

~~SECRET~~

30-12  
25

Copy No. 45

SOVIET  
PARTISAN WARFARE  
SINCE 1941

MARCH 1, 1949

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## INTRODUCTION

In the U.S.S.R. the German Army met for the first time a highly-developed new technique of partisan warfare. The Soviet Partisan Movement was not a spontaneous guerrilla operation, but was conceived and developed as a regular military adjunct of the Red Army. Plans and preparations were made before the war, and actual operations were directed by an integrated partisan warfare headquarters set up in Moscow.

The Soviet partisans succeeded in disrupting the economic life of a large part of the occupied Soviet territory, and seriously interfered with the German supply system. They also acted as a powerful psychological propaganda weapon in preventing the local population from collaborating with the Germans or serving in the German civil administration in the occupied areas.

The most important prerequisite for the partisan movement was the organization of the air communications between partisan groups and the Red Army. At one point when the Red Army was making its greatest use of the partisans on the Central Front, a quarter of Red Air Force activity in the area was devoted to servicing the partisans.

The Germans were never able to meet the challenge of the partisans, not only because they lacked sufficient troops and planes, but also because they were unwilling to make the political concessions necessary to win the cooperation of the population of the occupied areas.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## I MODERN FORM OF PARTISAN WARFARE

A memorandum of the General Staff of the German Army dated May, 1943, emphasizes that "Partisan warfare must be viewed as an important, well-disciplined method of combat of the Red Army which is increasing in significance." This was a general statement of a situation which had developed since the first weeks of the war, and was reported with increasing anxiety in many individual dispatches from occupied Soviet territory.

The reports about destruction caused by the partisans were repeated in each dispatch, as were the complaints concerning the inadequacy of counter measures employed by the Germans. Although anti-partisan warfare was recognized by the Germans early in the Russian campaign as a very important problem, the Germans were never throughout the whole war able to find a solution to it. The German General Staff also acknowledged in the 1943 memorandum that, "activities of the enemy as well as the lack of appropriate German counter measures have of necessity led to the situation which now exists."

The designation, "an important, well-disciplined method of combat of the Red Army" deserves special attention. Herein lies the basic distinction between Russian partisan warfare in the last war and the earlier classic examples, as in the case of the Spanish guerrilla war nearly a century and a half before against Napoleon.

The guerrilla war of the Spaniards was at that time not a combat method of the Spanish Army. Actually, the guerrillas had replaced the regular army in the conduct of the war. The regular Spanish Army officers failed completely when they attempted to make use of, and lead guerrillas.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

The few disastrous defeats which the guerrillas suffered fighting with the army led to the complete and final separation of the army and the guerrillas. The guerrillas became purely a combat means of the Spanish people, since they were not organized by the army but rather developed out of the spontaneous resistance of the people, led for the most part by Catholic priests.

The development of Soviet partisan warfare during the recent war was quite different and demonstrates both the functions and the significance of this form of warfare in a modern conflict.

The traditional concept of partisan movements arising through the spontaneous reaction of the population against an invader or against the occupying power has only limited application in the case of partisan warfare in recent times. It has almost no relationship whatsoever to the warfare of Soviet partisans. There were indeed cases of spontaneous partisan activity in the U.S.S.R., but only much later than the initial activities noted by the Himmler SS Security Police in the first days of the war.

## II ORIGIN OF SOVIET PARTISAN MOVEMENT

The Security Police units followed immediately upon the heels of the advancing army in order to insure the security of rear areas of the Eastern Front. Several days after the outbreak of the war, a report of June 27th noted that scattered forces of the Red Army between Libau and Memel were continuing the battle "in part as civilians, contrary to international law."

In a report of July 1st, it was disclosed that the advance of the Security Police toward Minsk was impossible "because the woods were full of Russian bands and Russian soldiers in civilian clothing." A report of the next day notes that "the enemy attempted desperately to escape out of the three encirclements (Bialystok, Volkovysk, Novogrodek), partly supported by civilian bands."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

According to a report of July 7th, "it was ascertained in Lemberg in Eastern Poland that about twelve agents were left behind by the Russians with the mission of performing acts of sabotage on bridges and so forth."

The first conclusive report of partisan activities on July 9th noted that "according to recent experiences and according to dispatches from military headquarters it appears of decisive significance that a resistance movement is forming in the rear area of the army, composed of dispersed elements of the Red Army under the direction of energetic Soviet officers."

Thus, only two and a half weeks after the beginning of hostilities, the Germans were already speaking of a Soviet resistance movement, and this movement was characterized as having "decisive importance." At that time, however, German troops were being received by the great majority of the population, either with obvious pleasure (namely, in the areas newly won from the Soviets), or with an attitude of hopeful reserve that was in no way hostile.

The Soviet Partisan Movement began as an activity ordered from above, or more exactly, as a number of distinct activities. Some elements of the movement have already been mentioned in the dispatches cited; scattered parts of the Red Army, agents left behind, and in addition, some civilians about whom the Germans at first knew very little.

It was gradually established beyond a doubt that when the Soviets evacuated an area or a city not all members of the Communist Party or Comsomols (Communist Youth Organization) went along. Part of these groups were instructed to remain behind as "Destruction Battalions" and carry out scorched earth policies or disappear into the forests and form bands of partisans.

It was the primary mission of the organizations of the Communist Party, working in close coordination with the NKVD (GPU) to organize guerrilla warfare, in order to prepare for a gradual, more complete subordination to the military command and finally to become the "well-disciplined method of combat of the Red Army."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

### III FIRST ORDERS FOR FORMING PARTISAN GROUPS

The general order for the formation of partisan units was given by Stalin himself in his speech of July 3rd, 1941. He said: "In areas occupied by the enemy, partisan units, mounted and unmounted, must be formed and diversion groups created for the purpose of combatting formations of the enemy army, for carrying on partisan warfare everywhere, blowing up bridges and roads, damaging telephone and telegraph communications, and setting on fire woods, dumps, and transports.

"Unbearable conditions must be created for the enemy and for all who help him in the occupied areas. They must be hunted down and exterminated at every step, and all their efforts must be frustrated."

Countless later orders and proclamations refer back to this original order by Stalin. However, the instructions for the organization of the partisan movement, (or rather, "movements") were given even before Stalin's speech. The German Security Police reported in the interrogation on July 12th of a captain of the Soviet General Staff, captured after serving with the 17th Division, that the prisoner discussed the questions of prewar instructions to the partisans at length.

The captain declared that before the outbreak of hostilities no instructions were given to the Red Army concerning partisan warfare, but during the fighting such instruction was given. This particular case occurred during the first days of the war, when the Soviet captain's division was retreating from Grodno.

