were declared invalid, and in the army area no pass was to have any value nor were any to be issued. Any partisans captured before 15 September were to be accorded prisoner of war status. Interrogation of partisan prisoners was to be comprehensive, covering data on irregular organization, intelligence system, and missions. Those persuaded to talk were to be forwarded to corps headquarters for further interrogation.⁴⁴ The commandant of the army rear area was considered responsible for all matters pertaining to partisan resistance and German countermeasures. If he became unable to control the situation, the army would take over.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Dir, BfH, H. Geb. Nord, Ia/Ic, Nr. 1198/41 geh., 14.IX.41., KTB, 281 Sich. Div. 15954/2; H. Geb. Sued. Ia/Ic, Nr. 1337/41 geh., 24.VIII.41., KTB, H. Geb. Sued, Aug 41-Dez 42, 75905; Korpsbefehl Nr. 52, BfH, H. Geb. Mitte, 14.IX.41., Anl. 121, Anlagenband II, KTB 1. H. Geb. Mitte, 1.IX.-31.XII.41. 14684/3.

⁴² Anl. 144 z. KTB 1. H. Geb. Mitte, 12.X.41. 14684/3.

⁴³ On this, see: Bericht N. 264/41 geh., 3.IX.41., Geheime Feldpolizei Gruppe 580, KTB, AOK 9. 14162/7.

⁴⁴ AOK 9, Ic/Abw/OQu, Nr. 238/41 geh., Anl. z. KTB, AOK 9, Ic, 2.III.-26.XI.41. 14162/7.

⁴⁵ Befehl, AOK 9, Ia/Ic/Ao. Nr. 254/41 geh., 10.IX.41. 14162/7.

In an attempt to penetrate any radio net the partisans might have established, an order was passed that all signal data and signal equipment captured from the partisans was to be forwarded to the chief signal officer of the army and any signal personnel captured was not to be be shot but sent to army headquarters with the equipment.⁴⁶

Convoy regulations were revamped in many units. The *XXXIV Panzer Corps* ordered that vehicles and personnel be kept close together on the road with more guards and no advance reconnaissance riders. One empty truck was to be included in each convoy to pick up all persons found wandering through the countryside.⁴⁷ Many line units had anti-partisan duty added to their combat roles.⁴⁸

In both the northern and central sectors local officials were made responsible for the good order of their districts, and reprisals were ordered in retaliation for partisan-inflicted casualties in an attempt to curb popular support of the bands. The mayors or elders of towns and villages, after a security check by the SD, were armed and given responsibility for the security of their areas, but their offices were moved to the nearest German headquarters in order that they might be closely watched. They also were made accountable for quiet not only in their community itself but for the area halfway to the next settlement. For added support, local civilians were drafted for static guard duty. As reprisal for positive partisan activity, in the *Fourth Army Area* two inhabitants were ordered shot for every German killed. In the case of an attack on an important installation three persons were to be executed. Any native who harbored strangers was to suffer a like penalty.⁴⁹ Persons found wandering in the streets after dark or found near rail or highway bridges at any time were to be shot on sight.⁵⁰

The German units in the operations zone, seeing that much of the last-ditch resistance of some of the Red Army divisions as well as the determined opposition of a number of the partisan bands centered around the fanatical leadership of the political commissars, repeatedly requested the "Commissar Order" be rescinded. As long as the commissars saw themselves faced with certain death, the *XXXIX Corps* wrote the *Sixteenth Army*, they would fight to the last because of the threats against them. Yet if the individual commissar knew that he could save his life by deserting, the inner unity of the political leadership would dissolve.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Befehl, AOK 9, Ia, Ic/AO, Nr. 284/41 geh., 25.IX.41.* 14162/7.

⁴⁷ *Befehl, XXXXIV Pz. Corps, 29.IX.41. in KTB, 112 Inf Div.* 19643/24.

⁴⁸ See: *Bericht, Nr. 264/41 geh., 3/IX.41., Geheime Feldpolizei Gruppe 580, KTB, AOK 9.* 14162/7.

⁴⁹ *Befehl Nr. 52, 21.IX.41., 286 Sich. Div., Anl. 102 z. KTB 1, 286 Sich. Div.* 16182/3; *Anl. 2 z. Befehl Nr. 25, 403d Sich. Div., 10.X.41.* 15701/3.

⁵⁰ Order of commandant of the *Fourth Army Rear Area* to *137 Inf Div* in *Lagebericht, 18.X.41., Korueck 559.* 13512/2.

⁵¹ Memo, *XXXIX Corps to Sixteenth Army, 17 Sep 41, "Possibilities of Disrupting Bolshevik Resistance from Within."* *Anl. z. KTB, XXXIX Corps.* 23584/8.

The request was passed along through OKH to OKW, but was turned down. In answer Jodl noted only: "The Fuehrer has declined any modification of previously published orders on the treatment of commissars."⁵²

In a less violent and perhaps more practical vein, OKH, to whom it had become obvious that the partisan threat would be greatly minimized and would eventually die if it were denied popular support, recommended that the armies make every effort to wean the people away from the partisan cause and as far as possible provide work for them so that there would be no idleness to breed discontent.⁵³

Antipartisan Directives

On 25 October OKH issued its first "Directive for Anti-Partisan Warfare" for distribution to all units in the east. Based on the experience and recommendations of the security commands, this directive actually offered little new information on the partisan movement and ordered only remedial measures which had been in use for several weeks in various portions of the occupied territories. It did, however, establish a uniform course of action based on experience and set up at least the beginning of a German antipartisan doctrine. Emphasis was placed on general aggressiveness, careful planning founded on extensive reconnaissance and reliable information, and swift execution in all operations against the bands, with encirclement and annihilation always the ultimate objectives.⁵⁴

This was not to be a static doctrine. The security commands were directed to supplement their activity reports with all information of value on the partisans, both general and in answer to specific queries, in order that the principles as laid down might be kept abreast of new developments.⁵⁵

Following the publication of the directive, the armies visibly tightened up their security procedures. For example, individual units of the *12th Infantry Division* of the *Sixteenth Army* were assigned areas for permanent partisan control. All villages, roads, and paths in those areas were ordered patrolled 24 hours a day and on an irregular schedule to keep any partisans there off balance. Pro-German village elders were to be installed in all communities and directed to compile

⁵² Note penciled on the margin of ltr, OKH to OKW, 23 Sep 41, in planning file *BARBAROSSA*. OKW/1938.

⁵³ Anl. z. *OKH/GenStdH/GenQu.*, Nr. 23766/41 geh., 18.X.41. in *KTB, H. Geb. Nord.* 14768/4; *OKH/Gen. z.b.V/JAG.*, Nr. 453-1332/41 geh., in *KTB, Ic, H. Geb. Nord.* 21.III-19.X.41. 14768/5.

⁵⁴ *Richtlinien Fuer Partisanenbekämpfung*, *Gen.St.d.H/Ausb. Abt. Ia*, Nr. 1900/41, 25.X.41. H 26/6.

⁵⁵ *OKH/Gen.St.d.H./Gen.Qu.* Nr. 7562/41 Geh. 29.X.41., Anl. 154, *Anlagenband II* z. *KTB 1, H. Geb. Mitte*, 1.IX.-31.XII.41. 14684/3.

a census of the population in which all individuals not native to the place were to be shown with the date of their arrival. These lists were to be constantly checked by means of snap roll calls. Collective punitive measures were to be carried out for noncompliance of orders. Natives were forbidden to travel from one village to another and no one was to be allowed to leave his community except in exceptional cases and then only with the permission of the garrison commander. Permits for such travel were to be dated and bear the route and the place to be visited, and were to be valid for but one day. All permits were to be turned in on the date of expiration and any person found on the roads without a pass was to be arrested and, if not belonging to the nearest village, executed as a partisan.⁵⁶

Effect of the Manpower Shortage in the Rear

Even with this increased awareness on the part of the Army High Command of the turn events in the occupied areas and the improved procedures for dealing with it, the efforts to establish secure control of the rear left much to be desired and did little to retard the growth of the movement. This was due primarily to the attitude of the people. Even the victory at Vyazma in October only momentarily stayed a steady deterioration of public morale and a growing hostility toward the Germans. The reasons were always the same—fear of a Soviet return, the German failure to improve the food situation, and, as ever, the land tenure question. In the central and northern sectors the individual Russian more and more was coming to look on the German as an enemy, not as a "liberator." As a result he became obstinate and disrespectful, and began to support the partisans, tacitly if not openly. The unchecked "clearing" actions of the *Einsatzgruppen* and police units, during which many people were executed without proof of Communist Party affiliation or Jewish blood, hurt the German cause immensely, and the continued pilfering and illegal requisitioning by the troops, especially that of the security units, did nothing to improve the situation.⁵⁷

In these matters there was little the security commands could do. As far as feeding the people in the devastated areas, they faced the hard and fast policies of the economic administration, and when some limited food stocks were available there was insufficient transportation for equitable distribution. There was no chance for a practical psychological approach with OKW refusing to allow the *Wehrmacht Propaganda Division* to make any open commitments on any subject; as a result many

⁵⁶ 12 Inf. Div., Ic/Ia, Nr. 607/41. 17.XI.41. in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, op. cit., VII, pp. 49-51.

⁵⁷ Bericht, Wi Stab Sued, 16.X.41. Wi/ID 2.1355; Lagebericht, Ortskdtr "Rshev", 8.XI.41., in KTB, Korueck 582. 17326/11; Anl. 12 z. Lagebericht, Wi Stab "Krasnowardeisk," Okt 41. Wi/ID 2.189.

points of difference between the occupiers and the occupied, often simple in themselves but with explosive possibilities when taken in aggregate, went unresolved. And the land tenure question was out of the Army orbit. Although the forces in the field made repeated recommendations that the state and collective farms be broken up and the acreage distributed to the peasants as a gesture of German good will, their recommendations were ignored.⁵⁸

The army and army group rear areas had been specifically charged with guaranteeing the unimpeded supply of the armies and the exploitation of the country for the use of the military. Had the natives accepted matters quietly as in Poland and France, the units originally allotted for this task would have sufficed. But with the campaign as yet unended and the partisan movement and general civilian disaffection on the rise, there were simply not enough troops available to protect the supply lines and still bring the huge territories under adequate police control.

It was strictly a problem of men and materiel. On 1 October the *Army Group Center Rear Area*, where the greatest amount of resistance existed, was responsible for the security of some 137,000 square miles of country, an area slightly smaller than the state of Texas and more than five times Pennsylvania. For this task it had available on paper three security divisions, two second-rate infantry divisions,⁵⁹ and an SS brigade. Several of the better elements of these units had been drawn into the front lines. The *707th Infantry Division*, with but two infantry regiments and only one motorized supply company, had an area of responsibility of 35,000 square miles.⁶⁰ *Korueck 582* in the rear of the *Ninth Army* covered 6,900 square miles including more than 1,500 villages plus collective farms. To secure this area it had available, in addition to headquarters personnel, 16 companies of 80 to 90 men each, a total of less than 1,400, for railroad, supply installation, headquarters, and PW camp guards. Of these, once the static details were mounted, less than 300 men remained for patrols and antipartisan action.⁶¹ On 5 October the commandant of the army group rear area reported that the security divisions and the *339th Infantry Division* were so far understrength that after static rail line guards were posted there were too few troops remaining to mount any offensive action against the partisans or exercise effective control.⁶²

⁵⁸ Op. Sit. Rpt 86, 17 Sep 41 (doc. 3151), prosecution document book in *N.M.T. op. cit.* (Case 9); rpt, *Army Group South to OKH*, 6 Oct 41, in *KTB, H. Geb. Sued.* 16407/8.

⁵⁹ The *707th* and *339th Divs* had only two infantry regiments each.

⁶⁰ Hist Div, EUCOM, "Protection of Lines of Communication in the East," 21 Apr 47, p. 3. MS D-102. Foreign Studies Br, OCMH.

⁶¹ Ltr, *Korueck 582 to Ninth Army*, 22 Sep 41. 17326/15.

⁶² Bericht, *H. Geb. Mitte*, Nr. 940/41 geh., 5.X.41., Anl. 137 z. *Anlagenband II z. KTB 1, H. Geb. Mitte*, 1.IX-31.XII.41. 14684/3.

This was accentuated by the acute shortage of transport. In *Korueck* 582 only a police battalion of three companies was motorized.⁶³ Other units were equally devoid of vehicles, although occasionally captured Russian trucks were supplied, generally without spare parts. In early October the 339th *Infantry Division* was begging for 20 captured Soviet vehicles which had been "promised" it.⁶⁴

On 7 October OKH authorized the recruiting of engineer units from Russian prisoners of Ukrainian and White Russian origin to alleviate the shortage of railway repair workers and furnish additional static guards along the lines.⁶⁵ In a further attempt to supplement these short hands, the army group rear areas were given permission to activate one trial Cossack squadron each from among prisoners of war for commitment against the bands. These squadrons were to be adequately armed, mounted, clothed, paid, and fed, and given missions against the partisans in definite areas under the command of their own officers. Detailed reports on the experiment were to be forwarded to OKW which would determine whether additional similar units would be formed.⁶⁶

The manpower shortage was especially accented by the task of controlling the increasing number of Soviet prisoners as encirclement followed encirclement. With literally hundreds of thousands of Russians being cut off and surrendering, the security commands found themselves faced with an almost insoluble problem. Shorthanded as they were, groups of PW's as large as 1,000 were usually guarded by only two or three men, and in the heavy terrain those prisoners who wanted to escape could easily do so. Large numbers of them swarmed freely about the rear looking for food and shelter, under no control whatever, disappearing at will, and all at least possible recruits for irregular units. The inability of the Germans to provide sufficient food gave them an added incentive to escape and join the underground.⁶⁷

By 1 October this situation had become so bad in the central sector that Von Bock issued stringent orders that all units taking prisoners, including armored forces, were to be responsible for their safe delivery to prisoner of war camps and that no excuses for failure to do so would be accepted. It was hoped that such a procedure would dry up a fruitful source of recruits for partisan units.⁶⁸

With the closing of the Vyazma trap on an estimated 600,000 Red Army soldiers, the PW control problem was multiplied many times.

⁶³ Ltr, *Korueck* 582 to *Ninth Army*, 22 Sep 41. 17326/15.

⁶⁴ Bericht, *H. Geb. Mitte*, Nr. 940/41 geh., 5.X.41., Anl. 137 z. *Anlagenband II* z. *KTB 1, H. Geb. Mitte, 1.IX-31.XII.41.* 14684/3.

⁶⁵ *Korpsbefehl* Nr. 59, *H. Geb. Mitte, Ia*, 7.X.41., *KTB, H. Geb. Mitte.* 16748/11.

⁶⁶ *OKH/Gen.St.d.H./GenQu., Az, Abt., K. Verw. (Qu4)*, Nr. 11/6878/41 geh., 6.X.41. in *Bfh, H. Geb. Sued, Ia*, Okt. 41-Nov. 43. 75906.

⁶⁷ Gen. d. Inf. Walther von Unruh, "War Experiences in Russia," pp. 28, 29, 39, MS D-056. Foreign Studies Br., OCMH.

⁶⁸ Anl. 999 z. *KTB, H. Gp. Mitte, 6.X.41.* 26974/10.

Large numbers of the Russians encircled there, having been told by the Soviet command that the Germans would let them starve to death, took advantage of the shortages of guards and slipped eastward through the front lines or joined the partisans.⁶⁹

The Partisan Picture Begins To Change

The failure of the final German assault on Moscow and the rapid success of the Soviet counterattack brought about a distinct change in the bases of the Russian defense effort and marked a turning point for the partisan movement. For the first time the Red Army held the initiative, and with its units exploiting the advantage the situation in the German rear took on a new aspect. Not only was the spirit of the troops and the partisan bands improved but the morale of the natives whose support they needed was strongly bolstered. And as the early tactical gains promised to develop into strategical victories with Soviet units moving through and around the German divisions, the bands for the first time were given an opportunity to make a direct military contribution. It was a small contribution, perhaps, but it laid the foundation for a more telling one later.

Concurrent with the Soviet counteroffensive in December, the attacks of the partisans, which had begun to increase in November, reached an even higher peak, accompanied as they were by widespread propaganda and rumor mongering concerning the Russian successes.⁷⁰ The heaviest pressure remained behind the *Sixteenth Army* where the northern wing of the Russian attack had driven a breach in the line along the boundary between *Army Groups Center* and *North*. There the number of rail demolitions was steadily increasing. Train arrivals in the sector averaged 35 daily on 1 December but by 14 December dropped to an "alarming low" due to partisan activity.⁷¹

A similar situation existed in the central sector. During November the bands had begun to concentrate in the extensive forests about Bryansk. As the Soviet drive developed they began hitting sharply at the railroads from this base in addition to launching numerous raids on troop units and installations behind the overextended *Second Panzer Army* and keeping the natives in the surrounding countryside in a constant state of terror. By the first of the year their numbers had so increased and their organization so improved that they completely controlled 8 of the 10 *rayons* comprising the *Bryansk Agricultural Ad-*

⁶⁹ *Lagebericht, Ortskdtr, "Wyasma," 2.XI.41., KTB, Korueck 582. 17326/11.*

⁷⁰ *Lagebericht Nr. L Wi Kdo. Bryansk, 9.I.42., KTB. Bryansk, 17.XII.41.-31.III.42. Wi/ID 2.84; KTB, Korueck 580, 24.XII.41. 16715/3.*

⁷¹ *Bericht, Wi Kdo. Pleskau, 27.XI.41., KTB, Wi Kdo. Pleskau, 1.X.-31.XII.41. Wi/ID 2.189; Bericht, Aussenstelle 51, 1.XII.41., KTB, Aussenstelle 51, 30.VIII.-31.XII.41. Wi/ID 2.277. "Halder's Journal," op. cit., VII, p. 220.*

ministrative Area.⁷² In the Ukraine, where natural cover was scarce, there were no bands of consequence in evidence outside the immediate Dnepr swamp area.