After crossing the Niemen, the corps commander assembled his staff, commanders and selected platoons of the Staff in the forest, and distributed machine guns and small arms.

"The Army corps has been cut off," the captain said his commander told them. "No one of this group must be captured alive. Therefore, we must strive to attain the following objectives: 1. a breakthrough of the German lines, 2. if the breakthrough is unsuccessful, ruthless partisan warfare must be undertaken."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

In the same report the Security Police mentioned the interrogations of several farmers from Collective Farms who complained that partisans were perpetrating ruthless acts of terror against the inhabitants of remote Collective Farms, slaughtering every farm animal, carrying away food, and in some cases robbing the inhabitants of their clothing. Red Army soldiers were obviously already using civilian clothing as was shown by the reports of June 27th and July 1st.

Even if instructions for partisan warfare had existed before the war, a captain on the General Staff need not, and perhaps could not, have known anything about them. It is obvious that any widespread distribution of plans for partisan warfare, indicating the possibility of great defeats, would have had a bad effect on the morale of the Red Army. Such instructions, however, must have been prepared for the event of serious defeats, large-scale withdrawals, or the occupation of extensive Russian areas by a hostile army.

The official line was that each enemy attack would be followed immediately with a mighty Red Army counter-offensive, and the war would be conducted on foreign rather than Russian soil. General Voroshilov spoke especially bombastically on this subject on several occasions before the war while he was still Soviet Commissar of Defense.

The Soviet captain said that no one in the Red Army had reckoned with the possibility of encirclement of such large masses of regular troops and that this explained why the army issued no instructions regarding partisan warfare before the outbreak of hostilities.

It might have been different in the case of the Corps Commander. It is not necessary to assume, however, that he acted on the basis of earlier instructions, rather than on his own initiative, since he followed an attitude traditional in the Red Army.

This attitude has nothing to do with memories of the partisans of the "Patriotic" War of 1912, which were only revived later for political purposes, but

~~SECRET~~

rather with the tradition of the civil war after the Russian Revolution of 1917 in which partisan warfare played an extremely great, and in some regions, a decisive role. According to this tradition the formation of partisan groups was a perfectly natural reaction to a military disaster.

#### IV PRE-WAR PREPARATION

Nevertheless, according to information gradually assembled by the Germans, it appears certain that partisan warfare was planned even before the beginning of hostilities, although not by the military, but by the Communist Party and the NKVD. This is substantiated in a report, by the Chief of German Army Military Police of December 31st, 1941.

This report noted the following statement of a twenty-five-year old Soviet partisan: "I know that, two to three weeks before the outbreak of war, Vassili Kossolapov, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee (the highest Party group), who was in Kholm during meetings and discussions of the Party, repeatedly urged the organization of partisan groups."

The partisan said that Kossolapov pointed out the absolute necessity for the organization of partisan groups, and the possibility for every comrade not drafted by the army to fight the enemy in this way. Kossolapov conducted daily theoretical courses in the afternoon from two to six o'clock in the Red Party House in Kholm. Participants were, for the most part, registered members of Young Communist Organizations (Pioneers and Comsomols) as well as other acceptable persons who were not Party members.

"The large participation of female workers was remarkable," the partisan told the Germans. "Participants ranged in age from fifteen to thirty-five years. About ninety to one hundred persons attended the course I took... The lessons included instructions for the use of rifles, hand grenades, for attaching of explosives to bridges and so forth... The course lasted two weeks. During this time we were on the shooting range ten times."



~~SECRET~~

He said that the course ended June 23rd, 1941, and that the exercises were always supervised by NKVD (GPU) agents. "On June 24th, 1941, we were set in march into the districts Loknya, Ostrov, Staraya Russa, and Toropensky, in groups of twenty to twenty-five men," he declared. "We wore civilian clothing. Each one of us had a rifle, a bayonet, a Finnish knife, and two hundred and forty rounds of ammunition.

"In addition, each group was accompanied by a wagon with several cases of ammunition, twenty hand grenades, several bottles of liquid fuel, hatchets, axes and provisions. Every man was sworn to fight to the finish ('until self-Sacrifice')."

It seems to have been a coincidence that the training in Kholm occurred just before the outbreak of the war. War had not been expected so early in the year. Most likely such training classes were scheduled in various places at various times.

#### V MEASURES AFTER WAR STARTED

According to most statements of other prisoners, training in other cases began only after the outbreak of the war. Then, however, it assumed very large proportions, which leads to the conclusion that at least sufficient instructors had been trained in advance.

In a Russian courier aircraft, which had made a forced landing, the Germans found a document reporting the organization of partisan groups in the same region, which was dealt with in the above statements.

The document reported the measures taken by the Political Administration (of the Red Army) on the Northwestern Front. It was addressed to Mekhlis, Chief of the Political Administration of the Red Army, and was dated the 13th or 14th of July, 1941.

This document shows that already at that time military authorities were participating in the formation of partisan groups.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

"A special department has been established at the Political Administration of the Army Front for the direction of partisan movements in the rear of the enemy," the document stated. "It handles all work on organization, armament, and leadership of partisan groups. The department maintains constant contact with local party organs and partisan groups... The Political Administration of the Army Front has sent fifty-two political workers who are to organize and lead the partisan movement and the work in the rear of the enemy.

"On July 13th, 1941," the document continued, "twenty-two partisan groups were formed in the area of the Northwestern Front. These groups are led by Communists, chiefly political workers from the active ranks of the Red Army.

"Political workers from local organizations or leaders of collective farms also served as active group leaders. All group leaders were thoroughly instructed. Principally, a group had a strength of fifty to eighty men and is subdivided into five or six divisions."

One special group was three hundred men strong. It was led by a comrade Krassavin, an official of the Ostrov party district, while its chief of staff was a comrade Yakoshev, a captain of the border troops.

"Furthermore, eleven officers of field rank have been assigned to this group as company and platoon leaders," the document continued.

"On July 12th the group assembled in the Dno area and is advancing toward the rear of the enemy... Other groups are active in the districts: Pskov-Luga, Ostrov-Staraya Russa, OPOCHKA-Kholm."

Furthermore, the authorities of the NKVD and the NKGB (Peoples Commissariat for the Safety of the State) formed so-called "clean-up battalions" to combat enemy parachutists. Measures had been taken, according to the extent of the German advance, to convert these clean-up battalions to partisan groups to fight in the enemy's rear areas.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Thus, in the same area (Kholm, Ostrov, Staraya Russa) there were two sources of recruits for the partisan movement. In both cases this was not a spontaneous movement, but one ordered and initiated from above. The first source was members of local party organizations, the other, from the Political Administration of the Red Army, both in collaboration with the organs of the NKVD (and NKGB).

## VI GENERAL LINE OF DEVELOPMENT

The introduction to the first of a series of secret reports on partisan warfare dated May 3rd, 1943, put out by the General Staff, says:

"The use of partisans is a well-known and proven means of warfare used by the Russian people in both national and international struggles. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Soviet Government, through the NKVD, prepared for partisan warfare before the outbreak of the war by setting up a plan of organization, enlisting former partisan members, holding complete training courses, instructions for the responsible leaders of all political organizations.

"During the further course of the war the leadership of the partisan movement was taken over more and more by the Red Army, a development which found its outward expression in the appointment of Marshal Voroshilov as Chief of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement."

It may be noted here that about May, 1943, the German General Staff evidently conducted a particularly thorough study of the entire and very voluminous material about the partisan movement. The results of this study were presented in summarized form in the above-mentioned series of reports and in several other documents. Naturally, a short outline like the one given here is a little over-simplified. But it lists correctly the most important development, and these are confirmed not only by the entire material in German files, but also by some comparatively honestly written Soviet publications on the subject (the best being "People with Pure Conscience" by P. Vershigora, Moscow 1946).

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Although it is true that preparations for partisan warfare had been made before the outbreak of war, it would be an exaggeration to say that the partisan movement was already organized before hostilities began. Furthermore, it may be taken for granted that at first the movement did not develop according to plan.

The German armies advanced so quickly, there were so many encirclements, and the Soviet front became so disorganized that for a long time there was no chance to coordinate the individual groups and to establish regular connection with the Red Army.

The connection, as outlined in the report addressed to Mekhlis, could be established only much later. It was all the more amazing that during this chaos, without regular supply of arms and ammunition, frequently without expert leadership and - at least in the beginning - in the face of a preponderantly hostile attitude on the part of the local population (as shown clearly by many reports), the partisans were able to inflict very heavy damage upon the Germans.

Complaints about partisan attacks never ceased. Nor did the hope of German authorities in 1941 that winter would curtail partisan activity materialize. There was only a short interruption while the partisans established their winter camps.

## VII RECRUITING

The Germans neither could nor did deny the boldness and skill of the partisans. German reports always emphasized the difficulties encountered in combatting them. There is no doubt that the partisans were self-sacrificing, enthusiastic and even fanatical.

It seems likely that what may be described as the first wave of the partisan movement was almost entirely lost. Vershigora, himself one of the later partisan leaders, has indicated this indirectly and cautiously in his book.

In June, 1942, he arrived at one of the most important areas of partisan warfare. He wrote that

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

"the true heroes of this area were unknown fighters, lower and medium rank officers of the Red Army who did not live to see the triumph of the partisan movement."

Among such unknown fighters were probably those "eleven officers of field rank" assigned to a partisan group, who had been mentioned in the report of the Political Administration of the Northwestern Front.

They included many who were not officers of the Red Army but civilians, usually faithful Communists. As Kossolapov said, the formation of partisan groups "will provide every comrade who is not drafted into the Army with the opportunity to fight the enemy in this way."

Thus, partisan warfare was expected to concentrate on the use of those who for some reason or other could not be drafted into the Army.

The partisans were partly recruited from men of draft age who had not been called to the colors because of the lack of time in view of the quick German advance, and partly from those who were either too young or too old.

Among the older group were old and faithful party members and - of particular importance for the activities of the partisans - partisans of the Civil War 1918-20, these latter especially on the Southern sector of the front.

For instance, a report of the Security Police of February 27th, 1942, stated that Makrusov, the leader of the entire Crimean Partisan Movement, was an "Old Partisan" who had "already distinguished himself in 1918 and had been appointed honorary member of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union and decorated for his services."

Partisan pamphlets toward the end of January, 1942, were signed by him as "Commander of the Crimean Partisan Movement." Another old partisan was Kovpak, leader of the most famous partisan group (later enlarged first into a partisan brigade and then a partisan division). He was decorated twice with the order of "Hero of the Soviet Union" and appointed a Major General during the war.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

He was a soldier in World War I, then fought as a partisan in the Civil War, ending in the most famous of the early partisan units, the Chapayev Division. On the staff of Kovpak, another old partisan played an important part. He was Korenev, called "Died Moroz," "Grandfather Frost, a Russian fairy tale character, because of his long white beard.

### VIII YOUTH AMONG PARTISANS

And in the ranks beside these older men were many who were very young, some still children. The Commissar and actual military leader on Kovpak's staff was Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Rudnev. He was accompanied by his son, who was not yet sixteen years old.

Books about the Kovpak brigade mention fourteen-year old fighters who were mainly employed in reconnaissance. Statements in the Soviet literature about very young partisans are not only confirmed but strengthened by German reports. It is particularly amazing how many seventeen-and eighteen-year old girls were employed, not only for liaison duty but also as spies. As the war progressed, an increasing number of these girls parachuted into the rear area of the enemy. The young boys were mostly recruited from local Communist Youth Groups.

The statements of the partisan from the Kholm area quoted earlier show that participants in a training course, which was held before the outbreak of the war, ranged from fifteen years up in age.

During the war, however, young people were taken without any previous training. These were evidently trained in the partisan groups. The Germans mercilessly executed the captured fourteen-year old boys and seventeen-year old girls whose short biographies are given in their reports.

In June, 1941, Kovpak was fifty-four years old. Other veterans of the Civil War were often even older. In case of another war they will not be able to play the same part again. But there will be other "Old Partisans," - those of World War II.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

There are indications that in the Soviet Union the youth is being trained, not only through military exercises in the schools. In 1948 "Detgis" (State Publishing House for Children's Literature) published a book for children "The Sharpshooters" (Metkiye Strelki, by T. Grits, Moscow 1948) 360 pages.

The first part of the book, written in easily understandable and lively form, is a history of shooting arms, from bow and arrows to the modern rifle.

The second part is nothing short of an instruction book for the training of snipers, with many pictures, sketches, and diagrams, and with practical examples from various wars, particularly the last one. The book does not only cover sharpshooting but also the subject of camouflage with many instructive pictures. There can be little doubt as to the purpose of such "children's literature."

The conduct of the partisan warfare in the Soviet Union was based on the principle that warfare is not only a matter for the Armed Forces, but also for the entire population. Stalin in his speech of July 3rd, 1941, said: "The Red Army, the Red Fleet and All Citizens of the Soviet Union must defend every foot of Soviet Territory, must fight for our towns and villages until the last drop of blood."

Although the entire population did not answer this call, there were enough men and women available to conduct an extraordinarily effective guerrilla war.

~~SECRET~~

## IX CONNECTION WITH THE RED ARMY

Any complete study of the history of the Soviet Partisan Movement would require an entire volume, although actually there is no lack of material for such a work. However, it is possible to give a picture of its development through an outline of the most important trends.