The persistent partisan emphasis was on the rail lines, although it never became overbearing during this period. The poor Russian roads had taken a terrific toll of Wehrmacht transport, and when the fall rains made all but the few paved highways virtually impassable it became impossible to move supplies by truck in any appreciable quantity. The result was an especially heavy load on the railroads. And then when the Russian rolling stock began breaking down for a lack of proper maintenance and the German engines, which had not been converted for operations at extremely low temperatures, failed to operate with anything like normal efficiency, the whole German supply system became particularly sensitive to any rail sabotage.⁷³

A comparison of the German directives issued in the northern sector in July and late in December reflect the steadily increasing activity by the partisans aimed at the rail lines. On 12 July the *281st Security Division* was ordered to place guards on the rail bridge over the Niehen, at the tunnel near Kovno, in the area west of the rail bridge near Krustpils, on the rail bridge over the Dvina at Dvinsk, and on the rail bridge north of Dvinsk.⁷⁴ On 20 December the same division ordered that the lines Pskov-Ostrov-Rezekne and Pskov-Dno be secured with all available forces in such a manner as to insure uninterrupted service. All bridges and culverts less than 40 feet long were to have double sentries, longer structures to be guarded by a squad of one noncommissioned officer and six men. All stretches of rail in closed terrain were to have one sentry every 100 yards; in open terrain one sentry every 200 yards; sentries were to remain in sight of one another. Along all stretches where partisans had been or might be expected, additional guards were to be assigned. Each railroad yard was to be secured by at least one company and all yards were to have a cleared area at least 300 yards wide around them. This security schedule was not to be deviated from, even if the last man in the division was used.⁷⁵ Ten days later the same division was so jittery that it ordered the metropolitan area about Ostrov completely fortified by 15 January.⁷⁶

It is probable that the danger was exaggerated by the Germans, their nerves strained by the rapidly deteriorating situation at the front.⁷⁷ At

⁷² *Lagebericht 1, Wi Kdo. Bryansk, 9.I.42., KTB, Wi Kdo. Bryansk 17.XII.41.-31.III.42; Lagebericht 5, Wi Kdo. Bryansk, 23.III.42.* Wi/ID 284.

⁷³ See: MS P-041r, "OKH Transportation Services," ch. I, pp. 37-43. OCMH. Foreign Studies Br; "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VII, p. 203.

⁷⁴ *Befehl, BfH. H. Geb. Nord. 12.VII.41., KTB, 281 Sich. Div. 15954/2.*

⁷⁵ *281 Sich. Div., Ia, Nr. 714/41, 20.XII.41., KTB, 281 Sich. Div. 15954/2.*

⁷⁶ *281 Sich. Div., Ia, Nr. 740/41 geh., 30.XII.41., KTB, 281 Sich. Div. 15954/2.*

⁷⁷ See: Entries for period 20 Dec 41-1 Mar 42 in "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.* At times Halder showed the effect of the pressure as much as the commanders at the front.

least this seems to have been the case during December and the first three weeks of January, for during that period supply difficulties never became so acute that either OKH or the army groups ever considered using line units to protect communications. Matters at the front were far too desperate. Rather, on 30 December, OKH ordered security units pulled from the rear and committed at the front in an attempt to restore the situation there.⁷⁸ A month later OKH considered changing the gauge of the Smolensk-Vyazma line where partisan pressure was reported to be the heaviest.⁷⁹

The Beginning of Partisan Cooperation With the Red Army

As the Red Army continued to press its advantage in the last days of January, the bands in the central sector came more boldly into the picture. With the temperature moderating somewhat—from -47° F. on 20 January to $+5^{\circ}$ ten days later—⁸⁰ they began moving northward out of their forest bases about Bryansk in some numbers and appearing between Smolensk and the rear of the *Fourth Army*. Here they joined forces with a number of Red Army parachute units dropped into the same area and were gradually pulled under the provisional command of General Belov, a Red Army cavalry corps commander who had broken through the German front with his divisions. Belov had established his headquarters at Dorogobuzh between Smolensk and Vyazma, and many of the bands set up their command posts in the vicinity. From this area a combined force of partisans, parachutists, and cavalry caused such disruption along the Smolensk-Vyazma rail line and highway, the principal supply line for the army group, that the Germans were forced to pull out elements of the *5th* and *11th Panzer Divisions* to right the situation.⁸¹

Belov, under orders from Moscow, constantly pressured these bands to increase their size and tighten up their organization in anticipation

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, VII, p. 245.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁸⁰ These temperatures are overwritten in crayon on the OKH operations maps for the dates indicated. See: *Lage Ost. 20.I.42*, and *Lage Ost. 30.I.42*.

⁸¹ "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VII, p. 263; see also *Lage Ost. 20.I.42* and *Lage Ost. 1.II.42*. The thesis has been advanced that since these airborne units nowhere attacked in closed formations they were intended to serve as cadres for and to stiffen the morale of the partisan units as well as reinforce Russian ground troops who had broken through the German lines. See: MS P-116 "Russian Airborne Operations." (Hist Div, EUCOM). OCMH, Foreign Studies Br. The *Lage Ost* maps for the period bear out the fact that the airborne brigades were widely scattered in their drops. However, considering the very tenuous liaison between the Red Army and the partisans at the time it seems more reasonable that the scattering of the parachutists was due more to Russian inexperience with airborne operations than to a design to reinforce the irregulars. It is more probable that the partisans were ordered north to work with the airborne troops.

of campaigns to come. On his orders NKVD agents and Communist Party members recruited a number of irregular personnel to be flown from an air strip at Dorogobuzh to the Soviet rear for training in special partisan schools and then returned.⁸² Belov was able to continue this control over the bands in his particular area until the late spring when the Germans with much difficulty drove him out.

In the northern sector, as the Soviets deepened the initial wedge they had driven between *Army Groups North* and *Center* and followed up with sharp attacks designed to isolate the German *II Corps* south of Lake Ilmen, the bands were able to lend material assistance in severing the north-south highway (*Rollbahn Nord*) and marooning the communications hub of Kholm. As the situation developed, a number of them operating in the rear of the *Sixteenth Army* were gradually brought under the control of a Red Army general officer who was working under directives of the headquarters of the Northwest Front.⁸³

These two instances seem to have been the first of real cooperation between the bands and the Red Army, and the fact that in both cases the lead was taken by a Red Army officer is significant. Whether Belov and his colleague farther north made their initial contact and expanded their control over the partisans in their areas on orders from the Soviet high command as part of a prearranged plan or simply because they were far-thinking, aggressive leaders is unknown and can only be deduced from what the record reveals. The evidence seems to indicate Moscow's guiding hand.

The northward movement of the bands from Bryansk to the Dorogobuzh area at the same time numbers of Red Army parachutists were dropping into the latter region appears too well timed to have been accidental, and must have been ordered by the Central Staff, followed as it was by Belov's assumption of command on Moscow's orders. Also, coincident with the Red Army offensive, signal equipment and trained communications personnel had been dropped in some volume behind the German lines, and as the attack got under way, patrols on a number of occasions had penetrated the discontinuous German line carrying directives to the larger of the bands.⁸⁴ Then toward the latter part of January as the Soviet penetrations became deeper and the German rear more out of hand, instances of regular-irregular cooperation became more and more frequent. Cadres of Red Army officers and NCO's and heavy equipment were flown into the bands via airfields under partisan control. As a result, the attacks on Wehrmacht communica-

⁸² The above was culled from a number of interrogations of partisan PW's and German intelligence estimates based on additional interrogations. See: *Tgb., 221 Inf. Div., 22.III.-17.VI.42. 22639/6.*

⁸³ Notes on conf between CofS, *Army Group North*, and CofS, *Sixteenth Army* 31 Jan 42, in *KTB, H. Gr. Nord, 18.I.-12.II.42. 75128/6.*

⁸⁴ *Meldung 156, Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, EG "A," Krasnowardeisk 16.I.42. 62/8; Fred Virski, My Life in the Red Army* (New York, 1949), p. 198.

tions, supported by antitank guns, mortars, and occasionally even artillery, began to lose some of their hit-and-run characteristics.⁸⁵

It was much the same behind the *Sixteenth Army*. There the bands almost from the first breaching of the German line worked in some sort of contact with the Russian regulars, and, as the drive developed and the Red Army general assumed direction of the action, joined actively with them in attempting to frustrate German efforts to relieve the Kholm hedgehog and reestablish control over their lateral communications.⁸⁶ In several instances the personnel of the bands were found mixed with Red Army soldiers who had come through the lines from the Soviet rear, and in at least one case a Red Army regiment furnished manpower to increase the striking power of a band.⁸⁷ So closely did the Red Army and the partisans seem to be working together that the Germans found reason to believe that the Soviet high command was attempting to raise several of the bands to the level and status of regular units.⁸⁸

The success of this cooperative venture coupled with German transportation difficulties occasioned by the bitter winter weather began to tell and by 10 February the situation had deteriorated to such an extent behind the line south of Lake Ilmen that *Army Group North* admitted that unless it could stabilize the rear of the *Sixteenth Army* and regain control of the *Rollbahn Nord* all the troop units in that sector would have to be supplied by air.⁸⁹

Early Use of the Bands as Intelligence Organs

As this early cooperation developed, Moscow saw that under close supervision valuable intelligence organs might be developed within the individual bands. With the Red Army now on the offensive the need for information of German dispositions and intentions was doubly acute. Consequently, during the winter guerrilla branches were installed in the intelligence divisions of all Red Army field headquarters to establish and maintain the closest possible liaison with the bands and work toward the establishment of a reliable information-gathering system within the over-all framework of the movement.⁹⁰ In this new role the bands were to work independently of and in addition to a number of small, specially trained espionage teams and Communist Party agent groups whose

⁸⁵ *Anl. 53 z. KTB. H. Geb. Nord, 1.I.-31.III.42.* 18320/6; *Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584. 3.II.42.*, *Anl. 52. z. KTB 3. Korueck.* 38998/2; rpt. 1430/42, Kluge to Halder, 24 Feb 42, in *KTB, Band Pz AOK 3, 1.II.-25.IV.42.* 20736/6.

⁸⁶ Notes on conf between CofS, *Army Group North*, and CofS, *Sixteenth Army* 31 Jan 42, in *KTB, H. Gr Nord, 18.I.-12.II.42.* 75128/6; *Anl. 53 z. KTB. H. Geb. Nord, 1.I.-31.III.42.* 18320/6.

⁸⁷ *Bericht, Ic, H. Geb. Nord, Maerz 42, Anl. 85 z. KTB 1. H. Geb. Nord.* 21287/1.

⁸⁸ *Bericht, Ic, H. Geb. Nord, Nr. 790/42, Mai 42, Anl. z. KTB 1, H. Geb. Nord.* 21287/1.

⁸⁹ "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VII, p. 267; see also: Telephone conversation, CofS, *Sixteenth Army*, and CofS, *Army Group North*, 27 Feb 42, recorded in *Army Group North* Hq Jnl at 1904. *KTB, H. Gp Nord, 13.II.-12.III.42.* 75128/7.

⁹⁰ NKVD Document, *op. cit.*

primary mission was to reestablish the Soviet control in the overrun areas.⁹¹

To provide close supervision and aid in the espionage work, Moscow assigned Army political commissars to the bands with which liaison had been established and a senior commissar to each assault army for the express purpose of further controlling bands in the rear of the German units facing that army.⁹² A large percentage of these commissars were NKVD personnel who, through what remained of the local police, fire fighting, and border guard organizations that had been under NKVD control prior to the war, were able to make at least a start toward setting up an espionage net.

Despite these efforts, for many months the bands played only minor roles as military intelligence agencies. The pressure of the Germans, who were still strong despite their winter set-backs, the lack of a dependable communications net, and general inexperience and lack of training as intelligence operatives precluded any real contribution on their part for some time to come. Further, there was the question of reliability of the information which they did send. Even the dependability of bands under close Communist Party scrutiny had to be proven.

Reorganization Within the Movement

The bands gained much through these first contacts with the Red Army. At least a portion of them were under Red Army control for a time and had the opportunity to work with regular units under experienced leadership. Their liaison with the Soviet rear improved somewhat. In several cases they had regular troops integrated in their ranks; some of their leaders were flown to the Soviet rear for training. Yet in almost all cases the partisan movement left much to be desired. The bands still lacked anything approaching uniformity in their organization at the unit level. Their leadership generally remained inept. Most important, they had no established chain of command and liaison with the Central Staff through which they could be brought into effective coordination with the Red Army and with each other.

It was with these deficiencies in mind that late in the winter the State Committee of Defense⁹³ sent groups of Red Army officers and cadre per-

⁹¹ For information on these units, see: Rpt, "Notes on Conference by G-2, Army Group 'B,'" no date, but after 25 Apr 42. 25124/2; statements by captured parachutists, Mar 42, in *Anl. 125 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41. 31.XII.42. 38998/2; Meldung 183, 20.III.42.* (doc. 3234) in *N.M.T., op. cit.* (Case 9); *Chef der Sicherheitspolizei, H. Gr. Mitte, Nr. 1669/42 geh. Anl. 41 z. KTB Ic. 444 Sich. Div. 25.III.-31.XII.42. 30260/2; Bericht, 207 Sich. Div., 15.III.42., Anl. 67 z. KTB H. Geb. Nord. 18320/6; Anl. Ia, z. Tgb. Ic, 213 Sich. Div., 24.IV.42., 27358/4; Anl. 52 z. Tgb., Ic, Korueck 584, Ic, 3.II.42., Anl. z. KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2.*

⁹² Captured Soviet orders in *KTB, Ic, H. Gp Nord, 15.IX.41.-2.I.43. 75131/93.*

⁹³ This was the agency set up within the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Jul 41 to direct all the defenses of the nation; military, political and civilian. Its American counterpart today would be the National Security Council.

sonnel into the German rear to reorganize the partisan groups into more uniform military forces and raise the level of their leadership so as to enhance their value as tactical units.⁸⁴ At the same time they were to set up a practicable chain of liaison and command whereby partisan operations might be effectively controlled and tied in with the over-all strategy of the Russian armed forces.

As a result, before the end of spring, three distinct types of irregular units emerged: partisan brigades organized along strict military lines and commanded and staffed by Regular Army personnel; units composed exclusively of irregulars including commanders and staffs; and home guard detachments or "self-protection leagues."

The hard core of the brigades was made up of the Red Army enlisted cadres with the rank and file composed of troops that had been cut off in the German encirclements of the previous summer and fall, irregulars selected from existing partisan bands, and picked males of draft age who volunteered or were forcibly recruited locally. Each brigade had a total strength of 1,000 to 1,500 men, formed into battalions, companies, platoons, and squads. The brigades of a particular geographical area were loosely assigned for tactical control to a higher divisional staff operational group, commanded by a Red Army general, who coordinated their actions, maintained liaison with the assault armies opposite the German units in whose rear they operated, and served as sort of an inspector-general for the Central Staff.⁸⁵ Political control of individual units paralleled that of Red Army organizations of comparable size.

The units composed exclusively of irregulars were integrated into groups similar to the brigade—and later so designated—numbering as many as 1,500 men. The strength of the individual units comprising these varied from 30 to 300 men depending on the personality and leadership qualities of their commanders. Commissars sent from the Soviet rear exercised political control. The personnel were given some training and for the most part were adequately armed.

The normal missions of both the brigades and groups were sabotage, raids on German installations and convoys, attacks on state and collective farms, and the like. In addition, both were expected to operate as reconnaissance and intelligence organs for the Red Army. Each or-

⁸⁴ Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is taken from: *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g.*, 28499/58. The specific reorganization described below was that effected in the forest area about Bryansk in the rear of the *Second Panzer Army of Army Group Center*. However, there is excellent reason to believe that the same reorganization took place in other portions of the rear. See: *Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 158 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584.* 38998/2; "Report on the Effects of the Partisan Situation," *Anl. 52 z. KTB, Wirtschaftsinspektion Mitte, 1.IV.-30.VI.42. Wi/ID 2.53.*

⁸⁵ See: *Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 1582, KTB 3, Korueck 584, 38998/2; Bericht 5, Ic, AOK 2, 15.IV.42., Anl. 362 z. KTB, AOK 2.* 23617/62.

ganization was assigned a Red Army intelligence section and a special unit of the counterintelligence agency OONKVD.⁹⁶

The brigades and groups were normally designated by the names of Russian heroes past or present or by the geographical area in which they operated. The lower echelon units were generally known by the names of their respective commanders.

The home guard units were formed one for each village in partisan dominated areas, with all men, youths, and women liable for service. Through these the Soviets hoped to instigate popular armed risings.

It was during this same general period that Voroshilov was relieved as chief of the Central Staff and replaced by P. K. Ponomarenko, a high-ranking Communist Party official who prior to the war had been chairman of the Council of Ministers of the White Russian SSR.⁹⁷ Just what was behind this change of personalities is not clear. It appears to have been a measure designed to place the partisan movement under more rigid party—as opposed to Red Army—control, for at very nearly the same time the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow was launching an all-out effort to reestablish the Communist Party in the German occupied areas, and in any series of steps taken to reassert Communist domination in the enemy rear prior to the return of the Red Army the bands would be a potent factor provided they could be adequately controlled.⁹⁸

The Bands and Soviet Strategy

With these concurrent military and political moves, Soviet strategy with regard to the German rear began to take form. One principle overshadowed all others: the Communist regime was going to return. The bands were to lend tactical aid to the Red Army as fighting units; they were to gather information of long-range and immediate tactical value, continually attack the German lines of communication, breaking rails, blowing bridges, and raiding outposts, all in cooperation with the offensive or defensive moves of the regular units; they were to prevent enemy exploitation of the occupied territories through raids on economic installations and personnel and through a general terror campaign waged among the natives. The party agitators were to expand the party in the rear and prepare a Communist administration to take con-

⁹⁶ NKVD Document, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 65, 66. This data was found in the instruction notes of a commissar of a brigade. The intelligence role of the bands was heavily emphasized in the partisan schools.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65. The exact date of Ponomarenko's assumption of command is unknown, but most sources, including WDGS, G-2, place it generally around 1 Aug 42.

⁹⁸ *Nachrichten ueber Bandenkrieg, Nr. 4, 10.IX.43., OKH/Fde. H. Ost. H 3/738.* This "News of Partisan Warfare" was a periodic summary of all available information concerning the partisan movement compiled and distributed down to division level and to the security commands by *Foreign Armies East*. As such, it constituted a digest of the best information available to the German command at the time.

trol of the natives the minute the Germans were driven out or even before, if circumstances permitted. Together with the bands they were to work to drive a wedge between the people and the enemy, undermine the enemy's control, and shorten his stay on Russian soil.⁹⁹

Morale and Discipline in the Bands

Despite the progress made toward improving the organization of the bands and raising the quality of their leadership and the level of their operational efficiency, the unit commanders found themselves continually hampered by the same problems of morale and discipline inherent in any quasi-military force. Morale and discipline remained fairly good among the former Red Army personnel, who had with considerable reason come to fear the German prisoner of war camps, the convinced Communists, and those who had been with the bands any length of time. But with the less stable elements, the lazy, lawless individuals who can be found in any country and who join only for the opportunity to plunder, and particularly with those drafted from the rural areas, the desertion rate ran high, especially if an action was prolonged. German interrogation of such deserters indicated that many more would desert if they knew they would not be executed as guerrillas.¹⁰⁰