The general line of the development was correctly characterized in the German General Staff document, quoted earlier, which stated that the movement passed more and more under the direct control of the Red Army. This meant also, that the movement gradually became more thoroughly organized, and that its activity was more completely coordinated with the operations of the Red Army.

Later German reports mention several times that the "bandits," as they usually called the partisans, did not consider themselves partisans, but "soldiers of the Red Army in the rear of the enemy."

The partisan movement developed in several stages, which were, however, not always simultaneous in all of the occupied areas. The partisan groups were originally connected with local Communist Party and NKVD units. The Party and NKVD units, however, had to be evacuated because of the German advance.

Some dependable party members as well as many NKVD agents were left behind in order to build up secret party organizations in territories occupied by the Germans and also, if possible, to remain in contact with the partisans.

This contact proved very difficult. The work of the secret party groups was considerably handicapped by their lack of freedom of movement. Many of them were discovered by German Security Police or betrayed by the population. Often discovery of links between groups led the Germans to partisan units which they destroyed.



The hundreds of small partisan groups were isolated, and had to act exclusively on their own initiative. It was especially hard for them because of the lack of communication with the Red Army which thus cut them off from this source of weapons and ammunition. They tried, of course, to establish contact with unoccupied Soviet territory, the "Big Country" as they frequently called it.

Such contact was also attempted from the Red Army side of the front, but this was again impossible as long as the partisan movement was not first consolidated through contact among the groups themselves. The final consolidation of the partisan movement was described in a German General Staff study of May, 1943.

"During the past summer (1942) many small bandit areas were reported which were connected together only loosely or not at all," the General Staff stated.

"During the winter, however, concentrations were noticeable in the areas of Bryansk, in the triangle between the Pripyet and the Dniepr, southwest of Bobruysk and on the Orsha and Nevel Rivers. These were accomplished primarily by small bandit groups, which had previously acted independently, uniting into larger bandit organizations. In some cases, reinforcement of such concentrations by additional manpower from more remote areas was noted."

According to Soviet books on the subject, at least a few "Unions" of partisan groups already existed in the summer of 1942, although the functions of such unions were still limited.

Vershigora, who was mentioned earlier, parachuted into the Bryansk area, the so-called "Little Country," on June 13th, 1942. This area of 3,500 square miles (130 kilometers long and 70 wide) was completely under partisan rule. Vershigora described it as an area "four times as large as the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg."

In this "Little Country," Vershigora found a Union of Partisan Groups formed from more than 80 individual groups. The union, however, was still a very loose one.

~~SECRET~~

It had a headquarters, but its actual activity was limited to gathering reports of individual groups and relaying them by the single small radio station to the "Big Country."

Thus, the union was able to establish regular contact with the other side of the front, a contact which it was impossible for individual groups to maintain. This was the first essential step toward cooperation with the Red Army and subordination of the partisan movement to central military leadership.

The partisans were advised beforehand of Vershigora's arrival and he was met on landing by parachute by a young man and girl. He joined the Kovpak group in August and in the same month (August, 1942) Kovpak himself was sent by an airplane (a Douglas) to a conference of partisan leaders in Moscow.

On August 31st, Kovpak and the other partisan leaders were received by Stalin, who personally gave Kovpak orders to carry out a large operation. Stalin used the following words to the partisan leaders, which became famous: "For the present, you are our second front."

#### X ROLE OF THE AIR FORCE

The contact by air played a decisive role in the partisan movement. Military leaders, technicians, weapons, ammunition, and medicine were brought to the partisans by Soviet Air Force planes. German reports recorded such operations as early as August, 1941. Later on, the partisans were also able to use landing fields behind the German lines.

In February, 1943, the Germans reported a total of 600 supply flights and in the first part of May, more than 2,000 in a single section of the front, the area of Army Group Center. The front of this army group extended from Novosokolniki in the North to Sumy in the South and the "Main Bandit Region" was located in this part of the occupied area.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

"This means," a report of the German General Staff stated, "an average of 20 supply flights daily in February, and in the first part of May an average of 150 flights daily. This explains also the continued improvement in the equipment of the bandits, such as additional submachine guns, machine guns, light and heavy mortars, and artillery. Up to now, due to inadequate armament, poor leadership and insufficient manpower, the military value and fighting power of the bandits were slight. Their activities were generally limited to sabotage and small-scale attacks, but now, the possibility of a growing scale of attacks coordinated with operations at the front must be foreseen. The employment of parachute and airborne units might be of particular importance in this case."

The air lift to the partisans apparently reached its peak during the first half of May, 1943. The Germans noted a decline in air supply operations during the second half of May. According to Army Group Center reports, the following number of missions were flown by the Russians during the periods indicated:

<u>Period</u> 1943	<u>Total</u> <u>All Types</u>	<u>Fighter</u>	<u>Bomber</u>	<u>For Partisans</u>
May 1-13	8,357	1,577	880	2,055
May 14-31	5,599	937	619	1,254
July 16-31	12,039	2,883	2,189	659

During the second half of May, 1943, air activity as a whole decreased, but the relation of partisan supply flights to total flights remained about the same, 24.4 percent during the first half, 22.4 percent during the second half of the month.

In contrast, supply flights during the second half of July amounted to only 5.5 percent of total flights, even though the total number of missions flown increased sharply. The explanation lies in the increased tempo of combat flying at the front up to July 13th due to the German offensive, and after July 15th, due to the Soviet offensive.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

The importance to the partisan movement of air communication with the "Big Country" cannot be over-estimated. Particularly, its psychological and morale effect must not be overlooked. Once this communication was established, the partisans no longer felt themselves isolated from the rest of the Soviet world. They could again send and receive letters from their families, and many such letters were found by the Germans on dead or captured partisans. They felt that they had a great power behind them taking care of them and supporting them.

Although much of what appears in Soviet publications about partisans' relations with Moscow and with Stalin himself may be good propaganda, it also had a basis in fact. Since a great many partisans were also faithful Communists, Stalin represented to them the supreme authority, the "father of the people." And when in addition to military supplies, they also received musical instruments or gramophones and records, their morale was helped.

Without air communication the military organization of the partisan movement could not have reached the point which it did. Parachutists alone would never have been able to accomplish any such degree of organization.

At first, rough landing fields, and later even regular air fields, were built, so that inspection trips by higher Red Army commanders as well as flights to Moscow by Kovpak and other partisan leaders were made possible.

Thus, the tactical situation could be discussed with higher headquarters and replacement problems solved on the spot on the basis of past experiences. Replacement requirements were very great, since the rate of loss of commanding officers was high and sometimes crippling. For instance, the Kovpak partisans lost their most important military leader, Major General Rudnev, in August, 1943.