The problem of morale was recognized in Moscow and received careful attention there. A propaganda campaign was projected with the objective of creating an *esprit de corps* in the bands and a definite sense of "belonging" to the national defense effort. The expression "partisan" was dropped from official usage and the expression "soldier of the Red Army in the rear of the enemy" substituted. Prior to the reorganization several of the larger bands were designated as armies "in the Rear of the Enemy."¹⁰¹ Special decorations were authorized for outstanding partisan work.¹⁰² Locally published propaganda newspapers extolling the exploits of outstanding irregulars were issued by political officers for consumption within the units, and the Moscow and Leningrad editions of *Pravda* were regularly received by air in many partisan-controlled areas.¹⁰³

The better organized bands demonstrated a fair degree of combat discipline. They consistently refused to allow themselves to be trapped

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g., 28499/58.; Tgb., Ic. 221 Inf. Div., 22.III.-17.VI.42. 22639; Bericht, Ic. Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 158 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2.*

¹⁰¹ *Nachrichten ueber Bandenkrieg, Nr. 1, 3.V.43., OKH/Fde. H. Ost. 3/738; Bericht 4, Ic, AOK 2, 15.IV.42., Anl. 362 z. KTB, AOK 2, Band 4. 23617/62.*

¹⁰² *Bericht 4, Ic, AOK 2, 15.IV.42., Anl. 362 z. KTB, AOK 2, Band 4. 23617/62; "Top Leadership in the Soviet Ground Forces," Intelligence Research Project No. 6549, 24 Jul 51. G-2 Library.*

¹⁰³ *Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 1582. KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2; Bericht, Ia, H. Geb. Sued, 31.XII.41.-V.42. 22571/17.*

into a standup fight against superior forces, and when enemy pressure grew too strong they carried out their withdrawals in an orderly manner and generally according to preset plans, fighting their delaying and covering actions skillfully and tenaciously.¹⁰⁴

Armament and Supply

The majority of the bands were set up under exceedingly loose tables of organization, and even after the reorganization the structure of the Red Army-led brigades and the irregular groups exhibited considerable variation. There were no tables of equipment as such. Each unit furnished its own basic needs from stock piles left by the Red Army in its 1941 retreat and from captured German materiel. These were basic weapons, rifles, machine guns, mortars, and occasional artillery pieces, and a few vehicles. The more specialized items such as automatic weapons, signal equipment, and a good portion of the ammunition other than that for small arms, were supplied by air from the Soviet rear. By the summer of 1942 all the better organized bands appear to have been well armed and supplied with ammunition.¹⁰⁵ Their materiel included light mortars, light and heavy machine guns, automatic rifles, bazookas, machine pistols, and grenades.¹⁰⁶

Air supply seemed to have been fairly steady in the larger partisan-dominated areas. There were at least three operative air strips in the Lake Polisto sector behind the *Sixteenth Army* to which ammunition and specialized items were flown and from which casualties were evacuated on the return trip.¹⁰⁷ The bands in the Bryansk area were similarly supplied, and several of the brigades there operated their own planes.¹⁰⁸

Some of the bands had Russian 76-mm guns and 45-mm antitank guns; a few had motor vehicles, and several operated reconnaissance cars, tanks, and even tank-recovery vehicles.¹⁰⁹ Whether they were able to maintain these vehicles in operating condition and supply them

¹⁰⁴ *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang, der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g. 28499/58.*

¹⁰⁵ Nearly all reports listing stocks captured from the partisans bear this out; there is no indication in the records that there were any such shortages as existed in 1941. See: *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g. 28499/58; Bericht, Kdr., 703 Wach Bn., 7.VI.42., Band 2, Juni 42, Anl. I-III z. KTB BfH, H. Geb. "B", 1.VI.-30.VI.42. 25124/2.*

¹⁰⁶ *Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 1582. KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Five planes were captured from the partisans in Operation *VOGELSANG*. See: *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g. 28499/58.*

¹⁰⁹ *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g. 28499/58; Bericht, Kdr., 703 Wach Bn., 7.VI.42., Band 2, Juni 42, Anl. I-III z. KTB BfH, H. Geb. "B", 1.VII.-30.VI.42. 25124/2; Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 582, KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2.*

with fuel is unknown, but it appears doubtful. Several operated their own railroad trains.¹¹⁰

Land mines appeared to be in good supply in many of the bands, and were used in defensive positions around base camps and offensively along the roads and rail lines.¹¹¹

As regards food, only such items as sugar, salt, coffee, and the like were brought in by air. The basic staples came from dumps left by the Red Army and raids upon German supply columns and outposts, or were requisitioned from the natives. In some areas herds of cattle were collected and held as a reserve for winter.¹¹²

The German Manpower Shortage, Spring, 1942

During the winter and spring of 1941-42 the German manpower situation in the East grew progressively worse. For the period of the campaign to 6 November 1941, the Army had lost 686,108 men in killed, wounded, and missing, and for the period 1 November 1941 to 1 April 1942, an additional 900,000 from all causes, or a total of 1,586,-108.¹¹³ Even with returnees from hospitals OKH estimated that on 1 May the eastern army would be 625,000 men short.¹¹⁴

This shortage was even more obvious in the rear, since such a condition in the line armies virtually precluded the return of the security units pulled forward for duty at the front at the height of the Soviet counter-offensive. *Army Groups North and Center* had been particularly hard hit in this respect. In the northern sector, of 34 battalions originally assigned to the security command there for anti-partisan work, all but 4 had been pulled into the front lines, with the result that no forces were available for offensive operations against the bands and only native Baltic units for rail line guard and patrol.¹¹⁵ Whereas previously all bridges behind the *Sixteenth Army* had been guarded, the security command there became so short of men that guard details were pulled off all spans less than 45 feet long, and 14 bridges totaling more than 500 yards, on which sentries were maintained, were covered with a total armament

¹¹⁰ *Bericht, Bfh, H. Geb. "B", Nr. 195/42, 1. VI.-30.VI.42., Anl. z. KTB H. Geb. "B".* 25124/1. *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g., 28499/58.*

¹¹¹ *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g., 28499/58; Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Bericht, Ic, Korueck 584, 22.VI.42., Anl. 1582. KTB 3, Korueck 584. 38998/2.*

¹¹² *Bericht, Ic, AOK 16, 4.VIII.42., KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75128/13; Bericht, AOK 16, 13.IX.42., KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75128/14.*

¹¹³ "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VII, p. 160; "A Study of the Employment of German Manpower, 1933-1945," app. 3. CRS, TAG.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Lagebericht, Ic, Feb 42, Anl. 37 z. KTB, H. Geb. Nord. 1.I.-31.III.42. 18320/6; Lagebericht, Korueck 584, 22.I.42., Anl. 39 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41.-31.XII.42. 38998/2.*

of but 14 light machine guns.¹¹⁶ The situation was equally pinching behind *Army Group Center*.¹¹⁷

The few Baltic and Ukrainian volunteer battalions organized during the previous fall having proved reliable, OKH in January, as a partial solution to this security troop shortage, had recommended that additional native units be enlisted from among anti-Soviet inhabitants and reliable former prisoners of war.¹¹⁸ An enlistment campaign had then been initiated and a number of units of 100 to 150 men each, "Centuries" (*Hundertschaften*), were formed from among Baltic, Ukrainian, Cossack, and Tartar natives, many of whom had previously indicated their desire to enlist.¹¹⁹ They were cadred from experienced military police battalions and armed with captured Russian materiel. After training and some security work under close supervision, they were committed as rail line patrols and bridge guards, but not in areas where partisan pressure was heavy.¹²⁰

Despite the fact that Berlin was fully aware of the state of affairs in the rear areas,¹²¹ Hitler on 10 February ordered that no further native combat units were to be organized by the Army for antipartisan work, and that those already formed were not to be committed in active roles. He further directed that the ultimate control of the native units, even in the army group rear areas, was to lie with the higher SS and police chief (who was Himmler's representative) in each army group, and not with the Army Security Commands.¹²² This prohibition, however, did not apply to the enlistment of local civilians in police units in the *Reichskommissariate* where they would be under Himmler's direct control.¹²³

OKH appealed this decision but was turned down, although combat and security units comprising Tartars, Caucasians, Georgians, Armenians, and Turkestani were specifically excepted from the prohibition, and units already enlisted and in service were allowed to continue.¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ *Befehl 19, Korueck 584, 4.II.42., Anl. 55 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41.-31.XII.42.* 38998/2; *Korueck 584 to Sixteenth Army, 31 Jan 42, in Anl. 49, z. KTB 3, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41.-31.XII.42.* 38998/2.

¹¹⁷ *Bericht, H. Gr. Mitte, Nr. 1430/42 geh., 24.II.42., Anl. z. KTB, Ia, Pz AOK 3. 20736/6.*

¹¹⁸ *OKH/Gen.St.d.H./Org. Abt., Nr. 213/42 geh., 9.I.42. in KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75131/94.*

¹¹⁹ *Bericht, Ic, 213 Sich. Div., 14.XI.41, in KTB, 213 Sich. Div. 14424/4; OKW/WFSt/Qu (II), Nr. 00738/42, 23.II.42. in KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75131/94; (doc. 628), prosecution document book in N.M.T., op. cit. (Case 9).*

¹²⁰ *Korueck 584 to Sixteenth Army, 8 Mar 42, in Anl. 89 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41.-31.XII.42.* 38998/2.

¹²¹ *The Goebbels Diaries*, ed. Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948), p. 195.