Since two accounts of the Kovpak group, one by Kovpak himself, the other by Vershigora, have been published in the U.S.S.R., more details are known about

~~SECRET~~

this group than about the others. The first aircraft to bring Kovpak medical supplies landed near his headquarters behind the German lines close to Bryansk about the end of July or the beginning of August, 1942. A few weeks later Kovpak himself flew to Moscow. After that, air communication with partisan groups became quite regular. At the end of October two 76 millimeter guns were flown in, and the same aircraft evacuated the wounded and mothers and children to Moscow.

In January, 1943, Kovpak's staff was located in the Byelorussian village of Lyakhovichi. A landing field was laid out on the ice of a nearby lake. Aircraft brought in weapons and ammunition for further military operations, and also brought correspondents and photographers of Moscow papers, as well as moving picture photographers to take action pictures. A member of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet brought in decorations and medals.

In the meantime, five partisan leaders, including Kovpak and Rudnev, were raised to the rank of Major General. Their generals' uniforms were also brought in by air. Finally, when Kovpak was having trouble with his teeth, a special plane arrived from Moscow with an outstanding dentist and his technician to make the partisan leader a set of false teeth.

On April 20th, the Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party Korotchenko, accompanied by several aides, arrived with instructions, and, later, the Chief-of-Staff of the Soviet Ukrainian Partisan Movement, Major General Strokach, landed with more decorations and medals.

Although Kovpak's troops marched at least 2,000 miles behind the German lines through occupied territory, they maintained almost uninterrupted air communications with the Red Army.

After communications between most individual partisan groups had been well established, between the summer of 1942 and the spring of 1943, the partisan organization was systematically developed.

## XI STRENGTH OF PARTISAN MOVEMENT

According to the German General Staff report, the following measures were carried out:

1. Consolidation of small bands into larger units, such as partisan brigades and divisions.
2. Use of complete units of paratroops and airborne forces in support of bands or for the purpose of organizing new bands.
3. Reinforcements through recruitment of local civilians.
4. Replacement of leaders lacking military training by officers of the Red Army.
5. Raising of training standards through partisan schools and courses of instruction.
6. Equipment of bands with more radio supplies to assure closer control of all units.
7. Use of more planes for liaison and also the introduction of a regular system of supplying of partisan units by air.

According to the same report, there were 129 large bands with a total strength of 125,000 in May, 1943, compared with 43 bands with 57,000 men in February of the same year. These figures, however, do not give a complete or altogether accurate picture. The comparison is not correct because the February figures do not include bands operating in the Baltic States and the Ukraine. Therefore the two sets of figures are not directly comparable.

When comparable areas are considered, the February 1st figure of 57,000 compares with a May 15th figure of 93,000 men. Even these figures are not entirely accurate since in addition to larger bands smaller groups were also operating. In fact, it is impossible to present an exact, statistical report of the partisan movement without knowledge of secret Russian data. On the other hand, sufficient data is available to gain an approximate numerical estimate of the partisan movement.

~~SECRET~~

German statistics of losses which the partisans suffered during 1943 and 1944 show the following figures:

Dead	147,058
Captured	90,904
Deserters	<u>7,402</u>
TOTAL	245,364

It is apparent, therefore, that in the period from the beginning to the end of the war several hundred thousand persons served in partisan units. From Soviet sources only one figure is available, that of 340,000 partisans for the Byelorussian area (Ogoniok No. 52, December 1948). Since this figure appears in an article in the issue celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Byelorussian SSR, the figure may not be reliable but may be an overstatement for propaganda purposes.

Nevertheless, it is not an unreasonable one. The partisan movement originated in Byelorussia and reached its greatest strength there. German statistics show that as of May 1st, 1943, 61 percent of all partisans in large bands were in Byelorussia and neighboring areas.

The Soviet publication gives the figure of 340,000 for this region, so this would mean nearly 600,000 for the whole occupied area, assuming that the same percentage ratio existed throughout the war, and that the German estimate of 61 percent for Byelorussia was correct.

## XII PARTISANS IN BYELORUSSIA AND UKRAINE

German statistics on the distribution of partisans according to areas are very revealing. A comparison between the area of Army Group Center and the Ukraine is especially interesting. In May, 1943, the composition of the population in the Army Group Center area, according to German estimates, was as follows:

White Russians	2,520,000
Ukrainians	1,300,000
Russians	<u>500,000</u>
	4,320,000

According to German observations, at least a portion of the Ukrainian population of this area was under Great Russian influence, while there were no separatist tendencies among the White Russians. Conditions for furthering the Soviet cause by partisan warfare were, therefore, most favorable in this area.

It is for this reason that a comparison of this area with the Ukraine is particularly interesting, since in the Ukraine a strong antagonism existed between the Great Russians and Ukrainians. According to German figures the number of partisans in the larger groups showed the following fluctuations:

<u>Date - 1943</u>	<u>Army Group Center</u>	<u>Ukraine</u>
March 1	55,300	10,000
March 15	57,200	12,500
April 1	58,800	17,500
April 15	71,500	8,500
May 1	75,500	17,500
May 15	69,800	18,000

The fact that the area of Army Group Center contained particularly favorable topographical features such as forests and swamps partly explains the fluctuations in these figures. Partisan groups from neighboring areas would assemble here for a time and then leave the area again. It seems evident from many reports, including Soviet publications, that the Soviet partisan movement in the Ukraine was mainly fostered for quite some time from the Army Group Center area.

The Bryansk forests were a favorite partisan assembly area. The Ukrainian partisan leader Kovpak



also came to this area before he appeared with his brigade in the Ukraine in 1943 for the purpose, in his own words, "of spreading the fire of the people's struggle." Although there was widespread willingness to collaborate with the Germans in all the occupied Soviet areas, it was especially strong in the Ukraine, and almost universal among the Ukrainian peasants, who felt a deep hatred against the Soviet regime.

However, after bitter experience with German occupation policies, anti-German feeling and even hatred developed among Ukrainians.

The anti-German trend did not so much help the pro-Soviet elements as it created a firmer basis for various Ukrainian Nationalist Movements. These for the most part developed in the Western Ukraine which had belonged to Poland until September, 1940. However, the strength of these movements such as the Bandera, Melnik, and "Taras Bulba" groups were partly dissipated by fighting among themselves. Their attitude towards the Soviet partisans was largely hostile, although the Ukrainians did in some cases propose to the Soviet partisans neutrality so both sides would be free to fight the Germans.

A German report of August 9th, 1943, states: "Fortunately, no agreement has thus far been effected between the Ukrainian nationalist and Soviet bands. On the contrary, these groups are bitter enemies, and only recently engaged in a three-day battle at Ostrog about twenty-five miles southeast of Rovno, with both sides suffering several hundred casualties."

The more important Ukrainian groups were committed to a struggle against the Germans as well as against the Soviets. The same German report states that "the Ukrainians directed their efforts exclusively against the German civil administration with the avowed purpose of bringing as much Ukrainian territory as possible under their control. They freely admitted that they had no interest whatsoever in attacking the German military and German supply lines, since before any independent Ukraine could be established the German and Soviet armies would have to destroy each other."

In the summer of 1943, the report continued, conditions changed radically. The number of attacks

on trains, convoys, strong points and warehouses, and terrorist acts against individuals, groups, villages, and entire regions became so numerous that the partisan situation developed into a "real menace not only to the Army supply system and transport routes over which agricultural products are distributed but even to the prestige of the German administration itself."

At this time, the partisans of Kovpak, Saburov, and others, who in August, 1942, had been ordered by Stalin himself to proceed to the "right bank Ukraine," that is, the region west of the Dniepr River, had already been active for two or three months.

The attitude of the local population had also changed. Red Army victories, beginning with Stalingrad, raised the possibility that the Soviets might reconquer the Ukraine. The population began to fear Soviet reprisals and no longer dared actively to oppose Soviet partisans.

A report about the Ukraine from the Chief of the Economic Staff in the Eastern occupied areas, dated July 24th, 1943, states: "The number of attacks by bands is steadily increasing and during June of this year increased 10 times over June of the previous year."

It cannot be ascertained exactly what part of this increase in partisan attacks was due primarily to the local development of the movement and what part to the activity of the Bryansk forest partisans who moved into the Ukraine from Byelorussia.

A tabular representation accompanying this report shows a striking increase in partisan attacks after the last part of April, 1943. This fact supports information from Soviet sources concerning the activity of partisans who were sent to the Ukraine. The greatest increase occurred during the period from April 25th to June 1st, and there is a very significant relationship between the increase in Soviet air attacks on the German rear areas and the corresponding increase in the number of partisan attacks.

Unfortunately, German statistics concerning the larger partisan groups, such as those available for the time up to May 15th, 1943, were not compiled for the

~~SECRET~~

later period. In any event, it is safe to assumed that the sharp difference between the number of partisan operations in the areas of Army Group Center and in the Ukraine became less as the Ukrainian Partisan Movement grew after the summer of 1943.

Finally, partisan activity in the Crimea should be mentioned, since it was also relatively strong, and the partisans were adept at exploiting the opportunities which this mountainous area afforded them.

~~SECRET~~

### XIII EFFECTS OF PARTISAN WARFARE

The partisan movement reached its peak in the summer of 1943. Thereafter it declined gradually, not in intensity, but in scope, as a result of the constant advance of the Red Army.

The area of the U.S.S.R. occupied by the Germans contracted until the Soviet forces were again in complete control of their homeland. Districts in which the partisan groups were concentrated and which had never been mopped up by the Germans were, one by one, re-occupied by the Red Army and became rear areas of the Soviets.

The activities of partisans who were still behind the withdrawing Germans did not diminish, but lost some of their importance measured by the total effect of the Soviet offensive.

The partisan movement also could not obtain the support it formerly received from the Red Army, because the Red Air Force was too occupied in supporting the Red Army's offensive. German reports for the first half of October record 571 missions for the purpose of supplying the partisans as against 3952 fighter and 5013 bomber sorties, or 4.8 percent of the total (12,003) Soviet missions flown.

In the second half of October, 315 flights to supply the partisans were recorded as against 3237 fighter and 3190 bomber sorties, so flights to supply partisans amounted to only 3.5 percent of all (8915) missions flown. Nevertheless, partisan attacks still represented a disturbing factor for the Germans even at that time.

Partisan warfare was of the greatest value to the Russians at the time when it interfered with and slowed down the German offensive and gave the Red Army time to strengthen its defenses, as well as in the period from July to September of 1943, when the Soviet armies definitely went over to a sustained offensive.

One might obtain a more complete picture of the functions and significance of partisan warfare in conjunction with an offensive by supplementing the study of

Soviet experience with a study of partisan movements in other countries (as for example in France after the Allies' landings.)

On the other hand, the experiences with the Soviet conduct of partisan warfare clearly show how the offensive capabilities of an army in enemy country can be limited by this type of warfare.

German losses in manpower as a direct result of combat with partisans were of small significance compared with losses suffered in battle against the Red Army. It is true that Soviet reports assert, for example, that Byelorussian partisans alone killed more than 500,000 Germans, but this is a fantastic exaggeration. Various Soviet reports concerning particular engagements often give several very contradictory figures of German losses.

Thus, for example, Bragin, a small Ukrainian city occupied by a German garrison, was attacked in April, 1943, by Kovpak and two other partisan units. Kovpak writes that his unit alone "wiped out more than 400 German officers and men."

Vershigora, who also took part in this action, reports that in all, that is by all three partisan units, more than 200 Germans were killed. These Soviet reports are entirely unreliable, because they were published for an obvious propaganda purpose. However, these are secret German reports published for their own use, which are necessarily more accurate, since there would be no reason for the German military authorities to leave such losses out of their own reports if they existed. Furthermore, there is no reason to doubt the validity of German reports which were not destined for publication but rather for restricted official use.

In the area of Army Group Center, where the partisans were strongest, the German Command noted the following losses by their own or allied troops during a period of five months, May to September, 1943: Germans, 902 dead, 1864 wounded, and 202 missing; their allies, for the most part Hungarians, 344 dead, 501 wounded, and 72 missing, auxiliaries from various nationalities of the Soviet Union, 758 dead, 788 wounded, and 3512 missing, kidnapped, and deserters.

The basic principle of the partisans was to avoid open combat with German troops. In such engagements the regular German troops' superiority in armament was too great.

Whenever the Germans succeeded in encircling and destroying the partisan groups, partisan losses were extraordinarily high compared to German. For example, in October, 1943, the Germans succeeded in liquidating the so-called Grishin Regiment. The Germans counted 1769 partisans' bodies, and this report added that this was probably not all. They captured 463 and rounded up about 1000 civilians from the woods. The Germans lost 64 dead, 18 missing (obviously killed in this case), and 120 wounded.

Far more important to the Germans, however, than actual losses in killed and wounded was the number of German troops tied up by partisan activities. In November, 1943, when the area occupied by the Germans had already decreased substantially, the High Command of Army Group Center estimated that it would require 210 battalions of 350 men each, that is 73,500 men, in order to effect "minimum security" on the railroads and highways alone. It was not in a position to make such numbers of troops available for this duty.