¹²² *OKH/Gen.St.d.H./Gen.Qu/Org. Abt. (II), Nr. 736/42 in KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75131/94.*

¹²³ *OKW/WFSt/Qu (II), Nr. 00738/42, 23.II.42. in KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75131/94.*

¹²⁴ *OKH/Gen.St.d.H./Gen.Qu/Org. Abt. (II), Nr. 1349/42 g. Kdos., 24.III.42. in KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 75131/94.*

The army groups, needing security troops badly, requested Himmler through OKH to release to them those native units under SS control in the *Reichskommissariate*, but they were rebuked.¹²⁵

Thus frustrated in its attempt to solve the manpower problem locally, OKH transferred two Hungarian security brigades from the southern sector to *Army Group Center Rear Area*. This move did little to restore matters, however, for some 30 percent of the personnel were untrained Carpatho-Ukrainians and the remainder second-rate reserves, the units were poorly equipped, and their indiscriminate looting and sharp repressive measures quickly turned the natives against them.¹²⁶ SS and SD units venturing into the rear areas from the *Reichskommissariate* were sometimes unceremoniously pressed into the fight; the forced enlistment of several SD intelligence and reconnaissance teams brought a sharp reaction from Himmler's headquarters.¹²⁷ Later several of the rear area commanders even went to the extreme of taking all draft age Germans working as civilians in administrative capacities in the *Reichskommissariat* and assigning them to alert forces or as leaders of native units.¹²⁸ As a further source of manpower *Army Group North* proposed that field training divisions of the *Replacement Army* be transferred from the Zone of the Interior to the east where they might complete their training in more realistic surroundings and at the same time release security and police forces from static employment for commitment against the bands.¹²⁹

Even in the face of Hitler's pronouncement against the use of indigenous units, the rear area commanders continued to throw all available troops, native and German, into the fight against the bands. The performance of some of the "Centuries," especially Finnish, Estonian, and Russian, was generally good initially, but poor tactical employment and logistical support on the part of the security commands gradually began to impair their efficiency. Clothing, especially shoes, deteriorated during the bitter winter weather and was not replaced, and this combined with the lack of food other than the standard German emergency ration and the equipment necessary for preparing hot meals did much to lower their morale and operational value. Despite the fact that somewhat the same conditions were prevalent in all Wehrmacht units at the time, the indigenous troops felt forgotten and neglected and quickly tended to

¹²⁵ OKH to *Army Group North*, 23 Apr 42, in *KTB, H. Gr. Nord, 1.IV.-30.IV.42.* 75128/9.

¹²⁶ *Bericht 3, AOK 2, Ic, 30.III.42., Anl 331 z. KTB AOK 2, Ic, Band IV, 1.IV.-30.IV.42.* 23617/62.

¹²⁷ Entry for 26 May 42, in *KTB, 207 Sich. Div., 1.I.-31.XII.42.* 33300/1.

¹²⁸ *Bericht, H. Geb. Nord, 3.VIII.42., in KTB, H. Gr. Nord, 1.VIII.-31.VIII.42., 3060.* 75128/13.

¹²⁹ *Army Group North to OKH*, 10 May 42, in *KTB, H. Gr. Nord. 1.V.-30.V.42.* p. 1998. 75128/10.

lose any sense of obligation they may have felt toward the German command.¹³⁰ Units were committed piecemeal and with inadequate training; nor was there provision made for casualty replacement. Some battalion commanders were without transportation of any sort, even animal, and frequently were out of contact with elements of their commands for long periods of time. There was no set chain of command, units being subordinated to any higher echelon in a hodge-podge fashion. Liaison with higher headquarters was generally inadequate.¹³¹

Fundamentally, the fault lay in the basic planning for the security of the occupied territories and in the breakdown of the whole Wehrmacht supply system during the winter. But the feeling ran through the rear area commands that since "Centuries" were ultimately under the command of the higher SS and police chiefs and might be pulled from under Wehrmacht jurisdiction at any time without notice, despite the fact that the Army had enlisted, equipped and trained them, they should be placed low on the logistical priority list.¹³²

When the advent of the spring muddy period brought a slackening of irregular pressure, several of the *Koruecks* pulled their native units out for reorganization and short courses of intensive training. They relieved many unqualified officers and noncommissioned officers and made efforts to improve conditions of supply, pay and allowances.¹³³ This practice was not uniform throughout all the rear areas.

Late in the spring another factor entered the picture threatening to further weaken the security commands. Most of the native units had been mustered in on a short-term basis, and considering the generally low state of their morals it was feared they would quickly disintegrate when individual terms of service expired.¹³⁴ The Germans solved this problem, however, by summarily extending the enlistments for the duration of the war and making the personnel subject to the Articles of War and thus liable to death for desertion.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Tlg, CO, *Lith Security Bn* at Kovno, to CG, *Korueck 584*, 10 Mar 42, in *Anl. 92 z. KTB, Korueck 584, 17.XII.41.-31.XII.42.* 38998/2.

¹³¹ Rpt on condition of the Lithuanian Security Bns, 3 May 42, in *Anl. 126 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584.* 38998/2; rpt of foreign units, 7 May 42, in *Anl. 825 z. KTB 1, Korueck 583.* 34735/2.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Rpt on the condition of the Lithuanian Security Bns, 3 May 42, in *Anl. 126 z. KTB 3, Korueck 584.* 38998/2.

¹³⁴ Ltr, CO, *Field Admin HQ 197*, to *Army Group South Rear Area*, 10 Jul 42, in *KTB, H. Geb. "B".* 25124/8; ltr, No. 465/42, *Army Group North Rear Area* to *Army Group North*, 15 Jun 42, in *KTB, H. Gr Nord.* 75131/94.

¹³⁵ Tgb., Ic, *339 Inf. Div., 16.VIII.-21.VIII.42.* Anl. 1 z. *KTB 8, 339 Inf. Div., 26.VII.-31.XII.42.* 29087/20; *AOK 9, Nr. 4324/42, 26.IX.42., Landeseigene Verbende, Anlagenband IV, Armee Befehle und Verfuegungen, AOK 9, 1.IX.-7.X.42.* 26791/8.

About this time help came from another source. In the fall of 1941, as the Red Army fell back before the German October offensive, a violently anti-Communist Russian named Voskoboinikov had gathered a sizable group of anti-Soviet natives under his command and taken over control of a portion of the forest south of Bryansk. When the partisans began to concentrate in the region, Voskoboinikov came to the attention of Moscow, and Soviet agents were parachuted in who assassinated him. The leadership of the group then fell to Bronislav Kaminski, a Russian engineer of Polish extraction who had fallen from grace prior to the war and served a penal sentence in Siberia.¹³⁶ Kaminski, taking the lead from his predecessor, centered his aspirations on the overthrow of the Stalin regime and the founding of a new Russia under a Russian National Socialist Party in which there would be no collectives and the church would be free of political pressure.¹³⁷

The first active German contact with the Kaminski organization was in January 1942 when railway repair troops, who were under constant pressure from the partisans, encountered a heavily armed group of Russians wearing white arm bands with a St. George's cross on them. A bitter enemy of the Red Army, Kaminski since assuming command had built an organization of some 1,400 well-armed men, and was waging a constant war against the partisans in his area. He controlled much of the territory south of Bryansk and during this first winter of the war aided the Germans in keeping the rail lines throughout the area operational.¹³⁸

By the summer of 1942 his command had grown to a strength of more than 9,000 men, well-armed, with good transport, and under strict discipline. Although very jealous of his sovereign rights, he willingly cooperated with the German authorities in their fight with the bands. In the face of the growing partisan movement the Germans saw the obvious advantages to be gained from fostering Kaminski, and in July made him chief mayor (*Oberbuergermeister*) of the Autonomous Administration Lokot, an extensive jurisdiction comprising eight *rayons*, and brigade commander of the militia.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ MS #P-123, "National Instinct and Governmental Institutions under German Occupation in Western Russia" (Hist Div, EUCOM), p. 34. OCMH, Foreign Studies Br; rpt, Dr. Guenzel, Ch. Adm Council, Mil Gov Sec, *Army Group Center*, on *Autonomous Administration Lokot*, 25 May 43. Filed in Rosenberg Collection. EAP 99/158.

¹³⁷ *Bericht 5, Ic, AOK 2, 15.IV.42., Anl. 362 z. KTB, Band IV, AOK 2.* 23617/62.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Guenzel, report, *op. cit.*; entry for 24 Aug 42, in *KTB 2, Teil 4, Pz AOK 2, 1.VII.-30.IX.42.* 28499/4.

The Rear Areas and the 1942 Offensive

German Preparation in the Rear¹⁴⁰

The German Army's plan for the 1942 campaign stated that as a necessary prelude to the attack the entire length of the line in the east was to be re-formed and straightened in a number of limited offensives and the rear area mopped up immediately after the close of the muddy season.¹⁴¹

In the southern sector the only Soviet penetration during the winter had been contained and later successfully pinched off, but further to the north the situation was confused and far from bright. Hitler's rigid tactics had for the most part succeeded in denying the Soviets any gains of a strategic nature, but at the same time had opened the German rear to a number of deep penetrations and left the Wehrmacht with a difficult mop-up job.

Direct rail and road communication between *Army Group North* and *Army Group Center* had been completely severed and a deep wedge driven between the two. *Army Group North's* right flank, held by the *II* and *X Corps*, had been rolled up tight against Lake Ilmen, and the *II Corps* cut off. To the rear of these corps Red Army units and mixed groups of Red Army personnel and partisans in large part dominated the situation. In the middle of January a task force of the *XXXIX Corps (mot)* had opened a drive from the southwest to relieve the Kholm hedgehog on the *Rollbahn Nord* and reestablish control over the highway. To complement this attack, in February two other task forces (later replaced by the *Luftwaffe Division Meindl*) had attacked southward from the line of the Dno-Staraya-Russa railroad to clear the rear of the beleaguered *II Corps* and close the breach in the *Sixteenth Army's* line. Kholm was relieved by 5 May and by 30 June the *Luftwaffe Division Meindl* had reestablished control of a sort along the *Rollbahn Nord*, though with a discontinuous line, while a *Landesschuetzen* regiment garrisoned the area just to the west. Still further to the west, the north-south Dno-Novosokolniki rail line, although under nominal German control remained open to interdiction along its entire length.