Furthermore, other security troops were also necessary because the partisans attacked not only railroads and highways, but also villages, cities, and German supply depots. In the summer of 1943, as far as can be ascertained, the Germans were able to prevent barely half of the attempted attacks on the railroads with the forces at their disposal. The successful attempts were sufficient to cause serious disruption of railroad traffic.

The statistics of Army Group Center are not entirely uniform, since in some cases attacks on railroads in the area far behind the front governed by the General Commissar for Byelorussia were also counted. Likewise, it is not sufficient to count only the number of attacks, since each attack occurred at several places at the same time.

Thus, for example, during September in the limited area of the Army Group Center only, 588 attacks were reported, including the entire Byelorussian area, 1256

~~SECRET~~

(attacks) with 14,150 demolitions of rail lines, in October 1093 attacks with 5456 demolitions, (fewer than in the previous month because the occupied area was smaller), and in November 952 attacks with 4574 demolitions.

In May, 1943, the Germans recorded 765 partisan attacks which had the following results: traffic was completely interrupted on the damaged rail lines for 3,853 hours, and reduced to single track operation for 2,132 hours; 255 locomotives were damaged, and of these 123 were severely damaged.

In August, the partisans in Army Group Center area carried out a large-scale operation, which began during the night of August 2-3. In two nights, demolitions were carried out at 6,519 points on the lines and 2,086 additional charges were removed unexploded.

During August there were a total of 781 attacks against railroad installations, involving 12,717 individual demolitions and 3,011 additional unexploded charges. In all, 74 locomotives and 214 railroad cars were damaged, 80 locomotives and 625 cars derailed and 150 kilometers (more than 90 miles) of rails were rendered unserviceable. Hitler ordered an increase in the number of troops to be used to guard rail installations, but it was found to be impossible to carry out these orders. The Army Group Center High Command reported that it had been forced to use security troops for other purposes at the front. They had to be withdrawn from their assigned mission of combatting partisan bands.

The partisan movement in the Ukraine was nowhere near as strong during the summer of 1943, but nevertheless the situation was viewed as very grave. On July 24th, 1943, the chief of the Military Economic Staff of the Eastern occupied territories wrote the Army High Command that many harassing actions had been successfully carried out against the German rear areas during June in the Western Ukraine. He stated that these actions consisted of "221 attacks with mines, 65 derailments caused by rail removals, and 78 air attacks. It must be recognized, that the danger of sudden interruption of traffic on the main supply line becomes steadily greater."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

The attacks of the partisans frequently and effectively slowed up the movement of German military supplies and delayed or destroyed food transports. Both of these conditions interfered with the usual precision of the German war machine and created a state of nervousness among the troops. In addition, partisan activity seriously affected the economic life of the occupied areas and the attitude of the local population.

The attached map (see end of study) shows clearly how the Germans estimated the effect of partisan activity on the economic life of the occupied areas in April, 1943. They had no reason to present a blacker picture in their official documents than the situation actually warranted.

The German report to which this map was attached also contained some very striking figures. The situation was worst in Byelorussia, where partisan activity had developed earlier and more vigorously than in other areas.

The Germans expected that there would be a sharp decline in the agricultural production of the Byelorussian area "because of the insufficient pacification of the area," and therefore set the quotas for deliveries very low, 10 percent of the grain yield, and 30 percent of the meat.

The German report states that the bands could claim as their achievement the fact that even these reduced quotas were not fulfilled. Grain collections were only 40 percent fulfilled, meat quotas only 36 percent, and fats (including vegetable oils) by 70 percent. Deliveries per hectare of farm land declined by 74 percent due to partisan activity.

Of 967 state farms ("Sovkhoz's"), which the association appointed by the Germans operated in 1942, only 312 remained under its control in 1943, while partisans had taken over the others. During the 1942 to 1943 wood-cutting season only 44 percent of the previous year's amount could be cut and half the sawmills were destroyed.

In the operational area of Army Group Center agricultural yields per hectare of farm land dropped

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

66 percent; total grain yields dropped 150,000 tons or 59.6 percent and total meat production dropped 30,000 tons or 75 percent. The sawmill production declined 42 percent. The report stated that 90 percent of the forests were infested by bands.

The situation in the Ukraine was more favorable. The Germans estimated in the spring of 1943 that in the Ukraine only 1 percent of grain production would be lost and 13 percent was greatly endangered, and 5 percent of meat production would be lost and 11 percent greatly endangered.

For all occupied areas, an overall 10 percent loss in grain production and a 20 percent loss in meat production were considered certain, while an over-all 11 percent of grain and 8 percent of meat production were considered greatly imperiled. However, conditions similar to those prevailing in other areas were developing in the Ukraine, so that a deterioration of the situation there might be expected - and did materialize.

The report related "how deeply also the economy of southern Russia (the Ukraine) has been imperiled by band activity." Finally, partisan activity deprived the Germans of the labor of 1,595,000 able-bodied persons.

The following conclusion was drawn: "The economic losses are heavy. The dangers which threaten the supply of the army on the East Front and even of the Reich itself because of the present situation and strengthened and expanded partisan activity are extraordinarily real and cannot be minimized."

One important aspect, however - namely, that even reduced deliveries of agricultural products could be extracted from all areas only by increasing pressure on the local population was not mentioned in the report. These areas with the exception of the Ukraine usually produced no surpluses even in normal times, and any cut in production was an acute hardship for the people. For the local population to deliver grain and meat to the Germans under such conditions meant actual starvation. At first this development stirred up the anger of the population against the partisans. Later, however, the sentiment of the population turned more and more against the Germans. This reversal of feeling in turn provided fertile ground for the development of the partisan movement.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## XIV PARTISANS AND LOCAL POPULATIONS

The country population in particular suffered directly and heavily from partisan activity. They were subjected to pressure from two directions. One of the first aims of the partisans was to destroy anything which might otherwise be used by the Germans. This was primarily food and livestock. The partisans tried to destroy all food stuffs and to carry away or slaughter livestock. This, if successful, meant a terrible famine for the population. The same partisans would later appear in the villages to requisition provisions.

The majority of the population, at first hoped for an improvement of their lot and particularly for dissolution of collective economy by the Germans. At the same time, however, they saw they were being robbed of daily bread by the partisans. Apparently reliable German reports, which consistently emphasize conditions unfavorable as well as those favorable to the Germans, indicate that originally the attitude of the farmers toward the partisans was overwhelmingly hostile.

Then the Germans inaugurated the policy of "terror against terror" as it was called in a report of the Security Police, dated August 22nd, 1941. If the population tried to oppose the partisans, and resist their demands for food, and help the Germans to locate the bands, they were subject to partisan reprisals.