The situation in the rear of *Army Group Center* was hardly less difficult. Von Kluge's left flank had been rolled back on the *Ninth Army*, and several Soviet units had advanced from the north dangerously close to army group headquarters at Smolensk. At the time of the opening of the Caucasus offensive this portion of the line had not been wholly straightened, and direct communication with *Army Group North*, though reestablished, remained exceedingly tenuous.

¹⁴⁰ Unless otherwise stated, the material in this section is taken from *Lagen Ost. 10.I.-10.VII.42.*

¹⁴¹ Directive No. 41, *OKW/WFSt Nr. 55616/42 g. K. Chefs.*, 5.V.42., in "Fuehrer Directives," *op. cit.*

As late as 1 April Belov with a strong mixed regular-irregular group still lay between the German front and Smolensk, threatening the Smolensk-Vyazma rail line from his base at Dorogobuzh. With the undermanned German security units concentrated in small perimeters along the railroads and highways, partisan units roamed the rear freely as far west as Borissov.

The danger posed by Belov's force was clear and as soon as the weather permitted, elements of two corps, aided by several security units, launched a concerted attack to clear it from the *Fourth Army* rear and secure communications there. Gradually, but with considerable difficulty, they drove Belov from his base, but despite an overwhelming superiority of numbers, including armor, they were unable to prevent his slipping eastward through the Soviet lines near Kirov with a good portion of his command.¹⁴²

As a corollary operation, on 5 June the army group launched a large-scale antipartisan operation, code-named *VOGELSANG*, in the area about Bryansk to clear the forests there of partisans and scattered Red Army units and to secure the rail lines and highways supplying the *Second Panzer Army* and linking the central sector with the southern armies.¹⁴³ The action was concluded on schedule with some 1,200 irregulars counted dead, 500 captured, and large quantities of supplies and materiel taken. Despite the careful manner in which the action was planned and carried out, however, the bulk of the partisans withdrew from the area to the west in an orderly manner and according to a previously formulated plan, leaving specially designated personnel behind to reorganize the region once the Germans had moved through. At no point were any large groups brought to bay.¹⁴⁴

Taken as a whole, these efforts to bring the rear area under control fell somewhat short of the mark. They did clear the *Rollbahn Nord* and drive the bands in the immediate rear of the *Sixteenth Army* to the west, eliminate the threat of the Belov group, and temporarily break up the partisan concentrations in the Bryansk forest area. But they failed to even approach a permanent solution. In combing out these areas the Germans scattered a number of bands, but nowhere were they able to trap and annihilate any sizable groups. Under pressure, the partisans merely dispersed, slipped through the attacking lines, and reassembled elsewhere. As a result, all during the spring months, and even while the German clearing actions were in progress, they continued their activity.

¹⁴² See: "Halder's Journal," *op cit.*, VII, pp. 316-28; *Anl. 19, 75, 76, z. Tgb 1c, 221 Sich. Div., 22.III.-17.VI.42.* 22639/6.

¹⁴³ *Bericht ueber Unternehmen Vogelsang der 339 Inf. Div., Nr. 1505 11.VII.42.* *Anl. z. KTB Pz AOK 2.* 28499/58.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Passive Measures

These limited offensives represented the maximum direct pressure the Germans could bring to bear on the bands at the time. Beyond this, in a purely military sense, they could only garrison or outpost certain selected localities, guard their installations, and screen their primary supply lines against major interruptions, leaving the initiative with the enemy. They well knew that such measures alone could never crush the movement or even contain it. Yet they knew equally well that it had to be contained before it grew into a really open menace, and that the support of the people was the key to the problem.

The Russian winter successes had done much to destroy the confidence of the population in the Germans. Unprotected all winter from the terror tactics of the partisans and still exposed to their pressure at the end of the muddy season, the natives had begun to see that their "liberators" too often could not control the vast areas they had overrun. And taking the line of least resistance they began to support the bands more and more, sometimes under duress, though more often voluntarily.¹⁴⁵

Recognizing this shift of popular sentiment for the hazard it was and realizing that Germany was in danger of losing completely the only popular support it had ever enjoyed in any country invaded to date, the Army, in conjunction with the antipartisan drives, attempted to counter the threat by modifying its policy of reprisals and collective punitive actions. These had heretofore been standard practice as retaliation for raids by the bands and to prevent the natives from aiding them. Experience had shown, however, that such measures had not had the desired effect and in many cases had driven sizable blocks of the people into active cooperation with the bands. At the same time they had fed raw material into the Soviet propaganda machine.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, OKH directed that retaliatory measures be taken only when absolutely necessary to maintain German authority, and only after the reasons for such were carefully explained to the people.¹⁴⁷

Experience gained during subsequent antipartisan offensives not only bore out the soundness of this change of policy but also indicated additional measures which might further undermine the strength of the bands. Captured documents and interrogations of partisan prisoners conclusively demonstrated that while reprisals as a means of weaning

¹⁴⁵ *Monatsbericht, Juni 42, 201 Sich. Div., Anl. z. KTB, Ia, 201 Sich. Div., 1.IV.-31.XII.42.,* 29196/2; *Army Group North to Army Group North Rear Area, 19 Jun 42, in KTB, H. Gr Nord, 1.VI.-30.VI.42.* 75128/11.

¹⁴⁶ Entry for 11 Aug 42 in *KTB, H. Gr Nord*, p. 3164. 75128/13; evaluation rpt, *Corps Rear Area 447, in Evakuierungen z. KTB 2, Pz AOK 2, 23.V.-5.IX.42. 28499/72; OKH/Gen. St. d. H./Gen. Qu. Nr. 3033/42, 7.V.42., Anl. z. KTB, Ia, H. Geb. B, 1.VI.-30.VI.42.* 25124/1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.; OKH/Gen. St. d. H./Gen. Qu. Nr. 3033/42, 7.V.42., Anl. z. KTB, Ia, H. Geb. B, 1.VI.-30.VI.42.* 25124/1.

the people away from the bands, and thus weakening the support of the latter, were generally ineffective, the evacuation of all natives from partisan-infested areas and the destruction of all farms, villages, and buildings in the areas following the evacuations did much to slow up the growth of the movement and sap its strength.¹⁴⁸

Several thousand civilians had been evacuated from the Bryansk forests during the antipartisan operations in May and June, and the practice was continued during the summer in areas which could not be properly supervised.¹⁴⁹

Several other passive measures were considered. The *Second Panzer Army* strongly recommended that a 6 mile wide strip immediately behind the front be completely cleared of all but Wehrmacht personnel to prevent natives from passing information on German dispositions to the bands for transmission to the Soviet rear.¹⁵⁰ Somewhat later the same unit directed that all teenage boys in partisan-endangered areas be conscripted into a "Reconstruction Service" where they might be reeducated along National Socialist lines and trained as cadres for native units, lest they be drawn into the partisan units.¹⁵¹

Partisan Reaction to the Offensive

The Soviets had considerable advance notice concerning the German 1942 offensive. The direction of the attack and some idea of the weight, if not the actual timing, was known to them as early as the middle of May.¹⁵² To what extent they planned to use the partisans to help counter the thrust is unknown, but during the latter part of May a number of bands, several under orders to avoid a stand-up fight to conserve their strength for other operations, were noted moving into the rear of *Army Group B* from the Bryansk forest area and the Pripyat Marshes.¹⁵³ During the same period the few active bands in the Ukraine began to step up their activity against the rail lines there, especially the east-west double-tracked line from Kiev to Kursk.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Entry for 11 Aug 42, *KTB, H. Gr. Nord*, p. 3164. 75128/13; *Bericht ueber Unternehmungen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g.*, 28499/58.

¹⁴⁹ *Pz AOK 2, Ia, Nr. 1013/42 geh., 9.VI.42., Anl. z. KTB 2, Pz AOK 2, 23.V.-5.IX.42.* 28499/72; *Bericht, 15.X.42., Pz AOK 2, Anl. z. KTB 2, Teil 5, Ia, Pz AOK 2, 1.X.-31.XII.42.* 28499/5.

¹⁵⁰ Note, CofS, *Second Panzer Army*, to *Army Group Center*, 5 Sep 42. No. 02640/42 in *Anl. z. KTB 2, Pz AOK 2, 23.V.-5.IX.42.* 28499/72.

¹⁵¹ Entry for 3 Nov 42, in *KTB 2, Teil 5, Pz AOK 2, 1.X.-31.XII.42.* 28499/5.

¹⁵² See: DA Pamphlet 20-261a, *The German Campaign in Russia*, op. cit., ch. 9.

¹⁵³ *Bericht ueber Unternehmungen Vogelsang der 339 ID, Beilage zum KTB Pz AOK 2, Bericht Nr. 1505/42 g.*, 28499/58. *Lagebericht, Hoherer SS und Polizeifuehrer, Ukraine, 27.XII.42.* 51/10; *Bericht, H. Geb. B. Nr. 195/42, Anl. z. KTB H. Geb. B, 1-30.VI.42.* 25124/1.

¹⁵⁴ *Bericht, H. Geb. B. Nr. 195/42, Anl. z. KTB H. Geb. B. 1-30.VI.42.* 25124/1.

Similarly in the northern sector the partisans intensified their raiding. During the first 20 days of June attacks of all kinds, on small Wehrmacht units, on rail and highway bridges, and military installations, rose almost 40 percent over May.¹⁵⁵ Behind the *Sixteenth Army* alone between 1 May and 31 July the partisans blew 30 bridges, broke rails in 84 places, and damaged or destroyed 20 locomotives and 113 railroad cars, causing a total of 1,129 hours interruption in service.¹⁵⁶

Behind *Army Group Center* the situation was similar, attempts to blow the rail lines rising more than 100 percent from May to the end of July.¹⁵⁷

Still, despite these attempts to embarrass them, the Germans moved to the Volga and the foothills of the Caucasus without undue interference with their supply. It is possible that Operation *VOGELSANG* caught a number of southward-bound bands in transit and scattered them or robbed them of much of their striking power. Certainly the partisans found the lack of cover in the steppes a serious handicap, for it was not until late August that there was any report of sabotage on the lines of communication there.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, by the first week in September they were reported moving back north again toward their Bryansk stronghold without having touched the east-west Kiev-Kursk line which was the primary logistical trunk feeding the attack.¹⁵⁹ During the same period there were no reports of interference by bands which had been identified in the Konotop area east of Kiev.

As for the demolitions in the northern and central sectors, they had no visible effect on the main course of events. The figures themselves are misleading. The nearly 40 percent increase in partisan attacks in the northern sector for the first 20 days in June, it must be remembered, included attacks of all kinds, large and small, successful and unsuccessful and of the rail damage there, 75 percent occurred on the north-south Dno-Novosokolniki line which although important was never a primary supply link.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, in the *Army Group Center* rear where rail demolitions rose more than 100 percent in three months the actual count was 71 charges successfully detonated on the lines with varying effect as against 31 unsuccessful attempts in May and 145 successful

¹⁵⁵ CG, *Army Group North Rear Area*, to *Army Group North*, 24 June 42, in *KTB H. Gr. Nord.* 75128/11.

¹⁵⁶ *Anlagenband W-VI, Partisanen-Sonderakten, 1.VIII.-31.VIII.42., Teil 5 z., KTB 5, AOK 16.* 36588/60.

¹⁵⁷ *Kdr. Gen. der Sicherungstruppen und Bfsh. im H. Geb. Mitte, Ia, Br. B. Nr. 2051/43 geh., 9.VII.43., Anl. z. KTB, H. Gr. Mitte, 11.VI.-31.VII.43.* 65002/22.

¹⁵⁸ Entries for 23 Aug 42 and 16 Sep 42 in *KTB 2, Teil 4, Ia, 1.VII.-30.IX.42., Pz AOK 2.* 28499/4.

¹⁵⁹ *Lagebericht, Ia, Pz AOK 2, Nr. 1838/42, 6.IX.42. and 11.XI.42, Anl. z. KTB, Pz AOK 2, 16.VIII.42.-28.II.42.* 37075/90.

¹⁶⁰ *Anlagenband W-VI, Partisanen-Sonderakten, 1.VIII.-31.VIII.42., Teil 5 z., KTB 5, AOK 16.* 36588/60.

attempts as against 91 unsuccessful in July,¹⁶¹ and this against weak opposition. In July the *Second Panzer Army Rear Area*, whose area of responsibility included the Bryansk forest region where a large number of the bands had their bases of operations, reported that it had but 3,763 security troops to protect 855 kilometers of roads and 730 kilometers of rail lines considered operationally important to the Army.¹⁶²

During June and July Romanian units in the Crimea made almost daily reports of partisan action in the peninsula,¹⁶³ but there is no evidence that this activity in any way affected the movement of elements of the *Eleventh Army* across the Kerch Straits into the Caucasus.

In other sectors the bands appeared equally unable to affect the tactical situation. On 30 July the Red Army launched a heavy attack on the *Ninth Army* in the central sector which by 4 August had effected wide and deep penetrations. Yet there were no irregular attacks launched in conjunction with it. Similarly, when the *Second Panzer Army* in August launched an attack designed to pinch off the Russian salient in the Suchinichi area, there was no perceptible partisan reaction.¹⁶⁴ In fact, all along the front there was a conspicuous absence of positive interference with communications. On 17 August, 299 trains were unloaded along the entire eastern front, 71 of them troop trains. This was a new record for the campaign in the east.¹⁶⁵

It was not until later in the fall that the bands behind the southern armies hit the rail lines with anything resembling a coordinated attack. On 13 October a large partisan unit struck the north-south railroad between Bryansk and Dmitryev and virtually destroyed an entire 12 mile section. After they had removed some miles of telephone line, the irregulars simultaneously attacked all guard details along the stretch and blew the tracks at 178 different points, demolishing some 2,400 continuous sections of trackage.¹⁶⁶ No other attacks were made in conjunction with this one, nor was it followed up. Later in October three

¹⁶¹ *Kdr, Gen. der Sicherungstruppen und Bjh. im H. Geb. Mitte, Ia, Nr. 2051/43 geh., 9.VII.43., Anl. z. KTB, H. Gr. Mitte, 11.VI.-31.VII.43.* 65002/22.

¹⁶² Entry for 23 July, *KTB, Ia, Pz AOK 2, Teil 4, 1.VII.-30.IX.42.* 28499/4.

¹⁶³ See: *Rpts, Eleventh Army in KTB, H. Gr. "A", Band 1, Teil 1, 22.IV.-31.VII.42.* 75126/1.

¹⁶⁴ Unfortunately, this has to be based on negative evidence. Neither Halder nor Greiner, the custodian of the War Diary in Hitler's headquarters, makes any mention of irregular activity in connection with either the Russian assault in the *Ninth Army* sector or the *Second Panzer Army*'s attack, although considerable concern over both these operations was expressed in OKW and OKH. See: "Halder's Journal," *op. cit.*, VII, entries for 30 Jul-18 Aug; and MS C-065a, Helmuth Greiner, "Notes on the Situation Reports and Discussions at Hitler's Headquarters from 12 August 1942 to 17 March 1943" (Hist. Div. EUCOM), p. 4 ff. OCMH, Foreign Studies Br.

¹⁶⁵ Greiner, "Notes on the Situation . . . 12 August 1942 to 17 March 1943," *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁶ Entry for 13 Oct 42 in *KTB 2, Teil 5, Ia, Pz AOK 2, 1.X.-31.XII.42.* 28499/5.

brigades under leaders just returned from Moscow training centers were reported moving south from the Bryansk area to the Ukraine toward a junction with an irregular group which had moved eastward from the southern portion of the Pipyat Marshes.¹⁶⁷ It is likely that this latter concentration was ordered in conjunction with the preparations for the Soviet counterattack at Stalingrad, for after the Red Army had successfully isolated the *Sixth Army* in the city, the Central Staff directed a number of bands in the Ukraine to strike at German installations and communications as far to the rear as the Dnepr River and to make detailed reports on German troop strengths, in an attempt to embarrass German efforts to relieve the Stalingrad garrison.¹⁶⁸ The results of this maneuver are unknown.

In November four partisan brigades estimated at an aggregate strength of 19,000 men were reported in the Bryansk area behind the *Second Panzer Army*.¹⁶⁹ Still, in spite of this strength and despite continued weakness of the security command there they mounted no effective offensive action. The rail lines remained open and demolitions dropped appreciably.¹⁷⁰

Further to the west in the Vitebsk-Polotsk-Nevel area of White Russia where their strength was on the rise, the partisans demonstrated a similar lack of aggressiveness toward German communications. They did hamper the work of the economic authorities which could not be given adequate protection because of manpower limitations within the security command, and they did much to turn the natives further away from the occupation, but they raided the communication lines only sporadically, and never in a concerted offensive.¹⁷¹ Raids continued, but in no great volume. Demolitions set off on the rail lines in the entire *Army Group Center Rear Area* numbered 235 for September, 203 for October, 162 for November, and dropped to 147 for December.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Entry for 25 Oct 42, in *ibid.*; *Bericht, Hoherer SS und Polizeifuehrer, Ukraine, 27.XII.42.* 51/10.

¹⁶⁸ See: Captured Soviet directive, dated 28 Nov 42, in *Anl. z. Bf/h. H. Geb. "B", Ia, Nr. 12001/42 g.*, *16.XII.42.*, *KTB, Ia, H. Geb. Sued, VIII.41.-XII.42.* 75905.

¹⁶⁹ *Lagebericht Nr. 1838/42, Ia, Pz AOK 2, 6.IX.42.*, *Anl. 77 z KTB Pz AOK 2, 16.VIII.42.-28.II.43 and 11.XI.42.* 37075/90.

¹⁷⁰ *Bericht, H. Geb. Mitte, Ia, Nr. 2051/43, 9.VII.43.*, *Anl. z. KTB, H. Gr. Mitte, 11.VI.-31.VII.43., Teil XXII, Band 10.* 65002/22.

¹⁷¹ *Berichte, 201 Sich. Div., Okt, Nov, Dez 42, Anl. z. KTB 2, 201 Sich. Div., 1.IV.-31.XII.42.* 29196/2.

¹⁷² *Bericht, H. Geb. Mitte, Ia, Nr. 2051/43, 9.VII.43., Anl. z. KTB, H. Gr. Mitte, 11.VI.-31.VII.43., Teil XXII, Band 10.* 65002/22.