If they did not oppose the partisans, or were compelled to assist them, and if they did not want or were afraid to betray them to the Germans, they were subjected to reprisals by the Germans who were perfectly prepared to burn down whole villages and execute their entire population.

The Security Police stated on August 22nd, 1941, that "reports have been received about villagers who had fed partisans or had temporarily hidden them. On the basis of these reports a number of villages were searched. In most cases, interrogation of the persons accused in the confidential reports and questioning of other villagers succeeded in locating the accomplices of the partisans. They were either shot on the spot or, if

~~SECRET~~

useful information might be expected from further interrogation, they were taken to the headquarters (of the Security Police). After interrogation, they were executed. Repeatedly, the houses of accomplices of partisans were burnt down in order to deter others from such action. It was announced to the population that their entire village would be burnt down if aid was given once more to partisans or if partisans appearing in the village were not immediately reported. The technique of opposing terror against terror has achieved excellent results. Fear of reprisals has led farmers to come from distances of 12 miles or more on foot or by horse in order to bring reports about partisans which in most cases proved correct."

This method, however, was a two-edged weapon which was turned rather strongly to the advantage of the partisans. Disillusionment, exploitation by the Germans, and the German reign of terror gradually taught the population to hate the Germans and caused a renaissance of patriotic sentiment.

The terror worked in favor of the Germans only so long as they appeared to be the stronger side. Their inability to cope with the partisan movement undermined their authority and resulted in a different appreciation of their power. In many regions the partisans were more feared in 1942 than the Germans.

Since May, 1942, German reports contained a steady stream of complaints that the attitude of the population was growing steadily worse and that it was mainly influenced by partisan activity and the desperate food situation, which also was caused by partisan activity.

Menaced from these two sides and without adequate German protection, many people saw no other solution but that of taking to the woods and joining the partisans. Thus the partisans did not have to resort to forced recruiting in many cases to fill their ranks. Simultaneously, the partisans disorganized the local administrations set up by the Germans by mercilessly destroying collaborating elements and particularly the village mayors appointed by the Germans and German-controlled police forces (Ordnungsdienst). Whenever a village mayor or teacher in a school licensed by the

~~SECRET~~

Germans was murdered, several other village mayors or teachers resigned in fear of the partisans.

Finally, when the Red Army began to be victorious, fear of reprisals for collaboration in case the Red Army would reconquer the area spread. Prisoners of war, who had fought on the German side and who were frequently employed against the partisans, began to desert to the partisans. The September report of the Army Group Center listed under losses on "Indigenous" manpower, that is persons of Russian origin, including national minorities, 187 dead, 166 wounded, 194 missing and 2076 deserters.

#### XV GERMAN FAILURE IN FIGHTING PARTISANS

On May 9th, 1943, the Commanding General of the Security Forces of Army Group Center summed up the situation as follows:

"The battle in the occupied area behind the front calls not only for military operations but is largely a political struggle. The less military means are available, the more political measures have to be used, because in the long run the entire population of the occupied area is forced to participate in this struggle, just for their existence. An aggravation of the partisan situation means to the population an admission of our weakness. Lack of any political goal makes doubtful the loyalty of even those parts of the population which before worked readily and voluntarily for and with us and which proved their confidence in us by their previous sacrifice of their blood. A final triumph over the partisans and pacification of the entire area thus will depend on 1) adequate German forces being made available to fight the partisans, 2) the enunciation of a political goal which takes into account the aspirations of the population of the occupied area." However, the Germans had neither sufficient manpower nor were they able to furnish the population with the necessary political goal. They had already lost the political war.

If the Germans had not lost the political war they would have had sufficient Russian forces to combat the

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

partisans. They should have permitted the Russian peasants to fight for their own land. There is no doubt that if the collective farms had been dissolved and the land divided among the peasants, they would have defended their property against everyone.

The partisans, moreover, represented the regime which had forced the peasants into collective farms with the utmost brutality. Because of their own policy of exploitation, the Germans could not risk arming the peasants so that they might defend themselves against the partisans. The question was much discussed but never decided positively. In particular, the Germans considered the establishment of so-called "Armed Villages," that is, villages whose inhabitants were armed.

In the draft of the German Army's final report concerning the military government in the occupied Eastern area, the statement was made that "as early as 1942 the wish was expressed by elements of the country population that they might be armed to defend themselves against partisan attacks. The experimental arming of inhabitants of villages by Army Group Center in the areas of Bryansk, Smolensk and Klinzy had the following result: partisan attacks on these areas diminished and in some cases ceased entirely, as for example in the area of the Smolensk Kommandatur.

"In spite of the success of this principle in experimental cases it was not attempted on a large scale."

The report ascribes this to the dispute between various German authorities as to which had jurisdiction in this matter. It is almost certain, however, that the basis of this rivalry was mainly political. A second attempt, however, was made at the beginning of 1944. In this case also, the same report said, "the armed villages proved their effectiveness. Partisan activities diminished noticeably in such areas. The armed peasants fought very well against several partisan attacks..." However, it was already too late. The Germans missed the opportunity to transform partisan warfare and the defense against it into a Russian civil war in which each side was backed by a regular army.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

It is difficult on the basis of the German experience to conceive of any other possibility for a successful campaign on Russian soil.

Finally, it seems remarkable that the Germans were practically powerless to prevent supply of the partisans by air. According to the German estimate of partisan losses in the years 1943 to 1944, the partisans lost 295 aircraft, apparently shot down by the Germans. These losses, however, were not sufficient to interrupt effectively the supply of the partisans by air. On May 3rd, 1943, the Chief of the General Staff, 4th Army, wrote to the High Command of Army Group Center that it "seems necessary that the continuing supply by air of the partisans be stopped by means of vigorous attacks on the supply aircraft by night fighters."

This was one of the "necessary" things which was never accomplished. One gains the impression from German reports that the Germans did not make much use of airpower against the partisans. Attempts to discover partisan air strips were surprisingly ineffectual. In the reports there are many instances where air strips were identified repeatedly in a certain location (for example in the area of Dyatkovo), but more accurate determination of the location was never made.

Apparently the Germans also did not have sufficient air forces to combat the partisans. Thus neither of the two requirements for the successful combatting of partisans, formulated in the document cited above, was ever fulfilled.

~~SECRET~~

# Störung der Wirtschaft durch Banden

**Erklärung:**

- räumliche Grenze d. Operat.-Geb.
- - - räumliche Grenze d. Armee-Geb.
- Meeresschengengrenze
- Energie total disrupt & Wirtschaft völlig gestört
- ▨ Economy considerably disrupted
- ▩ Wirtschaft teilweise gestört

Stand: April 1943



